'Out of the Ruins':
The Emergence of New Radical Informal Learning Spaces
(Under contract negotiation)

Edited by
Robert Haworth & John Elmore
West Chester University

Short Description:
There is no doubt that contemporary educational practices and policies across the world are heeding the calls of Wall Street for more corporate control, privatization, and standardized accountability. There are definite shifts and movements towards more capitalist interventions of efficiency and an adherence to market fundamentalist values within the sphere of public education. Unfortunately, these actions are not surprising. In many cases, educational policies are created to uphold and serve particular social, political, and economic ends. Schools, in a sense, have been tools to reproduce hierarchical, authoritarian, and hyper-individualistic models of social order. From the industrial era to our recent expansion of the knowledge economy, education has been at the forefront of manufacturing and exploiting particular populations within our society. Educational practices have continued to track individuals to the prevailing false hope of the marketplace through such avenues as the factory floor or the online credential shopper. Therefore, communities need to construct and organize radical educational alternatives. However, emancipatory educational practices emerging. Many are emanating outside the constraints of our dominant institutions and are influenced by more participatory and collective actions. In many cases, these alternatives have been undervalued or even excluded within the educational research. From an international perspective, some of these radical informal learning spaces are seen as a threat by many failed states and corporate entities.

"Out of the Ruins" sets out to explore and discuss the emergence of alternative learning spaces that directly challenge the pairing of public education with particular dominant capitalist and statist structures. The authors construct philosophical, political, economic and social arguments that focus on radical informal learning as a way to contest the continued efforts to commodify and privatize our everyday educational experiences. The major themes of this edited book include: the politics of learning in our formal settings, constructing new theories on our informal practices, collective examples of how radical informal learning practices and experiences operate, and finally, how individuals and collectives struggle to share these narratives within and outside of institutions.

Audience:
"Out of the Ruins" is intended for undergraduate and graduate courses, as well as, community activists and researchers who are engaged in adult education, informal learning, social movements, and organizing activities. The book focuses on developing unique perspectives, and it aims to help individuals understand and analyze different international perspectives and complex political landscapes involved in creating radical informal learning spaces. It explores topics such as, the politics of learning, theoretical frameworks on informal learning, and issues surrounding the dissemination of knowledge.

Timeline:
Individual abstracts: February 28th, 2014
Acceptance letters: March 16th, 2014
First drafts: June 30th, 2014
Returned edits: September 15th, 2014
Final manuscript submission: October 30th, 2014

Submissions:
Each submission should be between 5000-8000 words. Please cite using APA style of referencing. Please submit your proposals to Rob Haworth: rhaworth@wcupa.edu

Call for Papers:

> *Government must always depend upon the opinion of the governed. Let the most oppressed people under heaven once change their mode of thinking, and they are free.*
>
> -   *- William Godwin (1783)*

Over a century ago anarchist feminist, Emma Goldman (1906) wrote, "the systems of education are being arranged into files, classified and numbered...[and are] incapable of awakening the spontaneity of character" (p. 2). During the same time period, another less well-known anarchist Voltairine de Cleyre (1909) stated, "Political institutions must justify themselves to the young generation. They begin by training childish minds to believe that what they do is to be accepted, not criticised" (p. 339). Not surprisingly, Goldman and de Cleyre's words resonate strongly within contemporary political and educational landscapes. For example, within the U.S. today, both state and federal government, in cooperation with powerful corporations, forcefully drive standardized curriculum, (Emery & Ohanian, 2004, also see Common Core supporters), advocate for efficiency and punitive models of control, enforce high-stakes testing schemes, (see Race to the Top) and leave our educational institutions with very limited room for teachers, students and our communities to act and think critically.

Those who maintain power in any given society, Francisco Ferrer wrote in 1913, "*...have ever been careful to hold a high hand over the education of the people. They know, better than anyone else, that their power is based almost entirely on the school. Hence they monopolize it more and more*" (p. #). Historically, it is no secret that education has been repeatedly established to maintain political, economic, and social control over the working class and poor. Whether justified as patriotic necessity, economic necessity, or theological necessity, compulsory schooling has been employed by the powerful as an effective hegemonic tool throughout human history. The initial motivations for forced schooling within the U.S. were no different. The schools prescribed by the Puritans, and enforced by the Old Deluder Satan Act of 1647, were devoted to the indoctrination and training of a new generation of devout and submissive parishioners. "I will teach them" wrote Cotton Mather (1721), "that their Creator and Redeemer is to be obeyed in everything, and everything is to be done in obedience to Him" (p. 1). The schooling imagined by many founding fathers such as Benjamin Rush (1786) was no less religious, but added the goal of political docility: "Our schools of learning, by producing one general and uniform system of education, will render the mass of the people more homogeneous and thereby fit them more easily for uniform and peaceable government" (p. 9). The common schools of Horace Mann took on a more

economic flavor and were dedicated to "moralizing" the poor by teaching them to internalize their economic failures so as not to "incorrectly' blame the wealthy ownership class for their continuous failure in realizing the "American Dream". Schooling, Mann (1846) argued, "...disarm(s) the poor of their hostility towards the rich... the burning of hay-ricks and corn-ricks, the demolition of machinery, because it supersedes hand-labor, the sprinkling of vitriol on rich dresses - is only agrarianism run mad. Education prevents both the revenge and the madness" (p.xx). The Rockefeller Foundation (1906) stated such intentions for working class education in even less uncertain terms:

> In our dreams...people yield themselves with perfect docility to our molding hands. The present educational conventions [intellectual and character education] fade from our minds, and unhampered by tradition we work our own good will upon a grateful and responsive folk. We shall not try to make these people [working class] or any of their children into philosophers or men of learning or men of science. We have not to raise up from among them authors, educators, poets or men of letters. We shall not search for embryo great artists, painters, musicians, nor lawyers, doctors, preachers, politicians, statesmen, of whom we have ample supply. The task we set before ourselves is very simple...we will organize children...and teach them to do in a perfect way the things their fathers and mothers are doing in an imperfect way (Gatto, 2000, p. 124).

The recurring theme in each of these examples is clear; the primary purpose for education was control. The schooling of the young was to serve as a seeding ground for the development of passive citizens and malleable workers who would cede their own interest to the needs of the state and the economy. The purpose was the development of the authoritarian personality. It is our contention that this purpose of education is alive and well today – that such purpose is inherent to the very structure of compulsory mass-schooling - and this authoritarian nature has been, and continues to be, the primary driver of educational policy and practice within the United States.

The examples of education for domination reverberate through our history right up to the present day. Just like their counterparts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Christian conservatives and colonizing movements of today continue to exert power via mass-schooling by, what Kincheloe (2006) described as, "reclaiming the colonial discourse." In 2011, for example, the Texas Board of Education passed major social studies reforms to cater to Christian fundamentalists attitudes towards science, slavery, and the civil rights movements. In fact, the Texas GOP even went as far as including a plank in their 2012 party platform that stated their opposition to "the teaching of critical thinking skills" within in Texas public schools (Strauss, 2012). Other states have implemented policies to force particular literature that is critical of the United States completely out of classrooms. Recently, Arizona passed SB 2281 that led to the demand that public schools pull out Paulo Freire's book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Rudolfo Acuna's important critical analysis of western expansionism entitled, *Occupied America.* Even Purdue's current President and former conservative Governor of Indiana Mitch Daniels has joined the witch hunt by attempting to purge Howard Zinn's book *A People's History of the United States* from university courses.

Again, this should not be surprising given the historical context of educational practices in the United States, which has been set up to meet the needs of a particular economic, political, and social order. Global capitalism and cultural dominance mutates, embedding itself into our daily existence of education, debt, consumerism, and unquestioning submission to the larger liberal political structures of reform—thus making

public and private spaces indistinguishable and resistance to these circumstances limiting (Giroux, 2004). Arguably, education has been a catalyst to not only make individuals "foreign to themselves," (Goldman, p. 2) but it has been used historically to "produce a certain type of character to serve certain subsequent ends" (de Cleyre, p. 322). This is evident in the neoliberal "pay to play" and "set and forget" corporate online certifications. Their commercials inundate individuals with dreams of receiving a fast food degree and vocational training (not education), which then positions us just a short drive into the parking lot of corporate jobs. Under these circumstances, education becomes another commodity—something that can be standardized, measured, packaged, and sold to the public (Dokuzović, L. & Freudmann, E, 2009). Thus, a more evolved process that Goldman warned us of over a century ago emerges.

However, the history of education as a hegemonic tool of the powerful is not the only story to be told when considering the evolution of public education. The efforts of the elite to create and normalize pedagogies of oppression have not gone un-noticed, nor have they gone unchallenged. While they may not be as plentiful as one might hope to find in the so-called "cradle of democracy", there are examples of education for liberation within the U.S. and around the world for which we can turn to for better understanding of how we got here and how we might find ways – even within the walls of bourgeois institutions – to create radical informal learning spaces and employ pedagogies of freedom.

So, the question we seek to answer is this: is it possible to create educational alternatives within the relentless restraints of capitalism, statism, and religious dogmatism and "out of the ruins" of its destructive path? Is it within our capacity to do what Holloway (2010) describes as, "opening up cracks" to create non-hierarchical, voluntary, non-authoritarian, and mutual learning experiences in spite of the push to privatize our lives and alienate us from our labor? Deleuze and Guitarri (1987) make an important point, that as much as these ways of being are dominant, overwhelming, and in many cases reproduced, systems are not totalizing or universal. There are holes in the capitalist system where collective efforts are happening in different locales throughout the world. Not only are radical educational experiments emerging, but also these efforts actively oppose and denounce the liberal authoritative state that has all but abandoned them. These movements challenge us to think about learning in unique ways, focusing on experiences and processes that are what Shor (1992) describes as, "desocializing" thus moving our sense of being beyond the driving forces of the market place. Moreover, it is evident from some of the current research on the dynamic learning processes within these social movements (see Ball et. al, 2013) that new relationships are being forged, and that these experiments in horizontal and mutual learning environments have had important influences within different communities. Therefore, the "transformative possibilities" that emerge within these spaces attempt to meet the needs of a particular community (including anything from developing a deeper economic and political analysis to bicycle repairs) while at the same time, working to disrupt the flow and the intrusions of oppressive structures into everyday life. Thus education becomes more dynamic, active, and in many cases, informal.

So, how can radical informal learning spaces inform us and expand our understandings of current social movements and communities resisting neoliberal capitalism? Of equal importance, what knowledge is created/produced within those spaces? We understand informal learning processes as being a broad and a multifaceted subject (Berkman, Burbulas & Silberman-Keller, 2006; Livingstone, 2006). It has encompassed many areas within popular education, adult education, life long learning, experiential learning, workplace learning, and others. However, it has been unfortunate to see that most of the research over the past few decades has focused its energies on workplace efficiency

and reproducing dominate global capitalist structures (Birden, 2004; Brookfield & Host, 2011). From learning new technological innovations with colleagues or other flexi-workers, to "learning by doing" with other associates within corporate life, the dominant research on informal learning has been incorporated into restructuring labor and to build more efficient models of productivity. As Brookfield & Host (2011) point out, the emphasis on adult learning is not on democracy and socialism (I would add anarchism)—it is "focused on 'skilling' or 'retooling' America's workforce to compete in the global market place" (p. 2). Moreover, informal educational practices and research are used to explore higher returns on human investment and expand the landscapes of capital. Ultimately, operating to produce more authoritarian and profitable capitalist structures all while making it seem that the bewildered worker is happier under new specialized knowledge and individualized performances and productivity (Hager & Halliday, 2006; p. 18 and introduction).

It is under these distorted and oppressive conditions that we write this volume. As we mentioned earlier, formal learning, particularly in higher education, has become inundated with scripted and standardized curriculum similar to the K-12 polices under No Child Left Behind and the Common Core Standards. It is conforming to market place logic. This is not only happening in the United States, but has materialized in other parts of the world. What we envision are ways to re-conceptualize the purpose of education outside of the boundaries and limitations of authoritarian practices or institutional goals, particularly those that are guided by market driven forces and statist structures. This highlights some important questions. Is it feasible to construct learning spaces and larger movements that do not take up the goals of the institution while using the institution for other, more liberating purposes? Can we struggle within these spaces to transform the hierarchical and authoritarian institutions where we work, live, and learn or should we focus our effort elsewhere? From the recent actions of individuals and collectives around the world, in our universities and in the streets, the answer does not seem definitive. From our viewpoint, the struggle is much more complex than dismantling state and authoritarian structures. There are other factors, particularly concerning creating learning environments with a culture of resistance in mind—one that 'wages permanent struggle on our movements" (Deleuze and Guitarri, 1987). Consistently, the bombardments and cooptation of state, corporate, as well as other fascist (micro and macro) entities have been relentless in disrupting unique and potentially transformative experiments and projects. This means that local and global movements that attempt to transcend their conditions need to critically reflect upon their actions. This includes their own internal democratic decision-making processes, where authoritarian mindsets and practices can emerge. In many cases, these difficult interactions and struggles are where the fragments of radical informal learning occur. To a certain degree, these narratives give us a much more complex picture of what is occurring within these learning environments. According to Hall, et. al. (2013) these spaces give us "visibility to rich and varied stories of how ordinary people in literally every part of the world are resisting, organising and learning to overcome a world that we do not like but have no recipe to change" (p. x). In part, this is where imagination and the "spontaneity of character" materialize into what Cote, Day and de Peuter (2007) describe as a "myriad [of] teaching and learning contexts—from university classrooms to media literacy programs to community-based education to co-research—such radical pedagogy strives to draw out and examine links between the practices of everyday life and the wider structures of domination" (p. 7).

From the *bachelorettos* in the streets of Argentina (Sitrin, 2012), to the student and working class movements in Quebec, Chile, Greece, Turkey, and other parts of the world, the emergence of radical informal learning spaces are, in part, a retaliation to the efforts of global capitalism and other dominant forces that are used to undermine our autonomy and

extract resources and human capital. Due to these conditions, Chatterton (2002) argues it has become a necessity for communities to "intervene in the corporate city." Collective spaces have emerged to "denounce" the oppressive structures that are so pervasive under capitalism, while at the same time, they are "imagining" and "announcing" new ways of becoming (Crowther, 2006; Foley, 1999; Freire, 1970). Therefore, it is important to note that such learning spaces are not fixed or permanent—they are examples that emerge out of situated spaces and at times, spontaneous circumstances (Conway, 2005; Kitchens, 2009). To learn from these experiences, we rely on the narratives, testimonies and dialogical encounters of individuals and collectives who inhabit those environments.

This volume seeks proposals from individuals and collaborators who research the complex emergence of radical informal learning spaces. The book has been constructed with four major themes in mind:

1. The purpose of education and the politics of learning,
2. Developing theories of transformative possibilities and radical learning,
3. Collective actions: The emergence of radical informal learning spaces and
4. Learning from our experiences: Sharing narratives of resistance.

Our first section asks contributors to focus on the "purpose of education" and the politicization of knowledge. Moreover, what political, economic, social, and cultural barriers impede our ability to create learning environments that are autonomous and support free associations among individuals and collectives. We are looking for contributors who problematize the state and education, the impact of neo-liberalism and privatization on education and informal learning, as well as develop a broader critique of formal learning in general and to what Graeber (2013) describes as, "the war on imagination."

The second section asks for contributors to develop broader theoretical frameworks and philosophical discussions surrounding radical informal learning. Because our social movements and activism are so diverse and multifaceted, we are seeking contributors from various political backgrounds, particularly individuals who are committed to move the discourse beyond sectarianism and petty infighting and see the important and complex affinities within anarchism, feminism, non-western knowledge and decolonizing pedagogies, poststructuralsim, Marxism, horizontilism, collectivism, critical pedagogies and many others.

The third section encourages contributors to develop narratives, testimonies and ethnographies of their experiences within different radical informal learning spaces. Through the use of various theoretical lenses, authors will look reflectively on their role as activists, educators, and learners. We are specifically asking contributors to highlight learning processes, decision-making, knowledge sharing, the overall teacher/student relationship and how these spaces may differ from formal learning environments.

Finally, the last section has been developed as a reaction to the multiple institutional barriers that emerge in sharing these stories of radical informal learning processes. It is no stretch to say that many activists are skeptical of academia because they have been more than willing to sell themselves to Wall Street friendly financiers and data extracting institutions. In these particular cases and situations, ethical questions come into play. The colonizing efforts of institutions and grant-generated research projects bring up questions of, "who owns the research," as well as "what voices are valued or highlighted" (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Marecek, et. al, 1997; Tuck & Guishard, 2013). So, with these issues in mind, what are alternatives to some of these oppressive research practices, and are there other

ways we can disseminate or share this knowledge within our communities beyond the corporate publishing model? In fact, there are many excellent examples in which activist researchers and collective organizations are sharing information regarding their situated struggles. Through variations of independent, open source and self-publishing, DIY pamphlets, as well as organized skill share sessions, information and knowledge is being creatively constructed and distributed. Furthermore, it is evident that these vibrant projects continue to operate in different capacities, particularly within the internet communiqués of the Zapatista movement that transcended international borders (Khasnabish, 2012), the use of creative social media by Occupy movements and the indymedia sites that have given us up-to-date information from the frontlines of the international movements against neoliberalism, as well as some of the collective online networks, anarchist libraries, and archives that have been so incredibly resourceful for communities that are seeking a different way of being. With that said, we encourage contributors who are inspired by these divergent research and learning projects and are willing to offer more in-depth discussions of how we may think more critically of alternative ways of disseminating information.

References:

Bekerman, Z., N. C. Burbules and D. Silberman Keller (2006) *Learning in places: The informal education reader*, New York: Peter Lang.

Birden, (2004). Theorizing a Coalition-Engendered Education: The Case Of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective's Body Education. *Adult Education Quarterly.* August 2004 54: 257-272.

Brookfield & Host. (2011). *Radicalizing Learning: Adult Education for a Just World*. San Francisco: Jossey-Boss.

Cammarota, J., & Fine, M. (2008). *Revolutionizing education: Youth participatory action research in motion*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Chatterton, P. (2002). Chatterton, P. (2002) 'Squatting is still legal, necessary and free'. A brief intervention in the corporate city. *Antipode*. 34,1. Pp1-7.

Crowther, J (2006) 'Knowledge and learning in social movements: issues and opportunities for adult community education', in Edwards, R., Gallacher, J and Whittaker, S (eds.) *Learning outside the academy: International research perspectives*, New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Conway, J. (2005). *Praxis and politics: Knowledge production in social movements.* New York: Routledge.

Coté, M., Day, R. J. F., & De, P. G. (2007). Introduction: What is utopian pedagogy? In Coté, M., Day, R. J. F., & De, P. G. (Eds.). *Utopian pedagogy: Radical experiments against neoliberal globalization*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

de Cleyre, V. (1909). Modern Educational Reform. In Sartwell, C. & de Cleyre, V. & Presley, S. (Eds.). *Exquisite rebel: The essays of voltairine de cleyre: Anarchist, feminist, genius.* Albany: State University of New York Press. pp. 251 – 256.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Dokuzović, L. & Freudmann, E. (2009). Creating worlds. Squatting the crisis: On the current protests in education and perspectives on radical change. Retrieved from http://eipcp.net/projects/creatingworlds/dokuzovic-freudmann/en.

Emery, K., & Ohanian, S. (2004). *Why is corporate America bashing our public schools?.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Ferrer, F. (1913). *The Origin and Ideals of the Modern School*. New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Foley, G. (1999). *Learning in social action: A contribution to understanding informal education.* London: Zed Books.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Gatto, John Taylor. (2000). *The Underground History of American Education: A School Teacher's Intimate Investigation Into the Problem of Modern Schooling*. New York, NY: Odysseus Group.

Godwin, William. (1783). *An Account of the Seminary That Will Be Opened.* London, UK: T. Cadell.

Goldman, E. (1906). "The Child and Its Enemies." *Mother Earth*. v.1 (April 1906). pp. 7-14.

Giroux, H. A. (2004). *The terror of neoliberalism: Authoritarianism and the Eclipse of democracy.* Aurora, Ont: Garamond Press.

Graeber, D. (2013). *The democracy project: a history, a crisis, a movement.* New York: Spiegel & Grau.

Hager & Halliday. (2006). *Recovering informal learning: Wisdom, judgment and community.* The Netherlands: Springer.

Hall et. al. (2013). Introduction. In *Learning and education for a better world: The role of social movements.* New York: Sense Publishers.

Holloway, J. (2010). *Crack Capitalism.* New York: Pluto Press.

Khasnabish, A. (2012). To walk questioning: Zapatismo, the radical imagination, and a transnational pedagogy of liberation. In Haworth, R. (ed.) *Anarchist pedagogies: Collective actions, theories and critical reflections on education.* Oakland: PM Press.

Kitchens, (2009). Situated Pedagogy and the Situationist International: Countering a Pedagogy of Placelessness. *Educational Studies: Journal of the American Educational Studies Association*, v45 n3 p. 240-261.

Kincheloe, J.L (2006). A critical politics of knowledge: Analyzing the role of educational psychology in educational policy. *Policy Futures in Education*. Vol.4:3. 220-235.

Livingstone, D.W. (2006). Informal learning: Conceptual distinctions and preliminary findings. In Bekerman, Z., Burbules, N. C., & Silberman-Keller, D. (Eds.). *Learning in places: The informal education reader.* New York: P. Lang.

Mann, Horace. (1846). *Twelfth Annual Report to the Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education.* Retrieved at: https://learn.usf.edu/bbcswebdav/users/ljohnso2/3604/Readings/Mann%252012th.htm

Marecek, J., Fine, M. and Kidder, L. (1997), Working Between Worlds: Qualitative Methods and Social Psychology. *Journal of Social Issues*, 53: 631–644.

Mather, Cotton. (1721). *A Father's Resolutions.* Retrieved at: http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/mather/resolvd.htm

Rush, Benjamin. (1786). *Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic.* Philadelphia, PA: Thomas Dobson Publishing.

Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education.* Chicago: University Chicago Press.

Sitrin, M. (2012). *Everyday revolutions: Horizontalism and autonomy in argentina.* London: Zed Books.

Strauss, Valerie. (2012). *Texas GOP rejects 'critical thinking' skills. Really.* The Washington Post, July, 9, 2012.

Tuck, E. & Guishard, M. (2013). Scientifically based research and settler coloniality: An ethical framework of decolonial participatory action research. In T. M Kress, C. Malott, & B. Porfilio (Eds.) *Challenging status quo retrenchment: New directions in critical qualitative research* (pp. 3-27). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Preface:

Introduction: Robert Haworth

The Purpose of Education and the Politics of Learning
(4 chapters)
Authoritarianism and Education (John Elmore)
The state and education
Privatizing the public sphere
Formal learning and the standardization of curriculum
Critiquing informal learning and the market place
Hierarchical and traditional practices
Anti-intellectualism

Developing Theories of Transformative Possibilities and Radical Informal Learning
(4 chapters)
Anarchism and informal learning
Horizontalism
Freire and popular education
Non-western knowledge
Marxist (Marxist Humanism, Autonomous Marxist, etc.)
Poststructurualism

The Emergence of Radical Informal Learning Spaces
(4-5 chapters)
Learning in social movements
Student movements
Squatting: Learning through living
Anarchism and art
Free Schools
Homeschooling/Community schools
Collectives
Youth Cultures-punk, hip hop, folk
Unions: independent
Technology, social networking, open source and actions on the streets.

Learning From Our Experiences: Sharing Narratives of Resistance
(4 chapters)
Institutional issues
Alternative ways of disseminating knowledge
Counterinsurgency, zines, open source journals
Critical ethnography
Participatory processes: Activist/scholar
Researching in the "commons"

Afterword...