administration and the more metaphorical form of it that anchors most of his arguments.

That said, *Geopolitics and the Anglophone Novel* is nonetheless an important study, not the least because it raises useful questions about the role of literature in helping us to understand the dramatic process of social transformation in which much of the world finds itself in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The works under examination here do suggest—quite rightly—that we cannot fully understand this process of social transformation without the aid of literature. The Leavisite argument is compelling, finally. Moreover, this book joins an important discussion we are currently having about the role and status of “world literature” in a postcolonial era.

**Daniel Bivona**
*Arizona State University*


It is rare enough that any single new book revises our understanding about how print culture shapes and is shaped by the intellectual and ideological currents of its day. Now along come two books that study different places (Britain and South Africa); disparate personalities (William Morris and Mohandas Gandhi); and divergent left-wing politics (internationalist socialism and Tolstoyan fledgling nationalism). Each proposes, however, what might be called a “slow text” theory. Before there was slow food, there was “slow print” (Elizabeth Carolyn Miller’s account of Morris at *Commonweal* and at Kelmscott Press) and “slow reading” (Isabel Hofmeyr on Gandhi’s printing ventures in South Africa between 1898 and 1914).

As the circulation of words and even (as Lynda Nead has recently shown) images speeded up, significant and influential figures on the left proposed putting the brakes on. It is a wonderfully suggestive way of understanding many transformations of print-mediated public realm between 1890 and World War I, and these two books, each remarkable achievements in their own right, form together a happy and inspiring syzygy. Miller and Hofmeyr offer
slightly different accounts of these industrial slowdowns, but they agree on the main lineaments. Around 1900, left-wing thinkers sought and sometimes found ways to move *within* the speedy world of industrial production, but to develop ways of impeding its rapidity and promoting a distinct kind of reflection. In different ways (as described below), Miller and Hofmeyr each underscore the elective affinity that existed between political and aesthetic radicalism, and offer new ways of thinking about how formal innovation can bespeak or engender new ways of thinking about political possibilities.

Miller’s *Slow Print: Literary Radicalism and Late Victorian Print Culture* explores various ways in which the late-Victorian radical left sought political and aesthetic alternatives to the free flow of (commercialized) information and entertainment that by the end of the century defined the print-mediated liberal public sphere. The radical left was being drowned out by the end of the century not by censorship, but by clamor. In a sense, then, radicalism’s worst enemy was the press’s untrammeled freedom to print whatever it thought the public would buy.

This is a surprising observation and at first glance even an ironic one, given the strong association between British radicalism and the campaign for “print enlightenment” earlier in the nineteenth century. Miller’s key question, however, is what happens once the British left’s enemy is no longer the controlling state. Instead, just as John Stuart Mill had warned in *On Liberty*, by the 1870s the coercive force of “Society” as a preserver of the status quo had grown to surpass that of the state. Socialist, anarchists, communists, and other opponents of class-divided liberal polity faced a promiscuous, market-driven publication model that did not silence political dissent, but simply drowned it out in a raucous and commercially motivated chorus. Like Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge (in their monumental *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* [Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1993]), Miller in the first half of *Slow Print* is interested in exploring the alternative “anti-public” realms within which a more emancipatory sort of writing can circulate.

Miller explores the bitter realization, among radical and socialists, that the “free press and free print” maxims of the earlier radical age had little relevance in a society where not the state but the commercial organs of publication exercised dominance over the circulation of ideas and of art. Even the Chartists came to realize that they lived in an age when “speed was all” (p. 53), and were unable to find a way to transmute their “free print” radicalism into winning moves in the literary marketplace: witness their long unhappy involvement with
the mid-century popular press and the turn that Chartist writing took toward apolitical melodrama in the 1850s.

So, faced with that kind of exclusion by profusion, what were radicals to do? Morris’s poignant description of the “desolate freedom” that *Commonweal* had found outside the realm of widely circulating periodicals suggests the set of left-wing innovations that Miller sets out to explore: forms that avoided “selling out” partly by avoiding successful selling altogether. As previous scholars have noted, this critique of mass media readily lent itself to elitist snobbery: the Fabian disdain for working-class culture and its mandarin implications are clear. Without simply being a tub-thumper for every socialist thinker, however, Miller mounts an able defense of the very Ruskin-inflected line of thought that made thinkers like George Bernard Shaw, William Morris, and various socialist periodical publishers attempt to carve out a distinct realm where a progressive ethos might flourish, a little space apart.

The title *Slow Print* brilliantly showcases Miller’s analysis of three modes that developed on the left to counter this: alternative periodical culture, artisanal book production, and theatrical/textual innovation (the former two exemplified by William Morris in various stages of his career, the last by Shaw). On the analogy with the “slow food movement,” “slow print” implies that print can somehow claim an alternative region from which it offers a new way of looking at the world (a rival realism, perhaps, a utopian vision or even a naturalist satire on bourgeois complacency about current economic modes). The book’s first half accordingly details a genealogy of the ways in which such conscious resistance evolve: not only the conscious archaism and slowed-down artisanal production of Kelmscott Press, but also, in the 1870s and 1880s, by the creation of a hived-off radical “anti public” that shared socialist magazines like *Commonweal*, or summoned into being by the early socialist novels of Shaw (first serialized in other socialist magazines).

Miller charts ways in which socialists or other radicals forged print alternatives by conjuring up utopias (Morris’s *John Ball* and *News from Nowhere*); by newspapers that strove to present their print instantiations as mere traces of an originary orality that united the people in ways that London journals never could; by novels that reached for innovative political aims and hence renounced normative bourgeois modes of sympathy generation (hence chapter 2 interestingly attempts to rescue Shaw’s early socialist novels from obscurity). Among the new ways of bringing the left print culture of the day to light, Miller discerns evolving forms of political propaganda that can seem
strangely contemporary; socialist magazines that make a point, for example, by “juxtaposing] a starving girl against the backdrop of government ministers toasting champagne” (p. 199). There is more than a hint of Sergei Eisenstein’s montage theory in the radical print strategies that Miller describes: Battleship Potemkin’s flickering pictures of rotting meat and rich officers are not all that far away.

Miller’s book begins with Morris’s experiments, bringing his socialist newspaper Commonweal (often pegged as interested in politics to the exclusion of aesthetics, and hence indifferent to matters of form and publication) together with the Kelmscott Press books (so often dismissed as only aesthetically minded, hence implicitly politically quietist). Partially by tracing the impact that Kelmscott had on later writers—Shaw certainly, but also a range of socialist newspapers that altered their typography and layout in tribute to Kelmscott experiments—Miller tracks disparate efforts to generate a new kind of what might be called semi-closed readership. This semi-closed readership was open to those who were willing to commit time and energy—though not money; Commonweal sold for a penny—so as to enter into a living community that is understood as linked by the printed word, but not constituted by it. Hence traces of orality, Miller suggests, were crucial for Commonweal and Kelmscott alike.

Finally, toward the very end of the century, stepping into the space that Henrik Ibsen had opened up, there is radical drama. Miller links together in compelling detail the revival of Percy Bysshe Shelley (a celebrated “private staging of the Cenci” in 1886 is a crucial moment for her) and the rise of Shavian political drama, which reflects on and draws attention to the fact that government regulations held that the living word of a play actually performed were considerably more dangerous than its mere circulation in print.

In fact, Shaw himself aimed to do for theater what Morris had done for the printed book with the Kelmscott Press—a truly fascinating link that speaks volumes about how the radicals of the fin de siècle understood that narrowcast publication/promulgation of artworks might have the power to change minds that would be unaltered by simple exposure to words adrift within a chockablock print realm that offered not so much enlightenment as pure print tumult. If Kelmscott or Shaw’s blue book theater could offer only a weakly audible signal, that might nonetheless be preferable to entering into popular media that offered, in Kittler’s terms, noise without any discernible signal.

The second half of Miller’s book tacks to explore three situations in which the left’s association with “print enlightenment” is tested in more disparate ways: schematically, by “free-love,” by the challenge of
developing a poetic common parlance of the left, and by the potentially liberatory role played by Theosophism and related mystical movements. These cases, it is worth noting, do not neatly fall into Miller’s rubric of “slow print.” The poetic forms discussed in a well-researched chapter on radical and socialist magazines are traditional enough that they lend themselves to rapid assimilation by a dedicated working-class readership (Miller shows, for example, that Walt Whitman was frequently praised and described but almost never quoted or reprinted). By contrast, the sex-positive radical tradition that Miller describes (standing up for dissidents like Edward Carpenter) in fact aligns well with older ideals of “print enlightenment.” Finally, the mystical texts that Miller discusses are not readily parsable as part of “print enlightenment,” but that is principally because they are by nature profoundly anti-enlightenment generally. That does not mean, however, that they partake of the “slow print” dissidence that Miller maps in *Commonweal*, Kelmscott, and Shaw’s evolving radical relationship with the periodical press and the theater.

If Miller has many fish to fry, then Isabel Hofmeyr’s *Gandhi’s Printing Press: Experiments in Slow Reading* has only one. Mohandas K. Gandhi, she sets out to show, was a true slow-print genius, quick to realize and explore the possibilities of delay and bafflement that might be woven into a print culture principally defined by speed and discontinuity. Hofmeyr marvelously parses Gandhi’s sly assertion (regarding redacted “clipping” pages of his newspaper *Indian Opinion*) that the concision and redaction demanded in telegraphic condensations of the news might be a “distilling” of the content of a longer work rather than a dilution: “Condensation,” writes Hofmeyr, “becomes an art form that produces a thoughtful or an ‘ideaful’ text that in turn requires a reader who is thoughtful in both senses of the word: exercising careful deliberation and extending sympathetic regard to the text” (p. 70). That is, Gandhi set out to make more from less, to mandate slow contemplation in a world that seemed to demand only rapid page-views.

While Miller works her way methodically through several different instances of alternative configurations for producing radical print (or performance), Hofmeyr’s approach is more intensively microscopic: her story is only about *Indian Opinion* and the pamphlets that spun off from it, printed mainly by communal (or grudgingly paid) labor at its base at Phoenix, outside Durban. In its attention to the way in which the reader is constituted both as present and as absent, both as a “true patriot” and as diasporic and hence only vaguely known, Hofmeyr brilliantly uncovers the mixture of news and of redacted philosophizing that
Indian Opinion (surely not uniquely?) published in an attempt to make a parochial provincial audience feel part of a complex global news network—but to feel part of it partially by training its readers to step back from the flurry and hurry of news and to digest it, to teach themselves a kind of contemplative voraciousness that allowed a reader both to swallow the news and to resist being swallowed by it, which is what the immediacy of simple daily mindless reading would produce.

In one sense, Hofmeyr’s book is unabashedly a thick description of Gandhi’s printing press at Phoenix, where by way of clippings from other papers, poems, and carefully trimmed editorials (space in the paper was always at a great premium) Gandhi sought to generate a sense of a new print-bound community, a “colonial Indian” world in which his Tolstoyan ideals would come to serve as the basis for a reconfigured not-quite-nationalist solidarity. Yet in another sense Gandhi’s Printing Press is a launching-pad for Hofmeyr, with great elegance and economy, to explore many of the ideas that she has been developing since her revisionary account of how Christian evangelical ideals got globalized, in her The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of “The Pilgrim’s Progress” (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2004). As in her eye-opening article “Universalizing the Indian Ocean” (PMLA, 125 [2010], 721–29), Hofmeyr in Gandhi’s Printing Press seeks to remind readers (in ways that resist the too-quick paraphrase a review like this one has to attempt) that to think of oneself as embroiled in a global diaspora is not always to feel “peripheral”; it is also to feel the emancipatory capacity that creative redescription can bring, and to be aware of the ironies involved in a genealogy of “Indian nationalism” that is bred in South Africa by way of a motley crew’s encounter with pacifist texts from Russia, Massachusetts, and who knows where else.

Slowness is not the only crucial category for Hofmeyr, who strives to account for many competing currents within the print world where Gandhi’s political thinking came to maturity. In important ground-clearing work early on, she documents the power of what she calls “print laborists” (“men who attempted to define printing as part of white racial privilege” [p. 34]) and explores the complex mélange of racial stereotypes and assumptions that at times pitted Indian and African nationalists or radicals against one another as much as against their imperial rulers. She reconstructs portions of Gandhi’s employment practices—showing that Zulu women whom Gandhi never mentioned supplied paid physical labor to the printing press—and by exploring the sometimes cool relations between Gandhi and the African nationalist printing press run by John Dube next door to Phoenix.
at Ohlange Institute (p. 39). Such complexity—of racial thought, and of Gandhi’s interest in comparing “civilization” in its Indian and European incarnations—shed a sidelight on Gandhi’s thought experiments and his commitment to instilling in his readers a new kind of “slow reading.” Such historical nuance, however, does not diminish Hofmeyr’s sense of Gandhi’s urgent, complex attempt to train (slowly to train) readers to notice within a text what key elements deserve to be brought out, underscored, amplified, and pondered.

Taken together, then, Miller’s and Hofmeyr’s books have the potential to reshape our understanding of what kinds of alternative polities could be brought to life within a print-dominated public realm that had threatened (as John Stuart Mill saw it in 1859) to produce a stiflingly uniform sociability. They also suggest fruitful lines of research that might be undertaken on right-wing dissidents and their printing ventures, as well as on divergent religious and spiritual thinking of the sort Miller briefly explores at the end of Slow Print. In exploring various kinds of “slowness” associated with an ever-faster print realm, Miller and Hofmeyr uncover not head-in-the-sand “delaying tactics” but genuine formal experiments with various kinds of cognitive braking, so as to engage readers in a different kind of thought that would, they hoped, produce a new sort of political awareness. Miller chronicles what those techniques looked like from the outside, but Hofmeyr takes a remarkable further step, unpacking the internal hermeneutics of a “Gandhian theory of text” (p. 1). By her (brilliant) reading, Indian Opinion’s innovative response to “speed, summary, and discontinuity as ineluctable conditions of modern reading” (p. 158) is to acknowledge the speeded-up circulation of text, but to promote various baffles and impedances that make the reader ponder and contemplate both newsworthy events and the redacted, condensed philosophical insights that are also folded into the journal. Miller shows what a new print culture’s logistics and printed surfaces looked like; Hofmeyr offers some very persuasive readings of what kind of thinking such a culture aimed at producing, and she connects that thinking to Gandhi’s work turning Henry David Thoreau and Leo Tolstoy into inspirations for anticolonial satyagraha.

The “slowness” that both Miller and Hofmeyr discover is no mere truism about left-wing self-insulation, a proleptic avatar of the hippie “drop out” culture of the 1960s. Rather it is a radical move within radicalism, because within both Gandhi’s and Morris’s milieu, radical politics seemed to go hand-in-hand with the glories and virtues of a free press culture defined first and foremost by rapid access to a mass readership. What this slowness suggests is that in various ways
radicals on the left no longer saw their struggle, as nearly all had earlier in the nineteenth century, as a fierce struggle against the state for access to an untrammeled “marketplace of ideas.” Instead, in different ways Morris and Gandhi (and their respective co-workers in their various experimental small-press endeavors) sought to create, by way of very carefully planned-out new print products, protected spaces, almost (though not quite) anti-public realms in which radical ideas could germinate and selectively build a constituency. In almost every particular, the stories that Miller and Hofmeyr have to tell are distinct. In their general outline, though, Slow Print and Gandhi’s Printing Press tell a new story about the countercultural experiments that radicals undertook by exploiting wrinkles, peculiar and often transient vectors of flow within a variegated public realm.

John Plotz
Brandeis University