


contexts, despite their admittedly similar island experiences, therefore remain at the margins of the volume. Only a few exceptions, such as Stephen Royle's chapter, explore these structural similarities. Despite the stated intention of the introduction, moreover, the agency of the Indigenous and the related question of how the imperial experience shaped the islands (rather than vice versa) is somewhat less explored throughout the book than the more familiar focus on the experiences of the colonialists, with Sujit Sivasundaram's chapter the most prominent exception.

The chapters are written to the highest standard and each provides a comprehensive introduction to a geographical scene, its island formations, and their importance to and within the imperial context. Not all authors follow a strictly geographic structure: some, such as Michael J. Jarvis, adopt a chronological approach, and others, such as Sarah Longair, favor a thematic approach. This flexibility in style reflects the overall approach—even though a common set of questions is always visible, each author works from their own perspective. A naval historical perspective, in many ways seemingly at the origin of the volume and, for instance, employed by James Davey in his chapter on the Mediterranean, thus makes way for a perspective from the history of science as in Alison Bashford's study of Oceania. Many authors in fact employ different perspectives and thus successfully multiply the scholarly perspectives on any given setting of islands. In doing so, they also apply different conceptual frameworks, most of which have become popular in maritime history over the past two decades, such as Sivasundaram's idea of "islanding" (137) or Bashford's terminology of "terraqueous histories" (157). Given this variety, each chapter is more than an introduction to a common theme or to a respective geographic setting, providing, in their sum, a comprehensive set of examples of the importance of islands within and to imperial endeavors of the early modern period.

Overall, one cannot help but notice that the admirable variety of themes is, to some extent, unbalanced. From the introduction forward, there is a slight proclivity toward the practical, logistic, and strategic demands of empire to the disadvantage of otherwise well-explored cultural themes hinging on the "metaphorical power" of "island imaginaries" (1). It is noteworthy in this respect, moreover, that despite Hamilton and McAleer's awareness of the particular role of islands in the context of Britain's "island identity" (7) and the related origins of imperial aspirations, there is no one chapter where this connection is explored in any depth. Nor are the islands closer to home—that is, in the British archipelago—and their presumable role in the imperial project given much room in this story. Such quibbles, however, should not distract from the merits of a book that comprehensively connects island studies with the maritime and naval history of the British Empire, ultimately providing an invaluable reference for any historian interested in these intersections.

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HEATHER JAMES. *Ovid and the Liberty of Speech in Shakespeare's England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. 287. \$99.99 (cloth).  
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Too long have critics considered the inventiveness of English poetry within the framework of a draconian culture of censorship. In *Ovid and the Liberty of Speech in Shakespeare's England*, Heather James makes a strong case for reading Ovid's erotic elegies, *Amores*, as moral and political, "a galvanizing force" (1), and "a kernel of Republican values" (185). Her argument, supported by a central critical concept—bold, open, frank speech (*parrhesia* in Greek, *licentia* in Latin)—traces elegiac Ovidianism in Renaissance poetry. She convincingly articulates Ovid's

*licentia* (seen as morally reprehensible by Puritans) with Renaissance poets' plea for moral liberty (or *licentia*), showing how the ways in which Ovid tested the shifting definitions of *licentia* are constantly replayed in the Renaissance. James also explores links between *parrhesia* and *poetic license*, an ambiguous term that at first was concerned with Horatian norms and poetic decorum and eventually became defined as a form of voluntary self-censorship (147–52).

Ovidian intertextuality is conducive to *parrhesia*: in his erotic elegies, Ovid notoriously illustrates the witty use of *indecorum*. When politically banished to Tomis, near the Black Sea, he repeatedly gave mythological victims and dissidents a voice when they were reduced to silence by brutal coercion or arbitrary rules. His political exile—perhaps caused by Augustus's wrath after his affair with Julia—serves to redefine the notion of openness when opposed to censorship: the text is not explicit (*palam*), but it is open (*aperte*) to interpretation, allowing readers to search for meaning, even if veiled in allegory. James describes Renaissance “poetry as a *forum* in which the boldness (if not the openness) of speech may survive and flourish even in forbidding times” (1). She defends the engagement of literary creation as a *parrhesiastic* creative gesture, not (necessarily) linked to topical reading but to political philosophy. Over five chapters, James explores how poetry is “a new space for thinking about the liberty of speech in the domain of fiction” (5), offering moments of Ovidian *enargia* that form bold lines of ruptures.

In chapter 1, “Flower Power: Political Discontent in Spenser's Flowerbeds,” James plays on Edmund Spenser's poetic *copia*, often dismissed as sycophantic, here amusingly paired with Allen Ginsberg's flower power. Broadening Syrithe Pugh's approach about *Fasti* (*Spenser and Ovid* [2005], 12–41), James adds other material, like *Virgils Gnat* (a translation of a juvenile poem by Vergil treated as an Ovidian complaint) to read across the Spenserian canon for unexpected discoveries on well-trodden grounds. For example, she concludes that the encomiastic instrumentality of *The Aprill Eclogue* needs to be set aside to consider “Spenser's narcissism” (23) in “a deictic moment of threshold” (34). Spenser's floral creativity weaves a dialectic between silence and eloquence, inciting the reader “to get lost in the act of reading” (38), transforming loss of *parrhesia* into the reader's silent act of interpretation.

In chapter 2, “Loving Ovid: Marlowe and the Liberty of Erotic Elegy,” James picks up where M. L. Stapleton leaves off in *Marlowe's Ovid* (2014). Christopher Marlowe's philosophical reception of Ovid as a translator, using Niger's Latin glosses (1543–1550), illuminates how *All Ovids Elegies* (1595), in the light of Ovid's *Tristia* 2, offers game playing as a structuring metaphor, demonstrating the productive function of aesthetic *indecorum*, an example of what Michel Foucault identifies as *parrhesiastic* games. Ovid's erotic elegies, his “wanton toys” (3.15.4), use poetic license as weapons for readers to use in their ideological battles—*militat omnis amant* (“all lovers war,” 1.9.1) and the elegies become a “training ground in the relationship of citizens, subjects with rules, norms and orthodoxies” (60) throughout Marlowe's canon. In chapter 3, “Shakespeare's Juliet: The Ovidian Girlhood of the Boy Actor,” James intriguingly poses Juliet as heir to the *docta puella* in Roman elegies. If the *licentia* of her speech may reflect a disposition to amorous licentiousness (according to Quintilian), it can also argue for her overturning of “traditions governing the language of love, family and social relations” (104). When Juliet, a transgressing daughter, challenges fatherly authority at her window and in the Capulet's vault, she momentarily “shakes loose some of the mortar holding together the order of patriarchal rule” (129). Thus, Shakespeare's expansion of Juliet's part in 3.2 (in Quarto 2) achieves the same type of bold resistance to the infamous 1599 Bishops' Ban against Ovidian poetry as does Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* (1601) when he scripts Marlowe's translation of *Amores* 1 to be read onstage by Ovid in an early scene of his vitriolic comedy. James presents a second-generation Augustan poet in chapter 4, “In Pursuit of Change: The *Metamorphoses* in *Midsummer Night's Dream*,” and associates “the pursuit of change” with Ovidian iconoclastic practice meant to free theatrical energies. In chapter 5, “The Trial of Ovid: Jonson's Defense of Poetic Liberty,” James points out how Ovid was sidelined in Jonson's contemporary criticism even as Jonson styled himself an

Ovidian. James precisely foregrounds how “political critique takes place in forms of speech that reveal and partly conceal their audacity through . . . encryption” (204) in *Poetaster* by unpacking Jonson’s wealth of allusions to the Roman poet, using marginal and interlineal notes in his copy of Martial’s epigrams [1619, ed. Peter Schrijver]—placing him on the side of Joseph Justus Scaliger’s defense of Ovid in *Confutatio Fabulae Burdonum* (1608). The strategic use of quotation marks for gnomic sentences in *Poetaster*’s successive editions (Quarto 2, 1602 and Folio 1, 1616) contextualizes the use of Marlowe’s prohibited translation of Ovid’s *Amores* 1.15, pointing to it as “a maxim that reflects on the fate of Ovid, Marlowe and their censored words” (216). These sentences “shuttle between the past and present in a conscientious effort to arrive at truth” (218), suggesting how Jonson uses Ovid’s denunciation of imperial trespass on the Roman private space for more contemporary condemnations.

In an epilogue, “Ovid in the Hands of Women,” James explores Milton’s bolder speaker on the liberties, Eve in *Paradise Lost* (1667–1672), and, arrestingly, Anne Wharton’s Julia in the unpublished *Love’s Martyr; or Witt above Crowns*. Wharton stages Ovid’s banishment from Julia’s viewpoint, dramatizing the lovers’ impossible love; Ovid’s numerous asides unveil how he only acts as a libertine to shield his love from the jealousies at court. Ultimately, before suicide, Julia claims “my soul . . . will reign in Ovids breast”; such echo to Ovid’s closing formula in *Metamorphoses* about his “better part” being remembered by readers shows that Wharton fulfills what mattered to Ovid: the ability for readers to look to the past for “the energy of its liberating, unchained forms” (4), despite repeated moments of self-silencing. I strongly recommend James’s deeply literary contribution to reading Ovid’s classical parrhesiastic games.

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WARREN JOHNSTON. *National Thanksgivings and Ideas of Britain, 1689–1816*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2020. Pp. 413. \$130.00 (cloth).  
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Warren Johnston’s *National Thanksgivings and Ideas of Britain, 1689–1816* is a case study of the negotiations of faith and national identity in eighteenth-century Britain through thanksgiving sermons. Johnston also provides an assessment of the interaction between personal belief and communal religious identity by way of sermons. Britishness, he argues, was tailored, crafted, and publicized by these thanksgiving sermons, for Anglicanism was strongly tied to the British identity that was promoted in these sermons. Through these sermons, Anglican preachers justified a belief that Britain was a nation chosen by God. The political nature of these sermons also is a testimony to the church’s relationship with the political establishment in eighteenth-century Britain.

As Johnston argues, “Thanksgiving days were meant to tie the country together as a community in celebration and gratitude” (116). In order to emphasize national unity, preachers used the argument of religious unity, which testifies to the entanglement of political, religious, and social identities in eighteenth-century Britain. The sermons were also sometimes used as vehicles for expressing discontent with political authority—critiques of the monarchy, for example (not necessarily directed against the person of the monarch but against government ministers). However, disunity was also seen as a dangerous thing. Preachers were acutely aware of the political battle lines in the eighteenth century, and this awareness came across in the sermons as a critique of political division, especially that of Whig and Tory.

As an integral part of creating and disseminating a united British identity, thanksgiving sermons drew upon wars, victories, and heroes. The human cost of war was also sometimes