

justice paradigm' (p. 49). Exploring African and African American history and traditions leads to the insight that 'womanism is a way of being in community with all others in the earth community' (p. 53). Engaging transformation 'acknowledges religious pluralism alive in African religious life and tradition, and invites dialogue about earth justice engaging these multiple perspectives' (p. 57). Harris calls womanists to engage in interfaith and interreligious dialogue. In the final step of taking action, womanists explore the connections between social justice and earth justice in the struggle to change the world.

While much womanist theological and ethical reflection has been firmly rooted in the Bible and Christian tradition as understood in the black church, there are few references to black church experience in *Ecowomanism*. This reflects what Harris names a 'third wave womanist' openness to the diversity, richness, and complexity of African and African diaspora history and experience of the Spirit. Reflection on Martin Luther King and Black Lives Matter situate ecowomanism in the struggle for racial and social justice. Reminding womanists of their own ecomemories, and arguing that ecological issues intersect with justice issues, Harris shows that the so-called 'choice' between social justice and ecology is false.

Ecowomanism was cobbled together from previously published essays. This sometimes results in repetition. I was disappointed that the chapter titled 'Taking Action' focused on teaching ecowomanism. Teaching is what professors do, and it certainly contributes to changing the world, but I would have liked for Harris also to focus on current ecological justice issues that call for ecowomanist action. But these are minor points. *Ecowomanism* maps a new way forward in womanist theology and ethics. It should be widely read and assigned in courses, not only by womanists but also by white environmentalists and ecofeminists, and by theologians and ethicists, because it charts a new way forward for all of us. I recommend it highly to everyone who cares about theology, ethics, and the future of the world.

doi:10.1093/litthe/fry033

Advance Access publication 15 December 2018

CAROL P. CHRIST

*Ariadne Institute and California
Institute of Integral Studies*

A Theology of Literature: The Bible as Revelation in the Tradition of the Humanities.

By William Franke. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017. PB, £14.00. ISBN 978-1-5326-1102-5.

This remarkable book is written within a venerable tradition of literary reading of the Bible and of reading the Bible as literature. Its immediate predecessors in the past few decades include works by James L. Kugel, Robert Alter, Frank Kermode, Meir Sternberg, and others, both Jewish and Christian. And yet at the same time it has a power and a directness that are entirely new and singular. Franke's writing reminds me vividly of the time when I was a student of theology in an English university almost 50 years ago, being taught the Bible (especially the Hebrew Bible) and wondering how such wonderful literature and poetry could be made so dull by the preoccupations and impositions of theology and history. Should we not begin with the literary life and vitality of the texts and their forms in narrative and poetry?

Franke, a professor of comparative literature with deep theological knowledge, well known for his work on mysticism and the apophatic, reminds us that words and literary form lie at the very heart of religious revelation, and, beginning with Genesis, he leads us through the major literary forms of the Hebrew Bible up to the New Testament and the gospels. The books of the Bible are a human response to and expression of divine revelation beginning with Genesis and the creative word of God that brings all things into being. From there we move to the epic history of the book of Exodus and into the prophetic tradition that lies at the heart of the Hebrew Bible. Prophecy in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and others is essentially a poetic form, rooted in the present and its place in human history under the eyes of God. And the poetry of the Bible never allows us to escape the deepest and most immediate matter of human experience in the self-referential reasoning of Ecclesiastes or the deeply sensual verbal melodies and lyricism of the Song of Songs of which the 'intrinsic indeterminacy' links together, as only the poetic can, the bodily intimacies of the erotic with the infinity of divine love for humankind.

The synchronic life of the poetic allows us to connect, in Franke's careful analyses, the ancient sensualities of the Song of Songs with the Symbolist poetry of Baudelaire and Mallarmé, and thus the Bible with all of literature—a sacred text that is never separated from the rest of the poetry of world literature. In the book of Job (and after that, in poets and writers from John Milton to Muriel Spark and many others) we cannot forget the deep poetic nature of religious revelation, and in the Psalms the poetry that rests at the heart of the ancient liturgical traditions of Judaism and Christianity.

Most of this book is concerned with the Old Testament, but in some ways the key chapter comes towards the end, focusing upon the literary genre of the gospels. Here Franke demonstrates his deep knowledge of the art of biblical criticism and its processes in form, source, and redaction criticism. But these can never be merely academic exercises. For the gospels are alive in a faith community as testimonies of that faith and as exercises in theological imagination as it seeks in words to express the mystery of the resurrection in Christ.

Franke refers to the work of the philosophy Paul Ricoeur, with André LaCocque, in the art of thinking biblically, and this is exactly what he demands of his readers in his own book. Like Ricoeur, he never forgets the living communities that have created and interpreted the texts of scriptures through history, living within their metaphorical and poetic structures as catalysts for life and thought in faith through the millennia. The academic pursuit of literature and theology, it seems to me, has not always been as fruitful as it might be in recent years. It has never gained proper attention within the curricula of either religion or literary studies in our universities and colleges, caught between disciplines and often at fault in its own lack of intelligent imagination. William Franke's book, however, comes as a learned, lively and intelligent reminder that when we begin again in the study of the Bible it must be with a literary sensitivity and a theological imagination that recognises in ever-fresh ways the literary and poetic heart of faith as it arises from the life of words and language. The poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge once wrote memorably of the 'living educts of the Imagination' in Scriptures, and here, for our own time, we are reintroduced to them in this lucid and articulate book that finds theology to be inherent in the biblical text and its textures rather than something outside and imposed upon it. This is a

profoundly important book for anyone in the humanities and for general readers, as well as theologians, liturgists, and biblical critics.

doi:10.1093/litthe/frx026

Advance Access publication 25 September 2017

DAVID JASPER

University of Glasgow
Renmin University of China

Members of His Body: Shakespeare, Paul, and a Theology of Nonmonogamy.
By Will Stockton. New York: Fordham University Press, 2017.
x+178pp. Paperback, \$25. ISBN: 978-0-8232-7551-9.

On 26 July 2015, the Supreme Court of the USA decided in *Obergefell v. Hodges* that the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees same-sex couples the right to marry. In his dissenting opinion, Chief Justice John Roberts argued that this expansion of marriage to include same-sex couples could license future expansions to include polygamy. Roberts's opinion was, of course, not explicitly religious; his tacit unease over legally sanctioned polygamy and same-sex marriage, however, resonates with much of evangelical Christian America, for which anything but heterosexual monogamy is scripturally forbidden. But as Will Stockton astutely observes in *Members of His Body*, this is a brazen misreading of Christian scripture: 'biblical marriage is plural marriage' (p. 5, italics in original), he boldly declares. This insight fuels Stockton's readings of biblical marriage in four Shakespeare plays, which stage the structural perversity of marriage in an era—like ours—redefining its meaning and institutional boundaries.

Stockton builds his Shakespearean readings around Pauline epistles, especially Ephesians 5:22–33, a crucial biblical passage in Western redefinitions of marriage. English translations of verse 32, rendering marriage a 'mystery' or 'secret', were especially important to Protestant desacralizations of the institution and its reconfiguration as a means of producing Christian citizens. Stockton, however, emphasises verses 30–31: 'For we are members of his bodie, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shal a man leave father and mother, and shal cleave to his wife, and they twaine shalbe one flesh' (p. 1). Paul suggests that Christian marriage, by means of a unifying flesh, erodes distinctions between the members of the marrying couple and between the couple and the Christian community. This is a queer claim, Stockton contends, because it situates plurality *within* the contemporary evangelical conception of heterosexual monogamy, and not outside of it. As a means of critiquing American evangelicalism, Stockton's feminist-queer marriage theology works quite well, exposing the manner in which its homophobia belies a deeper attachment to monogamy. As an intervention in Shakespeare studies, a field in which queer and religious inquiry are mostly separate threads, this marriage theology attempts scholarly synthesis.

Stockton begins weaving these threads together in the book's first section by analysing Christ's sex in two of Shakespeare's early comedies. In *The Comedy of Errors*, Shakespeare figures Antipholous of Ephesus and Emilia—male and female neighbours—not as threats to the institution of Christian marriage but as included members. Through Christ-like Emilia, the play stages the unsettling remainders of Protestantism's masculine versions of Pauline universalism: Catholicism and