Elizabeth Carolyn Miller University of California, Davis Curran Fellowship Report, 2009

I am grateful to the Curran Fellowship Committee for funding a wonderfully fruitful research trip to England in June and July 2009. Over the course of four weeks, I consulted sources for my book project, *The Birth of Slow Print: Literary Radicalism in Late-Victorian Print Culture*, at a range of British libraries and archives. Much of my time was spent in London at the British Library, the Colindale Newspaper Library, and the London School of Economics (which holds the Fabian Society archive); but I also made a day trip to Oxford to consult rare materials at the Bodleian, and spent several days in the Brotherton Library at the University of Leeds. I returned to California with a wealth of new material and a much more solid and comprehensive grasp of the varieties of late-Victorian radical periodicals.

A particularly important dimension of this trip is that I was able to research several massoriented socialist papers that have not traditionally received scholarly attention from literary critics because they lack the literate quality (and middle-class perspective) of socialist papers such as *To-Day* or William Morris's *Commonweal*. For example, on this trip I learned a great deal more about Robert Blatchford's Clarion, and was able to consult not just issues of the Clarion itself, but rare affiliate periodicals such as Scout (a magazine for Clarion Scouts) and the Clarion Cyclist's Journal. These "spin-off" publications illuminated my understanding of the entire working-class culture that grew up around Clarion readership (the "Clarionettes"). Among socialist papers, *Clarion* is notable for its resemblance to the "capitalist press" (in prominence given to advertising space, for example) but also for its working-class tone and stylistic affinity with the sporting press. During this research trip, however, I found a number of other socialist papers in this discursive vein, all of them rare and short-lived, such as *The Dawn* out of Ilkeston. One of the most exciting days of my trip was spent reading one such newspaper, Tom Maguire's Labour Champion, which I travelled to Leeds especially to see since it now exists only at the Brotherton Library. Maguire was a working-class Leeds socialist and labor organizer who published a book of poetry (Machine Room Chants) and wrote poems for a variety of socialist newspapers. Because I'd become interested in Maguire's poetry, which I plan to discuss at length in my book chapter on the poetry of the radical press, I was eager to see the paper that Maguire himself edited (Labour Champion). The trip to the Brotherton was a research boon in other respects, too, since they hold a number of rare Northern socialist and labor papers in their Mattison Collection (donated by Edward Carpenter's friend Alf Mattison).

Another effect of this trip is that I have a much stronger grasp of late-Victorian sexual radicalism and its place in the radical and socialist press. A central premise of my project is that the "identity crisis" in post-1860s radical print is partially due to the abolition of governmental taxes and restrictions, and the consequent loss of the old "free print" rhetoric that was crucial to radical discourse in the first half of the century. In terms of sexuality, however, strict controls were still in place at the end of the century, and on my research trip I consulted a number of periodicals that demonstrate the overlap – the contested overlap – between sexual radicalism and socialism in the radical press: George Bedborough's free love journal *The Adult*, for example – which was seized in the same police raid as Havelock Ellis's *Sexual Inversion* – and the *University Magazine and Free Review*, which was published by the same outfit as *The Adult* and *Sexual Inversion*. I was also able to review a full run of *Seed Time*, the journal of the Fellowship

of the New Life, which helped me theorize a turn toward body-centric politics among many in the late-nineteenth-century socialist revival.

George Bernard's Shaw's "hygienic" woolen garments might be viewed as an example of this body-centric turn, and on this research trip, I also consulted a good deal of material for my book's chapter on Shaw. The chapter will focus on Shaw's transition from an 1880s socialist novelist (who serialized four novels in the socialist periodicals *To-Day* and *Our Corner*) to an 1890s playwright. I read Shaw's abandonment of the novel in favor of the stage as part of a broader radical frustration with an oversaturated capitalist print marketplace. In England, I consulted the Shaw Archive at the British Library to gain a better sense of Shaw's dealings with the radical press – and the mainstream press – in his early career. I also spent a few days with the Fabian Archive at the LSE, to gain a better sense of why the Fabian Society, alone among the major socialist organizations of the day, declined to publish a propaganda periodical (focusing instead on pamphlets), and how this might accord with Shaw's move from novel to stage.

In conclusion, let me again thank the committee for the research opportunity provided by the Curran Fellowship!