# Anarchism and Education in the Academy: An Essay Review

Cory D. Maley

University of Connecticut

Amster, Randall;  DeLeon, Abraham;  Fernandez, Luis A.; Nocella, Anthony J. &  Shannon, Deric. (Eds.) (2009). *Contemporary Anarchist Studies*.  London: Routledge

Pp. 318   ISBN: 978-041547402-3

Anarchism is back! At least this is the sense one is left with after having read *Contemporary Anarchist Studies* . What's more, they may be right. *Contemporary Anarchist Studies* brings light into the dark corners where anarchism has tended to lurk; from the peripheries of the academy where it has subsisted as a marginalized stepchild of the Marxist transition, this anthology illustrates that anarchism may be coming into its own, with works extending across  a diverse range of topics, representing many disciplines, including education, science, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, economics, religious studies, ecology, history, political science, among others.
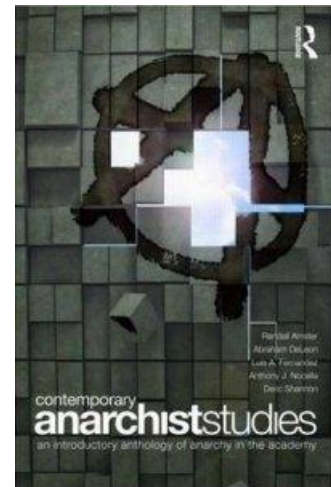
This volume serves to demonstrate the versatility and growing relevance of anarchist theory in the contemporary world, both in terms of the academy and through activism in the world at large.

Anarchists have drawn attention to anarchism largely through the anti-globalization movement, and individual anarchists such as Noam Chomsky have been active in speaking out against global economic and political tyranny. Further, anarchists have played a significant role in the feminist and peace movements, and as recently as January 2009 anarchists in Iceland were instrumental in facilitating the collapse of the government in what has come to be called the *Rainbow Revolution* (Gunnarsson, 2009).  As anarchism has emerged from the streets, the theoretical imperative connected to it has become increasingly hard to ignore. Editors Amster, DeLeon, Fernandez, Nocella, and Shannon, aim in this work to "[bridge] the gap between anarchist activism on the streets and anarchist theory in the academy" (cover). Thus the editors seek not only to reassert anarchist theory as relevant academic lens, but also to reframe the process by which theory is created.

## Anarchism and Education

Anarchism has a notable if ignominious connection to the history of education in the United States. The "Modern Schools" movement sought to remove the constraints of schooling and provide for education in ways that were non-coercive and averse to the oppression of what were seen as the children's natural inclinations. It was the execution of Spanish anarchist Francisco Ferrer, founder of *Escuela Moderna* in Barcelona, that sparked an interest in modern schools, a movement which was largely fostered by anarchist luminaries such as Emma Goldman and run by supporters and sympathizers. The schools persisted for nearly half a century in the United States, with the last of them closing in 1958, some 45 years after Ferrer's death (Avrich, 2006). Their appearance on the educational stage coincided with the age of progressivism. While few would consider the two to be connected, there is a possible argument to be made that the anarchist "modern schools" represented the

theoretical ideal proposed by progressives such as Dewey (1915; 1997).

Anarchist thought has appeared over the course of the last half century in the works of educators such as Ivan Illich, Paul Goodman, John Holt, Myles Horton, and others who have been critical of education as it is set up in the U.S. and have worked to counter the institutions and their effects on children. Even the free schools movement can be seen to have some anarchist elements built into the structures of these highly libertarian schools—the child's development is fostered in a non-coercive environment. But although there is an argument to be made that the free schools movement reflects some of the qualities many anarchists cherish, free schools have been, and largely remain, outside of the revolutionary framework of most anarchist conceptions of education rather than at the forefront of them.

In recent years, however, anarchism has begun to assert its relevance in the educational academy. The re-publication of Arvrich's (2006) *The modern school movement,* Suissa's (2006) *Anarchism and education*, and Rikowski's (2001) *The battle in Seattle: Its significance for education,* represent only a few texts published in the last decade dedicated to anarchism and education. More telling, perhaps, is its appearance in *The Praeger handbook of education and psychology* (Kincheloe & Horn, 2007), a publication geared toward both academics and education practitioners. And now, this compilation of anarchist writings  helps to demonstrate that not only is anarchist theory increasingly prolific and broadly applicable, but it can provide a refreshingly unique perspective and new insights that shed light on many areas relevant to education today. Anarchism, as presented by the editors and authors of this volume, is concerned with a number of key educational issues that may not be readily apparent with a casual reading of the volume.

Patterns do emerge with significant implications for the educational establishment. While it is difficult, and perhaps even undesirable, to attempt to synthesize a body of anarchist works, there are three prominent themes that stand out in this volume. First, the editors seek to recast the

critical frame. Instead of viewing social problems, and thus educational problems, through the lens of exploitive power of class conflict, their framework would have us view power more holistically. Here, power is viewed through the lens where domination, which acts through myriad relational means, is central to understanding social and educational problems. In recasting the critical frame in this way, anarchism challenges us to rethink what has been discursively constructed as *normal* or *natural* in our relations to one another and the world in which we live.

Second, the use of utopia as a principal tool by which to critique the present suggested by this volume provides a critical tool for understanding the world in which we live in order that we may transcend it. The premise on which this is based finds support in the literature on teacher education. Feiman-Nemser (2001) suggests that vision of practice can help to solidify the link between ideals and actual teacher practices. What's more this form of utopian thinking can help to overcome the apprenticeship of observation (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005), and other reifying forces in education. Zumwalt (1989) argues that this vision of practice, which is a reality in some places and still just a vision in others "… gives [the neophyte teacher] a mindset to inform their deliberations about teaching, to view the issues of classroom, school, and community in a larger context, and to be dissatisfied with the compromises and survival tactics of the first year as they continually reassess their own teaching in an attempt to provide an appropriate learning environment for the their students (p. 182)."

 It is thus an important critical tool for educators to consider, not just from a theoretical standpoint, but in the everyday practice of the classroom teacher. As Amster discusses in this volume, the nature of utopian thinking, serves to allow one to push, critique, think about, and otherwise endeavor to free people from their present conditions and affect their present realities by allowing them to focus "on the inherent connections between vision and action" (p. 290) "which suggest avenues…for turning ideals into realities" (p. 299).

Finally, Anarchist praxis provides both tension and cohesion as it continues to increase in relevance in the field of education. The editors present two key challenges that lie at the heart of many anarchists' reluctance to pursue the full development of anarchism in academy. Both present difficulties for anarchists who wish to remain faithful to the philosophical tenets of anarchism. One challenge for them is that of avoiding domestication by the universities which provide the space for anarchist studies and dogmatic approaches to theory that some anarchists associate with Marxism's failings. The second challenge for anarchism in the academy is to remain loyal to the idea that one must view and act upon the world, in terms of their research, in ways that are grounded solidly in the practice of anarchism.

## Recasting the Critical Frame

Anarchists share with Marxists the view that class conflict is an essential form of oppression responsible for many social ills, but believe that this is but one component of a larger dynamic of power and domination. Rather, they conceive of power as domination rooted in hierarchical structures that extend beyond class conflict and the exploitive powers connected to capitalism (DeLeon, 2008). In the opening chapter, May elaborates on this point noting that "[domination], unlike exploitation, can occur in any realm of social experience," and these realms, though related cannot be reduced simply to any single form of domination, such as exploitation (p. 12).  Moreover, oppression is not necessarily limited to acts of physical oppression. Rather, it is, more broadly speaking, a social construction that serves to oppress even those who further that oppression within the system. Take myself, or others like me, as a case in point: As a middle class, white male, the dominant social norms benefit me. I do not have to consider whether I'm treated a particular way because of the color of my skin, can live in upper-middle class neighborhoods without raising eyebrows; the dominant culture largely reflects my own, and so it goes unnoticed by me in much the same way a fish fails to notice water.

To follow this metaphor a little further, the fish also does not notice that the water stifles its ability to flourish in it without serious mechanisms of support. In much the same way, I never have to be cognizant of the fact that the dominant culture of which I am a part keeps others who are not a part of that culture from thriving. This is but one form of domination, which although not born out of a conscious desire to oppress others, nevertheless perpetuates the tyranny of domination. This notion is born out of the presupposition that if we were truly equal, domination could not exist, and so long as it does exist, we are not equal. What is more, it is not simply that domination can be overcome through demands for equality, because therein lies another source of domination—someone or something must have greater power in order to bestow equality thusly. It is, then, the goal of anarchism to interrogate structures of domination so that they may be deconstructed.

This volume consists of a number of contributions that do just that. Buck aims to accentuate the role of participation in the framework of an anarchist economic system. In contrast to capitalist or centralized systems wherein the individual plays a relatively peripheral role in the economy as a whole—that is to say that they do not control the means of production, largely managed by intermediaries—an anarchist system focuses on the unmediated free flow of economic activity. In such a system, the individual, who is both worker and consumer, has free access to total participation: "All persons with relevant and direct interest in a problem, process, or outcome of a process must be free to weigh in on deliberation, decision, control protocols, and action. Participation is the factor which determines the anarchy of economies" (p. 68). Still, the author admits "there is no essentially anarchist economic theory or anarchist economy" (p. 56), but that a plurality of ideas in questioning and pursuing the unmediated system of economic activity is central to the anarchist vision. The intentionality that guides the *Riot Girl* movement is such an example. Founded on a do it yourself (DIY) ethic that seeks to reject consumerist tokenism which looks to capitalize on girl-power as a market strategy, this participative culture aims to reject the capitalist foundations and constructions of literary and gendered

identities to affect and activate the alteration these identities such that one is able to activate and validate *girl power* in ways that are both authentic and self-generative. Central to the anarchist tension with capitalism's mediation of economic activity is the notion that authentic identity construction is co-opted, and these identities are, Kaltefleiter points out, "reconstructed and branded as slogans" (p. 225). Both Kaltefleiter and Buck indicate that it is from the foundation of active individual participation that one can both mitigate problems inherent in capitalism while also working to counter them.

The challenges of resisting socially enforced identities in favor of authentically generated ones are not limited to the economic realm; indeed their effects on people pervade many social spheres. One need only look to the life of an adolescent to see how profoundly students are affected by the need to fit in and the stigma attached to those who do not. Acklesberg and Ben-Moshe, Hill, Nocella, and Templer address concerns of competing notions of social identity and of normalcy. For the later, the authors do so through the interrogation of *ablism*. They recognize that normalcy is a social construct that is relatively recent to the modern paradigm, and is used to constrain and confine people around a mean, which may be called normal. This runs in contrast with nature's tendency to trend toward diversity, not normalcy. In the view of a social-anarchist, it is incumbent on teachers to foster dispositions that aim to "include rather than marginalize individuals who are 'different' than the socially constructed 'norm'…[thus] yielding a society that serves everyone's interests alike" (pp. 119-120). Acklesberg acknowledges, however, that these social constructions are derived also from our tendency to compartmentalize facets of our identities and encounter difficulties, both personally and socially, in reconciling them within a singular whole. She writes:

> In our liberal-individualist, capitalist society, we often conceptualize people as composed of separable parts: we concern ourselves with 'work/life' issues, as if work and life were separable. Or we talk of a distinction between

'personal beliefs' and 'politics;' or between
politics, on the one hand, and research and
teaching, on the other; or, finally, between my
cultural/ethnic/religious identity and my identity
'as a woman.' We may even come to believe that
these characterizations, these aspects of
ourselves, are separable: that 'who I am' really
can be different from 'what I do' – or that 'who
I am' is *only* 'what I do' (as in my work. We may
also take them to be separable in another sense:
for example, that I am a Jew in some contexts, a
feminist in others, or an anarchist in others, and
a scholar still in others (pp. 260-261).

In both Acklesberg's and Ben-Moshe's and other chapters,
the authors demonstrate the extent to which our system
both proscribes what we can be and delimits the spaces into
which we must fit. As a result we learn to be complicit in
our own domination, performing one role in one context
and a different role in another. It is a condition that
interferes with our ability to reconcile competing facets of
our identities. This schizophrenic existence may be what lies
at the heart of our tendency to look outward to the
mediators of culture to tell us who we are or should be,
rather than inward to uncover it for ourselves. Anarchism
rails against this dominance, even as we are guilty of
subjecting ourselves to it. Both aim to foster the celebration
of diversity of self and in relation to others that is at the
heart of anarchism and the key to engaging and resisting this
tendency toward a flattened uniformity.

In our society, teachers seem to represent forces of
reification and liberation in varying measures. If, as many
critical theorists contend, we are to liberate ourselves from
oppression, then liberation must begin with education.
Freire (2008) recognized that people cannot exist
authentically without freedom and that teachers bear a
responsibility that falls largely on their shoulders, to
question, critique, and rethink the tenets of our society that
we hold as sacrosanct. Their "efforts must coincide with
those of the students to engage in critical thinking, and the
quest for mutual humanization" (p. 75). In contrast to

Friere's vision of the "humanist, revolutionary teacher," Armaline argues that students and teachers are today locked into a paradigm where they are both doing school, a notion which is by no means novel (e.g. Pope, 2001), but it is nevertheless crucial to recognize that they possess within them their power to break from a dominant, and from an anarchist perspective, oppressive paradigm.

DeLeon and Love focus on the ways in which science and social studies are taught uncritically, failing to challenge the hierarchical and ideological aspects of the subject connected to progress and capitalism in ways that do not allow students access to or the means through which to interrogate issues of power, and the "abuses of science and scientific research," that lead to students developing qualities of unquestioning "passivity, docility, and conformity [which] support the desires of the military-industrial-media complex" (p. 163). Both chapters, Armaline's and DeLeon's and Love's, aim to recast teachers as proactive figures which must act in ways that subvert the system in order to rethink the value of what is and is not taught. They also aim to uncover and research ways in which they can address the curricula and the world in a critical manner, even in contexts where the current system aims to control them both technically and bureaucratically by way of tests, standardized curricula, and other such pressures.

To do so, teachers must begin to question the logic of the educational system, to empower their vision for what is possible and give themselves permission "to be dissatisfied" with what the dominant culture of our schools, our politics, our economic system deems natural and normal, and to embrace a notion of authentic diversity which is central to the health of any *natural* system. It is not enough, however, simply to foster particular elements as they are currently made manifest, but also, as Armaline, and DeLeon and Love explain, to transform education by subverting hierarchical learning, removing the structures where, for instance the teacher is cast as a provider of knowledge, superior to and in charge of their students, rather than a co-creator of knowledge in concert with their students who are their equals. Moreover, they contend that we must call into

question the ways in which we construct meaning in the
world, as well as the content of those meanings. Why for
instance do we call the tactics used by American patriots
during the Revolutionary War "guerilla" tactics when they
are used against the British, and call them "terrorist" tactics
when they are used against American forces today? It is
DeLeon and Love's contention that teachers should be
diligent to constantly question such epistemological
assumptions.

McCarthy attempts to bring one such question to light,
bringing Kropotkin's polemic against detractors of
anarchism to the fore. The argument which Kropotkin railed
against was one that is to this day a commonly leveled
charge, namely that anarchism would lead to chaos.
McCarthy focuses on the need for students and teachers to
make sense of the alternatives to a world that *is* already
chaotic in spite of, and maybe even because of, its apparent
order characterized by overflowing prisons, environmental
degradation, dozens of raging armed conflicts, the thousands
of deaths each day world-wide as a result of starvation and
unsanitary conditions: "All of these questions address real
chaos, that is occurring in the world today. Anarchists aren't
causing all that" (p. 176). It is, instead, the current paradigm
in human thinking in which people seek domination over
land, man, and beast which has led to the chaotic condition
of the world.

Anarchism, as Jones and Best demonstrate, propounds quite
the opposite. In contrast to the generation and reification of
domination, they demonstrate through a number of
illustrative examples the ways in which animals, and even
plants, actively, and in some cases consciously, resist human
encroachment, domination, and control with acts of open
defiance that cross boundaries between species. In this,
there are implications for us in recognizing that our
treatment of animals is more broadly connected to the
chaotic nature of the world based on our culture of
domination. Many of the atrocities that have haunted
generations of people have been facilitated by the
willingness of perpetrators to see their victims as less than
human, as animals. Our willingness to dominate and destroy

nonhuman animal life on our planet, to see it as less worthy or deserving of life, of having lives that are unequal to that humans has, therefore, much broader implications for peace in the world. As Jones demonstrates, non-human actors living in the world often work cooperatively and even resist injustice. Human actors, Best argues, must be equals to the task, acting to do the same on behalf of animals which are misused and maltreated, as means to economic ends.

> The fight for animal liberation demands radical transformations in the habits, practices, values, and mindset of all human beings as it also entails a fundamental restructuring of social institutions and economic systems predicated on exploitive practices. Animal liberation is by no means a sufficient condition for democracy and ecology, but it is for many reasons a necessary condition of economic, social, cultural, and psychological change…. One common ground and point of departure [that the discussion of animal liberation can provide is] the critique of instrumentalism and relation between the domination of humans over animals—as an integral part of the domination of nature in general—and the domination of humans over one another (pp. 198-199).

Such acts of subversion, Kemmerer points out, are inherent not only to anarchism, but to the spiritual heritage of the Western tradition out of which anarchism sprang.  She argues that the "[rebellion] against unjust authority is fundamental to both anarchy and Christianity" (p. 209). Moreover, the individual acting in concert with these notions and Christian faith have "a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws" (p. 209) and discourages "submission to secular powers" while holding "humankind accountable to principles that supersede secular rule" (p. 210). While some would question the relevance of this spirituality in relation to education, Kemmerer's depiction of the life of Tolstoy and his focus on non-violent resistance, communities of conscience, and his insistence "that 'Christianity in its true meaning destroys the state'," helps to

demonstrate that an interrogation of Christian philosophy, as with any set epistemological assumptions, can reveal the seeds of change which run counter to a long history of domination (p. 208).

## Tools of Utopia

In the same way that Christianity uses paradise as a point of comparison—a lens through which to guide meditation upon what seems to be the wayward path of humankind—anarchism frequently employs utopia as a critical lens. In much the same way, a coherent vision of practice allows teachers to resist submission to inferior educational practices. Utopian imaginings provide anarchism with a powerful tool with which to deconstruct, reflect upon, and reconfigure the prevailing understandings of the present. Seyferth rejects the claim by some anarchists, Bakunin in particular, that if we "just smash the state…everything will be fine," noting that there is strong evidence that runs contrary to "this simplistic revolutionary theory" (p. 281). It is much too easy to destroy, to tear down the structures that others create, but a much more demanding task to create. Krathwhol's (p. 212) revision of Bloom's Taxonomy places creation atop the hierarchy of cognitive processes. However, as Amster argues, utopian thinking allows one to push, critique, think about, and otherwise endeavor to improve the conditions of, and free people from, the state of things; it allows people to create the world anew. Anarchism, he writes, "has much to offer utopianism, and utopianism is sorely needed in the contemporary philosophy and practice of anarchism" (p. 290).

 This is not to say that the authors are enamored of, nor fully committed to their utopian visions as an achievable end. Indeed, Kinna and Pritchard caution against projecting utopian visions into the future given the limits of our sight, which does not lead forward in rationally predictable ways. But neither should we "lurch directionless and haphazardly into the future armed with nothing more than motifs and attitudes" (p. 277). The implications for education are wrapped up in this argument inasmuch as it taps into the larger question, raised by Kahn in his discussion of the

philosophy of Ivan Illich, about whether we should be utilizing education as a tool for constructing an ideal world, which he argues entraps humans within the mechanism of this goal as means to an end, making them tools in and of themselves? To Kahn, the answer is clear: "The hope now at hand may lie in our scholarly capacity to opt-out of the excited drive to reconstruct education once again in the hope of a better world and to recognize the programmatic suffering of our institutionalized existence as students and teachers" (p. 133).  To others in this volume, utopian tinkering and the use of imaginings are necessary for us to do so.

Amster rejects this argument, by and large, and the larger critique that encapsulates it, namely that anarchists and their penchant for utopianism are misguided. Utopia, he claims, is not so much a destination or something that can ever be realized; rather, it can be "understood as a condition of permanent revolution, a continuing rebellion against our own tendencies toward entrenchment and domination" (p. 292). What strengthens the use of utopianism as a tool of critique in the anarchist's repertoire can be found in a self-conscious willingness to critique the utopian vision itself. Schnurer and Hahn provide a narrative that is set up to demonstrate both the promise and perils of a de-schooled system as an example that illustrates this point and rejects an uncritical acceptance of utopian visions of education. Seyfurth makes the argument that self-critical literature, both utopian and dystopian, are necessary to work against the shortcomings of the smash-the-state mentality. This self-reflective utopian lens is a crucial piece of the anarchist toolbox, particularly as it moves between thought and action as part of a critical praxis on the part of teachers and students alike as they aim to shape the world in which we live.

## Anarchist Praxis

The notion of Anarchist praxis is perhaps the most consequential and contentious issue presented in this book. The authors present no clear agreements on this issue, but rather tensions that present themselves as anarchism begins

to mature in its own right as a field of critical theory and a unique ontological position through which to navigate and interrogate the creation of knowledge, its use and the implications thereof. It is clear that contemporary anarchist theory is not yet comfortable in its own skin, and has as yet to cohere as a fully formed discipline. The continual redefinition of anarchism throughout this volume could undoubtedly be a source of frustration for readers unfamiliar with anarchism, but this may be a criticism more of anarchism itself than of the book, because this, too, is indicative of the self-critical stance of anarchism as a whole. It is this sense that the field is ever forming and never arriving that is part and parcel with the recasting of the critical frame and reconceptualized notion of the utopian idealism of anarchism that is indicative of the editors' effort to remain true to the philosophical tenets of the field. Kuhn describes an anarchist social order, with its uncomfortable relationship to post-modernism and post-structuralism, as one which is, as De Acosta describes, geo-historically located; it is highly contextualized, and cannot truly be distilled to reveal a unified theory of anarchism. This is not only internally consistent with anarchist concerns about orthodoxy, domestication, and vanguardism, but educational researchers should be able to readily identify its relationship to social constructivist modes of knowledge construction that Vygotsky (1978) argued were bound by the particular socio-historical context in which they were formed. This may run contrary to the positions of some anarchists, such as Gordon (2007), who has argued that "the re-convergence of anarchist politics has given rise to what is arguably the largest and most coherent, vibrant and rapidly-evolving revolutionary movement in advanced capitalist countries" (p. 47). De Acosta goes on to say, however, that since anarchism is by its nature local and constantly emergent, "there is simply no defensible criterion as to the highest form of contemplation or the best way of doing" (p. 34). As such, anarchists may be better suited and served by fostering constellations of anarchic thought and action, rather than attempting to consolidate the philosophical underpinnings of the ideology, which he argues is faintly reminiscent of authoritarian statism, thus ceasing to be anarchistic.

The struggle to remain true to the core of anarchist thought underpins the resistance of anarchists to emerge as an ideological position in academic discourse, and perhaps more importantly, as a field of study in the academy. The editors are clear that the heart of anarchism is located in action, without which there is no praxis, maintaining that "theory without action often appears self-indulgent." But they are also cognizant of the need for theory, noting further that "action without theory can be reactionary" (p. 181). According to Graeber, unlike Marxism, which has always been at home as an academic pursuit, anarchism is on tenuous ground within the academy. He maintains that "to act like an anarchist would be academic suicide. So it is not at all clear what an anarchist academic could actually *do*" (p. 107). In order to survive within the academy, anarchist academics would have to define themselves as distinct, as do others in the academy. Rather than looking for the common ground, which he sees as a one of the hallmarks of anarchism, the academic falls into the trap of the revolutionary intellectual, becoming an intellectual vanguard. This concern has helped make manifest the tendency of anarchist thought to remain outside of the academy. Shukaitis argues that is precisely on the margins and on the move where anarchism belongs, present but cloaked from the watchful eye of the institution. By eschewing the space provided by anarchist studies, he argues, anarchism avoids a fate that would have it proscribed and defanged. Rather than acting as an expression of anarchism, anarchist studies would likely limit study to anarchism more broadly, or worse, a survey of anarchists. But it is this very marginalization that may be at the heart of Olson's critique of the infoshop and insurrectional tendencies of anarchism, which is perhaps proscribed and defanged by the very marginalization Shukaitis argues anarchism should seek to maintain. Indeed, the very notion that anarchism can hide in the shadows and also aspire to significance is contradictory. It is understandable that anarchists might fear that in stepping out of the shadow anarchism might be crushed, or worse, co-opted, packaged and sold to the masses as philosophical kitsch. But when what anarchists claim is at stake is the essential freedom and authenticity of the human

condition, is it any nobler to go quietly, ignominiously, into the shadows?

Shukaitis's point is not a lone voice in the shadows, however. Shannon details the danger of having anarchism domesticated within the academy, citing the apparent declawing of Marxism as a revolutionary movement— becoming a careerist pursuit in its own right. He cautions his audience: "While there are many anarchist scholars in the streets documenting and participating in [the streets], we as anarchist scholars, cannot repeat the same mistakes made by scholars in other liberatory perspectives." To Shannon and others, engaging in activism such as Critical Mass, IndyMedia, Food Not Bombs, and political actions such as the demonstrations undertaken by the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army is essential for anarchism to remain vital. "We must," he writes, "*remain* in the streets" (p. 185). Ferrell, Routledge, Fernandez, and Graeber each identify the importance of what Ferrell describes as "long-term, committed engagement with those we study" as the central, grounding force of the anarchist intellectual. Fernandez advocates a grounded, ethnographic, and reflexive approach to research whereby one immerses oneself in the world as an activist-researcher to understand fully the subject of the study, while rejecting one's "objectivity."

This approach to research holds only tenuously to the bounds of what is considered acceptable within parts of the academy, and Ferrell takes aim at what he identifies as the orthodoxy of the social sciences, which allows for surveys and preexisting data streams to flow freely past IRB committees, whereas more human-oriented fieldwork is met with countless obstacles. While it is difficult to accept his argument that the purpose of the internal review board is to dehumanize research and promote pseudo-scientific approaches to research in the human fields, given that it was set up to prevent abusive and dehumanizing research practices, his insistence on humanizing the human fields of research is well taken. Routledge perceives that even here the researcher walks a fine line between the power of the academic to name and describe what occurs and the role they are beholden to play in giving power to the people or

events that they describe. While this is an omnipresent concern in qualitative research, it is of particular concern to the anarchist who is not only cognizant of the power to dominate, but ideologically opposed to it. Graeber proposes that in order to avoid this, anarchist academics might turn the lens in on themselves as an actor within a particular movement; their work would be focused around auto-ethnographic analysis rather than seeking to make sense of others' actions.

Although self-studies have begun to gain some traction in the educational academy, more work has yet to be done in explicating how this practice can contribute to the field for those who wish to engage with anarchism and education. This, more than any other point in the book remains a point of open contention and may serve, I think, to confound both the reader and the would-be anarchist academic who may seek to look more broadly at social phenomena than to take the microcosmic view provided by self-study. But this, too, is indicative of Amster's characterization of anarchism as "a condition of permanent revolution" (p. 292). There is ever more that can be done. What is clear is that in relation to the academy, the focus of the anarchist academic is on action and discourse outside of it; and their role therein, as Shannon points out, is to have that action inform the academy. Moreover, that it is of prime importance that anarchists within the walls of the academy resist dogmatic thinking and the ideological blinders in their own practice of radical thinking.

*Contemporary Anarchist Studies* represents a noteworthy contribution to the academy in general, and to education in particular. It serves to highlight the significance of an anarcho-theoretical position in terms of critical theory and the role it may play in recasting power in terms of domination. In so doing, Amster, DeLeon, Fernandez, Nocella, and Shannon provide diverse avenues of inquiry that help to shed light upon the human condition which provides fresh insight into the world we have inherited and the choices we will make in it before we bestow it to a new generation. In seeking a more just and equal world, as one has a tendency to do in education, anarchism provides a

critical lens through which to view it, and a powerfully important tool of critique found in utopian and dystopian representations of the future against which we may gauge ourselves, our systems, our worldviews, and our progress, however we may define that.

As anarchism has yet reach maturity, those who pursue it will continue to struggle with the challenges and dilemmas this volume has brought forth. As a budding field it remains to be seen how the tenets of anarchism will be integrated into the daily practice of teachers and researchers alike. The concerns of several authors in this volume which express the tension between being accepted and valued as a critical discourse by wider academic community and the palpable fear among purists that to do so would undermine the very value of what anarchism has to offer have been noted. This tension is not likely to soon abate, and may indeed be heightened by the diversity of opinion within the movement itself. This is not necessarily problematic however; indeed it may be that this set of tensions will act as the engine which drives reflexive anarchism within the academy. In maintaining the momentum necessary to preserve the dialectical tensions between deconstruction and domestication, anarchism holds the potential to provide the academy with the vigorous energy needed to fuel the process of praxis at the heart of a critical approach to education and keep the specter of radical stagnation at bay. *Contemporary Anarchist Studies* is a welcome contribution to the field of education, one that serves to highlight a discourse with the potential to steer educational research and theory development in new and illuminating directions.

## References

Avrich, P. (2006). *The modern schools movement: Anarchism and education in the United States*. Oakland, CA: AK Press.

Dewey, J. (1997). *Experience and Education*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Dewey J. & Dewey E. (1915) *Schools of To-Morrow*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Company.

DeLeon, A. (2008). Oh No, Not the "A" word! Proposing an "Anarchism" for Education. *Educational Studies*, *44*(2), 122-141.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001). From Preparation to Practice: Designing a Continuum To Strengthen and Sustain Teaching. *Teachers College Record*, *103*(6), 1013-55.

Freire, P. (2008). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum International.

Gordon, U. (February 2007). Anarchism Reloaded. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 12(1), 29-48.

Gunnarsson, V. (February 2, 2009). Iceland's Rainbow Revolution: Seven Days that Shook a Nation. *The Reykjavik Grapevine*. Retrieved October 10, 2009 from http://www.grapevine.is/Home/ReadArticle/ icelands-rainbow-revolution.

Hammerness, K., Darling-Hammond, L., Grossman, P., Rust, F., & Shulman, L. (2005). In L. Darling-Hammond, & J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*. (pp. 358-389). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kincheloe, J.L., & Horn, R.A. (2007). *The Praeger handbook of education and psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 94-102). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Krathwohl, D.R. (2002). A revision of Bloom's taxonomy: An overview. *Theory Into Practice*, 41(4), 212-218.

Pope, D.C. (2001). *"Doing School": how we are creating a generation of stressed out, materialistic, and miseducated students*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Rikowski, G. (2001). *The Battle in Seattle: Its Significance for Education*. London: Tufnell Press.

Suissa, J. (2006). *Anarchism and education*. London: Routledge.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Zumwalt, K. (1989). Beginning Professional Teachers: The Need for a Curricular Vision of Teaching. In M.C. Reynolds (Ed.), *Knowledge Base for Beginning Teacher*. (pp. 173-184). New York: Pergamon Press.

About the Reviewer

Cory D. Maley is a Ph.D. student in Curriculum and
Instruction at the University of Connecticut. His research
interests are centered around issues of democracy and
education, social studies teacher education, and the
exploration of the philosophical underpinnings of
educational freedom and reform.