

Raffield's simultaneously micro and macro levels of analysis. Overall, the discussions are worth the work required of the reader, and the extended treatment of the legal cases, and especially Sir Edward Coke's writings, are valuable.

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Common: The Development of Literary Culture in Sixteenth-Century England.
Neil Rhodes.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. xiv + 346 pp. \$74.

One of my colleagues once suggested that we rename the field in which we work “the long seventeenth century.” Her rationale was that most people who study early modern English literature tend to focus almost exclusively on the period from Sidney to Milton and only turn to the early sixteenth century for intellectual and historical background to the late Elizabethan era and beyond. In *Common: The Development of Literary Culture in Sixteenth-Century England*, Neil Rhodes importantly reveals what gets lost in such an approach to the period. His ambitious goal is to connect the English Reformation of the early sixteenth century to the belated literary Renaissance at the century's end. The “common,” broadly conceived, is the common theme that unites the threads of his book as well as, he argues, the sixteenth century in England.

Common is divided into three sections, although really it is structured as two halves (composed of three chapters each) on, respectively, the early and late parts of the sixteenth century, in between which is a one-chapter section on translation that connects the Reformation and the Renaissance, and so the two main portions of the book, like the corpus callosum that links the two hemispheres of the brain. Part 1 examines tensions between the project of humanism and the radical upheavals of the Reformation. Here Rhodes provides an overview of changing conceptions of the “common” and the “commonwealth” in England, examines (in a surprising twist) the complex role that the Greek language played as a signifier of the common and the pure in humanist and Reformation discourse, and traces the early emergence of a literary culture in England. Part 2 focuses on the place of translation in the middle decades of the century—that strange, often overlooked transitional period between the vivid Henrician and Elizabethan eras. And in part 3, Rhodes turns his attention to the literary culture of the late sixteenth century, with brilliant chapters on Reformed verse, the Italianate short story, or novella, and the public theater.

No such summary can do justice to the ambitious, encyclopedic scope of Rhodes's erudite study. *Common* brings together topics, texts, and authors often discussed independently of each other, constructing a vast assemblage that produces not only countless local insights but also a coherent general picture of the sixteenth century. Observing that

the word *common* designates two axes—a “horizontal” one that “presents the common as universal,” as the shared property of all, and a “vertical” one that designates “what is low or base within a social hierarchy” and therefore reinforces social divisions (7)—Rhodes raises fascinating questions about the interplay between the elite and the popular and the exclusions that accompany the construction of a common literary culture. (He importantly points out, for example, that the first citations in the *OED* for the word *literature* establish it “as a category that excludes women and the common people” [75].)

If I have one quarrel with Rhodes’s work here, though, it is that *Common* declines the opportunity to put its important observations into conversation with current debates in the humanities beyond the field of early modern studies. In the past decade or so, since at least the publication of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s *Commonwealth* (2009), scholars working largely in political philosophy and economics (but also in literary and cultural theory) have revitalized the notion of the commons at a moment when the privatization amplified by neoliberalism continues an unrelenting assault on the notion of common property. Clearly our late capitalist moment, marked by increasing precarity and division of wealth, as well as the appropriation of populist energies for elitist, even tyrannical, state power, is but the latest chapter in an ongoing narrative that begins (in part) with the period Rhodes recounts. Perhaps it is asking too much of a scholar of the sixteenth century to engage with this body of work and concerns. But it is a shame that Rhodes, like so many working in early modern studies, makes the antiquarian gesture of quarantining the period from more contemporary issues. Despite these limitations, though, Rhodes’s study is smart, ambitious, and essential. It will undoubtedly reshape, for years to come, our conception of the sixteenth century in England.

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Elizabethan Publishing and the Makings of Literary Culture. Kirk Melnikoff. Studies in Book and Print Culture. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018. xiv + 292 pp. \$70.

Upon being introduced to Kirk Melnikoff’s *Elizabethan Publishing and the Makings of Literary Culture*, one is immediately taken with the presentation of the book itself: both dust jacket and title are attractively displayed, the typeface positioned clearly on pages of agreeable weight, the binding firm yet flexible within the hand. Such an aesthetically pleasing book not only attests to its performance as a publication (albeit a modern one), but also speaks to the early modern practices it embodies and explores—the literary, cultural, and artistic significance of bookselling publishers, men and women of the middling sort whose endeavors, especially during the latter half of the