Pale Fire is offered almost thirty pages, close to the attention paid to the entire eighteenth century. The invention of the printing press does not trigger many comments; yet, it is more disturbing that the importance of modern media in the last two hundred years of literature, from photography to digital media, is completely overlooked, although such media together with translation are crucial conditions for the return of European literatures to world literature.

The book is an admirable encyclopedic one-man show, but it also shows that all-encompassing histories today can only be carried out as teamwork, across languages and, to a certain extent, across disciplines. Exhaustive completeness is, of course, never obtainable, nor to be wished for. Had Cohen stopped before the eighteenth century, this would have been a better book. Yet, as a whole it deserves a prominent place on a comparatist's book shelf. Not only because of its huge reservoir of knowledge, but also as proof that literary studies only thrive when we have the audacity to enter uncharted territory. This is what Cohen sets out to do.

SVEND ERIK LARSEN
Aarhus University/ Sichuan University
DOI: 10.3366/ccs.2019.0316

Nicholas Thoburn, *Anti-Book: On the Art and Politics of Radical Publishing* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2016). 379 pp., ISBN 9780816621965, $30.

Meta-narratives are inevitable in any book about books. Nicholas Thoburn's new monograph has the added meta-complexity of being a book about publications that immanently problematize their native format (be they books, pamphlets, web platforms, etc.) and also in turn, more generally, the socio-epistemological category of 'the book'. Given the neo-avant garde use of 'anti-' in his guiding concept, one could mis-assume that this is a book about the end of books. Yet by drawing on his twin interests as a historian of political literature and a Marxist theorist, Thoburn has coupled an analysis of the contexts in which publications are produced and received familiar to the sociology of literature with a critique of form more common to philosophies of media.

The result is a highly original kind of anti-medium media study of how the coordination of intentions, inputs and outputs that we might call *the work of publishing* can embrace productive interferences between

the form, content and contexts (of production and reception) of its outcome – the publication. This book's subtitle, rather than main title, names the operative category of his method: the act and outcomes of *publishing* are together taken as a form – an organizational form – and how certain such forms are more or less conducive to a radical politics of openness determines their potential value to what Thoburn calls a 'communism of writing' (p. 213). This is a book about publishing experiments that counter the authority of what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari label 'the root-book' (p. 58) by *making public* – that base sense of the verb 'to publish' – the 'experimental condition of communist publishing' (p. 13).

Intellectually and structurally, *Anti-Book* is a hugely ambitious project. Threading all of these themes together depends on an unusual series of examples, spanning from the history of artists' books to communist myths. Each case study is creatively – and closely – read, and the theoretical scaffolding is eloquently and precisely built. Sometimes the clear thesis this scaffolding is built to support gets lost amongst the movement of references and ideas, which criss-cross between the book's six chapters in a fashion more rhizomatic than mono-linear.

The aptness of that analogy becomes clear in Chapter Three, which pivots on a critique of Mao Zedong's Little Red Book (1964). Read comparatively against the disruptive forms of Russian Futurist books, Antonin Artaud's paper 'Spells', and Guy Debord and Asger Jorn's *Mémories* (Copenhagen: Éditions Situationist International, 1959), the medial unit that relays Mao's ideal Truth (p. 126) is taken to be exemplary of the modern 'political root-book' (p. 111). That phrase is carefully excavated from *Mille plateaux* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1980), in which Deleuze and Guattari propose a tripartite typology of book forms, based on the differing degrees of openness those forms have to the communities of reception they engage with: 'the root-book', 'the fascicular root-book' and 'the rhizome-book' (p. 114). Chapter Four turns the discussion of disruptive form towards the question of authorial identity. Thoburn mounts a sophisticated, anti-identitarian case for anonymity and then collective (pseudonymous) voice with a detailed analysis of the 'transindividual authorship' (p. 177) of two collectively written novels: Luther Blissett's *Q* (Turin: Einaudi, 1999) and Bernadette Corporation's *Reena Spaulings* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2005). Then, steering us through a micro-history of collectively edited French journals, running from *Comité* to *Tiqqun*, he lays out the risks of substituting the authorial individual for a community

when the media form produced is still a relatively traditional text-object, like a book, and still perpetuates structures of self-identity and dogma.

In the spirit of rhizomatic openness, one might suggest that *Anti-Book* can be most productively read backwards and forwards from those two central chapters, which ground the whole project in a discussion of the 'what?' and 'how?' of political publishing and the question of 'who gets to speak?' respectively. From our vantage point in a post-digital mediascape, Chapter One revisits Rosalind Krauss' concept of a 'self-differing medium' (p. 9) and poet-editor Richard Kostelanetz's coinage 'antibook' (p. 11), plus his compositional theory of 'assembling' (p. 13). Both were heavily influenced by the low-fi publications of Conceptual artists in the late 1960s and the once challenging anti-commodity idea of the 'bookwork' (p. 9). Both also echo strongly in Thoburn's use of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of *assemblage* in Chapter Five. Here, through a close and bold case study of *Mute* magazine's history (1994-), he demonstrates how its editorial board have allowed changes in the magazine's form, content, and contexts of funding and readership to interfere with one another responsively, to destabilize one another, in order to keep the present and future possibilities of the magazine open. This is a model of reflexive editorship that drives what Thoburn calls 'diagrammatic publishing' (p. 224), riffing on Johanna Drucker's idea of 'diagrammatic writing' (p. 53).

Chapter Two substitutes the politically limited, Constructivist idea of transformative objects – objects that were to be used to transform everyday life in Revolutionary Russia; what Christina Kiaer calls 'socialist objects' (p. 65) – for a less unified object-form that Thoburn calls 'the communist object' (p. 64). These are more like an *assemblage* of discursive fronts or strands – multiple contents, multiple forms, multiple contexts of production and reception – each choreographed together as a project. Short, interlaced descriptions of three grass-roots efforts to combine self-publishing pamphlets with innovative archiving methods serve as the examples. But Thoburn's idea of the communist object finds a fuller and more complicated (maybe, also, more compromised) expression in the UNO or 'Unidentified Narrative Objects' (p. 290) proposed by Wu Ming Foundation. This Italian writers' collective, whose membership includes four of the Luther Blissett group discussed in Chapter Four, explore the much maligned literary form of the political myth. This final case study is Thoburn's most ambitious. Indeed, in the spirit of 'communist writing and publishing', this chapter-as-essay becomes an 'organizational form' for calling back and together:

Mao, communism, party politics, Deleuze, Luther Blissett, Marx, self-publishing and the rhizome-book. What the UNOs of Wu Ming begin to develop, through their fragmented authorship and 'falsified narration', is for Thoburn a form of 'desubjectified mythopoesis' (p. 283). The responsive interferences between a fictionalized author, mythical content and the decoy of a traditional media form triangulate the experimental conditions for one instance – an act-and-outcome – of radically open publishing.

No short review can do more than signpost the philosophical weave of an intricate study like this. Suffice to say, it is precisely that complex weave which means *Anti-Book* can and should become an important point of reference for anyone who also believes that 'the particular political qualities of texts are only grasped when approached in relation to the media forms that carry them, codetermine their meaning, collide with them, or leave them aside in pursuit of effects of an extratextual nature' (p. 298).

NICK THURSTON
University of Leeds
DOI: 10.3366/ccs.2019.0317

Emily Eells and Naomi Toth, eds, *Son et traduction dans l'œuvre de Proust*, Recherches proustiennes, 41 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2018). 176 pp., ISBN 9782745349101, €38.

Translators often speak of trying to capture the 'music' or 'voice' or 'rhythm' of the writers they translate, but this vocabulary usually has little acoustic reality and acts merely as a set of metaphors for the desire deeply to inhabit the source text, to care rather more about the text's being than its meaning. But it is time perhaps to call this well-intentioned bluff, and at the same time to give new dimensions to the stylistic study of Proust's text, after the inaugurative and perdurable studies of Spitzer ('Proust's style', 1928) and Milly (*La phrase de Proust*, 1975). Ian Patterson is right to insist on the distinction between sound and sounds (pp. 162–63), that is, between, on the one hand, the text's sounding in the reader's bodily articulation of it and psycho-physiological immersion in it, and, on the other, the particular network of sounds within which the text circulates, which is its psycho-affective currency. Translation is about capturing the articulatory immersion. But it is to the acoustic network that the papers gathered here principally give their attention,