

Ireland, the United States and the Second World War draws on a wide range of official and personal papers held in collections in Belfast, London, and the United States. Topping's frequent reference to newspapers from the war years pays dividends, showing, for example, that the supposedly secret arrival of US technicians to work on construction of a naval base in Derry in the summer of 1941—months prior to the American entry into the war—was widely reported in the local press at the time. This book comes highly recommended not just for readers interested in the pre-Troubles social history of Northern Ireland but for all scholars and students concerned with the ever-evolving triangular political, diplomatic, social, and cultural relations between Britain, Ireland, and the United States.

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MARCUS WAITHE. *The Work of Words: Literature, Craft, and the Labour of Mind in Britain, 1830–1940*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023. Pp. 320. \$120.00 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2023.229

Intersections between philosophy, critical theory, and literature have been well established since scholarship in that field rose to prominence in the mid to late twentieth century. These intersections have provided new ways to think about many intersections when it comes to the very definition of a text and how such definitions inform our understanding of society.

Furthermore, traditionally in British society and beyond, the “gospel of work” (11) has demanded individuals to consider the predominantly masculinist physical labor when it comes to what is valued the most. To that end, Waithe invokes semantic differentiation between notions of “work” and “labor” as they had been deployed in both philosophy and literature, beginning in the early nineteenth century. Waithe's interdisciplinary conceptual analysis provides a thorough and pragmatic study of such intersections and should provide a worthy infrastructure for further scholarship in the field.

As indicated in his title, Waithe explores intersection among literature, craft, and labor in a deeply scholarly work by relying on his primary methodology: “an emphasis on craftsmanship opens a rich vein of speculation that situates occupational self-description amid aesthetic, theological, political, and philosophical issues that extend well beyond the criterion of ‘hard work’” (5). By expanding our understandings of literature, art, and the notion of an expanding elucidation on the idea of the text itself through definitions of work, Waithe invokes a methodology when it comes to rhetorical theory as delineated in Mark Wiley's *Composition on Four Keys: Inquiring Into the Field* (1995), where the authors explore rhetoric and composition through the lenses of nature, art, science, and politics.

The consistent theme of Waithe's *The Work of Words* relies on the intersectionality between societal values ranging from everyday life, political realities, and theological impositions all the way to how writers and artists of all types not only construct their work but how they have reflected on it as well. Waithe, reflective at times while still returning to his rigorous scholarship, frequently reminds us of his expansive definitions of “work” that range from the value of everyday objects such as embroidery to traditionally defined craft movements when it comes to both the everyday objects and the artistry of the time.

Divided into three clearly delineated sections, each chapter provides scholarship through various lenses on authors and artists that, while not typically explored, indicates the work of their times. Waithe provides consistent methodology, as indicated in the first section, giving us a detailed exploration of an author's work in all genres (e.g., Thomas Carlyle's essays) to

the intersections of the art and work of the times. One of the consistent techniques Waithe employs is moving freely between one author and artist or worker of the time to another, often without returning to the primary thesis, which may prove frustrating to the reader.

The second section moves us through the Victorian period with a detailed discussion of the poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and the symbiotic reflections her work may have had on the various theorists of the time. Again, the notion of work informs Waithe's exploration and how various contemporary critical theorists can similarly inform readers on how those intersections emerge.

Perhaps the least detailed exploration Waithe engages in is that of the modernists in his third section. While he freely admits in his introduction that he wished to reveal "paths" that are "well-worn or might better be handled in a dedicated study," his investigation of modernist literature and contemporaneous modernist theories of work and labor appear to be lacking. Given the depth of modernist authors whose ideas remind us work, specifically those surrounding manual labor, Waithe seems to focus primarily on Ezra Pound, who, while certainly apt, provides rather a limited lens when it comes to the potential of modernism (particularly high modernism) and the emerging philosophies of the time that informed many of the ideologies of the twentieth century.

Despite the numerous references to well-known and well-published authors, there remain some philosophical lines of thinking that might seem to many as in need of more exploration. Given the time period and the critical theorists Waithe invokes, one would have expected a close examination of the influences of both Marx and Engels not only on the writers of the time, but also on the cultural thinking of the times as reflected in the writers and their notion of work. While there are references to these schools of thought along the way, a closer exploration and consideration would have further strengthened Waithe's central theses. Indeed, Marx himself writes of the connections between the mental and physical capabilities of labor in Chapter 6 of *Capital*, and this would provide an apparent opportunity for further exploration.

Overall, Waithe employs no fewer than 1,394 footnoted references in his sweeping survey of philosophy, literary criticism, essays, critical theory, and literature. This evokes a sense of strong scholarship through which to assist the readers to explore the various subjects more closely. As such, his often survey-like quality provides well-defined, basic principles for scholarship for anyone interested in the literatures of the period, including scholars of philosophy, literature, sociology, and history.

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STUART WARD. *Untied Kingdom: A Global History of The End of Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. Pp. ix + 691. \$35.95 (cloth).
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The significance of the connection between the rise of separatism in the United Kingdom and the end of empire has been frequently asserted but not previously properly scrutinized. Stuart Ward's immensely erudite and engaging book more than succeeds in remedying this neglect. In nearly 500 pages of text and a further 200 of notes, acknowledgements, and bibliography, he demonstrates a causal link, drawing on evidence from archives and newspapers across the globe, the most powerful of which comprises individuals' self-reflections on their own Britishness and its shifting purchase. Ward's account is not a simplistic story of "England's 'last