

Randall Amster, Abraham DeLeon, Luis A. Fernandez, Anthony J. Nocella, II, and Deric Shannon, eds. *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy*. London & New York: Routledge, 2009. Pp. 336. \$44.95 (paper). ISBN 978-0415474023

Reviewer: Mark Fulk¹

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As an academic with interests in radical political theory but not a lot of background in anarchist studies, I found this book helpful if limited. The stated goal of the editorial board for the volume is to “fill that void [of there being “no comprehensive anarchist reader for classes”] by compiling a much-needed anthology on anarchist studies that highlights the growing scholarly and activist interest in the subject” (1-2). If the work is to be used as a textbook, I would like to have seen excerpts from earlier anarchist writings as a way of contextualizing the debates within the text. This being said, the book overall is useful and adaptive to the classroom and the field.

The creation of this book begs the question of what is anarchy and, as a side issue, what is the conception of capitalism that those who designate themselves as anarchists are fighting against. There is mostly a fairly rigorous and unanimous view of what anarchy is. Among the many definitions offered in the text (e.g., 169-70), I find Lisa Kemmerer’s most fully developed. Kemmerer defines anarchy as having the primary focus of “individual liberty”; she further defines a life lived with liberty as “a life without compulsion” (202). Further, she claims that anarchy at its heart should be “action (philosophically lived)” and directed at abolishing economic exploitation (203). She then defines capitalism as

¹ **Mark Fulk** is an Associate Professor of British Literature and Women’s Studies at Buffalo State College. He is the author of numerous academic articles and *Understanding May Sarton* (University of South Carolina Press, 2001). **Dedication:** This review is dedicated to the memory of Dr. William Hartel, professor of history, Marietta College. Dr. Hartel was a wonderful and inspiring model of activist, intellectual, radical, and academic to many generations of students. His example is strongly loved and sorely missed.