Elizabeth Carolyn Miller, *Slow Print: Literary Radicalism and Late Victorian Print Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013). 392 pages. ISBN-10: 0804784086. ISBN-13: 978-0804784085

This fascinating book investigates the ways in which literary radicals between 1880 and 1910 adopted and adapted the material properties of print to counter the frenetic world of nineteenth-century capitalism in the belief that ‘large-scale mass-oriented print was no way to bring about revolutionary social change’ (2). Miller begins with a careful contextualisation of this turn to what she calls ‘slow print’: in the early part of the nineteenth century, she explains, radicals tended to embrace the democratising potential of industrialisation. It was only later, in the 1880s, that radical writers and artists began to introduce readers to the idea that form was intimately collected to politics and that mechanical progress was not always politically progressive. Ch. 1 focusses on William Morris, ‘perhaps the most influential radical writer of the era’ (25). Among this chapter’s most illuminating moments is the claim – amply justified in the evidence – that while the Kelmscott Press unarguably produced expensive goods which were out of the reach of most workers, radical working-class papers nonetheless recognised it as ‘anti-capitalist in spirit’ (57). Ch. 2 focusses on the radical turn against realism in the 1890s through an exploration of Shaw’s jettisoning of the realist novel in favour of the theatre as a potentially more radical public forum, a ‘synecdoche for the public sphere’ (84). Ch. 3 extends this work, examining new theatrical spaces such as The Gaiety (opened in Manchester in 1908) and key dramas for 1880s and 1890s socialists by Shaw, Ibsen and Shelley which, although they set out to attract a more heterogeneous audience than Kelmscott had been able to do, ended up catering to an exclusive élite just the same. Ch.4 turns its attention to poetry. Here, Miller claims, ‘the politics of form appear … as accrued and malleable rather than innate’ (169) as radical poets sought an answer to the question of ‘how to overcome political traditions embedded in linguistic forms’ (173). Ch. 5 examines two of the leading lights of the Theosophical Society as embodied in the work of Annie Besant and Alfred Orage. Besant’s campaigns in both printed and live forums combine the politics of form and social/sexual revolution, simultaneously reflecting ‘the changing nature of self and voice in a new media sphere’ in an era which had seen the invention of the phonograph (238). Orage’s contribution manifests in an intriguing regionality, through which Miller exposes a specifically Northern English response to industrial capitalism. The final chapter examines Besant’s legacy in the move from a broad-based social radicalism to a specifically sexual focus which appeared both in the radical press, and (in a move away from Shaw’s drama-based radicalism) in controversial novels; this, for Miller, is ‘a moment when radical discourse is losing its rhetorical coherence around issues of class’ and fastening to ‘the biopolitical domain of sexuality’ (297) for which, perhaps, the novel form was intrinsically well suited. This book makes an essential contribution to our understanding of the ways in which form and politics intersect in this period. It is a deserving NAVSA winner in the depth and breadth of its scholarship no less than in the masterly way Miller interweaves the various stories, movements and personalities across 30 years of radical history.

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