

**THE ETHICS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND FINANCIAL LITERACY  
EDUCATION: A SECURITY AND FREEDOM FOR THE OTHER**

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## **Abstract**

Financial literacy education (FLE) and entrepreneurship education (EE) are paradigmatic of the dominant response in education to precarious employment and increasing financial insecurity. Motivated by a conviction that governments, researchers, teachers, parents and businesses must empower individuals, particularly the most disadvantaged, to manage and even thrive in an increasingly competitive and unstable economic climate, FLE and EE advocates call for the reconstruction of economic practices, cultural narratives and education systems to create more knowledgeable and responsible individuals. The expansive and intensive aims of FLE and EE signal their “public pedagogic” character – a term I borrow from Henry Giroux to stress that FLE and EE lessons are taught through various media texts (e.g. debt and investment television programs, policy documents, FLE and EE video games, soap operas, newspaper articles and apps), are embedded in supportive economic practices, laws and regulations and aim at creating a particular ‘public’ that is both a conglomeration of financially literate entrepreneurs and a shared world.

Drawing from Levinasian scholarship, Marxist theory, critical pedagogy and critical theory, I conduct a critical philosophical analysis of FLE and EE security and freedom narratives, examining the claim that FLE, EE and their attendant economic practices, laws and institutions will improve the economic security and freedom of many. I find that FLE and EE public pedagogues’ narratives – despite claims that they are driven by a responsibility to improve the security and freedom of others – betray a primary responsibility for the security and freedom of capital, which undermines others’ security and freedom. I conclude my analysis by outlining a critical FLE and EE public pedagogy that promotes a responsibility for the other and others, not capital.

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## **The Ethics of Entrepreneurship and Financial Literacy Education: A Security and Freedom for the Other**

*The blessing that the market does not ask about birth is paid for in the exchange society by the fact that the possibilities conferred by birth are molded to fit the production of goods that can be bought on the market. (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1947, pg. 9)*

There were two key events which spurred my recent thinking about the dominant educational response to economic insecurity and questions of how one should live and be able to live. The first was a Toronto District School Board (TDSB) workshop that I attended as an elementary school teacher. I recall sitting amongst numerous other teachers and a significant number of administrators from our Family of Schools (FOS) and was struck by how excited the presenters were and how they thought their project signaled a revolutionary and egalitarian rethinking of education. They began by showing images of assembly lines, arguing that up until this moment schools were essentially factories molding students so they could be fitted to the needs of the economy. They played Pink Floyd's *Another Brick in the Wall* and talked about liberating students so they could think more critically and outside the box they had, until this moment, been penned into. Rather than regurgitating solutions given to them, students were to be problem solvers for problems which did not even exist yet. They were not to be molded for the world as it was but prepared for a fundamentally different world that was soon to arrive.

This appeared heady stuff, but I could not help thinking how ironic their critique was. At the same time as the school system was lambasted for its subservience to the economy and stultification of students' freedom and potential growth, it was apparent that schools had to change because the economy's demands were changing. Problem solvers and creative thinkers were needed, and this was what teachers now had to create. While the new mold appeared to allow for and even demand variation, at heart the 'revolutionary' concern was that the economy's

needs had changed and its mind factory, to borrow from Alan Sears (2003), had not; it was still churning out the inflexible and uncreative models needed to fill the bygone Fordist economy's hierarchical and fixed posts.

The other event took place as I was thinking about what to write about for my MA thesis. I had been reading Foucault and was wondering how I could use his concept of governmentality to better understand the relation between education and freedom. After a late night at the middle school where I teach, I was driving home and heard Kathleen Wynne, the then Education Minister, being interviewed on the CBC. In response to the financial crisis, Wynne argued that education systems must integrate financial literacy into all relevant subject areas. If we were more financially literate, Wynne opined, the crisis would not have happened. Amidst calls for austerity and the privatization of significant social goods and services (e.g. affordable housing, post-secondary education, healthcare, pensions, etc.), Wynne wanted individuals to be more financially resilient so they could weather economic downturns and procure what they need to live well on an expanding market.

While seemingly a beneficial initiative, education was once again being enlisted to mold individuals so that they could be the sorts of people the economy needed – in this instance, people who could block out the noise and see ‘market fundamentals’ (i.e. avoid a dangerous herd mentality) and who did not need bailouts or the collective provision of key goods and services. In the midst of a shift towards austerity policies, financial literacy education held out the promise that individuals could become financially autonomous and thus fend for themselves. It struck me that financial literacy initiatives seemed a paradigmatic example of governmentality at work: Individuals were not to be barred from particular avenues of action but instead encouraged and empowered to act in ways which assumed economic insecurity was an individual problem solved through more prudent investment and consumption. In the first example, the economy needed

different, more flexible inputs, and, in the second example, it wanted to shed itself of the costs of storing, reconfiguring and deploying those inputs.

As I looked further into the educational response to the economic crisis and, more generally, the ongoing structural changes to the global economy stemming from technological advances and a reconfiguration of economic production practices and relations, often gathered under the headings of neoliberalism, Post-Fordism and globalization, I saw a common pattern. The dominant response has been to call for the creation of individuals who can thrive in an economy which prizes the continuous production of new knowledge, creativity, innovation, flexibility and self-reliance; this is a key aim of numerous educational initiatives (e.g. character education, vocational education, knowledge mobilization, ‘grit’ and increased standardized testing), but none more so than entrepreneurship education (EE)<sup>1</sup> and financial literacy education (FLE).<sup>2</sup> These two initiatives, it is argued, are necessary for improving economic competitiveness, fostering economic growth and ensuring economic security and a robust freedom for all at a time of fiscal ‘restraint’ and economic insecurity.<sup>3</sup> Taken together, the aim of these two initiatives is to create financially literate entrepreneurs who have the ability and desire to be life-long learner, adaptive problem-solvers, collaborators, multi-taskers, optimists, resilient, sense-makers out of “chaos”, self-directed, creative, curious and agile (Abel and Nair, 2015, para. 3).

Endorsed around the world, FLE and EE take myriad forms, are delivered through a variety of means, such as apps, curriculum, television shows, workshops, special days and competitive contests, and target various groups. Youth are the prized demographic for FLE and

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<sup>1</sup> EE refers to the teaching of business creation knowledge, flexibility, opportunity attentiveness and innovation skills, and, while the term enterprise education is often used in the UK literature to denote the teaching of self-

<sup>2</sup> FLE is the teaching of personal money-management skills, knowledge and behaviour.

<sup>3</sup> This restraint is often one-sided. Bailouts of financial institutions, subsidies to incentivize companies and an expansion of security apparatuses continue alongside cutbacks in social welfare programs.



EE initiatives since they are more likely to feel the full force of Post-Fordism's flexible insecurity (Means, 2015) and are often presented as a key resource for spurring economic growth (Cornell, 2001). In Ontario, Canada – the political jurisdiction in which this thesis primarily focuses – financial literacy has already been integrated into the grade 4 – 12 curriculum, and fostering entrepreneurship through education is a significant policy focus at all levels of education in the province (Fullan, 2014; Council of Ontario Universities, 2013; The Learning Partnership, 2013; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Women (Bellevue et al., 2003; OECD, 2013a, c), seniors (Rooney, 2014) and aboriginal youth (Pinto and Blue, 2014) are three other prominent groups targeted in Canada, echoing the broad trend found in other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nations in which FLE and EE are framed as empowering the marginalized and excluded so they can share in the resources and opportunities the global economy creates.

Linking together social justice concerns, austerity discourses and total-war mobilization rhetoric<sup>4</sup>, FLE and EE advocates claim that the more creative potential, investor and consumer acumen and human capital we harness, the more economic growth, individual security and self-fulfillment opportunities we will create. In place of a war on poverty we are all to enlist in a targeted proxy war against investor ignorance, consumer irresponsibility and risk-aversion on behalf of the most disadvantaged and to ensure citizens *qua* liabilities remain off governments' and business's accounting ledgers and are able to create new opportunities for capital investment (OECD, 2014). Everyone seemingly wins if they play along: companies, investors and those with significant economic capital can continue to shed their costs and find new avenues for investment

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<sup>4</sup> The Reagan era's 1983 report from the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A National at Risk*, is the paradigmatic example of the use of war mobilization rhetoric to marshal education practices and resources to create the human capital needed to fend off competitor nations. More recently, US education secretary, Arne Duncan (2009), littered his call for a "revolution" in teacher training to improve US competitiveness and reduce inequality with martial metaphors, speaking of a need to win this "critical battle" (para. 13) by creating an "army of great, new teachers" (para. 16).

while those with little economic capital have become more secure and freer. That we should assist the economically precarious is not in question here: my concern is with the ends FLE and EE advocates promote and the ways in which they seek to assist those in need (i.e. the particular symbolic and material construction of the security and freedom we are to provide and work towards and the ethical and political means we are to use to reach these goals).

Teaching individuals how to independently manage financial risk and insecurity through improved knowledge of investing, consuming and entrepreneurship is useful to many and thus often is assumed to be unproblematic, especially when the alternative is the withholding of such skills. Lacking the tools to innovate, take prudent financial risks and efficiently manage what resources they have, those who are already disadvantaged will be even less likely to compete for secure employment, start their own businesses or invest for their retirement, retrain or weather financial emergencies. To give all the best possible opportunity to obtain some measure of economic security *in the world as it exists*, financial literacy and entrepreneurship education providers should help disadvantaged individuals obtain the dispositions and skills needed to improve their economic security. Moreover, we should continue to cultivate individuals' ability to create new goods and services, improve production and conserve resources. The technological innovations we have created over the years from indoor plumbing to the Internet have improved our lives and grown our individual and collective capacities immensely, and given impending ecological crises we must exponentially improve resource conservation and sustainability efforts.

The problem, however, is that such innovation and improvement are tied to political economic practices and relations which limit the freedom and security of many to that which is consonant with capital's expansion, prioritizing capital's needs over those of others whose

limited freedom and insecurity capital relies upon for its continued accumulation.<sup>5</sup> FLE and EE advocates occlude this parasitism and promote a neoliberal innovation, freedom, security and ethical obligation which appear universal and of benefit to all but in actuality support the reproduction and expansion of the political economic practices that create the problems FLE and EE purport to ameliorate. In effect, they shirk their responsibility for others' freedom and security by supporting the construction of a world which is more responsible for capital's security and freedom than it is for others' – a neoliberal innovation or world-making which is neoliberal in that it expands, intensifies and moralizes competitive practices.<sup>6</sup> A world, a concatenation and synthesis of assemblages consisting of various cultural practices, subjectivities, objects, spaces, agents and knowledges, supports the actualization of particular possibilities at the expense of others. Any ethical response to others must take account of what is 'possible' or 'feasible' within the present world, hence the need for FLE and EE, but this response must also support the creation of a different world, one populated with more ethical possibilities and feasibilities than are available at present. The core ethical problem with FLE and EE is that capital's needs and demands drive FLE and EE advocates' world creation efforts.

'Capital's demands' refer to the material and ideological force stemming from a particular political economic relation marked by generalized competition, unequal access to the means of reproduction and class antagonism "over the conditions and terms of the extraction of surplus labour" (Shaikh, 1990, pg. 75). Influenced by contingent laws, treaties, regulations, guidelines,

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<sup>5</sup> Capitalism has "created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together" (Marx and Engels, 1848/2004, pg. 41) but ties these productive forces to relations that produce acute large-scale crises (over-production), require the inculcation of particular consumer needs and dispositions and generate constant individual and social crises even during 'boom' times (ineradicable poverty, underdevelopment, surplus populations, inequality and economic insecurity).

<sup>6</sup> As I outline below, neoliberalism is not simply a return to a meaner capitalism or an unadulterated neoclassical economic theory but is an ongoing political reorganization of all facets of society so that competitive relations are expanded, intensified and moralized. This reorganization is not uncontested, and its particular character is influenced by other dominant discourses, historical practices and political work by groups with differing access to power. However, at its core is the moralization and naturalization of competition (Brown, 2015; Dardot and Laval, 2014).

technologies, subjectivities, built-environments and ideological hegemonies, this reified force supports particular actions and actors while barring other actions and disempowering some actors (notably those with limited access to the means of production and the created surplus). As an example, workers at the Caterpillar plant in London, Ontario were recently told that they must accept a 50% wage cut or their jobs will be relocated to Muncie, Indiana because workers there will accept lower wages (Macaluso, 2012). Capital in this example is both a particular company (a conglomeration of capital) and the system of relations which creates the abstract demand that calls on this company to continually improve its ability to compete, increase shareholder returns, attract investment and stave off competitors, which in this instance required workers in Ontario to accept less pay. Despite the fact that we, however unequally, continually give life and character to capital, it is a force that is external to our *individual* control and issues materially and ideologically constructed demands with which individuals or firms, even those who control significant amounts of capital, have little recourse but to comply (Marx, 1867/1990).<sup>7</sup>

While presented as neutral, a fact of life and democratic (in that it has the potential to affect all equally, a belief which occludes its always classed, gendered and racialized character), how capital will accumulate and who will bear the brunt of its creative destruction are the result of historical outcomes (e.g. private property laws, free trade agreements, financial products, shipping and information technology, the expansion of consumerism, the particular form political governance takes, the roles and practices we have constructed, etc.) and present work by differentially empowered groups. There is never a bare, unmediated demand that we create

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<sup>7</sup> Wendy Brown (2015) perspicuously stresses neoliberal capital's ideologically and materially constructed power, writing ". . . rather than each individual pursuing his or her own interest and unwittingly generating collective benefit, today, it is the project of macroeconomic growth and credit enhancement to which neoliberal individuals are tethered and with which their existence as human capital must align if they are to thrive. When individuals, firms, or industries constitute a drag on this good, rather than a contribution to it, they may be legitimately cast off or reconfigured – through downsizing, furloughs, outsourcing, benefits cuts, mandatory job shares, or offshore production relocation" (pg. 84).

through our production and consumption. However, in any form of capitalism there is a continuous demand calling for more from those with the least political economic power and our world (i.e. more time, more creativity, greater efficiency and more cheap or free resources). The ethical problem I highlight with capitalism and my phrase ‘capital demands’ is not only how the demand to accumulate has been constructed and is presently mediated. The problem this phrase points to is that in any form of capitalism there is necessarily both a demand to continually accumulate and an unequal distribution of the means to shape and mediate this demand.

As I expand upon throughout, global capital in its present historically, racialized, gendered and classed forms (e.g. finance capital, transnational systems of production, formations which depend upon outsourcing the costs of gendered reproductive labour and environmental destruction for continued profitability and formations which exclude those with the least political and social power from the means to live and or leave them with only the most precarious labour ‘opportunities’) continually makes claims upon our collective commons (world) to enable its present formations to accumulate. Capitalism is not synonymous with a market economy; it is a *political* economic system in which access to the means of production (to our world or collective cultural and material commons) is privatized and inequitably distributed. This inequitable gendered, racialized, classed, national and transnational distribution of economic power significantly influences any political response to capital’s demand to accumulate (a demand made by particular capital formations in competition with each other). Again, there are a variety of responses individuals, groups, nations and regions can take to capital’s demands – Iceland’s recent revolution is instructive in this regard – but to create significant alternatives requires *taking back* and reforming spaces, laws, regulations, practices and resources captured by capital. Economic, social and political power are intertwined in capitalism; to reform our world for others

necessitates we alter how economic, social and political power are distributed. This is not to be against a role for markets in the more ethical and responsible political economy we must create, but to stress that we must move beyond capitalism: we must take back our world and future from capital in all its guises.

FLE and EE advocates have no answer for the insecurity and limited freedom capitalism generates. Worse, they encourage and ‘empower’ individuals to conform to capital’s demands. Collective means of alleviating security (e.g. collective economic security schemes such as a guaranteed income, participatory planning, workplace democracy or public pensions) are eschewed in favour of individualized ‘best practices’ which hold individuals – often those who are already significantly structurally disadvantaged – rather than capitalism to blame for their economic insecurity (e.g. increased debt, unemployment and underemployment and inability to retire). In this sense, FLE and EE initiatives complement neoliberal macroeconomic policies and structural reforms, operating as the ‘good cop’ to austerity’s ‘bad cop’ by empowering people to act in ways that might improve their own financial security and freedom but will more likely reproduce the same individualization of economic risk, increased precarity and expansion of market logic the more coercive austerity policies institute. Riddled with a cheery, hopeless optimism, FLE and EE essentially reiterate the core message of austerity narratives, which blame low-income homebuyers for the recent financial crisis, castigate the unemployed for not being sufficiently innovative or hard-working, criticize public sector workers and social welfare recipients as irresponsible parasites and present collective, public social welfare programs as cumbersome and inefficient. For FLE promoters, “the real problem is in the mirror” (Wente, 2014, para. 2), and for EE supporters the best we can collectively do is to continually restructure our practices, relations and selves to teach and support the innovation, creativity, insecurity and

prudence capital demands (Crane, 2014). Far from being apolitical initiatives, FLE and EE are two planks in the disparate neoliberal response to neoliberalism's twin crises of accumulation and legitimation: a response that expands and intensifies material practices that individualize insecurity while dismantling opposition to marketization in order to restore neoliberal capitalism's legitimacy and create the conditions and subjects needed for continued capital investment and accumulation.

In this thesis I claim that the dominant cultural narratives found in financial literacy and entrepreneurship education texts are unethical and that our lack of adherence to neoliberal precepts is not the problem; the problem is the neoliberal material and symbolic construction of security, freedom, political action and our ethical obligation to others, which FLE and EE initiatives and research presently support. To create a more livable, secure and open future for all, we must contest austerity narratives and initiatives such as FLE and EE and construct ethical alternatives, which must include reforming the political economic practices and relations which render many economically insecure and unnecessarily limit their freedom. The point is not to help others manage their abandonment or reform excluded and marginalized individuals so as to include them within a system that requires their or others' marginalization and exclusion to function; the goal is to reform the system so that we do not have to accept the abandonment of others or their forced reformation and more ethical relations and outcomes are possible.

Taking up concepts and insights from Simon Critchley (1999, 2008, 2009a, b; Critchley et al., 2000) and other Levinasian scholars, who combine a heterodox Levinasian ethics with Marxism and/or radical democracy and critical theory,<sup>8</sup> as well as Marxist theory, critical

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<sup>8</sup> E.g. Atterton and Calarco, 2010; Caygill, 2002; Dussel, 2006; Fagan, 2009; Gibbs, 1994; Horowitz, 2011; Horowitz and Horowitz, 2006, 2010; Marder, 2004; Ryder, 2012; Tahmasebi-Birgani, 2010; Tahmasebi-Birgani, 2014.

pedagogy and critical theory, I analyze FLE and EE policy, academic and media texts, arguing that public representations of FLE and EE draw from and support a neoliberal “public pedagogy”<sup>9</sup> – a term used by Henry Giroux (2004b) to describe the educative character of culture, which “plays a central role in producing narratives, metaphors, and images that exercise a powerful pedagogical force over how people think of themselves and their relationships to others” (pg. 62).<sup>10</sup> From this perspective, the influence of FLE and EE extend beyond the classroom and credit counseling office; we are given entrepreneurial and financial literacy lessons from numerous media texts (e.g. debt and investment television shows, FLE and EE video games, soap operas, newspaper articles and apps), policy pronouncements and the daily economic practices, which these texts influence and which increasingly encourage and promote an entrepreneurial and financialized life. Building on others who have elucidated the ‘educational’ means through which hierarchical capital relations and practices are produced and justified (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Bowles and Gintis, 2011) and more specific work which links FLE and EE initiatives to neoliberalism (Armstrong, 2005; Arthur, 2012c; du Gay, 2004; Jones and Murtola, 2012), I am claiming that FLE and EE policy, academic and media texts and the accompanying material practices they encourage us to create offer a significant distillation of the narratives that support and are supported by a neoliberal public pedagogy: “a powerful ensemble of ideological and institutional forces whose aim is to produce competitive, self-

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<sup>9</sup> One which, like all discourses, cannot be captured and analyzed directly but whose contours can be sketched through the artifacts, practices, subjects, dispositions, language and emotions it informs and which inform it.

<sup>10</sup> As a construct, a public pedagogy shares much in common with Foucault’s (1980) nebulous *dispositif*: a “thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, administrative measures, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid” (pg. 194). This does not entail that our world is not rife with numerous diverse, incommensurate and even conflicting practices, texts and discourses; there is more than one operative public pedagogy and there are many forms of neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell, 2002). I am not arguing that there is a singular symbolic or even material construction of the public or that our common world is a homogenous mass. I am analyzing prominent FLE and EE narratives that seek to constrain and empower us in particular ways. These narratives will be uncritically accepted by some and resisted by others. My purpose is to support those who resist and problematize the world FLE and EE advocates encourage us to create.



interested individuals vying for their own material and ideological gain” (Giroux, 2004a, pg. 106).

Aligned with the aims of critical theory, this thesis contributes to both critical FLE and EE research by conducting a philosophical analysis of the ‘ethical’ security and freedom narratives FLE and EE public pedagogues promote and their link to capitalism’s structural violence while counter-posing the ethical necessity of a critical FLE and EE for the other. The analysis and critique that follow are both immanent – analyzing FLE and EE narratives using their own conceptions and underlying assumptions – and juxtapose excluded, ethical conceptions of ethics, security, freedom and politics. I argue below that FLE and EE narratives and the material practices the FLE and EE public pedagogy promotes limit our ethical obligation to the other, offer an unethical security and freedom, and forward a depoliticized, unethical politics, supporting the security and freedom of capital at others’ expense. Following my critique, I propose a critical FLE and EE public pedagogy that is responsible for others rather than capital – an alternative ethical-political response to a particular situation which seeks to institute a political order open to disruption by the others the order inevitably excludes.<sup>11</sup>

## **Thesis Outline**

### **Chapter One: Methodology**

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<sup>11</sup> This is a core feature of many critiques informed by radical democratic theory and a Levinasian/Derridean ethics – i.e. that we must act for the other and create a new order but must remain open to those the new order excludes. For Critchley (1999), we must continually expose the archic ‘said’ with the anarchic ‘saying’. Ruitenberg (2013) is also characteristic, arguing for both a ‘hospitality’ and ‘democracy’ in which “Hospitality calls attention to the risk that the formation of a collective subject . . . can result in new exclusions and inhospitalities . . . [while] democracy calls attention to the risk that an openness to the singular Other can leave the host blind to structural and contingent arrangements that unevenly distribute the positions from which hospitality is offered or sought” (pgs. 101-103). ‘Orthodox’ Levinasian approaches – this is how Critchley (2002) describes Levinasian approaches that leave out substantial analysis of politics – focus on the “moment before reason, the ethical moment that subtends the demand for justice” (Gibbs, 1994, pg. 242). This thesis follows Critchley’s ‘heterodox’ approach, stressing the need for political action informed by and open to the ethical relation with the other.

Chapter one outlines the methodology of the thesis, which draws from critical theory, Marxist political economic theory, narrative theory and Levinasian-inspired philosophers to analyze the FLE and EE public pedagogy – specifically its manifestation in FLE and EE ‘ethical’ security and freedom narratives reproduced in policy, media and academic texts and the accompanying material practices these texts support. These narratives and supporting material practices are argued to influence our relations, conditions of action, subjectification and reflection; they recreate symbolic and material assemblages which we draw upon, exist within and which in turn support the instantiation and reproduction of neoliberal conceptions of security, freedom, ethics and political action.

The texts and examples outlined in the second chapter’s policy overview and used throughout in the critical philosophical analysis in chapter four and five were created by prominent institutions and groups and thus are arguably indicative of the dominant FLE and EE public pedagogy and are also likely to reach a wide audience and significantly influence prominent public cultural narratives. Texts from non-Canadian national and international organizations are also included to stress the symbiotic relation between international and national levels of governance, highlight the largely homogenous character of FLE and EE narratives amongst OECD nations and forefront particular narratives less pronounced in the Canadian sources studied. Additionally, a variety of textual forms were analyzed to limit the influence any one particular text form has on my reproduction of the FLE and EE public pedagogy and to illuminate more clearly the FLE and EE public pedagogy, which is informed by myriad discursive and non-discursive sources.

## **Chapter Two: Neoliberalism and FLE and EE Policy**

Chapter two is split into two sections. In the first section, a brief history of neoliberalism as a political economic regime of subjectification and accumulation is provided, and its core tenets are contrasted with those of an earlier post-World War II Keynesian Welfare State (KWS) capitalism. The second section overviews the FLE and EE policy response to neoliberal capitalism's problematizations with a particular focus on the Canadian context. This section begins with FLE policymakers and institutions and then moves to outline EE's supportive policy apparatus. Canadian federal and provincial government policies and private and international FLE and EE organizations are included in an outline that is not meant to be exhaustive but rather representative of the international, national, public and private organizations that influence the FLE and EE public pedagogy and the core assumptions that underpin the FLE and EE public pedagogy's 'ethical' security and freedom narratives. The chapter emphasizes that neoliberal capitalism, as a particular capitalist mode of production and subjectification, requires the fabrication of the same subjectivities FLE and EE initiatives seek to institute: financially literate entrepreneurial investors, producers and consumers who will stimulate economic growth, create innovations and ventures in which to invest, and accept the neoliberal economic constraints within which they are to act, thus 'solving' both the capital accumulation and the legitimacy crises.

### **Chapter Three: FLE and EE Literature Review**

The literature review begins with the FLE discipline and then moves to EE and entrepreneurship studies, finding that while significant interest in EE precedes FLE by about two decades, the two academic disciplines share a number of similarities. They both depoliticize economic insecurity and present improved consumption, investment and production as solutions to Post-Fordism's individualization of risk, inequality, low growth and increased global competition. Most FLE and

EE researchers also limit themselves to figuring out how to teach financial literacy and entrepreneurship and measuring entrepreneurial acumen and financial behaviour or knowledge. Substantial debate on the ends of FLE and EE is wholly relegated to the critical FLE or EE literature, which shares this thesis's concerns about the problematic ends FLE and EE initiatives support: the reproduction of a gendered and racialized economic insecurity; the individualization of economic security; the commodification of our commons and subjectivity; and a capitalized future and ethics. This thesis expands the existing critical literature by examining the ethics, security, freedom and politics offered in FLE and EE narratives, in particular analyzing the relationship between FLE and EE public pedagogic freedom and security narratives and neoliberalism, and then elucidating an alternative ethical and critical FLE and EE public pedagogy.

#### **Chapter Four: An 'Ethical' Security for Capital**

Chapter four analyzes the ethics and security promoted in the narratives undergirding the FLE and EE public pedagogy. The chapter opens with a presentation of the FLE and EE public pedagogy's broad security narrative, specifically the narrative's claim that we have an ethical obligation to ensure that all can access capital and its 'bright-siding' assumption that this access will ensure a significant measure of financial security for all. I then examine specific security narratives in greater detail and argue that part of their efficacy comes from their appropriation of the 'force' of both a liberal-democratic ethics and a primary and infinite responsibility for the other (Critchley, 2008). Finally, I analyze the 'ethical' means through which we are to ensure that all can access capital and become secure, finding that this inclusion requires the production of others' insecurity. The chapter concludes that while most FLE and EE supporters present their educational initiatives and suggestions for economic reform as driven by an ethics that calls us to

improve the individual financial security of all, this ethics is limited by capital. In place of an ethics that calls us to take responsibility for the security of others, FLE and EE's public pedagogy effectively supports an ethics in which we are responsible for capital before others.

### **Chapter Five: An 'Ethical' Freedom for Capital**

This chapter analyzes FLE and EE narratives which link ethics and freedom together. The first form of freedom analyzed is *freedom as autonomy* defined as an achieved state of freedom from particular aspects of the capital relation (e.g. the boss, work, political impotence and capital itself). The chapter begins by examining this freedom in FLE *freedom-from-capital* narratives and then in *freedom-with-capital* EE narratives. I argue that both FLE and EE freedom narratives support a *freedom for capital* to grow its capacities through others while remaining free from a responsibility for the conditions of others' freedom. At the end of the chapter, the other form of freedom, *freedom as virtue*, is presented as a duty to act as free people ostensibly should and work on oneself so one is autonomous, resilient and desired by capital. Drawing on Lacanian political theorists and Levinasian ethics, I expand upon my earlier analysis of the FLE and EE public pedagogy's ethics and find that this 'freedom' not only limits our obligations to others but is hostile to others.

### **Chapter Six: An FLE and EE Public Pedagogy for Others**

In this chapter, the ideal motivating an FLE and EE public pedagogy for others is borrowed from Jones and Spicer's (2009) concept of an entrepreneurship for the other. This ideal motivates and informs my suggestions for a critical FLE and EE outside and within the school. I argue that outside the school we must learn from the 'entrepreneurial' innovations of collectives such as Occupy, the indignants movement in Spain, Basic Income Earth Network, Quebec's Maple

Spring, Idle No More, the World Social Forum and the Zapatistas, which, among other accomplishments, create what Myers (2013) calls “worldly things” mobilizing a collective and contested public. As part of this project, I call for a critical financial literacy to help read the present for both difference and dominance and the creation of political institutions and practices to support further political innovation. In preparation for a different future, I also call for the expansion of practices that can enable the other to effectively pursue private interests and grow his or her human capacities as he or she wishes. Within the school, which I argue remains a privileged space for spurring critical thought more open to improving others’ innovation, I briefly outline two approaches: one provides examples of age-appropriate critical FLE activities in intermediate and secondary schools and critical EE activities in colleges and universities that challenge the world the FLE and EE public pedagogy encourages us to create, and the other, borrowing from Simon (2005), calls on teachers and students to take up an informative and reflexive listening to those who are financially insecure and dependent and to the questions we ask of them.

## **Chapter One: Methodology**

### **Methodology: Ethics, Narratives and Problematization**

This section outlines and explicates the key principles underlying this thesis's critical philosophical analysis of FLE and EE security and freedom narratives.<sup>12</sup> To begin, I have chosen to analyze FLE and EE public pedagogic narratives because of the fundamental role played by narratives in human reflection and action (Bruner, 1991; Hjørth and Steyaert, 2004; Ricoeur, 1991). Narratives enable individuals to make sense of the world and their place in it and assist in mobilizing collectives by providing the problems and solutions that inform political projects (Meretoja, 2014; Patterson and Monroe, 1998; Pinto, 2013; Roe, 1994; Stone, 1997). Alongside the construction and dissemination of data (Cotoi, 2011), narratives assist in the construction or 'making up' of particular people (Hacking, 1986) and certain realities, providing a lens through which facts and population characteristics are 'discovered' and interpreted. FLE and EE security and freedom narratives are no different and are key facets of the FLE and EE public pedagogy, a response that complements the neoliberal project's core aims (e.g. the individualization of risk, destruction of the collective provision of social goods and services and the capitalization of security, freedom, political action and ethics). Additionally, I have chosen to focus on security and freedom narratives specifically because these are significant and desired states of being/becoming and feature prominently in FLE and EE texts.<sup>13</sup>

This critical philosophical analysis also situates FLE and EE narratives in their larger historical, political economic and policy context to better analyze their constructed, partial

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<sup>12</sup> Narratives have a plot (i.e. a series of causes, effects, problems and solutions), characters, a setting and are constructed to encourage the reader or listener to reflect on some aspect of the world or human condition.

<sup>13</sup> There are other FLE and EE narratives one could analyze. Pinto (2013) in analyzing Canadian FLE media texts, for example, found a "crusader" narrative and a "fox in the henhouse" narrative to be both popular and particularly salient in shedding light on an unnoticed aspect of the FLE debate: that FLE initiatives are "shaped not by evidence, but rather by the values, self-interest, mobilization efforts and lobbying power of participants in the political arena" (pg. 115).

character and the possibilities they foreclose. This approach is in contrast to most FLE and EE researchers and policymakers who assume the role of technical experts tasked with solving seemingly apolitical and ahistorical problems akin to figuring out the point at which water will boil.<sup>14</sup> For them, dominant FLE and EE narratives appear commonsensical. This is untenable. The particular narratives, epistemological frameworks, assumptions, possibilities and problems the present neoliberalized world and neoliberal policymakers create are not neutral and should not be accepted uncritically (Harvey, 1990).

This thesis thus joins critical theorists in treating the ‘technical’ problems FLE and EE advocates construct and our present reality creates for disadvantaged groups (i.e. the financially illiterate and unentrepreneurial) as socially constructed political problematizations that must be examined and reproblemated (Arnott and Ozga, 2010; Bohman, 2013; Gale, 1999; Webb, 2014; Winton, 2012).<sup>15</sup> Unemployment, for example, is presented as a significant ethical and economic problem in numerous FLE and EE documents, but it is also a particular problematization. This problem is not one that researchers created *ex nihilo* and to think so misperceives what social construction entails. Problematization is not part of a radical nominalist doctrine in which we create objects of study at will but one which signals that social construction has always already taken place, and the researcher is confronted with whether to continue to define the problem as it has been constructed or to construct it otherwise – a public pedagogic act that critical theorists hope is attended by the creation of new, more ethical problematizations and the material reconstruction of present unethical, undemocratic and inequitable practices.

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<sup>14</sup> This depoliticizing response to others appears in both the FLE and EE positivist research projects, which posit that knowledge should be value free, and the equally prominent utilitarian approaches, which consciously align research with policymakers’ goals. Methodological disputes do exist, but they are waged under the assumption that we are responsible to capital before others.

<sup>15</sup> A problematization “is the ensemble of discursive and nondiscursive practices that make something enter into the play of true and false and constitute it as an object of thought (whether in the form of moral reflection, scientific knowledge, political analysis, etc.)” (Foucault, 1990a, pg. 257).



With regards to the problematization of unemployment, this could entail the reformation of the problem of unemployment into a problem of too much onerous employment, a tying of remuneration to exchange value or a paucity of opportunities for taking part in meaningful work alongside others. The solution to these alternative problematizations would require material reconstruction of our political economy and likely the expansion of democratic relations to all organizations and the creation of a more participatory economic system (Albert and Hahnel, 1991). A problematization is thus not simply rhetorical but links the symbolic with the material. Additionally, while a new problematization often entails new solutions, the solutions continue to be subject to circumscribed political contestation. The institution of a new problematization does not necessarily lead to a singular solution but it does reconfigure the terrain upon which solutions are sought after, advocated for and fought over so that solutions that were tied to an earlier problematization no longer make sense.<sup>16</sup>

As *part* of our responsibility for others, this thesis re-problematizes FLE and EE practices as manifestations of our responsibility for the other: a security for the other and a freedom for the other. To borrow from Gramsci (1971)<sup>17</sup>, I look for the ‘good sense’ the FLE and EE narratives mobilize to engender support for their individualizing initiatives and seek to link it to more ethical practices and narratives. I do not mean by this ‘good sense’ the kernel of knowledge that links to a more fully scientific understanding of the world but the inchoate relations, feelings or ideas about freedom, ethics and security that can serve as “nodal points” or “master signifiers” we can symbolically and materially reconfigure for the other (i.e. to foster practices that are more conducive to ethical encounters). The most prominent ‘good sense’ that this thesis argues FLE and EE narratives appropriate is our ethical obligation for the security and freedom of the other

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<sup>16</sup> An issue I return to in the final chapter.

<sup>17</sup> See also Laclau and Mouffe (2001), Smith (1998) and Thomas (2009).

and others – this responsibility is the ‘good sense’ evinced in many of our everyday relations but is perverted by FLE and EE narratives and initiatives.<sup>18</sup> This ‘good sense’ is chosen not only because it dominates FLE and EE texts but also because we should be concerned with the other’s and others’ wellbeing and we *are* already always concerned with their wellbeing.<sup>19</sup>

Any problematization for the other should be inhospitable to the present construction of security and freedom offered by FLE and EE initiatives, which exhaust our ethical-political obligations for the other in acts limited by the capital relation: retraining those without jobs for the supposed jobs of the future, offering advice on investment, instilling self-reliance and acceptance of failure, providing more start-up capital for entrepreneurs and altering the advertising of financial products. Creating new problems to support the creation of a new world is necessary but not sufficient. We must also resist the assumption that our obligation to the other can be met through this creation and continually look and listen for the other our description, action and creation occludes. The ethical problem critical FLE and EE researchers face is thus both the particular world FLE and EE narratives are selling and the act of world-creation and narration in which they must engage. Researchers must be concerned with the particular,

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<sup>18</sup> The use of the term ‘other’ and ‘others’ borrows from Levinas and Levinasian scholars. Explained in greater detail in chapter four, the term ‘other’ refers to the singular, ineffable other while ‘others’ refers to a hegemonized group whose needs, desires and subjectivity are occluded, deemed illegitimate and unable to be realized in the present world (i.e. proletarians’ need for security, their desire for a freedom from capital and socially-constructed scarcity and their ability to better realize their human capacities, including care for the other and others). Additionally, the use of other here stems from an avowedly humanist approach. Our responsibility for the non-human is not dealt with in this thesis given its focus. For an approach which thoughtfully extends Levinas’s ethics to the non-human see Davy (2007).

<sup>19</sup> For Levinas, this responsibility for the other is a core feature of humanity. As a human, I am not only concerned with my continuance, but I am responsible for the other before I exist as a self, a responsibility which continually breaks up my self-sufficiency. The concern from this perspective is to discern why I fail to be responsible (i.e. to find and remove those obstacles which keep me from being responsible for the other). This is an essentialist claim that is unavoidable – a contrasting and seemingly non-essentialist position often posits a self which begins as an empty vessel and is subsequently influenced to act in x or y manner by his or her environment, but this also posits a prior human essence, one that is an unlimited potentiality shaped by history. Furthermore, positing the human as responsible for the other explains why most who harm or reduce the other to the self’s understanding go to great lengths to absolve themselves of their responsibility for the other. If the self were not responsible for the other, there would not be any need to continually construct frames through which to dehumanize the other and justify the other’s suffering and assimilation.

totalizing FLE and EE narratives; the unethical and unjust social relations; and the inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities these narratives support along with the totalizing nature of political action and the act of narration itself (Sandelowski, 1991). Action and the construction of counter-narratives are necessary but create new ethical quandaries, which does not mean that we should not act or pose counter-narratives but that we must work to lessen the betrayal narration and action necessarily bring (Tahmasebi-Birgani, 2010, 2014). This requires the researcher take up a critical reflexivity and support spaces and resources that enable the continual reconstruction of our public pedagogies and material practices for and with those we exclude. The philosophical frameworks, perspectives and insights brought to bear in this thesis's analysis are taken up with this concern in mind and are utilized as historical and political tools rather than universal constructs. The aim is to provide "a different language, a language which is not caught up with the assumptions and inscriptions of policy-makers or the immediacy of practice" (Ball, 1997, pg. 269) but whose avowed historical, ethical and political character we must keep in mind as part of our obligation to continually remake our languages, practices and world for and with others (Critchley, 2009a; Simon, 1992).

In the critical philosophical analysis below I examine the likely ethical-political outcomes of FLE and EE public pedagogic narratives and the material practices they support. Utilizing the tools, insights, perspectives and frameworks from a range of sources – critical theory, critical pedagogy, Marxist theory, narrative theory and Levinasian-inspired philosophers – this thesis seeks to illuminate the world these narratives accept and support: a world inhospitable to others and whose relations of irresponsibility remain masked if we follow FLE and EE researchers and abstract problems of economic insecurity and limited freedom from the social, political and economic environment in which they arise. Through the examination of FLE and EE security and freedom narratives that reiterate, rework and recreate the public symbolic resources we draw

upon to reflect on and create particular conceptualizations, relations and practices, the contours of a neoliberal FLE and EE public pedagogy and world centred around an ‘ethical’ security and freedom for capital emerge. I then critique this neoliberal FLE and EE public pedagogy in support of an alternative ethical security and freedom for others, which is outlined in greater detail in the final chapter. The overlapping critical, hermeneutic questions that underlie this thesis’s philosophical analysis and problematization for the other include the following:

- What ethical, political, security and freedom narratives do these policies and initiatives reproduce, challenge or create?
- How might a particular FLE or EE narrative relate to other EE or FLE narratives?
- What material practices do these narratives support?
- How do FLE and EE policies relate to the governing of our freedom?
- Why is a particular problem presented in this way, and what other ways of viewing the problem are there?
- How do FLE and EE narratives present our responsibility for others?
- What subjectivities, relations and forms of life do these narratives empower us to create and which do they occlude or foreclose?
- Who benefits from these problematizations, policies and initiatives?

### **FLE and EE Text Choice, Mainstream Media and Hermeneutics**

The media, academic and policy texts that inform the FLE and EE public pedagogy analyzed below were gathered through a “purposive sampling” (Palys, 2008) in which I read and analyzed numerous recent FLE and EE policy documents, academic texts and media products (news articles, editorials, television shows and movies).<sup>20</sup> The texts chosen were produced by prominent

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<sup>20</sup> In reading a significant number of FLE and EE texts my aim was to better understand the character of the FLE and EE public pedagogy. Overwhelmingly, the FLE and EE texts read tell strikingly similar security and freedom narratives – Bourdieu’s (2003) description of neoliberalism as a *pensée unique* extends to its FLE and EE public pedagogy. There are many FLE and EE media texts, lesson plans, academic papers and policy documents I did not read: it is possible that had I found and read those texts I might rethink my characterization of the FLE and EE public pedagogy, though the number and prominence of those which call into question the narratives constructed below would have to be considerable given that the narratives outlined below were found in a significant number and variety of prominent FLE and EE texts. Additionally, the provisional character of the analysis below marks all scientific inquiry. My descriptive claims about the FLE and EE public pedagogy’s security and freedom narratives could be called into question by further textual evidence just as a researcher’s characterization of a particular genus can be disrupted by the finding of a new species. Scientific inquiry moves forward not by establishing certainty

organizations and individuals, for the most part created after the mid 1990s (most of the media texts are post-2013) and expound FLE and EE ‘ethical’ security, freedom and political narratives that were found in other significant FLE and EE texts.<sup>21</sup> Prominent FLE and EE institutions’ and individuals’ narratives are privileged both because they play a dominant role in creating the FLE and EE neoliberal public pedagogy and because they uncritically accept and draw from it to produce the narratives that comprise it. Their texts are most likely to influence the FLE and EE public pedagogy given their prominence and the role many play in organizing large-scale and well-publicized FLE and EE initiatives, and texts by prominent FLE and EE institutions and individuals are most likely to crystalize the dominant FLE and EE public pedagogy; they are analogous to interviewees chosen because they are well-placed informants who have accepted, uncritically analyzed and advocated for the initiatives under scrutiny. Those chosen are the chief architects of the FLE and EE public pedagogy.

While this thesis tends to privilege texts and initiatives that are linked to Canada, texts and examples from other OECD jurisdictions (e.g. UK and USA) are also included in the analysis below to enlarge the available data set in a way that responds to the cooperative policy relations between international and national levels of governance in the OECD and the largely homogenous character of their FLE and EE initiatives in the Global North. The non-Canadian texts and initiatives analyzed also originate from important institutions, FLE and EE researchers or popular media outlets and explicate clearly prominent entrepreneurship and financial literacy ‘ethical’ security and freedom narratives operative or latent in the Canadian context.<sup>22</sup> These

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beyond all doubt but by bringing forward well-substantiated findings that disrupt our present understanding and spur us to think again. This is the aim of this thesis.

<sup>21</sup> This thesis’s intratextual analysis was accompanied by an intertextual analysis to discern between anomalous and dominant FLE and EE narratives.

<sup>22</sup> These include texts from the UK on social enterprise and social finance, which are gaining importance in Canada, and media and policy texts from the US and UK, jurisdictions which are often a net exporters of neoliberal initiatives

clearly expounded narratives often stand in as paradigmatic examples for other texts which share similar sentiments. John Hope Bryant's (2010a, b, c, 2011, 2014) popular FLE advocacy is a case in point. He is a prominent US FLE advocate and an important figure in the global FLE policy community who produces FLE narratives that are typical of those found in other FLE texts, including Ontario's, but he draws out in stark terms aspects of dominant FLE narratives that are less stressed in other texts. His empowerment discourse linking the civil rights movement to FLE and his narratives of dependency (arguing that those without FLE will be reduced to "economic slavery") are particularly perspicuous, stressing the paternalism, depoliticization and hopeless optimism that are conveyed in a more restrained manner in most other FLE texts. Bryant is an example of what Palys (2008) refers to as an "extreme case sampling", providing the "purest or most clear-cut instance of a phenomenon" in which the researcher is interested (pg. 698).

A variety of texts are analyzed to limit the influence any one particular text form has on my recreation of the FLE and EE public pedagogy, which is informed by a variety of discursive and non-discursive sources (e.g. newspaper articles, reality TV shows, academic texts, special FLE and EE holidays and policy texts). The expanded array of text forms provides access to 'ethical' security and freedom narratives and conceptualizations which are largely similar but differ in important ways, yielding an arguably more representative outline of the FLE and EE neoliberal public pedagogy than would be possible if I were to focus only on policy or academic texts.<sup>23</sup> The inclusion of mainstream media texts hopefully allays concerns that the FLE and EE narratives and initiatives analyzed may be read by, directly affect or target only a particular group – immigrants, students, debtors, policymakers, academics or retirees – and thus have little

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(e.g. teacher performance pay, zero tolerance laws, workfare, Social Impact Bonds, etc.) and are constant objects of comparison for Canadian policymakers (Currie and Scott, 2013; Currie et al., 2012).

<sup>23</sup> Focusing solely on policy texts limits the variety and character of the public pedagogic narratives one can analyze given the textual constraints of the policy genre.

pedagogical impact on those outside the specific group. The seeming parochial nature of FLE and EE, especially FLE and EE academic research and policy, raises a significant concern for this thesis given that a public pedagogy by definition mobilizes a public who recognize themselves as a particular public (in this case a privatized and individualized public of entrepreneurs, investors, consumers or failed or not fully realized versions of these selves). However, the ubiquity of these narratives in the media and the reporting and editorializing on FLE and EE initiatives and research expands the reach of FLE and EE policy and research far and wide – a point of which policymakers are well aware and of which they seek to take advantage (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2012).

Two examples illustrating the media's distribution and amplification of FLE and EE policies and narratives will elucidate my point. The first is the widely reported OECD Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) test, which is also often referred to in policy and media texts to justify whatever changes the texts' authors think should be made (e.g. if we are not doing well on PISA we must change to improve and if we are doing well we must also change to do even better on PISA).<sup>24</sup> OECD FLE PISA texts (OECD, 2010, 2013d, 2014b, c) are one source creating the FLE public pedagogy, while the media coverage of these tests provide another arguably more powerful source. Through both forms of text, readers learn of the test and that its results are a matter of global security, ethical obligation, economic fitness and social justice. Readers are taught once again that education is a key battleground for the production of human capital and that wealth inequality, unemployment, underemployment, global production and distribution issues and poverty are problems solved through better education.

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<sup>24</sup> Following the release of the results for the first PISA financial literacy test, media outlets have predictably called for more and better FLE (Pathe, 2014; Parker and Mason, 2014). See Pereyra et al. (2011) and Schleicher (2014) for analyses and critiques of the OECD's PISA test's influence on education policy.

The second example is the media coverage of the cancellation and replacement of the *Canadian Federal Entrepreneur Program*, created in the 1970s, and the *Immigrant Investor Program*, created in 1999, with a five-year pilot program in 2013, *Start-Up Visa*. In this example, the federal government was not simply altering a program aimed at attracting wealthy immigrants but was also teaching Canadians about their entrepreneurial society through its criticism of the existing programs, which the government felt did not provide an appropriate return on investment in immigrant entrepreneurs: “immigrant investors report employment and investment income below Canadian averages and pay significantly lower taxes over a lifetime than other categories of economic immigrants” (Carman and O’Neil, 2014, para. 5). Moreover, according to Immigration Minister Jason Kenney, the program was only attracting “shopkeepers” rather than “a potential Bill Gates or Steve Jobs” (Carman and O’Neil, 2014, para. 20). The terms of the older programs, according to the Government of Canada, did not require entrepreneurs to “invest in innovative enterprises but enabled them to limit investment to smaller, safer ones – the antithesis of entrepreneurship” (Government of Canada, 2013, para. 9).

Reiterated by a number of media outlets, the justification for these changes to the entrepreneurship program teaches us about our world – or rather the world the federal government would like to create. We are taught first that the state is an entrepreneurial investor which only supports ventures that provide a return on investment while selling those that do not. This entrepreneurial exchange relation justifies replacing permanent programs that provide a somewhat stable contractual relationship with prospective immigrants with a short-term pilot program that can be revoked if it does not pay off, thus reducing the government’s risk exposure. Second, we are taught the ubiquitous lesson that in this competitive climate, human capital inputs must constantly be innovating, and, if we (as inputs) fall below an average or just simply are



average, we may not be worthwhile investments. Third, we are taught that immigrants are to be subject to the least protection from market forces.

We do not learn these lessons solely from the PISA text or the *Start-Up Visa* program or even the media's promotion of them but from linking these texts consciously and unconsciously to other texts and experiences. The creation of meaning is intertextual in character. We create meaning when confronted with a text or event such as the change in the federal entrepreneur programs by using, consciously and unconsciously, the innumerable other discourses we have been subjected to and experiences we have had (Bruner, 1991; Luke, 1995). The hyper concern in the media and among politicians over the results of the PISA test and the rationale for changing Canada's immigrant entrepreneurship programs would make little sense outside of other initiatives and discourses that tell us (and force us) to constantly update our human capital so as to compete for scarce resources. It is not a single policy or practice that promotes a particular inhospitable 'entrepreneurial' relationship with others but the cumulative effect of myriad material injunctions and the message repeated through various mediums that we need to reform our schools to be more competitive, cut work regulations to become 'leaner', or rehaul our immigration system because we are bringing in the wrong immigrants. Start-up Visa's entrepreneurship lesson operates together with other similar lessons to teach us what is expected of us – citizens, immigrants and even the state. We make sense of the program because of the lessons we have already received about Canada's temporary worker program, the discourse in the media on tying Canada's immigration policy to market need (Grubel, 2012) and even former Ontario PC Party Leader Tim Hudak's proposal to tie Ontario student loans to grades and fund post-secondary institutions based on how well graduates find jobs (Ferguson, 2013).

This is not to say that we all face the same conditions or read these initiatives in the same way. We are inculcated in myriad forms of life, engage in numerous practices embedded in a

variety of fields and are constantly subject to new experiences, all of which provide foundations and opportunities for a variety of interpretations and actions. The texts themselves also provide opportunities for oppositional readings given that they contain both ‘good sense’ and heterogeneous discourses: discourses and ideologies that are the result of contestation between opposing and incommensurate groups mark their production. However, despite the openings particular texts provide, there is a coherent logic to the neoliberal public pedagogy which teaches us that we must be innovative and work to constantly improve competition while also teaching us that some, generally those with less political power, are less worthy of being even minimally protected from the worst of this competitive logic and must continually perform at their best (or better) or see their stock sold for the relative benefit of others. Additionally, while one could point to alternative policies that contest aspects of this entrepreneurial vision, the sheer volume of entrepreneurship, financial literacy and austerity policies, narratives and initiatives repeat banal neoliberal assumptions that overwhelm alternative perspectives and encourage “automatized interpretations” (Bruner, 1991, pg. 10) aligned with a hegemonic neoliberal public pedagogy that seeks to intensify and expand neoliberal relations and logic following the 2008 financial crisis.

The critical philosophical analysis that follows is the result of a working back and forth between FLE and EE texts and the dominant FLE and EE public pedagogy with each informing my understanding of the other and driving the analysis. In this critical hermeneutic process, the whole (public pedagogy) informs the choice (i.e. purposive sampling) and analysis of the parts (texts); at the same time, however, my understanding of the whole has changed as a result of the analysis of particular texts, which often did not fit within my initial framing, resulting in a different understanding of the FLE and EE public pedagogy than that which originally influenced the texts I chose and analyzed (Bruner, 1991; Simons et al., 2009). This disruption set off a new round of choosing and reading other policy, media and academic texts, which also required

analysis of other complementary policy initiatives, regulations and material practices, whose discourses FLE and EE narratives draw on for support (e.g. immigration and bankruptcy laws and trade agreements). The analysis that follows is thus interpretive, which justifies neither relativist abandon and the choosing of any text as ‘evidence’ of a significant freedom or security narrative nor a limiting of analysis to a single text artificially isolated from its context in the hopes the analysis would be more ‘objective’ in text choice (Kincheloe, 2003). Instead, it is necessary to situate my analysis within its political, social and economic context, ensure that the narratives I analyze are corroborated by a number of prominent FLE and EE texts and attend to those narratives that differ or challenge my characterization of the FLE and EE public pedagogy and what I assume the dominant FLE or EE conception of freedom, security, ethics or politics to be.

Chapter two provides an overview of the neoliberal political economic and policy context to which FLE and EE research are responding and chapter three features a review of the FLE and EE academic literature. The political economic and policy context is presented and examined prior to the literature review to situate the academic FLE and EE field as a response to the political economic and policy context and support my claim in the literature review that the dominant FLE and EE research paradigms align with policymakers’ neoliberal depoliticization of economic issues, individualization of insecurity and creation of the subjects needed to meet capital’s needs. After the review of the academic FLE and EE fields, chapters four and five comprise the critical philosophical analysis of the security and freedom narratives produced by both FLE and EE policymakers, the media and academic researchers, narratives which contribute to an FLE and EE public pedagogy that supports the construction of a world for capital, not others. Chapter six outlines a critical FLE and EE for others.

## Chapter Two: Neoliberalism and FLE and EE Policy

### A Very Brief History of Neoliberalism

The recent 2008 financial crisis has sparked increased interest in FLE and EE, but neoliberalism remains the most important factor accounting for their popularity and character. Continually racked with crises, which have only intensified of late (e.g. economic insecurity, regional and national competitiveness, moribund economic growth, limited freedom and inequality), neoliberalism as a particular ethics and institutionalized mode of production and governance is reconstructed through actions which provide a neoliberalizing solution to its neoliberalized crises<sup>25</sup>, which can be punitive and violent such as workfare, incarceration and increased militarization (Wacquant, 2003, 2009) or consensual and persuasive such as FLE and EE. These solutions aid in neoliberalism's expansion through, among other achievements, the construction of the subjects who will create, acquiesce to and supposedly flourish under intensified and expanded neoliberal production practices.

Neoliberalism's earliest manifestation is often dated to the Colloque Walter Lippmann, a conference held in Paris in 1938 in honour of Walter Lippman and his book, *An Enquiry into the Principles of the Good Society* (Denord, 2009). While the group diverged significantly on what they thought should be done, their shared concern was to protect liberalism and a negative marketized freedom from collectivist planning (Harvey, 2007). Taking a hiatus during WWII, the "thought collective" re-formed to challenge state economic planning in 1947, creating the Mont Pelerin Society under the leadership of Albert Hunold and Friedrich Hayek (Plehwe, 2009). With the success of Allied governments' coordination of economic production during WWII, the Great

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<sup>25</sup> By "neoliberalized crises", I mean issues/problems that have been symbolically and materially articulated/created as neoliberal versions of these issues/problems (e.g. economic security appears and is an individualized concern and equality appears as equal inequality), even though they are also inflected by other discourses (e.g. techno-utopianism, neoconservatism and welfare liberalism) (Amable, 2011; Brown, 2005; Cowen, 2013).

Depression still fresh in the public's mind and an ascendant communism appearing an attractive alternative development model given the great industrial gains made by the Soviet Union, increasing state intervention into markets appeared unavoidable. Hayek's (1944/2006) *The Road to Serfdom* offered a popular exposition of the threat 'collectivist planning' posed to individual freedom, whether socialist, communist, social democratic or fascist, but the policies of the day more closely followed Polanyi's (1944/2001) *The Great Transformation*, which warned against the dangers to freedom an unrestricted, competitive market society posed, in particular the backlash it engendered which could just as easily take the form of a fascist dictatorship as a social democracy depending upon the prevailing social and political conditions. Polanyi's social democratic solution, broadly taken up by post-WWII state planners, such as John Maynard Keynes and Harry Dexter White, was to balance capitalism's "double movement" – an apt phrase that describes capitalism's tendency towards continual expansion and intensification of capital relations and the political counter movement to limit capital's predation and redistribute wealth according to a non-marketized logic – so that the market could work for the good of all. With too much social protection, capital accumulation would suffer; with too little, labour, a fictitious commodity Polanyi reminded his readers, would be subjected to horrible working and living conditions and be forced to revolt.

While the Keynesian Welfare State (KWS) compromise appeared unassailable for a time, the capital accumulation and legitimacy crises of the 1970s called for a rebalancing of the double movement's tenuous equilibrium/compromise. The KWS brought relative benefit to white, male workers in the Global North, but this legitimacy and the capital accumulation opportunities it provided were predicated on the extreme exploitation of racialized and gendered others, fixed hierarchical production relations, significant opportunities for economic expansion and limited global competition (Mies, 1999). Unable to solve economic stagflation (low rates of economic

growth coupled with high inflation) brought on by the reindustrialization of Germany and Japan (Brenner, 2006) and exacerbated by the 1973 oil crisis or to placate the worker, student and social movement protests of the 1960s and 1970s against the KWS's bureaucratic, undemocratic, racialized and gendered institutions and practices (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007; Harvey, 2007; Lipman, 2011), the KWS floundered and gave way to neoliberalism, which was convincingly packaged and sold as the solution to these twin crises.<sup>26</sup> Against the restricted freedom of the KWS authoritarian, rigid Fordist production relations and public institutions, neoliberalism's more horizontal and flexible working arrangements were championed as giving workers more control over their work and the privatization of public institutions was argued to shift power from unaccountable bureaucracies to consumer-citizens (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007; Harvey, 2007).

Following the election of Margaret Thatcher in Britain and her breaking of the coal miners' union in the UK and Ronald Reagan's election and mass-firing of unionized air traffic controllers in the US, neoliberalism was solidified as a dominant political force (Harvey, 2007). Privatization, outsourcing, deunionization and removing barriers to capital's movement were replicated everywhere as neoliberals set about dismantling the welfare state and its institutional and ideological bases of support.<sup>27</sup> Echoing Thatcher's depoliticization of neoliberalism – a staple of neoliberalism's ideological support – there appeared to be “no alternative”; those arrayed against her, she later recounted, “wanted to defy the law of the land in order to defy the laws of economics. They failed and . . . It is a lesson no one should forget” (Thatcher in Jenkins,

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<sup>26</sup> Though in some instances, notably Chile, force was used to greater effect than consent in neoliberalizing the economy (Harvey, 2007).

<sup>27</sup> Successful challenges against particular neoliberalizing initiatives, the expansion of some aspects of the welfare state and the varied and always compromised character of neoliberal initiatives complicate the simple picture painted here but do not alter the fact that the period following the late 1970s was one in which the labour-capital compromise shifted decidedly in favour of capital or that the welfare state was greatly transformed along neoliberal lines everywhere (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 2007; Peck et al., 2012).

2001, pg. 119). For neoliberals, capital's dictates comprise a set of immutable economic laws that set necessary limits on what is possible and that we contravene at our peril.

The problem, of course, is not simply that neoliberalism's post-historical narrative is false or treats political issues as technical concerns for experts. They have created a world within which this narrative is true so that today there is no return to the post World War II KWS compromise. In an age of rapid capital mobility, high levels of public and private debt, low growth, and limited opportunities for the type of massive economic expansion we saw following World War II, any political economic solution that looks to arrest a bleak future of continued environmental degradation and massive wealth inequality<sup>28</sup> would have to be radical (Klein, 2013; Streek, 2014; Žižek, 2010). Against reformers who call for a return to the post-war KWS, Žižek (2010) writes,

The utopia here is not radical change of the system, but the idea that one can maintain a welfare state *within* the system. Here, again, one should not miss the grain of truth in the countervailing argument: if we remain within the confines of the global capitalist system, then measures to wring further sums from workers, students and pensioners are, effectively, necessary. (pg. 86)

Reformist measures such as raising taxes on the wealthy or cutting back on fossil fuel consumption are measures that would not be enough on their own to arrest capital's present ecological, fiscal and humanitarian crises. Moreover, even these minimal measures would require a significant mobilization of the populace, coordination with other jurisdictions to limit capital flight and currency devaluation, and parts of the economy which have been privatized or placed under the control of minimally accountable bureaucrats would need to be redemocratized.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Conditions which the OECD projects will continue for at least the next 50 years (Braconier et al., 2014).

<sup>29</sup> Free trade regulations and World Trade Organization tribunals would need to be abolished and new, more democratic, egalitarian and transnational agreements and institutions would have to be created, central bank

Immediately following the 2008 financial crisis, however, many forgot Thatcher's lesson. Capitalism, or at least its most virulent variant, neoliberalism, suddenly appeared as unnecessarily exploitative and destructive. The dream that one's offspring would live better was suddenly revoked for a significant section of the population who previously were able to shield themselves, if not materially then at least psychologically, from neoliberalism's precarious and unequal reality. For many, the hope that a recovery for them, not banks or the stock market, is soon to arrive continues to appear grim. Seven years after the financial crisis, "four million Canadians [almost five hundred thousand more than five years earlier], are affected by some level of 'food insecurity', which means they can't, or they constantly worry about being able to, properly feed their families because they lack the means . . . according to the latest Statistics Canada data" (Taber, 2014, para. 4). In the same year (2014), the World Bank, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the OECD warned that "there was a large and persistent shortfall in the number and quality of the jobs being created in G20 countries" (Silvera, 2014, para. 5). Finally, according to a study on employment precarity in the greater Toronto area and Hamilton, Ontario almost half of those working are in some form of precarious employment (Monsebraaten, 2013), which has increased by 50% in the last 20 years. Jobs described as temporary have increased by 40% since 1997 and "across Canada, the category of 'self-employed without employees' increased almost 45% between 1989 and 2007" (Lewchuk et al., 2013, pg. 6).

Given these conditions, which are replicated across the world, though they are often far worse, it became evident for many that capitalism's double movement was decidedly tipped too far in favour of markets. For the more optimistic among neoliberalism's critics, the 2008 crisis appeared as the final nail in the coffin of a bankrupt ideology that should have been long dead,

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functions would need to be redemocratized and the privatization of banks, transportation, energy and education would need to be reversed.



calling us to take up a range of progressive structural solutions, from a return to stricter banking regulations and the Keynesian Welfare State (KWS) model to the fundamental reconstruction of our political economy and the creation of a post-capitalist future. Capturing the anti-neoliberal zeitgeist, the *Financial Times* ran a series entitled *The Future of Capitalism* in which Wolf (2009) trumpeted the end of neoliberalism, and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2009), the president of Brazil, advocated for a post-neoliberal economic and social order that put people before profit. France's president, Nicolas Sarkozy – no enemy of neoliberal reforms – castigated neoliberals, arguing, “the idea of the all-powerful market that must not be constrained by any rules, by any political intervention, was mad. The idea that markets were always right was mad” (Vuccheva, 2008, para. 3). While Sarkozy only advocated for a more ‘moral’ capitalism that would leave intact the material practices and policies that supported neoliberalism, his rhetoric was telling. Government regulation of finance, Keynes and even Marx were popular again (Galbraith, 2008; Jeffries, 2012). In the streets, the Occupy movement in 2011 protested bank bailouts and the great gains the 1% achieved at the expense of the rest of the population while a year later Quebec students toppled their provincial government and blocked a proposed increase in tuition fees. Both events followed the Icelandic protests begun in 2009, which forced the resignation of Iceland's government and the rewriting of their constitution by its citizens. In this critical narrative and at the height of these events the future of our political economic practices and institutions appeared open for not only for debate but significant material change.

However, following finance's meteoric recovery (Madigan, 2011), growing public deficits, increasing public and consumer debt, a demobilization of progressive forces and a concerted ideological effort by austerity advocates, a more regressive response has gained ground (Curtis, 2013). In this neoliberal narrative, there is little concern over banks' malfeasance, neoliberalism or capitalism. The banks have paid their fines, are posting profits and amassing

significant stores of wealth (Goodman, 2014; Whitehouse, 2011), while governments around the world seem incapable of balancing their budgets. The problem is not how to reform or transform neoliberal or capitalist institutions and practices. They are here to stay. The real concern is how to reform individuals to meet a new crisis: a present and future of rising inequality, relatively low-levels of economic growth, a loss of middle-income jobs and ongoing precarity (Braconier et al., 2014; Cowen, 2013). This more pessimistic neoliberal narrative continues to argue that we have ‘no alternative’ to neoliberalism and paints a present and future marked by constant insecurity for the unprepared while implying, with a healthy dose of cognitive dissonance, that all can be secure if they act appropriately.

The financial crisis and the ensuing insecurity are being used by neoliberals to resuscitate neoliberalism rather than repudiate it (Peck et al., 2012). In a complete reverse of the critical narrative which calls for changes to our political economy, we and those aspects of our world that are at odds with neoliberalism’s capital-maximizing logic must change. At the heart of the austerity project and the recycled neoliberal rhetoric in the media and policy circles about the skills-jobs gap (Turpin, 2014), innovation projects (Government of Canada, 2010), right to work legislation (Lammam and Macintyre, 2014) and accountability in the public sector (Blyth, 2013), is a concern that there is a mismatch between the global economy’s needs and the human skills, desires, ethics and relations (i.e. human and social capital) we have. Combining moral admonishments of living beyond our means with depoliticized, technical discourse purporting to enlighten us as to the realities of our balance of payments’ situation, we are told we must reign in our irrational collective desires and eradicate the spaces and procedures that enable crass political opportunism by entrenched interests protected from market discipline to fester.

The usual suspects – public workers, students, social justice advocates and retirees – are once again painted as self-interested saboteurs stymying economic growth while benefiting from

the hard work and insecurity of others. The collective risk management practices and institutions that protect these groups from the market are not to be extended as anti-austerity advocates have argued but demolished as relics of a bygone era that tolerated sloth and inefficiency; for neoliberals, collective risk management practices and institutions enable some to procure positions in the social hierarchy which have not been ‘earned’ in open competition or have not been continually re-earned, ostensibly limiting the mobility and opportunities of the most disadvantaged, the incentive to work and economic growth. The only just and technically sound solution for neoliberals is to ensure that any position one obtains is continually earned through market competition (i.e. the creation of a world in which one’s job and economic security can, at any moment, be taken by others who have the opportunity to do so). To borrow from Foucault’s concise articulation of neoliberalism’s ethic, we should all be “equally unequal” or equally precarious (Lemke, 2001, pg. 195).

Though portrayed as such, this response to the crisis is not necessary. The institution of austerity – further lowering of corporate taxes, expanding privatization projects, reducing social welfare spending and rolling back employment protections and regulations (Braconier et al., 2014) – is a particular political response to a neoliberalized crisis. The crisis is not naturally x or y but is subject to discursive interpretation prior to our understanding and acting, and, while the dominant reading or problematization of the crisis is neoliberal, there are other interpretations. With this context in mind, let us turn to the FLE and EE policy response and then review the FLE and EE academic literature, both of which I argue in the following chapters support the creation of the subjects who will accept, intensify and extend the resurgent post-2008 neoliberal project and an unethical security and freedom for capital at the expense of others.

## **A Review of FLE and EE Policy and Research: Constructing, Expanding and Intensifying the Invisible Hand**

### **FLE Initiatives in Canada: Empowering Investors and Consumers**

FLE and EE both have roots in earlier 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century educational initiatives associated with cooperative organizations and craft guilds, which educated consumers and self-employed producers (Arthur, 2012c). FLE prior to the 1990s was subsumed under consumer education, an initiative that responded to the problems associated with the rise of mass consumerism and citizen demand for improved product regulations in the early twentieth century (Arthur, 2012c; Spring, 2003). However, with the ‘democratization of finance’ (Ertürk et al., 2007), the explosion of individualized financial products and the individualization of economic risk, FLE began to appear as an initiative in its own right rather than a subset of consumer education. This more prominent role for FLE was followed a transformation of consumer protection, which moved from emphasizing a mandate to *protect* consumers to a responsibility to *empower* consumers and investors (Arthur, 2012c). In place of the clumsy and ‘freedom-restricting’ regulatory bureaucracy of the KWS, FLE is to empower consumers, whose purchasing decisions ‘force’ financial institutions to make the financial commodities they need (OECD, 2005).

Indicative of a larger shift during the neoliberal period from protection to resilience and government to governance, FLE is part of a more diffuse mode of governing in which former state powers and responsibilities, such as the construction and implementation of ‘educational’ policies or the provision of social goods and services, are shifted to or shared amongst national and international NGOs, corporations and state-funded arm’s length entities which then govern by modifying the conditions of acting – i.e. rather than banning particular actions or shielding individuals from harm, governing institutions support the construction of particular forms of

human capital and alter the risk/reward ratios of particular actions to spur competition, encourage prudent exposure to risk and provide opportunities to learn from failure (Beck, 1992; Clarke, 2015; Dean, 2010; Jessop, 2005; Reid, 2012). The state has not retreated but has taken on a meta-governing function in which it becomes “more involved in organizing the self-organization of partnerships, networks and governance regimes” (Jessop, 1997, pg. 575), working through regional, national and transnational governance networks to promote empowered, active consumer-citizens who are

assisted not through the ministrations of solicitous experts proffering support and benefit cheques, but through their engagement in a whole array of programmes for their ethical reconstruction as active citizens – training to equip them with the skills of self-promotion, counseling to restore their sense of self-worth and self-esteem, programmes of empowerment to enable them to assume their rightful place as the self-actualizing and demanding subjects of an ‘advanced’ liberal democracy. (Rose, 1996, pg. 60)

Reflecting this shift from government to governance, the Canadian government has created a number of supporting FLE institutions and initiatives to empower individuals: the creation of the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada in 2001; a national conference on financial literacy in 2008; a federal Task Force on Financial Literacy in 2009; the naming of November as Financial Literacy Month in Canada in 2011; and in 2013 the passing of the Financial Literacy Leader Act (Bill C-28) and nomination of Jane Rooney as Canada’s first Financial Literacy Leader tasked with coordinating the teaching of ‘unbiased’ financial literacy knowledge, skills and behaviour and promoting proven ‘best practices’ around the country (Department of Finance Canada, 2014; Shecter, 2014).<sup>30</sup> Canada’s provincial governments have also been swept up in the mania, joining other countries – Australia, Brazil, New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore and the

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<sup>30</sup> At the national level, Canada is among 45 nations who have implemented or are in the process of implementing a national financial literacy strategy (Russia's G20 Presidency and OECD, 2013a, c, e).

United Kingdom – who have mandated financial literacy education be taught in schools.<sup>31</sup> The province of Ontario integrated FLE into its existing grade 4 – 12 curriculum in 2011, with Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta recently following Ontario’s lead. As of 2014, the three Prairie Provinces are taking part in the *Building Futures Project*, which is organized by their respective provincial Ministries of Education, the Investor’s Group and the Canadian Foundation for Economic Education (CFEE). In 2016, Prince Edward Island has also followed suit, including financial literacy in its grade 10 curriculum. British Columbia does not have a cross-curricular FLE initiative, but in 2002 the province instituted a 20-hour financial literacy unit for grade 10 students.<sup>32</sup>

The Investor Education Fund (IEF), created in 2001 by the Ontario Securities Commission, is significantly involved in the Ontario provincial governments’ FLE initiatives and has initiatives of their own. They operate an FLE website (*GetSmarterAboutMoney.ca*) and a blog (*Masters of Money*), hold financial literacy contests, advise government officials,<sup>33</sup> co-create financial education policy with elected officials and cooperate with Ontario universities and the Ontario Teachers’ Federation (N.D.) to train teachers on FLE instruction and provide financial literacy resources from the IEF, CFEE, VISA and the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada. Other private profit and non-profit organizations that provide FLE in Canada include ABC Life Literacy Canada, Credit Canada Debt Solutions, the United Way, the Chartered Professional

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<sup>31</sup> Over 40 countries as of 2014 have introduced some form of financial education in schools (OECD, 2014).

<sup>32</sup> More important than the actual teaching of FLE in Ontario schools at present – of which there is likely little – is the coverage these initiatives generate in the media, which often pit jurisdictions against each other. Before Ontario brought out their FLE project the response in the BC media lauded their government’s innovation: “Here in British Columbia, our high school students are one step ahead of the rest of Canada. Why? Because five years ago, the B.C. government included a mandatory course on financial literacy for Grade 10 students, part of a four-part program called Planning 10” (Bowles, 2009, para. 1). After Ontario issued its FLE curriculum documents, there was suddenly concern in British Columbia (BC) that Ontario’s youth would overtake their BC counterparts (Arthur, 2012c). Ontario’s position is far from secure, however, and after the US state of Oklahoma implemented their own FLE program, it was not long before the Ontario media began raising concerns that Ontario is falling behind the FLE arm’s race (Gordon, 2014).

<sup>33</sup> The president of the organization, Tom Hamza, was the co-chair of Ontario’s financial literacy task force.

Accountants of Canada, the Canadian Bankers Association and Junior Achievement (JA).

Canada's major banks – TD Bank, CIBC, Royal Bank, Bank of Nova Scotia, BMO and HSBC – are also significant supporters of FLE initiatives: they partner with the above NGOs; supply volunteers to teach FLE; sit on financial literacy task forces and FLE NGO boards; create financial literacy learning resources and conduct FLE policy research. The involvement of Canadian banks in FLE further illustrates the myriad connections between public and private institutions within Canada and around the world.<sup>34</sup> In addition to funding JA, TD Bank, for example, also funds, along with the Government of Canada, a number of organizations, including ABC Life Literacy Canada, Social Enterprise Development Innovations SEDI (now Prosper Canada) and the Canadian Centre for Financial Literacy (now Prosper Canada Centre for Financial Literacy).<sup>35</sup> TD also engages in FLE initiatives in other countries: in the UK, TD collaborates with *Number Partners* to teach students in Leeds and Manchester; and in the US, TD created a program called *TD Bank Wow! Zone*, a free interactive program that teaches children about financial literacy issues in which “approximately 1,842 TD Bank instructors volunteer an average of 320 hours to teach over 7,600 students each month” (TD Bank Financial Group, N.D., para. 6).

Canadian banks also collaborate with higher education institutions to further FLE. In 2009, BMO created the *Financial Group Chair in Capital Markets: Financial Literacy and the Individual Investor* at McMaster University (presently held by Dr. John Maheu) (McMaster University, N.D.). In 2014, TD Bank Financial Group partnered with Ryerson University's Ted Rogers School of Management's Diversity Institute to encourage underrepresented youth groups

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<sup>34</sup> On the connections between FLE organizations, see also the Financial Literacy Action Group (FLAG), which is a coalition of seven organizations dedicated to improving Canadian's financial literacy: ABC Life Literacy Canada, CFEE, IEF, Credit Canada Debt Solutions, JA, Financial Planning Standards Council and Prosper Canada.

<sup>35</sup> Founded in 1986, Prosper Canada teaches self-employment training to low-income people in Canada while the Prosper Canada Centre for Financial Literacy, created in 2008, teaches low-income groups FLE and distributes grants to community groups to conduct their own FLE training.

to consider careers in the financial services sector because TD “believes in financial literacy for youth” and the finance industry would benefit from the creation of “a feeder pool of fantastic talent” (Ryerson University, 2014). Explicitly blending advertising and bank profits with FLE, TD also recently created TD Ameritrade University, an online learning site, which is targeted at university finance professors, providing them with another tool to enable students to apply knowledge learned in class to buy and sell securities – the site was created because of TD’s concern that younger Americans are risk averse and wary of investing in the stock market (Taylor, 2014).

Aiding national governments in coordinating the proliferating and diverse financial literacy initiatives<sup>36</sup>, international organizations such as Child & Youth Finance International, the World Bank, the G20 and the OECD<sup>37</sup> have created financial literacy standards, held conferences, compiled data and produced numerous FLE publications. The OECD, in particular, has emerged as an important force contributing to the FLE effort: in 2003 it launched its FLE project and in 2005 published an influential FLE policy document, *Improving Financial Literacy: Analysis of Issues and Policies* (OECD, 2005). Expanding on these initiatives, in 2008 the OECD created its *International Gateway for Financial Education*, which houses information on FLE and FLE providers around the world. In the same year, it also created the International Network

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<sup>36</sup> While there is already considerable coordination, the range of FLE initiatives is staggering and includes not only institutions but also entrepreneurial individuals who create their own FLE resources, such as Daniel Britton, who crowd-funded \$20,000 to create a set of FLE books (*Financial Fairy Tales*) aimed at educating young children on financial and entrepreneurial issues (Britton, N.D.). His books are listed with key FLE organizations, including the Personal Finance Education Group (pfeg) in the UK and the Child & Youth Finance International (which lists among its numerous partners and stakeholders, JA, ABC Life Literacy Canada, CFEE, IEF, Scotiabank, TD Bank and VISA).

<sup>37</sup> The OECD began as the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, created to administer American and Canadian financial assistance aimed at rebuilding Europe after the Second World War (e.g. the Marshall Plan). The OECD gathers and analyzes data on a variety of economic and political issues facing OECD countries and is funded by its thirty-two member countries with each country’s contribution defined by the size of its economy. To assist policy implementation and standardization of best practices the organization disseminates its findings and brings together government officials of OECD countries to compare different national policies, regulations and problems and to coordinate efforts on shared concerns. The OECD is thus well placed and funded to assist governments in standardizing FLE and EE policies, teaching techniques and curriculum content.



on Financial Education (INFE), which, as of 2014, comprises more than 230 public institutions from over 100 countries. Both initiatives support the OECD's goal of improving FLE information sharing, evidence collection, analytical work and policy creation and implementation. As already noted, the OECD, starting in 2012, included financial literacy on its PISA test to assist governments in assessing the relative value of their citizens' financial knowledge. More recently, the OECD has followed the success of their more general policy approach to FLE (OECD, 2005) with a number of more focused analyses, producing a number of FLE policy documents on a range of groups, issues and regions: Insurance and pensions (OECD, 2008), Africa (Messy and Monticone, 2012), women (OECD, 2013d), analyses of FLE strategies on financial inclusion (Atkinson and Messy, 2013; OECD, 2013a) and youth (OECD, 2014).<sup>38</sup> Unsurprisingly, social justice concerns over gender equality and underdevelopment are linked to an empowerment and resiliency discourse that holds the individual responsible for her financial security and her nation's development.

### **EE Policy in Canada: Creating Entrepreneurs**

In the 1950s and 1960s, governments tended to promote physical capital as the key to increased economic growth and collective prosperity. In the 1970s and 1980s, the shift to a post-Fordist economy driven by niche-oriented, flexible, just-in-time and immaterial production gave further impetus to the wide-spread teaching of improved technical skills, creativity, innovativeness,

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<sup>38</sup> Often these groups are combined together with young women in developing countries emerging as a key group whose financial and entrepreneurial inclusion will reap rewards for both the young women themselves and their countries: "Gender equality and empowered women are catalysts for multiplying development efforts. Investments in gender equality yield the highest returns on all development investments" (OECD, 2012, pg. 3). The OECD on its own and with other international organizations (the World Bank, the Alliance for Financial Inclusion, the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor and the International Finance Corporation) also measures barriers to women's financial and entrepreneurial inclusion; presently, the OECD, the World Bank and the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (created by the G20 in 2010) are tasked with creating a review of barriers to and progress towards gender equality with respect to access to financial education and financial services (OECD, 2013d, pg. 92). See Goodman (2013) for a critique of similar neoliberal initiatives and female empowerment discourses.

resilience and entrepreneurship. In this period, the quality of human capital increasingly came to be seen as important in accounting for the differences in productivity and wealth between countries, firms and groups (Casson, 1982; Henrekson, 2014), and today policymakers continue to argue that our hyper-competitive global post-Fordist economy necessitates the constant and perpetual mobilization and reformation of all inputs and practices, especially an area's store of human capital. They continually worry that their political jurisdiction does not produce or attract human capital agglomerations comprised of significant amounts of Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), creativity, innovativeness, resilience and entrepreneurship in the quantities necessary to stave off competitor jurisdictions (Florida, 2003).

The present ubiquitous concern that individuals are not sufficiently entrepreneurial, creative, resilient or innovative is thus not new; Ontario's recent policy document framing the next round of curriculum revisions, *Great to Excellent: Launching the Next Stage of Ontario's Education Agenda* (Fullan, 2014), is indicative of the perennial character of this concern, borrowing much of its rhetoric and narratives from EE initiatives that precede it by more than 30 years.<sup>39</sup> An editorial in the *Globe and Mail* by a chair from *The Learning Partnership* further exemplifies EE advocates' shameless appropriation of earlier EE initiatives and narratives:

The working world has changed. A university education used to guarantee a long-term job in a large company. Not anymore. Today, large companies are disappearing. Employment opportunities are short-term. Most people in tomorrow's working world will find employment filling niche gaps, providing goods and services. People who are unprepared for that reality will be unable to provide for themselves. They will need to think like entrepreneurs. (Ransome, 2014, para. 8)

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<sup>39</sup> See MacDonald and Coffield (1991) on entrepreneurship education in Britain in the 1980s, which the authors criticize for drawing on theories focused on improving the transition from school to work that were developed in the 1960s. Fullan's (2014) call to revolutionize education by teaching problem solving, perseverance, creativity, innovation, risk-taking, technology, doing, optimism and a "new entrepreneurial spirit" (pg. 9) is unentrepreneurial and is merely the latest in a long line of similar efforts to educationalize the risks posed by post-Fordism by using education institutions to create entrepreneurial individuals.

All that is new in Ransome's 'plea' for teaching entrepreneurship in schools is an increase in the intensity of the call to teach EE.<sup>40</sup> One-day classes from Junior Achievement are insufficient, and EE must be taught more often and at an earlier age, following Ransome who "began honing [his] kids' entrepreneurial skills at four years old (para. 9).

The only other significant change in EE discourse is that a new entrepreneurial ideal dominates EE policy narratives. In the 1982 *Globe and Mail* article (see footnote 39), the paradigmatic entrepreneur was the owner of a carpeting business or possibly a self-employed hairdresser; in 2014 the model entrepreneur is one who founds a novel, often high-tech start-up that provides jobs for others – the aim of EE today, as noted above, being to create "a potential Bill Gates or Steve Jobs" rather than "shopkeepers" (Carman and O'Neil, 2014, para. 20). Subsistence self-employment *is* still an aim of EE policy makers, but high-growth, job-creating start-ups (Gazelles) have captured the social imaginary, and, along with the broader goal of turning everyone into entrepreneurs of themselves even if they are employed by others, is the primary aim of recent EE initiatives.<sup>41</sup> In numerous entrepreneurship policy texts, a similar story is told over and over: to survive individuals must think and act entrepreneurially, and fast growing new firms create the most new jobs, so we must foster the growth of new firms, especially in the high-tech sector, if we are to improve our employment prospects (The Economist, 2011; Pinto, 2014; Tapscott, 2014).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Written 32 years earlier, an article from the same newspaper in which Ransome's editorial appeared lauded EE as a solution to post-Fordist precarity, outlining efforts in Britain to teach EE to students via film (Britain's Department of Industry offered the film on video cassette free to schools) (Kelly, 1982). The hope then was that students would start their own businesses amidst double-digit unemployment and avoid the "dole" or "street corner".

<sup>41</sup> In the 1990s, entrepreneurship began to be associated with Silicon Valley and high tech start-ups. In 1999, the World Economic Forum adopted the motto, "Entrepreneurship in the global public interest", signaling an alignment of information technology, profit-making, innovation and poverty-reduction that continues today (Brenkert, 2002, pg. 5). The clamour for this entrepreneurial high-tech figure waned following the bursting of the dot-com bubble in 2000 (Henrekson, 2014) but was soon taken up again to give a face to the 'innovation economy' discourse, which assumes that economic growth increasingly relies upon high tech innovation.

<sup>42</sup> A seminal article on Gazelles and their importance for employment creation is Birch (1981).

In response to the pressing need to become more entrepreneurial, a vast range of entrepreneurship initiatives have sprung up: there are transnational initiatives that bring together researchers from around the world to analyze the entrepreneurial conditions in various countries and present their findings and suggestions in policy documents; entrepreneurial competitions that mimic popular investment and entrepreneurial television shows (e.g. *Dragon's Den*, *Shark Tank* and the *Apprentice*); government initiatives (e.g. targeted tax incentives, procurement policies, supportive bankruptcy and patent laws and start-up regulations, task forces on entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship financing); private and public entrepreneurship incubators and networks; and numerous education schemes in schools and higher education. With regards to the latter approach, in Canada, Alberta and Ontario appear at the forefront of the Canadian push to include EE in schools, with both creating policy review frameworks that stress entrepreneurship (Alberta Education, 2011; Fullan, 2014; Ontario Government, 2014).<sup>43</sup>

As with most EE initiatives, the Ontario and Alberta policy frameworks are quite similar. The Alberta framework, created in 2011 and then ratified by the Minister of Education for Alberta in 2013 (Johnson, 2013), seeks to create engaged thinkers, ethical citizens, and an entrepreneurial spirit (the 3 E's).<sup>44</sup> The Ontario framework, proposed by Michael Fullan for the Ontario government, is more detailed than Alberta's and sports the six C's rather than the 3 E's: character education; citizenship; communication; critical thinking and problem solving; collaboration; and creativity and imagination. However, as with Alberta's framing document, entrepreneurship is a significant focus with "entrepreneurialism and innovation reach[ing] across

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<sup>43</sup> EE's penetration into schools is more advanced in the UK: a significant number of school are engaged in pilot projects which aim to teach children as young as 5 the "role and importance of business and the need to make a profit" through starting their own small businesses (Kirkup, 2014, para. 6). Other prominent UK initiatives include inviting entrepreneurs to visit schools and expanding the teaching of entrepreneurship in higher education (Kirkup, 2014). Without the inculcation of an enterprising attitude and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills, students are argued to be ill-prepared for a world in which all must innovate or risk being left behind (Young, 2014).

<sup>44</sup> One is also reminded here of the OECD's (2012) three Es for improved gender equality (education, employment and entrepreneurship).

all six C's" (Fullan, 2014, pg. 10).<sup>45</sup> Another key curriculum document in Ontario, *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision of Education in Ontario*, adds to the entrepreneurial picture Fullan paints, quoting approvingly the Council of Ontario Directors of Education's call for a "new entrepreneurial spirit" – a spirit characterized by innovation, risk-taking, and skilled problem solving in the service of a better future" (Ontario Government, 2014, pg. 4); notably, the document's 10 references to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs marks a significant shift from a 2008 framing document, *Reach Every Student: Energizing Ontario Education*, which contains no reference to entrepreneurship (Ontario Government, 2008a).<sup>46</sup> Like Fullan (2014), who defines creativity and imagination as "economic and social entrepreneurialism" (pg. 9), the Ontario government (2014) follows Alberta's lead and equates ethical citizenship with entrepreneurship: "We can develop compassionate and actively engaged citizens who graduate high school equipped for the technologically-driven, globalized world . . . [with] not only strong basic skills but also the critical thinking skills, imagination and resilience to excel in – and create – the new jobs of tomorrow" (Ontario Government, 2014, pg. 20).

In Ontario, a number of private organizations support efforts to teach EE in schools: key among them is *The Learning Partnership*. Created in 1993 to improve and expand business relations with schools, the organization includes a number of former heads of school boards on its leadership team, has a corporate advisory board chaired by presidents from banks and major corporations and a Board of Directors made of present and former school board directors, government officials and corporate executives. It is also supported financially by an equally

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<sup>45</sup> Even kindergarten instruction is positioned as requiring constant improvement so as to effectively support the "systematic cultivation of the six C's for all children in Ontario" (Fullan, 2014, pg. 11).

<sup>46</sup> The focus on entrepreneurship is likely an extension of the Ontario government's goal of aligning "all provincial activities with the needs of an innovative culture and economy", an initiative whose "emphasis is being felt throughout the entire post-secondary educational system" and is also "reflected in a commitment to grow the culture of innovation by engaging young people in the excitement of discovery from the earliest grades right through to high school" (Ontario Government, 2008b, pg. 4).

diverse array of government, corporate and public education sources: various corporations (Samsung, Deloitte, etc.), numerous school boards and universities, Pearson Canada, all five of Canada's large banks (BMO, CIBC, RBC, Scotiabank and TD) and the federal government. The organization's activities take two forms. It runs in-school programs aimed at improving student entrepreneurship and work-readiness, founding *Take your Kids to Work Day* in 1994, and it delivers EE programs for K-12 students in schools, such as *Entrepreneurial Adventure*, in which students design entrepreneurial ventures with classmates, and *Investigate! Invent! Innovate!*, which teaches grade 7 and 8 students to "identify a problem, be the first with a solution [and] take it to market" (The Learning Partnership, N.D.).<sup>47</sup>

The organization's second aim is to directly influence policy through meetings and partnerships between business executives, heads of school boards and government officials. The organization produces a variety of policy documents on the state of education, but of key importance here is the recent CEO Roundtable document, *From Great to Excellent: A Response to Ontario's Education Consultations* (The Learning Partnership, 2013). This document, the result of a meeting attended by the Ontario Minister of Education and the Deputy Minister of Education and a host of corporate executives (Scotiabank, Royal Bank, IBM, etc.), continues the familiar EE narrative of "skills shortages", fear of failure, lack of 'grit' and innovativeness and the need for constant innovation and flexibility (e.g. training students with skills that can be reformatted easily so that plumbers can become engineers and vice versa, depending on market demand). The report also repeats the organization's chief goal: the expansion of business involvement in education – a feeling "passionately" shared by Ontario's Minister of Education, who noted that corporate Canada should follow the lead of small and medium enterprises and

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<sup>47</sup> Junior Achievement (JA) runs similar EE programs around the world, which they argue improve the likelihood that participants will open their own business (Adams, 2012).

find inroads into education through the Specialized High School Major (SHSM) program (The Learning Partnership, pg. 8).<sup>48</sup>

EE has also made significant gains in higher education in Ontario, which the Ontario government would like to make “the most entrepreneurial post-secondary system in North America” (Sá and Kretz, 2014, pg. 8). A growing number of universities host startup incubators in which students learn from established mentor entrepreneurs, access funding for ventures and are provided with resources to assist in commercializing their ideas.<sup>49</sup> The University of Waterloo was a pioneer in this field, creating their incubator in 2008, with fourteen others quickly emulating their innovation. York University, for example, joined the Ontario Network of Excellence (ONE)<sup>50</sup> and founded Innovation York in 2011, which, according to its webpage, “supports entrepreneurs by providing an entry-point to a broad range of expertise – including researchers, academics, business, government and investors – as well as assistance commercializing research” (York University, N.D.). In 2013, York created the York Entrepreneurship Development Institute (YEDI), a free 12-week program that operates out of the Schulich business school to provide student-entrepreneurs with a certificate and opportunity to pitch their ventures to investors (York Entrepreneurship Development Institute, N.D.). The University of Toronto also recently expanded its entrepreneurship support, launching its Certificate in Entrepreneurship program in collaboration with the MaRS Discovery District in 2013 (University of Toronto, 2013). The University of Toronto also hosts seven business

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<sup>48</sup> The Minister is referring to SHSM business programs such as Scarlett Heights Entrepreneurial Academy in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB).

<sup>49</sup> Other EE initiatives include “student residences, workspaces and mentoring programs emphasizing and encouraging entrepreneurial behaviour; internships and co-op placements that allow students to experience working in start-ups; competitions and awards for seed funding or business plans; and an array of speaker series, workshops and networking events that are engineered to support entrepreneurial learning and culture” (Sá and Kretz, 2014, pg. 6).

<sup>50</sup> ONE is an agency, funded by the Government of Ontario, that assists entrepreneurs in starting up or expanding their company or commercializing their research.

accelerators (the Creative Destruction Lab, The Hatchery, The Hub, I-Cubed, The Impact Centre, Techna Institute and Utest), which link students and alumni from a host of disciplines (medicine, engineering, arts, information and communication technology and business) with successful entrepreneurs, funding opportunities and space to collaborate with other prospective entrepreneurs. Not to be left out, Toronto's third university, Ryerson, outdid the nine universities in Ontario that offer discipline specific programs on entrepreneurship by embedding entrepreneurship in its "curriculum across all of its faculties" (Council of Ontario Universities, 2013, pg. 10).<sup>51</sup>

Myriad international organizations lend support to EE initiatives in Ontario. A few of the most influential organizations include the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), the World Bank, Ernst and Young (EY), the G20 and the OECD<sup>52</sup>, all of whom produce and disseminate data on entrepreneurship and advocate for particular policies that will supposedly improve entrepreneurship (e.g. lowering taxes, cutting employment regulations, changing cultural norms so that entrepreneurs are more valued or increasing subsidies for research and development) by directly and indirectly steering national policies through "target setting, accountability and comparison" (Ball, 1998, pg. 123) – highlighting the meta-governing partnership between state and non-state entities outlined earlier. Often this indirect steering is facilitated through the media, which repeats their reports' comparisons and recommendations. The claims of the EY Entrepreneurship Barometer, to take just one of the many publications that monitor countries' entrepreneurial climate, were uncritically repeated in many of Canada's major media outlets (CBC News, 2013; Maimona, 2013; McMorrow, 2012).

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<sup>51</sup> Ryerson's graduate studies webpage in 2014 boasts, "It's your degree, your future, your life. When you complete your Master's or PhD at Ryerson, you reap the benefits of an urban learning environment that is creative, connective and entrepreneurial to the core" (Ryerson University, N.D.).

<sup>52</sup> Again, as with FLE, the OECD is a major force in promoting entrepreneurship around the world, holding conferences on entrepreneurship (Bellevue et al., 2003) and creating entrepreneurship research centres to generate and disseminate data (Cornell, 2001; OECD, 2013b).



As noted above, the OECD has begun advancing a gender initiative to examine existing barriers to gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship (the “three Es”). The goal is to promote “gender equality in the economy in both OECD and non-OECD countries alike” (OECD, 2012, pg. 2).<sup>53</sup> This complements earlier Canadian efforts to empower women entrepreneurs through a variety of national and regional initiatives: the Canadian Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards; the Foundation for Canadian Women Entrepreneurs; a television documentary series profiling women entrepreneurs; the 2003 Prime Minister’s Task Force on Women Entrepreneurs (Bellevue et al., 2003); the Women’s Enterprise Initiative; and the Network for Women Entrepreneurs.<sup>54</sup> The concern to improve women’s entrepreneurship fits with the recent trend in entrepreneurship policy to broaden who is considered an entrepreneur while appropriating a social justice narrative that presents entrepreneurship as a solution to inequality. This discourse challenges exclusion and inequality by analyzing a limited set of factors that inhibit a wide range of disadvantaged groups – “youth, seniors, the disabled, women, ethnic minorities, the unemployed and others” – from creating their own businesses and by supporting efforts to assist these groups in becoming self-employed (OECD, 2013b, para. 1).<sup>55</sup>

## **Conclusion**

FLE and EE are increasing in popularity all over the world and are largely viewed as necessary solutions to the present’s economic precarity. In Canada, particularly in Ontario, both FLE and

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<sup>53</sup> To this end, in 2012 “the OECD launched the Gender Data Browser . . . a one-stop gender data portal which will show the relative standing of countries on the various dimensions of gender inequality in the three Es with the aim to monitor progress over time” (OECD, 2012, pg. 2).

<sup>54</sup> The Women’s Enterprise Initiative was set up by Western Economic Diversification Canada in 2003 with offices in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba; the institution assists female entrepreneurs by providing education, loans and networking opportunities (Western Economic Diversification Canada, 2013) and was replicated in 2005 in Ontario with the opening of the Network for Women Entrepreneurs.

<sup>55</sup> See also *The Missing Entrepreneurs: Policies for Inclusive Entrepreneurship in Europe* (OECD/The European Commission, 2013).

EE are becoming more important in elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools and are widely supported by a range of institutions and groups. This broad support for FLE is mirrored amongst the population: 96% of Canadians polled by BMO (2013) agreed that “teaching financial literacy will contribute to personal and household financial stability and help the Canadian economy” with 96% of parents polled wishing schools would teach more financial literacy (para. 2). EE also finds broad support with youth, many of them viewing entrepreneurship as an increasingly viable life path, given concerns about unemployment and finding a work-life balance (Leong, 2014).<sup>56</sup> The extensive support for both FLE and EE amongst the public and across a range of influential institutions signals these initiatives’ success in their individualization of the problems many presently face (e.g. economic insecurity, wealth inequality, precarious employment and limited economic freedom) – a popular commonsense belief that our economic problems are caused by individuals’ maladaptation to capital’s needs.

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<sup>56</sup> The assumption is, however, erroneous given that most who are self-employed have a work-life balance that tends to tilt more heavily towards work than those employed by others (Cowen, 2013; Pinto, 2014).

## Chapter Three: Literature Review

### Financial Literacy Education

Remund (2010), in his overview of the FLE field, finds that the financial education movement began to take “solid root” after 2000.<sup>57</sup> Given the field’s relative youth, it is unsurprising that he also finds it marked by conceptual heterogeneity: in his review of over a hundred financial literacy articles (both scholarly and policy texts), Remund (2010) discerns five definitions of financial literacy: “(1) knowledge of financial concepts, (2) ability to communicate about financial concepts, (3) aptitude in managing personal finances, (4) skill in making appropriate financial decisions and (5) confidence in planning effectively for future financial needs” (pg. 279). While he laments the incapability of researchers to choose a common definition of financial literacy and a shared set of measures to move research towards “true enlightenment” (pg. 277), he misses that FLE researchers are already united behind a significant assumption: that financial insecurity can be solved through improved individual consumption and investment. The field’s diverse conceptions share FLE policymakers’ belief that it is the individual who is to be reformed, not the political economic system – though there is disagreement on whether choice architecture modifications are necessary or prudent (Arthur, 2014b).

In this respect, FLE research echoes the “resilience studies” discipline described by Ken Saltman (2014), which

Examines students in schools in poor communities where the majority of students succumb to the ill-effects of poverty such as gang violence, imprisonment, and teenage

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<sup>57</sup> This is not to say that earlier financial education initiatives did not exist. Junior Achievement (JA), for example, has taught consumer and financial education in the US since JA’s founding in 1919 and is now a global organization teaching financial literacy all over the world (Junior Achievement, 2011). See also Marx’s comment in the mid-nineteenth century on consumer education efforts: “The capitalist, as well as his press, is often dissatisfied with the way in which the [labourer] spends [his] money’, and every effort is then made (under the guise of bourgeois philanthropy and culture) to ‘realise the condition of the labourer by an improvement in his mental and moral powers and to make a rational consumer of him” (Marx in Harvey, 2006, pg. 91).

pregnancy. Resilience studies ask not how the social conditions of poverty and violence can be transformed or how students can learn to comprehend and act to change what oppresses them. Instead resilience studies identifies the rare student who survives, graduates, and goes to university despite the social disinvestment, violence, targeting by the criminal justice system, despair, and poverty. Resilience studies focuses on the exceptional ‘success against all odds story’. The thinking goes that if only the unique characteristics that allow for resilience can be identified, teachers, by replicating those unique characteristics, can design a course of action that might allow for more students to succeed in spite of the context. (pg. 52)

A study published in *Science* by researchers from the University of Warwick, who had worked alongside researchers from the US provides a case in point. The study’s authors found after testing poor farmers in India that “poverty-related concerns consume mental resources, leaving less for other tasks” (NHS Choices, 2013, para. 45). The researchers advised policymakers to “consider reducing the cognitive burdens (a ‘cognitive tax’) imposed on poorer individuals. This could involve making forms or interviews shorter or carefully timing educational interventions to fall at the appropriate time in the harvest cycles” (NHS Choices, 2013, para. 47).<sup>58</sup> The problem of the inequitable global production and distribution of food – in particular the regime of subsidies provided to farming corporations in the US and EU which undercut the price the “cognitively taxed” farmers in the global south can charge for their crops – is replaced by the problem of how to improve underdeveloped countries’ farmers’ use of their meager financial resources. Those described by the G20 Financial Inclusion Experts Group (2010) as having “low, irregular and unreliable income” (pg. 4) are not to be provided with a regular, reliable living wage or sufficient food (despite the world producing sufficient food for all (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2002)) but with greater access to financial products and financial education. These individualized solutions are assumed to enable individuals to save, invest and borrow more prudently and on a greater scale, and through better resource allocation of capital,

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<sup>58</sup> See also Jha (2013).

individuals will incrementally foster greater economic growth which then is assumed to bring prosperity to all (Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion, 2014).

For most FLE researchers, collective measures are not even considered despite their discipline's expansion beyond the borders of personal money management, which in itself is never simply personal (Arthur, 2012b). Townley-Jones et al. (2008) provide a rare example in which macro-economic reformation of the economy is considered but ultimately an expansion of KWS collective welfare programs is rejected because though they may provide "immediate relief for financial insecurity [they] . . . do not aim to eradicate the underlying causes of [financial insecurity]. In contrast, financial literacy programmes provide no immediate financial support but proactively aim to improve the longer term skills of persons handling their financial affairs" (pg. 207). Thatcher's lesson permeates a discipline that assumes there is no choice but to arm oneself with the financial advice learned from a Royal Bank app or Junior Achievement seminar and face one's increased financial responsibilities. At times, the ideological allegiance to neoliberalism and elite opinion results in convoluted thinking that betrays FLE researchers' supposed value-free and objective approach. Marcolin and Abraham (2006) offer a case in point:

Because financial literacy has become increasingly important for the economic wellbeing of the nation's future . . . it is important that it can be explicitly linked with financial behaviour, and hence financial success and sustainability. No financial literacy study has achieved this. (pg. 9)

Marcolin and Abraham (2006), like many FLE researchers, believe that FLE will improve the economic wellbeing of all and their job is to find evidence to support this truism.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> The belief that FLE must improve financial security is pervasive. In a study on debtor education in the US researchers found that even though almost two in three debtors believed financial education would not have prevented their bankruptcy many still expressed optimism about the future benefits of financial education (Thorne and Porter, 2010). Moreover, despite evidence that one's income level is a "significant determinant" of one's

Faced with mixed results (Willis, 2008b), a number of FLE researchers advocate for more tailored approaches to teaching FLE while keeping to the individualized paradigm (Townley-Jones et al., 2008). One such approach is to teach FLE when the individual is more likely to need the information and thus be more interested in absorbing it (e.g. when taking out a mortgage, choosing a pension plan or applying for a student loan) (Lusardi, 2008). The picture guiding this methodology is of an individual who proceeds through a set number of developmental milestones on his or her way to a robust security and self-actualization. This ‘just-in-time or ‘teachable moment’ ‘lifecycle’ approach to teaching FLE is part of the discipline’s overall strategy to segment the FLE market by gender, class, ethnicity, geographic location, interests, etc. but has yet to produce a marked improvement in results.

FLE researchers’ continued failure to link FLE to significantly improved outcomes, no matter how differentiated their instruction, has led some researchers to incorporate insights from behavioural economics into their FLE research (Altman, 2011, 2012; Hastings and Mitchell, 2011; Soman and Mazar, 2012; Thaler and Benartzi, 2004; Yoong, 2011). Altman (2011) outlines two prominent behavioural economic approaches: an older approach in which errors are made when information is poor or misleading, highlighting consumer’s bounded rationality, and a newer model in which experts alter consumers’ choice architecture to influence their consumer decisions (e.g. instituting mandatory opt-in pension plans). Altman (2012) advocates for the older approach, finding that it leaves more room for FLE and better respects consumer freedom. Most FLE research and policymakers, however, do not draw as fine a distinction as Altman and tend to couple FLE with both clearer language provisions, improved regulations and choice architecture

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financial money management skills (Hogarth et al., 2002, pg. 20), FLE researchers continue to search for evidence that FLE influences one’s wealth rather than evidence that wealth improves one’s financial literacy (or at least provides one with the middle class financial literacy most FLE policymakers and researchers are keen to impart) (Lusardi and Mitchell, 2013).

‘nudges’ to improve an individual’s ability to manage his or her increased financial risk. The chief ‘ethical’ concern with this approach is not only that it might infringe upon individual consumer freedom (experts are manipulating consumer choices) but that it might not adequately shift responsibility to the individual (i.e. if the state alters the choice architecture to influence particular choices, this might lead the public to believe the state is partially responsible when those choices do not work out, undermining a core justification for FLE) (Marron, 2013).<sup>60</sup>

As with other forms of FLE, the behavioural FLE paradigm’s goal is to improve financial behaviour by ensuring individuals act inline with the “efficient markets model” (Braunstein and Welch, 2002, pg. 453). The particular ‘twist’ that behavioural FLE researchers bring to this goal is the argument that we must use both direct education methods and alter environmental stimuli to ‘nudge’ individuals to choose options that more consistently conform to what is expected from neoclassical economic theory. Milton Friedman (1953/2008) argued for the validity of neoclassical economics’ homo-economicus as a model on the grounds that it ‘worked’ despite the fact that it obviously did not reflect the actual motives of most individuals, who were more than self-interested utility maximizers and did not have perfect information. FLE initiatives, in contrast, are not pragmatic or descriptive; they are socially constructive. With behavioural FLE, researchers and policymakers this aim is laid bare: the goal is to ensure that people act as they are supposed to in neoclassical economics’ models.

### **Critical Approaches to FLE Research**

A number of FLE researchers expand beyond the individual and outline the collective benefits of having a financially literate population: empowered consumer-citizens will choose the leaders

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<sup>60</sup> “If consumers, like businesses, are to be held accountable for the impact of their choices on themselves and others, they must see themselves as leaders in the complex global economy” (McGregor, 2011, pg. 354).

and financial products that best suit their needs and thus ensure that only suitable leaders and products are produced (Adkins and Ozanne, 2005; Pearson, 2008); the financially secure are self-sufficient and so resources do not need to be diverted to ensure their wellbeing (e.g. unemployment insurance, welfare, public housing, etc.) (Stewart and Ménard, 2010); and the financially literate can provide charity to the few who have yet to pull themselves up (Arthur, 2012b). However, in contrast to this limited ethics and civic obligation, critical FLE researchers argue for political action that would alleviate financial insecurity by altering our political economic system. They argue that increasing tuition fees, rising housing costs, unemployment, precarious work and increasing debt cannot be solved through more prudent individual investing and that we need political action against capital and for others, particularly action which will help the most vulnerable. Some of this criticism of the dominant FLE paradigm takes place within texts which analyze FLE initiatives that attempt to improve the financial literacy of particularly vulnerable groups within neoliberal capitalism. Forte (2012), for example, explicates an adult financial literacy education program for Latina learners that stresses the importance of culturally relevant education within the world as it is. At the end of the paper, however, Forte points to structural issues this program does not address, stating that it “must be recognized that the program under examination in this study does not adequately address the more serious social, political, and economic issues associated with the power of financial institutions in underserved communities, particularly in communities of colour” (pg. 230). A study on FLE for battered women similarly points to the need for political change, arguing “economic advocacy on behalf of battered women must also seek to address the larger structural conditions and forces that work against them” (Sanders et al., 2007, pg. 252).



These concerns are analyzed in greater detail by a small number of critical researchers who examine the effectiveness and assumed benign and apolitical character of FLE.<sup>61</sup> Prominent examples include a group of financialization scholars associated with the Manchester Business School. In their two texts on FLE they expose the risks associated with the “democratization of finance” and the misguided assumption that financial literacy is a viable solution to increasing, individualized financial risk (Ertürk et al., 2007; Froud et al., 2006). In doing so they repeat a fairly prominent critique of FLE: that it does not work. According to Ertürk et al. (2007), the “US and UK governments’ intentions to individualize responsibility for saving and borrowing decisions run well ahead of individual capacity to manage complex choices and unknowable risks” (pg. 570).<sup>62</sup> Other key figures who carry out similar immanent critiques of the FLE project (i.e. those which draw from the FLE project’s ontology and ethics to critique it) include Olen (2012), who examines the personal finance industry, its key proponents (e.g. Suze Orman, Dave Ramsey and Robert Kiyosaki) and the larger historical socio-economic context that gives rise to the industry in her popular book, *Pound Foolish: Exposing the Dark Side of the Personal Finance Industry*.<sup>63</sup> For Olen, “financial literacy is, first of all, no substitute for financial regulation. It’s also an ultimately ineffective solution to a systemic political and economic problem” (Olen, 2014, para. 28). Prior to Olen, Willis (2008a, b) – whose widely cited article, *Against Financial Literacy Education*, is a key text in the critical FLE field – made similar

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<sup>61</sup> This research complements a growing body of research on financialization, debt, culture and political economy which critically analyzes the cultural and material means through which finance is imbricated in our daily lives (Bryan and Rafferty, 2010; Dienst, 2011; Finlayson, 2009; Jones, 2013; Haiven, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014; Langley and Leaver, 2012; Langley, 2008; Lazzarato, 2012; Martin, 2002; Martin et al., 2008; Soederberg, 2010, 2012, 2013; Thrift, 2001).

<sup>62</sup> It should be noted that this group of authors engage in other projects which extend their analysis beyond the pragmatic, immanent critique of neoliberal projects (Bowman et al., 2014).

<sup>63</sup> Olen also writes numerous articles on financial issues in a number of mainstream publications (*The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *Slate*, and *Pacific Standard*), focusing on particular financial issues. For instance, she outlines how private pensions have eroded social solidarity and rendered many insecure in retirement and contrasts private defined-contribution pensions with public pensions, arguing the latter are more cost effective and the best option for most (Olen, 2013).

arguments, arguing that FLE is largely ineffective and that FLE initiatives tend to blame the financially insecure for systemic risks.

To attenuate the worst effects of the individualization of financial risk and insecurity, Ertürk et al. (2007) argue that researchers should conduct critical analyses of why and how these individualizing policies “will not work (or at least not work as promised and anticipated)”, creating “critical academic knowledge” that is “politically useful and policy relevant” (pg. 571). These scholars accompany this approach, a hallmark of critical, pragmatic scholarship, by contrasting FLE and further neoliberalization with liberal or social democratic alternatives that roll back neoliberalism’s excesses. For the Manchester Business School scholars, this entails instituting a counter “democratization of finance” (the extension of democratic control to financial institutions) so that the worst of financialized capitalism will be attenuated and finance will work for all citizens (Engelen et al., 2011). Willis (2008a, b) is less radical, arguing that better consumer regulations, choice architecture changes and impartial financial advice are the answer to individual short-comings and risks that cannot be solved by better financial literacy, while for Olen (2009; 2013) public pensions and a collective discussion on how to manage financial risk present the way forward.

For the most part, these scholars are against FLE because it does not work as advertised; it does not create the autonomous, financially secure individual that it promises. Their range of alternatives to FLE and financialization aim to reinstitute a public provision of financial security in forms reminiscent of the KWS – e.g. stricter regulation of finance, direct provision of financial services (e.g. public pensions) and a ‘real’ “democratization of finance” (Ertürk et al., 2007; Engelen et al., 2011). This pragmatic social-democratic critique champions the collective alternatives dismissed by FLE advocates, providing an alternative vision that is “politically useful and policy relevant” (Ertürk et al., 2007, pg. 571). The only concern, one which those discussed

below note, is that sometimes the production of critical FLE knowledge that is useful and “policy relevant” can come at the expense of a more radical analysis that calls into question fundamental aspects of the world financialization and FLE projects rely upon.<sup>64</sup>

Odih and Knights (1999) and Williams (2007), in contrast, use a framework and language foreign to FLE policy and most FLE research to analyze not why FLE will fail but how FLE works, specifically how FLE projects and texts successfully interpellate individuals as financially responsible subjects. Drawing from Foucault’s theories of discipline and governmentality to question the assumed autonomy of the financially literate subject, Odih and Knights (1999) and Williams (2007) illuminate aspects of FLE subjectification that are not apparent from the neoliberal or social-democratic perspectives outlined above. Rather than a pragmatic critique Odih and Knights (1999) elucidate how our autonomy is always socially constructed by political policies such as FLE: there is no neutral, apolitical financially secure subject awaiting the outcome of a pragmatic debate on which initiative is best for managing financial risk and delivering a sought after autonomy and security; he or she and the world which creates economic risk are always made and remade by us in ways that privilege certain forms of life and subjectivities over others.

A further difference between the pragmatic and Foucaultian-inspired texts outlined here is that the former tend to offer concrete alternatives to FLE. Odih and Knights (1999), in keeping with some readings of Foucault (Žižek, 2009, pg. 174), avoid taking up a clear alternative to the individualization of financial risk (e.g. we should provide public pensions rather than private pensions or institute some other collective mechanism for managing economic risk) and instead

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<sup>64</sup> One can of course make the argument that more radical approaches which are not useful or relevant to the present world will not be understood or generate the change they seek. My approach is to begin the critique of the FLE and EE public pedagogy on its own terms while working to shift the terms of the debate so that ethical concerns that appear obscure from a neoliberal, liberal, gender-blind, depoliticized and deracialized worldview can be better seen.

describe FLE's methods of subjectification (i.e. how knowledge and power combine to create certain governable subjects). They lay out how FLE seeks to govern us so they can analyze its "political assumptions" but refrain from judging the "political assumptions" that underlie the promotion and development. Williams (2007) similarly avoids taking a clear position in favour of an alternative to FLE's neoliberal financialization and individualization of risk and insecurity. She instead largely problematizes FLE's claims of promoting autonomy, finding that the FLE project constructs individuals' "goals as well as their behaviour . . . by reference to states' interests in economic development and in the competitiveness of domestic economies in global financial markets" (Williams, 2007, pg. 243). Additionally, she notes that there is an "ideological dimension [to] using individual educated choice in place of direct delivery of social welfare" (pg. 243) and that FLE may corrode social solidarity, but she does not provide a clear explication as to why we should be concerned about this particular form of ideological social construction over others or what is wrong with the empowerment of individuals and disempowerment of collectives.

Differing from Odih and Knights (1999), however, Williams follows Foucault's (1990c) later concern to account for resistance – which one also finds in other Foucault-inspired critiques of financialization (Langley, 2008) – and points to the opportunities FLE initiatives presently offer for resistance (e.g. consumer citizenship, prudent consumption and money as a shared medium for solidarity and ethical commitments). Yet, without any alternative normative or ethical project, this resistance appears perfunctory; it appears as a normal state of affairs in the operation of regimes of truth with resisters disembedding themselves from one regime only to attach to another. This is certainly not an outcome Foucault's work (1990c) must support, but without an explication by Williams (2007) it is unclear what ends one should resist or which

regimes of truth one should support. Resistance just happens and what is more it appears individualized.<sup>65</sup>

Lucey, in a number of publications (2007a, b; Lucey and Giannangelo, 2006; Lucey and Bates, 2010) combines the above pragmatic approach with post-structuralist insights to examine how best to teach FLE. For Lucey, financial literacy is a socially constructed moral literacy, and from this he draws two conclusions: teachers should modify classroom practices to respond to differences in financial knowledge, and they should incorporate moral issues into financial literacy instruction.<sup>66</sup> The first is a moral concern for Lucey, who argues that teachers should attend to differences in financial knowledge, skills, moral beliefs and behaviours borne from differing socio-economic enculturation and alter the FLE curriculum accordingly to ensure all students have “equal opportunities for understanding the processes of acquiring, managing, and developing financial resources” (Lucey, 2007b, pg. 486). The second aim is more critical and has the possibility of supporting an FLE approach that shifts away from inclusion in the present world to the creation of another more ethical and egalitarian one. In this approach Lucey (2007b) argues for space in classrooms to discuss moral financial issues, which are often left out of FLE curricula (e.g. economic injustice, the production conditions of particular goods/services, opportunity costs of excessive short term credit). In a more recent joint publication, Lucey writes with others (Bates et al., 2014) that the key is to synthesize the views of all to ensure that we act in a financially moral fashion and that our financial decisions are “affectively shaped through compassion for others” (pg. 18).

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<sup>65</sup> Odih and Knights (1999) simply note there is “no escape from the transformation of subjects through power relations” and advocate for reflecting on totalities (pg. 147-148). Brown (2015) argues that this lack of analysis of subjects’ political action, in particular collective action aimed at resisting particular practices and instituting others, is endemic to Foucault’s work.

<sup>66</sup> Lucey (2007b) defines morality “as respect of other parties’ basic material and psychological economic needs” (pg. 493).

Pinto also argues that the dominant FLE curricula must be modified to take account of group differences, but, in line with critical theory, advocates for specific changes to FLE so as to challenge symbolic violence and “change social institutions to overcome inequity” (Pinto and Coulson, 2011, pg. 58). Her aims are to outline why FLE will not work (Pinto, 2009) and to elucidate how FLE narratives perpetuate gender and class injustices (Pinto and Coulson, 2011; Pinto, 2012a, b).<sup>67</sup> Marrying these two aims, Pinto (2013) argues that FLE, as it appears in Canadian mainstream media and curriculum resources, is “shaped not by evidence, but rather by the values, self-interest, mobilization efforts and lobbying power of participants in the political arena as evidenced in the narratives presented” (pg. 21). For Pinto, these values include those of large financial institutions and the dominant masculine, racialized and classed narratives we draw upon to act and make sense of the world. In contrast with an approach in which all voices are encouraged to be heard and then synthesized to achieve a universal moral stance on financial issues (Bates et al., 2014), Pinto outlines the problematic FLE discourses and critically interrogates them – identifying whom they benefit and whom they harm. She is less concerned with including those presently excluded within the world as it is: her aim is to disrupt and alter the present classist, gendered and racialized political economic system of inclusion and exclusion. Pinto’s and Coulson’s (2011) argument that “gender-blind”, “neutral” FLE discourses perpetuate the gendered systemic barriers we have constructed and that we should reconstruct our world to remove these barriers is anathema to the mainstream FLE project. It calls into question the discipline’s core assumption that FLE is an effective and ethical response and that financial insecurity is wholly a result of poor individual choices. Pinto makes clear that the openness to

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<sup>67</sup> See also Farnsworth (2012), who interviewed students about their experience learning financial literacy to discern the ideologies they reproduce – she found they viewed financial issues as private rather than public concerns – and the possibilities their narratives hold for disrupting dominant ideologies.

those excluded and insecure requires a fundamental alteration of those who listen and the world that presently privileges their lives at the expense of others.

Pinto is joined by a growing number of critical theorists who analyze FLE initiatives' modes of subjectification, the character of the subjectivities they promote and the practices they encourage us to create from perspectives informed by Marxist theory, post-structuralism and critical pedagogy (Arthur, 2011b, 2012c; Carr, 2012; Clarke, 2015; Daellenbach, 2015; Montegary, 2015; Tuominen and Thompson, 2015). Borrowing from Giroux (2004b), my own work presents FLE as a public pedagogy that extends beyond the classroom to include popular media such as debt and investment television shows, which operate both discursively and affectively to encourage particular dispositions and debt relations (Arthur, 2014a). My analyses and those of other critical FLE scholars conclude that FLE is better seen as an ideological, depoliticizing project which supports the individualization of financial risk, continued welfare state retrenchment and the blaming of individuals for structural insecurity (e.g. Arthur, 2011a, b, 2012a, b, c, forthcoming). To counter the FLE public pedagogy, I call for critical FLE scholars to support socially just alternatives to the individualization of economic security, including the institution of collective social-democratic and anti-capitalist solutions outside the school (e.g. a guaranteed income, robust public welfare institutions and participatory democratic production practices) and a "critical financial literacy education" to challenge the dominant "consumerist" FLE project within the school (Arthur, 2012c; Arthur, 2014b).<sup>68</sup> My broad stance is that it is not enough to call for a more inclusive dialogue to take place. Echoing Pinto, we must interrogate the world within which this conversation takes place, aiming not for a consensus that benefits the dominant but a dissensus that highlights the particularity, contingency and inequitable character

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<sup>68</sup> Daellenbach (2015) similarly calls for a "financial literacy from below" to challenge the dominant FLE project and neoliberal political economy. See also Carr's (2012) juxtaposition of critical pedagogy with FLE.

of our world. It is not enough to say that all must be heard while those excluded are barred from using a different language to voice their complaints (one which illuminates racialized, gendered and classist systemic inequity). If we are to be responsible for others' security and freedom, we need political action informed by an alternative language and hope for a different future than the present (Arthur, 2012b; Daellenbach, 2015). The problem, as critical FLE scholars make clear, is not how the least-advantaged engage in inequitable capitalist, racialized and gendered financial practices but the fact that FLE initiatives encourage us to recreate and accept these practices.

Against Remund (2010), I view the heterogeneity of the field's aims and methodologies as strengths and call instead for an expansion of the frameworks FLE scholars use and problems they analyze. This is not to say our research should not respond to each other's efforts, but, in addition to expanding upon common projects using shared methods, we must also interrupt the ground upon which our present projects rest through both immanent and incommensurate critique and the institution of opposing and incommensurate projects.<sup>69</sup>

### **Entrepreneurship Education**

Following the 2008 financial crisis, entrepreneurship education (EE), a field that was popular in the 1980s and early 1990s, particularly in the United Kingdom (Blackburn and Ram, 2006; Casson, 1982; Fillion, 1997; Gilbert et al., 2004; MacDonald and Coffield, 1991), is again a mainstay in media and policy circles (Pinto, 2014). As argued earlier, most growth opportunities and future employment are said to come from small start-up companies, which policymakers hope will grow into larger technology, software engineering or health science companies to replace older companies that are eliminating, automating or offshoring jobs (Tapscott, 2014; The

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<sup>69</sup> Incommensurate refers to that which relies upon a completely different ontology, epistemology and ethics than the project with which it is compared.



Economist, 2011). The entrepreneur, the subject at the heart of the neoliberal project in the 70s and 80s (Casson, 1982; Foucault, 2008; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992), is recruited once again to alleviate widespread precarity, low economic growth and a host of other economic ills (Kielburger and Kielburger, 2014; Matlay, 2006; OECD/The European Commission, 2013; Sá and Kretz, 2014).

In this narrative, educators and researchers are called upon to assist policymakers in creating entrepreneurs and an entrepreneurial culture (Davidsson and Wiklund, 2001; Drucker, 1985; Chell and Athayde, 2011; Jones and Spicer, 2009; Minniti, 2008; Peters, 2001).<sup>70</sup> Lepistö and Ronkko (2013) are indicative of the EE field, arguing “education is key to the development of an entrepreneurial mindset” (pg. 641). Valdez and Richardson (2013) join them, claiming we ought to use schools “to shape [the] normative beliefs of younger generations, with earlier exposure to entrepreneurial concepts and success and with more specific inclusion of entrepreneurship in elementary and post-secondary curricula” (pg. 1169). Given their shared subjectifying aims, this review and the analysis that follows include academic texts from the broader entrepreneurship studies discipline and EE. This broad approach illuminates the ‘educative’ aims of more general entrepreneurship studies researchers who analyze the characteristics of entrepreneurs for ‘educative’ purposes (i.e. to teach or promote these characteristics to the not-yet entrepreneurial). Additionally, the analysis of the relationship between entrepreneurship and various environmental stimuli in entrepreneurship studies highlights how the aim of altering environmental stimuli is aimed at encouraging more entrepreneurial behaviour. This, as with behavioural FLE’s choice architecture alterations, is a subjectifying act in the sense that it aims to create particular types of people. If we are to better

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<sup>70</sup> A case in point is the lead article of the winter 2015 issue of *UofT Magazine* titled “From dream to reality: Canada’s next billion-dollar tech start-up might just come from U of T” (Lorinc, 2015).

understand EE's public pedagogic character, we should not limit textual analysis of EE to only those texts which study, promote or report on entrepreneurial pedagogy in schools but should take into account the EE public pedagogy's conflation of education and subjectification and its use of our broader cultural practices to inculcate an entrepreneurial mindset.

In the broader field of entrepreneurship studies much is made of the discipline's inchoate character. Shane and Venkataraman (2000) in their review of the field describe it as a "hodgepodge of research" (pg. 217), but the early dominance of the 'trait' approach in entrepreneurship study continues and is tied to a common aim: studying the entrepreneurial in an attempt to distinguish the entrepreneur's intentions, skills and traits from the non-entrepreneur's (Chell, 1985; Deeks, 1976; Davidsson and Wiklund, 2001; Dodd and Anderson, 2007; Griffiths et al., 2012; Shaver and Scott, 1991; Vermeulen and Curseu, 2010). Cromie and Johns (1983) sum up the belief underlying this 'trait' approach:

We feel that it takes a special kind of person to set up a business on their own. Entrepreneurship is viewed as a personality characteristic. We recognize that situational circumstances and social function are relevant to the process but argue that under similar situational circumstances some people will set up business while others will not (i.e. personality features are a necessary condition for starting a business). (pg. 317)

Studies in entrepreneurship education build on this approach and attempt to gauge the effectiveness of particular pedagogical interventions by measuring the change in pre and post-test entrepreneurial intentions, knowledge, traits or behaviour (Ibrahim and Soufani, 2002; Mwasalwiba, 2010; Peterman and Kennedy, 2003).

For many in entrepreneurship studies (Casson, 1982; Drucker, 1985) and certainly within EE, these traits, skills and knowledge can and ought to be taught to individuals. Lepistö and Ronkko (2013), for example, argue that to create an entrepreneurial mindset we should teach young children to be creative, courageous, open, motivated, responsible, persevering and

independent. Chell and Athayde (2011) list similar characteristics to be inculcated (leadership, self-efficacy, creativity, energy and risk-propensity), but the problem many in the discipline stress is that there is no clear set of characteristics that have been found, despite numerous efforts, which can distinguish entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs (Gartner, 1988; Jack and Anderson, 1999).<sup>71</sup> Despite the lack of evidence pointing towards a trait that can distinguish the entrepreneur from the non-entrepreneur (other than his or her being an entrepreneur, which is itself a contested concept), the analysis and teaching of entrepreneurship traits continues unabated. As noted earlier, in Ontario this trait approach, combined with both character education and the teaching of “grit” (Duckworth and Peterson, 2007), is assumed by the provincial government to instill an entrepreneurial disposition and skill set that will improve the workforce’s entrepreneurship and innovation capacities (Fullan, 2014).

The assumption that we ought to create more entrepreneurs, expand entrepreneurship and improve the entrepreneurial process is often so strongly held by advocates in the entrepreneurship studies and EE fields that this goal is rarely questioned, creating a bifurcated discipline that, much like FLE, is marked by silence from the dominant paradigm in response to challenges and proposed alternatives to its core assumptions by critical EE researchers. Lepistö and Ronkko (2013), for example, when faced with rejection of EE initiatives by the respondents in their qualitative study on attitudes towards entrepreneurship amongst Finnish students can only understand this rejection as deriving from ignorance and fear of the unknown. They cannot understand this rejection as signaling a legitimate concern that calls for critical reflection on the commonsense assumptions they and other EE supporters’ hold. They are so wedded to a view of EE as wholly beneficial and necessary that they cannot see the constructed, political character of

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<sup>71</sup> There is also no clear consensus on how to effectively teach students to become innovative entrepreneurs (Griffiths et al., 2012, pg. 617).

the world they are supporting, the negative aspects of this world or a role for EE researchers other than expanding and improving entrepreneurship. There are disagreements amongst EE and entrepreneurship scholars on the nature of entrepreneurship, the scope and nature of government involvement and the usefulness of the state in fostering entrepreneurship (Minniti, 2008); but there is wide-spread agreement that we ought to create more entrepreneurs (Jones and Spicer, 2009) and that improving our understanding of entrepreneurship will aid this goal, linking the fields of entrepreneurship studies and entrepreneurship education, at times explicitly, with entrepreneurship policy.

William J. Baumol (1990), Academic Director of the Berkley Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, complicates the picture slightly by distinguishing between productive, unproductive and destructive entrepreneurship, and Davidsson and Wiklund (2001) also agree that it *might be possible* that “*under some circumstances* [emphasis added] new enterprise on the micro level are not beneficial to society” (pg. 95). However, revealing the optimistic bent of the discipline, they, like Baumol, see entrepreneurship and the creation of an entrepreneurial society as overwhelmingly positive. For them, entrepreneurs are special individuals who are moving us forward in history by creating novel practices and products or copying the most efficient practices and desired objects from one place and bringing them to another. This appears so obvious to Davidsson and Wiklund (2001) that they call for analysis into “how the discovery and exploitation of profitable opportunities for private wealth, i.e. new enterprise, translates into societal wealth creation” (pg. 95) but not how the creation of an entrepreneurial society, culture and mindset harms the well-being of many (Brenkert, 2002). Like Baumol, whose list of negative examples of entrepreneurship are exhausted by mafia bosses, terrorists and rentiers, they do not see that an entrepreneurial society can limit creativity, imagination, innovation and the security and freedom of many (Haiven, 2014; Jones and Murtola, 2012).

Despite the inability of entrepreneurship researchers to settle on a definition of the entrepreneur and his or her traits, for most researchers the entrepreneur is at base an innovator who takes risks to improve an aspect of the production process. Richard Cantillon, who first introduced the term “entrepreneur” to economics in 1755, described the entrepreneur as an “uncertainty bearer” – one who bought at a certain price and sold, hopefully, at a higher price while mediating between different facets of the production process (Vermeulen and Curseu, 2010). In this tradition, the entrepreneur is a disciplining force for production, exploiting price differences and innovation opportunities that exist because of asymmetries in information, personality traits or contextual factors.<sup>72</sup> Through his or her exploitation of differences in prices and his or her function as a coordinator between various elements of production (e.g. land, labour and capital) the entrepreneur is responsible for capitalism’s tendency towards equilibrium and homogeneity.

Expanding upon Cantillon’s view of the entrepreneur, Joseph Schumpeter (1934/1982) described the entrepreneur as an innovator who disrupted the economy, delivering the “creative destruction” that swept away old methods of production and brought in new, more efficient ones. According to Schumpeter, the entrepreneur drives change in the economy and creates profit for him or herself by finding inefficiencies or opportunities that others did not notice and creating novel production processes or sating consumer needs/desires through inventing new products/services. This perspective stresses that economic growth is not linear or gradual but marked by short, medium and long cyclical waves of growth and decline (Kitchen, Juglar and Kondratieff waves), with the long waves caused by “a large-scale clustering or sequence of innovations, the appearance and absorption of which require a half-century or more” (John E.

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<sup>72</sup> This conception of the entrepreneur continues to this day with Shane and Venkataraman (2000) arguing that innovative entrepreneurship is the “mechanism through which temporal and spatial inefficiencies in an economy are discovered and mitigated” (pg. 219).

Elliott in Schumpeter, 1934/1982, pg. xxix). These innovations, the result of entrepreneurial ingenuity, unleash waves of creative destruction that shift capitalism away from equilibrium and homogeneity (for a time), forcing firms to emulate the novel production processes of their industry competitors, switch their production to a different commodity when their industry is made obsolete by a new product or find new uses for their products. From this perspective, entrepreneurs are the lifeblood of capitalism. Without entrepreneurial innovation, capitalism is neither creative nor destructive but stagnant (Kirzner, 1999).

Cantillon stresses the role of ‘incremental innovation’<sup>73</sup> in capitalism, which relies on a collective effort to diffuse already existing innovations to firms or industries that lacked these innovations, while Schumpeter highlights the role of ‘radical innovation’, which is the creation of a novel product or production process (Toner, 2011). Both types of entrepreneurship find their way into EE researchers’ narratives, which stress the need for innovation and disruption but also note the necessity of adapting to and expanding innovations (e.g. innovations in technology or the production process can disrupt an industry, but this disruption creates a new reality to which others must conform). Entrepreneurs are thus both those who find new ventures for capital to accumulate and the conduits through which its disciplining force flows, innovating in the first instance and replicating in the second. For this reason the entrepreneurial mindset is not only creative and iconoclast but also deeply conformist, stressing a necessity to adapt to capital’s needs – a point I expand upon later.

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<sup>73</sup> This is by far the most prevalent form of innovation: as an example, in 2004 and 2005 incremental or replicative innovation accounted for all but 1% or less of all innovations introduced in Australian business (Toner, 2011).

## **EE and Entrepreneurship Studies Methodology**

For those less wedded to studying the decontextualized individual, failure to create entrepreneurs through teaching entrepreneurial dispositions or to even define the entrepreneur led to a move away from analyzing the isolated individual to analyzing the contextual influences on the individual's behaviour (Baumol, 1990; Ramoglou, 2011). This approach views the entrepreneur as embedded within a social context and treats the entrepreneur as one variable among many, extending the analysis to numerous levels beyond the individual – e.g. the firm, industry, regional and national environment. Though analyses at the individual level continue to be prominent (Davidsson and Wiklund, 2001; Dodd and Anderson, 2007), this more structuralist approach seeks to correct the methodological individualism of the entrepreneur trait research to learn better what relations, policies, institutions and practices encourage or discourage the creation of new firms or innovations (Minniti, 2008). The bulk of the research in this area, unsurprisingly, has an activist stance aligned with the entrepreneurship policies of governments (Science Technology and Innovation Council, 2012) and transnational NGOs (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, N.D.; OECD, ND; World Bank, 2010).

In addition to analyzing and altering the material environment (e.g. tax levels, labour standards and government procurement policies) to create opportunities for entrepreneurship, policy makers and entrepreneurship researchers are also interested in the impact culture and entrepreneurship have on each other (Taylor and Wilson, 2012).<sup>74</sup> The broad focus of this form of entrepreneurship research, as with cultural research in other disciplines which have gone through the 'linguistic turn', is to analyze the effect language and linguistic practice have on our actions and beliefs. The basic idea is that while we create our culture and language, these

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<sup>74</sup> Neoliberal policy makers and entrepreneurship researchers would agree with Hjorth (2010) that "entrepreneurship is a social force creating society, and not only (or even primarily) an economic force creating companies and products" (pg. 311).

symbolic constructs influence how we see and act in the world.<sup>75</sup> For Gartner (1993), to think and see beyond what we take to be commonsense (as he makes clear this means seeing opportunities for profit making and innovation that others do not) we must generate “new words to talk about what we see and experience” (pg. 238). Here we see the connection between understanding the entrepreneurial process and supporting the entrepreneurial process; analysis and description, as Gartner makes clear, are innovative and prescriptive. The social construction of particular linguistic categories and narratives supports particular actions and bars or discourages others. Entrepreneurship researchers analysis and description creates concepts and narratives which can support novel (entrepreneurial) action.

For researchers in both EE and entrepreneurship studies, however, the pendulum had swung too far away from methodological individualism and had reduced the individual to an effect of his or her surroundings, replacing an under-socialized account with an over-socialized one.<sup>76</sup> With many calling for continued research into the individual, given that many potential entrepreneurs fail to act on the entrepreneurial opportunities that exist (Ramoglou, 2011), two related, interpretive responses to this dilemma emerged to save the figure of the socialized entrepreneur. The first called into question the privileged rational subject who was predicted to take advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities if he or she noticed them. Like early Marxist theorists who sought to explain why the masses did not rise up in revolt when it was clearly in their interests (Gramsci, 1971; Horkheimer and Adorno, 1947/2007; Marcuse, 1956/2005), some entrepreneurial theorists began to analyze the “deeper beliefs that may impose unnecessary

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<sup>75</sup> Gartner (1993) highlights a particularly strong linguistic determinist stance few would subscribe to today: “The choice of words we use to define entrepreneurship sets the boundaries for how we think about and study it. Language governs thought and action” (pg. 232). When reading his words today we should attend to the more nuanced accounts of linguistic influence his analysis supports, remembering that often when one is emphasizing a conflicting point of view or approach hard boundaries (e.g. we are constructed and our thought and action is determined by language vs. we are free to think and act as we wish) are drawn to make a case for an alternative paradigm.

<sup>76</sup> See Granovetter (1985) for an early and influential argument to this effect in economic sociology.



blocks on entrepreneurial behaviour” (Ramoglou, 2011, pg. 447).<sup>77</sup> Given that both the need and opportunity for entrepreneurship exists but people do not seize it, researchers looked to potential entrepreneurs’ irrational beliefs, which are assumed to be either completely socially constructed and thus wholly contingent or contextually-inflected universal constructs which conform to a particular logic that can be channeled in particular directions given prevailing conditions. As with behavioural FLE, the concern then becomes how to use this knowledge to better shape the social environment to encourage entrepreneurship, which is uncritically accepted as the appropriate course of action.

### **Critical Entrepreneurship Studies**

The second response attempted to better account for an embedded rather than determined existence by carrying out micro-analyses of individual entrepreneurs as they exploit opportunities for profit or respond to injunctions to be enterprising. For most entrepreneurship researchers taking up this approach (Bhave, 1994; Chell, 1985; Gartner, 1988), interpretive ethnographic research promised to create the nuanced data that could be used to better encourage entrepreneurship.<sup>78</sup> For more critical researchers, the interpretive approach offered tools to better understand both how we are governed and how we could govern ourselves differently. Freedom *from* entrepreneurship or from entrepreneurial injunctions is a key feature of this critical literature. Working from a more critical perspective, Courpasson et al. (2014) take this approach in their analysis of how an organizational entrepreneur was able to resist management’s desire to outsource production. Others, borrowing from Foucault (2008), highlight how entrepreneurship

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<sup>77</sup> As with the individualist and structural analysis, the search for unconscious beliefs, which govern our behaviour, particularly our “non-rational reasons for inaction”, has clear implications for policy makers and entrepreneurial educators (Schwartz, 2007, pg. 447).

<sup>78</sup> Gartner’s key concern is to make the entrepreneurial “process more efficient and successful because it appears that few new venture plans gain support” (Gartner, 1988, pg. 28).

practices create a problematic relation to the self (Binkley, 2009; Rose, 1996) but one that also offers possibilities for acting otherwise.

While varied in their approaches, Critical Entrepreneurship Studies (CES) researchers oppose the uncritical acceptance of entrepreneurship and analyze its function in relation to existing power relations (Blackburn and Ram, 2006; du Gay, 2004; Jones and Spicer, 2009; Kenny and Scriver, 2012; Pinto, 2006, 2014; Pinto and Blue, 2014; Rees, 1986).<sup>79</sup> A chief concern of CES is that most entrepreneurship initiatives, policies and academic research take up the rhetoric of social justice and seek to include underrepresented groups without significantly altering the material or symbolic structures that exclude them (Blackburn and Ram, 2006).<sup>80</sup> Contesting this limited inclusion, critical post-structuralist approaches trouble dominant and dominating entrepreneurship narratives, recounting stories of entrepreneurship that are left out and highlighting the failure of entrepreneurship narratives to fully account for all aspects of economic insecurity and entrepreneurship (Hjorth and Steyaert, 2004; Ogbor, 2000).

Campbell (2004), for example, argues that critical entrepreneurship research must work to “recover women’s entrepreneurial accomplishments” and include them into our accounts of “economic history”, a task which requires the creation of new methodologies to see what the present methods do not enable us to see (pg. 206). Drawing on psychoanalytic theory, Olaison and Sorensen (2014) analyze how dominant entrepreneurship failure narratives function to contain entrepreneurial society’s failures while Jones and Spicer (2009) argue that entrepreneurship narratives’ failures to fully account for all the phenomena they attempt to explicate provide opportunities for hegemonic work aimed at articulating entrepreneurship

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<sup>79</sup> As with FLE, critical approaches to entrepreneurship exist on a continuum in relation to how they position themselves vis-à-vis capitalism and support for an expansion of non-capitalist relations. CES theorists such as Jones and Spicer (2009) and Jones and Murtola (2012), for example, are more radical than Brenkert (2002).

<sup>80</sup> See Shinnar et al. (2012) and Bellevue et al. (2003) as academic and policy examples of this type of inclusion.

differently. In a nod to radical democracy theorists (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001), Jones and Spicer (2009) remind CES researchers that this hegemonic work requires an attentiveness to entrepreneurship narratives' 'nodal points' or master signifiers around which other signifiers are quilted and which give these nodal points meaning (pg. 20). These supporting signifiers must be delinked and other signifiers attached to these nodal points to challenge existing entrepreneurship narratives and create new hegemonic discourses.

For Jones and Murtola (2012), Jones and Spicer (2009) and Mazzucato (2013), such action delinks 'entrepreneurship' from a capitalist innovation that colonizes our cultural commons and instead links it to everyday acts of cultural innovation that enrich and preserve our commons as commons. Here one can draw a further distinction between those who champion the public appropriation or 'commoning' of value and our cultural resources because the public contributes to and bears the risk of innovation and so should "reap the returns from the innovation process, if and when it is successful" (Mazzucato, 2011, pg. 113) and those who, like Jones and Murtola (2012) and Jones and Spicer (2009), draw on Levinas and Hardt and Negri to argue that we ought to create the "capacity for the other to innovate" (Jones and Spicer, 2009, pg. 108) and that the commons – from which we both draw to innovate and also reconfigure through innovation – ought to be democratically governed. The latter approach rejects an entrepreneurship which justifies appropriation of the commons on the basis of what was 'risked' and who did the risking and supports an "entrepreneurship for the other" (Jones and Spicer, 2009). The latter approach, which will be expanded in the last chapter, is more in the spirit of Levinas's ethics or Marx's (1875/2008) communist ethos "from each according to his abilities, to

each according to his needs” (pg. 27), while the former approach seeks distribution of the rewards of risk in accordance with how much was risked and who did the risking.<sup>81</sup>

## **Contributions**

This thesis seeks to contribute to both critical FLE and EE research by offering a philosophical analysis of the security and freedom dominant FLE and EE narratives propose. To date there exist no studies of FLE and EE narratives together even though FLE and EE are supported by the same groups, share similar goals (e.g. individualizing risk and economic security) and appear in the same policy, curriculum or media texts. This joint approach seeks to better understand the complexity of the neoliberal educational response to austerity and post-Fordist economic risk, and, while it does not exhaust the neoliberal educational response<sup>82</sup>, it does respond to key aspects of it: the creation of neoliberal subjects (responsible, autonomous and self-sufficient entrepreneurs, debtors, citizens, consumers and investors) and amenable practices (neoliberalized forms of security, freedom, ethics and politics).<sup>83</sup> The goal of this approach is not simply to analyze EE narratives alongside FLE narratives but to outline the contours of an FLE *and* EE public pedagogy which teaches us not only how to consume, invest, take on debt and produce more creatively and flexibly but also how we should assist others, desire and engage in political action.

Additionally, the analysis of the relation between ethics, security, freedom and politics is novel in the FLE and EE literature, and the use of a Levinasian-inspired theoretical framework

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<sup>81</sup> The former aligns with Marx’s (1875/2008) lower phase of communism while the latter is the higher, and, I would argue, more ethical, phase.

<sup>82</sup> A response which also includes school privatization initiatives, an expansion of accountability measures to teachers and students, the use of big data to drive top-down instruction and the teaching of ‘grit’.

<sup>83</sup> This campaign has elements that are both coordinated and uncoordinated – it is a hegemonic project, which links heterogeneous groups, aims and means together to advocate for and improve action, which ultimately increases and expands competition.

has also not been deployed in FLE research, which to date has under-theorized the relation between ethics and FLE.<sup>84</sup> Finally, while Levinas' ethics has been used to analyze the ethics of entrepreneurship and business (Aasland, 2009; Bevan and Corvellec, 2007; Byers and Rhodes, 2007; Jones, 2003; Jones and Spicer, 2009), the relationship between politics and ethics is still under-theorized in entrepreneurship research. To this end my analysis of the relation between ethics and politics draws from a wide-range of scholarship that combines 'heterodox' Levinasian ethics with politics in an attempt to make an original contribution to the debates on the relation between ethics and politics in both the FLE and EE fields.

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<sup>84</sup> Often in FLE research, a vision of ethics is implied behind researchers' worry that FLE does not meet the security needs of many and that it should, but it is unexamined.

## Chapter Four: Creating Capital's Standing Reserve Through FLE and EE Security Narratives

The watchwords following the 2008 financial crisis are precarity and economic insecurity (Standing, 2011).<sup>85</sup> In contrast to the rosy picture presented by the federal government, the ‘Canadian dream’ of economic security for all appears more myth than reality<sup>86</sup>: middle income jobs in Canada are becoming scarcer (Tal, 2015; Tencer, 2013) – a hollowing out of the middle class reflective of the situation around the OECD (Braconier et al., 2014) – while middle income wages have stagnated between 1993 and 2007, falling behind tuition and housing price increases (The Canadian Press, 2014b).<sup>87</sup> In Canada, the household debt-to-income ratio has climbed more than 55 percentage points between 1990 and 2009, leaving a total household debt equivalent to 148% of income (Hurst, 2011).<sup>88</sup> The Vanier Institute of the Family found that in 2010 Canadian seniors were 17 times more likely to be insolvent than in 1990 (Mayers, 2015) and “financial stress has tripled since 2009” according to a 2012 Canadian Payroll Association survey which found that 47% of Canadians “would experience financial difficulty if they missed even a single pay cheque” (Jones, 2014, para. 1). Youth have been particularly hit hard by the recent crisis and continue to experience high rates of unemployment – in 2013 the youth unemployment rate in

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<sup>85</sup> Precarity denotes the erosion of employment and social welfare security associated with the KWS and the creation of flexible, fleeting, individualized, marketized and hyper-meritocratic relations of insecurity (Standing, 2011).

<sup>86</sup> Perpetrating this myth, the Canadian federal government created a fictional family meant to represent the ‘average’ Canadian family in their 2012 budget. In the 2014 budget the family reappeared and had received a 20 percent salary increase in 2 years so that they earned \$120,000 combined (The Canadian Press, 2014a). According to Statistics Canada (2015), the median after-tax income for two-parent families with children was \$85,000, and most families in the ninth decile were not as well off as the federal government’s ‘average’ Canadian family a year earlier, earning an average after-tax income of \$113,100 in 2013.

<sup>87</sup> This continues a longer term trend which saw the market income of the bottom 60% of family units in Canada drop between 1976 and 2010 and the fourth quintile experiencing only a meager increase in income (Rajotte, 2013). The bulk of the gains between 1976 and 2010 went to the highest quintile, which gained 28.9% in market income (Rajotte, 2013).

<sup>88</sup> Unsurprisingly, those with lower incomes are less secure – in the same study Statistics Canada found that the debt-income and debt-asset ratios of Canadian households that earn under \$50,000 a year were significantly higher than those earning above that amount: those earning under \$50,000 a year were 1.6 times more likely to have high debt-asset ratios and had debt-to-income ratios that were 162 percentage points higher than those earning between \$50,000 and \$79,000 (Hurst, 2011). In late 2014, the Canadian debt-to-income ratio rose to a record level (Parkinson, 2014).

Canada was 13.7% compared to 5.9% for those 25 and older (Tahirali, 2014), and student debt grew 44.1% from 1999 to 2012, according to Statistics Canada (Tencer, 2014).<sup>89</sup> Finally, food insecurity, mortality, drug use and suicide rates have risen appreciably following the implementation of harsh austerity measures (Allen, 2014; Stuckler and Basu, 2013).<sup>90</sup>

The solution offered by FLE and EE public pedagogues to this growing economic insecurity is radical. According to Fullan (2014), we must inculcate a “new entrepreneurial spirit” in “both business *and social domains* [emphasis added]” (pg. 9). Cornell (2001), writing on the importance of EE, takes a similar expansive world-making approach:

The “target” is not only just the individual, the pupil or student who may decide to go into independent business or become a successful employee in the modern workplace, but also the whole society with whom the person will come into contact or who will affect his life or her life . . . unless or until all of society shares the entrepreneurial spirit, the educational task will not be complete. (pg. 82)

To build on Bernstein’s metaphor of the totally pedagogised society (Ball, 2008), EE public pedagogues’ broad aim is to transform not just formal education institutions but all of society into a business incubator through offering entrepreneurial opportunities, financing, mentoring, ‘investment-friendly’ tax regulations, partnerships with higher education, a training regime that can continually retrofit human capital, flexible employment regulations and an Intellectual Property Right’s (IPR) and immigration regime to create/attract the entrepreneurs who will

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<sup>89</sup> US students are far worse off with a student debt burden that grew 110% between 2005 and 2012 (Tencer, 2014). The situation for many US elementary and secondary students is also bleak: a recent report in the US found that “for the first time in at least 50 years, a majority of U.S. public school students come from low-income families” (Layton, 2014, para. 1). Youth unemployment is also particularly marked in Europe: in 2015 UK youth are three times as likely to be jobless as their older counterparts (Boffey, 2015); and in the Eurozone the youth unemployment rate in August 2014 was 23.3% (Bird, 2014).

<sup>90</sup> According to Food Banks Canada, at least 700,000 people a month have used Canadian food banks since 1999, numbers which have risen significantly following the financial crisis (Grant, 2013a). In the US, Americans are having fewer children following the 2008 crisis (Khazan, 2014), and, according to *Time Magazine*, “more than half of Americans have put off major life events like retirement and marriage in the last year. And that number has grown significantly since the recession” (Ross, 2015, para. 1).

ostensibly improve the economic security of all.<sup>91</sup> FLE public pedagogues are no different, arguing for the inculcation of a culture of conservation, prudence and individualized risk-taking and the institution of ‘investor-friendly’ material practices: limited financial regulation and the creation of individualized means of securing financial stability (Arthur, 2012c).<sup>92</sup> To be secure, the world – our practices, institutions, cultural resources, relations and dispositions – must welcome and make a home for the entrepreneurial and investor spirits.

FLE and EE narratives are a central support for this world and subject reformation. Disseminated through policy, media and academic texts, as well as practices, institutions and relations, narratives play “a central role in cognition. They help organize our perceptions of reality into a coherent and meaningful pattern” and support particular actions and the creation of a particular world over others (Patterson and Monroe, 1998, pg. 319). In particular, FLE and EE narratives complement further neoliberalization of our world by providing a plausible reading of the present and its future reconstruction (i.e. outlining the causes and nature of the economic insecurity many face and how it will be solved in terms which appear true and ethical to many) while in turn drawing support for the stories they tell from the existence of a neoliberal world (i.e. a world of widespread, individualized insecurity) and population (i.e. subjects who see themselves as human capital and whose security rests upon their prudent and constant self-reformation), which FLE and EE public pedagogues paradoxically present as natural. It is to

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<sup>91</sup> The OECD (1998) concurs: “Entrepreneurship is the result of three conditions working together: conducive framework conditions, well-designed government programmes and supportive cultural attitudes” (pg. 12).

<sup>92</sup> A prominent example in Canada, which encourages a particular form of financially literate investment, is the Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) program. While these financial products are not new – they were created in 1957 – particular policy changes to RRSPs (continually increasing the amount individuals can claim and enabling RRSPs to be used to buy one’s first home) encourage increasing investment (Dougherty, 2008; Frenken, 1990). Saving is often thought of as a moral good and some may not think anything wrong with its encouragement; however, the construction and reconstruction of the RRSP program (one can also include Canada’s Tax-Free Savings Accounts and Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs) here too) promote an individualized financial security strategy at the expense of more collective alternatives that ensure a more equal outcome for all (i.e. a robust and expanded public pension or universal tertiary education) (Harden, 2013).



these FLE and EE security narratives that I now turn, beginning with those which individualize insecurity.

### **Individualizing Insecurity**

In FLE and EE security narratives, security is not a right or entitlement that can be provided by the state or one's employer. Indeed, FLE and EE narratives often assume that era has passed: US Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan (2010), refers to the present's intensified and individualized insecurity as the "new normal" (para. 1), and FLE researchers Kozup and Hogarth (2008) cite as unquestionable the US Government Accountability Office's prediction that

Due to current demographic trends, rising health care costs, and other factors, we face the possibility of decades of mounting deficits, which left unchecked will threaten our economic and national security, while also adversely affecting the quality of life and opportunities available to future generations. Americans must be aware of these developments in planning for their own financial futures, since, for example, we can no longer assume that current federal entitlement programs will continue indefinitely in their present form. (pg. 128)

Some FLE and EE public pedagogues, however, go further and explicitly attack popular support for collective forms of life at odds with neoliberal capital's offloading of economic risk (e.g. forms of life funded by collective risk management schemes like public pensions or democratically-controlled production practices).<sup>93</sup> Indicative of this attack, John Risley (2013), a board member of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE), claims that financially literate citizens understand how capitalism 'works':

The market creates wealth. The world's wealthiest countries and people and those which are its fastest growing understand how this works. We need to ask ourselves very basic questions. It would be great to have a sophisticated hospital in every meaningful

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<sup>93</sup> A majority of Canadians support increasing contributions to the Canadian Pension Plan (Vincent, 2015) and more than half feel that university and college tuition should be free (Dubinski, 2015).

population centre. It would be wonderful if we could twin more roads. Both would save lives. But what can we afford, what level of taxes will we endure to support what level of services? (para. 7)

Risley is not advocating for inquiry into our political economic practices; his plea for inquiry is rhetorical since the ‘basic’ questions have already been decided. His “we” laments that it might be “great” and “wonderful” if all could have the hospitals, transportation and food they need (this would save lives!), but “we” cannot afford it – the wealthiest, unsurprisingly, understand “how this works”. FLE is needed to help “John Q. Public . . . grasp the significance of fiscal discipline” and how the world ‘works’ and must be made to work (Risley, 2013, para. 3).<sup>94</sup>

Bodie and Prast (2011), writing on pension reform in the Netherlands, continue in this vein, equating our continued desire for an expanded KWS retirement contract with wishful or “magical” thinking.

The biggest obstacle to making the necessary changes in the [pension] system is wishful (even magical thinking) by the people directly concerned: the tendency to pretend that the problem does not exist or that some powerful entity – the government, the trade union, the employer, or some other organization – will take care of it at little or no cost to them personally. Wishful thinking must be replaced with pragmatism. People must be made to understand and accept the need to save more, postpone retirement, or both. (pg. 2)

Financial literacy supporters from both the OECD (Gurria, 2008) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Hausler, 2005) are also concerned that many might not understand that practices which collectively share the economic risks borne by individuals are verboten, explicitly presenting FLE as a means to counter resistance to individualized security schemes – resistance they believe is borne from ignorance of our macroeconomic realities which Hausler (2005) at the

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<sup>94</sup> Bryant (2010b) also similarly explains our predicament to the uninitiated: “Governments cannot continue to ‘fund’ GDP growth nor subsidize all those with growing needs. Governments need to nurture and launch a major 10-year effort to spur a youth entrepreneurship generation, and a 20-year effort to change and mold a ‘can-do’ culture” (para. 15). See also Mintz (2015).

IMF worries may “bring political pressure to bear on governments” (para. 9). Daniel McFadden (2006), a former president of the American Economic Association, shares Hausler’s worry and calls for better consumer education and changes to the choice architecture in privatization initiatives to avoid growing support for “alternative resource allocation schemes more favorable to the underdogs” (pg. 6). Finally, the Council for Economic Education (N.D.) drives the point home: financial and economic literacy education are needed to restore “faith in capitalism and the democratic process” at a time when “the financial services industry has been demonized and capitalism has become a dirty word” (para. 4-5).<sup>95</sup>

As part of this counter-offensive against ‘wishful thinking’ and ‘ignorance’ (i.e. a desire for collective alternatives to neoliberal capitalism), FLE public pedagogues parade around the financially insecure to serve as warnings of what could happen to those who fail to spend and invest appropriately. US sub-prime borrowers<sup>96</sup> are routinely featured in FLE narratives engaging in reckless behaviour: they took shortcuts and bought houses without sufficient collateral and in some cases without even a job, assuming significant risk. They were then in dire straits when housing prices dropped and interest rates rose on their mortgages, and now they and many others are paying the price. Greece is another popular choice of late: Greeks were funding supposedly lavish retirement benefits for everyone, collecting few taxes and allowing the siphoning of public funds for private gain (Bird, 2015; Makary, 2015; Risley, 2013). Greeks will now face years of hardship as a result of their decadence and corruption, serving as a reminder to others that

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<sup>95</sup> The Council for Economic Education’s view on the aims of economic education is not new. In 1940, Thorndike wrote that “the ignorance and irrational thinking about economics and business certainly is deplorable” (pg. 587) and that the US should teach economic education to inculcate the belief that “a world of rational beings, each striving to maximize his own satisfactions, is the best of all worlds” (pg. 593). As proof of widespread ignorance and irrationality he stated that a majority of Americans believed that business set its prices too high and the government should have provided for the needy: reasonable beliefs, one would think, given the proximity at the time to the age of robber barons and the Great Depression. William Stanley Jevons, a leading neoclassical thinker of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, also expressed similar hopes for the economic education of the working class (Arthur, 2012c).

<sup>96</sup> By this I mean of course those initial sub-prime borrowers and not the financial institutions which sold, speculated on and/or purchased sub-prime housing debt. Their financial illiteracy is not the concern of FLE advocates.

citizens should reign in their public desires and elect only governments that will implement policies their citizens can ‘afford’ (Erman, 2010; Stinson, 2013).

While often framed in these terms, the problem is not the collective, statist or political character of the solutions FLE and EE public pedagogues eschew; the problem is that they limit capital’s power. FLE and EE public pedagogues *explicitly* advocate for collective, statist and political solutions so long as they either leave undisturbed or expand and intensify capital’s power (e.g. lower taxes, incorporation of EE and FLE into formal education, fewer employment regulations, etc.). They are wholly untroubled by the massive mobilization of resources and world reformation for which they presently and loudly advocate. For FLE and EE public pedagogues, individuals, in particular youth, have no alternative but to be more resilient, determined, prudent and innovative while continuously subjecting themselves to retraining, *and we should ensure they understand this.*<sup>97</sup>

Therefore, if 4-year university degrees in Canada cost \$100,000 in 18 years time, improved individual money-management is the only answer (Alexander and Marple, 2010, pg. 7), and future students’ only ‘responsible’ course of action is to prudently take on debt to build up their human capital base when young and pay it off during their peak earning years when that capital begins to pay dividends so they can invest the money it garnered in exchange for retirement. Without alternatives it appears credible, even ethical, that the state, businesses and NGOs teach students to ‘manage’ their massive student loans, create online tools so students can assess their debt to potential earnings ratio when deciding if it is worth attending college or university (Lusardi, 2013; Wasik, 2015) and run workshops on how to find alternative funding sources (e.g. grants or “hitting up” grandma and grandpa, those “great untapped resource(s)” who

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<sup>97</sup> “Today’s young adults are a test-case generation of what’s to come, [writes Ted Beck, CEO of the National Endowment for Financial Education]. They’ll be responsible for their financial lives to a much higher degree than previous generations.” (Malcolm, 2012, para. 30).

can help pay the “ever-increasing cost of education” (Marr, 2014, para. 1-3).<sup>98</sup> When they leave post-secondary education indebted and with few job prospects, EE advocates also appear helpful, offering innumerable entrepreneurship workshops, lobbying the state for tax-breaks for start-ups and giving out tips to jobless-youth like that offered by Greg Bass, Alberta’s Deputy Minister of Education: “if you can’t get a job, then create one” (Bass in Parmar and Connelly, 2014, pg. 28).<sup>99</sup>

Those previously tasked with direct provision of the means through which many could reproduce themselves or move up the socio-economic ladder and achieve a significant measure of security – e.g. full-employment policies to create stable, well-remunerated jobs and the provision of certain social goods (e.g. universal tertiary education, public pensions, unemployment insurance and public healthcare) – have reconfigured their duty. Combining boot-strap self-creation paeans with a collective concern for the well-being of others, an array of moral FLE and EE “crusaders” (Pinto, 2013), including governments, businesses, national and international NGOs, teachers and parents, have tasked themselves with ensuring that everyone, especially those most insecure, are “sufficiently financially literate and entrepreneurial to take the necessary steps to protect themselves and their relatives and ensure their financial well-being including coping with unexpected events and/or developing their own source of income” (OECD, 2014a, pg. 15). Overwhelmingly, FLE advocates like Citibank argue there exists a “*moral imperative* for the global community to empower low-income clients to take control of their own financial needs” (Deb and Kubzansky, 2012, pg. 2). Paul Golden, spokesman for the National Endowment of Financial Education, is also exemplary, arguing “we have a societal responsibility to send our

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<sup>98</sup> Also, it is unsurprising that these individualized FLE and EE narratives find ready acceptance in the field of education given that it is dominated by the belief that the individual, within the world as it is, can become whoever he or she wants to be through hard work and perseverance.

<sup>99</sup> This seemingly cynical admonishment appears to place all responsibility on the individual, except that FLE and EE moral crusaders take every opportunity to flagellate themselves and our present institutions for not supporting the individual enough in his or her quest to support him or herself.

youth into the world with the tools to be financially capable, and globally competitive, as adults” (Moodie, 2015, para. 7). One of FLE’s and EE’s most ardent proselytizers goes so far as to claim these initiatives are part of a new “civil rights movement” fought against entrenched interests and complacency to pull people out of “economic slavery” (Bryant, 2014).<sup>100</sup> Again, individuals have a ‘right’, not to the provision of economic security by the state, but to the human and economic capital needed to compete for security, requiring the reformation of our world and its inhabitants so that each can fend for him or herself – a duty FLE and EE public pedagogues selflessly take up.

As many have already commented with respect to neoliberalism (Bourdieu, 2003; Brown, 2003; Foucault, 2008), this duty to help others compete is a capitalization of collective action – an appropriation of collective action (world making) to individualize economic insecurity and create the self-sufficient individuals capital desires, linking FLE and EE with austerity discourses that render unemployment, poverty, lack of access to healthcare, indebtedness, intensified work and an expanded working day into problems of subject creation rather than political problems that require a reformation or abrogation of capitalism. All are to accept the individualization of insecurity, and all, regardless of the endless variations FLE and EE advocates propose, require the same totalizing solution to their individualized insecurity: the implementation of large and small scale FLE and EE initiatives to modify and arrange the malleable bits of human and

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<sup>100</sup> Financial institutions are, of course, also motivated for self-interested reasons and are well aware that “there are a variety of benefits an organization can expect to accrue from taking a positive ethical stance: higher sales through improved public image; enhanced employee commitment to corporate goals through higher regard for the organisation; greater job satisfaction; efficiencies through improved internal and external relations and so on” (Bartlett and Preston, 2000, pg. 205). That said, the concern for the security needs of others and the responsibility of the already secure to assist the insecure are fore fronted. Youth, women, Aboriginals, the elderly and the host of other disadvantaged groups outlined by FLE and EE advocates are said to have a responsibility to themselves and others to become financially literate and entrepreneurial; however, the obligation of education institutions, governments, businesses and NGOs to provide the means to do so is constantly stressed. There is an asymmetrical responsibility with those more secure called on to provide the insecure with the means to become secure.

economic capital that are available into conglomerations that can produce, conserve and create the ever-more productive formations of human and economic capital that capital desires.

### **Bright-Siding Insecurity: The Security to Come**

In contrast to the pessimism that greets KWS economic security solutions, FLE and EE public pedagogues evince an overwhelming optimism that their individualized solutions and world-making for capital will provide economic security for all. The world may be becoming less secure and more is asked of individuals, but FLE and EE public pedagogues are incurably optimistic that all who follow their advice can become economically secure, despite significant evidence to the contrary (Arthur, 2012c; Blackburn and Ram, 2006; MacDonald, 1991; Pinto, 2014a; Willis, 2008a, b). With FLE and EE public pedagogues' seemingly unshakeable faith in their cause, they assume that teaching money-management and entrepreneurship skills to the insecure will enable them to "regain control over their pay cheques" (Fisher et al., 2010, pg. 4), assist low-income individuals to put themselves on an "equal footing with higher income Canadians" (Social and Enterprise Development Innovations, N.D., para. 3) and help low-income communities to achieve a long sought-after "economic freedom" (Chun, 2011, para. 6).<sup>101</sup> Displaying the concern for others' security and optimism for individual solutions that permeates the FLE and EE crusader mentality, Amy Rose at the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) opines, "Kids are making decisions when they're 12 or 13 that will destine them to poverty . . . The question is: Can you change the trajectory of a kid's life in one year-long course by getting them involved in their work? I've seen over and over again that you can" (Clark,

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<sup>101</sup> In their zealotry, some even reach back into history and rework past achievements of middle-class security in the twentieth-century as the sole result of individual ingenuity and determination rather than political opposition to the inequitable distribution of the gains of economic progress (e.g. working class, anti-racist and women's movements) (Bryant, 2011, 2014).

2013b, para. 9). Echoing the financial gurus who tell their followers that investing \$5 a day will net them a \$2 million retirement account (Olen, 2012), Rose and other FLE and EE narrators move dizzyingly from stories of mass layoffs and increasing global competition from smarter, harder-working students overseas to the hidden opportunities these threats bring for those willing to invest prudently, build a better mousetrap or Facebook or think positively (Fullan, 2014; Rabbior, 2007).<sup>102</sup>

In their uplifting narratives, FLE and EE advocates pursue a variety of strategies to “bright-side” capitalism’s insecurity.<sup>103</sup> One such strategy is to position those not yet financially secure along a fixed developmental continuum ending in the economic security a middle class life or ‘developed’ economy is assumed to bring for those who ape the financially literate and entrepreneurial secure (stable employment, decent pay, a robust basket of consumer goods and a similar or better life for one’s descendants). The assumption is that everyone, especially those racialized and gendered others who are presently disadvantaged by the present political economic system, can increase economic growth and attain a mythic liberal capitalist security cleansed of its hyperexploitation of racialized and gendered others (Mies, 1999) through improved individual

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<sup>102</sup> Romana King (2015), writing for Money Sense Magazine (a Canadian personal finance magazine founded in 1999 and owned by Rogers Communications), is similarly optimistic: After asking “Who wants to raise a millionaire?” she regales readers with examples of children who have beat the odds and struck it rich, concluding that following her advice will “raise responsible, independent children” who may “happen to become millionaires along the way” (para. 31). Amy Bell (2010), in an Investopedia article (Investopedia is an investing education site created in 1999 and owned by IAC), asked the same rhetorical question five years earlier but was even more optimistic, concluding that “If you make the right moves, you may just be the proud parent of the next J.K. Rowling, Sergey Brin or Donald Trump (with much better hair, of course). With a little bit of encouragement, lots of love and plenty of financial advice you can put your kid on the road to riches” (para. 14). Kyle Prevost, a Manitoba school teacher and creator of a personal finance course recently approved by Manitoba’s ministry of education, is no different: his first lesson is telling students they “could be a millionaire by 50 by investing the equivalent of a pack of cigarettes every day” (Sagan, 2015, para. 19). More reserved, Suzanne Hopgood (2015), president and chief executive of the Hopgood Group, writes in an editorial on the need for FLE in college, “many hardworking people of modest means could be very comfortable if they had the financial skills to manage what they have” (para. 4).

<sup>103</sup> See Ehrenreich (2010) on this “bright-siding” ideology.



innovation, consumption, investment and production.<sup>104</sup> The rising tides of economic growth, which improved individual consumption, investment and production behaviour are to bring, may not secure all equally, but all are assumed to benefit significantly (Braconier et al., 2014).

In FLE and EE narratives attaining a fairly robust economic security can happen immediately as individuals learn the needed skills and knowledge (this narrative is often reserved for the downwardly mobile or insecure middle class) or it can be a slow process with those lower on the entrepreneurial or financial literacy ladder requiring time and the removal of cultural and institutional obstacles to catch up. Cornell (2001) provides a typical narrative of the former ‘soon-to-be middle-class’ entrepreneur, who in this particular case was initially stymied by “perverse tax incentives” but in the end overcame the welfare state’s injustice:

This writer has personal experience of a young family friend in France, with limited education but good manual skills, now in his mid-30s, who passed through a depressing unemployment experience in the 1990s. He found underground, independent artisan work for a time, and now has become the proud proprietor of a legitimate, registered, successful, tax-paying business. He has rescued himself from professional oblivion and regained his dignity. His young firm provides a living for him, his family and a business partner, as well as part-time work for occasional assistants. *The OECD area has millions potentially like him* [emphasis added]. (pg. 23)<sup>105</sup>

This middle-class subsistence entrepreneur is situated in the middle of a hierarchy of entrepreneurship that runs from bottom-of-the pyramid (BOP) entrepreneurship to high-tech, heroic and innovative entrepreneurship.<sup>106</sup> Each level on the hierarchy requires slightly different

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<sup>104</sup> Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, is exemplary, arguing that education, formerly a “weapon of oppression . . . can now [in the form of FLE] be the key to unlocking the full potential of our people” (Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of British Columbia, 2011, pg. 3).

<sup>105</sup> James Rosebush (2015) reiterates essentially the same story, arguing that there are “hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of Davids out there” (David being his friend and a “start-up maniac”)(para. 6).

<sup>106</sup> At the top of the entrepreneurship hierarchy are three types of heroic entrepreneurs Canadians are encouraged to emulate. The most prevalent is the wildly successful high-tech entrepreneur, often embodied by Steve Jobs, Bill Gates or a region’s local entrepreneurial success (e.g. Research in Motion, Magna and Bombardier are popular examples in Canada). This hero is primarily concerned with his or her own security, but, to borrow from Bernard Mandeville (1714/1989), the heroic entrepreneur’s vices have ‘public benefits’, not the least of which is the creation

solutions (e.g. micro-credit institutions for BOP entrepreneurs and supportive state procurement policies and state risk-sharing schemes for high-tech entrepreneurs), but most EE narratives assume that access to capital, knowledge, a disposition for risk-taking and reduced social welfare state regulations and limited business taxation will help those at the bottom and top of the entrepreneurship pyramid.

Social enterprise and social finance public pedagogues<sup>107</sup> take up a slightly different bright-siding strategy, weaving narratives of a soon-to-be created capitalist utopia in which a security for all is waiting to be created by enlightened CEOs and social entrepreneurs.<sup>108</sup> The most utopian of these narratives encourages us to imagine a future capitalism in which all can live well. The political economic system we have now might create insecurity for many, but, “if we can open up our thinking of what capitalism really is”, argues Michael Porter, Bishop William Lawrence Professor at Harvard Business School, we (i.e. the economic elites that comprise Porter’s vanguard) can “make a substantial and positive impact on virtually every societal need” (Driver, 2012, pg. 423). For Porter, social entrepreneurs will put “actual market forces to work” so that we can pursue “shared value principles” and create a “higher form of profit” (Driver, 2012, pg. 424-426). Through empowering heroic social entrepreneurs, a more socially just and

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of quickly growing companies (Gazelles) that provide secure, well-paid employment for others. The other heroic figure is the charitable entrepreneur who gives some of his or her wealth to charity (Rabbior, 2007), and the final type, falling between the other two, is the social entrepreneur – typified by Muhammad Yunus of Grameen Bank fame – who aims at socially desirable outcomes for others through various money-making activities: micro-lending, social impact bonds, public-private-partnerships, privatization schemes and sub-prime loans. The social entrepreneur, in contrast to the heroic entrepreneur, who unwittingly improves the lives of others (as if by an ‘invisible hand’), aims intentionally at public and private betterment.

<sup>107</sup> In the FLE literature, social entrepreneurship narratives are mirrored by social investment discourses featuring investors and consumers who create security for others through their ‘ethical’ allocation and investment of economic resources.

<sup>108</sup> The other forms social entrepreneurship and social finance can take include charity and precarious, excluded populations’ entrepreneurial and investor activities. The moniker ‘social’ is often attached to entrepreneurial and investor activities that are initiated by the excluded or are to benefit the significantly insecure (e.g. Aboriginal entrepreneurs running a t-shirt shop is a form of social entrepreneurship (Government of British Columbia: Ministry of Social Development and Innovation, 2014) as is the creation of a cheap water purifier by a multinational corporation). Thus, similar ventures can be referred to as ordinary entrepreneurship or social entrepreneurship depending upon who is running the business or who its customers are.

‘authentic’ capitalism is possible. There is pain now, but Philip Auerswald (2012), another prominent entrepreneurship researcher, claims that “this should not blind us to the epochal promise of prosperity that is evident on the horizon” (pg. 10).

### **Erasing the Insecure**

This fantastical social enterprise narrative highlights another aspect of FLE and EE bright-siding narratives: the erasure of the insecure and capital’s insecurity. A children’s FLE fairytale text, *Dreams Can Come True* (Britton, 2010), which borrows from the plot of Robert Kiyosaki’s (2011) popular personal finance book *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, provides an apt opportunity to analyze the disappearance of capitalism’s insecurity. In the story, the protagonist, a young boy, wants to be wealthy like his uncle (the rich dad) rather than remain a woodcutter like his father (the poor dad). The boy takes his uncle’s advice and copies his business model, leaving behind the life of a woodcutter by teaching others how to woodcut and then collecting a cut of their sales in perpetuity. After a series of events that attempt to make the story more interesting and portray the only female character as a subject in her own right, the off-stage wealth creation by the young entrepreneur’s indentured franchisees enables the protagonist to realize his dream goal of becoming wealthy and marrying the daughter of the Duke, who is impressed by the commoner’s capital accumulation abilities.

Though a seemingly innocuous and even progressive re-telling of a clichéd rags-to-riches/boy-gets-girl story (the Duke’s daughter saves the boy in one scene and is not given away but chooses to marry him), the indentured woodcutters are removed from our sight so that the heroic entrepreneur can stand alone and the story can appear as an ethical response to economic insecurity. Britton keeps to the sphere of circulation and does not venture into what Marx (1867/1990) calls the “hidden abode of production” (pg. 279); he also does not wonder how the

woodcutters came to be in need of work in the first place or why the workers continue to work for the boy. We arrive on the scene after the woodcutters have already been rendered insecure so their state of insecurity appears natural, if not their own fault, and leave just as quickly, implying that poverty is a choice and security comes from emulating the world's rich dads rather than poor ones.

There seems no violence, and the workers and the boy appear to meet as equals with each exchanging something they have for something they want, which shifts our attention from the fact that the security of the owner of the means of production (woodcutting knowledge) only comes at the expense of the other woodcutters' initial and *ongoing* insecurity. If the workers had direct access to the means to reproduce themselves, they would have no need to submit to the young woodcutter and provide for his now lavish lifestyle. Many will protest that the woodcutters chose to serve the young boy and without him they would not have had employment and would have starved, so they are better off.<sup>109</sup> However, this is exactly the problem: the construction of a world in which some have exclusive access to the means of production (including knowledge and wood) and who are allowed to use their exclusive access, backed by the state, to force others to provide for their security.<sup>110</sup> Britton's story and most other EE narratives do not dwell on the structural origins of insecurity when they reach the climax where the entrepreneur creates wealth, often disavowing those who make the entrepreneur's dreams come true and erasing the conditions heroic entrepreneurs rely upon to access the labour power of others, hiding the insecurity that is a prerequisite for capitalist security.

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<sup>109</sup> See, for example, the Foundation for Teaching Economics (N.D.), which in concluding its lesson plan on trade and labour argues that enabling capital to take advantage of economic opportunities benefits all: "Those mired in poverty are held back by corrupt governments, weak property rights, and restrictive economic policies. Nations experiencing growth and change have, on the other hand, seen through the myth that 'evil foreign capitalists seek to exploit impoverished workers' and understand that some paths to development just might run through sweatshops" (pg. 15).

<sup>110</sup> See also Marx (1842/1996) on the insecurity created through the privatization of fallen wood, which trumped the customary rights the working class in Germany had to the collection of fallen wood.

FLE investing narratives are arguably more deceptive. In these narratives the trace of those who create the value captured by ‘heroic’ entrepreneurs *qua* job-creators has completely disappeared: the ‘magic’ of compound interest is actually magical because those who compound it are nowhere to be found (Arthur, 2012c). As I argue elsewhere (Arthur, 2014b), the Ontario Teacher’s Pension provides a real life example of a very financially literate institutional investor (regularly posting investment returns of over 10%), which improves the security of the teachers who contribute to it through their defined-benefit pension plan but which rests upon others’ insecurity. To make its significant returns, the plan must invest in profitable ventures, which often means avoiding investment in companies that provide a similar pension plan or have unionized workers and instead investing in water privatization projects overseas (Allan, 2011) or dissuading workers from unionizing in the companies it owns (Bouvier, 2014).<sup>111</sup> Investment can take different forms; the investor could buy student debt, stock in an ‘ethical’ company or the rights to a resource (e.g. the water in Chile the Ontario teachers own), but essentially the investor seeks to get back in return more than he or she contributed, which requires another to work for the investor who has captured for a time another’s labour power.<sup>112</sup> In these examples both the contribution of others’ labour power and their necessary ongoing insecurity is disavowed, leaving only entrepreneurs and investors *qua* value creators directing production and capturing the value created.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> See also Wal-Mart’s financially literate strategy of advocating against raising the minimum wage so they can improve their stock price by using the money they save from paying their workers more to buy back shares (Reese, 2014). While a boon to Wal-Mart investors, this leaves their workers insecure (Skariachan and Wohl, 2013).

<sup>112</sup> Gwen-Ann Chittenden, manager of corporate initiatives for BC Investment Management Corporation, the major investor of BC public-sector pensions, states succinctly the responsibility of pension fund managers to their investors’ financial security: “Investing responsibly [is] . . . doing what we can to ensure the long-term financial status of the plans . . . even if that involves [investing in] controversial companies and products (Pynn, 2013, para. 6-8).

<sup>113</sup> What is also disavowed openly, as Jones and Murtola (2012) outline, is that this value creation is also always the result of a collective endeavor that exceeds a given production site in both space and time. Drawing from autonomist thought, which focuses on the increasing dominance of ‘immaterial production’ (the increasing importance of the tertiary sector, branding, niche production, innovation, cooperation and creativity in production), Jones and Murtola

There is variation within capitalism, and capital's demands can be responded to in a variety of ways. As Knafo (2007) perceptively writes, "the market only mediates social relations, but it is people who take decisions regarding the way they adapt to market imperatives, and their actions contribute, in turn, to shaping these imperatives" (pg. 95). Staying within capitalism, the woodcutting entrepreneur could have, like his uncle, given away his knowledge for free or set up a cooperative where all employees of the woodcutting firm could have equal say in the production and distribution of woodcarvings. There are numerous examples of cooperative firms that presently exist – Mondragón being one of the more famous. Investment can also take a variety of forms, including ethical investment and pension-fund socialism (i.e. the socialization of production through ownership of the means of production by worker pension funds, bringing either complete democratic control or significant democratic influence over what is produced, how it is produced and how it is distributed to large swathes of the economy) which are not necessarily doomed to failure (Langley, 2008).<sup>114</sup> The present, however, is largely inhospitable to the expansion of democracy to production, and FLE and EE public pedagogues not only do nothing to support this expansion, but by individualizing risk and insecurity, naturalizing capital's demands and obfuscating the link between security and insecurity, they undermine it.

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(2012) stress that "production becomes possible only on the basis of previous cooperation, which appears in the form of objectified knowledge, in machinery, technology and in established sciences, and a generalization of the intellect in the form of a trained and constantly communicating workforce" (pg. 640). FLE and EE narratives thus not only disavow the immediate efforts of those whose labour creates the value investors and entrepreneurs capture, they also disavow others' past creation of the social and material environment and resources needed to create investment opportunities and future innovation. Despite FLE and EE public pedagogues' forefronting of an ethical obligation for others, their narratives overwhelmingly promote investment and entrepreneurship as individualized pursuits, erasing others' contributions so as to bar collective access to our material and social commons (Jones and Murtola, 2012).<sup>114</sup> It is also not necessary, even remaining within a neoliberal worldview, to accept the continual privatization of education or healthcare and marketization of access to education and healthcare. One could, for example, propose that providing universal tertiary education would improve capital accumulation better than schemes that provide inequitable access to human capital mobilization. This more 'progressive' neoliberal response is in contrast to the present more regressive response that holds that universal access is inefficient because it diverts resources away from those who best know how to use these resources to pay for others to receive a formal higher education that is not necessary given their role in the economy. However, to gain traction amongst neoliberals, the 'progressive' response would have to show that providing all with equitable access provided a Return On Investment (ROI) for present agglomerations of capital, improved competition and increased economic growth better than schemes that modulate and limit access to education and healthcare through marketized access to debt and insurance.

The most variation or reformation of our political economy FLE and EE advocates are willing to support is the promotion of various private-public partnerships, subsistence entrepreneurship for the poor and social entrepreneurship schemes in which capital accumulation and the betterment of society are aligned, creating Porter's "higher form of profit" (Driver, 2012, pg. 426).<sup>115</sup>

However, when we put down the FLE fairytale book and enter the 'real world' capitalist elites prattle on about so much we find this "higher form of profit" is fool's gold. The president and CEO of Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), Gordon Nixon, may argue that insecurity is not a necessary corollary of capitalism and that "addressing core social issues and generating a financial return are not mutually exclusive" (Ontario Government, 2013, pg. 20), but the would-be social entrepreneur/bank CEO who made over twelve million dollars in 2012 and, unlike Porter, was actually in a position to put social entrepreneurship's "shared value principles" to work (i.e. he was one of the vanguard who had taken up the message to open his thinking to "what capitalism really is") unsurprisingly found that profit making and "addressing core social issues" are at odds when the latter runs up against capitalism's structural demand to accumulate. In response to his company's replacement of bank employees with temporary foreign workers, he lamented that it is difficult to balance RBC's "desire to be both a successful business and a leading corporate citizen" (Nixon, 2013, para. 6; Tomlinson, 2013).<sup>116</sup> Certainly, there are examples of companies giving to charity or supporting fair trade who do not turn around and outsource their workforce, but despite the existence of these examples, even the most enlightened

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<sup>115</sup> Tellingly, Porter, who calls on CEOs and managers to pursue a more enlightened self-interest, never calls on workers to do the same because even in his world of 'higher profits' most who sell their labour will not be able to decide what the 'higher profits' they produce will be, how they will be distributed or under what conditions they will be created.

<sup>116</sup> McQuaig (2014) also questions Gordon Nixon's social conscience given he presided over the shifting of Royal Bank's new employees to a defined-contribution pension plan in 2011 while he will retire at the age of 57 with a defined-benefit pension of \$1.68 million a year until he turns 65 and then the pension will rise to \$2 million a year for life. At a time when the right to retirement is increasing under attack, the shift he orchestrated for others *but not himself* was described as a "responsible" change that will ensure the "sustainability" of workers' pensions (The Canadian Press, 2011).

CEO's options, as Nixon notes, are limited by capitalism, which despite the possibility for variation is marked by a logic that induces firms to continually reduce costs and expand production to stay ahead of their competitors, limiting the pursuit of "shared value principles" and necessarily producing insecurity.

### **Disavowing Capitalism's Insecurity**

Most FLE and EE public pedagogues do not call for the creation of an enlightened vanguard to usher in a better capitalism or completely erase capitalism's insecurity but stress its *necessary* insecurity, which they then disavow to argue that insecurity is caused by individuals and is not systemic. Disavowal is used here in the Freudian sense in which one knows and does not know, "that is, a compromise between reality and wish" (Campbell, 2005, pg. 279) with the individual's supposed financial illiteracy and limited entrepreneurial ability standing in as the fetish that supports the disavowal of capitalism's necessary insecurity. To cite one of the most initially pessimistic bright-siding examples, Matt Gurney (2011) in the *National Post* derides Occupy protestors' economic security grievances (e.g. the desire for stable, well-paying and meaningful employment and a debt-free future) as naively optimistic given the state of the global economy but then turns around and disavows the economy's necessary insecurity when he proffers a solution. For Gurney, financial illiteracy fueled the Occupy Movement; student Occupiers have no idea how the "real world works" (para. 1) because they were raised on a "self-esteem curricula" that glosses "over the fact that some people will enjoy greater financial success in life than others, that hard work matters and sometimes, people fail" (para. 10). However, after revealing the structural economic insecurity of the 'real world', in the very last line of his article Gurney then disavows its workings by arguing that while it is too late for FLE to help today's indebted students and retirees it "might help get future generations of Canadian students into the



1%” (para. 11).<sup>117</sup> In text after text, this pattern repeats. FLE advocates begin by outlining, sometimes in great detail, the systemic economic threats and necessary insecurity many face only to end by positing that FLE, positive thinking and expanded opportunities for investment will somehow enable all to be secure.

Cowen (2013), a *New York Times* best-selling author and columnist and economics professor at George Mason University, offers an even starker example of a discourse that begins with realist ‘tough’ talk of rampant inequality borne from hyper competition but which then dissolves, leaving a path to security that is available to all if we expand market relations and build up our human capital sufficiently. He begins by painting a stark dystopian future in the US in which a wealthy few who are able to complement information technology are being waited on by servants (personal services for the wealthy being a growth industry) and pestered by an impoverished multitude living in shantytowns eager for their attention and money. Those not able to make it into the entourage of their technocratic rulers get by on a subsistence entrepreneurship which Cowen argues will be indistinguishable from that presently conducted in the underdeveloped world.

His narrative of a future in which significant inequality and insecurity is the norm *no matter what we do as individual entrepreneurs, consumers, producers or investors* (i.e. within the constraints of our present neoliberal global economy) is continually undermined, however, by his assumption that “personal qualities of character such as self-motivation and conscientiousness will reap a lot of gains in the new world to come” (pg. 182). Again, the key factor rendering one insecure is shifted from our capitalist relations and modes of production to the individual’s inability to adapt to capital’s demands. For Cowen, only 10% –15% will see improvements in

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<sup>117</sup> In Canada the minimum income in 2010 for the 1% was \$191,100 (CBC News, 2013b), far more than the \$90,000 he derides students for assuming they will make given the average salary at that time was \$31,648.

their economic security while the rest will see regression because those who failed were not sufficiently motivated.<sup>118</sup> Those who are hardworking and creative will do well given the cheap means to learn the necessary skills to succeed while those without self-control or desire to succeed – he singles out young women with a “strong ‘baby lust’” as being particularly at risk (pg. 182) – will be significantly insecure.

Having shifted the causes of insecurity from the economy to the individual, Cowen (2013) goes further, instituting a ‘bright-siding’ teleology into our political economy and arguing that even those with individual or culturally-influenced maladaptive traits will, in the far off future, live in a world in which “the cheap or free fun is so plentiful that it will feel a bit like Karl Marx’s communist utopia, albeit brought on by capitalism” (pg. 189). For Cowen (2014), those who cannot control themselves appropriately and lack motivation to meet capital’s demands are insecure in the short-term but their offspring are fortunate since the invisible hand is benevolent in the long-term:

Even if income inequality continues to increase in the short run, as I believe is likely, there exists a plausible and more distant future in which we are mostly better off and more equal. The history of technology suggests that new opportunities for better living and higher wages are being created, just not as quickly as we might like. (para. 13)

Offering one of the most pessimistic accounts of our future in which most Americans will have to significantly downgrade their expectations and live much less securely than their parents, Cowen,

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<sup>118</sup> For Cowen (2013), the future will be one of rampant inequality but “worthy individuals will in fact rise from poverty on a regular basis . . . [and] the measure of self-motivation in a young person will become the best way to predict upward mobility” (pg. 168). “Some will opt for self-education, supplemented by programs and some human guidance, much like chess prodigies. Those who are less self-motivated will subject themselves to extreme forms of discipline for short periods of time to learn a new set of skills. And others will retreat into the world of what I have called threshold earners, just trying to get by” (pg. 150). Notice that the problem is individual motivation, which Cowen argues is the key to success: individuals are always opting for, subjecting themselves to and retreating from various activities, which will provide them with a particular level of economic security. They are not excluded from or forced into a particular level of security.

like other entrepreneurship advocates, seems compelled to assume that security is available for those who learn the needed technical skills, dispositions and comport themselves appropriately (the corollary being that those who failed did not work hard enough), that the opportunity to learn these skills and dispositions will be available for all and that the present political economy is the best of all worlds, delivering security for all through entrepreneurial technological innovation, even if only in a far off future. Cowen is an extreme example, but many FLE and EE public pedagogues stress supra-individual threats to our economic security – cheaper overseas production, automation of jobs, exhausted investment opportunities, global indebtedness, welfare state retrenchment, structural unemployment and underemployment and threat of capital flight and strike – and then naturalize our political economy, shifting the problem of insecurity to the individual’s level of adaptability while rereading our political economy as enabling all to become secure.

After initially presenting in detail capitalism’s necessary insecurity, FLE and EE public pedagogues could simply reiterate the realities of capitalism’s creative destruction and leave our future as one in which some will necessarily be insecure. It is telling that Gurney, after berating the working poor for not understanding capitalism’s necessary insecurity, and Cowen, who weaves a narrative in which most are facing a future eating canned beans while hoping the wealthy few hire them as sycophants, are compelled to include a vision of a better future for many, if not all. With avenues for anti-capitalist and even liberal reformist macroeconomic change blocked, the economy is continually reread at the end of FLE and EE narratives as enabling all to become secure. Despite readily accepting our collective impotence before capital’s demands, there is an almost pathological inability to accept the necessary destruction and insecurity FLE and EE advocates note at the beginning of their narratives – it must instead be foisted onto individual traits or cultural norms (financial illiteracy, risk aversion or ‘baby lust’) or

a defective capitalism. FLE and EE advocates cannot countenance that they are helping create a world where all cannot be secure no matter how flexible, resilient or creative they are.<sup>119</sup>

### **The Sublimation of Ethics for Capital**

Wendy Brown's (2005) comment that "we are in an interregnum" in which "neoliberalism borrows extensively from the old regime to legitimate itself even as it develops and disseminates new codes of legitimacy" (pg. 47) sheds light on the compulsion to disavow capitalism's necessary insecurity and hold to an optimistic narrative in which all can be secure despite the ample contradicting evidence FLE and EE narratives themselves present. In these optimistic narratives the "force" of the earlier KWS social contract in which there is an assumed ethical imperative to ensure all can be secure remains but is separated from its past means which attenuated capital's demands for many (e.g. full employment policies, more equitably shared productivity gains, social welfare programs and progressive taxation). Neoliberal entrepreneurial or investor solutions are imbued with this liberal force – i.e. we do not accept a world in which massive inequality, precarity and significant levels of poverty are ineradicable – supporting claims that we are still acting so as to ensure all will be secure, that equality of opportunity will lead to a robust security for all.

This is the parallel with Agamben's (2005) state of exception in which the dictator suspends the law (liberal capitalism's means of providing security for all) and issues edicts (neoliberal solutions, which create unequal outcomes) which take on the law's force (at the end all will be secure). The ethical critique that not all are secure still 'works' (i.e. has force), but given the naturalization of capital's demands and an ongoing neoliberal 'state of exception', there

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<sup>119</sup> Obviously, the problem is not only that some will not be financially secure even if they accede to capital's demands but that even those who are secure have acceded to demands which significantly limit their freedom; this is the topic of the next chapter.

appears to be no alternative but to alter the individual either through direct instruction or through modifying his or her environment to expand and intensify market relations. Having foreclosed a return to solutions that abrogate capital's demands, FLE and EE narratives align with a liberal ethics worried over inequality but can only support an endless search for 'better' individualized neoliberal solutions. A case in point is John Hope Bryant's (2010b) claim that FLE is part of a new civil rights movement extending the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

If we want to honor the legacy of the late, great Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., then honor his last great, unfinished work with his 'Poor People's Campaign.' Dr. King once said, 'you cannot legislate goodness or force someone to respect you. The only way to social justice, in a capitalist country, is economic parity'. This is what I mean by silver rights. (para. 20)

In this example, Bryant draws upon an extra-economic liberal moral force to argue for "silver rights" (e.g. financial knowledge) to ensure the poor have access to capital. In doing so he ties the moral 'force' of the concern for the insecurity of others which led King to advocate for a guaranteed income (Weissman, 2013) to a neoliberal solution (better incorporation into capitalism). The leverage provided by the "modest ethical gap between economy and polity" which was characteristic of liberal democracy's 'law' (i.e. the labour-capital 'compromise') (Brown, 2003, pg. 9) is erased by the FLE and EE public pedagogy: all that remains is a responsibility to continually construct a more competitive capitalism and better competitors, placing capital's demands definitively ahead of others' security (i.e. there is no weighing of capital's and others' opposing needs as capital sets the parameters within which we can respond to others' insecurity).

The justification for opening one of Bryant's *Operation Hope* outlets (non-profit financial empowerment agencies) in Detroit provides a paradigmatic example of how neoliberals take advantage of a state of exception (Detroit's bankruptcy) to reform KWS forms of life,

subjectivities, ideals, institutions and ethics (Abdel-Razzaq, 2015).<sup>120</sup> Detroit, a significant centre of both auto manufacturing and the KWS ethic that accompanied unionized manufacturing (Smith, 2001), is now a hollowed out shell. Water privatization initiatives (Dolan, 2014) and the gutting of workers' pensions (Christoff, 2015) continue unabated. As of 2014, more than 17,000 households have received "visits from the water company to have their supply cut off for non-payment of bills" (Maqbool, 2014, para. 8), between 2013 and 2014 the percentage of unionized workers in Michigan dropped from 16.3 percent to 14.5 percent (Shepardson, 2015) and more than 59 percent of Detroit children live in poverty according to a national *Kids Count* report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (Bouffard, 2015). Amidst this abandonment and destruction of the foundations of the KWS ethic, Bryant's *Operation Hope* and the financial literacy and entrepreneurialism it sells are rolled out as if they were the New Deal *redux*, equating the teaching of prudent consumption, investment and entrepreneurship and their underlying ideal of equal inequality in which each must continually compete for any scrap of security he or she is able to procure with the KWS ethics and its ideal of robust economic security for all. The neoliberal ethic of competition and the necessary insecurity and inequality it generates has cloaked itself in the rhetoric of the KWS ethics and in doing so neoliberalizes the KWS ethics (i.e. shifts the means and ends associated with the KWS ethics).<sup>121</sup>

In this thesis my aim is not, however, to support the reinstatement of a liberal ethics that weighs capital's demands against those of others. Rather than recover a KWS ethics, I argue for reclaiming ethics as an infinite responsibility for the other: a responsibility for the other which

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<sup>120</sup> See also Klein (2007).

<sup>121</sup> One marker of this shift is the down-sizing of expectations many have for the future: a majority of 'financially literate' Americans in a recent survey defined getting ahead as not falling behind: one respondent replied, "the global economy has changed so much that I think holding on is going to be the reality in the future . . . There is so much competition (in the world), it's going to be harder to maintain the lifestyle we've been accustomed to" (Brownstein, 2012, para. 3). The Broadbent Institute (2014) found Canadians also feel that the present generation will be worse off than their Boomer parents, the same findings as a 2008 Environics Research Group survey (Kirby, 2009).

calls into question our present world, selves and capital's demands. The more significant concern is that the FLE and EE public pedagogy not only sublimates a liberal ethics for neoliberal ends but sublimates our more fundamental infinite responsibility for the other, transforming it into an *infinite responsibility* for capital. Sublimation of this infinite responsibility is necessary if it is going to motivate a finite (i.e. actual) response, but the FLE and EE public pedagogy channels genuine concern for others' security towards ends that support capital's security and others' continued insecurity. In other words, though there are various mediations of our infinite demand for the other – which we can judge as better or worse using our historical, socially-created norms and our estimation of the mediation's level of openness to an infinite responsibility that calls its foundations into question – FLE and EE support a capitalized mediation that renders others insecure and is decidedly against a foundational rethinking of its order.

Taking up a particular reading of Levinasian ethics influenced by Simon Critchley's work (Critchley et al., 2000; Critchley, 1999, 2002, 2008, 2009a, b), I take the term 'infinite responsibility' to refer to an originary, ethical, asymmetric and endless obligation I have to the other which is prior to my being and any order. This infinite responsibility calls me, my being and the created world into question. My responsibility for the other creates "an insurrection at the level of ontology" (Butler, 2008, pg. 22), signaling that the other is more than another person whose demands I can fully understand or fulfill; the other is one who exceeds my understanding and calls me out of myself and world, demanding that I reflect on my habituated ways of knowing and acting in the world and take responsibility for the other as other.

The other calls me to attend to his or her very singularity and distinct needs and vulnerability, which are beyond those the other has as a woman, unemployed migrant worker or an orphan. "It is the other *per se* who is destitute, whether white or coloured, whether wealthy or prosperous or poor or very poor, in the sense that she is stricken with mortality, and *especially*,

vulnerable to murder *by me*”. (Horowitz and Horowitz, 2014, pg. 9). My responsibility for the other is a responsibility for the violence of my very existence:

My being-in-the-world or my ‘place in the sun’, my being at home, have these not also been the usurpation of spaces belonging to the other man whom I already oppressed or starved, or driven out into a third world; are they not acts of repulsing, excluding, exiling, stripping, killing? . . . A fear for all the violence and murder my existing might generate, in spite of its conscious and intentional innocence. (Levinas, 1989, pg. 82)

Though I am responsible for my actions, this originary, anarchic responsibility does not derive from my having caused the other’s insecurity because the other and my responsibility for the other cannot be reduced to knowledge. My responsibility for the other is prior to my being; it precedes knowledge and the formation of the self. In fact without the other there would be no self. It is only through the encounter with the other that the self is borne (Horowitz and Horowitz, 2014).

For Critchley (2009b), this *a priori* responsibility for the other is a core feature of humanity: “our orientation towards the other at the level of deep subjective experience is one of something like compassion or something like being affectively moved by their presence” (pg. 20). However, whether we point to our phenomenological experience as Critchley does or list historical examples of ethical acts which exceed expectations yet appear with regularity, we have only supported after-the-fact an *a priori* obligation. As Cohen (1998b) elaborates:

In the body of *Totality and Infinity* Levinas will argue that the very temporality of morality, where the self is obligated by the other prior to its own syntheses of identification, deeper than its rational mediations, or its contractual negotiations with alterity, cutting these structures of the for-itself to the quick, introjecting the self more deeply, in a passivity more passive than receptivity, in a suffering for the other’s suffering, that this very temporality escapes the synthetic or ecstatic temporality of knowing. (pg. 159-160)



Thus this obligation cannot be justified by recourse to any ontological evidence or reasoning. Our being for the other along with our desire to preserve ourselves are core parts of who we are as humans. To ask for reasons why I should care for the other is akin to disavowing one's humanity.

However, there are not one but multiple others, necessitating a move from a relation between the self and singular other to one which explicitly includes the "third" or the "other Other" (Byers and Rhodes, 2007). Linking ethics with politics, Levinas (1969) states that "it is the third party that interrupts the face to face of a welcome of the other man, interrupts the proximity or approach of the neighbor, it is the third man with which justice begins" (pg. 150). Reinstating a gap between the competing obligations of singular others, the 'third' moves me from thinking only of my responsibility to the singular other who faces me to requiring that I attend to those who may not be physically present but to whom I am nevertheless also responsible, including myself (Fagan, 2009).

While necessary, the figure of the third entails that my infinite responsibility to the other is not only always betrayed by a response that must fall short but is attenuated further by the calculation, evaluation and institutionalization of justice the other others require (Caygill, 2002; Fagan, 2009). I cannot avoid this dilemma but must, with others, productively use this tension to enact just practices while remaining attentive to my failure to be responsible for the other and the other Other. Borrowing from Gibbs's (1994) insight that "the face cannot appear within rational discourse, but the face is the originary cause of that discourse" (pg. 239), we can say that though the other cannot appear in justice or political action it is the originary cause of both (Critchley, 2008).<sup>122</sup> Our infinite responsibility for the other motivates our political, social justice actions

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<sup>122</sup> Reading FLE and EE texts, I see no reason to think that a concern for the other does not motivate FLE and EE public pedagogues' political interventions and narratives. The vast majority of FLE and EE public pedagogues are not supporting the construction of a world in which the lives of many will be worse for their own gain and do not desire to cause harm to others or to promote the self-interest of the wealthy. Instead, their bright-siding of

which betray the other, but we cannot do without this betrayal: ethics without justice would be unethical just as justice without ethics would be tyrannical (Cohen, 1998a, pg. xvi).<sup>123</sup> We must respond to the particular politicized other who is excluded from our world (i.e. excluded in a particular way) by changing the present world, *and* we must also remain unsatisfied with our response, which is motivated by the transcendental other who is always to come and who continually calls into question any order we create – demanding we take responsibility for the exclusionary and colonizing nature of any order and the politicized, actualized and particularized identities we create for others.

Ziarek (2002) expands on this point; drawing from Levinas, Derrida, Laclau, Mouffe and Lyotard she argues that the particularity of any hegemonic formation, the creation of any particular world, will always leave other worlds unrealized. Without a way of adjudicating between competing demands in favour of a particular world (including those demands which cannot be articulated at present) – i.e. a procedure which is not built on an ultimately foundationless political decision – any polis is forever marked by an ineradicable antagonism. Democracy and justice are never finished but are always to come, haunted by those who are necessarily excluded (Derrida, 2005). This exclusion and antagonism is not simply a conflict between existing groups and particular conceptions of equality and freedom but between what is (the present hegemonic order) and that which is excluded from not only this order but any

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individualized solutions, disavowal of systemic insecurity and calls for initiatives which will make the lives of many less secure are a perversion of their *a priori* responsibility for the other. Some may be cynical or self-serving, but the vast majority appear to be genuinely searching for solutions to improve the lives of others. The problem is that they have succumbed to the “principle of the drunkard’s search” (Jervis, 1993) (i.e. the principle based on the joke about the drunkard looking for his keys under a streetlight because it is easier to see there rather than the dark corner where he dropped them) or rather “capital’s search” and are looking for solutions in the areas capital has lit rather than the dark corner where the other and third are waiting to be found.

<sup>123</sup> Certainly any ethical entrepreneurial or financial education cannot be satisfied with the creation of more ethical individual relations and actions while leaving intact the institutionalized practices which structure the ethical responses that are possible.

order.<sup>124</sup> Calling us to “bear witness to the differend”, Ziarek, drawing from Lyotard, argues that we must listen for a wrong which is “not signifiable” within the created world (pg. 92). Similar to Rancière’s (2010) “part of no part”, the excluded are those who cannot be included within a particular order (e.g. liberated proletarians in a capitalist society) without reforming that order so that their claims make sense and they can exist; but they are also more than this because any particular order, even that instituted on behalf of the differend or part of no part, excludes other possible formulations of the differend or other iterations of the part’s no part: the reformation of the present by and with a differend or part of no part is always a hegemonic operation that reforms the present for a particular, hegemonized excluded but always leaves a remainder, a differend to come to whom we are obligated.<sup>125</sup>

The concern for Levinas (1989) is that the self and the political institutions and practices we institute to deliver justice and regulate society tend to eradicate the differend or other, specifically the other’s radical difference and singularity, epitomized in what he refers to as ‘the face’. We betray our infinite responsibility to bear witness to the differend or part of no part that always escapes representation and instead shore up our defences against its demands. FLE and EE mirror this colonization of the other or reproduction of the ‘same’ by linking our ethical obligation for the other’s security to capital’s accumulation needs.<sup>126</sup> In doing so the FLE and EE

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<sup>124</sup> It is an ineradicable conflict between equality as the *said* (which involves the measuring, comparing and counting of singularities) and freedom as the *saying*. Roughly, the *said* is an *arché* or order while the *saying* is a disruption of the *arché*, an *anarchic* force. Holloway (2010) makes a somewhat similar distinction between the *done* and the *doing*. My point here is that it is not simply a conflict between a particular form of freedom (e.g. freedom from wage slavery) and another (e.g. freedom to sell one’s labour) but between a freedom that is realized and one that is always potential.

<sup>125</sup> Zembylas (2013) quotes from an interview with John Caputo on the relation between impossibility and justice in Derrida’s work that makes a similar argument: “the point of the impossible . . . is to make us intolerant of the injustice of the structures that are around us, to offset complacency and to raise the pitch of our sensitivity to those who suffer injustice, those who are excluded, those who are marginalized. [Derrida] wants to make us discontent with anything that we have now so that we can do better” (pg. 81).

<sup>126</sup> Interestingly, the Ontario Centres of Excellence alludes to colonization as entrepreneurial, arguing that the entrepreneurial “spirit was ingrained in the people who first built this province. And it’s in us” (Ontario Centres of Excellence, N.D., pg. 3).

public pedagogy effectively sublimates our infinite responsibility to protect the other's singular alterity with a responsibility to protect capital – to transform all that is other to a form that is amenable to capital, to reduce all relations to capital relations and expand these relations to all fields. A Levinasian ethics emphasizes that capital's totalizing logic – its reduction of life in all its infinite heterogeneity to exchange value and its conflation of my ethical responsibility for the other to a prior and more fundamental responsibility to capital – is unethical. FLE and EE's 'ethics' are thus a particular and virulent manifestation of the tendency of the "I" to reduce the other to an object to be consumed or 'samed'. I argue below that this undermines ethics by 'capitalizing' the responsibility we have for the other's security, which is an obligation to provide a more ethical and just security in which the other is secure, i.e. can avoid being reduced to the 'same' *qua* unit of standing reserve for capital and has the means to flourish.<sup>127</sup>

### **Accessing Capital or Accessing Others?**

Alongside their bright-siding and individualization of insecurity, FLE and EE security narratives' most prominent claim is that the only solution to economic insecurity is to enable the insecure to better access capital. As with other neoliberal initiatives, inclusion at all costs is presented as the only antidote to insecurity. This is untenable. If I am to be responsible to the other and we are to be responsible to others we cannot accept that our responsibility is exhausted by offering an opportunity, even an equitable opportunity, to access capital: we must test the limits of our sense of responsibility and expand the means through which we can enact our responsibility. While

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<sup>127</sup> Borrowing from Ryder (2012), "justice, then, would be the material and conceptual world as reconceived to allow for the deinstrumentalized freedom of global others who are no longer subordinated to the demands of the productivity furnished by the international marketplace" (pg. 132). That this reconception will fall short of what justice demands both because of the partial, finite nature of any response and this particular response's unique partial understanding of the unjust world it opposes does not justify inaction (i.e. a misguided attempt to institute a pure ethics) but demands continual critique and action with others for those whose suffering is justified and occluded by the present order and any we might create in the future.

infinite and thus containing limitless responsibilities/possibilities, this obligation requires that we attend to the trace of the other – that which is opposed to and incommensurate with our present capitalized world (Marder, 2004) – and the narratives, feelings and world we have constructed which capitalize the other’s demands (i.e. reduce the other to the ‘same’ *qua* capital) and limit our responsibility for others’ security.

It is true that achieving economic security is presently an individualized and capitalized problem in many countries, *but this is the problem*: the symbolic and material construction of economic insecurity as an individual consumer, investor or entrepreneurial problem is unethical.<sup>128</sup> The provision of education or healthcare is not necessarily a consumer problem (or an entrepreneurial or investor opportunity), and the individual is not necessarily a consumer, investor or entrepreneur. That we are presently tasked with creating our own jobs and have little recourse but to find favour in the market in order to live are historical, political outcomes created at the expense of other possibilities. This is not to say that FLE and EE texts or researchers create consumers, investors and entrepreneurs, their world and security problems *ex nihilo*; they already exist, embodied in subjectivities and supported by dominant discourses, practices and institutions. Unfortunately, FLE and EE researchers routinely accept this state of affairs and take for granted the continuing expansion and hegemony of consumer, investor and entrepreneurial relations over other, more ethical and democratic relations (i.e. they privilege consumer, investor and entrepreneurial subjects, who choose from the available options capital offers and allows, rather than supporting critical, ethical subjects who work with others to alter the political economic system for the security of those the system renders insecure).

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<sup>128</sup> Vaz-Oxlade’s (2015) account is typical: “Canadians are carrying record levels of debt on our lines of credit, our credit cards, and loans. Why? Simple: We’ve forgotten how to live within our means. We’re ricocheting out of control, spending money we’ve yet to earn. We’re buying stuff we think we need, when all we’re doing, really, is scratching our consumer itch” (para. 4).

In the sections that follow I argue that the responsibility for others' economic security FLE and EE advocates encourage us to take up is both limited and continually diminished because it is underpinned by a more primary responsibility for capital's security. FLE and EE public pedagogues' solutions to economic insecurity primarily assist capital and those whom its present formation benefits, providing capital and the already secure with the access to others and our ethics in the forms they require, effectively replacing a responsibility for others with a responsibility for capital. It is true that "nothing flows deductively from the fact of the ethical demand right the way down to real world politics" (Critchley, 2009b, pg. 16). However, if we are to be responsible for others, we could and should analyze the taken-for-granted narratives, institutions, relations and practices which render many economically insecure while securing us from the other and insecure others who could trouble our present being and world.<sup>129</sup>

### **A Diminishing Security and Responsibility for Others: Accessing Debt**

One such problematic narrative assumes that access to debt is the key to financial security for many. Though concerns over predatory lending practices and individuals' ability to borrow money are ubiquitous in their narratives, FLE and EE public pedagogues overwhelmingly promote access to capital *qua* debt for the 'unbanked', 'underbanked', students, homebuyers and entrepreneurs in need of start-up capital as an effective, ethical imperative (Bryant, 2014; Cospes, 2014; OECD, 2005). Certainly, the ability to access debt to start a business, make ends meet, buy a house or pay for post-secondary education is necessary for many, and denying them this access will limit their future financial security and wellbeing. However, FLE and EE advocates, even

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<sup>129</sup> Ethics is purely negative, calling me to account for my being to the other I face. What follows the moment of being called into question is a political decision which measures and judges between all others, including the self, and the needs of each. My argument is that (among other concerns) we ought to be concerned with others' economic insecurity, our role in rendering others economically insecure and the capitalized narratives which mediate my responsibility for the other's and others' economic security.

those concerned with high levels of indebtedness, ignore that this access is in lieu of other alternatives which would not create debt's insecurity. For Lazzarato (2015), "indebtedness exemplifies neoliberalism's strategy since the 1970s: the substitution of social rights (the right to education, health care, retirement, etc.) for access to credit, in other words, for the right to contract debt" (pg. 66). In the wake of this shift, FLE advocates seek to ensure individuals can access debt, manage their debt and that they understand the necessity of taking on debt to build their human and economic capital.

Individuals must also understand and accept the constant modulation of the terms of indebtedness, often for the benefit of capital and creditors.<sup>130</sup> For most FLE and EE advocates, capital's demands on how we structure the debt relations needed to access education, housing or employment – delivered through technical, seemingly neutral knowledge constructions (e.g. credit scores and complicated risk-pricing formulas) as well as more direct means (e.g. stock and bond market fluctuations, state and institution policies and capital flight and capital strike threats and actions) which provide the means for capital to adjudicate between competing jurisdictions' ability to offer a Return on Investment (ROI)<sup>131</sup> – are viewed as sacrosanct. If tuition fees rise to \$100,000 for a four-year degree in Canada as TD Bank assumes, FLE advocates will likely continue to accept not only increasing levels of debt but a further modulation of debt relations so that students who appear able to provide a healthy ROI for lenders and capital will be able to access the debt they need while those who are less likely to do so will receive meager assistance, onerous conditions or no support at all – a prediction inline with recent moves to re-hierarchize

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<sup>130</sup> See for example the recent subprime housing crisis in the US and the ensuing bailouts for banks (Lazzarato, 2015), the flagellation of Greece over debts it will never repay (Hope and Barber, 2015) and the inability of US students to discharge student debt through bankruptcy (Webley, 2012).

<sup>131</sup> This is what Noam Chomsky (2000) refers to as a "virtual parliament", a fact of the world we have created and that apologists for capital never tire of reminding us, routinely arguing that if we want to create employment and attract investment we must cut capital's costs and bolster its returns by raising the age of retirement, privatizing state-supported institutions, aligning education with business needs and cutting the corporate tax rate.

education to reflect the economy's hollowed out middle class structure by hiving "off a special place of learning to build the capacities of the elite" while leaving others with technical training and diminished expectations (Sears and Cairns, 2014, para. 19).<sup>132</sup>

This is not a foregone conclusion as education is not considered wholly a private good at present; however, its status as a public good and social right is under increasing attack and efforts to further undermine what remains of equitable access to tertiary education continue apace. These attacks can exclude some directly: the Ontario PC party recently proposed tying student loans to marks (Ferguson, 2013) and the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business is looking into how to discern students' future earning potential so as to better admit students who will become wealthy alumni (Weinberg, 2014). They can also be indirect: increasing tuition fees will turn more students into risky investments. Rather than exclude them directly, the likely option is that they will have to pay higher interest rates on student loans, modulating their access to education and making it appear, as FLE advocates do, that whether one chooses to attend university or college is the result of an individual cost-benefit analysis. This indirect method is already operative in the US: the US federal government cuts loans and federal funding (e.g. Pell Grants) to institutions with high default rates. Universities and colleges with high default rates or a student population that is at a high risk of default then preemptively limit student access to federal loans to avoid losing federal funding but this leaves students with few alternatives except to take out private loans which have higher rates of interest (Darolia, 2013). FLE advocates often passively accept this differentiated access to debt and readily trade others' security for capital's need to accumulate while assuaging their *mauvaise conscience* – the *for-the-other*, non-

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<sup>132</sup> For EE advocates, this hierarchization is giving way to a more egalitarian structure of education ushered in by advances in information technology. This narrative is blind, however, to the enclosure that is necessary to create exchange value (Jones and Murtola, 2012). Education is a massively lucrative venture at present and any technological threat to the capture of value in education will face significant opposition from the education entrepreneurs EE advocates think are our saviors (Saltman, 2010, 2012).



intentional aspect of ourselves that calls into question our *bonne conscience*, our untroubled *for-the-self* existence (Levinas, 1989) – by assuming that we have no alternative but to allow capital to reconfigure access to the means to achieve security and that all can be secure if they follow along.

It is true that restrictions and modulation of access to our material commons are necessary. There are technological and natural limits to what we can create, necessarily limiting the provision of goods and services.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, we need an economic system to divide up the work that must be done, allocate raw materials to particular ventures and distribute the fruits of production, and any system will necessarily exclude, limit and hierarchize access to particular goods and services: choices between competing alternatives will always have to be made. The problem, however, is that FLE and EE public pedagogues support a system in which capital's demands take precedence over others'; it is capital that chooses the terms of access to many of the goods and services people need to be secure and live well, and it is capital that continually calls for changes in access. The political economic system we are encouraged to recreate privileges capital's needs over others' so that it is capital not the other which breaks through our institutionalized and habituated stupor and demands we reform our economic practices, relations and world on its behalf.<sup>134</sup> Expanding capital's access to our relations and practices is presented as assisting others, but the terms and form of access betray that it is capital's accumulation needs which take precedence, driving the expansion and modulation of debt relations so that capital can

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<sup>133</sup> That said, it must be noted that in many instances inequitable distribution of goods and services (e.g. food, housing, water and immaterial goods) would be less a concern if we were not limited by capital's need to limit distribution to capture value and a production regime that privileges exchange value over use value – see the next chapter.

<sup>134</sup> This is in contrast with a polity founded on a responsibility-for-the other in which “the state [or collective] enters the scene of interhuman relationship precisely so that it reduces the degree of this betrayal” [i.e. the betrayal of an infinite responsibility which founds the institution and codification of particular practices] (Tahmasebi-Birgani, 2010, pg. 524).

create stable financial flows to tap into (Lapavitsas, 2011) and securitized debt-assets to sell (e.g. securitized mortgages, credit card debt, student, loans, car loans, etc.) (Bryan and Rafferty, 2010).

### **Capturing Education**

Further troubling, capital's modulation demands extend beyond our responsibility for others' ability to access debt and pervert the practice of education further. For most FLE and EE advocates education, already nearly synonymous with training for employment (Sears, 2003), is still too independent of capital. Governments, schools and lenders may be working tirelessly to ensure that universities can maximize their ROI by cutting non-STEM disciplines (Hutner and Mohamed, 2013) and tying education funding to the creation of profitable innovations (Bertram, 2014; English et al., 2012; Zakaria, 2015), but FLE and EE advocates call us to go further.<sup>135</sup> At a time of significant global competition and low rates of growth, capital demands innovation and self-sufficiency, and for FLE and EE advocates this entails aligning education even more closely with capital's needs, specifically the teaching of entrepreneurship to spur innovation and job creation (Duval-Couetil et al., 2014; Sá and Kretz, 2014) and the teaching of financial literacy so that individuals can cope with their significant and growing insecurity. McGill Professor John Gradwell's (2015) editorial in the *Montreal Gazette* is a case in point; he argues that education and business creation are "frequently . . . seen as separate entities, however, the employment challenge and the education struggle are in reality two sides of the same coin" (para. 1). For Gradwell, transforming education into entrepreneurship training will aid students in creating their own jobs and provide the constant innovation needed to stimulate the economy. For FLE

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<sup>135</sup> As with access to education, capital's demands on education are endless and there is no end to our need to invest in ourselves: capital's drive to "enhance the quality of labour-power has *no social limits*" (Rikowski, 2000, pg. 17), meaning employers' cry that schools are not teaching the right skills is as insatiable as their desire for any other improved input that can be used to increase profit and stave off competitors. We are always already obsolete and required to continually invest in upgrading ourselves, and the education system is forced to follow suite.

advocates, a reformed education system will teach individuals to survive and take advantage of the opportunities a precarious economy provides (Clarke, 2015; Rabbior, 2007) – a supposed boon for both capital and students.<sup>136</sup>

Indicative of most EE advocates, the CEO of the *Learning Partnership*, Akela Peoples (2014), goes even further in colonizing education for capital by conflating entrepreneurship with core features of education (problem solving, creativity, wonder and curiosity), making it appear as if the inclusion of EE in education will be seamless because EE is already comprised of the best aspects of what education should be.<sup>137</sup> The ideological move Peoples hides, however, is that in conflating the two she has already subtly claimed that entrepreneurship and surplus value creation are aligned with the other signifiers that give meaning to education (e.g. that wonder is the same as innovation or that problem-solving is aligned with the problems capital wants answered). As with most FLE and EE advocates who expand their seemingly niche training programs into education proper and align them with civic, liberal and critical education concerns, Peoples' (2014) conflation of EE with education only appears unproblematic because those aspects of education that are other than or at odds with enterprise creation and innovation for capital are tacitly subverted or eradicated.

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<sup>136</sup> Interviewed by Helaine Olen (2013b), Daad Rizk, head of a financial literacy program at Penn State University, explicitly conflates education with human capital augmentation, arguing “financial literacy helps students to treat education as an investment in their future” (para. 16). That some do not treat education as an investment is a concern for FLE advocates: a report by CIBC, for example, found that while “most Canadians are aware that on average, your odds to earn more are better with a degree in engineering than a degree in medieval history . . . it’s not clear that students, armed with that knowledge, have been making the most profitable decisions” (Marr, 2013, para. 15).

<sup>137</sup> EE advocates routinely draw upon critiques that argue schooling is not meeting students’ needs and that it stifles their creativity and diverse interests while arguing that EE will reach those the system presently fails (Ruthven, 2014; Young, 2014). Amy Bell (2010), addressing new parents, offers advice that captures this narrative succinctly:

Research shows that most children start to exhibit entrepreneurial traits including risk-taking, problem-solving abilities and a powerful drive to succeed at a very young age. Unfortunately, many of these kids lost that capitalist spirit by the time they graduate high school . . . It’s your job to stoke your child’s entrepreneurial fire and encourage him to think freely and creatively. Don’t squash your child’s seemingly harebrained ideas – your youngster’s ‘ridiculous’ dreams could end up earning him a fortune. So nurture that entrepreneurial spirit, and teach your kid the harder she works, the higher she’ll climb. (para. 6)

She does not, for example, think that education is an open and somewhat violent practice, leading one to ends and to a becoming that were unforeseen and thus unasked for; this is anathema to Peoples' capitalized education which constrains innovation to that which can improve capital's accumulation and fills up students with the human capital they came to the university to purchase. Needless to say, this form of education also does not support entrepreneurial thinkers who experiment with creative solutions to the problem of capitalism. Faced with the failure of large-scale alternatives to capitalism, we are not called, as Žižek (2009a) argues we should be, to "try again. Fail again. Fail better" in our search for alternatives (pg. 210). Instead, Peoples' subverts formerly non-capitalist and potentially anti-capitalist aspects of education so that students' creativity, curiosity, problem solving skills and even hope for a new world are limited to improving their human capital so they can create the innovations capital desires. They are to "continually learn, plan, try, fail, try again...and again" for the benefit of capital not others (Peoples, 2014, para. 13).<sup>138</sup>

In summary, my ethical concern is first that the FLE and EE public pedagogy supports a continual diminishing of ethics and others' security by capitalizing our responsibility for others; though they may profess that they are motivated by a concern for others, in tying our ethics to capital FLE and EE public pedagogues support the continual erosion of others' security and our obligations for that security – i.e. they support the expansion of contractual relations with a creditor (capital) who rewrites the social contract when it suits its needs. Secondly, education, an ethical practice that is more than and other than training to maximize surplus value, becomes an

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<sup>138</sup> Failure is lauded in EE narratives despite the fact that the "evidence suggests that past failure really just predicts future failure" (Surowiecki, 2014, para. 4). Surowiecki (2014) cites two studies to support his claim: one found that 80% of entrepreneurs who failed would fail a second time and another studied eight thousand German ventures and found that those who failed were more likely to fail than entrepreneurs just starting out.

ethical relation for capital and a means to ensure the capitalized self's continuity – a self that sees itself as human capital.

Education as an ethical practice in which we prepare students to take care of the world and others – a caring that includes supporting the growth of the world and others – is further transformed into training to create the inputs and innovation capital needs now and in the future, a preparation to ensure that capital is taken care of and can continue. Thus, rather than helping others access capital, FLE and EE public pedagogues' 'assistance' is better seen as supporting capital access and subvert our ethical relations to create the human capital it desires at the price it wants.<sup>139</sup> From this perspective, the reason for the changes to our ethical relations and obligations becomes clearer: capital's needs, not others', call us to continually modify the security we provide and the ethical relations (including education) in which we are to engage so as to enable capital to create and access the inputs needed to provide for its security while shifting the costs to individuals.

In fact, for Young (2014), an EE advocate advising the British Prime Minister on entrepreneurship education, enabling capital to better access the human capital it needs is a key purpose of EE. Gushing over an "enterprise passport", which records students' extra-curricular enterprise activities that "add value", Young (2014) writes "at a time when employers report how difficult it is to distinguish between applicants on their education qualifications alone, the Passport will be a valuable adjunct, enabling a fuller picture of enterprise and employability skills alongside academic qualifications" (pg. 11). Using education to better segment the labour force is

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<sup>139</sup> The student debt FLE advocates accept as necessary is also a means through which capital can gain access to students' future labour and creative capacities. Students saddled with debt and facing a bleak job market are increasingly likely to give capital what it wants: human capital inputs who will independently form and reform into conglomerations based on capital's needs and will accept whatever remuneration is offered (e.g. becoming temporary workers or independent contractors who can be called upon when needed and who will accept low-waged work) and who view education as nothing more than a means to provide them with an advantage over their competitors. In this sense debt itself is a form of public pedagogy which supports the creation of capitalized subjects, actions and relations over more ethical alternatives (Haiven, 2014; Williams, 2006).

not new – Bowles and Gintis (1975) wrote almost 40 years before Young that education’s segmentation of the workforce played a major role in capitalism’s continuation by ensuring the reproduction of social classes. Young is merely updating education’s role as a means to justify economic inequality and sift through the dross at a time of hyper-competition, over-education and significant unemployment, providing capital with another measure to choose who among the many unemployed and over-qualified it should access (i.e. whose human capital is worth being used and whose is worthless). That this will, as Young (2014) states, have a “strong motivational effect” on students (pg. 11) makes this initiative even worse, exacerbating the insecurity of many by encouraging further rivalry for a scarce and individualized security while helping to secure capital from a united political opposition to the insecurity it generates.<sup>140</sup>

## **A Duty to Create Insecurity**

### **Lowering Taxes**

Many FLE and EE public pedagogues passively accept the expansion of insecurity and resort to bright-siding narratives to assuage their conscience. However, as noted earlier, some go further and call for policies to create a world more hospitable to entrepreneurs and investors by improving access to capital in the hope that this will spur economic growth. In addition to government procurement policies that assist new companies by providing them access to a large, fairly stable market (Langford et al., 2013) and public financing of entrepreneurial projects in

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<sup>140</sup> Young (2014), a holdover from the Thatcher era’s entrepreneurial push, also calls for a “future earnings and employment record”, proposing that the “government take steps to publish both employment rates and earnings over a period of ten years post-completion of every further and higher education course” (pg. 9). This will create incentives for institutions and teachers to provide courses that deliver ‘value’ and empower students with knowledge of which courses will maximize their human capital returns. Craig (2015) is also indicative of the desire to render human capital metrics more fine-grained and transparent, predicting that higher education will become ‘unbundled’ and move away from ‘bloated’ degree programs to lean certificate programs that are shorter in duration, teach the skills employers want and inform employers of the clearly defined competencies each program offers.

which the state shoulders more of the risk to encourage private financing (Canadian Task Force on Social Finance, 2010), cutting taxes and lowering employment regulations are two key initiatives supported by a number of EE public pedagogues. Focusing on the first initiative, by lowering taxes, policymakers and EE advocates assume entrepreneurs – a moniker that is applied to both sole proprietorships, the precarious self-employed and multi-national corporations<sup>141</sup> – will have access to a greater pool of capital which they will then use to expand and improve production (e.g. invest in research and development, open more businesses and hire more workers) and that mobile finance capital will invest in entrepreneurial ventures, given they can be assured their profits will be minimally taxed (Cornell, 2001; Finlayson, 2010; Lecuna, 2014; Stangler, 2010). If taxes are cut, there will essentially be more capital to access, whether in the form of operating capital or disposable income. This is thought to spur economic growth, which is assumed to benefit all and thus justify the ensuing increase in insecurity for many when funds are shifted from social welfare programs to capital accumulation ventures.

However, as a strategy for stimulating growth, production, innovation and employment, further lowering business taxes or offering tax rebates for investment in research and development is unlikely to encourage existing companies to invest in research or production or create more jobs.<sup>142</sup> Canadian corporations are presently awash in cash (\$626 billion as of May 2014, more than the total Canadian federal debt) (Goodman, 2014), while global hoarding has reached obscene levels with an estimated \$21 to \$32 trillion hidden in off-shore tax havens – as

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<sup>141</sup> The concern with only providing tax ‘relief’ to small businesses is that this punishes companies that are successful and provides a disincentive to grow. For EE advocates, this is counterproductive if we want to create large companies which will employ more people (Stangler, 2010).

<sup>142</sup> Moreover, as of 2010, Canada was ranked sixth highest among OECD countries for its combined direct and indirect support for business research and development and ranked second (only behind France) in indirect support (i.e. targeted tax cuts) for business research and development (Science Technology and Innovation Council, 2012). Despite this already significant support, business enterprise expenditures on research and development (BERD) as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) declined between 2002 and 2012 and are significantly lower than many other OECD countries (Science Technology and Innovation Council, 2012).

much as half of all global debt (Vellacott, 2012). There exists an abundance of wealth but few opportunities for capital to invest. Unsurprisingly, the dearth of productive ventures, coupled with low interest rates providing easy access to money, has led to not only hoarding but rampant financial speculation (O'Brien, 2015; Talley, 2015; Thomas, 2015) and centralization of capital through mergers and acquisitions, which will reduce rather than increase employment (Foster et al., 2011a). It is therefore highly improbable that giving companies more money will induce spending or increase employment for the financially insecure.

Moreover, as Thomas Piketty (2014) demonstrates convincingly, the low tax strategy for growing the economy and alleviating inequality is at odds with the historical record. Without intervention (e.g. massive destruction of capital or wealth redistribution through taxation), capitalism has historically tended towards a regime of low-growth and inequality.<sup>143</sup> As many have noted (Harman, 2009; Lazzarato, 2015), the era with the highest levels of growth and income equality were marked by high, progressive taxation. While Canada's low-tax regime is such that "Canadian entrepreneurs have much to be thankful for" according to the EY G20 Entrepreneurship Barometer (McMorrow and St-Jean, 2013, pg. 2), continuing to lower taxation rates on wealthy corporations and individuals will more than likely continue the trend of distributing wealth towards those who are already secure and away from those who are insecure – a conclusion shared by researchers at the International Monetary Fund who recently advocated for increased progressive taxation as a solution to low growth and rampant inequality (Beltrame, 2014).<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> The OECD predicts the next 50 years will be marked by increased inequality and low-growth (Braconier et al., 2014). The IMF's prospects are similarly pessimistic (Blagrove and Furceri, 2015).

<sup>144</sup> In fact, in a period of decreasing taxes, we have seen rising inequality with the wealthiest 86 Canadians increasing their wealth between 1999 to 2012 from just under \$120 billion to almost \$180 billion, while the poorest income quintile continues to have negative equity and depends significantly on Canada's tax and transfer system for its income (Macdonald, 2014). Furthermore, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that the largest



## **Cutting Employment Regulations**

EE advocates' deregulation solutions which aim to promote growth by making it easier to fire workers, hire them, pay them less and work them for irregular hours will likely make workers even less secure (Braconier et al., 2014; Currie and Scott, 2013; JA Worldwide, 2014; McMorrow and St-Jean, 2013; OECD, 2005, #9103; OECD, ND). The assumption driving these policy solutions is that

Where there is a large pool of workers with advanced and highly portable skills, and where social protection is low, companies enjoy considerable flexibility in attracting new workers, laying off old ones, or starting new product lines. This flexibility allows for high responsiveness to new business opportunities, and facilitates the use of rapid product innovation strategies. (Estevez-Abe et al., 2004, pg. 174)

This logic also drives the jobs-skills gap rhetoric (Spence, 2012) and policies that tie immigration to business needs (Grubel, 2012) – the avowed aim being to create a larger, more flexible, insecure and highly-skilled reserve army of labour for capital to put to work in the hope that this will improve production and that the expanded and flexible workforce will share in the ensuing economic growth.

However, while having on-demand, cheap, highly-skilled labour is a boon to investors and employers, it is highly doubtful that this will improve the security of many. First, not everyone will be able to attain the 'in-demand' skills we hear so much about and therefore will not be able to compete no matter how many barriers to employment are removed; they will instead join the rejected debtors, who also cannot access capital because capital has no need for them. Secondly, lowering barriers for firing workers and decreasing regulatory hiring hurdles

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beneficiaries of corporate tax cuts are actually pulling down Canadian employment growth rates (MacDonald, 2011, pg. 5).

(e.g. hiring teachers without certification) will drive down the wages of already existing workers further. This is hardly of benefit to the skilled workers who are presently employed and also points to the problem with EE's 'create your own job discourse': having everyone become small scale capitalists only ramps up the competition between the members of this group, which is already even more precarious than those who are employed by others (Pinto, 2014a; Rees, 1986). Finally, the CIBC recently reported that the quality of employment has already been decreasing over the past 25 years (Tal, 2015), but this erosion of a barrier supposedly stifling entrepreneurial growth has not improved the economic security of most or increased growth substantively, and those who are most insecure have seen their insecurity further increase during this period.<sup>145</sup>

This does not, however, stop EE advocates from presenting the welfare of others, not capital's security, as their core concern: the World Bank, for example, is ostensibly worried about others' insecurity when it calls for gutting employment regulations to improve job prospects for the poor, trotting out an 18-year-old Ecuadoran, who, "capturing the perspectives of poor people around the world", says that "First, I would like to have work of any kind" (World Bank, 2010, pg. v). However, the problem is not, as the World Bank believes, simply that the poor or the 18-year-old Ecuadoran do not have any work or even work of a decent quality. The problem from a perspective that resists or is other to the picture of the world capital presents (Marder, 2004) is that the Ecuadoran has been placed in the condition of needing and desiring "work of any kind"

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<sup>145</sup> For the OECD, workers' security and corresponding wage expectations are explicitly presented as barriers to growth and future security (Braconier et al., 2014). The IMF also voices support for increasing workers' precarity, advocating for increasing older workers' labour force participation rate (i.e. raising the age of retirement) (Blagrove and Furceri, 2015). However, despite almost 40 years of neoliberal policies, global insecurity is rampant: a Pew Research Center study (Kochhar, 2015) found that 84% of the world's population lives on less than \$20 a day and 71% live on less than \$10 a day, concluding that the global middle class is much smaller, less well off and more regionally concentrated than generally assumed. Most of those who previously earned less than \$2 a day now make only between \$2 to \$10 per day, and, during the same period (2001-2011), median income in the US decreased. Jacobs et al. (2015) also found that the wages of the bottom decile of income earners in the US was five percent lower in 2013 than in 1979 and that from 2003 to 2013 real wage growth was either "flat or negative for the entire bottom 70 percent of the wage distribution" (para. 1). Clearly eroding employment protections is not improving the economic security of workers.

and that, as noted with the disappeared woodcutters, many must continually be placed in a precarious condition for capital to be secure. Manufacturing insecurity through initiatives such as cutting employment regulations is a necessity not simply because capital demands it as one option amongst many but because capital cannot survive without constantly improving production through measures such as lowering the cost of labour. While capital can countenance different distributions of and levels of economic insecurity, for capital to exist – recall capital is a relation as Marx (1867/1990) reiterated over and over – some *must* be insecure so that they have no option but to seek access to capital and accept capital’s access of them. Further, any given state of systemic insecurity is never static but is continually under pressure from capital, which seeks more intense and expanded access to us, our relations and world.

### **The Panacea of Economic Growth**

Gary Rabbior (2007) sums up the core claim of the FLE and EE growth narrative that drives support for cutting taxes and gutting employment regulations: “the key thing to note is that increasing productivity brings benefits. By increasing productivity, Canadians can increase real incomes and improve our standard of living” (pg. 64).<sup>146</sup> In bald terms, we cannot be secure unless capital is secure. Furthermore, if capital requires others’ increased insecurity so it can secure what it needs to accumulate, then we must render others more insecure. The problem for FLE and EE advocates is not our present economic insecurity *per se*, rather, they are concerned

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<sup>146</sup> For FLE and EE supporters, as with neoliberals more generally,

There is only one true and fundamental social policy: economic growth. The fundamental form of social policy must not be something that works against economic policy and compensates for it; social policy must not follow strong economic growth by becoming more generous. Economic growth and only economic growth should enable all individuals to achieve a level of income that will allow them the individual insurance, access to private property, and individual or familial capitalization with which to absorb risks. (Foucault, 2008, pg. 144)

that we are not prepared for our increased insecurity and responsibility and will stifle growth. Growth, for FLE and EE public pedagogues, will increase the amount of wealth available, and through upgrading their entrepreneurial, consumption and investment skills, individuals are assumed able to lay claim to more of the increased wealth – the assumption being that the cost of production inputs including labour reflects their contribution to production.

Evacuating power relations from the production process, FLE and EE public pedagogues' believe there is an apolitical equilibrium between capitalism's "double movement", described by Karl Polanyi (1944/2001) as a movement to create and expand markets and a countermovement which seeks to secure society from the ill effects of these market forces. While they note that capital presently demands the erosion of the security of many, FLE and EE advocates tacitly assume the demand for insecurity is not intrinsic to capitalism. They are blinded by an optimistic narrative of growth built on the dubious assumption that the thirty years following WWII were not an anomaly, that the security this period offered many can be expanded to all and that it can be achieved through expanding and intensifying rather than limiting capital's reach. FLE and EE public pedagogues cannot see that there is no equilibrium point between capitalist society's double movement but a constant battle in which the total victory of one side not only destroys the other but eradicates the particular basis on which it exists in the process.<sup>147</sup> They readily agree that this is the case with the countermovement (i.e. a generous welfare state will make workers dependent, lead to capital flight and shift resources from productive ends towards unproductive ones like national daycare or dental programs (Gordon, 2014; Hausler, 2005; Peterson, 1999)), but they do not have the same concern with capital's movement, assuming that capital's demands for greater and cheaper access to the world and its human capital (i.e. an expansion of the

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<sup>147</sup> This, of course, does not entail that we must keep capitalism around. Capitalism cannot survive without us but we can survive without it, and increasingly it is becoming clear that the survival of a significant amount of life on earth depends on us moving beyond capitalism (Klein, 2013).

inability to mitigate capital's demands) can be attenuated by the constant reformation of subjects and our world to create continuous innovation, growth, prudent conservation and vigilant investment that will harness capital's creative destruction for the good of all. Through constantly keeping up with capital's demands, FLE and EE advocates assume we can all be secure, but this is a fantasy. Economic growth alone will not improve the security of the insecure and certainly not growth borne of an increase in their precarity or that of others.

## **Conclusion**

Taken together, expanding debt relations, reducing taxes, cutting employment regulations, restructuring education to better fit business' needs and the myriad other neoliberal initiatives in vogue at the moment reproduce an even more frenetic 'race to the bottom' to see who can be the most hospitable to capital. As capital formations *qua* political jurisdictions, companies and individuals compete against each other by expanding and intensifying production and offering increasingly favourable incentives for capital to set up shop and invest, it seems more than probable that capital will demand increasing access to others and thus their further precaritization. It therefore is unlikely that most will be secure if capital's demands for increased insecurity never end. After we have eradicated corporate taxation and employment standards, we will have to reform our world, selves and ethics in some other way. Again, it is not enough to destroy collective social welfare practices inimical to neoliberalism; neoliberalism naturalizes *capital's demands*, not a particular, static form of capitalism, and because capital's demands are insatiable we must continually reconfigure all practices, relations and subjectivities, even those presently deemed 'neoliberal'. There is always a more capital-friendly neoliberalism to come that we are responsible for ushering in.

Capital, Marx (1867/1990) wrote, is vampiric; it is an undead force we have set in motion which requires living labour and, I would add, a subversion of our ethics to continue. This capture of labour and ethics is, however, a constant battle. Capital demands living labour's energy, cooperation and innovation to grow but must constantly limit innovation that challenges the capitalist relations of production or which cannot expand surplus value, a subversion of innovation which also limits education to creating human capital inputs. Here I draw from autonomist Marxists who present labour as an active force, always exceeding the bounds capital places on it, while capital is reactive, channeling and enclosing labour's energy, creativity, cooperation and production (Casarino and Negri, 2008; Hardt and Negri, 2011; Silver, 2003). This subversion, as Boltanski and Chiapello (2007) note, must also be justified, requiring an ethics which will motivate capital's subjects to acquiesce to and even anticipate capital's demands *and* allay the *mauvaise conscience's* constant needling that our transformation of others into inputs or "standing reserve" for capital is irresponsible.<sup>148</sup> The latter function signals the parasitic and antagonistic relationship that exists between our responsibility for others and capital's needs. Capital requires a motivating ethics but our *for-the-other* ethics is an active responsibility that exceeds and routinely escapes capital's capture, constantly critiquing all responses to others as irresponsible and acting against capital's ethics.<sup>149</sup> The perennial problem for capital, taken up in a mystified form by its FLE and EE subcontractors, is how to elicit, subvert and enclose our labour power, creative capacities and ethical relations for capital's security.

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<sup>148</sup> For Heidegger (1977), technological thinking "enframes" the world and supports a totalizing, instrumentalist revealing of what is, treating everything, including humans, as "standing reserve" – quantifiable inputs reserved for instrumental ends. Capital represents a particularly virulent strain of this instrumentalist and totalizing manner of being in the world, an alienated force which we continually set in motion but appear powerless to stop.

<sup>149</sup> This includes instances of mass action which aim to create institutionalized means to provide goods and services outside of market logic and routine micro acts in which one abrogates market logic for another.

Whether we feel this subsumption of ethics, education and others' security to capital is an ethical, political concern is a result of historical, political construction. When a particular relation, good or service has long been commodified, this particular subsumption is more easily accepted as a technical rather than an ethical and political concern. This is the case with food, shelter and increasingly healthcare and education in many countries. For most in the developed world, treating shelter as a consumer good and the practice of charging variable rates of interest on debt to purchase a home appears an uncontroversial practice. This is less the case for education, which is not yet fully accepted as a commodity, and thus the practice of tying student loan access and interest rates to the degrees students pursue, their expected earnings, credit history and collateral assets might face backlash (Darolia, 2013). That we might feel there is something ethically wrong about giving some students sub-prime student loans because of the degrees they pursue, their projected income, their assets or their credit history (or even charging user fees for accessing education) while feeling that sub-prime mortgages are unproblematic says less about any intrinsic difference between a home and a four-year university degree or between shelter and education and more about our residual KWS ethics – specifically, our sense that education is still a public good and we have a collective obligation to provide students equal access to education, regardless their risk profile.

FLE public pedagogues, however, often mystify the fact that the felt difference between the two is a historical, political outcome to which they contribute. Having naturalized and assumed capital's demands are benevolent (in the end), FLE and EE public pedagogues are untroubled in framing insecurity as a problem of unequal access to capital (debt, knowledge, skills and employment). If the insecure have better access to capital, FLE and EE supporters assume, then they will be more secure, even if the terms of access are initially quite onerous. With security for all assured in the future if we reconfigure others and our world as capital

desires, there is little concern over analyzing what will arrest the erosion of others' security and our responsibility for others' insecurity in the present. However, if the security capital offers is built on another's insecurity and if the means through which we are to improve security actually increase insecurity, FLE and EE public pedagogues should, if they are as concerned as they say they are about others' security, look more closely at the ethics and economic security solutions they support. If they do so, I think they will find that rather than a security and access for the other, they are promoting a security and access for capital and that the 'ethical' problem they are in fact tasked with solving and which they take up with uncritical gusto is how best to provide the economic capital, ethics and cheap, precarious, resilient, flexible and creative human inputs capital demands.

Unquestionably, some can and do go beyond a limited ethics of providing others with the opportunity to become self-sufficient through knowledge and access to capital: successful financially literate investors, for example, are presented in a number of FLE texts as being financially secure enough to give to charity (Arthur, 2012b).<sup>150</sup> In EE texts, successful entrepreneurs not only have the option of giving to charity (Rabbior, 2007) but also have a responsibility to create a business that can become a role model "for the next generation of organizations" (Dunham, 2007, pg. 6).<sup>151</sup> However, while charity and creating a company that aims to support some social aim (e.g. reducing its carbon footprint or providing scholarships for employees) will undoubtedly assist some to become more secure, this is an abrogation of our

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<sup>150</sup> This optional, measured charity differs from the selflessness behavioural FLE researchers lament drives some to give to charity despite their "financial situation" (pg. 453).

<sup>151</sup> Dunham (2007) continues: "Aiming, for example, to 'do a Sam Walton to the childcare business' implies a set of values and beliefs very different from those expressed when aiming to 'do a Steve Jobs' to the kitchen appliance market" (pg. 6). This may be trivially true but with the child labour and long work hours at Apple's suppliers (Edwards, 2013) and Wal-Mart holding food drives for its employees (Lutz, 2013b) one is left wondering what values these organizations hold that are so different and concerned that these are the next generation's ethical role models.



responsibility for the security of others which calls us to go beyond charity and practices which do not challenge capitalism, a system which ensures many will be rendered insecure.

We should provide charity, FLE and EE to help alleviate insecurity. Sanders et al. 2007) in their analysis of economic education and battered women emphasize the need for targeted support to assist women who are victims of domestic violence – which includes financial education – but at the same time they call attention to the need to “address the larger structural conditions and forces that work against them” (pg. 252). Providing lessons on how to start a business or open a bank account are not, in isolation, exacerbating insecurity and in many instances can help those who are new to a country or unfamiliar with the workings of financial institutions or the social welfare system. However, when read in a context in which capital’s security concerns have become paramount and practices that limit capital’s reach (e.g. public health care, public pensions, unemployment insurance, etc.) are viewed as barriers to progress that must be replaced by individualized and marketized initiatives that enable capital to expand and grow (Stein, 2001), FLE and EE as public pedagogies are deeply problematic. They not only support the individualizing of insecurity – shifting the cause of insecurity from our political economic practices and relations to the individual as entrepreneur, investor and consumer – but are fundamentally irresponsible.

If we step away from the FLE public pedagogy’s simplistic narratives on Greece and debtors, the economic security and freedom Greeks and debtors seek is not exorbitant: less work and a robust retirement for all should not be impossible to attain given our productive capacity, and the desire for homeownership by sub-prime borrowers is not excessive given there were 5 times as many vacant homes as there were homeless people in 2007 in the US (Loha, 2011). In blaming individuals for their insecurity all financially insecure citizens and consumers are targeted with the message that they must scale back their private and public desires, occluding the

political economic reasons why their reasonable security and freedom desires cannot be attained (Arthur, 2014a).

To borrow from Freire (1970), FLE and EE are a form of “false generosity”, not simply offering ineffective individual solutions to structural insecurity but undermining our ethical relations with others and expanding and intensifying others’ insecurity *for capital’s security*. In other words, FLE and EE initiatives do not simply fail to address the cause of insecurity but support actions that create the insecurity they are attempting to solve. In doing so, the FLE and EE public pedagogy replaces a responsibility for others with a responsibility for capital that then drives the reformation of others and our world for capital, not others. Those who are created are worldless: they are not responsible for our world and its plurality but have transferred their responsibility to capital so that it is capital that drives change and delineates what is possible, choosing what forms of life from the past and present we continue and those we discontinue.

## **Chapter Five: FLE and EE Freedom Narratives, Abandonment and a Freedom for Capital**

Given that freedom is a paramount virtue and prized state of being in liberal democracies, the chief goal of education is often the creation of autonomous individuals who in their private lives can grow their human capacities in ways that they find fulfilling while pursuing whatever conceptions of the good they desire (Drerup, 2015). As citizens, these individuals are to think critically and act with others to improve their democracies. They are the bulwarks against the expansion of liberal democracy's hierarchical bureaucracy and a collective complacency, which, if unchecked, can diminish and even dissolve democracy's potential and the individual's opportunity to live how he or she wishes.

These liberal private and public aims continue to inform education, but, in response to the consumerization and entrepreneurialization of the public sphere, educators must create new sorts of people: post-Fordist subjects who are much more fluid and active than their Fordist counterparts. These new people are 'producers' who not only consume a product but also contribute to its improvement; 'intrapreneurs' who independently create innovative products or processes within an organization; 'crowd-funders' who invest in products they want made; and 'collaborative consumers' who create new ways to collectively use the goods and services we create (Bauwens, 2012; Ordanini et al., 2011). More than all other educational initiatives, FLE and EE avowedly pursue these consumerized and entrepreneurialized private/public aims, seeking to create the post-Fordist citizens who can successfully and autonomously manage their individual financial responsibilities and continually reform the economy and its constituent roles and practices for not only their own but others' benefit as well.

Those who are most insecure and dependent and who contribute little to economic growth are often the targets of FLE and EE initiatives (OECD/The European Commission, 2013; Pofeldt, 2014). The dependent have the potential to control their lives and positively impact the economy *qua* polis but are not yet free from the capricious, overbearing dictates of others, their own irrational desires and the worst of capital's effects. They need and want FLE and EE to set them free, leading Jones and Iredale (2010) to claim "the ideal of freedom is a big incentive and motivator for introducing programmes of enterprise education" (pg. 14) and FLE public pedagogue John Hope Bryant (2010b) to forefront freedom as a key motivator for instituting FLE programs in schools:

In the 21st century, in the backdrop of a global economic crisis and in an era of economics, understanding the language of money (financial literacy), accessing the mainstream financial system with dignity, avoiding financial predators and pursuing your aspirational dreams without illegitimate barriers of opportunity, is in fact the freedom we seek today. It is the freedom we have always sought. (para. 6)

This desire for freedom by those targeted by FLE and EE programs is not, however, a sufficient reason to accept as sacrosanct the FLE and EE public pedagogy's vision of freedom or the means through which it is attained. Too often FLE and EE freedom narratives are uncritically accepted because it appears obvious that we should take control of our lives and help others free themselves from dependency so they can pursue their dreams. The hallmark of critical thinking, however, is its untimely questioning of complacent, common-sense assumptions. The reader is thus reminded that while Bryant and his EE counterparts portray the freedom offered by the FLE and EE public pedagogy as timeless, any freedom is always a specific, historical freedom that supports particular relations, actions and practices (Foucault, 2003). Large numbers may believe that FLE and EE will improve the autonomy of many and that this is a laudable goal, but we must

ask whether FLE and EE initiatives can make good on their claims and, more to the point, whether we should be pursuing the freedom they offer. Our responsibility for others calls us to go beyond the present's consensus, to question not only how best to achieve the freedom capital offers but whether we should accept that history is over and this freedom is all we can offer others.

To this end, this chapter analyzes the freedoms promoted in FLE and EE narratives, the first of which is a *freedom as autonomy* whose contours are influenced by both capital's demand for perpetual accumulation and a widespread desire for freedom from onerous aspects of the capital relation (e.g. the boss, work, political impotence and capital itself). Surveying critiques of capitalism since its inception, Boltanski and Chiapello (2007) find this latter desire for freedom from capital seeks four ends: a desire for control of one's life, authenticity (i.e. living a 'meaningful' life), democratic community (in contrast to the present's massive economic and political inequality and impotence) and an end to others' suffering (e.g. the concern with others' security analyzed in the last chapter). FLE and EE public pedagogues attempt to meet these four demands as well as capital's demand for a world replete with resources and practices that are supportive of continued accumulation, but, as we saw in the last chapter with regards to others' insecurity and suffering, capital's demands take precedence, shaping the freedom FLE and EE public pedagogues offer.

Below I outline that publically FLE and EE advocates champion a freedom from capital, or at least the worst of its effects. They crow that we can be our own bosses, improve the lives of others and pursue meaningful ends, living how we want; however, the freedom they offer is shaped chiefly for capital's benefit. The freedom they champion is a freedom *for* capital masked

as a freedom *from* capital or at least a freedom from the worst of its effects.<sup>152</sup> In this freedom, capital frees itself from that which is other to its needs at the time of production (i.e. that which creates an added cost) but which is also necessary for capital to exist (e.g. the long-term health of the planet and the replenishment of its human creators and their culture of caring, trust and cooperation). Reading this freedom for capital alongside the security for capital analyzed in the last chapter, we see that capital demands not our full inclusion or exclusion but a constant modulation of our exclusion and inclusion to overcome barriers to capital's predatory accumulation needs.

The second form of freedom examined is *freedom as virtue*. In my analysis of this freedom, I expand upon my earlier exposition of the ethics the FLE and EE public pedagogy promotes. To be free in this sense we must act as free people should and work on ourselves so as to acquire the means (e.g. credentials, relations, dispositions, desires, and knowledge) to engage in capital maximizing investment and production. If the first freedom is an idealized end-state in which the individual is autonomous and free to decide how he or she wishes to live, the second is a practice of working on oneself to become the autonomous person one should and wants to be, a perpetual becoming in which the free, virtuous individual continually remakes him or herself in a bid to become freer. The virtuous could have significant autonomy from the capital relation and financial insecurity or not; achieving economic autonomy is secondary to acting virtuous. The problem I stress in this chapter is that this form of freedom or virtue ethics is hospitable to capital but hostile to others.

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<sup>152</sup> Boltanski and Chiapello (2007) argue that this sort of subterfuge is necessary and that capitalism continues because its defenders are able to (knowingly and unknowingly) incorporate critiques against it to justify its continuance.

## Financial Literacy and Autonomy

Though stressed by some, the core promise in FLE freedom narratives is not that one will become a financial titan but that one will obtain the freedom to carve out a significant space and time for non-capital maximizing activities and relations through retirement, vacations and a more manageable life/work balance (Honore, 2004; Rice-Oxley, 2014).<sup>153</sup> Some FLE public pedagogic texts may present investing or coupon clipping as fun activities (Arthur, 2014a; Martin, 2002), but most present investing, saving and work as dull, necessary activities we must do to obtain the money to live a full life. “Money plays an important role in most people’s lives”, Rabbior (2007) notes, adding, “we may wish it weren’t so, but it’s true” (pg. 4). A Freedom 55 Financial (N.D.) article sounds a similar dour note on moneymaking: with a “sound financial security plan” in place, “a big part of enjoying financial independence” is that one will actually “spend less time thinking about money” (para. 15). Finally, Kim Kiyosaki (2012) sums up the FLE public pedagogy’s message of earning to live, not living to earn: “financial freedom is much more than having money. It’s the freedom to be who you really are and do what you really want in life” (para. 2). In a world where we are constantly required to scan the horizon for risks and opportunities and treat ourselves and others as flexible masses of human capital, FLE offers a means to obtain a reprieve from capital’s demands and perhaps retire from the relation altogether.

The FLE public pedagogy is obviously not anti-capitalist or hostile to moneymaking. Some may want to continually amass money, but it is *their* choice. FLE offers a freedom from

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<sup>153</sup> Some EE narratives stress a work-life balance, but, as I stress below, these narratives often ask one to always be ‘on’, working irregular hours and balancing work and life to maximize productivity. Jack Preston, a content manager at Virgin, is exemplary:

Richard Branson has demonstrated throughout his hectic business career [that you do not] . . . have to cut out the things you enjoy most in life. To be refreshed and ready for anything, you need to find time for play. You are far more likely to succeed if you are having fun, so play just as hard as you work, if not harder! Find time to laugh, whether it is catching up with friends, chatting to new people or sharing a joke on Twitter. Then when opportunity knocks, open the door and make every second count. (para. 7)

capital to pursue a life one finds meaningful, but it also offers a freedom to choose how one will engage with capital to achieve that life. As autonomous individuals, the financially literate can “choose to optimize” their economic capital continuously or “opt to satisfice and then go play with their children” (Kozup and Hogarth, 2008, pg. 134). Each decides how much time to sell to capital to live how he or she wishes free from capital. What the financially autonomous do with their time is not the concern of FLE advocates: they ‘earned’ it so long as their pursuit of their life goals ensures they are financially independent.

The free financially literate subject is consequently not an automaton who follows strict FLE austerity edicts (i.e. invest 5% of your monthly income in your pension, only eat out twice a week, etc.). Instead, he or she is a “boundary-keeping” subject (Binkley, 2006) who is responsible for navigating between an instrumentalist capital maximizing logic and those non-capital maximizing activities and desires he or she finds significant. Each individual is to decide what a freedom from capital looks like for him or her. FLE provides knowledge of general financial principles and particular strategies to read capital’s and one’s own needs, but the individual must decide how to structure his or her life. Certainly, the FLE discipline provides a number of saving and investment strategies (e.g. life-cycle investment and diversification strategies), but, given the current construction of our world, these are strategies that are *necessary* if one is to become autonomous and live the life he or she wants. For FLE advocates, one should be the boss of one’s life, and financial literacy educators and programs help individuals take control of their lives and, to borrow from Disney’s online FLE game, *The Great Piggy Bank Adventure*, pursue their “dream goals”.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Disney’s *The Great Piggy Bank Adventure* was replaced on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 with *The Star Banks Adventure*, moving from a board game format to one modeled on *Candy Crush* to appeal to its target audience better (Seltzer, 2015).



The debate in the FLE field on the use of behavioural economics also brings out the field's preoccupation with the individual's freedom to choose how he or she wants to live (Altman, 2012; Thaler and Benartzi, 2004; West, 2012; Yoong, 2011). As I noted earlier, one side argues we must use behavioural economic insights into human behaviour to alter our "choice architecture" to steer or nudge consumers and investors towards more 'rational' financial choices, while the other worries this impinges upon the individual's freedom, swapping the individual's preferences with an expert's judgment of how to live (Altman, 2011, 2012; Thaler and Benartzi, 2004; West, 2012).<sup>155</sup> The most popular position in the FLE discipline, though, is to draw from both approaches and combine education with changes to our material environment. The twin goal is to "get the incentives right and create a better environment to promote good decision-making" and to create "a capable lifelong learner better able to self-educate as an adult with the resources available" (Rabbior, 2009, para. 2). However, regardless of the ratio of choice architecture modification to education promoting individual responsibility, the core concern of each approach is that everyone should be able to choose how he or she wants to live free from interference and dependence on others. The aim is to create someone who is in control of his or her life because he or she is making the best decisions available to live the life he or she wants.

### **The End of Retirement: A New Freedom**

However, this *freedom as autonomy* or freedom to live as one wishes is, as we saw in the previous chapter, offered in a context in which the ability to pursue meaningful ends is eroding

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<sup>155</sup> In the former camp, FLE researchers at the US Federal Reserve worry that even with "reliable and credible information" individuals are often either too risk averse, overconfident, prone to overreaction, selfless (giving to charity when they cannot afford to) or preoccupied with the risk of financial loss (Braunstein and Welch, 2002, pg. 453). Consumer and investors need a 'paternalist' state to regulate their choices to ensure that they act in a manner consistent with the "efficient-markets model" (Braunstein and Welch, 2002, pg. 453) and "competition works effectively" (Rinaldi, 2008, pg. 66). In addition to automatic pension enrollment, these choice architecture reforms include the promotion of life-cycle pension plans, automatic savings schemes, lottery incentives, the banning of certain financial products and increased regulation of financial marketing and selling practices.

for many, including the quantity and quality of time one can spend free from the capital relation. Debt-financed education in the US, for example, has led to massive student loan debt, which has not only increased students' financial insecurity but has limited their ability to engage in meaningful activities with others after graduation. A 2014 Gallup poll found that US graduates with

more than \$50,000 in student debt are significantly less likely to be thriving financially and physically than their counterparts without loans. They are also less likely to have a strong sense of purpose and to be thriving in their community well-being. Notably, for 2000-2014 graduates, the most indebted degree holders are less likely to be thriving in social well-being, something that is not true of the larger sample [which extends back to 1990]. (Kingkade, 2014, para. 7).

Many Canadians are also finding it difficult to take part in valued activities free from work: 59% of Canadians in a 2014 survey for Expedia.ca felt "vacation-deprived", but on average Canadians planned on taking only 15 vacation days in 2014, down from 17 in 2013 (Toronto Star, 2014). A TD Bank report found that only 43% of Canadian workers used all their vacation days: most took fewer because they were worried that they could be fired, did not have enough money to take a vacation, felt guilty or did not want their work to pile up (Olive, 2015). Work creep is also a concern, stealing away time on weekends and evenings for many: "a 2013 Canadian Work, Stress and Health study found that 28% of Canadians who work full-time for an employer frequently check work-related e-mail or text messages after-hours", many feeling that it is necessary and enables them to be more efficient (Schieman, 2014, para. 2).<sup>156</sup> Even sleep is under attack (Crary, 2014) with many trying to get by on less sleep or turning sleep into a time of human capital maximization/consolidation (i.e. "sleep learning") (Robson, 2014).

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<sup>156</sup> One could also add to the work creep phenomenon the recent move in Wisconsin to, according to the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, "put workers in control" by removing a law that barred seven-day work weeks (Rickert, 2015, para. 6).

Retirement, the paradigmatic freedom from capital, is also eroding for many. According to CIBC (2012), 60% of retired Canadians hold some form of debt, which will likely diminish their retirement options. A Manulife Financial online survey lends support to this prediction, finding that “older respondents were less confident in their retirement goals and about half planned to continue working full-time or part-time to extinguish their debt” (Friend, 2014, para.7).<sup>157</sup> A Canadian Financial Capability Survey conducted in 2009 also found that Canadian seniors are pessimistic about their retirement with only 27% expecting to retire by 65 and “two out of five Canadians . . . worried about outliving their savings” (Sorenson and Campbell, 2014, para. 5).

FLE public pedagogues acknowledge that it is deeply worrying that a significant number of people do not have the financial security to retire or will struggle to retire (Junior Achievement, 2009; van Rooij et al., 2011). Freedom away from capital, particularly in the form of retirement, is still considered a social right in developed countries. It is a time when we can do what we want and thus a significant part of the ‘dream goals’ of many.<sup>158</sup> Austerity advocates, however, are worried that retirement continues to dominate the social imaginary in the Global North. Capital is going lean to compete globally (Sears, 1999), and retirement for all is a burden given demographic trends and healthcare advances. At a time of hyper-competition, the last thing particular agglomerations of capital want is unproductive hangers-on who are not working to

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<sup>157</sup> While problematic in itself, for some this might not even be an option: a 2014 Fidelity Investments Canada poll found that “48% of retirees surveyed retired earlier than planned, often involuntarily. One in five respondents say they had to retire early because of health problems. Another 23% feel employers don’t want to hire retirees, and 15% can’t find a job” (Drake, 2015, para. 5).

<sup>158</sup> An advertisement posing as an editorial in *The Telegraph (Retirement: A golden age for the family)* mobilizes the widespread desire for the autonomy and meaningful life one is assumed to attain in retirement through a typical narrative in which retirement brings time for pursuing the caring relationships one has difficulty fostering when working full-time: in the advertisement one grandparent has the time to look after her grandchildren while another creates a business where his children, wife and children’s spouses all work together (Edwards, 2015).

accumulate capital.<sup>159</sup> ‘Unproductive’ time, principally in the form of retirement, appears as the enemy within, diverting resources from those who own or direct capital’s flows and thus undermining the global accumulation effort ostensibly waged to improve the security and freedom of all. FLE advocates are therefore faced with two competing demands: our desire to live as we wish free from capital’s demands and capital’s desire to free itself from funding our time off.<sup>160</sup>

In FLE narratives, capital’s needs take precedence. Our demands for a freedom from capital are downsized and bright-sided. The NGO, EY (2014) provides a typical account, claiming that if we “rebalance benefit expectations with financial resources” (i.e. raise the age of retirement and reduce public provision of retirement funding) we can build a “better retirement world” for all (pg. 2), while Freedom 55 Financial (N.D.) goes even further, arguing that the loss of retirement actually expands our freedom:

Gone are the days of toiling away at a job for 40 years until you’re given a gold watch. That’s all changed. The world has changed. Now you can realize your dreams every day, not just at the end of a long career. Welcome to the new freedom. (para. 1)

According to Freedom 55, we can realize our financial independence goals *every day* because we are less secure and have a much-reduced chance of retiring at 65. Given job instability, we can take off time in-between jobs and work part-time in our old age. We ostensibly have the freedom to choose how much independence from capital we want to achieve, when we will realize this independence and what we will do with it. Rather than hold onto an ‘outdated’ concept of retirement as an end to our working life, we are encouraged to replace it with ‘pre-tirement’, “a

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<sup>159</sup> See recent moves by GM and Ford to offload pension risk (Keenan, 2012, 2015; Muller, 2012).

<sup>160</sup> One could argue that capital’s desire to harness all labour power, including that of the elderly, is driving this erosion. Undoubtedly, this is also true and many will have little choice but to make their way back into capital’s fold, but to focus only on inclusion misses capital’s externalization of costs and its abandonment of those who are ‘unproductive’.

seismic shift in the way we think about retiring . . . [One which provides] an opportunity for many people to stay healthy, give something back, spend more time with their families and continue working” (Black, 2014, pg. 7).

The old image of everyone giving up work aged 60 or 65 and becoming a pensioner is a thing of the past. People are seeing the *opportunity* [emphasis added] to stay at work full-time or in a period of ‘pre-tirement’ as an attractive one – whether it’s to boost their pension pots or just to stay fit, healthy and stimulated. (Stan Russell, retirement income expert at Prudential, in Moneyfacts.co.uk, 2015, para. 7)

“Retirement should not be seen as a race to accumulate enough assets to fade into the night” writes Eric McWhinnie (2015), the Chief Commodities Analyst at Wall St. Cheat Sheet; instead

Retirement is a period of financial freedom, where you can afford to find fulfillment as desired. This can include travel, spending time with family, or even part-time employment. Having a job in retirement may not sound ideal, but many retirees find emotional benefits to working in retirement. When you have the financial freedom to pursue your passions, paid or unpaid, you know you’ve reached the golden years. (para. 7)

### **Capital gives us our Freedom**

While workers have won a ‘new freedom’ to continue working in perpetuity, capital has won early retirement from them (i.e. those aspects of workers’ lives that do not directly contribute to a particular agglomeration of capital’s immediate bottom line). Capital is shedding itself of older workers whose leisure is a drain on capital’s resources and whose abandonment frees up capital for more ‘productive’ purposes. Certainly, there are some who find their work fulfilling and want to continue working for as long as they can. However, many are not able to fund their golden years and are forced to work at jobs that are clearly unfulfilling or must rely on the meager remains of the welfare state (Ensign, 2011).

The FLE public pedagogy thus empowers individuals to live as they wish within a system that ensures many will not have the freedom to choose how they will live. Alternative political economic forms of life in which one is cared for and cares for others through the collective provision of a robust freedom from capital are not only occluded or derided as fantasy but thought to undermine the autonomy of those who are abandoned. A CEO of a global bank interviewed by Giesler and Veresiu (2014) at the World Economic Forum (WEC) offers a typical moralized comparison between the “patronizing and arrogant standpoint” that motivates KWS redistribution schemes, which supposedly keep the poor dependent, and a neoliberal empowerment discourse which presents the poor as active, “creative and flexible decision makers”: “In sharp contrast to the old view, let’s instead build on the idea that all the decision power lies actually with the poor, not with government or higher-order stakeholders” (pg. 846). The “sooner we realize this [argues Scott Gilmore, founder and CEO of Peace Dividend Trust in another context], the future of aid will be no aid. Other than urgent humanitarian assistance, donors will no longer be needed or wanted, as entrepreneurs in such countries as Liberia and Haiti create what donors cannot: prosperity” (Gilmore, 2012, para. 12).

Gilmore and the global bank CEO may prize a virtuous freedom in which one works on oneself and becomes an active, creative and flexible decision maker *because* they assume it will bring prosperity to all, but FLE public pedagogues overwhelmingly value this freedom as an end in itself. Freedom for FLE advocates is not simply a negative freedom from financial insecurity but the positive freedom (ability, disposition and desire) to *actively* take control of one’s life and *pursue* the life one wants, which they assume will lead to financial security. However, contra FLE researchers Kozup and Hogarth (2008), capital increasingly decides the level of financial security many can obtain and thus the kind of freedom they have and whether they can even “satisfice” or must continually “optimize” for another and forego or significantly cut back

playing with their children. Individuals may have a responsibility to manage the boundary between capital's time and their time, but increasingly 'their time' is a chimera, an unfunded purgatory for the unemployed or precariously employed who must prove their time and labour can be put to use.

For this reason the critique that FLE initiatives are not supportive of "the values and life goals of each individual as they decide how to live the life they want" (Blue and Brimble, 2014, pg. 40) is pushing against an open door. They may not be successful in offering a sufficiently tailored approach but FLE public pedagogues are constantly worried that FLE programs fail to meet individuals' unique needs and goals (e.g. some need to manage a vast amount of wealth while others need to figure out how to make diminishing disability payments stretch to the end of the month). They continuously create new categories of debtors, consumers and investors and tirelessly modify FLE programs to each individual's or group's specific needs and desires. The executive director of the Independent Financial Brokers, Nancy Allan (2014), writing in support of Canada's national FLE strategy, which seeks to target different groups each year (seniors, youth and Aboriginals), argues explicitly that "access to individualized financial advice . . . is key to financial success" and worries that "lower income consumers" are not receiving the targeted advice they need. Parker Cohen of the Corporation for Enterprise Development and Dr. Terri Friedline from the University of Kansas both agree that the "discrepancy between high-income and low-income millennials' access to resources . . . point[s] to the need for a conscious effort to address the *unique* [emphasis added] challenges lower-income individuals face in an economy where assets matter" (Lockhart, 2015, para. 5).<sup>161</sup> For Terry Goodtrack from the Aboriginal Financial Officers of Canada the solution is to target more effectively the dependent population: his particular solution calls for the creation of financial products that serve aboriginal

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<sup>161</sup> The solution they offer is to teach FLE in schools.

customers' needs and the crafting of a financial literacy message that will break through the barriers *qua* "language and traditional values on financial matters" barring Aboriginals' "inclusion into the Canada economy" (Nelson, 2015, para. 10).<sup>162</sup>

Most FLE initiatives offer an FLE aimed at an ideal middle-class, masculine and white subject, and this is a significant problem that must be rectified. However, without the more radical critique which Blue and Brimble stress elsewhere with Grootenboer – that capitalism is necessarily marked by economic insecurity and "FLE is not the solution to poverty" (Blue et al., 2015, pg. 7) – this critique is easily captured by an FLE public pedagogy which covers over that the plurality of life choices available are those chosen by capital and the privileged groups which benefit from the present's articulation of capital's omnipresent demand for more of our time, resources and labour. Rabbior (2007), for example, stresses that FLE must support a plurality of life goals and ensure individuals have the freedom to choose how they want to live but, characteristic of FLE public pedagogues, occludes that capital limits the plurality of options most can pursue or desire:

Different people will have different goals because, as we all know, people are different. What one person wants out of life can be different from what another person wants. What people have in life also differs greatly. Individuals face life and its financial challenges from a wide array of starting points. Some people have access to a great deal, including opportunities for education, training, working, and acquiring income. Others have access to very little and face different challenges and opportunities. Different cultures have

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<sup>162</sup> Other examples include the OECD, which categorizes financially illiterate consumers into two broad groups: the financially excluded (those without financial products) and the marginalized (those who only use a few financial products irregularly), both of whom are made of "heterogeneous and diverse consumer groups – such as low-income consumers, racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants, refugees and indigenous consumers – who tend to reside in either inner-city and deprived areas, or remote isolated rural regions" (2005, pg. 76). Kempson and Whyley (1999) from the Personal Finance Research Centre at the University of Bristol discover a similar array of financially excluded and precarious consumer types: elderly low-income households, single mothers, marginalized workers, ethnic minorities, the unemployed, the retired, those who have experienced financial difficulties and the divorced or separated. Finally, for Annamaria Lusardi, the director of the Global Center for Financial Literacy at George Washington University, those in need of FLE tend to be "women, African Americans, Hispanics, and individuals with few educational opportunities" (Lusardi, 2013a, pg. 2), making financial literacy an "issue of equality" (Lusardi in Malcolm, 2012, para. 23).



differing attitudes to money and material things. The same is true of various religions.  
(pg. 5)

Plurality is a fact of life, but Rabbior does not question the capitalized character of our plurality: that capital supports a plurality marked by a necessary inequitable distribution of goals, desires, challenges and life options and which cannot be overcome through better individual investment and consumption, no matter how tailored. For Rabbior and most FLE advocates, capital's continual erosion of our ability (particularly those racialized, gendered and classed groups that are most disadvantaged) to pursue meaningful ends outside the capital relation is not an 'illegitimate barrier' to our freedom.

To be financially literate and autonomous thus means in part to align one's desires and life options with those which capital deems possible. Indebted retirees pining for a freedom from capital are those consumer researcher McGregor (2011) calls "hard-done-by, stressed-out pawns struggling with the psychological trauma of economic recessions" rather than "key power brokers" (pg. 355). Power brokers mold their consumption, investment and life goals, including retirement, to market conditions, choosing amongst the options capital makes available to fund their 'dream goals' (e.g. stagnant wages, precarious work, debt-funded education and pre-retirement). "Stressed-out pawns" do not; they are not in 'control' of their lives because they have ignored or been unable to read the market's signs.

This "freedom we have always sought" is thus one in which capital gives us our freedom and chooses how we will live.<sup>163</sup> FLE public pedagogues are preoccupied with ensuring everyone can achieve a plurality of life options but only *after* capital has set the parameters of choice. They

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<sup>163</sup> Capital, in choosing how we will live, or delimiting particular options from which we are to choose, is a force that is mediated by others (e.g. patriarchy and racism). The FLE and EE public pedagogy is not only capital friendly but, despite their innumerable minority and women-friendly initiatives, also racist and patriarchal as many have noted (Pinto and Blue, 2014; Pinto and Coulson, 2011; Pinto, 2012a). These forces in turn also influence – not simply mediate – capital's continual reformation (Baucom, 2005; Federici, 2004; Mies, 1999).

are unconcerned that this plurality is circumscribed by capital, leaving only those with sufficient financial security (which capital is eroding) able to engage in most non-capital maximizing forms of life free from capital (e.g. retirement, vacationing, stress-free time engaging with loved ones in a variety of activities, etc.). Thus while the FLE public pedagogy may promote innumerable symposiums and create various task forces aimed at assisting and funding racialized groups, the destitute and women in choosing how they want to live, until structural changes are made in the economy these FLE initiatives will do little but assuage the guilt of those who benefit from capital's freedom from those we have abandoned. As Pinto (2012a) writes in support of gender justice, "while women may have equal opportunity to earn and save money, these opportunities are far from equitable given *social and political realities* [emphasis added]" (pg. 179).<sup>164</sup>

It is therefore necessary to supplement the ethical concern for each individual's singularity with the political institution of a new world for others. Brimble and Blue (2013) in their call for a more tailored FLE program hint at this need for political action, noting that indigenous communities' practice of "collective wealth/ownership creates particular challenges for FLE" (pg. 210). However, they leave unexplored the extent of the challenge collective wealth/ownership poses to the present FLE paradigm: namely, that a world in which the wealth we produce is owned in common is a world at odds with the one FLE public pedagogues seek to fit us into. Both cannot exist together. The world the FLE public pedagogy encourages us to create – a world in which each is responsible for his or her own financial well-being amidst widespread abandonment and diminishing freedom from capital – is fundamentally at odds with

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<sup>164</sup> To improve women's freedom we must institute significant structural changes to our economy, which will face substantial opposition from those who benefit from the present's gendered, classed and racialized distribution of freedom and security.

one in which we take into account our necessary interdependence and collectively ensure all are free to pursue projects that are meaningful to them.<sup>165</sup>

## **Entrepreneurship Education: Freedom Through Work**

### **The Little Boss**

Given diminishing opportunities for freedom outside the capital relation, it is unsurprising EE public pedagogues join FLE advocates in promising a freedom just as robust within the capital relation in which we are free from a boss and can pursue meaningful activities, relations and ends through self-directed work. Continuing the neoliberal incorporation of the critiques of the 1960s against government and business bureaucracy (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007; Harvey, 2007), EE public pedagogues present bosses and government agencies alike as limiting our freedom, believing our autonomy lies in an unmediated relation with capital. The EE public pedagogic solution to the threat business and government bosses pose to our autonomy is thus the same as the solution to insecurity analyzed earlier: further open up spaces, practices and ultimately ourselves to market forces (e.g. decrease funding for social welfare programs, cut labour regulations to increase self-employment, outsource work, expand the use of information technology and privatize formerly public goods and services) and create private and public institutions that promote and support innovation, consumer choice, flexibility and the necessary training to ensure individuals can manage their new-found freedom (Jones and Iredale, 2010; McMorrow and St-Jean, 2013; OECD, 2014a). It is assumed that this world and subject

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<sup>165</sup> The financial literacy ‘advice’ offered by McDonalds to its employees is a perfect example of a tailored approach which is blind to the ethical need to alter structural inequalities. The company’s tailored advice to their underpaid employees is that they improve their financial security by selling unopened presents and unwanted possessions on Ebay and Craigslist, break food into smaller pieces so they can eat less and still feel full, work a second job, apply for food stamps and turn off the heat in their homes (Lutz, 2013a). Jamie Oliver’s advice for the downwardly mobile on fiscally responsible culinary delights (eat stale bread) and entertainment (do not buy large televisions) is another similar example (Deans, 2013).

reformation will give us the freedom from hierarchies, manipulation and rigid social roles we have ‘always sought’, helping us take the steps to transform ourselves from precarious retirees and “minimum wage zombies” into financially literate entrepreneurs in control of our lives (Kubes, 2011, para. 3). Rather than wait for our pre-tirement years, EE public pedagogues promise a ‘new’ freedom right now for all.

Similar to social entrepreneurship narratives which swap out an existing capitalism for a future capitalism in which everyone is secure, the world in EE narratives bears only passing familiarity with reality. Everyone appears a potential entrepreneur surrounded by an abundance of opportunities to live a meaningful life.

Today’s world is full of opportunities. As changes occur and our society evolves, those who are prepared will be able to take advantage of the increasing opportunities – opportunities to do new things, generate new ideas, accomplish new tasks, and formulate and realize new hopes and dreams. Although it is certainly true that change creates stress for many, for those prepared to take control of their lives, and willing and able to take the initiative, the future that is unfolding holds much promise. (Rabbior, 2007, pg. 1)

Provided with easy access to the innovation economy’s chief means of production, seemingly everyone “can take ownership of their futures” (Peoples, 2014, para. 13) and “forge whatever world they wish” (Ontario Centres of Excellence, N.D., pg. 10).<sup>166</sup> Luke Johnson (2015), writing in *The Sunday Times* and trotting out the cliché that all social classes are equally able to become entrepreneurs, echoes the technological optimism rife in EE narratives:

There are no exams to pass or academic qualifications required. Accents, parental contacts and old school tie networks are irrelevant. Instead, the core competences are application and a ferocious hunger to succeed. After all, intelligence is distributed evenly,

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<sup>166</sup> According to three EE public pedagogues, the Internet “is a full employment act for entrepreneurs” (Stewart, 2011), opening “the door to any would-be entrepreneur wanting to start a business on a shoestring” (Pagano, 2011, para. 11) and leveling “the playing field between individuals and corporations” (Strong, 2013, para. 3).

and those with sufficient chutzpah don't need to be from the upper reaches of society to get ahead. (para. 3)<sup>167</sup>

Ottaway (2015), a freelance writer who refers to herself as a “solopreneur”, offers another typical example of the hackneyed optimistic EE narrative on the benefits of being one's own boss:

Every day is a challenge but I've never once regretted taking the leap to pursue entrepreneurship full-time. I'm the one who controls my work schedule, giving me the freedom to choose to work during the hours I am most creatively stimulated. Ultimately, I decide what number shows up on my 'paycheque' at the end of the month and if I want a raise, I don't ask for it – I go get it. (para. 3)

Entrepreneurs like Ottaway – free of a dependence on others and assumed to independently decide what is best “for themselves, their company and their community rather than what they think is expected of them” (Bartlett and Preston, 2000, pg. 208) – have moved from “passengers into drivers” (Ontario Centres of Excellence, N.D., pg. 10). They are their own bosses, controlling how hard they work, when they will work, what they will create and what amount of remuneration they will attempt to procure.

The reality of an ineradicable inequality and necessary dependence relationship between the owners of the means of production and those who own nothing but their labour power thus appears a holdover from a bygone era.<sup>168</sup> With everyone a potential entrepreneur, there appears no necessary proletarianization and thus no class of capitalists or bosses opposed to a class of workers. In the new information and innovation economy everyone appears as an entrepreneur

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<sup>167</sup> See also Cowen (2013).

<sup>168</sup> This new, seemingly more egalitarian production regime contrasts with earlier forms of agricultural or industrial capitalism in which enclosures of land and capital-intensive industrial production necessarily left some without access to anything but their labour power. Divorced from the means to reproduce themselves, capitalism's early freedom from rigid caste relations was cruel for those who did not have the means to take advantage of their freedom and were forced to rent themselves to another. Immaterial production, unlike land enclosure, is not a zero-sum game (if I use a plot of land another cannot, but it is possible to have many using a particular computer code, app or genetic sequence) and so EE advocates often argue that today's would-be entrepreneurs can take from our intellectual commons and leave as much for others, if not more. Moreover, start-up costs for production have dropped precipitously given advances in information technology.

and can supposedly live as they want: i.e. decide how they want to secure their reproduction and exercise their freedom. The indentured woodcutters from Britton's (2010) financial fairy tale can free themselves from their young boss by learning their trade on YouTube and selling their wares on eBay. From this, EE supporters often draw the conclusion that the most important division between producers is between those who can learn the necessary skills to complement and innovate *with* machines and information technology and those who cannot (Cowen, 2013, 2014). Inequalities and insecurities could still continue, but they are caused by differences in individual ability or human capital rather than access to the means of production. This increases the impact entrepreneurial aptitude, technology skills, positive thinking, risk-taking, perseverance and communication skills appear to have on one's freedom, justifying the entrepreneurship discipline's continued infatuation with instilling entrepreneurial traits.<sup>169</sup>

### **The Big Boss**

While entrepreneurs may have freed themselves from a particular little boss, the big boss remains, and the continual search for more optimal production relations leaves many entrepreneurs with few options but to conform to what capital, the big boss, desires (Cremin, 2011). This is, of course, not without its benefits. Submission to abstract economic forces can be preferable to direct submission to a human boss who decides how you produce and takes a cut of the value you created. However, with or without an employer, the key problem EE freedom narratives occlude is that our freedom and security are tied to a system that treats everything,

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<sup>169</sup> Most of this technological optimism discourse is aimed at reassuring those left in the middle-class and elites in the Global North that all is well. When targeting the poor, especially in underdeveloped countries, EE public pedagogues lament that many still lack the access to the technology that will set them free (Zahra et al., 2008). The outcome, though, appears inevitable: one day soon all will have access to the means to produce immaterial goods.

including ‘free’ human beings, as production inputs for the limitless pursuit of capital accumulation as an end in itself.

McNally (1993) is perspicuous here,

Capital, as Marx never tired of repeating, is a social relation, a key aspect of which is the compulsion of individual units of production (by the threat of bankruptcy) to try and better the productivity of other units . . . it is the nature of the commodity/market economy that the producers feel the external pressure of the law of value (production according to socially necessary levels of productivity) as a pressure to develop the forces of production. The surest means of surviving the competition of the market is continually to raise the productivity of labour, to produce a given good in less time. (pp. 179-180)

The big boss is comprised of what Marx (1867/1990) calls “abstract value”: the socially necessary labour time required to produce a given commodity. This is the supra-individual force behind capital’s demands, decreeing the worth of the labour power of a commodity’s creator. The fetishism Marx (1867/1990) describes is thus real as the commodities we produce dictate the terms upon which they will be made (i.e. the conditions we must accept to produce goods that will be sold). Our commodities in a sense decide who constitutes, in the CEO of the National Endowment for Financial Education’s words, an ‘attractive’ workforce (Malcolm, 2012) and who will be rendered surplus to capital’s accumulation needs. Derived from Marx’s labour theory of value, the force of abstract labour explains *one aspect* of how labour is disciplined within capitalism.<sup>170</sup>

As human capital inputs, entrepreneurs’ security is reliant upon their ability to include themselves within a system that constantly seeks to ensure that all of its inputs are running at

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<sup>170</sup> This particular reading of Marx’s theory of value – value form theory – supports an explicitly normative analysis of the character of human freedom and social relations under capitalism, an analysis not “of the relations of *things to things*, as was thought by vulgar economists, nor of the relations of *people to things*, as was asserted by the theory of marginal utility, but of the relations of *people to people* in the process of production” (Rubin, 1928/1973, pg. 3). It stresses the role abstract labour plays in disciplining labour, creating a collective insecurity in which “time is everything, [and] man [*sic*] is nothing; he is, at the most, time’s carcass (Marx in Bonefeld, 2010, pg. 262).

peak efficiency. One worker's testimony in China's Foxconn facility<sup>171</sup> highlights capital's preoccupation with labour time within production and its detrimental effects on workers' well-being:

We finish one step in every 7 seconds, which requires us to concentrate and keep working and working. We work faster even than the machines. Every shift (10 hours), we finish 4,000 Dell computers, all the while standing up. We can accomplish these assignments through collective effort, but many of us feel worn out. (Chen, 2010, para. 13)

In this example a little boss forces workers to speed up production. EE narratives merge the little boss and worker so the worker, now read as an entrepreneur, decides how he or she will improve the accumulation of capital. The point I stress is that the big boss, capital, is ultimately the one who demands we continually work faster, cheaper and better: whether self-employed or not, we are all employees or potential employees of capital.

Worse, even this limited, capitalized freedom is illusory: the little boss must remain in some form for the big boss to exist. Capitalism, if it is anything, is a power relation in which those who own the means of production or control capital's flows (i.e. the little bosses) restrict others' access to the resources they need to live and thrive. Those without access are then forced to sell themselves to expand the wealth of those with access so they can obtain the resources they need to live. The big boss can only exist if there is limited access to the means of production (i.e. if the means are owned by the little bosses who restrict others' access) and labour power is needed and available to produce key goods. Even if everyone had equal access to the immaterial means of production (e.g. Internet and education), many would still not be free from a boss because while EE advocates want to provide everyone with the immaterial means to work they do

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<sup>171</sup> Foxconn is a massive corporation with contracts from Dell and Apple among others. It has factories around the world, including Brazil, Mexico, Taiwan, India, Malaysia, Hungary and Japan (with Sharp electronics), and is most famous for producing Apple products, the massive size of its Chinese factories and its highly publicized worker suicides (Chen, 2010).



not want to provide all with the material means to live. Excluded from the food and shelter needed to live, immaterial entrepreneurs must create a commodity to get the money to purchase the material goods they need from those who own them.

However, only a few can succeed in creating their own immaterial work because of entrepreneurs' relative differences in skills and desire to innovate and create; consumers' limited time and desire to use and pay for the massive amounts of unique immaterial goods that would have to constantly be made if all are to achieve security in this fashion; and a consumer herd behaviour which draws us into choosing products others desire (G.I., 2014), leading to a handful of products garnering attention and money. In short, some people will create better or cheaper products than others and so some products will go unsold. Moreover, even if everyone made a unique immaterial product, consumers would not be able to or want to consume them all in the amounts needed to ensure this would be a successful strategy for all. Thus, even if we start out as equally unequal immaterial entrepreneurs, capitalism tends towards centralization, i.e. the amassing of capital into fewer and fewer hands (Marx, 1867/1990; Piketty, 2014), and, without political countervailing measures (e.g. progressive taxation, unions and a robust social welfare state), we would be back to where we are now: a state in which 1% of the population owns more than half of the world's wealth and looks set to amass an even greater percentage in the future (Hardoon, 2015). Contra the EE freedom narrative, little bosses are a necessary feature of capitalism; even if it was desirable, we cannot all be independently employed by capital.

### **A Freedom for Capital: A Freedom from Us**

Interestingly, while the employer-employee relation is routinely excoriated as an affront to one's freedom and best abolished or substantially reformed so the employee is more open to market competition, the creditor-debtor relation is presented as offering a path to freedom (Yunus, 2008).

In numerous FLE and EE narratives, individuals are encouraged to take on ‘good’ debt, and benevolent financial institutions help the under- and unbanked access micro-debt products so both can pursue opportunities which would otherwise be unavailable: those excluded can access education, housing, medical treatment or the capital to start a business while financial institutions can access the excluded. Debt is not to be eliminated; instead debtors are to be taught to manage periods of indebtedness so they can become self-sufficient and use the capital they earn to invest in others off of whose value-creation efforts they siphon. Emancipation from employers is to happen immediately while those indebted slowly move to self-sufficiency if not creditor status over their life-cycle.

Undoubtedly, one could surmise many reasons why one authoritarian economic relation is an affront to freedom while the other is a boon. I find it provident, though, that the creditor-debtor relation and the employer-employee relation embody different conceptions of paternalism.<sup>172</sup> The employer-employee relation often carries with it a sense that the party with power is responsible for the subordinate: i.e. the idea that the boss is not only the head of a business but also the head of a household, a sentiment that informs the EE public pedagogy’s ‘job-creator’ discourse. The regulations and unwritten norms surrounding employment draw from and inform this paternalism (e.g. employers should not fire workers without cause and should throw retirement parties for them, provide them with a comfortable, safe atmosphere to work in and benefit plans and give them time off if they are sick or to care for loved ones). In contrast, the creditor’s responsibility to the debtor is limited to refraining from purposely duping the debtor. If anything, great effort is expended to inculcate in debtors a responsibility for the debt they owe creditors (Beggs et al., 2014; Lazzarato, 2015).

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<sup>172</sup> I am referring to an employer-employee relation informed by the KWS ethic. This paternalism as a responsibility for the worker obviously differs depending upon the worker (ethnicity, class, gender, etc.), employer and the political jurisdiction’s laws and ideological climate.

Additionally, in their conflation of freedom with an unmediated relation with capital, EE freedom narratives not only criticize the employer-employee relation but present employees as intrapreneurs who are to find, create and exploit profitable opportunities without direction and accept that their employer cannot protect them from capital's predations or waste resources on anything that does not produce surplus value for the employer. Former Anheuser-Busch president David Peacock gives voice to this employer-intrapreneur relation, one in which the employer appears helpless to mediate capital's demand that it be able to free itself from its earthly connections when it desires: "it's painful because of the uncertainty and the change, and anytime you have to let people go. But I also would tell people, 'the team matters more than any of us'" (Kesmodel and Gasparro, 2015, para. 15). Less thoughtlessly, what he means is that what matters most is the team *qua* conglomeration of human and economic capital and its ability to meet capital's insatiable, fickle demands, not his employees' job security. The little boss remains but is presented as a figurehead in a significant respect: when he or she jettisons employees so the rest can sail faster free of ballast, both should understand that this is the way of the world. Capital demands and the little boss and his or her employees must obey. The ability of each conglomeration of capital to keep up with the rest is what "matters more than any of us".

Thus, I believe that while both creditor-debtor relations and employer-employee relations are unpopular with those subordinated, the fact that the employer-employee relation carries with it a sense of responsibility for the worker contributes to its undesirability and the popularity of entrepreneurship in EE narratives. If we turn the EE freedom narrative around, the freedom offered is not a freedom from a boss – a particularly onerous aspect of the capital relation in which another controls us in an authoritarian manner – but a *freedom for capital* to attach and delink from the living bodies it uses to accumulate when it is profitable to do so. Capital in its desire to accumulate wants to be free from all impediments, including labour relations structured

by regulations and paternalist sentiment. However, it cannot do away with labour and so seeks to take as little responsibility for our lives as it can while augmenting individuals' reliance on capital and responsibility for capital accumulation, exactly the model we find in the creditor-debtor and employer-intrapreneur relations.

In EE bright-siding freedom narratives this freedom for capital is obfuscated; it is always our freedom from a boss that is forefronted, never capital's desire to flee from us. Ottaway's (2015) comment on her freedom to be her own boss more than making up for her economic insecurity is typical, as is Nowak's (2013):

Part of the reason people are precariously employed is that a growing number choose to be. Which makes sense to me. I left a very good stable job with our public broadcaster more than two years ago. The pay was great, the benefits were good and the pension was exceptional. But, having been technically 'precariously employed' since then, I don't think I could ever go back to any sort of 'stable job' The benefits of being my own boss, setting my own hours and doing whatever I want more than offset those tangible payoffs.

Would it be nice to have cheaper benefits or an easier time getting a loan? Absolutely. Do I have any idea what I'll be doing in the future, even a year from now? Absolutely not – but that's part of the fun . . . the future may be more precarious, but it's obviously much more interesting and fulfilling than a stable one. (para. 8-9)

Unlike those who are hiding in stable jobs, Nowak is out there living his life on his terms. However, his experience of leaving behind a job with great pay and benefits is not the norm. According to Wayne Lewchuk, professor at McMaster University's economics and labour studies departments, insecure freedom is the norm – in a survey of 4,000 people in Toronto and Hamilton, Ontario, Lewchuk found that almost half “work in jobs with some degree of insecurity” and that workers are often “viewed as a liability or a cost to be minimized whenever possible” (Grant, 2014, para. 12-14). The OECD (2015) presents a similarly bleak picture: “Temporary and part-time work and self-employment now account for about a third of total employment in OECD countries. Since the mid-1990s, more than half of all job creation was in

the form of non-standard work. Many non-standard workers are worse off in many aspects of job quality, such as earnings, job security or access to training” (pg. 17).<sup>173</sup> This is the side of entrepreneurial freedom we rarely hear from in EE narratives, which hide that the choice for most is not between security and freedom: for many there is no choice, only an insecure freedom far worse than the privileged life Nowak gets to lead.<sup>174</sup>

A few examples of capital’s recent ‘entrepreneurial’ innovations should suffice to highlight this freedom for capital masked by narratives hyping a freedom from bosses. The first is the entrepreneurial innovation of “zero-hour contracts” in the UK, an example of entrepreneurial ‘replication innovation’ that draws on past labour practices like the “call-on” prevalent in the docks in London, England in the mid-1800s in which workers would amass several times a day in the hopes of being selected to work for a couple of hours (Raw, 2011). More than 150 years later, at least 1.4 million workers in the UK have signed zero-hour contracts in which they are not guaranteed any set number of hours of work but must be available on demand.<sup>175</sup> Zero-hour workers bear increased responsibility for managing capital’s production risk (i.e. the risk of sub-optimal capital allocation) by providing ‘just-in-time’ labour while capital has a right to access labour when it wants it and to free itself from labour just as easily.<sup>176</sup> This flexible approach to human capital is also prevalent in Ontario’s universities. Bonnie Patterson, president of the

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<sup>173</sup> Worldwide the situation is worse with only 25 per cent of workers in stable employment according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2015).

<sup>174</sup> In their joint report, the OECD and the European Commission (2013) worry about “bogus self-employment” in which employees are reported as self-employed so that employers can pay fewer benefits and have more flexibility. Further highlighting the coercive character of freedom *qua* self-employment, a recent study by Statistics Canada concluded that up to a third of the self-employed in Canada are forced into self-employment during times of high unemployment (Bahar and Liu, 2015). The truth, however, is more worrisome because the model for the future is a ‘bogus’ self-employment in which most have little job security whether employed by others or themselves.

<sup>175</sup> They either call in to see if they are needed to work or make themselves available and if called must go in to work. This arrangement is unsurprisingly used in the more precarious and lower paying work sectors (e.g. retail, tourism, catering and hospitality) (Inman and Monaghan, 2014).

<sup>176</sup> The office of the New York attorney general is also investigating 13 retailers (Gap, Abercrombie & Fitch, Target, J. Crew, Sears, TJX and seven others) who engage in on call shift work which requires employees to call in a few hours in advance or the night before to see if they are needed that day (Tabuchi, 2015).

Council of Ontario Universities, for example, argues that sessional instructors provide not only financial benefits (they are cheaper) but “also a way of getting the right human resources in the right places, given the kind of change that can occur, and trying to balance the multiple responsibilities of the permanent, core faculty members” (MacDonald, 2013, para. 19). In the zero-hour worker example increased consumer demand for t-shirts one sunny afternoon might require more human capital than usual in the Gap while in the latter example decreased student demand or external funding<sup>177</sup> for learning about applied ethics or labour history might require fewer capital inputs that deliver this particular service.

I want to stress that the freedom of zero-hour contract workers and sessional instructors is structured to improve efficiency by bringing together the appropriate capital inputs when they are needed and disassembling them when they are not. The key concern from the perspective of capital’s representatives is that they feel they can no longer take responsibility for the financial security of their human capital inputs if production is going to be efficient. Instead, these inputs must be set free and become independent contractors who are their own boss, in practice creating a triple ethics – a more generous concern for those who are needed, a limited responsibility for those who are occasionally needed, and very little for those who are not needed at all (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007). For the each group, EE narratives offers a host of individualized entrepreneurial discursive solutions (intrapreneurship, an entrepreneurship of the self and a subsistence or BOP entrepreneurship) but leaves each free to create the life they want with the means they can obtain.<sup>178</sup> Capital’s now ubiquitous ‘just-in-time’ production strategy frees capital and those with power over capital’s flows by externalizing the cost of storage, maintenance and

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<sup>177</sup> Increasingly, even permanent, core faculty members are expected to entrepreneurially seek out grant funding for research projects, which are thus rendered contingent and precarious.

<sup>178</sup> Even the Mondragón Cooperative Corporation keeps 20% of its workforce on part-time or short-term contracts: According to the corporation’s president, “Our clients cannot guarantee us steady workloads, so we have to have a number of people on temporary contracts. We live in a market society. That we cannot change” (Gaspar, 2014, para. 18).

retooling of the necessary production inputs whether they are windshield wiper blades, microchips or human beings.<sup>179</sup>

### **Capital's Creation and Destruction: An Infinite Dissatisfaction with Labour**

Capital's need for security (i.e. amassing the inputs needed for capital accumulation) is always at odds with its need for freedom (i.e. its freedom from that which is other to the accumulation process). Outsourcing and off-shoring provide a classic example of this dialectic. Maidment (2011), in a journal on ethics and entrepreneurship, provides a typical reading of capital's search for inputs:

Outsourcing and off-shoring are the natural result of enhanced transportation, communication and financial technologies that have developed since the 1990s. Off-shoring, in particular, is the result of the liberation of approximately one-billion people who are now participating in the global economy since the end of the Cold War. These people's ambitions are no longer being constricted by the dictates of government and they are seeking the rewards that the global economy is promising them. (pg. 62)

In this example capital seeks access to new sources of labour, a proletarianization that Maidment reads as improving the freedom and security of those accessed. At the same time, however, inclusion of a billion 'liberated' people through off-shoring production is also an exclusion of those labour inputs that have become too expensive, inflexible and antagonistic (Silver, 2003). Capital's territorialization and construction of amenable production relations in one location is accompanied by a deterritorialization in another location and a destruction of production relations that hinder capital's accumulation. As argued earlier, there is no equilibrium between labour and capital because capital's demands are insatiable. Driven by competition, capital must continually improve production, and labour, like all inputs, can never be cheap, skilled or flexible enough

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<sup>179</sup> Disproportionately the cost of this reproductive work falls on women (Fraser, 2013). What is left of the KWS state is also called on to subsidize worker's low wages and precarity (Jacobs et al., 2015; O'Connor, 2013, 2014).

(Rikowski, 2000). Foxconn is heavily involved in this “spatial fix” strategy of moving production around to improve the accumulation process (Harvey, 2006; Silver, 2003): it has moved production within China from Shenzhen to Henan (Culpan, 2013; Larson, 2014) and has plans to open twelve factories in India (Crabtree, 2015) and another in Indonesia, largely to employ new pools of docile labour.

This “spatial fix” is only one of capital’s strategies for freeing itself from labour inputs whose employment has become too costly.<sup>180</sup> In its endless drive to improve accumulation by liberating itself from ‘needless’ costs such as labour’s reproduction, capital also employs a “technological fix”, seeking to replace human labour with technology (Silver, 2003). In industrial production, automation has long been a core part of the strategy for reducing labour costs, enabling capital to free itself from its workers’ meddling or its meddlesome workers entirely. Foxconn’s long-term solution is not just to shift production around but to significantly reduce its dependence on living labour by automating more of the production process (Gold and Lee, 2015; Larson, 2014). Other recent popular automation examples include the Google car, which appears set to free capital from drivers, and Amazon’s drones, which will deliver your Amazon purchases via air to your doorstep. These examples are only a few of the present and predicted automation advances which many believe will render a significant number of workers obsolete: Frey and Osborne (2013) are cited by many and predict *conservatively* that 47% of total US employment in the next 10-20 years can be automated.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> The strategy also provides a sink for capital, only generating value after many years and thus satiating for a time capital’s need to procure a return on its investment (Harvey, 2015).

<sup>181</sup> One mobile phone plant in China has already replaced 90% of its workforce by machines. Those who are left monitor the machines (Linning, 2015).



## **Freedom from Abundance: It's All About Power**

Given that most assume the means to produce the goods needed to live well will continue to be privately owned and that those without direct access must sell something in return for these needed goods, rather than being a boon to workers the automation of a predicted 47% of total US employment in the next 10-20 years is presented as “the dark side of technological advances” (Dixon, 2014b). This “dark side”, however, has nothing to do with technology or the automation of work in itself but with capitalism (Lanchester, 2015; Means, 2015). Only in a system such as capitalism would the automation of work be seen as an existential concern, robbing us of not only our material security but also our freedom to live the life we want. As with the FLE public pedagogy’s acceptance of the continual erosion of retirement as a social right, we are again encouraged to support a freedom for capital not a freedom for others. We have abandoned those who cannot retire and those whose job has been automated while ensuring that capital and those who it benefits can carry on free from their responsibility for those excluded.

Instead of hoping for the creation of work that robots cannot do or cannot do as cheaply as humans, we need to be free from continually submitting to a job accumulating someone’s capital or even our own – we need to be free from capital. There is no necessary reason that those who are made obsolete by automation cannot access the goods and services they did previously when working. Even more goods would exist in the world than before so it makes little sense that they could not receive the same amount of goods as before. Their access is barred, however, because they live in a capitalist system and so do not get to share in the bounty we create without doing something capital or those with capital value. Automation sets labour free but does so in a world that ensures capital is free from abundance by barring democratic access to our commons (e.g. the means of material and immaterial production). Thus, workers who are rendered redundant are not free from capital but are forced to find their way back into the capital circuit

because they have no other option. For EE advocates, a more robust freedom and innovative entrepreneurship to set us free from capital are unthinkable. Their best-case scenario is that one continually creates works to amass capital while pursuing a desire to become “the master of one’s own exploitation” (Bloom, 2013, pg. 801). To borrow from Ruti (2014), the aim is to keep “us invested in the notion that our welfare demands relentless toil” – a work ethic that has “outlived its usefulness in the sense that our collective productivity these days surpasses what is necessary for the provision of food, clothing, housing, and other basic amenities” (pg. 306).

William Baumol, professor of economics at New York University, Academic Director of the Berkley Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Professor Emeritus at Princeton University, downplays the significance of this freedom from abundance and instead stresses the benefits innovation brings; he argues that only “3% of the benefit of invention goes to the inventor and to the people who invested in it. The rest flows to society” (Griffiths et al., 2012, pg. 616). That capitalism generates phenomenal benefits for many is well known but misses the point. The inventor and his or her investors might capture only 3% of the benefits, but 100% of the benefits of innovation flow into a system which limits the uses of these innovations to further capital accumulation.<sup>182</sup> This is what we see with automation. Many of the benefits of an automation may escape the grasp of a particular robot’s inventor and investors, but they only flow to others in particular, amenable forms, which forecloses the possibility of emancipation from the capital relation and its necessary insecurity and limited freedom. As consumers we will benefit from lower prices for goods and the creation of technological wonders, but our forced

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<sup>182</sup> David Noble’s (1984) study on numerical-controlled machine tool automation highlights how the form technological innovation takes is not simply about improving profit but is perhaps even more importantly about control, specifically shifting control over production from workers and towards management. Technological innovation, despite its portrayal in FLE and EE texts, is not a neutral endeavor but one that is influenced by its political, economic and social context.

retraining to become app creators, personal assistants, gardeners or subsistence entrepreneurs is in marked contrast with what we could do with this technology if unconstrained by capital.

### **Entrepreneurship, Financial Literacy and Private and Public Values**

Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) typically obfuscate the issue and worry that the loss of jobs from automation will erode significant avenues for self-actualization and self-worth. Most EE advocates concur: robots are not only taking away our means to live, they are taking away our means to live a meaningful life. To live and to live well, we must therefore create our own jobs EE supporters exclaim. Leong's (2014) 'bright-siding' account in the *National Post* provides a typical account of the value entrepreneurs find in their work.

Generation Y may be the most entrepreneurial generation on the planet. Parents have raised their children to value independence, personal aspirations and meaningful work. Rather than wait for the ideal job in a competitive job market, many graduates are charting their own path and finding ways to fund their aspirations (para. 4).

The widespread assumption EE advocates share is that if entrepreneurs can create their own work, they can create work which is aligned with the private and public ends they value. The fear that retirement is unattainable for most or the worry that robots will take away the work that defines our lives is solved through the creation of meaningful self-employment.

Once free from the boss and provided easy access to the means of immaterial production, there appears no *necessary* conflict between the life we desire and the job we create for ourselves. While these jobs may be less available and secure, given capital's propensity to flee, they will be of a better quality because through work we can be who we want to be and create the world we want. What is more, given the erosion of free time and rise of irregular labour, individuals can pursue this meaningful work around the clock. With work no longer confined to a specific

location and time but bled into other spaces and times, our time spent working, improving ourselves and pursuing projects we find meaningful is much expanded.<sup>183</sup> Our self-actualization desires can be realized at all times through being more closely integrated with capital's desire for accumulation.<sup>184</sup>

Inspired by “success stories of modern entrepreneurs like Mark Zuckerberg”, “once-passive employees” are starting “side projects on Kickstarter in their spare time . . . [because they] now have the freedom to find their own voice, an audience, a product, and a business – but only if they’re willing to step away from the crowd and risk failing along the way”, writes Strong (2013) in the *Globe and Mail*. For some this capitalized freedom staves off the boredom they encounter during formerly ‘unproductive’ time. Personal finance blogger and freelance business journalist, Danielle Kubes (2015) is one such example. Her lamentation that time away from capital maximization activities is a wasteful burden – driving her to organize her nail polish alphabetically and take two-a-day yoga sessions when she only had one job – is only a more hyperbolic instance of the ubiquitous EE assumption that we not only desire to be free from our bosses but are also constantly searching for ways to be more productive and align ourselves and values with profit maximization. This is both fun and makes good fiscal sense for those without stable employment because, opines Kubes (2015), “relying on only one source of income . . . [is] just too nerve-wracking” (para.4). Kamenetz (2015) also lauds the enjoyable pragmatism of entrepreneurialism, writing in the *Chicago Tribune* on the importance of financial literacy,

Most of the successful people I know can do more than one thing for money. They may or may not be doing them at the same time, but simply knowing that they can makes it easier

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<sup>183</sup> An ad for Rogers posing as an editorial in the *Globe and Mail* sums up our new freedom: “At firms across Canada, the workplace of the future has arrived – and it’s all about collaborative workplaces, wireless connectivity, portable devices and networking software to allow people to work anywhere at any time” (Globe Content Studio, 2015, para. 2).

<sup>184</sup> Even those whose “only passion is zoning out while listening to [their] iPod for hours” can apparently create jobs that align with their singular interest (Kubes, 2011, para. 5).

to make financial decisions without fear of losing everything. In today's economy, being shock-ready means constantly updating and maintaining one's skills. And that, in turn, becomes much easier if you have a genuine sense of interest in what you're doing. (para. 10)

Working irregular hours – when she is most creatively stimulated – is also the height of freedom for Ottaway (2015). She wants to align her values with her work and maximize her human and economic capital in ways she finds important. Serial entrepreneur, Lauren Bias (2014), is even more explicit, stressing capital's need for a deeper commitment from entrepreneurial workers who must purposely align their values, interests and natural curiosity for learning with a desire to do “whatever is needed to maximize value creation” (para. 5 and 8). They must, she continues, figure out how to “evolve” and explore their “passions” and “creativity” (para. 3). This is also the attraction for entrepreneur Eileen Phoan who creates her own jewelry for sale: “things may seem very challenging and may seem very hard but if we look at things from a different perspective, all of this opportunity for personal growth . . . it's really inspiring to see how this impacts others (Ongchoco, 2015, para. 17). In contrast to outdated employment relations, entrepreneurship empowers individuals to improve themselves and express their values through their work, which often includes a desire to improve not just oneself but also the lives of others.

In fact, it is through capital, FLE and EE advocates argue, that we can create real change, enabling citizens to pursue their public values (e.g. environmentalism, feminism, social justice, etc.) and improve the world. At a time when cynicism of public officials could not be higher and the differences between political parties seems minimal, EE freedom narratives offer the civic-minded a means to effect political economic change.<sup>185</sup> The online craft-site Etsy's goal of

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<sup>185</sup> According to students and professors interviewed at Ryerson's School of Management, entrepreneurs and business students increasingly “no longer...see ‘doing good’ as an aside, merely philanthropic or marketing work of

fostering “regenerative entrepreneurs” – individuals who do not simply want to keep the world the same but make it better (Shemkus, 2015) – is only the latest example of what Alan Hurst (2014) calls the “purpose economy”, a new economic paradigm “based on the creation of purpose for people” (para. 2). Once set free, entrepreneurs do not have to accept the world as it is or consent to the whims of interchangeable politicians or global economic forces; as an entrepreneur you can bypass politicians, shape economic forces and create a new world for the benefit of all by yourself or with others (Zahra et al., 2008). The assumption that the spread of free-market institutions will bring immediate benefit to all is wrong. In the EE public pedagogy, free markets provide opportunities (and are necessary for any prosperity or freedom), but someone must take advantage of them to create new products, production techniques and a better world (Wharton University of Pennsylvania, 2003). The freedom to create political change is available, but entrepreneurs must seize it.

FLE civic freedom narratives complement this EE story, often through aligning private self-interest and the public good (i.e. if we all pursue our self-interest the public interest will be served).<sup>186</sup> The entrepreneur creates something new, and it is up to consumers and investors to decide whether this creation will come into the world and in what form. Consumers and investors offer feedback through spending their capital or as more involved ‘prosumers’, contributing to the reformation of the world through the force I have referred to as ‘capital’s demands’. We, through our myriad economic actions as entrepreneurs, consumers and investors create capital’s demands. We must submit to this force which limits our freedom, but our submission is to

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a corporate citizen whose primary objective remains to maximize profit; increasingly, they look to business school for effective tools to make positive change” (Millar and Tersigni, 2014, para. 4).

<sup>186</sup> “Where you have well-informed consumers, you will find vigorous competition and efficient markets. In other words, financial literacy is not only good for Americans because it allows them full participation in society, but financial literacy is also essential for business, the economy, the country and, in this age of globalization, the world” (Lusardi, 2013, pg. 4). As noted earlier, some FLE narratives also promote ethical action explicitly aimed at creating public good.

something we have created and could create otherwise. If entrepreneurs, for example, create fair-trade goods, “made-in Canada” products, cheap water purifiers or mortgages with reasonable interest rates and consumers and investors support them ‘capital’ will demand these goods are made. We through capital’s signals are demanding these goods should be made. The worry for FLE and EE advocates is that too few see themselves as entrepreneurs, limiting the innovation and creation that could improve the world, and that not enough are pursuing their ‘real’ interests which is needed to ensure capital can create the best possible world for all.

### **Values and Work**

Capital’s demand for our imagination, values, interests and creativity signals the other reason EE narratives laud freedom from boss narratives but support creditor-debtor relations. Debtors have a simple function: pay back the principle they owe plus interest. They are to be a reliable host for the creditor by providing him or her with a steady supply of capital. Entrepreneurs in contrast must innovate and create something new. If many people are beholden to a boss for direction this is an inefficient use of mental resources. The better strategy from capital’s perspective is to link our interests, imagination, values and creativity with our work. We want to pursue projects we find meaningful (Hurst, 2014) and at the same time capital wants us to be emotionally, ethically and intellectually invested in our work (Hochschild, 2002). It is not enough to just put in the time or follow the boss’s directions; in the new innovation economy our work and life must merge to “maximize value creation” (Bias, 2014, para. 8).

The concern, voiced by a number of critical commentators (Dyer-Witthford, 1999; Haiven, 2014; Lazzarato, 2009), is that the space outside of work has now been colonized, transforming the world into a “social factory” for the creation of human capital and material and cultural creations (e.g. practices, relations, languages, affects, etc.) that can be used to improve

capital accumulation. It is not just formal education as I argued last chapter but our culture and ‘free time’ which become resources for the creation and accumulation of economic and human capital. For EE advocates this is not a political, ethical concern but a state of the world we must accept and manage to our advantage (Florida, 2003). The installation of an entrepreneurial mindset in all of society creates ‘entrepreneurs of the self’ who find a life-work balance by cannibalizing whatever ‘outside’ life activities they engage in so that they can better improve their capacity to generate value (Dean, 2010; Foucault, 2008; Lazzarato, 2009). This ‘freedom’ as continual improvement and maximization of one’s value generating capacities (i.e. human capital) ostensibly enables the individual to realize a new passion, capability and self, but it is one that the market must validate (Bias, 2014; Kubes, 2015). Free from a boss, the individual entrepreneur chooses and must choose the passion, capability and self he or she wishes to pursue, but the market ultimately validates the choice. Few would disagree that the employment of our human powers in concert with others towards ends we find meaningful is a necessary part of a fully human life. This is not, however, the aim of capitalism.<sup>187</sup> Capital does not flee from one place to another to create work that offers a meaningful exercise of our human powers but escapes to find cheaper and more efficient labour, lower environmental regulations or some other advantage, including a more creative, entrepreneurial workforce (Florida, 2003), to reduce costs and/or create a more desired commodity.

It is unsurprising that in this context activities which add no economic value are denigrated (Marr, 2013; Stanger and Robinson, 2013). Why ‘waste’ time when one could be aligning one’s interests and ‘free-time’ with capital maximizing activities? Extending this fun

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<sup>187</sup> In fact, as Adam Smith (1776/2003) noted long ago, capitalism’s division of labour makes us as stupid as possible in the search for efficiency. EE public pedagogues often stress that what we need now is more intellectual and creative labour but occlude that we continue to create massive amounts of intellectually stultified labour (Graeber, 2013; Means, 2015).



pragmatism to youth, it also makes sense not to let this budding human resource go to waste over the summer pursuing ‘valueless’ ends when parents could send their children to youth financial literacy or entrepreneurship camps (Allen, 2013; Alowairdi, 2015). The “summer camp experience . . . shouldn’t just be a week off where the kids get out of their parents’ hair, [writes Vrbanac (2015)] but should inspire them to think of what they might want to do in the future” (para. 10). If innovation is what the future requires, EE supporters tell us there is no time to waste. Parents should ensure they are taking full advantage of their children’s ‘free time’ to build their creativity skills: asking them at the dinner table what they failed at during the day, getting them to figure out how to do things by themselves and rewarding them for challenging rules and asking questions (Seth, 2015). Given the ‘new normal’ is one of heightened competition, it seems obvious we should pursue activities that we both find of interest and which will also enable us to increase our human and economic capital. It is more efficient, appears a necessity and helps turn ‘pawns’ into ‘power-brokers’. The problem is that everything becomes fodder for capital – a particularly nightmarish ‘saming’ of the world, which creates a commodified plurality (e.g. consumer goods, values, interests and lifestyles, which are made to be obsolete) to be used as fuel for capital accumulation.

### **FLE: Creating ‘Responsible’ Consumers**

The FLE public pedagogy is also implicated in the obfuscation of capital’s influence over the values we pursue. Contra Stone et al. (2008), FLE is not a solution to ‘materialism’ (i.e. our desire for consumer goods). It does not enable individuals to pursue what they ‘truly’ desire (as if our desires are not always influenced by the forms of life of which we are a part) but operates alongside a manufactured desire for commodities that consumer capitalism needs to continue (Norris, 2008). Carrick (2015), the *Globe and Mail*’s personal finance columnist, hints at the

supportive relationship between FLE and consumerism, noting the “tension that exists between our consumption-focused society and financially responsible behaviour . . . [while reminding us that] the financial literacy strategy doesn’t have to advocate frugality; it would be enough to remind people of the savings benefit of going a little lighter on the accumulation of stuff” (para. 10). For Carrick, FLE should support prudent risk-taking and responsible enjoyment. It is not an antidote to consumerism but a means of tempering it so that individuals avoid massive debt and consumer capitalism can work more effectively. We are to ensure we spend and invest so that we are not a burden on others; we are not, however, to be independent of the manufacturing of consumer desires. There is, for example, no FLE proposal that bans or significantly restricts advertising. Consumerism and FLE instead work together to ensure consumer capitalism ‘works’ because it does not ‘work’ if large numbers of people are so indebted that they need others to provide for them and cannot purchase the goods that are created.

Stavrakakis’s (2012) analysis of capitalism’s regulation of enjoyment supports this claim. For him, “going a little lighter on the accumulation of stuff” is a response to our austere times and not a general principle we must follow at all times. In the mediation between our desires and capital’s needs, he argues that capital’s needs are privileged such that during economic booms individuals are encouraged to identify with capital’s ethic of “commanded enjoyment” and consumer excess while during recessionary periods an “ascetic prohibition” is promoted (pg. 2297). These injunctions to consume or refrain from consuming are both material (e.g. interest rates, employment levels, economic growth and wage and debt rates) and cultural. Holidays are devoted to consumption, and politicians even exhort citizens to consume as if it were their civic duty when consumer demand wanes (Arthur, 2012c; Norris, 2008). Television shows chronicling the lifestyles of the rich and famous and the ubiquitous housing renovation shows encourage spending – including the ill-fated pursuit of homeownership by individuals who could not afford

the interest rate hikes on their loans or the sudden drop in housing prices in 2007 – while shows on pawn shops, debt, extreme couponing, minimalist living, down-sizing, storage locker scrounging, hoarding, second-hand shopping and dooms-day prepping incite cutting back. The latter group of shows comprise an FLE public pedagogy that presents a world in which the financially literate make every dollar count and eschew excess material goods, encouraging a culture of thrift and restraint in which some find happiness in uncovering hidden wealth while others enjoy shifting their time and attention from consumer goods and capital maximization to hobbies, experiences and family and friends. The broad aim is not to alter the system that requires many consume massive amounts periodically and which creates planned and perceived forms of obsolescence to ensure we continue to consume. Instead, we are to find a place for ourselves on a spectrum that runs from hoarders who ruin their lives amassing consumer goods to those who travel around the country in tiny houses collecting years of waste in a mason jar they write about on their Facebook page.<sup>188</sup> We are free but only to choose how we are to adjudicate between capital’s “commanded enjoyment” and “ascetic prohibition”.<sup>189</sup>

Canada’s *Fashion* magazine in its November 2013 ‘math issue’ offers another example of how financial literacy is taken up not to decry mass consumerism and live a more ‘authentic life’ but to navigate the demand to consume more responsibly. In the issue, the reader is encouraged to blend a fashion and investor ethic to remain financially independent/solvent while also making a

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<sup>188</sup> The latter is a privatized opting out in which one attempts to ‘live off the grid’; it finds its extreme expression in doomsday preppers who have forsaken the world and see others as potential threats to their hermetic, post-apocalyptic life. This is not to say that downsizing is not necessary if we want to continue to live on our planet: downsizers’ experiments are necessary and can provide examples of how to reform our world.

<sup>189</sup> Norris (2011) highlights the geographic character of this uneven consumerism, arguing that we must look at consumerism and capitalism as a global system. Restraint may be called for in countries experiencing austerity, but China is argued to have a savings glut and the problem is not a lack of restraint but a lack of consumerized desires. In India the concern is also that too many are saving but in this instance they are encouraged not to consume but to invest more riskily to more aggressively build their own (and their country’s) capital (Arthur, 2014a). The common driver promoting savings in one area, consumerism in another and riskier investing in a third is the need to further capital accumulation, not improve individuals’ autonomy.

desired statement about one's identity through consumption. Two strategies are offered. The first calls us to balance two different conceptions of value; we are to purchase clothes which exude authenticity (i.e. they have "something deeper, an element of emotion and reality" (Racco, 2013, pg. 68) and "contain an atmosphere, an echo, a story" (Sinclair, 2013, pg. 72)) and which will also retain their economic value or at least depreciate at a slower rate than other clothes. The second strategy calls us to consider our entire portfolio/wardrobe when we buy an item of clothing rather than look at a single item abstracted from the totality of our garments. In our clothing options we should "splurge" on clothes that will set us apart but twin this strategy with the purchase of "seasonless staples" which will cost "pennies a year" "if they're in constant rotation" (Racco, 2013, pg. 70). Our consumer desire in effect takes on a diversification investment logic in which certain excessive desires which carry great risk and reward are offset by more staid, 'blue chip' investments of desire whose costs are amortized over the garments' life spans, helping one "get the goods while minimizing the guilt" (Racco, 2013, pg. 66). This is not to deny that humans take pleasure in adorning themselves but rather to highlight again that too often 'living how we want' and pursuing our values are influenced by capital's needs.

### **EE, Ethics and the Post-Political**

The problem of cooption also arises when we turn to the EE public pedagogy's promotion of public desires. EE advocates' rhetoric appears radical; some even align themselves with earlier social movements and their leaders (e.g. the civil rights movement (Bryant, 2011), Ghandi (Zahra et al., 2008) and the women's rights movement (National Women's History Museum, 2014)) to breathe life into the post-political present. David Edwards, engineering professor at Harvard, is representative, arguing we need to ask ourselves "What kind of world do we want to live in?" while opining that "there's a real need to have a deep understanding of a complex world and to

also think out of the box” (Zhou, 2015, para. 33). He is joined by social entrepreneur, Rajan Patel, who echoes Edwards’ seemingly radical sentiment: “The techie stuff can be empowering and enable you to solve problems, but which problems will you choose to solve? What does it mean to be a good citizen, and how will you do that? (Zhou, 2015, para. 32). For these advocates of social entrepreneurship we should choose to solve the problems of the insecure through creating commodities to meet their needs. Patel provides low-cost infant warmers to developing countries and Edwards’ students “confront a key world challenge . . . and develop a product to address it within one semester” (Zhou, 2015, para. 33). The non-profit organization IDEAcO provides a further example. It attempts to create “changemakers” through its various workshops, including City X Project (N.D.) which asks children aged 8-12 to “invent, design, and prototype something” that solves problems “faced by the citizens of City X”, problems which “are representative of real-world social issues that we face here on Earth” (para. 6).

The depoliticizing core of this movement is, however, best summarized by Pamela Hartigan, managing director of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, who writes that social entrepreneurs “are not blinded by ideology. They would never say, ‘I’m not going to work with a tobacco company’. They don’t take an emotional position. They won’t be protesting in the street. They’re too busy” (Wharton University of Pennsylvania, 2003, para. 33). For Hartigan, those who are making ‘real’ change are working within the avenues that the present’s power relations allow, ensuring they change only inefficient production processes, under-exploited desires or sub-optimal commodified goods or services. In EE narratives like Hartigan’s, our public desires and responsibility for others are essentially aligned with capital’s need for accumulation, and so, other than changes in the “relations of production” that are amenable or a boon to capital (e.g. becoming our own bosses and intrapreneurs or transforming the excluded

and impoverished into BOP entrepreneurs), entrepreneurs foray into politics is limited to revolutionizing the “forces of production”.<sup>190</sup>

Low-cost infant warmers are better than relying solely on high-cost incubator systems that many in the underdeveloped world cannot purchase and which require advanced electrical infrastructure. This product has the potential to save the lives of children, and we should create more products that will make the lives of the underprivileged better. However, our responsibility to others calls us to go beyond entrepreneurial action aimed at creating cheap commodities or cheaper ways of making commodities. Our infinite responsibility for others calls us to do more and to do other. Levinas (1998) writes of a responsibility to give which strips “me of what is more my own than possession” and is akin to taking “the bread out of one’s own mouth, to nourish the hunger of another with one’s own fasting” (pg. 56). Taking the bread from one’s mouth and stripping one of what is more than one’s possession means to sacrifice one’s self. This requires more than divesting oneself of all possessions and working tirelessly for others by creating low-cost commodities. It can mean giving one’s life for another (i.e. dying), but it can also mean changing one’s life and world for others when this will improve the lives of others and especially when my present life and the present construction of the world renders others’ lives worse. When the bread that is in my mouth is there by dint of a system which bars others from bread, I must change the bread distribution system (Dussel, 2006).<sup>191</sup> Sacrifice in this sense means to create a new self and world for others. My responsibility to others calls me to reform the world such that I can no longer be the person I was before; my former self cannot exist in the

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<sup>190</sup> For Marx (1867/1990) the “relations of production” refer to the social relations that comprise a particular regime of production. The “forces of production” refer to the materials and processes of production.

<sup>191</sup> Again, despite the fact that the world produces enough food to feed everyone, many are still hungry and die from starvation (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2002). Additionally, even innovation which reduces product costs is sometimes barred because it would decrease the profits of established capitalist enterprises: low cost medicines are sorely needed in the developed world but patents (an enclosure of our commons) keep drug costs and pharmaceutical company profits high while barring those who need low-cost medicine from receiving access (Schull, 2000).

new world or get bread in the way it used to but must begin as a different person, one who is the result of an attempt to take responsibility for others.

We should not hide behind the braggadocio that we are “too busy” getting things done or the empty lamentation that we wish we could do more. The present construction of the world, including its power relations and institutions, are not immutable. We can and must do other than work within the avenues capital and those who inequitably control its flows allow. Ethical-political action is not the application of rules and procedures already given or approved by capital but action which aims at interrupting and altering the present order on behalf of those who cannot be included because they are other to the present world: those who Rancière (2010) refers to as the “part of no part” – e.g. those who can only appear in need of charity or as BOP entrepreneurs and not as individuals who are barred the freedom and security some have because of the political economic system we perpetuate. This necessarily entails a qualitative change in the world and the self so that the I is more vulnerable to those aspects of others that cannot be acknowledged in the present and can take more responsibility for them, a transformation of our relations of abandonment into relations of responsibility that I discuss in the next chapter.

### **An Ethics for Capital: Freedom as Virtue**

In the previous chapter I examined the FLE and EE public pedagogy’s iteration of a *for-the-other* ethics; the second form of freedom (*freedom as virtue*) I outline here is a *for-the-self* ethics in which one works on oneself to become autonomous and the virtuous person one ought to be. Financially literate consumers and investors are encouraged to practice “good financial stewardship” and learn to “adjust quicker” to capital’s demands so that they can “be more resilient in ways that positively affect their bottom line” (Giesler and Veresiu, 2014, pg. 851), but, regardless of the effect on their bottom line, good financial stewardship, resilience, optimism

and striving for independence are virtues that free individuals cultivate: they are ends in themselves.

Whether out of work, self-employed or an employee of another, all are to take up this ethic. If they act as intrapreneurs who expand and improve another's business in self-directed ways, those employed by others can be just as virtuous as those who work for themselves (i.e. employees can be just as virtuous if they discover exploitable opportunities and create novel production processes or products with little direct instruction from their employer). Serial Entrepreneur Lauren Bias (2014) writing about intrapreneurs captures this virtuous entrepreneurial freedom: "Almost every company today seems to want people who are entrepreneurial in their thoughts and actions. Employers want people who will step up and make things happen – not sit back and wait for things to happen to them" (para. 13). Della Casa from the non-profit organization *Growing Leaders*, echoes Bias: employers "want workers thinking like start-ups – hungry, creative, reactive" (Locke, 2015, para. 19). The employee has been set free; he or she is not to "conform" to a company culture or stay within the boundaries a company has defined for him or her but go above and beyond, exploiting opportunities for capital maximization that the company has yet to tap (Bias, 2014, para. 4). The free are units of capital who continually search for ways to improve value creation, whether they self-employed or on another's payroll.

Reminiscent of the Protestant work ethic outlined by Weber (1905), a state of financial autonomy is only a crude sign of election; those with "lots of money", according to the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of British Columbia (2011), may not be virtuous or "financially fit" whereas those with "very little money" could be. "It's having the skills and knowledge to make informed choices about what you do with your money that determines if you are financially fit" (pg. 8). Financial fitness and entrepreneurial acumen are assumed to lead to



financial rewards on Earth, but one does not become financially fit or an entrepreneur simply for wealth, financial autonomy, control over the external world or security: achieving an entrepreneurial mindset, practicing financially literate behaviour and continually updating one's entrepreneurial skills and financial literacy are ends in themselves, enabling one to act as a free, virtuous being should. The defining characteristic of a free person in this sense is his or her internalization of an ethic in which "the maximum exploitation of a person's labour is an expression of individual freedom, not of subordination" (Amable, 2011, pg. 13) – an ethic mirroring the popular zero-based budgeting strategy in which each expense, relation, practice and person must be shown to create value. For FLE and EE advocates the real success of FLE and EE is instilling this "lean" virtue ethic, driving the individual "to maintain herself or himself at peak levels of fitness and generally organize her or his life around lean principles, avoiding waste and dependence" (Sears, 1999, pg. 103), a necessity in a world in which "getting up at 8am to work on Saturday is now the new normal" (Pagano, 2011, para. 22).

To be autonomous in the sense that one is a virtuous, 'financially-fit' or entrepreneurial person therefore does not entail that one can do whatever one wishes; moral excellence requires one improve one's autonomy (i.e. ability to act independently) but limits must be respected and one must want and act appropriately. Virtuous consumers, investors and entrepreneurs desire independence and work on themselves to become more autonomous, but they are aware of what is possible and what they should do and adjust their desires and actions accordingly. On a general level this is obvious. An individual is not, for example, any less free for not being able to grow wings and fly but he or she is certainly less free to the extent that he or she allows an irrational desire to structure his or her freedom, leaving other possible avenues for action and growth unexplored because of a fixation on achieving the impossible or pursuing ends that limit one's capacity to grow.

Moreover, even if one can act in a given manner, it does not follow that one should do so. Some workers may have a particular tactical advantage and could press their employer to improve their employment conditions or augment their pensions, but at a time of sluggish growth and mounting public debt they should not do so. Some debtors could renege on their debts, but a virtuous FLE and EE public pedagogic subject is not solely concerned with his or her bottom line; he or she is also concerned with capital's wellbeing, which requires respect for its rules and for those who rule. Those who are financially insecure should not accept their insecurity but must work within the 'proper' channels to improve their lives. This is Gurney's (2011) complaint against Occupy: their protest is pointless, ignorant and at base immoral; if they were financially literate they would see this. Those who want more go out and get it. They do not complain that the rules of competition are unfair. The virtuous instead autonomously mold themselves to fit the demands of capital, taking on an ethical relation in which they remake themselves and act so as to maximize economic value, an outsourcing of capital's drive to the individual. Rather than freeing everyone from an external boss, becoming an entrepreneur is more about setting up a boss inside oneself so that one autonomously acts to maximize human and economic capital.

As with capital's demands, this ethics is contradictory. On the one hand the entrepreneurial individual must take on capital's deterritorialization ethic and be able to reconfigure and relocate him or herself at a moment's notice. He or she is a flexible, resilient producer who may work with others in a hierarchical employer-employee relation but whose connection is always 'loose' or (to borrow from Bauman (2000)) "liquid" so the parties' relations are able to be reconfigured, delinked and reattached to maximize surplus value creation. He or she must have few commitments to a particular way of life, interests or relations that cannot be left behind. At the core of the entrepreneurial self is nothing but a bare potential to be more and other than one is. The individual must be a shell with "the habit of not having any habits" (Virno,

2007, pg. 44), learning “transferable skills for ‘parallel careers’” (The Learning Partnership, 2013, pg. 9) (e.g. the engineer should learn to be a plumber so that if the economy has an oversupply of engineers and a lack of plumbers, he or she can easily switch professions). In short, the entrepreneur is a “potential”:

A subject that ‘belongs to’ a continuous uprooting of the very possibility of any authentic tradition . . . for this subject freedom is literally a potential; it is never altogether realized and never experienced to the full; it is a practice of self-overcoming and a dream about becoming the ‘superman’. (Maravelias, 2009, pg. 30)<sup>192</sup>

However, at the same time he or she must also be engrossed in whatever he or she is doing at the moment. This is capital’s territorialization logic which seeks to squeeze every ounce of value from a particular site or resource. If employers or customers value entrepreneurial individuals because they are wholly committed to their job, not simply acting, the entrepreneur must be hollow but not appear so even to him or herself. The entrepreneur must hold skills, traits and dispositions in such a way that they can easily be repurposed or jettisoned but appear genuinely to be the particular person comprised of these skills, traits and dispositions at a given moment. In other words, while one should be prepared to abandon or repurpose particular relations and aspects of oneself that are no longer of value, when they are of value they should appear an integral part of who one is.

The ideal entrepreneurial subject is Jake Gyllenhaal’s character, Louis Bloom, from the film *Nightcrawler*, who Gyllenhaal aptly describes as “the superhero of a generation” (Barnes, 2014, para. 5). Louis is incredibly involved in whatever venture he undertakes whether it is stealing scrap metal or selling footage of violent crime or crash scenes to TV stations. Despite an

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<sup>192</sup> Daniel Muzyka, chief executive of the Conference Board of Canada, warns us we have no alternative but to take up this deterritorialization ethic, opining, “If you’re not willing to make yourself obsolete, someone else will” (Dixon, 2014a, para. 13).

intense level of involvement, he does not hesitate to change his pursuits when needed or to betray those with whom he has connected: near the end of the film he sends out his one employee to die so he can capture it on film. Like capital, his sole purpose is to expand his power through whatever means possible. He comes to know a great deal about the television business but has no real interest in it other than success defined as an accumulation of money, market share and influence. He is incredibly passionate, optimistic and driven, but, like the ideal entrepreneur he is hollow, filling himself up with whatever skills, dispositions and interests are needed to succeed and freeing himself from anything, anyone and any self that will slow him down without hesitation.

Louis is also fond of reiterating phrases from business self-help books about perseverance and resilience to get across the point that life is hard, and you must work for everything you get: “If you want to win the lottery, you have to earn the money to buy a ticket” (Barnes, 2014, para. 20). FLE and EE public pedagogues overwhelmingly agree. They may argue that entrepreneurship is enjoyable and you can be who you want to be, but they also note that it is a challenge requiring significant hardship.<sup>193</sup> We must therefore remove barriers to insecurity (e.g. employment regulations and social welfare programs), not only to supposedly improve the security of all but to help individuals become who they should be (i.e. the evisceration of the welfare state is part of a moral project to create more virtuous subjects). For those who still have fairly secure jobs free from constant market evaluation, their security must be eroded to help shift them from a culture of dependency to one of entrepreneurship (Braconier et al., 2014; Chatterjee,

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<sup>193</sup> Expressing a view characteristic of most EE supporters, a business leader from a summit hosted by The Learning Partnership believes that insecure youth are not working hard enough, opining “it is tough out there [and we are not doing students] any favours in terms of instilling a strong work ethic in a competitive workplace . . . you don’t get an award for showing up for work in the real world” (Parmar and Connelly, 2014, pg. 10). ‘Awards’ in the form of stable, well-paid and meaningful employment and access to the resources needed to live a fulfilling life are increasingly hard to obtain for many, and for most EE providers that is not only how it is but how it will be.

2013; McMorrow and St-Jean, 2013).<sup>194</sup> The collective security that we must dismantle is thus not only unsustainable but unethical because it holds us back from controlling our lives and growing as free people.<sup>195</sup> In the EE narrative, competition – the state of standing without the support of others in the market and being judged as if one was a contestant on *Dragon's Den*, *Hunger Games* or *Britain's Hardest Grafters* – appears as a force of enlightenment freeing us from our earlier immaturity.<sup>196</sup> Heroic, wealthy entrepreneurs may appear prominently in EE texts, but the real heroes are those fighting against overwhelming odds to create their own work and save what little they make.<sup>197</sup>

Hoque (2015), serial entrepreneur and author of *Survive to Thrive: 27 Practices of Resilient Entrepreneurs, Innovators, and Leaders*, sums up this 'hard' freedom:

To live is to experience physical and psychological suffering, and to strive to overcome these things. It is indisputable that we have to eat from the sweat of our brows; we have to work for what we get; we have to deserve what we want. This inherently demands effort and sacrifice. We suffer because of our desire to go beyond what we are today. In that context suffering is the step towards entrepreneurial growth which can initiate a positive force from a negative situation. (para. 27)

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<sup>194</sup> This warped utilitarian thinking, which also motivates workfare schemes, is obvious: humans need rewards to prod them into action, but the dependent have already proven this is not enough for them. They must also be threatened with destitution. Like capital, the individual will only invest him or herself in pursuits if he or she can expand his or her value or utility or if not doing so diminishes one's value or utility. Without external stimuli, the human as capital is assumed to tend towards a vegetative state, thus, to encourage action, inequality, insecurity and opportunities for value/utility generation must be continually generated.

<sup>195</sup> According to Jason Clemens, executive vice-president of the Fraser Institute, even "not keeping score during kids' soccer games is hurting Canada's entrepreneurial future; [he opines], 'What we're telling kids is: we're not going to keep score and it's not ok to fail, everybody has to do well [which sends the message] that to fail is a bad thing and so you're better off not trying'" (Serebrin, 2015, para. 5-6).

<sup>196</sup> Millennials appear to have internalized the message that life should be hard and excoriate their generation as entitled: the Pew Research Center found that millennials (those between the ages of 18 and 34 as of 2015) had a much more negative view of their generation than other age groups with 59% describing their generation as "'self-absorbed' while 49% said they were 'wasteful' and 43% said they were 'greedy'" (The Guardian, 2015, para. 2)

<sup>197</sup> US politicians routinely trot out this virtue discourse, especially those who have nothing else to offer the insecure. G.W. Bush responding to a single-mother of three kids who had three jobs is an infamous example: "You work three jobs? . . . Uniquely American, isn't it? I mean, that is fantastic that you're doing that. Get any sleep? (Swanson, 2008, pg. 255). Presidential hopeful Mitt Romney echoed Bush a couple of years later, praising the "heroes in the homes of the nation . . . a nation of invention and reinventing: single moms who are working two jobs so their kids can have the same kind of [things] other kids at school have. Dads who don't know what a weekend is because they've taken on so many jobs to make sure they can keep the house . . . We're a patriotic people. The heart of America is good" (Terkel, 2013, para. 4).

In their ethnographic study, Tuominen and Thompson (2015) found that this freedom as virtue – the desire to work on oneself to improve against overwhelming odds – was highly prized by low-income *Smart Money* program participants. Like most, the participants thought that the *Smart Money* program and work they conducted on themselves would improve their financial security and freedom (despite their continued dependence upon social welfare programs and little appreciable difference in their actual autonomy and financial security after completing the program). However, they also viewed this work on the self as an end in itself, signaling their election and distancing themselves from the stigma attached to the financial insecure and dependent. They believed that the aspiration and self-fashioning they learned from and exhibited by being part of the FLE program set them apart from the other financially insecure, i.e. those who they assumed did nothing about their dependence and accepted or even took advantage of the generosity of others. This *for-the-self* ethics thus not only subverts our desire to live as we wish and pursue meaningful projects but also creates a division between those who are virtuous and responsible and those who are irresponsible. The *Smart Money* participants interviewed by Tuominen and Thompson (2015) explicitly deflected the shame and guilt engendered by their financial insecurity and dependence onto a group of insecure dependents who had supposedly given up trying to achieve autonomy. For these participants, the virtuous do not accept their fate but are optimistic and resilient to the end; they are the deserving poor whose badge of honour is their work ethic.

Some FLE and EE public pedagogues make a similar distinction between the virtuous and the undeserving dependent. Angela Self (2009), one of the hosts of *Smart Cookies*, a personal finance show on the W network, is characteristic of FLE supporters in the mainstream media:

The truth is that we create our own financial picture. It means you have the power to start to alter your financial status today just by changing your thoughts about it . . . [but] while the power of positive thinking has worked for me, it goes hand in hand with a strong work ethic. I value and appreciate those who work hard. They deserve everything they get. Someone who is not willing to put in the sweat equity shouldn't complain about the lack of rewards. (para. 9)

Self is joined by Wente (2014) who tells us to “look in the mirror” if we are wondering why we cannot make ends meet and Herman Cain who yells that we need to “blame ourselves” if we do not have a job (Huffington Post, 2011). Each offers similar narratives, arguing there are those who do not put in the sweat equity and are not only ruining their own lives but threatening the security and freedom of the virtuous.

Those assailing the virtuous are the young women with “baby lust” that Cowen (2013) decries and all who resist the individualization of economic risk (Bodie and Prast, 2011; Gurney, 2011; Gurria, 2008; Hausler, 2005). Even amidst fairly reserved technical discourse this darker narrative sometimes rears its head: the OECD, for example, reiterates this moralizing myth in its FLE text on youth when it splits the world into those who have taken the “appropriate steps to manage the risks transferred to them” and those who require “government aid” because they have “taken unwise financial decisions – or no decision at all” (OECD, 2014a, pg. 16). Lusardi (2008) also hints at the fantasy of the threatening, unvirtuous other, writing, “If people with low literacy make mistakes, who will pay for these mistakes?” (pg. 17).<sup>198</sup> Harnisch (2010), writing about the role of colleges and universities in improving Americans financial literacy, is more explicit: “The

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<sup>198</sup> In the Wall Street Journal she continues in this vein, writing that millennials “owe a lot” and “know too little”, and, while this “should worry millenials”, the concern for “us” is that their “struggle with debt may eventually become our problem, too” (Lusardi, 2015, para. 7). Dixon (2015), writing in the *Globe and Mail* on the importance of financial literacy foresees this problem and has some advice for parents unable to cut off their millennial adult children: first, abandoning them to the market is actually good for them and will hopefully give them the same desire for autonomy as the fabled depression-era generation or the baby-boomers (as if this is why adult children are moving back in with their parents). Second, “you have to prioritize yourself” and this is a “decision that doesn't need to be so emotional . . . it really could be based simply on the ability to pay [to assist one's adult children] after first contributing to one's own retirement savings” (para. 8).

cost of poor financial decision-making and planning often gets shifted on to other members of the community, state and nation through higher prices for financial products, the diversion of economic resources and greater use of public ‘safety net’ programs” (pg. 3). In other words, my security and freedom are compromised because I have to pay for the healthcare and food stamps of someone who cannot manage their money properly or make up their own job. At the heart of this freedom as virtue is a desire aligned with capital’s freedom: a desire to be free of those who cannot take care of themselves because they threaten my accumulation project and autonomy.

Gail Vaz-Oxlade (2015) offers seemingly harmless and typical FLE advice that when linked with the above FLE and EE narratives fuels hostility towards others whose seeming ignorance, apathy or entitlement is assumed to threaten the security and freedom of the virtuous:

Just because all the people you know are walking along the edge of a precipice doesn’t mean you should follow them. If you’ve been walking in lockstep with a bunch of fools who can’t control their spending to the point that they put themselves and their families at risk, then it’s time to change your pace, and maybe the company you keep. (pg. 20)

Certainly, Vaz-Oxlade is correct that some people make bad financial decisions and one should avoid following their example, perhaps even removing oneself from their company so as not to be tempted. However, the problem is that this advice supports the narrative that a group of unethical insecure exists who are threatening the security of others, in particular the virtuous insecure who are having a tough enough time working multiple jobs for meager pay and do not need to fund those who will not help themselves.

So while FLE and EE public pedagogues cheerily offer ‘assistance’ to the insecure and dependent (e.g. economic education, workfare and fewer employment regulations), the hidden fantasy they hint at and which motivates support for these initiatives is a freedom from the dependent. Like capital, the already free and secure do not want anything slowing them down or



holding them back. They want everyone to be autonomous and firing on all cylinders. They want to abandon everything and everyone that is not autonomous and find support among the insecure who are keen to transfer the disdain heaped upon them onto others so they can feel in control of their lives and signal to others that they are trying to take control (Tuominen and Thompson, 2015). FLE and EE advocates appear to have a boundless amount of patience with the insecure and even castigate themselves for failing to offer the right advice, but Vaz-Oxlade's comment that we should change the company we keep hints at a hidden darker side to the FLE and EE public pedagogy.<sup>199</sup>

This abandonment fantasy finds expression most often in discourses attacking immigrants, welfare recipients and feminized public sector workers, which we should not read separate from FLE and EE narratives. Herbert Grubel (2012), professor emeritus at Simon Fraser University, represents the 'respectable' side of this discourse. He wants employers to choose Canada's immigrants because under the present system, he argues in the *Globe and Mail*, immigrants use more social services than they or even their children can ever pay back. His concern is that immigrants are dependent upon Canadian citizens, and Canadians, acting like capital, should be free of dependents.<sup>200</sup> The less respectable side includes those who are openly hostile and racist towards immigrants or fantasize about eradicating all welfare recipients. Those who tweeted death threats to the welfare recipients featured on the UK show *Benefits Street* are an example of the latter: "I want to walk down #BenefitsStreet with a baseball bat and brain a few of these scumbags" (Denham, 2014, para. 4). Stroebel (2015), writing in the *Toronto Sun*,

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<sup>199</sup> Townley-Jones et al. (2008) also point to this darker side when they remark that for those with an "extremely cavalier approach to debt and repayment . . . regrettably, only punitive measures are likely to have any impact" (pg. 208-209).

<sup>200</sup> Grubel does not consider that immigrants tend to have less social power and thus are forced to take jobs paying lower wages (i.e. that they are used for labour Canadian citizens would rather not do) or that the whole point of social welfare programs is that those who are wealthier will pay more for the services than the amount they use so they can be made available to the less wealthy who do not have the money to procure high-quality services privately.

delivers a characteristic, hyperbole-filled attack on public school teachers who he believes are the “twitchiest, most anal retentive, acquisitive, defensive and entitled of professionals” (para. 18). As with all public sector unionized workers, teachers’ freedom from the market means they owe their security and freedom to tax payers, who, right wing critics never fail to remind us, are fed up with paying for perks the virtuous do not have themselves. Grubel’s tone is matter-of-fact, assuming that at present our immigration system is bringing in bad investments, but the others are driven by a nihilistic rage that seeks to tear everyone down to the level of the most precarious. Ostensibly, this rage is enacted on behalf of the precarious (often white working class men) (Kimmel, 2015), but really this rage is for capital, attacking all who cannot or do not stand as self-sufficient individuals.

For Lacanian political theorists, the covert character of the xenophobic and poor-bashing fantasies mobilizing support for the FLE and EE public pedagogy is unsurprising. Fantasies must not be officially disclosed to motivate affective support for an ideological discourse because, according to Glynos (2001), a fantasy is effective precisely because it is not officially disclosed but is “secretly accepted as ‘typical’ of the situation” (pg. 209). Its allure is that it is transgressive of the present order but transgressive in such a way that it supports the ideology it transgresses. He writes, “In this view, what sustains ideological meaning is not simply symbolic identification . . . but, most importantly, identification with the *jouissance* procured through collective transgression of publicly accepted norms” (pg. 210).<sup>201</sup> FLE and EE public pedagogues’ narratives individualize risk and present dependence upon another as a moral failing that threatens the wellbeing of others, but they go to great lengths to avoid stating that the poor, often women, immigrants and members of racialized groups, are to blame for their insecurity and the

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<sup>201</sup> Glynos and Stavrakakis (2004) cite Bakhtin’s and Bataille’s analyses of “periodic carnivalesque transgressions” to argue that transgression is both enjoyable and can be subverted to support the present social order (pg. 268).

insecurity of those who assume their educational, gendered and racialized privilege and citizenship status exempts them from capitalism's insecurity.<sup>202</sup> FLE and EE public pedagogues do not call for the violent elimination of the unvirtuous. They only want the insecure and dependent to continually work on themselves so they spend, invest, hope and work 'properly'. The unvirtuous are *Prince\$\$es* or *Money Morons* who need to shape up, and FLE and EE public pedagogues are there to help them *for their own good*. 'Transgressive' racist, classist and patriarchal fantasies essentially 'fill in the blanks' left by FLE and EE narratives, promising a fully realizable totality (e.g. everyone can be secure and autonomous, especially those the KWS compromise used to protect) once the unvirtuous are reformed/eradicated (Daly, 1999; Ruti, 2008). The fact that the present order is never rid of the financially illiterate, unentrepreneurial and unvirtuous keeps alive these fantasies, supporting new FLE and EE initiatives and more violent iterations of the fantasies that undergird them.

## Conclusion

Stuck in a world in which our security and freedom relies on our institutional supports, relations and selves remaining in sync with capital's shifting, rapid-fire demands, we seemingly have little option but to emulate the speed, malleability and abstract character of capital.<sup>203</sup> The perpetual misalignment between capital's accumulation requirements and our subjectivities, practices, regulations and institutions requires everyone to continually reconstruct him or herself, taking on the valued dispositions, skills, ethics and desires capital desires at a particular moment while

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<sup>202</sup> FLE and EE public pedagogues often write that we need to teach FLE and EE because the unvirtuous could, *in the future*, infringe upon and threaten the virtuous, but they rarely write that they are doing so now. In contrast, Grubel argues, in seemingly innocuous terms in a national newspaper, that Canada's past and present immigrants are welfare parasites.

<sup>203</sup> The words 'nimble', 'swift', 'flexible', 'responsive', 'agility', 'quickly', 'portable' and 'adaptable' which permeate The Learning Partnership's report (2013) on education and employment signal the summit participants' desire to create 'educational' practices which can be built up, torn down and transformed at a moments notice to meet the global economy's changing demands.

jettisoning those that have fallen from favour. The responsibility to refashion ourselves (and others) thus never ends. We are always, from capital's perspective, lacking in some respect and thus charged in perpetuity with continually improving ourselves and others.

On the one hand, this ethics calls us to ensure that, to borrow from Bauman (2003), no life is "wasted" and all human capital is efficiently mobilized to provide security and freedom for all. The aim is to create a "totally pedagogised society . . . to mobilise subjects in ways that promote self-reliance and enterprise, enabling them to develop capacities, constantly remaking themselves, a form of continuous 'optimisation'" (Ball, 2008, pg. 203) to improve capital accumulation. The inclusion narratives analyzed in the security chapters correspond to capital's territorialization needs and promise freedom and security for all through access to capital while securing for capital the inputs and innovation it needs in the forms it wants. Those who are presently excluded from creating their own businesses or investing (e.g. seniors, youth, poor, the disabled, minority groups, women and aboriginals) are untapped resources whose incorporation into the capital accumulation process supposedly benefits both them, others and capital.<sup>204</sup>

On the other hand, FLE and EE freedom narratives also respond to capital's deterritorializing demands. The rise in self-employment in Canada and the UK, while masked by EE narratives lauding high-tech success and autonomy from a boss, is an effect of capital's search for more efficient production relations and techniques, which increasingly require cheaper and less permanent labour (Clark, 2014; Grant, 2013b; Kantor, 2014). In a context in which

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<sup>204</sup> For EE advocates we must continually reshape our world's store of human capital to expand and intensify production. Rick Miner, a past president of Seneca College, is typical, worrying that Canada has too many people who are not aligned with the economy's needs, creating skills mismatches, geographical mismatches and people whose jobs "have evolved beyond their capabilities" (Parmar and Connelly, 2014, pg. 27). Dan Kelly, president and CEO of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, also worries that "young people" do not find "agribusiness, retail, hotels, and restaurant" jobs "cool" and so employers must rely on "the temporary foreign worker programs" (Parmar and Connelly, 2014, pg. 27). The problem for them, of course, is not the quality of the jobs or character of the economy we are creating but that we are not fostering the innovation or creating the inputs that will grow capital.

capital has less use for stable labour relations or even labour itself, entrepreneurship is increasingly the refuge of those who have no other option and have been rendered surplus. The freedom the FLE and EE public pedagogy offers in its freedom narratives is thus an autonomy to choose how best to conform to the possibilities capital's freedom/abandonment leaves to us (e.g. working part-time in perpetuity, spending less time with one's family and continually updating one's skills, values and desires).

To return to capital's territorializing, inclusion moment, conforming to capital's need for entrepreneurship, innovation, resilience and optimism is also a sign of one's virtuous election with those abandoned who continue to strive against all odds to meet capital's demands reaping most of the cruel praise. For the insecure and dependent who do not continually strive or appear not to work on themselves as they should, FLE and EE freedom narratives open discursive space for violent anti-immigrant, patriarchal, racist and class fantasies of retribution against those who supposedly threaten the well-being of the virtuous abandoned or precariously employed who have some marker of status that enables them to shunt the brunt of social opprobrium onto another. Thus, the freedom capital offers is twofold: the freedom to live as one wants and pursue values one finds meaningful in a world abandoned to capital and a freedom from those who will slow one down and of whom capital has no need.

## Chapter Six: An FLE and EE Public Pedagogy for Others

The FLE and EE public pedagogy's ethical ideal is to create a society in which everyone is equally unequal (i.e. everyone has an equal chance of becoming financially secure or insecure). In this society insecurity is never eradicated, but FLE and EE public pedagogues nevertheless assume that prudent risk-management and innovative production can allow everyone to achieve significant financial security and independence; they just have to continually reform themselves as needed. To create this society, FLE and EE public pedagogues tell us we must provide minimal access to capital through debt, financial products and training for those who are not yet able to compete<sup>205</sup> (i.e. an inclusion of those excluded) and accept that the continuance or expansion of institutions, practices and sensibilities that offer even limited protection from capital's demands is impossible if not unethical (i.e. we must abandon everyone to the market). Lawrence Solomon (2015) of the Consumer Policy Institute is exemplary, supporting Canada's Tax-Free Savings Accounts (TFSA's) because he thinks they will enable everyone who wants to become a millionaire to do so while assuming they reinforce "values such as self reliance and maturity – the norm in youth before our nanny state culture left them infantilized and government-reliant" (para. 7). The image he presents and the one at the heart of the diverse FLE and EE initiatives targeting various groups is the self-sufficient, hyper-masculine entrepreneur/investor who faces the full gale of market forces alone and tames them. FLE and EE public pedagogues are adamant that while we are to provide the tools and opportunities so everyone can compete on some minimal level, we are not to shield them from hardship; those not

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<sup>205</sup> A recent creation by a group of University of Toronto students, one of six entrepreneurial projects in the running for a \$1,000,000 prize for solving global problems, provides an example of a bright-siding neoliberal initiative. The startup project, which seeks to give "kids a better start", aims at closing the "word gap" between children from different socio-economic groups so as to level the "playing field" between competitors (Sproule, 2015, pg. 10). All will still have to compete to live, but now, to keep with the sports analogy, everyone will have similar equipment and practice time.

yet secure or independent must grow up, move out of the house Keynes built and independently fund the life they want to live.

The problems with this ideal are myriad. Setting aside that a neoliberal utopia would be a nightmare,<sup>206</sup> the ideal of equal inequality for all is continually undermined because those who win the economic competition are allowed to retain their advantage over their competitors in future contests and influence the character of the competition. Dean (ND) argues that despite the rhetoric this is the real aim of neoliberalism: it is a strategy of “class domination that uses the state to promote certain competitive dynamics for the very rich” (pg. 1) rather than one of “governing for the market” as Foucault (2008, pg. 1) argues. Far from being euthanized, rentiers are alive and well, and racialized and gendered groups with less social, political and economic power continue to be more unequal and insecure than dominant groups who use their power to their continued advantage, even if this undermines productivity.<sup>207</sup>

Dean is right,<sup>208</sup> but we should not dismiss the neoliberal ideal of equal inequality’s importance. Neoliberal initiatives may routinely undermine the neoliberal ideal because they

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<sup>206</sup> Louis Bloom may be able to advance his own interests, but he corrodes the trust, caring and public spirit needed to hold a society together. He is a modern day Hobbesian subject whose war against all will only be quelled through force.

<sup>207</sup> The list of unproductive initiatives or those skewed in favour of the already secure is endless: the poor receive tax breaks on money they do not have while corporations are enticed with subsidies to spur investment and create local jobs despite their massive hoarding of wealth (Goodman, 2014; Whitehouse, 2011). CEOs’ benefits and pay seemingly lack all market accountability while public sector workers are pilloried. Productive investment is replaced with mergers, acquisitions and financial speculation. To this list we can add ‘free trade’ agreements which protect agricultural production in wealthy countries, low inheritance taxes and strong intellectual property right regimes which stifle competition and transfer wealth to rent-seeking patent holders (e.g. pharmaceutical corporations, academic journal publishers and information technology companies).

<sup>208</sup> Gilens and Page (2014) found ample evidence that the wealthy in the US do exactly this. In their study of US ‘democracy’, which they argued was an “oligarchy”, “the preferences of the average American appear to have only a miniscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy” (pg. 575). EE advocates are enamored by the ideal of equal inequality, continually hyping the ability of entrepreneurs and technology to create new members of the financial oligarchy, but the facts bear out that under neoliberalism the rules advantage those who have already won: intergenerational income mobility is often lowest in countries assumed to be the most neoliberal (e.g. the UK and US) (Causa and Johansson, 2010); a Pew Charitable Trust and Russel Sage Foundation study found that American children born into the families at the 90<sup>th</sup> income percentile had an expected family income about three times that of children who were born into the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile (Bleier, 2015); the global middle class neoliberal capitalism had supposedly created has also been found to be more a promise than reality (Kochhar, 2015); and finally

leave untouched the symbolic and material bases of support for neoliberalism's classist, racialized and gendered reality and reproduce the class domination to which Dean refers, but this 'failure' does not diminish the ideal's allure.<sup>209</sup> The 'failure' of neoliberal initiatives keeps intact the ideal's power because it has yet to be realized, tested and found to be the nightmare that it is. This generates endless opportunities for neoliberals, including FLE and EE public pedagogues, to posit new individualizing initiatives, which will also 'fail': leaving untouched or further empowering already dominant groups. FLE and EE public pedagogues' may profess that they want to help everyone compete but their assistance ultimately harms the disadvantaged racialized, gendered and classed groups they want to help and is tied to a neoliberal ideal we should not attempt to institute and which they are unable to question.

### **Thoughtlessness**

Hedges (2012), writing on neoliberal capitalism, denounces this thoughtlessness, arguing that

The greatest crimes of human history are made possible by the most colorless human beings. They are the careerists. The bureaucrats. The cynics. They do the little chores that make vast, complicated systems of exploitation and death a reality . . . They enforce the laws and regulations. And they do not ask questions.

Good. Evil. These words do not mean anything to them. They are beyond morality. They are there to make corporate systems function. If insurance companies abandon tens of millions of sick to suffer and die, so be it. If banks and sheriff departments toss families

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the number of Least Developed Countries (LDC) and people living in extreme poverty has doubled since 1970 (the beginning of the neoliberal era) (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2010).

<sup>209</sup> Moreover, although we can alter the racialized and gendered distribution of security and insecurity, everyone cannot be made into equally unequal competitors. Even with the plurality of teaching strategies and various initiatives FLE and EE advocates roll out, everyone has inherent differences (multiple intelligences, interests, desires, etc.) which cannot be eradicated. What is more, differences in interest should not be eradicated (Noddings, 2004). Some may want to pursue interests that can complement capital and the automated machines we are creating but others may not. Rather than look for every-more innovative means to force people into waged-labour that is increasingly less necessary, we should be experimenting with how to guarantee the economic security of all and expanding meaningful non-waged activities.



out of their homes, so be it. If financial firms rob citizens of their savings, so be it . . . They serve the system. (para. 1-2)

FLE and EE advocates are not immune from Hedges's criticism of a thoughtlessness that is readily apparent whenever the insecurity of the already insecure is ratcheted up or when the freedom of those with limited freedom is further eroded: FLE and EE public pedagogues invariably follow along repeating their cruel catch-phrases to ward off their *mauvaise conscience*. There is seemingly no abandonment or insecurity that FLE and EE public pedagogues will not accept and attempt to bright-side or get us to work around, arguing that the destruction of employment regulations sets us free, and the funding of formerly public goods through consumer debt somehow makes us more financially secure.

In fact, it is hard to believe that FLE and EE advocates will awaken to others' suffering and the alterable political economic causes of that suffering anytime soon given their responses to date. What, for example, would be the FLE and EE response to increased suicides in Greece as a result of austerity (Zanolli, 2015)? It is not unrealistic to assume that FLE public pedagogues would probably argue that those still alive should save more and build up any in-demand human capital they possess. It would also not be out of the ordinary if they told Greeks to ensure that they and their loved ones had their financial affairs in order (e.g. power of attorney, written wills and funeral arrangements) or provided tips on the best options for funeral arrangements. EE advocates could also get in on the macabre thoughtlessness and call for the creation of innovative solutions such as an app that notices the signs of suicide in one's Facebook posts. Entrepreneurs could also respond to Greeks' increased food insecurity with social entrepreneurship services that divert food from the garbage to food banks or shelters while running social media campaigns on how eating leftover food is hip. They could even less helpfully encourage those who are able to take the opportunity and snatch up Greece's public assets at cut-rate prices to do so (Rankin and

Smith, 2015). There are endless opportunities to create innovative FLE and EE initiatives to help people cope with, accept and even profit off of neoliberalism's violence, but the more thoughtful and ethical response is to end this violence.

### **A Critical FLE and EE Public Pedagogy**

In this chapter, I expand upon Simon, Diplo and Schenke's (1991) critical pedagogy of work education, Daellenbach's (2015) "public financial literacy" or "financial literacy from below", Jones' and Spicer's (2009) "general entrepreneurship" and the critical financial literacy I have written about elsewhere (Arthur, 2012c) to outline aspects of a critical FLE and EE public pedagogy that can help challenge this violence. Capitalism may be increasingly crisis-ridden (Streek, 2014), but its usurpation (as well as its continuance) rests upon the outcome between conflicting political forces in society (Gramsci, 1971). Crises can provoke anxiety and a search beyond our present selves, but they do not necessarily set one off on a search for an alternative world or way of being if there are no examples to learn from or avenues open to act otherwise. What happens after a crisis in terms of thinking and action depends upon the symbolic and material resources (i.e. subjectivities, discourses, practices and relations) available. Without alternatives, crises can "commit us to engage even more strenuously with what we know and what we ordinarily do" (Curtis, 2012, pg. 22). This is even more the case with a neoliberalized subject that is encouraged at every turn to anticipate and build up its defenses against the unknown and soldier on: to slow down, reflect and rethink oneself in the face of a crisis wastes valuable time that could be spent better building oneself up so as to protect oneself against competitors. Remaining attached to the dream that one can attain the privatized security and freedom on offer through suffering, resilience and optimism, even when this is patently not

possible, is sometimes preferable to the work of reinventing oneself and attaching to another social imaginary (Berlant, 2011; Ruti, 2014).

EE advocates lament that we have a jobs-skills gap – i.e. there is a mismatch between the human capital we have and the jobs that are being created – but this is not the pressing problem. The gap we should be worried about is the gap between what the other needs and what we are providing. Our creativity, cooperation, understanding and imagination need to be used to take responsibility for others, not to continually remake the world, ourselves and others for capital. Thus the first step in creating a critical FLE and EE public pedagogy is to institute the other as our motivating ideal, creating a gap between our reality and the other’s needs. In particular, we should take up Jones’ and Spicer’s (2009) “entrepreneurship for the other” as the ideal motivating a critical FLE and EE public pedagogy (i.e. “an innovation in which the innovation is not one’s own but one that makes possible the innovation of the other”) (pg. 108-109).

With this ideal, the other, not capital or my freedom and security, takes precedence, calling me to be more responsible for the other’s potential to innovate, i.e. the other’s ability to grow and be other than he or she is at present by creating and engaging in forms of life and activities that are meaningful to him or her.<sup>210</sup> Rather than answering problems given by capital (e.g. how can we incorporate inputs that are not operating at full capacity within capital; how can we harness individuals’ creativity and innovation to spur economic growth; or how can those abandoned manage their ‘freedom’ so they leave me and capital alone?), we must respond to the problems motivated by the other’s needs (i.e. the other whose claims cannot be met within the present order and so call us to reform the world on his or her behalf). This response must take the

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<sup>210</sup> This responsibility follows from my originary responsibility to ensure the other’s radical otherness is not colonized and reduced to the same. This responsibility cannot be responsible only for the other’s present otherness but also must take responsibility for his or her future self, protecting and providing the means for the other to become other than he or she is at present. I am concerned with not only the other’s negative freedom but also his or her positive freedom and the ends he or she can pursue.

form of an attentive listening for those we exclude, a precarious, insecure but knowledgeable understanding of our present political economic world and experimentation in more responsible forms of life with and for others. Returning to the earlier discussion on Levinasian ethics, this is not the other in the sense of another person who has yet to create a job for him or herself or design the next Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat; EE texts and heroic entrepreneurs are overwhelmingly concerned with ensuring others can be entrepreneurial. I mean the other in the sense of another whose self and accompanying world and relations are barred from existing, innovating, expanding and flourishing at present. This is an other whose possibilities, needs and freedom are at odds with capital and its enclosure of our commons (Jones and Murtola, 2012).<sup>211</sup>

The self's freedom to grow and flourish is not to be dismissed but is a byproduct of the other's freedom in the sense that the self's freedom to grow and become otherwise requires the continuance of an other outside of the self: to become other than one presently is the self requires others who are not reduced to the self's understanding and who can thus question and call the self to account (and possibly induce change). Contra the FLE and EE public pedagogy, our freedom is not an autonomy capital gives us or even an autonomy to pursue private conceptions of the good and continue as we are (whether free or subservient to capital). Our freedom is instead a heteronomy for the other, an obligation to the other to whom we provide the stable but alterable conditions (relations, resources, practices and institutions) for the other's security to be and freedom to become otherwise. Rather than secure ourselves from others and in particular those who are other to capital's needs, we must provide the security for the other to become other and cultivate an insecurity in us that does not reduce the other to the present's dominant practices and frames.

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<sup>211</sup> The other is also at odds with other aspects of our world, but our response is always particular – here I focus on capital's limitations on the other's present singularity and ability to grow in ways the other finds meaningful.

The core ethical problem with the FLE and EE public pedagogy is that it seeks to secure the self from taking responsibility for others by reducing them to either burdens from which to be freed or resources to be used. Lebowitz (2002), paraphrasing Marx, sums up the violence and irresponsibility at the heart of the world the FLE and EE public pedagogy encourages us to recreate:

What is it about this society in which we now live that if you were to tell me you had a need for something I was capable of satisfying, it would be considered as a plea of humiliation ‘and consequently uttered with a feeling of shame, of degradation’? Why is it, he asked, rather than affirming that I am capable of activity that helps another human being, your needs are instead a source of power for me? ‘Far from being the *means* which would give you *power* over my production, they [your needs] are instead the *means* for giving me power over you.’ (pg. 2)<sup>212</sup>

Lebowitz highlights in this quote that the other and his or her needs, including the ability to exercise one’s human capacities and become other than one presently is, are my responsibility but at present this responsibility is subverted. Replacing a capitalized relation to the other with a relation which is always *uneasily* mediated through our finite, historical senses and so more open to a continual rethinking of the frames through which we experience the other and the world is a

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<sup>212</sup> Lebowitz appears to point to an asymmetry that is absent in most interpretations of Marx (i.e. another’s needs having power over me) which posit the self’s relationship with the other as reciprocal, not one in which the self is hostage to the other. That said, this reciprocity goes beyond a liberal morality, which, seeing the individual as autonomous, holds we can pursue our growth so long as it does not limit or damage another’s. A communist reciprocity is more radical because it is based on the idea that my freedom is tied to the other. Drawing on Marx, Eagleton (1999) agrees with liberals that “we may realize those historically bred powers and capacities which do not obstruct the self-realization of others” but points out that a communist reciprocity also seeks to realize “those capacities which provide the very common ground and possibility of others’ self realization, in a common reciprocal enhancement” (pg. 160). The core ethical difference between Levinas and Marx on this reading is that for Levinas it is the infinite responsibility for the other that motivates my response to the other while for Marx it is a species-being we share in common (i.e. a drive to grow our human capacities in ways we find of interest and in concert with others whose growth improves my own). Horowitz (2011) argues convincingly that both Marx and Levinas can “supplement and enrich each other” with Levinas “filling out and strengthening the concept of species-being”, which “sometimes appears as though the affirmation of the other occurs for the sake of my self-affirmation, my reality, and my power” (Horowitz, 2011, pg. 62), and Marx leading ethics “in the direction of its realization on the planes of the societal and the political” (pg. 58). The aim of reading Marx and Levinas together is to bring about what Horowitz and Horowitz (2010) call a “communism for the other, [which] would not define the human being by membership in any community. Community itself would be the form taken by singularity – that is, by individuality as radical responsibility for the other” (pg. 194).

necessary first step to illuminate the present's insufficiencies and spur us to rethink what we are doing so we can experiment with alternatives to improve the other's ability to innovate.

### **Worldly Things**

To this end, the critical FLE and EE public pedagogy I propose seeks to form a particular public, one aware of capitalism's particularity, its necessary insecurity, limited freedom and the alternatives to neoliberalism and capitalism that exist and have existed. It seeks to create a public that takes capitalism as a problem and sees our present responses to the problems of capitalism as inadequate. Movements like Occupy, the indignants movement in Spain, Basic Income Earth Network, Quebec's Maple Spring student movement, Idle No More, the World Social Forum and the Zapatistas provide examples of critical FLE and EE public pedagogic collectives and events. Some are short-lived but many continue after the public has moved on and spur the creation of ongoing if less publicized organizations. Occupy, for example, experimented with horizontal structures of democratic decision making and is credited with introducing the slogan of the 99% vs. the 1%, contributing significantly to the increased interest in inequality. It also continues to live on, working with Strike Debt to buy up debt, publicize unjust student debt and organize debtor resistance (Kasperkevic, 2014).

The innovative political entrepreneurship examples listed here represent only a tiny fraction of existing and past critical public pedagogic movements and stand in stark contrast to the un inventive political action one finds lauded in FLE and EE narratives. The former create what Myers (2013) calls "worldly things": "things that serve as the focal points of democratic activity [and] are disputed; they do not admit of a single identity or meaning" (pg. 96) but are an aspect of the world that is openly contested. Worldly things bring together a public to debate, learn about and institute solutions to problems that before being made into worldly things were

not seen as problems. Occupy, for example, brought into existence a public by constructing and then effectively publicizing our present response to inequality, debt, underemployment and unemployment as a problem. Certainly, some groups mobilized into action by this publicization of inequality want to ignore that a problem exists and return to the old paradigm as quickly as possibly, but, if inequality or debt becomes a worldly thing, those wishing to return to the old paradigm will have to amend their strategy of refusing the problem's public, political character and compete with others over the problem's meaning and solutions, constructing the problem so that it is amenable to solutions within the present paradigm (e.g. constructing inequality as a problem of unequal opportunities in acquiring the human capital, debt-financing and aspiration needed to succeed).

The demand for a guaranteed income (Weeks, 2011) and a demand for the creation of a participatory economy (Albert and Hahnel, 1991) are two other examples of worldly things that could be the subject of a critical FLE and EE public pedagogic event.<sup>213</sup> For Weeks (2011), the demand for a guaranteed income is a “concrete utopian demand” that brings together two key elements of the worldly thing – the “real-possible” and the “novum” (the unpredictable new) (pg. 197). This non-reformist reform begins with the demand that all citizens have a guaranteed basic income (e.g. \$20,000 or \$35,000)<sup>214</sup> but has far ranging, unforeseen and contestable effects given that the initiative would allow people to opt out of waged work and would be given to all citizens unconditionally. The demand for a participatory economy is similarly both a real-possible demand and radical and unpredictable in that it is not clear what the creation of democratic rather than marketized relations of production, consumption and distribution within and outside

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<sup>213</sup> In fact, in preparation for a referendum on a guaranteed income a Swiss group conducted a public pedagogic campaign in Switzerland on the issue (Foulkes, 2013), creating a worldly thing that was the object of debate and contestation and bringing into the world a public centred around it.

<sup>214</sup> An experiment we have tried on a small scale in Canada to great effect in the 1970s (CBC News, 2010; Shingler, 2014) and is technically possible to implement today given advances in information technology and the already centralized character of global production (Foster et al., 2011b).

enterprises would entail. What comes after these concrete utopian demands and how they are read is the outcome of political work between cooperative and contesting groups. Both demands do not offer blueprints of what a society which has instituted these initiatives would look like but aim to “spark the political imagination of, and desire for, a different future” (Weeks, 2011, pg. 146).

To support a democratic mind-set for the other rather than an entrepreneurial mind-set for capital we need examples of dissensus like the public pedagogic experiments and concrete utopian demands listed above. Without these experiments, which offer what Chomsky (1999) refers to as the “threat of a good example”, or the construction of worldly things, we would remain within the present post-political context marked by endless variations of the same, unable to see the present differently. These concrete utopian demands act as “structured provocation[s] and challenge[s]” to our thinking (Simon, 1992, pg. 47), but they also elicit an openness to the unknown that is a critical element of our responsibility for the other. Through contestable examples and participatory experiments we can glimpse the future’s potentiality in a way that is not only critical towards particular aspects of the present but is “open and indeterminate . . . rooted in an ethical-political vision that attempts to take people beyond the world they already know but in a way that does not insist on a fixed set of meanings” (Simon, 1992, pg. 47). The hope is that critical and open public pedagogic initiatives will continue to spur thinking as well as political action; to paraphrase from Simon (2006) in another context, the hope is to see differently and “initiate a desire to know more, to become more certain and to form more conclusive judgments” (pg. 202) on what we should do for the other, encouraging a continual rethinking of not simply the means through which we act but the ends we pursue for others and ourselves as well. Critical alternatives that can reasonably be implemented but which also provoke wonder are key aspects of any critical FLE and EE public pedagogy for the other.



## **Reading for Difference and Dominated Difference**

In addition to creating, promoting and learning from brief and/or spectacular large-scale anti-capitalist initiatives and events (e.g. Occupy, May 68', the Zapatistas, etc.) critical FLE and EE public pedagogues must also take up Gibson-Graham's (2006) practice of "reading for difference". This reading practice brings out the myriad, micro alternative relations, practices, potentialities and subjectivities that already exist, a contrast with the "reading for dominance" they claim views the world as a capitalized totality. The goal is to bring into view events, practices and everyday relations that are at odds or could be at odds with capitalism's logic (e.g. participatory budgeting, alternative currency movements, producer cooperatives, babysitting groups and community gardens) to stress capitalism's heterogeneity. Through showing how capitalism is presently comprised of diverse logics, ethics and practices the hope is that our subjective and affective investment in capital will also be loosened, and we can see ourselves as already more than employees, entrepreneurs, consumers or investors. For Gibson-Graham (2006) our affective investment in a monolithic view of capitalism is an obstacle to creating new and more democratic production practices. As an example they note that during the Argentinian factory occupations following the 2001 economic crisis the owners had fled and the means of production were there for the taking, but it was workers' affective investment in a totalized capitalism and employee subjectivity which were capital's last line of defence: they continued to see themselves as employees looking for work rather than part of a democratic collective deciding how to value their labour and direct the surplus they created.

To read the present's potentialities, particularly those practices which can be built upon to enable us to better meet our responsibility for others, critical FLE and EE public pedagogues should publicize and expand existing examples of alternative systems of valuation and more

democratic relations of production: the factory occupations in Argentina, the participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Freecycle, Kijiji, alternative currency schemes, Fair Trade, Strike Debt's strategy of buying and forgiving debt and the growth of production cooperatives in Kerala, India. We need to see that another world is not only possible but is already here in various forms and is being remade everyday through examples which give hope and provide direction to our responses to others' needs – examples that cannot simply be replicated but must continually be altered with and for others. In addition to anti-capitalist initiatives and events which seek to resist and/or replace capitalism, we need to expand “already existing non-capitalist economic processes and build new non-capitalist enterprises” (Gibson-Graham, 2003, pg. 157).

FLE and EE narratives occlude the alternative, non-capitalist character of the relations and valuations Gibson-Graham seek to illuminate, presenting all entrepreneurship as aligned with capitalism. In doing so these narratives effect an uncritical “reading for dominance” (Gibson-Graham, 2006) that sees capital everywhere rather than taking up an approach that illuminates potential lines of flight and existing non-capitalist alternatives. That said, we should also *critically* read for capital's dominance and analyze initiatives which seek to extend and intensify this dominance. The dominant FLE and EE public pedagogic response to the recent crisis, as illustrated in the previous two chapters, is to accept and in many instances strengthen capital's hegemony and privilege elite's mediation and direction of capital's needs. What is at stake is not only the obfuscation of the plurality of economic practices that exist but also the occlusion of the destruction and cooption of alternatives, and we must attend to both.

A critical FLE and EE public pedagogy would stress that alternative production relations within a capitalist system such as the Mondragón Cooperative cited above are not enough on

their own.<sup>215</sup> Placing the obvious irresponsibility of only seeking benefit for oneself or group to one side, it is not enough to attempt to carve out a space only for oneself; a critical pedagogy would point out that capital will continue to come calling. Mondragón, as noted earlier, protects some workers from capital at the expense of others by outsourcing work to precariously employed workers outside of Spain to help keep its labour costs down. In this way Gibson-Graham (2003) argue, Mondragón stays “true to the guiding vision of people over capital in the Basque region (i.e. maintaining sustainable employment) while engaging in operations elsewhere along mainstream business lines (where capital rules over people)” (pg. 152). The big boss does not go away but extracts a heavier tithe from those the Mondragón workers have sacrificed. Rather than obfuscate the matter as Gibson-Graham (2003) do – arguing that “the task of extending cooperative education and membership to workers in the myriad international sites . . . would potentially carry with it all the worst aspects of missionizing that go counter to the grass roots participatory involvement that is so much a part of the cooperative vision” (pg. 153), as if the worst aspects of missionizing were not using others for cheap labour – we must expand any protection won from capital and take over other capitalist enterprises.

Drawing on McNally (1993) again,

As important as workers’ self-management within the enterprise may be, it cannot break free of the logic of the market unless the working class can establish democratic, planned control of the economy. Reuniting workers with the means of production is thus about more than workers’ control at the level of the firm; it also requires democratic control of the economic reproduction of society – otherwise the means of production will continue

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<sup>215</sup> Means (2014), analyzing the strategy of building alternatives outside of institutions, spaces and practices presently colonized by capital, summarizes the problem with supporting a politics of difference or exodus to capital’s interstices rather than one of confrontation with capital: “This privileging of exodus implies a debilitating withdrawal from political engagement with public institutions, including educational institutions, the State, and the legal mechanisms, that maintain the seemingly inexorable momentum toward the total commodification of all life on the planet” (pg. 129). It is not enough to remake the space capital has left to us or let us retreat to; we must also remake the spaces capital presently colonizes. We must use the spaces left to us as staging areas to continually encroach upon and take away the spaces, institutions and practices capital dominates.

to be subject to the market-driven imperative to accumulate at the expense of living labour. (pg. 182)

Capital is a totalizing force that allows for myriad forms of economic production (e.g. producer cooperatives, self-employment, multinational corporations, etc.). How one answers capital's command to produce at the socially necessary rate is not set in stone, but to be responsible for others rather than capital we cannot limit ourselves to responding to capital in different ways and should not be so quick to assuage our guilt when we shunt the worst of capital's deprecations onto others.

Unions also open spaces where capital's valuation is attenuated, but their rearguard action in the neoliberal period faces the same problems as Mondragón. Fighting only for one's membership or fellow citizens rather than expanding the fight to better the conditions of others is not only unethical, evincing a concern more for oneself than those outside one's organization or group, but is also counterproductive. It is unsurprising that in a context in which exposure to the market is deemed virtuous and precarity has become the 'new normal' attacks against unionized public sector workers have grown. Those left out of union protection rightly see it as unfair that they must be subject to the worst of capital's deprecations while others, like Mondragón's workers or public sector workers, remain relatively immune.<sup>216</sup> Just as with Mondragón's workers, unionized workers cannot stand by while others face greater hardship but should use their position to demand improvements for others. Unionized public sector workers, in particular teachers in Ontario, have significantly better pay, leverage over their employers and working

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<sup>216</sup> Given this desire to hold everyone accountable to the market, even CEOs' relative immunity from market demands is under some threat with rising shareholder activism and revolt against exorbitant CEO pay (Garside, 2015; Stothard, 2015).

conditions than others<sup>217</sup> and are thus in a better position than most to fight to improve the conditions of those who do not share these benefits, especially considering their strategic position in an industry that cannot be off-shored.

Unionized workers must move away from the box they have been penned into and must more often fight for others. This means going beyond funding progressive movements and candidates for office to striking for improved working conditions for others who are not unionized. This will require sacrifice and strategy, but the public pedagogic opportunity is there: Ontario teachers in 2015 were at odds with the province over class sizes, arguing that smaller classes improve student learning. Why not publicly forgo pay raises and instead strike for not only smaller class sizes but also a significantly higher minimum wage for all on the basis that this would also improve student learning? This could be part of a larger effort to lay the groundwork for a fight for a guaranteed income later. Teachers could even demand the higher minimum wage be paid through an increased progressive tax on those who, like themselves, make more than most others.<sup>218</sup>

Extending beyond mere concern for academic achievement, striking teachers should stress that poverty not only threatens a child's educational achievement but also their psychological, social and physical well-being (Ferguson et al., 2007). A much higher minimum wage or guaranteed income would go a significant way towards improving the well-being of those presently living in poverty and aligns with the Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) four-year

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<sup>217</sup> The median salary for Ontario teachers is \$95,000 (Levitt, 2015), and, according to Statistics Canada (2011), in 2011 only 10% of Canadians had total incomes of more than \$80,400. Perhaps this is the going rate for their human capital relative to other similarly educated workers, but I am not limiting my comparison of teachers to those with similar levels of human capital as I do not think the level of one's human capital should dictate one's share of the resources we create (Cohen, 1995).

<sup>218</sup> The strategy of sacrificing an opportunity to improve one's financial security for another is not one I would advocate for low-income teachers in the UK or US (Strauss, 2015; Weale, 2015). In both countries, the relentless attack on teachers' working conditions, wages and public esteem has contributed to a teaching shortage in both countries with some districts in the US resorting to bringing in labour from the Philippines because workers in the US do not want to do the work.

strategic plan for children and youth mental health and well-being, which Director of Education, Donna Quan argues, is an issue that “belongs to everyone and is key to student success” (TDSB, 2014, para. 5). This sort of strategic public pedagogic action aimed at helping others is necessary in itself but also for staving of the threat capital continually poses to the existence of relations, spaces and practices that provide alternatives to capital.<sup>219</sup> To close the responsibility gap, we need a critical FLE and EE to listen and read for difference *and* dominance so we can better inform our action aimed at improving the world for others.

### **The Political Conditions for Responsibility**

Thus far, the examples of dissensus have spurred discussion focused on their potential to provoke the thought, action and experimentation needed to provide the material security (e.g. food, healthcare, money, control over production and shelter) to innovate and exercise one’s human capacities in ways one finds of interest. Drawing on Myers (2013), this material security is necessary for not only the other’s private pursuits but also political participation (i.e. participation enabling individuals to engage in political action and entrepreneurship with others to recreate our common world). Her quote from Arendt is worth reproducing in full:

How much have we to change the lives of the poor? In other words, how much money do we have to give them to make them capable of enjoying public happiness? Education is very nice, but the real thing is money. Only when they can enjoy the public will they be willing and able to make sacrifices for the public good. To ask sacrifices of individuals who are not yet citizens is to ask them for an idealism which they do not have and cannot have in view of the urgency of the life process. Before we ask the poor for idealism, we must first make them citizens: and this involves so changing the circumstances of their private lives that they become capable of enjoying the public. (pg. 119)

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<sup>219</sup> The argument that this is not possible at the moment and union members (and the public) would need to be mobilized is correct, but this is not a reason to give up. Instead one should increase one’s public pedagogic efforts to increase the likelihood a strike for the economic improvement of all through minimum wage increases or even a guaranteed income could be possible in the future.

Tahmasebi-Birgani (2014) agrees the same holds for ethical-political action: “without first freedom [i.e. freedom from economic exploitation and material scarcity], non-reciprocal relation remains an exception, witnessed only in individual acts of goodness” (pg. 49). Political engagement, especially that which is not aimed at improving one’s own material security but might even undermine one’s own security or is aimed at bringing in something new to the world to which others can respond (Arendt, 1998), is less likely to be carried out by those who are constantly worried about their material security and have little time to spare for political endeavors that seem far removed from their immediate concerns.<sup>220</sup>

However, more than money or food we must also ensure that our political institutions and practices support others’ political innovation: i.e. the expansion of alternatives to capital should be supported by participatory and dissensual practices and institutions which see democracy as an always unfinished project for the other (Critchley, 1999).<sup>221</sup> Our responsibility calls us to go beyond ensuring others have their basic needs fulfilled; our responsibility to the other calls us to ensure he or she can engage in political innovation (i.e. bringing into being worldly things around which a cooperative and dissensual public can form). Empowering the other to engage in political action that takes responsibility for others might seem to contravene Levinas’s asymmetrical

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<sup>220</sup> Moreover, the probability that economically disadvantaged but racially or gender advantaged groups will give up their remaining privileges for the benefit of others is less likely, especially when all that is waiting is the shame and humiliation for having become poor. This is especially true when elites use racist and patriarchal identifications to mobilize poor constituents whom they have nothing else to offer. In the US, this strategy is used to great effect, creating a cultural class war pitting an embattled white working class against ‘politically-correct’ elites while hiding the ongoing economic class war that increases the value these identities have for downwardly mobile whites (Frank, 2004). Supporting this claim, researchers at New York University found that prejudice towards racialized minorities increases during economic downturns (Rhodan, 2014).

<sup>221</sup> Cane (2015) argues that this is also Arendt’s position, suggesting that while Arendt is often concerned that social, private needs are invading the public sphere, there do exist passages that suggest “political action is permitted to engage socio-economic issues, so long as it is not reduced to such issues. On this account, the social rears its head when we fail to convert a concern for material deprivation into a principle of action and instead view others merely in terms of their biological needs” (Cane, 2015, pg. 65). In Cane’s (2015) reading of Arendt, we should engage in political action aimed at improving others’ material security but it must have as its ultimate aim their “political empowerment”.

ethics, but surely I ought to ensure the other has the capacity, opportunity and means to care for others and the world. Why would I limit the other's possibilities to self-interested, depoliticized action? Additionally, given that ethics needs political action aimed at altering and creating anew the political economic institutions, relations and practices that structure our world (Dussel, 2006), political action and the institutions which support political action must benefit both the singular other and all others. There will always be those excluded and for this reason our institutions must be open to revision, a demand that can only be pressed if they are made more participatory, accountable and citizens are able to engage in effective political action aimed at creating worldly things to which others can respond.

Presently, the state of democracy looks dire; in Canada we have a shrinking voter turnout, widespread political apathy and feelings of powerlessness amongst citizens (Ibbitson, 2011). A Samara Canada's report found that only 39 percent of Canadians took part in a political conversation in the last 12 months and less than a third believe politics affects them daily (CBC News, 2015). Further troubling, an Environics study found that 23 percent support the Prime Minister shutting down parliament in "very difficult times" (Adams and Flumian, 2015). The mainstream political entrepreneurial response has been to institute initiatives which better integrate Twitter or Facebook into political campaigns or lobby for mandatory or online voting and proportional representation. While I am supportive of the latter initiative, these experiments will not do much to solve feelings of political impotence, encourage civic interest or promote political engagement. To take responsibility for others we do not need better messaging or new mediums attached to the same political practices. We need entrepreneurial experiments in democratic governance to give people the power to institute actual changes in how our political economy works. We need experiments which will create political institutions that are more participatory and responsive so that people not only stop feeling powerless but are not powerless



and can affect change for others. Many of the movements, groups and events listed above attempt to draw attention to the lack of viable alternatives presently available and experiment with more democratic modes of governing. We should learn from these initiatives and expand this innovation into mainstream political institutions.

Increasingly, however, political elites are creating political practices that promote capital's innovation rather than others' and are eroding the ability for others to create political innovations to renew our democracy and world. For them, capital's security and freedom are paramount and citizens are seen as potential threats to be monitored and managed at all times; this elite authoritarianism is evinced in growing unelected technocratic governments, the unilateral abrogation of employment and labour laws, ubiquitous surveillance, central banks' independence from political interference and the protection of investor rights and trade agreements from public debate and control.<sup>222</sup> Hayek's chilling, thoughtless comments in 1981 on the Pinochet regime in Chile are indicative of the neoliberal ideology's contempt for democracy and political innovation by and for others:

As long-term institutions, I am totally against dictatorships. But a dictatorship may be a necessary system for a transitional period. At times it is necessary for a country to have, for a time, some form or other of dictatorial power. As you will understand, it is possible for a dictator to govern in a liberal way. And it is also possible for a democracy to govern with a total lack of liberalism. Personally, I prefer a liberal dictator to democratic government lacking in liberalism . . . [the latter can create] a stable democracy and liberty, clean of impurities. (Leeson, 2015, pg. 89)<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Streeck (2014) summarizes this post-political thinking:

The utopian ideal of present-day crisis management is to complete, with political means, the already far-advanced depoliticization of the economy; anchored in reorganized nation-states under the control of international governmental and financial diplomacy insulated from democratic participation, with a population that would have learned, over years of hegemonic re-education, to regard the distributional outcomes of free markets as fair, or at least as without alternative. (pg. 49-50)

<sup>223</sup> Hayek – a significant figure in the neoliberal movement – also went on to say that he “had not been able to find a single person even in much maligned Chile who did not agree that personal freedom was much greater under Pinochet than it had been under Allende” (Leeson, 2015, pg. 89).

As noted earlier, FLE and EE advocates may only want to improve individuals' entrepreneurship and financial literacy; however, by individualizing the causes of precarity and *at best* passively supporting measures which insulate key political economic issues from democratic oversight and revision they support the conditions in which Hayekian fantasies of cleansing the polis during a state of exception of those who cannot keep up or who hold us back appear increasingly attractive for many. In this post-political context we need political alternatives more than ever, but so long as democracy is equated with the market and subservient to capital, political entrepreneurship will be limited and the individualization of structural insecurity and dependence will give racist political innovators the opportunity to exploit the unmet need for structural change (Mouffe, 2005).

### **The Other's Pursuit of Private Ends**

To enable the other to effectively pursue private interests and grow his or her human capacities as he or she wishes it is also not enough to provide only material security; critical EE public pedagogues must support the cultural practices, institutions and resources that can enable others to pursue the private projects they find meaningful and become the people they want to be. The institution of a guaranteed income and creation of more participatory democratic institutions to reconfigure how we distribute what we produce and how we govern must also be accompanied by alternatives to work in a post-work society. If we are to effectively respond to the possibility that many of our present jobs could be automated, we must take into account the fact that many people find meaning in waged work and when out of work do not flourish but become more anxious, depressed and withdrawn (Clark and Heath, 2014). Like the Argentinian workers Gibson-Graham (2006) analyzed, many become distraught and wait for an opportunity to be

reattached to capital, which gives them both material and ontological security. Again, Brynjolfsson and McAfee's, (2014) worry that a possible lack of waged work will have deleterious effects on individuals' well-being is not inaccurate.<sup>224</sup> However, it misses that the problem is not a lack of waged work but that our identities, the meaning we give life and our desire to work on ourselves (our inclination to grow our human capacities in various ways) are linked to waged work. The problem is the 'cruelly optimistic' (Berlant, 2011) virtue ethic the FLE and EE public pedagogy supports, which reads waged work as one of the most important avenues to signal one's value and find purpose in life.

The demand for freedom from capital must therefore also be accompanied by a positive freedom to shift our affective attachment from waged work to other non-capitalized pursuits. We must expand on Gibson-Graham's (2006) attempts to loosen our affective attachment to waged employment and not only see the present possibilities that are available for meaningful non-capitalist pursuits but build on these alternatives. Rather than spending resources to spur the creation of waged work which complements machines, we need to create opportunities for people to engage in non-waged projects they find meaningful, which often includes projects that help others. This could include creating low-cost infant warmers and the continuation of many other entrepreneurial projects, but it would likely not include the numerous "bullshit" jobs Graeber (2013) decries which people are forced to take on even though they offer little opportunity for self-expression, growth or meaningful interaction with others (e.g. telemarketing, corporate law, most administrative work and advertising). To be sure, jobs that are necessary but unattractive will remain. However, with expanded automation, a participatory economy and a guaranteed income we can come up with a better method of allocating necessary but mind-numbing or

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<sup>224</sup> According to Thompson (2015) these effects are significant with research showing "that it is harder to recover from a long bout of joblessness than from losing a loved one or suffering a life-altering injury" (para. 34).

dangerous work because those who presently do this work will have the option of opting out if they have a guaranteed income, or, if work is equitably assigned, the work will not be done by those with the least social, political and economic power. This will also increase the likelihood that the work will be improved or automated so no one has to do it.

Thompson (2015), writing in the *Atlantic*, outlines a number of entrepreneurial experiments that could be implemented to support the innovation of others in a “world without work”: One experiment is the expansion of community centres and public spaces where people can socialize, learn from and create objects with others and experiment with new relations. Another is the creation of online marketplaces advertising work that individuals want done. Building on the practices we already have, the online marketplace could operate in a similar manner to websites like *Angie’s List*, *Amazon’s Mechanical Turk*, *Kickstarter* campaigns or the UK National Health Service’s online advertisement of jobs that are able to be picked up by employees (National Health Service, 2014). The expanded public spaces can include ‘makerspaces’<sup>225</sup> in which individuals gather to create projects of interest to them as well as continuing on and off-line education initiatives and community education/care facilities promoting intergenerational care/learning opportunities through combining daycares and kindergartens with nursing homes (Brown, 2015; Hammer, 2012) and opening schools, colleges and universities to the public. The key is to build on practices that presently exist and create new ones to support the creation of spaces and institutions which can provide individuals with

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<sup>225</sup> Thompson (2015) argues that makerspaces (he investigates The Columbus Idea Foundry, the largest makerspace in the US) could, with the “demise of the formal economy, . . . free many would-be artists, writers, and craftspeople to dedicate their time to creative interests – to live as cultural producers. Such activities offer virtues that many organizational psychologists consider central to satisfaction at work: independence, the chance to develop mastery, and a sense of purpose” (para. 46). EE narratives offer the same vision of meaningful, self-directed production with and for others with the important difference that our work is always capitalized: it is either for capital (i.e. we are creating a commodity) or done during time won from capital or in spaces not yet colonized.

opportunities to engage with and learn from others while pursuing projects they value as ends in themselves.

Again, it is not enough to celebrate alternative practices and spaces without taking steps to ensure they will not be colonized by capital and can in fact expand and colonize capitalized spaces. Providing all with a guaranteed income would go a long way to ensuring the protection of alternative spaces and their ability to expand. In a world in which capital rules, requests for work to be done are backed by the whip of hunger and social exclusion, enabling the entrepreneurial initiatives listed above (e.g. *Kickstarter*, *Amazon's Mechanical Turk* and *Angie's List*) to replace secure waged work with precarious, 'Zero-Hour' waged work (Ettlinger, 2014) while makerspaces and education are turned into consumerized for-profit ventures. A guaranteed income would remove the whip and provide individuals with the positive freedom to create and choose between capitalized and non-capitalized alternatives.

Of course, some may argue that the predictions concerning the automation of significant numbers of jobs are overblown and a guaranteed income would result in too many needed jobs going undone. Additionally, some argue that the automation will, as technological innovations have in the past, create new needs, which will require the creation of new waged jobs. Leaving aside discussion of the fact that the jobs that would be undermined are those often done by the least advantaged, the problem is not whether x or y numbers of jobs can be automated; the problem is that we have created a political economic system which cannot countenance large numbers of people not working for a wage even if there are few waged jobs around. Moreover, the core need that automation allows us to realize (free time to pursue meaningful activities as we want) is the one need capital cannot meet. Capital's Luddite strategy to protect its way of life is not to smash machines but to smash and coopt alternatives, subverting the potential that

automation offers to create ‘bullshit’ and precarious waged work bright-sided by EE public pedagogues in its place.

### **A Critical FLE and EE in Schools**

Thus far I have focused my discussion outside of the school, but the school remains a privileged space for spurring critical thought more open to improving others’ innovation. Outside the school, discussion with others on “worldly things” that are not trivial is rare. Samara Canada’s finding that only 39 percent of Canadians took part in a political conversation in the last 12 months (CBC News, 2015) did not delve into the character of that conversation, which is too often preoccupied with a superficial reading of political events unconnected to larger social issues given the propensity to limit conversation to topics that are uncontroversial and require little thought: usually the goal of conversation is to enjoy the company of others and reaffirm relationships centred around common interests, relations and experiences not to provoke conflict over a common object of concern, begin a research project on the roots of inequality or wonder what it means to be free or responsible and what social structures we could create that would support freedom and responsibility for others. Within the school, however, debate, deep analysis and analyzing conflicting opinions are expected and encouraged.

The treatment of topics for debate and analysis in textbooks and classrooms is often limited in scope and standardized tests are growing in importance, but the fact that teachers in Ontario are expected to improve problem-solving, critical-thinking, research and teamwork skills opens the *possibility* for teachers to introduce a range of issues in their classes.<sup>226</sup> This critical inquiry could compare present, historical and possible means of providing security and

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<sup>226</sup> The opportunities available differ between schools and school boards in the province.

freedom,<sup>227</sup> examine different definitions of security and freedom and analyze how these means and definitions are, could and should be instituted – i.e. a study of past, present and possible political action aimed at hegemonizing particular definitions of security and freedom (e.g. security as a right to one’s basic needs and freedom as the ability to collectively decide what those needs are and to access opportunities and resources to pursue projects one finds fulfilling).

In history, students could study the colonization and enclosure necessary to secure the resources (land, natural resources and people) to create the spaces, practices and subjects needed for a racialized and gendered capitalism. Moving to the present, many secondary school students are concerned about the cost of post-secondary education and likely would be interested in a research project analyzing the 2012 Quebec student movement (Maple Spring), which blocked proposed increases to post-secondary tuition. They could compare the movement’s goals and means with the justifications and means used to transform post-secondary education into a consumer good and decide which objective they think citizens should support. This analysis supports a broader and more critical financial literacy that assists students with understanding “the wider financial, economic and social system” (OECD, 2014c, pg. 51), but in a manner that does not consumerize ethical-political concerns.

The study of colonization, post-secondary tuition, student debt and the Quebec student movement could be part of a larger critical FLE and EE research project in intermediate and senior schools (e.g. ages 12-19) into inequality.<sup>228</sup> Social studies and language are two hospitable

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<sup>227</sup> As part of their problematization of the present for others, students could study the reasons for and effects of collective and individual provision of significant goods, services and opportunities: water, healthcare, law enforcement, employment, education, retirement, food, energy, transportation, citizenship, design and housing.

<sup>228</sup> This is not to say that inequality could not be studied earlier. It should, but it must be introduced in an age-appropriate manner. Many grade 6 students have difficulty understanding even the dominant reading of free trade agreements, which they are supposed to learn in grade 6 social studies in Ontario.

subject areas in which a project studying inequality and irresponsibility could be implemented.<sup>229</sup>

The curriculum expectations for language in Ontario are almost wholly devoid of content and focus on language skills (e.g. summarizing, discerning the main idea, creating media texts, etc.) so teachers can often choose whatever age-appropriate content they would like to study.<sup>230</sup> In social studies, the latest curriculum iteration in Ontario can be leveraged to support critical inquiry into social justice issues because students are expected to connect events to larger issues, analyze different points of view on topics of significant importance and carry out research on the ‘worldly things’ debated outside the classroom (e.g. free trade agreements, the impact of residential schools on the aboriginal population and the benefits and drawback of different economic systems). The possible projects teachers could undertake in these two subject areas are myriad: in geography, students could research inequality related issues that affect their school community; they could also learn about, debate and critique various theories on inequality (e.g. biological and cultural theories, meritocracy, geographic determinism, colonialism and neocolonial theories), which could then inform a documentary they could create in groups, replete with solutions for creating a more just world; and in language study, the theme of inequality could drive the analysis and comparison of FLE and EE media texts with the aim of discerning the world or main idea these media texts are conveying and then judging whether these texts provide a ‘responsible’ representation of the world (i.e. whether it presents the

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<sup>229</sup> Studying inequality in mathematics or science is possible but more difficult; the former tends to focus on abstract reasoning and both include a significant amount of prescribed content which takes time to teach and does not easily lend itself to a pairing with sociological analysis.

<sup>230</sup> The teacher should also follow critical pedagogues’ advice and begin from where students are, connecting the objects of study to students’ present lives and acting as co-investigators rather than one who has the answers students’ seek (Freire, 1970, 2004; Giroux, 1997, 2011; Simon et al., 1991). A ‘banking model’ of education is to be eschewed in favour of a more open problem-based inquiry centred around a contested critique of the present state of the world and our subjectivities.



problems the financially insecure face appropriately and points us towards solutions that will help).<sup>231</sup>

In their critical media study, students could examine typical FLE video games in which players collect money to buy objects or games in which they answer questions on money management. They could then compare these games with *Spent*, a game created by the Urban Ministries of Durham, which asks the player to attempt to live in the US on a minimum wage. The contrast between the privatized optimism of the former games and the pessimism of the latter might provoke questions about how to improve the lives of those whose for whom “there was no money left to save” (Tuominen and Thompson, 2015) and could link to earlier discussions on the supra-individual causes of inequality.<sup>232</sup> Media study into EE texts could include analyzing popular entrepreneurship shows like *The Apprentice*, *Dragon’s Den*, *Shark Tank* or any of the innumerable house flipping shows and compare them with the subsistence entrepreneurship in *Britain’s Hardest Grafter*, a show in which low-income youth compete against each other to win a year’s minimum wage salary, or Ehrenreich’s (2002) book *Nickel and Dimed* or even the popular young adult novel *The Hunger Games* (FLE and EE advocates bear more than a passing familiarity with Effey Trinket, the Capitol’s district 12 representative who gushes about the opportunity the games present for the lucky contestants she helps prepare for a battle to the death).<sup>233</sup> The latter suggestion can build on the popularity of dystopic fiction, a genre which provides vantage points through which to see the present differently but which also provides a

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<sup>231</sup> Here I advocate for analyses of public pedagogic artifacts, building on Giroux’s (2011) claim that “pedagogy at the popular level must now be a central concern of formal schooling itself” (pg. 137).

<sup>232</sup> Elsewhere, I have argued that this analysis could also be coupled with a visit to a food bank and sociological research on food bank users (Arthur, 2012c).

<sup>233</sup> A J. Crew executive who had fired members of his team in a corporate downsizing binge certainly thought there were apt parallels between our world and the one in the Hunger Games. He celebrated his escaping the hatchet and successful firing of others with celebratory social media pictures of a night out drinking that were hash-tagged with Hunger Games references (Kasperkevic, 2015); this follows a spoof Hunger Games video created by executives at Morgan Stanley in which staff at regional offices were chosen to fight to death for the ‘Home Office’ – two months later Morgan Stanley outdid the Capitol and reduced its regional offices from 12 to eight (Rushe, 2015).

form that is easier to access for students and allows more opportunities for students to think and make unexpected connections than a study of theories of inequality.

In universities and colleges, this critical analysis and reflection should be extended even further. Teacher preparation programs in particular should expand courses that ask teacher candidates to critically analyze the state of the world, themselves and the practice of education.<sup>234</sup> During my undergraduate education degree, one of the few courses in which I was asked to think and take part in discussions of importance was an elective course on Paulo Freire. In a context in which education is increasingly reduced to training for the world as it is, opportunities for critical reflection are too rare: I have certainly never come across Freire in any of the professional learning I engage in at the school or board level. Instead, the aim in most ongoing teacher education initiatives is always how best to transfer knowledge rather than critically analyzing the ends we promote. Unsurprisingly, if ends are not to be questioned and there is limited ability to influence the ends we pursue because avenues for democratic change are blocked, many teachers and teacher-candidates will feel theory is a waste of time and clamor for more ‘hands-on’ learning. Why teach about Freire, Piaget, Freud, Marx, Foucault or Vygotsky if they are only used to introduce some missive outlining that guided-reading is the most effective form of instruction in *x* situation, *y* percent of the time and should be carried out in *z* manner? If history is over, why study thinkers who provide a way to see the present differently? It would save time and be more effective if teacher candidates practiced leading guiding reading sessions over and over. Moreover, if teacher education is reduced to learning various strategies for fixed ends then moves to deregulate teacher accreditation and move it out of the university (Saltman, 2010) also make sense – why tie teacher training to an institution that is still expected to train not simply

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<sup>234</sup> Carr (2015) makes a strong case that this critical inquiry should include the teaching of critical media literacy to teacher-candidates.

functionaries but expose students to alternative ways of thinking that challenge their previously held views so as to prepare students to become critical citizens who can with others renew our democracy (Curtis, 2013)?

Numerous examples of student activism that aim to arrest the destruction of practices supportive of critical thought in the university already exist; the economics undergraduates at the University of Manchester who formed the “Post-Crash Economics Society” provide a pertinent example for teacher-candidates to emulate. Following the financial crisis, they demanded their university reform the economics department to better reflect the post-crisis environment and a world that demands not more self-interest but expanded opportunities for reciprocity and fairness. They argued that the university was renegeing on its stated goal of preparing “graduates for citizenship and leadership in diverse, global environments” by divorcing economics from social, political and philosophical issues, silencing diverse perspectives and providing minimal space for analysis of the ethical impact of political policies informed by neoclassical economics (Post-Crash Economics Society, 2014, pg. 10). Teacher candidates should build upon these experiments and push for a teacher-education that expands inquiry into the ends of education and the teaching of diverse ways of seeing the world, pursuits that are necessary if teachers are going to effectively contribute to the renewal of our democracy.<sup>235</sup>

In particular, teacher-candidates should call for the critical examination of FLE and EE initiatives and the analysis and promotion of alternatives to these individualizing initiatives (e.g. guaranteed income, participatory economy, public pensions, etc.). They do not need to reject all FLE and EE initiatives. The lessons provided by the FLE organizations that present at education

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<sup>235</sup> As with schools, there are marked differences between universities and undergraduate and graduate programs. My graduate experience in education faculties has been one in which I have continually been challenged and exposed to various perspectives, inciting a wonder to think and know more about the possible ends of education and our responsibility for the world and others. This should be the norm in all faculties and for both graduate and undergraduate students.

faculties and teacher workshops in Ontario can be of use in teaching personal money management tips (Arthur, 2012c), but they can also contribute to an FLE and EE public pedagogy that presents individuals, not our political economy, as the problem to be rectified. To pick one example from many, a group of York University education students sent recommendations to the Canadian Federal Task Force on Financial Literacy which outlined their creation of an online self-assessment tool that would help under-resourced urban communities better understand “what it is they do know and what it is they need to know” (yFile, 2010, para. 5). For those with little money not knowing how to use it effectively is a significant concern (they have little to waste and often face higher fees than those with more money). However, from a critical perspective that takes into account a present context marked by an expansion of neoliberalism’s abandonment of unprofitable human capital and an individualization of financial insecurity, teaching excluded populations how to take better personal responsibility for their poverty is also problematic. In this context a self-assessment survey shares much with the examples of pastoral power Foucault (1990b) outlines in which through confession individuals create the self upon which they are to improve: an individual that accepts his or her personal responsibility for his or her lack of resources and defective traits and seeks to work on his or her self to become both more financially secure and independent.<sup>236</sup>

The call for more critical perspectives and experiments must be never-ending. A critical FLE and EE public pedagogy cannot draw only from the sources I have used or point out the political economic problems I have illustrated. If it is to be motivated by a concern for the other, a critical FLE and EE public pedagogy must be perpetually open to other perspectives. In

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<sup>236</sup> Spotton-Visano’s (2008) question, “Where’s the justice?” is one critical FLE public pedagogues must ask with regards to these students’ response to financial insecurity. Where is the justice for those most adversely affected by austerity initiatives which diminish their life opportunities and health (Stuckler and Basu, 2013)? A critical FLE would draw our attention to the systemic character of financial insecurity and call for entrepreneurial action to create a political economy to distribute the means to attain security and use one’s freedom as one wishes more equitably.

schools, teachers should support an openness to excluded perspectives by providing opportunities for more open-ended inquiry and reflection on our responses to others, particularly the narrative frames we reduce the other to and the “exclusionary forms of belonging” we institute (Todd and Säfström, 2008, para. 31). However, each must take up this demand on his or her own and learn to cultivate an ethos in which ignoring his or her responsibility to the other “becomes the less likely moral response” (Critchley, 2009b, pg. 20). Part of this requires one learn to listen “responsibly”, a practice Simon (2005) argues requires a “double attentiveness”: an informative and reflexive listening to those who are financially insecure and dependent and to the questions one asks of them (pg. 98). Do I, for example, ask questions which imply the victims of structural violence are to blame for their insecurity? Do I, as financially literacy and entrepreneurial researchers so often do, reduce the other’s alterity to the same and listen only for evidence of misspending, misinvestment or an inability to take up the entrepreneurial opportunities that apparently always exist? Perhaps, my responses are more charitable, but still I must ask what the questions I pose and actions I take tell me about my present irresponsibility.

In this way, I can become more aware of the beliefs and assumptions I protect from being interrupted and called into question, improving my understanding of not only my conscious beliefs but also the disavowed fantasies and “vaguely felt and little understood psychic projections and culturally invested frameworks that order [my] attention” (Simon, 2005, pg. 99).<sup>237</sup> These include both right wing fantasies but also a cynical reason which passively awaits

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<sup>237</sup> While understanding may reduce the other to the same by taking the other as an object to be understood, it is a necessary part of our responsibility to the other: the other who exceeds my present understanding calls for a necessary reformation of the narratives through which I see, experience and understand the other (i.e. the other calls for a perpetually *different* understanding). That any framing or understanding betrays the other’s singularity does not entail that we can or should do otherwise. Understanding is a necessary aspect of the judging and calculation that accompanies our material construction of the world as well as our ordinary and too often thoughtless interaction with others which restricts understanding to a repetition of the same. The self must therefore not move too quickly to understanding; I must tarry with the aporia the other induces in me, but there is no way to be responsible to the other

the necessary political action to come without preparing the world for its arrival. Justice is infinite but that does not mean we cannot begin to make the world more hospitable for others now (Tahmasebi-Birgani, 2014). Many people have done and are doing this. A critical FLE and EE public pedagogy would help us to understand the need to change the world and how to create responsible innovations so that others can not only be more secure and be other but can exercise their human capacities in ways they value, becoming other than they presently are.

## **Conclusion**

For FLE and EE advocates it is never too early to start teaching students about how best to navigate within the world as it is or begin harnessing the possibility for renewal youth bring (what Arendt (1998) calls ‘natality’) to capital’s project. Youth, writes Cornell (2001), have a “desire to relate to and express solidarity with a much wider world” (pg. 11) and “a natural disposition for innovation and change on which we can capitalize” (pg. 9). Capitalizing on youth’s “comparative advantage” (pg. 9) is necessary to ensure capital is running at peak capacity (i.e. everyone is innovative, flexible, resilient and optimistic and no one is dependent upon others for their reproduction). In contrast, the critical FLE and EE public pedagogy I outline here calls for a responsibility to enable others, including youth, to innovate for others. In schools, this requires educators to create opportunities in which students can, to borrow from Simon, Dippo, and Schenke (1991), “rethink our understanding of the way our world works, what made it that way, and what continues to reproduce the current state of affairs . . . [as well as] engage new ideas and frameworks that challenge their taken-for-granted ways of thinking and help them voice, critically reflect on, and take pride in alternative needs, desires, and possibilities” (pg. 10).

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without the understanding a political response requires (i.e. an understanding of the systemic problems which exclude or harm always particularized others).

Outside of the school we must learn from the alternative public pedagogic experiments that already exist, opening ourselves to thinking otherwise and building on these experiments to create a world more responsible to others than the present.

## Conclusion: A World for others

*The very progress of civilization under the performance principle has attained a level of productivity at which the social demands upon instinctual energy to be spent in alienated labor could be considerably reduced. Consequently, the continued repressive organization of the instincts seems to be necessitated less by the 'struggle for existence' than by the interest in prolonging the struggle – by the interest in domination. (Marcuse, 1956, pp. 129–130)*

FLE and EE public pedagogues are incurably optimistic despite the paucity of gains their initiatives have had in improving the security and freedom of most. However, their bright-siding and continual refrain that we must be optimistic cannot counter an increasingly pessimistic reality. The OECD's best-case scenario for the future, for example, is one in which economic growth for the next 50 years will remain low and inequality will continue to rise (Braconier et al., 2014).<sup>238</sup> Means (2015) in his analysis of youth precarity also draws attention to a future much less bright than that we read about in FLE and EE narratives: "if the projections of both orthodox and heterodox economists are to be believed, the future currently appears as one of increasing precariousness defined by a vulgar race to the bottom for ever more scarce resources and degraded livelihoods for the majority of workers" (pg. 13). Streek (2014) similarly claims that the future with capitalism looks bleak:

what is to be expected on the basis of capitalism's recent historical record, is a long and painful period of cumulative decay: of intensifying frictions, of fragility and uncertainty, and of a steady succession of 'normal accidents' – not necessarily but quite possibly on the scale of the global breakdown of the 1930s. (pg. 64)

When Streek writes of a global breakdown, he has in mind not only the Great Depression but also the violent, fascist countermovement of the 1930s which one sees echoes of in the xenophobic

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<sup>238</sup> Incidentally, this scenario relies upon a future in which climate change is limited, and international cooperation arrests beggar thy neighbor policies and the erosion of labour and social rights presently underway (Braconier et al., 2014). Needless to say, the present does not instill confidence that this 'best case' scenario will come to fruition.



and often openly fascist political parties in Europe (e.g. Golden Dawn, the National Front, British National Party and the Jobbik party).

This does not have to be our future. We have the means to provide most, if not all, with the goods and services necessary for a secure life in which they can pursue meaningful activities in concert with others. Some diversion of resources from certain ends and the retraining of individuals for the socially useful labour shortages that exist and will exist in a more equitable political economy (e.g. doctors, teachers and artists) are likely necessary, but the potential is there. However, while FLE and EE public pedagogues elicit fawning support for bold declarations about how teaching children to fail, creating FLE video games or entrepreneurializing university disciplines will change the course of human history and create ‘doers’ who will build a better future for all, demands and initiatives aiming to change how we presently produce, distribute and consume resources are ignored, treated as impossible or viewed as an existential threat to humanity’s freedom and security. For all the support given to claims for more innovation and creativity, most cannot imagine the end of capitalism (Jameson, 2003). Predictions of a looming automation revolution, for example, are met with fear, hope that new work will appear and myriad efforts to encourage the creation of self-employment rather than relation that we can do away with a substantial amount of the work we must do and pursue more meaningful ends. Too many have forgotten that our economy serves us and that the aim should not be to create endless forms of waged work but to enable people to pursue those aims they wish while growing their human capacities with others in care for our common world. Most waged work is at odds with this and calling for more ‘social entrepreneurship’ or a ‘higher capitalism’ does not change that fact. Instead we must imagine, create alternatives and prepare for the end of capitalism.

To create alternatives and enable others access to the necessary institutions, practices, time and material and symbolic resources needed to create and recreate a new self and world with others, capitalism's enclosure of our material and immaterial commons must be lifted (Jones and Murtola, 2012). Some of the ways in which we can work towards this more just future, one responsible to others and the other always to come, were analyzed in chapter six: creating 'worldly things' for others by demanding a guaranteed income and a participatory economy; learning from private and public experiments and events that call for and create alternative, often anti-capitalist practices; supporting a critical FLE which reads the present for both difference and dominance; engaging in political innovation for the other; and critically reflecting on our active production of ignorance and irresponsibility.

In their present incarnations, FLE and EE initiatives are not part of this solution; they are part of the problem. It is possible that the future will not be as bleak as the one filled with canned beans, shanty towns and masses clamoring for a job fawning over the technocratic elite that Cowen (2013) describes, but the OECD's less pessimistic best-case scenario (Braconier et al., 2014) appears brutal enough (and built on much weaker assumptions than Cowen's). Given that public and private debt are not going to be erased anytime soon and austerity is likely to continue as well as capitalism's necessary production of insecurity and dependence, FLE and EE initiatives will not appreciably improve the security or freedom of most. The worry is not, however, their ineffectual character but their effective contribution to an FLE and EE public pedagogy that erodes the security and freedom of many while closing from view any future other than one continually recreated for capital. In this respect, the FLE and EE public pedagogy acts as a "disimagination machine":

a set of cultural apparatuses extending from schools and mainstream media to the new sites of screen culture [creating the] . . . images . . . institutions, discourses, and other

modes of representation, that undermine the capacity of individuals to bear witness to a different and critical sense of agency, ethics and collective resistance. (Giroux, 2013, para. 10)

Again, the problem is not their failure but that FLE and EE public pedagogues might be successful in selling their ‘cruel optimism’ (Berlant, 2011) and tying our hope for security, freedom, an open future and the opportunity to improve the lives of others to a system that requires that we further diminish the security and freedom of many, which ‘bright-siding’ FLE and EE public pedagogues overwhelmingly accept/support.

Many would be better off without these shallow but expansive initiatives which function more as advertising for the neoliberalization of the world through their promotion in the media than as educational initiatives which provide opportunities for learning about and critically reflecting upon the relation between the global economy, personal finance, innovation, creative thinking and a responsibility for others. Unfortunately, these initiatives and the public pedagogy they support are growing in importance at the moment when we need radical innovation and imagination more than ever (Haiven, 2014). Entrepreneurship is already ubiquitous in education policy documents, universities, political speeches, reality TV and news articles, and FLE’s inclusion into the OECD’s PISA test will ensure financial literacy remains a significant metric by which to judge a population’s fitness and inform interventions in the future. Given this, more critical analyses of the FLE and EE phenomenon are needed and many are responding.

The preceding analysis contributed to this growing critical literature. Utilizing heterodox readings of Levinasian ethics alongside concepts and frameworks from critical pedagogy and Marxist, radical democracy and critical theory this thesis has offered a novel contribution to the critical FLE and EE literature through its philosophical analysis of the security and freedom narratives found in prominent FLE and EE texts. No study to date has analyzed the FLE and EE

public pedagogy or the relation between the ethical-political security and freedom narratives found in FLE and EE texts. This approach outlined the contours of an FLE *and* EE public pedagogy which teaches us not only how to consume, invest, take on debt and produce more creatively and flexibly but also seeks to inform how we should assist others, desire and engage in political action.

The texts chosen for analysis were created by prominent institutions and groups and so were more likely to reach a wide audience and influence the dominant FLE and EE public pedagogy. While the analysis centred on Canadian FLE and EE initiatives, texts from the US, UK and international organizations were also included. The scope was more expansive because there is a symbiotic relation between international and national levels of governance, FLE and EE narratives are largely homogenous amongst OECD nations and access to a larger corpus provided an opportunity to analyze narratives that were present but less pronounced or less advanced in the Canadian sources studied. Analyzing a variety of textual forms also limited the influence of any one particular text form on my reproduction of the FLE and EE public pedagogy and better illuminated an FLE and EE public pedagogy informed by myriad discursive and non-discursive sources.

The analysis of security narratives in chapter four examined the FLE and EE public pedagogy's claim that we have an ethical obligation to ensure that all can access capital and its assumption that this access will ensure a significant measure of financial security for all – i.e. the ability to meet their material needs. I argued that part of the efficacy of the FLE and EE public pedagogy's security narratives derived from their appropriation of the 'force' of both a liberal-democratic ethics and a primary and infinite responsibility for the other. I also stressed that the FLE and EE narrative of access to capital misconstrues FLE and EE public pedagogues' ethics, which seeks to ensure capital's access to others in forms amenable to continued capital

accumulation. The FLE and EE public pedagogy's security narratives and initiatives thus appear to respond to others' security needs but are modulated by a responsibility for capital that continually diminishes our responsibility for others. Rather than a security for others, the FLE and EE public pedagogy promotes a security for capital.

In chapter five, the freedom on offer in FLE and EE narratives was also found to privilege capital over others. I began by analyzing two narratives promoting freedom as autonomy: FLE *freedom from capital* narratives and EE *freedom with capital* narratives. Both FLE and EE freedom narratives were found to support a *freedom for capital* to grow its capacities through others – including a subversion or capitalization of individuals' private and public values – while remaining free from a responsibility for the conditions of others' freedom. Returning to the analysis from chapter four, I argued that capital's territorialization aligned with a security for capital that reforms others into the amenable forms to include those presently excluded into the capital circuit while capital's deterritorialization mirrored a freedom for capital which excludes that which and those who are other to capital's needs at the time of production. The other form of freedom analyzed, *freedom as virtue*, was shown to encourage us to act as free people ostensibly should and work on ourselves so we can engage in capital maximizing investment and production. Drawing on Lacanian political theorists and Levinasian ethics, I expanded my earlier analysis of the FLE and EE public pedagogy's ethics and claimed that this conception of freedom not only limits our obligations to others but is hostile to others.

The avenues for productive, ethical and critical FLE and EE research this thesis opens up are multiple. One could delve into the fantasies that mobilize support for the FLE and EE public pedagogy through ethnographic research similar to that carried out by Tuominen and Thompson (2015). Examining the hold these initiatives have through a psychoanalytic lens could prove fruitful and is an approach that while used in organizational studies (Cederstrom and

Hoedemaekers, 2010) and analyses of neoliberal discourses (Cremin, 2011) is rarely applied in critical FLE and EE research.<sup>239</sup> One could also analyze the gendered and racialized character of FLE and EE narratives. Specifically, one could complement my analysis of the cooption of ethics and conduct a critical philosophical analysis of prominent FLE and EE texts to discern how discourses of anti-racism and gender equality are used to support a racialized and gendered capitalism – a paradigmatic example of these discourses are Bryant’s (2010a) appropriation of the civil rights movement and VISA’s attempts to improve the financial security of women (Alderman, 2013).<sup>240</sup> Finally, researchers could focus on the teaching of a critical FLE and EE in schools and the positive public pedagogic experiments outlined in this thesis’s last chapter, including an analysis of the efforts of the Basic Income Collective in Switzerland and the effects of its public pedagogic action on civic discourse (i.e. did it create a ‘worldly thing’ and public sphere?), public support for the initiative and citizens’ understanding of the state of, causes of and solutions for wealth inequality.

One could doubtlessly posit other similar avenues of critical FLE and EE research, but the core concern is that whatever we choose is motivated by the attempt to be responsible for the other and others. We are responsible for our immediate actions and their role in the creation of systems which influence the lives of others, but FLE and EE public pedagogues shirk this responsibility by thoughtlessly reproducing the narratives and calling for or accepting initiatives (e.g. lower employment regulations, fewer collective risk management practices and less progressive taxation) that erode a security and freedom from capital, supporting the recreation of capitalism and the insecurity and limited freedom it generates. At a time when the old phrase

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<sup>239</sup> Jones and Spicer (2005, 2009) are an exception in the entrepreneurship field. Kenny and Scriver (2012) build on their analysis to examine entrepreneurship discourse in Ireland.

<sup>240</sup> Taking up this avenue for research, one should consult the work of Pinto (2012a) and Pinto and Coulson (2011) in the critical FLE field.

‘socialism or barbarism’ appears increasingly apt, this is unconscionable. The problem is not that we are not fit for capital but increasingly that capital is not fit for us. To return to the beginning, the point is not to help others manage their abandonment or reform excluded and marginalized individuals so as to include them within a system that requires their or others’ marginalization and exclusion to function; the goal should be to reform the system so that we do not have to accept the abandonment of others or their forced reformation and more ethical relations and outcomes are possible.

It is true as Critchley (2009b) comments that “nothing flows deductively from the fact of the ethical demand right the way down to real world politics” (pg. 16). But something must flow, and certain things should not flow. An ethics without a decision would be no ethics at all; however, what one chooses to do and is against requires more than ethics. It requires an agonistic politics that is for a particular world and against others, understanding that politics is not simply destabilization but is also the creation of a new hegemony that even in its most ethical iteration is only open to the other in particular ways (i.e. only particular aspects of the hegemonic order are easily rendered into ‘world things’ open to contestation) (Mouffe, 2010). The world I point to is one created through radical experimentation and demands such as a guaranteed income and participatory democracy; the world I am against is that which FLE and EE public pedagogues are encouraging us to create: a world hospitable to capital but hostile to ethics as a responsibility for the other and others.

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