

and political elasticity that were essential magisterial virtues; Donne's *Satyres* and (at least) four Shakespearean comedies (*The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *Measure for Measure*) represent the cultural anxiety over the application of statute laws (which were seen as "snaring" subjects) and interrogate the often satirized Elizabethan pardon designed to absolve the ensnared; *Measure for Measure's* irresolutions (especially those regarding the Duke and Elbow) invoke both the cyclical itinerancy of the assizes and their reliance on character as part of adjudication; and *The Winter's Tale's* exploitation of the culturally widespread figure of the oracle of the law, especially in Paulina and Camillo, counters the Crown's efforts to extend sovereign power.

This is an erudite study and a significant contribution to our understanding of the often submerged ways law and literature have always spoken to and about each other. English Renaissance scholars in particular will appreciate the comprehensiveness of Strain's argument. In it, and in a particularly timely perception, the law emerges as a variable thing in need of sustained reformation not so much to produce new, socially progressive regulations as to prevent it from deteriorating into the desires of one man or group of men. It is constantly being monitored and reformed by legal theorists (Francis Bacon is a prominent figure here). But, as Strain also makes evident, it is at the same time constantly being restored and rebuilt in the work of literary magistrates and aesthetic reformers.

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The Art of Law in Shakespeare. Paul Raffield.
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The Art of Law in Shakespeare focuses on the mutual development of imagery, language, and tropes used in the early modern English drama and in the common law, primarily during the reign of King James I. The book uses law—in its rhetorical formation and written explorations—and drama as mutually influencing, and so each chapter examines a key topic that has relevance to both an area of common law (often a specific case, event, or legal writing is discussed) and a Shakespeare play (*Love's Labour's Lost*, *Macbeth*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest*). Rather than only zero in on the explicitly legal moments in a play—like trials, prison scenes, or portrayals of individual lawyers—Raffield's approach is often more global, which sets this book apart from previous scholarship. The book highlights the writings of Elizabethan and Jacobean legal thinkers—most notably Sir John Fortescue, Sir John Davies, and Sir Edward Coke—and brings in a range of diverse legal treatises, individual judgments, parliamentary decisions, and other forms of common law's expansive language. The

wide net that Raffield casts—he also includes poetry, non-Shakespearean dramas, satires, James I’s writings, Elizabethan portraiture, travel narratives, and political texts in his analysis—is one of the book’s strengths, although at times the reader also may wish for more explicit connections between the sections of each chapter.

The multi-part approach is well evidenced in the first chapter, which is also the only one with an Elizabethan focus. It explores how education in common law drew on technical approaches in rhetoric manuals, developed its own specialized languages and forms, and invited satire in that self-production (as in John Marston’s *Histrion-Mastix*). The chapter then zeroes in on Sir John Davies’s satiric epigrams and the poetical *Nosce Teipsum* to examine a lawyer working in a literary way and his targeting of “legal technocrats” (43). Finally, the chapter builds to a discussion of Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, in which Raffield highlights the play’s simultaneous reliance on, and satire of, formal processes of law and technical rhetoric. The analysis rewards the reader when it comes full circle to compare the cloistered world of academe in the play and the Inns of Court, and to deliver a final questioning of legal rhetoric as merely empty tricks.

The following chapters are Jacobean focused, but they offer a similar multi-part approach. Raffield’s knowledge and facility with legal matters—whether individual cases, treatises, reports, or accounts of the Inns—stands out in this book, with compelling and detailed analyses of the rhetorical, artistic, legal, and philosophical elements at work in his examples. One of the most interesting and interconnected discussions in the book presses on the relationship between natural law and common law, and examines a corollary body of natural images, ideas, and concepts in drama. This approach leads to an especially insightful take on *The Winter’s Tale*, which Raffield notes has an explicit trial scene but that far more subtly intertwines the language of natural law and horticulture in its larger story. The chapter compares how legal theorists and jurists like Fortescue and Coke cultivated antique philosophy, natural law, and common law together in their writing as they linked law’s search for truth, the affirmation of God’s law, and the assertion of legal ethics. Raffield especially calls on Coke’s writing in the case of *Sharlington v. Strotton* (about inheritance and generations), and then moves to more general deliberations on the language of grafting and nature. In the process, he brings in Fortescue’s *De Laudibus Legum Angliae* and Puttenham’s *Art of Poesie*. The chapter is especially interesting and well connected, although its final section on portraiture feels somewhat attenuated.

Raffield’s other chapters likewise look at Jacobean plays—*Macbeth*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest*—as they draw on major legal themes: treason, trial, and sovereignty; defining nationhood and the constructed image of Britain and of empire; and colonialization, oppression, and civic rebellion in the New World. These chapters (and the book in general) provide interesting takes on Shakespeare, although the analysis of legal texts and other matter often outshines the more familiar material. The final chapter especially illustrates the expansiveness of the book and its erudition, as well as the difficulty of

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.

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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