

the particular claim for the book's central, much scrutinized Holy Sonnet is that the poem, by fully attending to death as its subject, overcomes "death itself, . . . distraction itself" (215), and "provides a practical, experiential proof for the mortality of death by showing that distraction may be overcome" (217). For all its eloquence, this interpretation, essentially the study's profit and punchline, is belief-beggar, if not, to submit another play on *attentio*, overstrained and overstretched, "like butter that has been scraped over too much bread."

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Members of His Body: Shakespeare, Paul, and a Theology of Nonmonogamy.
Will Stockton.

New York: Fordham University Press, 2017. x + 178 pp. \$25.

When Diana, Princess of Wales admitted in a television interview that her marriage to Prince Charles had been unfaithful, she confided to the journalist that there "were three of us in this marriage, so it was a bit crowded." Diana's unwelcome second partner was her husband's mistress, now wife, Camilla Parker Bowles. But as Will Stockton's excellent and politically astute book argues, three was hardly a crowd in the early modern world. Men and women in Shakespeare's England, nominally Protestant but still attached to a Catholic understanding of sacramental marriage, found in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, chapter 5, a marital theology that was fundamentally plural: husband and wife became "one flesh," and that single entity joined the many-membered body of Christ (Ephesians 5:30).

Members of His Body reads four Shakespeare plays in light of what Stockton regards as the persistence into Elizabethan and Jacobean England of a Pauline theology of marriage. The apostle Paul (or the authors of the New Testament who wrote under his name) defined marriage as a *mysterion*—translated as sacrament, mystery, or secret, depending on one's confessional persuasion—that enabled a superior form of embodied membership of the citizenry of Christ. "To what extent," asks Stockton, "does Shakespeare figure Christians as united to one another and to God, in the body, through marriage?" And how—this is the line of polemical steel in the book—might these questions help us think about "post-Reformation retrenchment of marriage in Christian, especially Evangelical, body politics?" (4). Post-Reformation is Stockton's delicate term for present-day: his book is also a corrective to the cherry-picked readings of the Bible that empower modern fundamentalist Christian politics, and it offers a determinedly queer recalibration of Christian marriage.

But the present is a subtle thread in these refreshing and compact historicist readings. His purpose is to tease out the implications of a theology of Pauline marriage in texts (including three non-Shakespeare prose utopias) that deal in gender relations and

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.

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