comes to experience language and texts as sentient would be especially illuminating. Eubanks argues, "*setsuwa* are an often-miraculous form of literature that assumes sutras are living beings who may incorporate themselves into human form" (220). If Eubanks is right, that medieval Japanese Buddhists experienced sutras as living presences, what might be the cognitive basis for the human propensity to elide bodies with cultural artifacts, or to believe that language is—literally—alive?

Individual intellectual interests aside, this is an articulate, well argued, and theoretically sophisticated approach to sutras and *setsuwa* as textual culture. It is especially suitable for students and scholars of Japanese Buddhism and literature, as well as those more generally interested in comparative views of textual culture. Perhaps the highest praise for this excellent book is that its cogent, nuanced interpretations of medieval Japanese Buddhist textual culture merit further reading and discussion.

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The Bible and Bob Marley: Half the Story Has Never Been Told. By Dean MacNeil. Cascade Books, 2013. 166 pages. $21.00.

Most Bob Marley enthusiasts know that the King of Roots-Reggae codified his ballads and anthems with political ideas and Judeo-Christian-Rastafarian religious consciousness; these he often clothed in biblical imagery and a grammar of theology to spread his message of resistance to oppression, need for peace, and social–political redemption. What is less well known even among students of Marley and his music is the extent to which the thinking and lyrics of this superstar are informed by his reading of the Bible; a notorious tool of colonial oppression, not withstanding, in the Babylon of the West that Marley assails. Now, "Students of the Bible and of Bob Marley" can be eternally grateful to Dean MacNeil for the "rest of the story," in the first book ever written exclusively on Bob's reading and interpretation of the most sacred and popular book in western culture. MacNeil, himself a contributor to the pop-culture music world and an artful theologian-Bible scholar trained in English literature, used his personal experience and knowledge of Marley and home-town Jamaican culture to bring the Bible, Bob Marley and his lyrics, and biblical scholarship into an arresting triune-conversation on Marley's cultural revolutionary vision and message.

Though measured in scope, the author's aim is to give "a comprehensive study of biblical references" and interpretation in the "songs composed by Marley and released on studio albums during the Island Records period, from 1973 to 1983" (xiii). MacNeil "captured the number of distinct biblical references per song and per biblical book in a database" and "conducted word searches against the electronic KJV," Marley's only Bible, "to validate each biblical

reference" (xiv); whether those are direct quotations, allusions, or mere echoes of a biblical text. "In a total of eighty-three songs" of Marley, the author "identified 137 distinct biblical references, comprised of thirty-nine quotations and ninety-eight allusions" most of which occur in the biblical and extra biblical wisdom literature (xiv). So in four engaging chapters, MacNeil is able to bring fresh statistical research to bear on his analysis and interpretation of the use of the Bible in Marley's lyrics.

After discussing in the Prologue his Marley-Reggae inspiration for writing the book, the scope and method of his project, Marley's uses of the Wisdom Literature as his canon within the biblical canon, MacNeil presents an introduction—which is actually the first of the book's four chapters—where he discusses a number of pertinent issues: the King James (KJV) Bible as a constant companion of Marley and his guitar, the pervasive use and presence of the KJV in Marley's Jamaican colonial culture, the paradox of Marley's embrace of this tool (used in the colonial legacies of brutal black oppression) to envision and "herald a postcolonial world" (5), Marley's biracial consciousness, sensitivity, colonial experience, and context, and the enigma of Marley as secular–social–cultural icon, Jamaican-Ethiopian-Orthodox-Christian-Rastafarian, and Bible reader–interpreter. Marley converted to Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity in 1980 (9) but continued to use the Bible as a weapon of resistance to the Babylon system, a tool of redemption from Babylon, and an elixir to cure what ails the Babylon Christian culture.

In his "Review of the Literature" in chapter 2, MacNeil shows that a line of academic works from leading scholars probing the use of the Bible and Judeo-Christian religious ideas and theology in Rastafari and Bob Marley's music preceded his book by more than fifty years. However, the author offers fresh insightful analyses, measured criticisms, and corrections to various writers' readings, interpretation, and claims about the composition, place of writing, and vision of a number of Marley's hit songs, and especially his use of the Bible in those compositions. For example, Marley composed *Zimbabwe* "in Ethiopia in 1978," not in Zimbabwe as some scholars suggest, and "recorded it in 1979" prior to its performance at that country's independence in 1980 (33). MacNeil says, "The context of the songwriter is key in understanding his or her biblical interpretation" (34). Marley emerged from a colonial culture of injustice, deprivation, racial prejudice, political malaise, and busted hopes for economic salvation in a postemancipation Christian Jamaica. These form the context of his Bible influenced Roots-Reggae.

By far, the most substantive part of *The Bible and Bob Marley* is chapter 3, "The Wisdom Songs of Bob Marley." Here MacNeil not only analyzes the lion's share of biblical texts, references, allusions, and images found in Marley's lyrics, but he astutely brings the King of Reggae into conversation with a number of biblical scholars whose works on the Kethuvim (Wisdom Literature) are well known in the academy. Marley is seen as appropriating, interpreting, and using an array of texts and ideas from biblical and extra biblical wisdom traditions (Psalms, Proverbs, Qoheleth, Wisdom of Solomon, Song of Songs, and Sirach),

"as a means to resist against the system" (42) of colonial oppression. In sixty-two pages of analysis and commentary, McNeil unpacks the meaning of a large and diverse number of wisdom sayings that informed Marley's lyrics and influenced his disposition as a "modern sage" and social–cultural prophet-critic. Marley used wisdom sayings to create an "alternative consciousness" (46) with which to challenge and resist the Babylon "shit-stem" (system). In over thirty songs and records—like Small Axe, Natty Dread, Exodus, Catch a Fire, Running Away, Africa Unite, Rastaman Vibration, and Uprising—MacNeil unearths Marley's lyrical appropriation of texts from Psalms, Proverbs, and other Old Testament books in his creative use of the Bible, to advance his vision of creating a better society. "Marley quotes wisdom literature more than any other biblical book type" (40) and was especially fond of the Psalms; of his 137 biblical references, there are twenty-four Psalm quotations. "There is at least one Psalm reference on every album of the Island era. . . . Marley's heavy quotations of the Psalms imbues his songs with a distinctive quality" making him the "true new psalmist" (60) of Reggae and Rastafari.

In his fourth chapter, MacNeil sought to prove that Marley drew on biblical text, especially Pauline literature, to propound his visionary mission of resisting the Babylon system of oppression, economic rat race, political violence, and evil especially in Jamaican society; not with bombs and guns but with cool rhythms and biblical truth. In albums such as Soul Rebel, Rastaman Vibration, Uprising, and Exodus, Marley is seen as bringing the Bible in conversation with the harbingers of evil in Babylon to create his envisioned new world order and the triumph of good over evil. Here again, Marley's reading and adaptation of wisdom sayings impacts the singer's own "wise disposition" and critique of the wicked, who foolishly despise wisdom from The Book, the Bible, in their rat race for gain and evil acts of oppression. Marley draws on Paul's declaration: "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man sows that will he also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption . . ." (Gal. 6:7–8). Even when the king of Reggae alludes to Pauline mystical apocalyptic texts like "for we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world . . ." (Eph. 6:12, KJV), MacNeil argues that Marley is restoring "Paul's emphasis on historical political struggle" (128). The singer's appropriation of Paul's 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11 continues his tradition of resistance (120) to Babylon's colonialism. This use of the Bible in Marley's understanding of redemption disavows a pie-in-the-sky religiosity.

Some scholars may query the significance of MacNeil's Bible word count statistics in a database for biblical studies. To the less observant enthusiast, Marley's random use of biblical images, ideas, and citations may also just be the song writer's attempt to complete his lyrical prosody stich and line to make it more poetic. To others, the artist' casual appeal to biblical authority may even be an attempt to legitimize his revolutionary philosophy in song. MacNeil, however sees these as Marley's careful and deliberate use of biblical and extra-canonical texts as a tool of peaceful revolution and redemption. Marley invented his own

transgressive reading of the Bible to "wrest the message from the colonial messenger" (Murrell 2006) to call for a new world order and a reversal of fortunes for society's poor and oppressed. *The Bible and Bob Marley* is a breath of fresh air in biblical studies. It will be appreciated for its clarity of thought, freshness of ideas, scholarly innovation, and lucid theological discourse on Marley's use of the Bible in song. In under 150 pages of reading text, MacNeil not only demonstrates what light biblical scholarship might shed on Marley's reading of the Bible and what Marley may "teach biblical scholars," but he also answers the question why the cultural icon and mystic "spirit dancer," with such marginal education and humble and depressed origin, became a popular Bible reader–interpreter worthy of study and reflection.

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Introducing African American Religion. By Anthony Pinn. Routledge, 2013. 276 pages. $125.00.

An essential question permeates Anthony Pinn's *Introducing African American Religion*: How are the "thinking and practices" of African American religious traditions tied "to the quest for greater life meaning?" (xi). Pursuing the answer to this question allows Pinn to go beyond general reviews of African American religious practices, a temptation that would seduce many scholars brave enough to undertake the task of writing an introductory text to the field. Instead, Pinn reviews four primary African American religious traditions—Christianity, Islam, Traditional African Religions, and Humanism—to illustrate how "life meaning gets played out in relationship to slavery, continued discrimination, socio-political struggle and in connection to key issues such as sex, gender, sexuality, politics, key cultural developments, and so on" (xi). This distinctive feature of Pinn's *Introducing African American Religion* makes it unique in its breadth and courageous in its ambition.

Comprised of fourteen chapters divided into three "Parts," Pinn's volume assumes the form of a textbook. It includes numerous images, quotations from important figures in African American religion, as well as "Key Points" and "Discussion Questions," and lists for "Further Reading" at the end of each chapter. In Part I, Pinn historicizes the traditions he initially identifies to arrive at his definition of African American religion. Compelling prose takes the reader from the bowels of the slave ship to the shores of the New World in one chapter, and then to the early formation of eighteenth-century religious communities in another. Pinn balances a careful presentation of the role of Christianity in European conquest and enslavement with information on the faiths Africans brought with them from the continent. Later chapters in Part I map the African American religious landscape from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries, and how