If we understand the term "anarchism" as a catch-all label for the diverse political, social and economic ideas associated with the practice of "anarchy," then New Perspectives on Anarchism is aptly titled. Nathan J. Jun - assistant professor of philosophy at Midwestern State University - and Shane Wahl - instructor of philosophy at Ivy Tech Community College - have collected a diverse selection of new and previously published essays on contemporary and classical anarchism and philosophy, poUtical science, religion, ecology and culture. The volume contains contributions from astute contemporary anarchist thinkers, including Harold Barclay, Lewis Call, Benjamin Franks, Uri Gordon and Todd May, among others.

The book begins with several essays on the relationship between anarchy and philosophy. The following section on anarchism and political science demonstrates how political scientists are beginning to engage with anarchy and asks about the role of "vanguards" in such organizations and social movements, the role of anarchism in anti-WTO protests, and the place of human rights in anarchism. These social science questions are continued in a subsequent section addressing anarchism and society, education, geography and utopianism. While each of these essays is well done, none are particularly momentous. However, when read in conjunction with the other essays in the collection it is clear that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

While the essays will be of interest to scholars, there is much here that will interest the anarchist-curious. Those curious about classical anarchist thinkers will find essays on Gustav Landauer, Peter Kropotkin, Elisée Reclus and PierreJoseph Proudhon. Those interested in anarcho-primitivism will find a section devoted to that topic. Classic themes such as mutual aid are addressed, as are newer topics including rhizomic value practices. And essays like Lewis Call's "Crisis of Authority Aboard the Battlestar Galáctica" will be of particular interest to those who appreciate the potential of the science-fiction genre for elucidating anarchist ideas. And while some contributors to anarchism are absent or underrepresented - Emma Goldman for instance - and the volume lacks a useful chapter comparing classical and contemporary anarchism, it nevertheless is quite comprehensive in scope.

The most commendable aspect of this volume is its attempt to engage social science with anarchism in a serious and rigorous way, while also unabashedly maintaining the normative desirability of anarchism as a form of social organization and way of life more generally. As Todd May correctly notes in his introduction, "theoretical anarchism is rife for development (p. 3)." This is so in large part due to a decade's worth of alterglobalization organizational practice that has seen the revival of anarchist ideas and practices. From the 1999 meeting of the WTO in Seattle to the most recent G20 meeting in Toronto, Canada, anarchism is recognized as a force to be reckoned with - bodi tactically and intellectually. This is a topic that social scientists have as yet not fully investigated.

Some may fairly criticize the volume's lack of practical value. True, this is not a guide to anarchist action, and it does not presume to be. But anarchism, after all, is foremost a mode of practice, of social, political and economic organization and tactical direct action - recent
ethnographies by David Graeber (Direct Action, 2009) and Marianne Maeckelbergh (The Will of the Many, 2009) demonstrate this. And while the target audience of this collection is both academics and nonacademics, it skews toward the scholarly and in so doing highlights the enduring tension between theory and practice. So it is a fair question whether or not practical anarchists will pause to read this volume. The probable answer is that they will not. Nevertheless, should they read these essays? Yes. While anarchy endures as an essentially un-theoretical mode of action, it has nevertheless always necessitated thinkers - its intellectual anarchists - to help all anarchists and non-anarchists similarly gain perspective on their thought and action. Social science has a role to play in this. And it is volumes like this and the recently published Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy (Randall Amster, et al, 2009) that stress this relationship.

Perhaps the perspective of democratic theory is the most glaring omission from this and other recent volumes on contemporary anarchism and anarchy. The role of democratic practice in anarchist organizations has always been integral. This has been made outstandingly obvious by contemporary alterglobalization organizations. Yet without a solid analytical framework - of the sort which democratic theorists are capable of providing - the degree to which anarchist democratic practice achieves its democratic goals will remain unclear. This is unfortunate. Anarchy has always represented a mode of direct democracy that most state-centric political theory has rejected as impractical or impossible. And while recent ethnographies noted above have demonstrated that direct democracy is possible, they lack a rigorous analytical framework that would persuade more social scientists to take it seriously. An essay - moreover an entire section - on this topic would have enhanced this collection.

New Perspectives on Anarchism offers something for scholars and non-scholars alike. And because these essays are included in a single volume they tend to blur the line between what is considered academic and what is more accessible, yet no less thoughtful and rigorous. This, then, is the sort of collection that has the potential to prompt both scholars and novices into learning more about the influential radical democratic theory and practice of the 21st century.

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