A strength of this volume is the lens of community, a topic that has received a good deal of attention in recent years among early modern historians. This works well in tandem with Law’s focus on adaption and negotiation. Communities, she writes, are both real and imagined and they experience forces that shape them from both within and without. Cambridge, then, was simultaneously one community (as the university) and a gathering of multiple communities (the colleges). And even then, communities could expand beyond geography and involve imagined religious identities like “the Godly” or Catholics. She highlights, too, how the university, with a revolving door of students and fellows, was always in flux, how it was youthful and all male, and how its culture encouraged not only argumentation but argumentativeness. Further, Law tells us how the boundaries of these communities were porous, both among the colleges and between the university and the drivers of national concern. People both within the university and without would implore the chancellor, a nonresidential political figure at court, to intervene when things were not to their liking. Likewise, outside authorities might initiate visitations, as in 1559. The results of such interventions were never straightforward. The communities that welcomed the appointment of Martin Bucer in Edwardian Cambridge likewise exhumed his corpse and burned it during the reign of Mary. Andrew Perne of Peterhouse, who famously preached at the burning, was later a faithful conformist in the reign of Elizabeth, although he was often suspected of crypto-Catholicism by colleagues.

Law shows us a Cambridge in which many also simply “lived through” religious change, arguing that the loudest voices ought not to monopolize our attention. Likewise, we should not be surprised that certain colleges, even at Cambridge, had links to Catholic seminary priests or that many within the university through the reign of Elizabeth found ways to live out a quiet non-conformity. While there were clear signs of Puritanism such as the mass refusal of the fellows of St. John’s to wear the surplice and Walter Mildmay’s foundation of Emmanuel with Laurence Chadderton as the first master, Cambridge also witnessed the attack on Calvinism in the famous sermon of William Barrett in 1595. Law argues that Barrett’s sermon was not an aberration but rather underlines that religious conservatism, even Catholicism, within Cambridge has been underestimated. Law’s work is a welcome entry in the historiography of the English reformation, a solid addition to studies of the way communities engaged religious change in the sixteenth century, and it certainly expands the history of Cambridge more broadly.

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The subject of addiction is a fertile field of philosophical debate because of the problems it poses to ordinary notions of volition and responsibility. A largely unquestioned consensus prevails, however, regarding the concept’s history, as Rebecca Lemon points out in her erudite and engaging new book. According to the standard picture, the modern concept of addiction as a disease characterized by the submergence of the addict’s capacity for choice did not exist until just before 1800, when it was simultaneously invented by Thomas Trotter in Britain and Benjamin Rush in the United States. Before that time, the discourse on habitual drinking was
purely moralistic, which is to say it presupposed the intactness of the drinker’s agential freedom. The alternative, medicalizing account of the addict’s loss of self-control, the story goes, is a product of high modernity, linked intimately with Enlightenment science, Romantic ideas of literary creativity, and the politics of Victorian social reform.

Lemon shows elegantly that this story is not exactly true. Compulsive drinking was a major preoccupation of Elizabethan and Jacobean writers who deployed a concept of addictive disease facially difficult to distinguish from that of Trotter and Rush. Yet these were not physicians but religious thinkers, whose use of addiction reflects its semantic and substantive linkage to a particular theological context. Addicere (to addict) in Roman law denoted an act of pledging or binding over, with the implication of one’s being placed under the authority or at the disposal of another. John Calvin in his Latin writings uses the word pervasively, in two quite distinct senses. Endemic to our fallen nature is our being subjected or addicted to worldliness; yet addictive captivation of the will also characterizes the tenacious constancy of the believer sustained by God’s grace. For the English Calvinists who adopted the term, it thus came to indicate the laudable capacity for devotional attachment that might be hijacked by the material forms of Catholic ritual or, alternatively, by such comparably potent seductions as dicing and drink, tobacco and plays.

The early modern understanding of addiction differed from its modern counterpart, in other words, not by lacking a clear concept of the addict’s diminished self-possession, but rather by placing it within a wider field of similar modes of subjective dissolution, some of which might prove ethically and spiritually valuable, even heroic. Lemon’s aim is to describe this largely vanished space of moral imagination, and in so doing she relies for most of the book—one of five chapters—on readings of Marlowe’s and Shakespeare’s plays. This is a notable narrowing of focus for an argument that had been framed on a rather broader scale. What Addiction and Devotion in Early Modern England thereby loses in interpretive scope, however, it gains in tightness of conception. Lemon offers an impressively coherent account of Doctor Faustus, Twelfth Night, 1 and 2 Henry IV, and Othello and their depiction of relationships that are addictive in the sense of pivoting on a willed alienation of the will, a delivering of oneself to another that at once preempts subsequent choice and establishes commitment to one’s initial act of devotion as an ongoing mode of ethical being.

Hence Lemon sees in Faustus’s notoriously one-sided bargain with Mephistophilis not as an unaccountable misstep so much as an embodiment of his desire to be “ravished” (43) by an external entity into which his discrete identity might altogether dissolve. In Twelfth Night this kind of “self-shattering” (xiv, 57, 58, and 136, using Leo Bersani’s term) is presented as the condition of love in its most exalted form, which the play identifies with the suspension of every determinate feature of individual personality. Othello and the Henry IV plays in turn dramatize the ambivalence of such relations by staging an “addictive” character’s ultimately destructive devotion to another whose atomistic selfhood places him at the opposite pole (#). Falstaff’s alcoholism extends and compensates for an intimacy frustrated by Hal’s remorselessly instrumentalist view of human relationships, while Iago’s playing upon Cassio’s weakness for drink prefigures his more far-reaching manipulation of Othello’s addictive “capacity,” his ability to sustain the type of freely willed subjection radiantly realized in his marriage to Desdemona.

Lemon’s final chapter considers health drinking, a social ritual that emerged as an object of condemnation in the 1580s but came to be championed from the 1630s on by royalist poets such as Robert Herrick. Health drinking exemplified with unusual literalness the sense in which addiction could mean a kind of interpersonal compulsion insofar as its basic feature was the obligation to drink by turns to the health of each participant; attempting to withdraw prematurely was treated as a gravely insulting breach of solidarity. Likewise the ritual exemplified the way such features of addictive relationality could give rise to diametrically opposed moral evaluations. What appeared from one angle to Puritan reformers as a pathological loss of rational control could be revalued by their opponents as an expression of loyalty, generosity, and collective freedom.
Lemon’s basic analytical move is thus to show how early modern discussions of addictive behavior were embedded in a wider context of concern for the boundaries of selfhood and the nature of intersubjective attachment. This approach has its limitations. Lemon’s tendency to treat drinking essentially as a metaphor for some more abstract set of ethical dispositions at times lends a curiously sanitized quality to her readings, as in a discussion of Falstaff’s praise of sack that labors earnestly to cast it as a speech about the value of devoting oneself to others. A tension runs throughout the book between Lemon’s aspiration to recover the history of the phenomenon we call addiction and the desire to exploit the fact that the word *addiction* was once used to mean many other things as a point of departure for exploring themes for which that phenomenon serves merely as a notional model. Yet ultimately Lemon’s study does valuable work at both levels. It offers at once a compelling historiographic provocation and an appealing framework for understanding the strange ethical magnetism exerted by some of the most extravagant creations of the Renaissance stage.

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With *Poor Relief and the Church in Scotland*, John McCallum has produced one of the most important books on the social history of early modern Scotland in the last twenty years. This is an essential piece of research for historians of poor relief and religious reform in Scotland and Europe. Since Margo Todd’s seminal work, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (2002), on the impact of the Reformation on popular culture and the daily lives of ordinary people, much work has been done to widen our understanding of the ways in which the church altered governance and religious observance in the localities after 1560, including McCallum’s first book, *Reforming the Scottish Parish: The Reformation in Fife, 1560–1640* (2010). However, the provision of poor relief—a common way through which ordinary people engaged with the church—has received almost no attention. McCallum clearly lays out the purpose and importance of this work in the introduction: not only has there been very little research on poor relief during this period, but understanding the ideas and mechanisms of welfare provides a vital insight into the process of religious and social reform in Scotland. One of the biggest strengths of this work is the way in which McCallum integrates the purpose and findings with European historiography, showing that it is part of a wider discussion over the previously accepted backward nature of ecclesiastical systems of poor relief. McCallum contributes to this discussion by showing with exceptional clarity that the Scottish system was wide-ranging and effective. He challenges the negative assumptions made by the few Scottish historians who have considered the provision of poor relief, particularly Rosalind Mitchison, and instead highlights the lengths to which the kirk sessions went to ensure effective provision was made for those who fell on hard times due to ill health, poverty, disability, or a range of other issues. McCallum qualifies this by stressing that the Reformation in Scotland was not a clean break from the past and that poor relief was administered before 1560. The Scottish reformers did not create poor relief out of the blue, but rather improved its provision through utilizing the role of the kirk sessions.