

in sexual and religious identities. Thus *The Comedy of Errors* appears as a farce that stages the consequences of multiple bodies collapsed into one self. If the play registers a “crowded discomfort” with the “sacramental conjunction of so much sexual, class/status, temporal, geographic, and religious difference” (40), it finds reassurance in the capacious, feminized Christ-figure of Emilia, the abbess who delivers after “thirty-three years . . . in travail” (5.1.402) the Antipholus twins and their servant Dromios to an astonished family. Stockton reads *The Merchant of Venice* as a critique of marriage’s masculinizing and Christianizing power, explored in this problematic comedy through the queer cross-dressings of Jessica and Portia. The chapters on *Othello* and *The Winter’s Tale* focus on the logical impossibility of chastity for bodies bound in union with the Christian faithful. Stockton reconfigures Desdemona as a “desiring subject” whose idealization of monogamy is called into question by the “dynamics of group embodiment” and “the persistence of difference between two or more people joined in one flesh” (65). Hermione, too, bears unavoidable guilt, simply by virtue of the essential adulteration produced by the mix of her flesh, her husband Leontes’s, and that of her husband’s intimate friend Polixenes; it is the “aptly-named Paulina” who exempts Hermione “from the adulterated condition of the human flesh by first rendering her as stone and then resurrecting her from the same” (84).

Stockton’s readings are persuasive. Not a trained theologian himself, he has extended the reach of queer theology (as practiced by scholars including Stephen D. Moore and Richard Rambuss) to an early modern corpus that, when pressed, willingly gives up its signs of religious queerness. The book is also refreshingly ecumenical in its historicist and presentist affiliations: twenty-first-century society and early modern theology have seldom seemed so congruent. It is a short volume, however, and the densely argued chapters leave little room for a broader consideration of confessional variation in Shakespeare’s England. And although Stockton acknowledges the “overlapping rubrics” (7) of bodily unity that obtained at the time (friendship discourses that stressed mutual identity; humoral medicine predicated on the fungible transmissibility of bodily sensation), his study of the plural subject is conducted without further reference to these competing and complementary ways to understand the self.

Will Tosh, *Shakespeare’s Globe*

*Le Langage du désir chez Bossuet: Chercher quelque ombre d’infinité.*

Agnès Lachaume.

Lumière classique 111. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2017. 730 pp. €125.

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Jacques Bénigne Bossuet became so famous as an orator that a bust of him, alongside Demosthenes, Cicero, Daniel Webster, and Edmund Burke, among others, adorns the exterior of the Sanders Theatre at Harvard University. What images and eloquence of

language accorded him such honor and reputation? This book by Agnès Lachaune, *Le Langage du désir chez Bossuet*, is an outstanding contribution to our understanding of Bossuet as it navigates the inspiring, sensual, and passionate language that guides his sermons and writings. How did Bossuet proclaim the value and kinds of desire in his work? Was he really a censor of all pleasure? Hardly, to the latter statement. Indeed, he would qualify some kinds of passions, pleasures, and desires as being worthier than others. This book greatly enriches our understanding of Bossuet's vision for salvation and reveals the course Bossuet took in edifying his Versailles audience without offending them. A dominant voice for divine right of kings, especially regarding Louis XIV, Bossuet still supported and championed an active, dynamic, expansive nature of the heart for everyone in their search for God and salvation. Of course, desires of the soul are superior to desires of the flesh, which are condemned. Pleasures of the soul, knowing and understanding God, transcend the body. Bossuet's language is rich, sumptuous, controlled, and persuasive, as he admirably steers the corporeal desires of the senses to a search for God.

The worthiest and greatest value of this book is its organization of the table of contents and parts. Since this book would be more for scholarly use than for a general audience, it deals extensively with lexical, nuanced, and philosophical meanings and analyses of Bossuet's orations and writings. Part 1 is composed of five chapters that delineate Bossuet's definitions of passion, and especially regarding the Augustinian, Thomistic, and Cartesian influences found in his work. In addition, this part analyzes the different kinds of passion and what is to be avoided and condemned as opposed to desire for the exaltation of God. Part 2, "Imagination in the Service of Spiritual Desire," consists of a short introduction and chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9. Topics in these chapters include the significance of images used in nature, the idea of Noah's ark and the Creation theories, the Fall from Grace, human vanities, images of natural disasters, and finally, persons of the Bible and history who are models of good or bad examples of desire. Part 3 is comprised of chapters 10, 11, and 12 as well as a conclusion. These chapters study the elegant, varied, poetic, descriptive, and sensual language of Bossuet.

The annexes consist of seven tables of lexical usages of certain words in Bossuet's works, including the terms *desire*, *passion*, *aspire*, etc., and references to different sermons when these words are used, such as during Lent, funeral orations, and other texts. This source is exhaustive and extremely useful for a scholar of Bossuet or one studying and analyzing theology or philosophy through sermons. Related words dealing with passion, such as *ardor*, *need*, *caprice*, *inclination*, *penchant*, *charity*, *love*, and *appetite*, among other words, end this section. Part 2, "Index of the Principal Images in Bossuet's Texts," shows the most used images, starting with *abeilles* (bees) to *voyage or voyageurs* (travels or travelers). The next column interprets Bossuet's usage of these words and then the source where they are used and the page numbers in this book where the words are mentioned. This is a marvel of research and an excellent tool for the excavation of Bossuet's

genius in oratory. A thorough bibliography of primary and secondary sources both modern and ancient regarding Bossuet, historical influences, critical essays, and analyses of his inspirations are listed here in thirty-two pages. This book is a requirement for any serious scholar who is studying the art of theological oratory, the age of Louis XIV, or the religious issues and rivalry of the day (notably between Bossuet and Fenelon), and it gives an overall understanding of the language of passion as employed by Bossuet.

Camille Weiss, *Suffolk University*

*“Le secret des secrets,” traduction du XVe siècle.* Pseudo-Aristote.

Ed. Denis Lorée. *Classiques français du Moyen Âge* 179. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2017. 456 pp. €45.

The European tradition of excellence in textual scholarship, which one could say starts with the humanists, is well represented in number 179 of Honoré Champion’s distinguished series *Classiques français du Moyen Âge*. The pseudo-Aristotelian *Secret of Secrets* was a medieval publishing blockbuster. The complete text was translated from Arabic into Latin ca. 1230 (a partial translation appeared ca. 1120); it lived on into the later stages of the Renaissance (for example, the famous Aristotelian philosopher, doctor, and university professor Alessandro Achillini [1463–1512] published an improved Latin text in 1501 that was reprinted in 1516, 1520, and 1528). Part of its enormous success came via retranslations into Europe’s vernaculars, including a number into French; the publication under review here focuses on the most popular of those French versions.

Following the standard formula for such projects, the book has two parts: an extended introduction, and the critical edition of the text in question. The former covers some historical basics, including an overview of the French translation tradition; a description (based on in situ examinations) and classification of the MSS, with the construction of a stemma; a detailed discussion of orthography, phonetics, morphology, syntax, and vocabulary; and a presentation of editorial principles. The second part of the book includes, along with the edition, over ninety pages of variants, over one hundred pages of “Notes et éclaircissements,” a glossary, and an index of proper names.

The heart of the book, of course, is the edition itself, which is concerned with what scholars label Version C of the French tradition. Probably executed ca. 1400 and based on a corrupt and abridged Latin exemplar, Version C ignores the majority of the occult scientific material; it might be described as a mirror of princes with supplementary sections on health and physiognomy. Twenty-four MSS are extant. On the basis of a stemmatic analysis, one of the three subfamilies is identified as being the “most read” and “most diffused”; the best from that group, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS 1087, serves as the base text, with omissions being supplied in most cases by Oxford, British Library, MS Douce 305.