Out of the Ruins
The Emergence of Radical Informal Learning Spaces

Edited by Robert H. Haworth and John M. Elmore

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. 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.

The important news is that emancipatory educational practices are 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 efforts to commodify and privatize our everyday educational
experiences. The major themes 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 how individuals
and collectives struggle to share these narratives within and outside of institutions.

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tion for social justice, democracy, atheism, and antiauthoritarianism.

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“How do we create spaces of learning that will help us to avoid the pitfalls of routine,
hierarchy, and passivity? In other words, how do we learn to change the world,
together? Those trying to figure this out will enjoy reading about the experiments,
strategies, and logics of anarchist education in this rich collection.”
—Lesley Wood, professor of sociology, York University