


isolation and unchanging attitudes around working fatherhood. With the arrival of New Labour in 1997, there seemed to be a greater attempt to help parents with childcare, albeit while bolstering the private sector: childcare vouchers were expanded and tax credits were created that enabled working parents to purchase private childcare. Through Tony Blair's equal opportunities policies, discussions shifted away from right-wing "family friendliness" and toward promoting a "work life balance" (155). However, as Stoller argues, this new balance didn't necessarily emphasize working less, but working smart: the gap between work and life was narrowing regardless. That said, by the 1990s, having an equal opportunities policy was a business agenda: retaining staff and promoting loyalty rested on, for example, giving both women and men opportunities to take parental leave.

By the late 1990s, Stoller argues that there was a renewed enthusiasm about working parenthood and the promise of "having it all" (163). The final chapter of the book—undoubtedly the most fascinating of the book—is a study of the rise of working parenthood as a cultural ideal among white middle-class heterosexual families. Focusing on magazine coverage of working parents, Stoller includes stories of parents, in particular mothers, whose ability to balance work and childcare meant they were lauded as "success stories." But the success of these parents is debatable. Stoller draws attention to the fact that by the 1990s working parenthood was a necessity rather than a step toward equality, as parents argued that without a dual income, they wouldn't afford their mortgage. As such, Stoller suggests that working parenting may have led to a more equal division of labour in the household, with men assisting with childcare (which they included as domestic labor). That said, in the 1990s and early 2000s, women still, unsurprisingly, did the lion's share of the housework. What's more, the depoliticization of working parenthood had individualized efforts at balancing work and life. Mothers felt that if they buckled under the pressure they were personally failing at "having it all."

If it wasn't already obvious, *Inventing the Working Parent* tells one side of the complex, heterogeneous, and deeply personal history of parenting in post-war Britain. But Stoller is conscious of this. Job sharing, community childcare, working parenthood—these were issues that occupied, as Stoller stresses, white middle-class Britons, and particularly women. In fact, as Stoller notes, the balance of work and childrearing had always been a necessity for black and working-class mothers in Britain, which begs the question as to whether working parenthood was a really an "invention" during this time, or simply a middle-class rebrand. These questions aside, *Inventing the Working Parent* is a critical history of the development of flexible work as a viable and important goal for mothers and fathers, employees and employers, in late twentieth-century Britain. It is story about how the utopian visions of Euro-American white feminists helped to inspire the flexible working arrangements of tech industries in the Global North today. And finally, as Stoller reminds us, it is an urgent reminder to continue to valorize caregivers and care work.

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SIMON TOPPING. *Northern Ireland, the United States and the Second World War*. London: Bloomsbury, 2022. Pp. 311. \$115.00 (cloth).
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This well-researched and extremely informative book is a useful addition to a growing body of work examining Northern Ireland and the Second World War. Much of Simon Topping's account focuses on the experiences of the American troops who began to arrive in the province

in January 1942, the month after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Successive chapters explore justice and policing, the reaction of nationalists and armed republicans, relations with local women, Jim Crow racism, and the various attempts to revive ancestral ties between Ulster and the United States.

Four waves of US troops totalling 32,000 men were dispatched to Northern Ireland in the first half of 1942. Later in the war greater numbers arrived, as the province was used as a holding area in the run up to D-Day, and by early 1944 120,000 GIs were billeted there, a little under one in ten of the population. Tensions as well as moments of comedy arose from the resulting clash of cultures. Bringing jazz, baseball, and other exotic novelties with them, the visitors challenged some conservative shibboleths, demanding that cinemas open on Sundays. Some were bored by the sleepiness and perceived dreariness of the rural areas in which they were based: one GI quipped that the County Down village of Rostrevor was “swell, but why the hell don’t they bury their dead?” (53). This territory has already been explored by David Reynolds in his magisterial *Rich Relations: The American Occupation of Britain 1942–1945* (1995)—which, despite its title, also addresses Northern Ireland—but in focusing on the province alone Topping’s account goes much further and deeper, skilfully navigating the intersections between local societal and political formations and the military, judicial, and racial hierarchies of the visitors. Topping has published a series of pioneering articles exploring African American soldiers in Northern Ireland during the war, and the chapter on their experiences is particularly impressive and intriguing. As in Britain, segregation was considered a purely American matter: official policy was to welcome African American troops but to limit their contact with local populations, where possible. Drawing on letters, morale reports, and official documents, Topping suggests that the white population in the province was for the most part hospitable to the troops; he concludes that experiencing “some respite from the systemic racism of their homeland” made many “unwilling to accept second-class citizenship quite so readily back in the States” (147).

Despite its scale, it is difficult to argue that the influx had a decisive or lasting impact on Northern Irish society. Topping notes at the outset that the troops “left Northern Ireland’s people changed, but not necessarily transformed, a little less insular and conservative, perhaps, but they triggered no social revolution or lessening of communal animosities” (1). This deflationary concession sets the tone for an account which avoids overblown claims, and indeed features a series of dogs which ultimately fail to bark. The conclusion of a chapter addressing the threat posed by the IRA to US bases and personnel admits that “no recorded attacks or sabotage” (110) actually took place beyond “a couple of stones, some assaults and a few Nazi salutes” (109). An examination of romantic relations between local women and GIs produces a number of striking vignettes, such as a retired missionary leading a group of moral vigilantes patrolling the grounds of Belfast City Hall, “shining torches on canoodling couples” (125) or a group of US soldiers deployed to Armagh’s parks to collect “a harvest of condoms” (126) using spiked sticks. The chapter concludes, however, that “the extent to which the war was transformative for Northern Ireland’s women is debatable” (133).

Topping argues convincingly that the main significance of the presence of the Americans was to solidify the two-decade-old border and Northern Ireland’s status as part of the United Kingdom. Hosting the Americans enabled the Stormont government to project “an image which emphasized its Britishness, its links with the United States and its pivotal wartime role,” thereby entrenching partition and sidelining the nationalist minority, as well as infuriating neutral Eire. But although unionism had a “‘good’ war” (1) in these respects, the book also emphasizes Stormont’s ultimate inability to influence developments dictated by Washington and London.

A series of errors and misprints reflects the ongoing sad decline in standards of academic book publishing, but these do not detract from the thoroughness of this project. Nearly seventy pages of notes testify to Topping’s extensive and diligent archival research: *Northern*

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