THE COVETED SOULS OF OPPRESSED PERSONS

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THE COVETED SOULS OF OPPRESSED PERSONS

by

Connie L. Gibb

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Educational Studies
(Teaching, Curriculum and Learning)

Under the Supervision of Professor Karl D. Hostetler

Lincoln, Nebraska
December, 2014
Marcus Aurelius (167 A.C.E. III. 16) stated that: “[b]ody, soul, intelligence: to the body belong sensations, to the soul appetites, to the intelligence principles.” In my philosophical inquiry (my play) I argue it isn’t that simple and that the concept of soul is much like what Aristotle (1994, II, 1, 412 a 28) wrote, "The soul, therefore, is the primary act of a physical body potentially possessing life." Or, like Fincher (2007, p. 32) who wrote, “My soul is me, and I own all of my soul’s abilities and experiences…” I also discuss that the intelligence of human beings could enhance the development of their soul, and that all three – soul, intelligence and body are intricate features that separate us from animals and plants.

“The Coveted Souls of Oppressed Persons” might raise some questions when it comes to those active participants within educational environments – educators and students. In my play I argue that oppression is a limiting condition, belief, rule or situation that is forced upon a human being by an outside influence; where the outside influence is either alive, like another human being or inert, like the weather. When oppression becomes the malicious intent to strip a human being of their dignity, dehumanizing them and making them feel disrespected, oppression now becomes coveting.
For the purpose of my play I focus on how an oppressive educational environment could be transformed into a creative, flexible learning environment through the utilization of theatre, which could be a fervent addition that works in conjunction with the standardized curriculum set forth by NCLB [No Child Left Behind] Act of 2002 (Appendix A).

The “soul” purpose of my play is to introduce the use of theatre and, how the use of theatre in conjunction with the standardized curriculum could circumvent an oppressive learning environment. Much like Boal (1979/1985, 1995) who encouraged theatre spectators to become spect-actors, I will argue that the use of theatre could encourage students to become active and soulful participants in a guided student-centered learning environment (Dewey, 1916/2009, 1938, and 1899).

And so my play begins.
DEDICATION

My play is dedicated to my best friend and soul mate,

My husband, Michael Patrick O’Mara.

Your love and support encouraged me to reach my goal.

I love you!!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Accomplishments are not always achieved by oneself. With the help of very special people, I was able to attain my goal.

To my adviser and good friend, Dr. Karl D. Hostetler, thank you for your mentorship, time, encouragement and friendship. Our coffee meetings paid off.

My committee, Dr. Theresa Catalino, Dr. Edmund T. Hamann and Dr. Brent D. Cezda, thank you for caring about educating students and for believing in my philosophical inquiry. Theresa, thank you for reading my play and making suggestions on how to improve it.

To Zoe Sophia, my granddaughter, you are the highlight of my life and the star of our future. Continue to love books to be a “forever” learner. To my children, Todd, Wendi and Bryan, you are terrific adults and always make me proud; I love you unconditionally. To my Aridzonacuz, Roslyn, I love you. To my parents and the rest of my family, thank you for your continuing love and support throughout all of my educational endeavors.

I DID IT!!!
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PROLOGUE

It has always seemed strange to me that in our endless discussions about education so little stress is laid on the pleasure of becoming an educated person, the enormous interest it adds to life. To be able to be caught up into the world of thought – that is to be educated.

(Chang on Hamilton, 2006, p. 442)

Marcus Aurelius (167 A. C. E., III 16) stated: “body, soul, intelligence: to the body belong sensations, to the soul appetites, to the intelligence principles.” In this philosophical inquiry (my play) I argue that the concept of soul is more than quoted by Aurelius and is more like what Aristotle (1994, 414a20ff) wrote:

The soul does not exist without a body and yet is not itself a kind of body.

For it is not a body, but something which belongs to a body, and for this reason exists in a body, and in a body of such-and-such a kind.

As I develop the concept of soul, I compare the human soul to the soul of an animal and to the soul of a plant. This comparison will show: (1) that animals and plants have souls; (2) that soul is not based on intelligence; and (3) that intelligence along with the soul work in harmony to endure adverse situations and to thrive in favorable situations.

However as I bring forth the concept of soul, I also argue that soul is not perceived as intelligence of or knowledge gained by an individual, because I’m not sure plants, some animals and some humans can be defined as being “intellect”, but that the intelligence of human beings enhances the development of their soul; and that all three – soul, intelligence and body combined are what separate the human being from animals and plants. What happens to the soul of human beings if they are subjected to an oppressive environment?
I argue that oppression is a limiting condition, belief, rule or situation that is forced upon a human being, animal or plant by an outside influence; where the outside influence is another human being, animal, or plant or it can be inert, like the weather. Human beings are my primary objective throughout my play, focusing on soul, oppression, coveting and educational environments. I bring in animals and plants to illustrate that soul, oppression and coveting are not limited to human beings; that these entities: soul, oppression and coveting are important to understand in order for change to occur. In education this outside force could be the educator and even the administration that oppresses the student. It could also be the educational environment and knowing that they are in a room with other pupils for a good part of the day that the student finds oppressive. How can oppressive or perceived oppressive educational environments capture the minds of students so that they want to become a viable part of their own learning experience?

For the purpose of my philosophical inquiry (my play) I focus on how an oppressive learning environment could be transformed into a creative, flexible learning environment through the utilization of theatre, which could be a fervent addition that works in conjunction with the standardized curriculum set forth by NCLB [No Child Left Behind] Act of 2002 (Appendix A).

An environment, whether it is an educational situation or another type of situation, is defined as the place in which the subject inhabits or frequents on a regular basis that is populated by other human beings, flora and fauna as well as inert objects and conditions; i.e. a home, a church, a shopping mall, a school, etc. Throughout my play, environment is that place where the other inhabitants affect our lives and helps or hinders
to make us who we are and what we become. It is also where the student and the other inhabitants of the area cohabitate in a symbiotic, working relationship. However, as I will argue this symbiotic relationship could become a parasitic relationship in an oppressive or coveting environment; where the parasite, I use this word only as a biological term, is the educator and the host, again a biological term, is the student.

The philosophers emphasized within my philosophical inquiry are Dewey, Freire, Nussbaum, as well as others. I also use Boal, who through theatre established the spectator, a concept I use to develop an educational environment that could encourage educators to transform their classrooms into an empowering and soulful learning environment. Like Hamilton’s (Chang on Hamilton, 2006, p. 442) quote, I believe that the focus of education should be on the journey of “becoming an educated person”. This journey should be void of oppressive or coveting learning environments and experiences, where the student’s soul is quashed by having to sit, listen, take notes and regurgitate on standardized exams. Instead, this journey should involve a guided student-centered experience (I use Dewey’s definition) where the use of Boal’s theatre could add life to a rehearsed lecture or assignment and capture the student’s interest, opening new doors and encouraging the educator and the student to become soulful, inspiring individuals. Like all environments there are many aspects involved in creating the conditions of this soulful, anti-oppressive and liberating learning environment. I use the aforementioned philosophers to highlight some especially important aspects of an approach to teaching that aims to resist and overcome oppression and further students' and teachers’ humanity; for example: Dewey’s positive growth, Nussbaum’s capabilities, Freire’s humanization
and dehumanization, Hostetler and Sumner’s well-being and ultimately Boal’s introduction of the spect-actor.

But, what if the educational environment is riddled with pitfalls and obstacles? For example, rote learning might be emphasized at the expense of a richer form of learning, for instance learning in the sense of growth (to be further developed in Act Three), as Dewey argues. Then, students are not encouraged to develop the skills and Weltanschauung, an understanding of humanity’s relationship to the universe, needed for growth; or educators and administrators are not of the mind to “rethink education if education is to help people live worthwhile lives” (Hostetler, 2011, p. 1), and oppression becomes an accepted way of life. To learn something and not merely memorize the information is to remember it and be able to recall and utilize the information at a later date; i.e. to connect new information to previous, current and future external information and sources.

I maintain that this kind of educational growth of an individual feeds the soul, as Aristotle teaches us:

Even after the intellective soul begins to think, the first thing it knows is not the truth of the thought towards which the desire (from which the activity of the active intellect is said to originate) would have to be directed; rather, the first thing it knows is the nature of external things (Aristotle, 1995, p. 323).

As I will argue, when an educator encourages students to think, the student acquires the ability to become a critical thinker, a problem solver and a soulful person.
“The coveted souls of oppressed persons” might raise some questions when it comes to those active participants within educational environments – educators and students. Such as: (1) Why is soul important? (2) Who are these oppressed persons? (2) How do these souls become coveted? (3) How does oppression or coveting affect learning? (4) How does one overcome oppressive conditions and become a soulful person? I argue that “[w]e must engage body, emotion, and spirit, as well as minds” (Hostetler, 2011, p. 1); where in my play “spirit” and “soul” are interchangeable. Although soul is difficult to define, soul will be determined as the very fiber that makes up the individual’s being, their psyche and their person; in short, our uniqueness is encapsulated within our soul. While intelligence works with the soul and our bodies to overcome oppressive states, intelligence is not an integral part of the soul.

In education, if the environment becomes oppressive educators must resist the temptation to control, to oppress, or worse, to covet the souls of their students; for they are the unsuspecting souls, vulnerable souls, inquisitive souls, and impressionable souls. Educators should be able to control their authoritative position and allow their students to own their educational experience; i.e., allow the students to be inquisitive and ask questions so connections can be made and the pleasure of learning can be fostered, which is also the philosophy of Dewey, Freire, Hostetler, Nussbaum and others.

Unfortunately for some students, their souls are not just at risk of being controlled or coveted within an oppressive educational environment but by other environmental situations as well. For example, a home environment where children are raised to be seen and not heard, they are to be quiet until spoken to, are not to ask questions or interact with others and their minds are not stimulated through conversation, reading or
questioning. Or they are raised in an environment riddled with abuse, verbal and/or physical. These are two of many oppressive environments to which a child or adult could be exposed. Even though the role of the family unit and the community are not the focus of my paper they are important factors in understanding student behaviors and student growth.

The “soul” purpose of my play is to introduce the use of theatre and, how the use of theatre in conjunction with the standardized curriculum could circumvent an oppressive learning environment. Much like Boal (1979/1985) who encouraged theatre spectators to become spect-actors, during the oppressive regime of the Brazilian government, and communicate their distressed conditions, I will argue that the use of theatre could encourage students to become active participants in a guided student-centered learning environment (Dewey, 1938/1997). I will also discuss how educators who use theatre as an alternative to lecturing might be able to captivate the students and draw the students into a soulful learning experience; in other words, so students and educators can experience “the pleasure of becoming an educated person” (Chang on Hamilton, 2006, p. 442), and experience the pleasure of helping others to learn.

This play would not be complete without the expertise and knowledge of selected philosophers. Although there are many, I have selected those who address soul, oppression, growth, humanity, well-being and the use of theatre to help develop my philosophical concept – the use of theatre in the classroom.

I Introduce the Selected Philosophers

Selection of the philosophers as well as their proposed stage names, should they perform in a play, is based on their philosophical view that when combined with the
standardized curriculum could change a stoic teaching environment into an active guided student-centered environment. John Dewey (1899, p. 30) believed children knew, or that we at least shouldn’t underestimate their capabilities, how to solve problems and voice their opinions, and that they brought to the educational environment four basic “native impulses” – “impulse to communicate, to construct, to inquire, and to express in finer form.” These were the “natural resources, the uninvested capital, upon the exercise of which depends the active growth of the child” (Dewey, 1899, p. 30). Paulo Freire (1983, p. 13) devoted his life to the growth of the impoverished population of Brazil based on his belief that “…every human being, no matter how ‘ignorant’ or submerged in the ‘culture of silence’ he may be, is capable of looking critically at his world in a dialogical encounter with others.” Using Freire I look at oppression and use his devotion to the oppressed persons of Brazil in understanding oppression within the educational system of the 21st Century. Karl Hostetler (2011) wrote on human well-being in education. He provokes us to look at the current educational system and “rethink education if education is to help people live worthwhile lives” (Hostetler, 2011, p. 1). I use Hostetler with Sumner on developing human well-being within the educational system which nourishes the soul. I also focus on two of Martha Nussbaum’s ten capabilities, practical reasoning and affiliation, because they are of particular importance in the growth and humanization of an individual. Having the ability to capitalize on each of Nussbaum’s ten capabilities should help the individual to feed their soul and overcome oppressive and/or coveting situations. Use of the theatre is brought forth by Augusto Boal (1979/1985, p. ix) who offered proof that the theatre can be a very efficient weapon against the domination of the ruling class and for the liberation of the oppressed; where “[c]hange is imperative”.
When Boal introduced the spect-actor the theatre was being used by the oppressive Brazilian government as a way of controlling the masses and deliver political tyranny. The spect-actor was an experiment by Boal to encourage spectators to go on stage, along with the actors and actresses, and express their concern and discontent with the current regime. Even though introduction of the spect-actor failed in Brazil, because the government put a stop to it, Boal continued develop the concept of spect-actor in his other theatrical works in other countries, including the United States. Using variations of Boal’s spect-actors, where students become active participants within their learning environment, could enhance Dewey’s conception of a guided student-centered education and avoid the traditional educational environment.

Many themes used in my play are from the various movies, books and theatrical plays I selected to review. These particular works help to illustrate my perception of soul, oppression, and coveting in different ways. Because of this the philosophers are cast as the spectators and not the main character, which will be further explained in my works. Before proceeding with my philosophical play, I find it necessary to delve further into the beliefs of my selected philosophers. Biographies of the selected philosophers are alphabetical, which follows the general format of theatrical Playbills.

**Augusto Boal on Theatre**

Born in Brazil and formally trained in chemical engineering, Boal’s interest in theatre led him to work at and explore audience participation exercises to promote social awareness at the Arena Theatre in São Paulo, Brazil. I gave Augusto Boal his chorus name of Radical Boal based on the chemical definition of a radical – a very reactive atom that seeks out other radical atoms to form different molecules; as a radical, Boal drew
attention to himself when he transformed the audience from spectators to spect-actors (the correlation of Boal’s spect-actor and Dewey’s guided student-centered educational environment are explained in Act Five) where audience members voiced their ideas and feelings, to the actors, on stage to speak out against an oppressive government. This empowered audience members, which in turn generated social action. Boal transformed theatre from its original form, where the Brazilian government (the oppressor) used it as a means of assimilating propaganda to the citizens (the oppressed), to a form where the citizens went from spectators to spect-actors thus using the theatre to speak out against their oppressor. In the 1960’s the Brazilian government looked upon Boal’s activity as a threat and called him a cultural activist; I prefer to call him a radical, one that attracts others in order to transform the current situation.

Interaction of the performers and the audience are semi-observed today in improvisational shows where raw material is generated for future performances that are more structured. An example of this type of performance is seen when observing the Cardiff Giant Theatre Company in Chicago. In the late 1980s and early 1990s they “mounted a weekly improvisational show that often generated raw material for the plays.” (Kotis & Hollmann, 2001, p. v) In exercising this concept in the classroom, student interaction with the educator is just as, if not more, important than gaining factual knowledge and regurgitating it; a participatory learning environment was encouraged by John Dewey (the guided student-centered classroom), Paulo Freire (humanization), and Martha Nussbaum (encouraging practical reasoning and affiliation). There are many more educational philosophers prior to and following the mentioned foursome, but these four are my major focus. In the theatre Boal encouraged the audience to become spect-
actors. In education, John Dewey encouraged a guided student-centered environment where the educator guides each student through new experiences and helps students make connections to their past and present experiences. For example, the educator is the actor or actress and the students become a type of spect-actor, where they are actively involved in their educative experience. By cultivating the interest of the student through the use of an environment which allows the student to become a part of the educational process growth should occur and education should become exciting and dynamic avoiding an oppressive environment. For this to take place it is important for the educator to understand the numerous conditions of growth.

**John Dewey on Positive Growth**

Sir Dewey is selected based on John Dewey being the “most influential philosopher of the twentieth century” (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 64) with his concept of a guided student-centered educational arrangement and student growth. In England, knighthood is one of the highest honors an individual can achieve based on significant contributions to national life. John Dewey made a significant contribution at the turn of the twentieth century to the educational experience and stood up to those who strongly believed in the traditional, passive way of teaching. Because of this I bestow thee Sir Dewey into knighthood. According to Dewey (1938) educative experiences should be connected resulting in an interactive experience and should be inclusive of putting the student at the center of education as a voluntary, active member of the learning process.

Dewey’s alternative educational approach to the static traditional method and the unguided student-centered environment, where students had no guidance and were able to do as they pleased, was his vision of a “meaningful” educative experience, identified in
this play as a guided student-centered environment. His guided student-centered environment incorporated the necessary and useful features from the traditional education and the unguided student-centered approach as well as including the supervision of dedicated educators. These educators would ultimately guide the students through positive educative experiences leading them to solid, more substantial learning and growth. A “positive” learning environment included, but was not limited to: (1) the building upon students’ previous knowledge and environmental setting; (2) the educator guiding students through the current experience; (3) the making of connections between past, present, and future experiences; (4) the encouragement of continued learning utilizing educational tools necessary to succeed. In doing this, Dewey believed that the positive, non-threatening educative learning environment would instill in the learner an optimistic attitude in becoming part of a community, and encourage the student to seek further knowledge.

An example of Dewey’s guided student-centered educational environment could be observed in an interactive mathematics class where students work in groups to solve assigned math problems. As an educator, this would work when I encouraged the individual students of the group to work a problem and show the other group members how they arrived at the answer. It was interesting, to me, to see how some students would get the correct answer. Some students are analytical, following specific steps in working the problems, while others are abstract where they would work the problems backwards and not following any specific steps to arrive at the answer. They would tell me “I just knew the answer” but couldn’t show me how they arrived at the answer. Their way was more difficult for me to grade, because if they got the wrong answer there
wasn’t a way to figure out where they miscalculated. By allowing students to work in
groups they would take ownership of their work, those who didn’t understand how to
work the problem could see how their peers worked them.

Dewey’s guided student-centered educative environment which emphasized
growth can be linked with Freire’s (1983, p. 13) “conviction…that every human being,
no matter how ‘ignorant’ or submerged in the ‘culture of silence’ he may be, is capable of
looking critically at his world in a dialogical encounter with others.” Paulo Freire
believed like John Dewey, that there shouldn’t be a barrier between schools and their
local communities and that educators should become part of the community; much like
the actor becomes interactive with the spectators similar to Boal’s development of the
spect-actor. This will be developed in Act Five of my play.

**Paulo Freire on Oppression**

Paulo Freire was born in Brazil in 1921 to a middle-class family who lost their
money and status due to an economic downturn and found themselves as a poor and
impoverished family; because of this Freire was not a stranger to hunger or being called
stupid. Growing up hungry Freire found it difficult to concentrate and stay awake in
school and teachers thought him lazy and lacking interest. Although Freire was educated
as a lawyer his first wife told him that he was a better educator. So, he changed careers
and pursued his PhD in education. Throughout his career his main focus was on the
oppressive situation of the poor in his home town, and he believed that if they were
educated it could be a way for them to escape this oppression. I gave Paulo Freire the
name Curious Fellow based on his argument that “[c]uriosity about the object of
knowledge and the willingness and openness to engage theoretical readings and
discussions is fundamental” (Freire, 1983, p. 13). Freire believed in the unity of theory and practice in order to achieve dialogue between educator and student, much like Socratic dialogue, as conversation.

Freire’s belief that education might overcome oppression and the struggles some people face can be observed in specific parts of the world where women are trying to overcome oppression. Today, there are girls of different faiths who want to become educated and who are facing extreme persecution by the Taliban. Malala Yousafzai, a young Pushtan, is leading the fight against the Taliban in Pakistan so that girls can go to school. She lives “in a land where rifles are fired in celebration of a son, while daughters are hidden away behind a curtain, their role in life simply is to prepare food and give birth to children” (Yousafzai & Lamb, 2013, p. 9). When the Taliban shot her to keep her quiet and show other girls that they need to return to the female Muslim’s societal position in life, the Taliban was not ready for the world to stand behind her in her fight for girl’s to be educated. Instead of shutting up Malala they opened Pandora’s Box. Unfortunately, the Taliban continues to persecute girls and women and forbids them from becoming educated.

Boal introduced theatre to help overcome oppression in an overpowering government environment; and Dewey believed that the tool needed to overcome a static traditional educational environment and for growth to occur, was a guided student-centered environment in which students could ask questions and investigate. For Freire the tools included the unity of theory and practice where dialogue would occur between educator and student. Martha Nussbaum believed these tools included, but are not
exclusive to, the ability to develop ten capabilities for all of humanity; which are needed for an individual to be human and help them to overcome oppression.

**Martha Nussbaum on Capabilities**

Martha Nussbaum, an American Philosopher and a Professor of Law and Ethics, further developed ten capabilities from their original inception by Amartya Sen: (1) life; (2) bodily health; (3) bodily integrity; (4) senses, imagination, thought; (5) emotions; (6) practical reason; (7) affiliation; (8) other species; (9) play; and (10) control over one’s environment (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 78-80). Each of the ten capabilities relates to an aspect of life, and having the ability and being able to acquire and cultivate these capabilities throughout one’s life is Nussbaum’s (2000, p. 70) “foundation for basic political principles that should underwrite constitutional guarantees”.

In *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (2010) Nussbaum mentions the ten capabilities when she writes about how education of the soul is being forgotten in the current curriculum. It is because of her belief in these capabilities that her stage name is Madame Capability. Nussbaum’s approach to welfare is a liberal theory of justice and human rights. I examine two of Nussbaum’s capabilities, *practical reason* and *affiliation*, throughout my play as they will help to explain my theory on ways to overcome oppressive situations within our educational system.

I focus on Behar’s (1993/2003) book based on the life stories of an old Mexican woman, Esperanza, to illustrate the inability and lack of freedom to develop Nussbaum’s capabilities. Ruth Behar finds herself searching for a mythical woman whom she has heard tales of. When she finds this woman the search turns and she becomes the one who is “searched out” and asked to be a comadre (godmother) to Esperanza. Behar
(1993/2003, p. xxii) takes a journey into Esperanza’s past and she doesn’t know the end, “[w]ithout putting down a word on paper, my comadre has been writing the story of her life since she was five years old, when she began to impress upon her memory every beating her mother received at the hands of her father.” Since her comadre does not know how to read or write, Behar put Esperanza’s words down on paper; to pass the life story of a poor peddler woman across the border; from Mexico to the United States.

In one of her stories, Esperanza tells how her mama has thrown her off her land and called the bruja (police). Esperanza brings up the point of being uneducated and that if she knew how to read she would be able to control her environment and get herself out of the situation of being evicted from her mama’s land. Behar’s (1993/2003, p. 201) interpretation of Esperanza’s story concerning this is not of just a story to be told, “but in the hope that I, an educated woman with some connections in the world, would have some advice, some notion of what to do.” As an educated woman, it is up to Behar to offer advice to Esperanza in how to deal with future problems in a diplomatic way.

From Boal, I identify that freedom from oppression through theatre is understood to be physical freedom as well as freedom of one’s soul. Freire believed that dialoguing was achieved between the educator and the student by the unity of theory and practice. Dewey believed that cultivating the interest of the student through the use of an environment in which the student could make choices, growth should occur and education becomes exciting and dynamic. Nussbaum brought forth two capabilities, practical reason and affiliation that are important in the development of a soulful person. Each philosopher introduced, along with some others, performs an important role throughout my play; they along with their philosophical beliefs will be further developed
within specific Acts and Scenes throughout my play. As in some Playbills, after the introduction of the cast members one might find the Act Overtures.

**ACT OVERTURES**

**ACT ONE: WITHOUT A BEGINNING THERE IS NO END**

Act One is a narrative of terms within the title of my play – The Coveted Souls of Oppressed Persons. Without laying the groundwork by discussing and developing the concepts of the four Scenes within this Act: (1) Soul in Souls of the Unsuspecting; (2) Oppression – The Good, The Bad and The Ugly; (3) Coveting – To Covet or Not to Covet; and (4) The Educator Did It, my play would be meaningless and just words on the pages. Central to Act One are the souls of the unsuspecting and how oppression and coveting could affect their very fiber, their very being. I also introduce the educator, an important actor in nurturing or, on the flip side, going as far as coveting the unsuspecting soul.

My play does not address those individuals who might have a chemical imbalance, mental illness or are inherently harmful to themselves or others; these are for another time and place.

**Scene One: Souls of the Unsuspecting**

Scene One explores the concept of Soul and introduces the main characters of my play – the souls of the unsuspecting. The basic purpose of this scene is to clarify the many different abstract, nonphysical concepts of soul, and address the religious connotation of soul only to bring to light its mortal aspect. It is important to understand
the distinction between body, soul and intelligence in order to understand how they complete the human being.

I also argue that animals and plants have souls to illustrate that the soul is not based entirely on intelligence but that it goes deeper to make the individual human being, animal or plant who and what they are or become themselves and within their environment.

**Scene Two: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly of Oppression**

Although there are many kinds of oppression, in this Scene and for the purpose of my play I focus on three: (1) physical, an action to intentionally harm the body of the oppressed but lacking a psychological objective; (2) physical and psychological, a harmful act aimed at harming the body and soul of the oppressed; and (3) psychological, the mental anguish or harm intentionally inflicted on the oppressed without the use of physical contact or restraint. The event or act of one to all of these three on an individual or community can be: (1) intentional or unintentional; (2) directly focused on a specific individual or community; and (3) have temporary or permanent effects on the oppressed. I differentiate between the three forms of oppression, pertinent to my play that human beings, animals and plants can be exposed. I am not a psychologist therefore the forms of oppression I address are relevant in setting the stage for the purpose of my play.

I will argue the difference between the good, the bad and the ugly of each of the three types of oppression. With human beings for example, the good of oppression might be found among military personnel – when trained to do as they are told in order to protect themselves and others. The bad of oppression might be observed in slavery – the
owning of another human being, but not to the point of taking the soul of that human. Ugly oppression might be the educator who asks their students to sit on their lap – the enjoyment of physical contact by the oppressor. I will also elaborate on how the act of “being oppressed” versus “allowing oneself to be oppressed” play an important role in the perception of oppression.

**Scene Three: Coveting – To Covet or Not to Covet**

Scene Three takes oppression to the ultimate point of possessing and controlling another human being, animal or plant soul; to possess their very being, their soul – coveting. This Scene emphasizes the difference between oppression and coveting, how oppression can be intentional and unintentional while the coveting of another’s soul is an intentional malicious act against all living organism; it also addresses how easy it is to go from oppression to coveting of another human being, animal or plant. However, this intentional type of control or desire by an individual can also be for the betterment of oneself, for example, one can covet time to exercise and relax. For the purpose of my play, I will argue that coveting is intentional and that it takes on a malicious, evil form of oppression; the malicious intent of taking over another’s soul, for example, a person who is kept in bondage for the pleasure of another or forced into labor.

**Scene Four: The Educator Did It**

Scene Four discusses the Educator and how the unsuspecting soul (the student) can be influenced positively or negatively by them. By cultivating the interest of the student and allowing the student to make choices growth should occur. For this to take place it is important for the educator to understand the conditions of growth. I focus on Dewey’s philosophy, which is that growth through freedom, creativity, and dialogue is
the principal aim of education and is a cumulative movement of action resulting in continued learning to reach goals and continue to grow. Unfortunately, there are some educators who can oppress or covet these unsuspecting souls, causing the student to feel suppressed or dehumanized. I bring to light that the educator can also become oppressed or coveted by a controlling administration or an over-reaching government entity. The lack of freedom, time and energy to engage students in the learning experience could cause an oppressive environment for both educator and student.

ACT TWO: THE VISION OF SOUL IN EDUCATION

Act Two takes the concept of soul developed in Act One, Scene One into the educational arena, where the unsuspecting souls come to a perceived safe environment. Focusing on the souls of educators and students within an educational environment I further develop the abstract, nonphysical nature of soul and explore the concept of soul within the educational environment. Although the other philosophers which I use throughout my play have their perspective on soul, I focus mainly on Nussbaum and two of her ten capabilities along with Hostetler and Sumner, who focus on the well-being of the unsuspecting souls to emphasize the importance of addressing student’s souls within the educational environment.

Scene One: Nussbaum and the Soul of the Educated

In Scene One, I use Fincher (2007) in conversation with Nussbaum (2000, 2010) to further develop the concept of soul. I also discuss Nussbaum’s concern with taking the humanities out of the current curriculum, and how she fears by doing so could affect humanity.
Scene Two: Hostetler with Sumner on the Well-Being of the Soul

In this Scene I discuss how Sumner’s concept of well-being; how the theory he defends is not solely based on identifying well-being with happiness, and how it requires a subject’s authentic endorsement of the conditions and experiences of her life. To understand Sumner’s idea of what welfare is one should be aware of how Sumner perceives the traditional meaning of welfare and why it is more than just feeling good about one’s self at a particular time. I also focus on Hostetler’s (2011, p. 2) belief that “the welfare of students and teachers is under attack right now, especially in public education, and needs defense” to help emphasize my play and how oppression is present in our current educational environment.

Scene Three: Nussbaum’s Two Capabilities to Feed the Soul

In Scene Three I focus on two of Nussbaum’s ten capabilities, practical reasoning and affiliation, which are of particular importance to my play and the understanding of the student’s welfare. Practical reason, like Sumner’s authentic happiness, demonstrates the ability of the student to make good choices. Affiliation emphasizes the need of a social base of self-respect, non-humiliation, and treatment of others as intelligent and dignified human beings.

ACT THREE: THE ROPE AROUND THE NECK OF THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Act Three looks into the oppression students could face within their educational arena and delves into Dewey’s concept of growth. Understanding growth, as defined by Dewey, is important in the perception of how oppression could hinder or worse stop the
“learning” growth of students. Contribution of both the student and the educator as co-participants is vital to a guided student-centered learning environment that could be void of oppression. It is a matter of growth for both the educator and the student. The central idea of an education, which is based on experience, is the careful selection and planning of educative experiences that promote connections and therefore produce intellectual growth and development in a non-oppressive way.

**Scene One: Dewey on Growth to Overcome Oppression**

The general focus of Scene Two is based on the interpretation of student growth by John Dewey (1916/2009, 1938, and 1899). While the philosophical interest in the structure and importance of “growth” has existed for centuries, the definitions and understanding of growth are wide-ranging and the understanding of how growth can be conceived affected is open for debate. Dewey theorized that one condition for growth of a student should include an educational process built upon pre-existing experiences and in a positive direction. The criterion of positive growth would lead students to understanding new experiences built upon previous knowledge and the ability to make connections.

**Scene Two: Freire and Freedom from Oppression**

In this scene I focus on some of Freire’s acts to free the oppressed from oppression, to humanize individuals. Specifically discussed are: unity for liberation, organization and cultural synthesis. I also introduce the relationship between Freire and Boal and the impact they had on the Brazilian culture.
ACT FOUR: THE COVETING OF THE UNSUSPECTED SOULS

Act Four explores further into the coveting of another’s soul within the educational arena and how becoming an educated person could free them from this type of environment. Using Freire as my main philosopher I first focus on how dehumanization and antidialoging can go from oppression to coveting, and then use fight in Brazil to educate the poor people in order to free them from oppression, I use his philosophy to help free the coveted souls of oppressed persons from the act of depositing – banking concept of education to one of communication – dialoging (Freire, 1983).

Scene One: Freire on Humanization and Dehumanization

In this Scene, I use Freire to understand the connection between humanization and dehumanization with oppressor, and oppressed. In becoming liberated from an oppressive environment, one must take care not to become an oppressor of the oppressor. With dehumanization, humanity has been compromised and those affected lack the ability to become human. To regain their humanity, they need to be careful to not become an oppressor, “but rather restorers of the humanity of both” (Freire, 1983, p. 28). Freire also believed that dialogue was important in the educational process; where dialogue can establish trust and communication, so “true education” (Freire, 1983, p. 81) can occur.

Scene Two: Freire and the Coveted Soul

Even though Freire focused on humanization and dehumanization, discussed in Act Three, Scene Two, I focus on the acts that could be conceived as coveting. In this Scene, I focus on some of Freire’s acts to dehumanize individuals and how some could
go from oppression to coveting. Specifically discussed are: conquest, divide and rule, and manipulation.

**ACT FIVE: THEATRE, SOULFUL LEARNING**

Act Five introduces Boal and the use of theatre as a way to circumvent the oppressive state of our current educational system. Although the point of this Act is not to encourage students to physically stand up with the educator to deliver their message or show their frustration, it is how the educator and student can break away from Freire’s “banking” concept and Dewey’s traditional educative approach. I argue that there is a type of spect-actor experience that could excite students about learning and make education an enjoyable adventure to becoming an educated person. Within this Act I discuss Boal’s concept of the spect-actor; how to transition from a playwright to an educator; and show one example of how theatre could be used to encourage learning in an unoppressive environment.

**Scene One: Boal and the Spect-actor**

In this Scene I focus on Boal’s (1979/1985, p. iv) use of theatre as a “very efficient weapon” for liberation. Boal’s perception that theatre was used as a tool for domination by the ruling classes, impelled him to change the concept of theatre and encourage those oppressed persons, the “passive beings”, the “spectators” to become active, participating subjects, the actors, the “spect-actors” (Boal, 1979/1985, p. 122).

**Scene Two: From Playwright to Educator to Playwright**

I focus on what it takes to become a playwright and translate this into what it takes for an educator to transform the classroom into a theatre environment, where
student’s become an integral part of their educative experience. Different ways in which Boal’s spect-actor can be incorporated into the current curriculum will also be discussed.

**Scene Three: From Lecture to Theatre**

Scene Three illustrates one way in which Boal’s spect-actors concept can be incorporated into the current curriculum, where student’s become the first person of subject material in order for them to become active learners. One of my interpretations of Boal’s spect-actor is for the educator to rewrite her lecture using the students to act out an abstract concept; this is done to captivate and encourage student participation and learning.

**Scene Four: A One Act Play**

Scene Four is a play written to exemplify the use of Boal’s spect-actor while teaching an abstract concept. My one act play sets the stage to take students, who are generally concrete learners, into one concept of the abstract world of the building blocks of matter. Understanding what an electron is and how it fits into forming an atom is performed by the students.

**ACT SIX: EPOLOGUE**

Act Six is the Epilogue, where I review what I brought forth during my play and from my educative experiences. Soul, oppression and coveting are concepts an educator should understand when developing an educational environment encouraging students to become participatory learners. By incorporating a concept similar to Boal’s spect-actor with the standardized curriculum designed by NCLB, the educator and the students could avoid an oppressive educational environment.
And now my play comes to an end, having introduced the unsuspecting soul and the educator, guiding them through oppressive and coveting educational environments and introducing a possible solution. My main objective is to bring forth the use of theatre in the educational environment so that students and educators can experience “the pleasure of becoming an educated person” (Chang on Hamilton, 2006, p. 442).
ACT ONE: WITHOUT A BEGINNING THERE IS NO END

From Socrates and Plato straight through to the Hellenistic schools, there was deep agreement that the point of philosophical inquiry and discourse in the area of ethics was to improve, in some manner, the pupil’s soul, to move the pupil closer to the leading of the good life.

(Nussbaum, 1990, p. 16)

Overture

Like every play there is a beginning as well as an end. My play commences with Act One where my four scenes introduce the major rudiments found throughout my play: soul, oppression, coveting and the educator. Scene One is an in-depth look at soul – the heart and spirit of living organisms; in my play I focus on: human beings, animals and plants. I will argue that animals and plants also possess souls, although not as intricate or discernable as the human soul but non-the-less a spirit – adaptability and survivorship, and in some higher order animals – loyalty. The Second Scene introduces oppression, the good, the bad and the ugly, a domination that occurs when one person curtails the soul of an unsuspecting person. Physical, physical and psychological and psychological oppression of another can ensue intentionally or unintentionally. Scene Three takes oppression to the ultimate domination, to coveting a person’s soul to the point of “owning” the subordinate. Scene Four, the final scene of Act One, introduces the educator, the person who could become oppressed or coveted by an outside entity and who possesses the ability to oppress or liberate the unsuspected souls, their students. Before I begin my play I would like to introduce the main character, the “unsuspecting souls” and argue that we all fall within this realm at some point in our lives; unfortunately, some more than others.
I Introduce the Unsuspecting Souls

Torn from our comfortable, safe nurturing habitat within the mother’s womb we emerge into an unknown World. How our needs are met, how we are nurtured and the environment in which we live will determine how we perceive this new place. Having the instinct to survive (nature) in this new place we are dependent on those around us (nurture). There are many articles written on studies concerning nature versus nurture; some studies argue that nature, what’s in our genes, is stronger than nurture which is the effect our environment has on us; likewise, there are those who argue that one’s environmental influence is stronger than our gene’s in determining who and what we become. Although not the topic of my play it is important to distinguish between the two; I argue that as human beings it is our environment and those around us (nurture) that affect us more than our genes (nature). Human beings are unlike animals born with different survival instincts as well as abilities, depending on the species, or plants that have different ways to survive the conditions in which they encounter. For example, as human beings and other higher order animals we are born with a survival instinct but lack the ability to survive on our own without being nurtured. We demand, we accept and most of all we trust. In actuality, we are the “Unsuspecting Souls” and live our lives with the other fauna and flora within our environment in a symbiotic relationship. We are not born knowing who or what will influence or harm us, these are learned and experienced throughout our lives: such as, being burned by putting your hand on a hot burner of a stove – it teaches us that a burner could be hot and touching it will harm us; or having your hand slapped by an authority figure when reaching for a valuable piece of art work – it teaches us that the possessions of others are not to be touched. As a young person we
become aware of those situations that can intentionally and unintentionally influence or change who or what we are or become. Our souls make us vulnerable but also receptive to whatever our environment has to offer; whether it is for the good of human kind (animals and plants) or the bad. Born unaware of the entanglements our souls might encounter and the ecological influences we might encounter we become the product of those around us and situations we experience.

**SCENE ONE: SOULS OF THE UNSUSPECTING**

When people hear our music I think they realize that there is something more to this life than what I can see with my eyes because beauty touches the soul and the heart and it reminds people that I have a soul and I have a heart.

(Mother Cecilia Snell, CBS News Sunday, 2014)

**Overture**

Souls of the unsuspecting explores the abstract, nonphysical nature that is present within living things specifically human beings, animals and plants, and how environmental and physical changes can purposely or inadvertently change the souls of the individuals, physically and/or psychologically. Because the sense of soul is intangible, I begin with the use of examples to illustrate the depth of soul and bring forth the idea that the concept of soul is not limited to human beings but that it is intricately present within animals and plants, as well. The philosophers I use are by no means all of the ones who address soul, but they do help develop my perception of “soul” and as my title suggests focus on the “unsuspecting” soul.
In the Republic (Waterfield, 1993) Plato believed that every human being possesses three parts of the soul, *The Tripartite Soul*: (1) the rational part, our thinking portion that helps us distinguish between what is true and what is false – practical reason (I use one of Nussbaum’s capabilities); (2) the spiritual part – our passions, aggressive, competitive, the good and the evil; and, (3) the appetitive part – our wants for food, drink, sex, etc. These human properties that we hold so dear to “being alive” make us who we are and what we are within our environment; a place consisting of the physical, biological and chemical influences that affect our well-being.

**The Abstract, Nonphysical Nature of Soul**

“The word ‘soul’ has religious connotations for many people, and I neither insist on these nor reject them” (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 6). However, this spirituality that soul represents is what I am trying to capture with the idea that soul need not be religious and that one could conceivably put their soul into something, listen to their soul and/or be touched by a soul. Or in the quote above when “music touches the soul” one realizes they have a soul. The belief is that listening to beautiful music makes one realize that there is more to life than what can be seen. Because music stirs the nonphysical life-force within human beings, may be the reason why some people play music, sing or talk to other humans, animals and plants.

As an abstract entity, soul escapes an easy definition; however, a clear definition of soul isn’t really needed. How people think about soul, use the idea of soul and interpret the word soul might be helpful in understanding the convoluted term “soul”. For example, one might say Shakespeare put his soul into his plays and put soul into the
characters of his plays. Macbeth had a tortured soul. One might bare her soul. Ebenezer Scrooge, created by Charles Dickens, lost his soul to the monetary devil. Sméagol (Gollum) in *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings Trilogy* lost his soul to an inanimate object, the One Ring. A modern day example is observed in *Fried Green Tomatoes* where Evelyn Couch regains her emotionally repressed soul through the help of a feisty old woman, Ninny Threadgoode, whom she befriends in a nursing home. By listening to Ninny’s stories about Idgie, a compassionate and fiercely independent woman who in the 1920’s served blacks out of the back of her Whistle Stop diner, Evelyn regains her self-worth and liberates her soul from an oppressive husband and life style. Evelyn revolutionizes her self-esteem from drowning her sorrows with the daily ingestion of candy bars to exercising and taking control of her life; taking control as far as asking Ninny to move in with her and her husband, Ed. Since beginning my play I have heard the word “soul” used in varying contexts in the movies and in real life situations; I ponder if some writers or persons using “soul” really understand the intricacy of the word – soul? I have gleaned some authors and writers who do help me explain my perception of the word soul and its importance to the coveted souls of oppressed persons.

Aristotle used the word soul to explain that plants and animals are alive, unlike an inanimate object like a stone, and wrote on the importance and difficulty of the study of the soul; the “soul” purpose for this section of my play. Aristotle (1995, p. 9) believed that the “soul and the body are distinct substances, but views the body as a help rather than a hindrance, a 'tool' for the soul”. Much like the shell to the oyster living within, the body is a vessel in which the soul resides. Belief in the separation of soul and body is observed within many different cultures throughout the World. For example, the
Buddhists of Tibet believe in reincarnation and that when someone dies their soul is separated from the body. “Tibetan Buddhism and Hinduism are two religions that argue that the soul is immortal, born again and again” (White, 2010, p. 82). As a result, when a person dies there is no need to preserve the body as it becomes an empty vessel. To dispose of the body the Buddhists of Tibet perform a Sky Burial where they take the body atop a mountain, debone it and slice it up scattering the pieces for vultures to devour. So no part of the body remains unconsumed, the bones are pulverized, mixed with flour and fed to smaller birds. Consumption of the deceased’s body ensures the cycle of life as it becomes food for another living creature which in turn will become the source of food for another; and the cycle of life continues.

In Christianity, specifically Catholicism, death is a passage from one life to another and the soul of the deceased goes to the afterlife. Depending on how the person lived their life would determine if their soul went to Purgatory, Heaven or Hell. After performing a ritualistic ceremony, the funeral, the body of the deceased is buried only to be resurrected at the end of time. Dewey (1934/2013, p. 63) wrote on this sort of belief within the Protestant Church, “[f]or according to it, the beliefs and rites that tend to make relation of man to God a collective and institutional affair erect barriers between the human soul and the divine spirit.” Different Christian faiths preach that man’s relationship to God should be personal and should be initiated by the individual and not within a group ritual. However, it is within the group ritual that there are specific beliefs and teachings distinguishing one religious group from another; all are practiced under the auspice of controlling the individuals within that sect. Although man’s relationship to God or the religious beliefs and practices within different groups are not the topic of my
play, they do have some significance throughout my play, when talking about soul, oppression and even coveting. Using a religious example I illustrate how the inference of soul is introduced to some children.

**Ushering in the Concept of Soul**

For this I look at a common prayer, *Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep*, written by parents in the 18th Century who feared the premature death of their children; a time when infant and child mortality was high. This prayer is still said today by young children who undoubtedly might not understand the meaning of it or why they are taught to say it at bedtime. Much like other rituals handed down from generation to generation the original meaning for saying this prayer may have been lost or altered. The original prayer is longer than the short version presented here, nonetheless it is the way I was taught to say it as a young child:

Now I lay me down to sleep.

I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

If I should die before I wake,

I pray the Lord my soul to take.

Understood as an intimate relationship between the Lord and the individual, this prayer does not explain what soul is or what it means to have a soul. In fact, one could say that this prayer portrays soul as if it was an “it”, an item, a thing. Prior to the lines in which the word “soul” is used an event is occurring – I am lying down, a physical act controlled by my body; or has occurred – I died, I no longer have control over my body. In either case, these events are the precursor to a specific request on what to do with my “soul”. Dissecting this prayer brings forth an insight into two distinctly different references to
“my” soul. First, now that I am lying down “I pray the Lord my soul to keep,” which is similar to me going on vacation and asking my friend to keep my cat while I am away; I still have ownership of my soul like I have ownership of my cat, but there is a need to have it taken care of. This is very different from the second one, if I should die “I pray the Lord my soul to take,” which could be similar to giving my cat to my friend in the case of my demise because I no longer am around to care for it. Much like there is a separation between my cat and me, *Now I lay me down to sleep* emphasized Aristotle’s teaching and the spiritual belief that there is a separation between my soul and my body. Because soul is recognized as an object in this prayer, what is a deeper, more philosophical understanding of soul in relation to one’s life?

Although there is no direct access to one’s foundation of life; the vehicle for understanding the mystery of life may be through the concept of soul. Fincher (2007, p. 51) expanded Plato’s idea of a tripartite soul in the passage just below to which we have already been introduced, and describes her concept of the soul:

I don’t just have a soul, like I have curly hair; I am my soul. My soul is me, and I own all of my soul’s abilities and experiences – memories, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, introspections, desires, choices, sensations. To make it simpler, all of my soul’s abilities can fit into five categories or capacities; mind, where thoughts and beliefs work; desires, where our attractions and dislikes are pushed and pulled; feelings, where sensations and emotions play; the spirit, where we introspect and meditate; and the will, where our choices begin. Our soul is the keeper of these five capacities.
In summary of Fincher’s (2007) description, I am the keeper of my mind, my desires, my feelings, my spirit and my will and these capacities make me who I am and how I perceive myself. Each soul is unique and represents the “black box” of the individual; it is the story book of our life, written chapter by chapter as we continue down the path of life. For example, this play is the crescendo of my time spent to achieve an academic goal and within it are my thoughts, beliefs, likes and dislikes, my emotions play into the subject matter presented, I “listen to the music” on what to write and it is my will to finish and to begin another chapter of my life. I could say I am baring my soul. In other words, I am exposing myself by presenting a different method of teaching to overcome oppressive educational environments, which is subject to corrections, criticisms, and possible rejections. My work must be explicit, definitive, and open to discussion in order to be “soulful”. My ideas define who I am and how what I have learned either has changed my way of thinking or not. For others to understand me, these ideas and thoughts are written for others to read. Education has touched my soul; I am a different person today than I was yesterday. My experiences, readings and peers have further developed my knowledge and view on many subjects. I am able to be “caught up into the world of thought”, and “experience the pleasure of becoming an educated person” (Chang on Hamilton, 2006, p. 442).

For the purpose of my play, soul is understood to be more about how the individual’s response, survival and confidence are a result of situations and stimuli that are inflicted upon them within their own group or by the larger environment in which they live. The souls of these living things can either be nurtured or be deprived by inward and outward forces and it is ultimately these forces that could conceivably mold
the individual or species into who or what they become, respectively. Or in the case of the lower animals, such as an earthworm, and plants as their environment changes they adapt to survive. To emphasize how complex and deep-seated soul is I argue that plants and animals, as well as human beings have souls; they have the will to survive, respond to stimuli and adapt to new environments. With this in mind and to continue my argument that other animals as well as human beings have souls how does the nurturing of the animal’s soul differ from that of the human soul?

The Animal’s Soul

Using Fincher’s five capacities that are kept by our souls and are always available, I argue that the souls of animals are also the keeper of these five capacities. However, the “abilities and experiences” (Fincher, 2007, p. 51) of the soul of animals is very different from those of humans and specific to their species. I define the animal’s capacities as: (1) mind, where instincts, survival and training (by humans) work; (2) desires, where pheromones, aversions and loyalty (to humans) are displayed; (3) feelings, where response to stimuli and learned behaviors play; (4) the spirit, where playfulness, aggressiveness, fight or flight come into play; and (5) the will, where dominance, submission and adaptation begin. For example, the mind, desires, feelings, spirit and will (Fincher, 2007, p. 51) of animals in the wild are focused on the day-to-day survival of that animal. Each species has the instinct to survive by taking in nourishment and water and finding a safe place to reside. The young born to grazing and foraging animals are born with their eyes open, an instinct to get on their feet as quickly as possible, to nurse and soon to graze, and stay close to their mother or the herd for protection. While the young born to a predator, like a mountain lion cub, are born with their eyes
closed, are unable to leave their den and are completely dependent on the female to nurse and then bring in food; their main protection is the mother lioness along with the “nurse” females who “babysit” while the mother lioness goes to hunt; these young will be taught to hunt by the lioness. Although this is not a study on the survival of animals or the difference between the young of different species, this section is to show that the soul of these wild animals and of any animal in captivity can be altered by the type of care they receive from human beings. If naturally wild animals are born in captivity they still have the instinct to survive; however, they generally don’t fall into the predator-prey relationship since their basic needs are provided. This section on animals will show that the soul of the higher order of animals is similar to, yet different from the soul of human beings and is influenced by the animal’s environment. Unfortunately, the capturing and training of wild animals, like the Mustang, can change the spirit of that animal (a topic to be discussed later).

John Brierhorst (1995, p. 23), a scholar of Native American thought, wrote about the perception that the Tlingit of southeast Alaska have on animals’ souls. “Animals’ souls are called qwani, ‘inhabitants of,’ because they are believed to live inside the animal’s fleshly body.” Brierhorst’s explanation of the Tlingit’s belief of the animal soul is much like that of Aristotle’s separation of the soul and the body. Both, Native American and philosopher believed that the soul resides within the body. As a result, the Native Americans recognized the importance of being the protectors of animals and developed a soul-to-soul relationship with them. They believed that animals and all natural objects have souls or spirits and that the soul of the animal also lives within a person, influencing the power of a person, teaching, guiding and protecting them – their
Totem. The kill of an animal by the Native Americans was out of necessity for food, clothing and shelter never for pleasure or sport. For each animal killed a ritual was performed to ensure that the animal’s spirit would live on as the body of the animal was consumed and all parts of the animal were used. The relationship between human beings and animals is found throughout history, and like the Native Americans some cultures continue to protect and worship certain animals and believe that the soul of this animal lives within the animal as well as the human. Soulful relationships among the same species, as well as between different species within the animal kingdom are also observed.

Memories, rituals, recognition, and emotions are displayed by elephants time after time. Elephants also exhibit great recall, “Elephants also apparently recognize and can keep track of the locations of 30 companions at a time…” (Ritchie, 2009) Recognition of these companions is through the use of memory, smell and touch. For example in 1996 two elephants, Jenny and Shirley, euphorically reunited after being separated for 23 years. Brought to The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee and put in separate pens next to each other, the two elephants bent the metal railings trying to touch and be close to one another (Buckley, 1996). After being reunited, the two elephants were inseparable for the next ten years, until Jenny’s death. On the day of Jenny’s death, Shirley tried to get her to stand up and wouldn’t leave her side. With the realization that Jenny was not going to stand Shirley left her side and walked into the woods. Jenny’s death had a huge impact on Shirley, and she mourned for two weeks. Fortunately, the presence of other elephants at the Sanctuary helped Shirley overcome her grief. In the wild, it is the Matriarch elephants that protect the herd from danger, remember migration routes and
“hold a store of social knowledge that their families can scarcely do without” (Ritchie, 2009). When a herd member dies the other elephants will stand around the body, weep, bellow and fondle the body with their trunks. If a member of the herd dies during the time of migration it is difficult for the rest of the herd to leave the remains. After a period of time the Matriarch will coax the herd to continue their trek.

There are other animals that show signs of memories, emotions, etc. For example Koko, the gorilla, “expresses love, anger, sorrow, and joy” (Patterson, 1985) for her kitten, All Ball. The story of Koko and All Ball began when Koko was asked what she would like one Christmas, Koko signed cat. Instead of a real cat Koko was given a gorilla proof clay cat which made her angry and she wouldn’t interact with her trainer or show anyone what she got for Christmas. Realizing that Koko wanted a real cat, her trainer gave her a choice of three kittens, from which she selected All Ball, a gray Tabby; on whom she showered love and showed joy. When All Ball got out and was hit by a car Koko mourned for months. Even though Koko has moved on and has had several other kittens, she still gets sad when she sees a picture of a kitten that looks like All Ball. The story of bonds between two different species is not unusual and there are plenty of them. Stories of nursing female dogs taking in stray kittens or a piglet; nursing cats taking in a baby rabbit or baby squirrel; and the latest story is of a friendship between a bear, lion and tiger animals who generally live on different continents and who would normally never have come together. These three animals, named BLT, are inseparable; they are the best of friends. Originally brought together by a drug dealer as small cubs, they were found living in their own feces, malnourished and sick. They now live in a 2.5-acre enclosure at Noah’s Ark in Georgia. (Lanfreschi, 2014) There are many stories of
animals with other animals and animals with human beings that show the souls of animals to be far greater than intelligence; it is the compassion and care as well as the aggression and fight for survival, acceptance and continuation of the species.

**Plants Have Souls Too**

Similar to humans and animals, I rationalize that plants have souls and that the soul of the individual plant can be characterized as their ability to survive and grow in good and in harsh conditions. Take for example the weed. The weed is an opportunistic plant that will grow just about anywhere in different soil types and in any environment – hot or cold, wet or drought. Its adaptability to any almost climatic conditions shows the resilience of the species, the soul of the species. If there is a bare spot of soil a weed will take advantage. These plants have developed many different ways to spread to numerous areas where the species will continue to flourish. For example, the sand burr which is either thrown off by the plant or attaches itself to a passing animal or human being to be carried to a new place. This is also true of the many varieties of non-weed type plants. Some plants have spores that are blown in the wind, flowers that are pollinated by insects or by their own species – such as the corn plant. Flowering plants “feel” the right time to open their flowers to pollination by the wind, insects, animals or other plants. The souls of these plants respond to stimuli, generally weather conditions; sunshine, temperature and moisture. Some plants, such as the Poinsettia, “reveal” their soul. If the Poinsettia loses a leaf prematurely it will bleed a white, sticky substance; bleeding is the plants response to injury. This sticky substance acts as a defense, it is poisonous when eaten and is tacky when touched, illustrating a survival technique. So, even though it doesn’t have a verbal response to tell us it is hurt it has a physical response.
Some plant enthusiasts believe that planting a seed or a seedling in a pot of good, rich black soil, adding fertilizer and moisture, and setting it in a warm sunny place may not be enough so they play music to encourage it to grow into a strong healthy plant. Where music soothes the soul of the seedling in order for it to grow and the soul of a withering plant is soothed so the plant can flourish and become a beautiful green leafy and/or flowering plant; this assumes that proper sunlight, water and food are provided. An example of this type of nurturing is observed in *A Raisin In the Sun* (1994), by Lorraine Hansberry. Mama (Lena Younger) lovingly nurtures a struggling plant that she places in the apartment’s only window trying to keep it alive. Each morning she gives it a little water, and tenderly talks to it as she places it back out on the window ledge for the little ray of sunlight it receives; encouraging it to continue to live. She shares her dream with it, of someday being able to plant the struggling plant outside where it can have plenty of water, sunlight and more room to grow. Mama’s tender nurturing of the plant is symbolic of the way she cares for her children, unconditionally and endlessly despite the poor conditions in which they live. The plant is symbolic of the garden Mama was going to plant in the yard of the house she and her late husband, Walter Sr., dreamed of buying. It is also representative of Travis, Mama’s young grandson, who continues to flourish even though he is growing up in the ghetto without a yard in which he can play. The symbolism of plants found in books, movies and plays is not only of sharing ones dreams, they can also illustrate the plant’s response to stimuli – show the “soul” of the plant.

For this I look at the phenomenally popular series of Harry Potter written by J. K. Rowling. Even though the Harry Potter series is fictional, Rowling was inspired by the
real magic of the five plants she depicts; in actuality these plants are very strange. For example, in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998) Rowling gives a fictional depiction of the Mandrake plant. Her fictional depictions of the properties or the Mandrake plant are almost exactly what were believed in the 17th Century. The actual mandrake, common name for the plant genus *Mandragora*, has roots that look like arms and legs and resemble the human body. The Greeks believed that the plant root took the human form and would often illustrate them as either a man with a beard or a woman with long hair (U.S. National Library of Medicine, 2012); Rowling not only gives the plants human forms, she also gives them a soul and has these human-like roots make faces, scream, wiggle and fight when uprooted. As the powerfully restorative root of Rowling’s Mandrake plant goes through the similar stages of human development – from infant to teenager to adult, they need to be transplanted. During transplanting when the Mandrake is uprooted it lets out a high-pitched scream; if the plant is young the scream will only knock a person out for a period of time, however, if the plant is mature the scream will kill a person.

In Ancient societies the mandrake root was used as an anesthetic (U.S. National Library of Medicine, 2012); Rowling takes the uses of the plant root to a different level, where the pulverized plant root will act as a sedative when one is ill or be used as an antidote when one is petrified by the Death Eaters. In fact, all parts of the plant are poisonous and legend tells us that when pulled the roots scream is fatal (U.S. National Library of Medicine, 2012), and if cattle eat this plant they will die. Rowling’s reveals her unique imagination with her depiction of the human like Mandrake plants. However, according to the U. S. National Library of Medicine (2012) this plant does display
distress when uprooted and that humans would use mad dogs to harvest the plant so that they could avoid their deadly screams.

**Précis Scene One**

In summary, in Scene One I argue that the nonphysical and spiritual entity of the human soul is more intricate than that of an animal, and the soul of the animal is more complex than that of a plant. In humans, the sense of soul is intangible and the depth of soul reaches beyond the religious connotation generally associated with soul. Escaping an easy definition the use of the word “soul” among humans is used in several different ways. For example, a person puts their soul into their work, they listen to their soul and music can touch their soul. I argued that unlike an inanimate object it is the soul that makes humans, animals and plants alive and adaptable to variable climatic and situational conditions. These illustrations of the word soul make it intangible but demonstrable and its presence is the foundation of life.

I argued that the soul and body of plants, animals and humans are different from one another, and that the individual souls of these are separate and distinct from the cellular components making up their bodies. For the plant, their “soul” is not defined by how the plant thinks but instead how some plants have the capability to adapt to environmental changes and oppressive conditions in order to survive; for example, the weed. Some studies report that plants respond to stressful situations as well as tranquil situations; for example, playing soothing music. “A plant has a soul and it can take on sensible form – it can get warm, for example” (Aristotle, 1995, p. 71). This is similar to the response animals and human beings have to various conditions they encounter throughout their lives. An animal’s soul is more than the adaptation for survival; it is
how the animal reacts to environmental changes and how the animal behaves, feels, desires, etc. towards a member of its own species and that of others.

“To the ancients, soul was *anima*, that which animates, the living-, moving-, breathing-ness of a biological being. In this sense, not only animals but plants have souls (of different capacities appropriate to what they are).” (Nicol, 2013, p. 13) Freire (1983, p. 119) wrote “Animals do not consider the world; they are immersed in it. In contrast, men emerge from the world, objectify it, and in so doing can understand it and transform it with their labor.” Therefore, juxtaposed to the soul of other animals, the soul of a human being is more sophisticated, more complex. Each individual possesses the ability, providing nothing stands in the way, to develop all of Fincher’s five categories that are kept by their soul. However, possessing the ability is not the same as having the freedom to develop and/or execute the act, or have the capability to accomplish the act. Human beings have the proclivity to seek answers, to develop and use their intelligence, and for the most part to live within the ability and experience of their five capacities. Their soul defines them, it is them, it is the recording of their life’s story no matter how short or long, it is the “black box” of their life and makes them who they are. However, it is the environment and the conditions in which the human being, animal and plant resides, or is subjected to that can conceivably impact their souls. These environments can be the right conditions that encourage positive growth (to be defined in Act Three) and survival or they could be oppressive and growth and survival become a struggle for the individual.

There are two kinds of people in the world, my friend. Those who have a rope around their neck and those who have the job of cutting.

(Tuco in The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly, 1996)

Overture

In Scene One I explored the nonphysical nature of soul, embodied in human beings, animals and plants. I illustrated the depth of soul and argued that the concept of soul is not limited to human beings; what it is like for a living organism to “have a soul”. Much like the soul of a human being, environmental conditions can either improve or deteriorate the soul of an animal or plant. However, unlike the plant and the animal who are immersed in the world (Freire, 1983) and are forced to adapt or become extinct, the human being possesses the ability and possibly have the freedom to change their environment, “transform it with their labor” (Freire, 1983, p. 119) for the sake of their soul – to keep their spirit; human beings are not incapable of changing their environments but some humans may lack the initiative, the freedom or the knowledge to do so. For example, a child living in an environment that suppresses their soul may have the desire to leave but lacks the knowledge and resources to do so safely.

Scene Two explores the essence of oppression, with the central focus being the good, the bad and the ugly oppressive environmental conditions that impact the soul of the human being, animal and plant. Like soul, oppression could be considered an abstract or a nonphysical entity; however, there is a recognized physical and/or psychological suppression in force when one is “being oppressed”. Oppressive acts can be orchestrated through physical, physical and psychological or psychological conditions to which the
human being, animal and plant are subjected. Oppression can be intentional as well as unintentional depending on the source and it can be harmful or helpful depending on the circumstance. For example, the soul of a wild Mustang can be intentionally altered from a free spirit to a manageable steed when the horse is captured and broke to be ridden. The spirit (soul) of the Mustang is “reined” in; even though the Mustang still has spirit it is kept under control, where the Mustang has gone from being a wild animal to a tamed animal. The Mustang’s spirit will remain “reined” in as long as it is in captivity. However having been free at one time if the Mustang is allowed to return to the herd and remains without human contact, over a period of time it could go back to being wild, reclaiming its natural spirit (soul). This particular type of manageable behavior can also be seen in human beings, as observed in slavery. Like the Mustang, the slave can regain their liberated soul if the person knew freedom before or had an idea of what it is to be free and is given the opportunity to become a free person. As a slave they were no longer emancipated to live as they would like or own what they would like, they have a “rope around their neck” and are reined in. In both examples the animal and the human being are oppressed by an outside force; and in both cases the souls of the two are subject to transformation abruptly or over a period of time. This will be discussed further in this Scene.

Discussed in each section are the good, the bad and the ugly of oppression. Regulations, policies and training for the purpose of protecting oneself and others of the community could be perceived as forms of good oppression; for example, it is illegal to drink and drive for the safety of the drunk driver and for others on the road. By oppressing the drunk from driving while under the influence it is the intention of
providing a safe journey to other drivers and their passengers. Suppressing the Wild Mustang could be considered a form of bad oppression, quashing the spirit (soul) of the horse; while enslaving and physically and/or psychologically abusing a living creature is ugly oppression, taking away one’s freedom and exploiting them for the purpose of another person’s gain. Revolutionizing the good, the bad and the ugly of oppression can be the guiding force in developing one’s soul, for one who is oppressed can become an oppressor or liberator. However, before I get to this point it is important to develop an understanding of the various types of oppression and how these types can affect the soul of plants, animals and humans. Perhaps before I examine this, a distinction between “being oppressed” and “allowing oneself to be oppressed” needs to be considered.

“Being Oppressed” or “Allowing Oneself to be Oppressed”

There are many situations by which one can be oppressed – the act of “being oppressed”; what can happen to us physically and/or psychologically, intentionally or unintentionally by an outside force. How one responds to these oppressive conditions is “allowing oneself to be oppressed”. For example, the unintentional physical oppression caused by the weather and how it could affect our bodies; we begin to perspire, our clothes stick and chafe, we “stick” to each other and our extremities swell. In other words, hot and humid weather conditions without a breeze could make us physically uncomfortable. I will address two types of response a human being can have towards the uncomfortable weather conditions. The first is “allowing oneself to be oppressed”, the person could become lethargic, grouchy and short tempered; hating the weather and having the inability to deal with it. Or, one could have a more calmed response to these
conditions like being more energetic, cheery, enjoying the heat and humidity and spending time outside ignoring the physical effects.

“Allowing oneself to be oppressed” is not only observed by the unintentional weather conditions, these conditions could be intentional, but not targeted towards any specific individual. For example, a cluttered disorderly room may cause an observer to be disgusted with or disillusioned by its condition, “the condition of the room is oppressive”. At the work site one could feel oppressed by their peers, by allowing oneself to feel inferior because of low self-esteem; or by their boss and feeling picked on if their boss asks them to work late; or by the amount of work needing to be done before the end of the day by feeling overwhelmed. In summary, the act of “being oppressed” is caused by an outside force to the human being, while the response to this oppression could be “allowing oneself to be oppressed”.

**Physical Oppression**

For the purpose of my play, I define physical oppression as an act specifically focused on having an effect on the body or cellular component of the oppressed which lacks a psychological objective. We are all familiar with the usage of oppression when defining a physical state; such as, oppressive weather conditions. Further exploration into the physical aspect of oppression, we might say “the heat and humidity are oppressive”; which translates to “the weather makes us physically uncomfortable”. Our bodies can become so sopping wet with perspiration that our clothing might cling and chafe. When touching another person we might “stick” to them, which in turn could exacerbate our uncomfortable feeling. Walking becomes arduous, and for some people physical body changes might occur; as an example, their ankles and hands might swell,
their skin becomes clammy, their hair becomes wet from perspiration and their face becomes red. In short, one becomes physically miserable and mentally intolerant to other outside stimuli. In summary, oppressive weather generally causes us to feel “icky” and lethargic; it’s difficult to muster up motivation, and we get grouchy and short-tempered. One might say that we allow the stifling weather conditions to make us feel oppressed when we need not be.

Important to note in the previous examples is to emphasize that this type of oppression lacks intention and that oppression doesn’t have to be intentional in order to be oppressive. At times unintentional oppression can be good and bad, a desperately needed rainstorm during a softball game, the parched ground is quenched by the rain and the teams can complete the game; the weather condition is oppressive but the result of the rain is good. Unintentional oppression can be considered bad when the desperately needed rainstorm becomes a torrential rain with local flooding and the game is rained out. Or, unintentional oppression can become ugly when the rainstorm comes with lightning, thunder, tornadoes and destruction of property or the loss of life occurs; the game’s players and spectators have to run for cover. However, for the purpose of my play I focus on the position of “being oppressed” and under what intentional conditions one is “being oppressed”. If the afore mentioned weather conditions, cluttered room and perceived oppressive environments lack intention, when is oppression intentional?

An example of intentional physical oppression is observed in contact sports, like football; where the goal of the defensive team is to stop the offensive team from advancing and scoring. The offensive player’s reactions to this domination are generally to push back and advance the ball forward. However, there are times when the offense is
unable to move the ball and the players “allow themselves to be oppressed”; in other words, dominated by the other team. A prime example of this is the reaction of the Denver Broncos when Peyton Manning, their quarterback, missed the first snap by center Manny Ramirez and the football flew into the end zone, where Seattle recovered and picked up two points; the quickest scoring in Super Bowl history. After this incident the Denver Broncos could not pull their team together, they made one mistake after another. The final score was Seattle 43 and Denver 8. The Denver Broncos “allowed themselves to be oppressed” by the first mistake of an important game.

**Physical Oppression of Animals and Plants**

Certain weather conditions can be oppressive and cause unfavorable effects on the versatile and opportunistic weed. For example, if the weed is indigenous to warm, humid climatic conditions a bout of extreme heat and arid conditions will cause the weed to shrivel up and go dormant until it rains. Likewise, a weed indigenous to extreme heat and arid conditions will not do well if the temperature becomes too cool and increasing moisture occurs. Illustrative of what was argued before, the soul of a plant is defined by adaptability for survival, oppressive conditions will force the plant to adapt, move to another area where the weather is right or die.

Animals as well as humans and plants can also become oppressed by unfavorable weather conditions. Hansen’s (2009) research showed that, “Heat stress can have large effects on most aspects of reproductive function in mammals.” Disruption in sperm and egg development as well as placental growth and lactation occurred due to the “physiological adjustments” by the animal to regulate body temperature. As our climate continues to change and our summers become warmer and our winters colder this could
have an adverse effect on the reproduction of placental mammals causing a decline in the population of that species. On the flip side, there are animals that do well during hot, dry summers. For example the largest marsupial, the red kangaroo, is very adaptable to the arid parts of Australia. During the hottest and driest times of the summer the red kangaroo shuts down their reproductive system only to reboot it when conditions improve. They are capable of getting water from the food they eat “between dusk and dawn,” and rest in the shade during the hot times of the day (Monroe, 2012). During hot summers a dog and cat will cool their bodies by panting, lying in the shade and lessen their activities. They too become lethargic and uncomfortable in extreme heat, unless of course they are indigenous to hot summers or extreme cold. Both the Kingdom Plantae and Animalia have species that do well and survive in extreme climatic conditions; such as, the Fennec Fox and grasses in the Sahara Desert which are physically adapted to live in heat and drought conditions; and the Arctic Fox and Arctic Lichen that can survive harsh cold, wind and snow conditions. In summary, when unintentional physical oppression happens to animals and plants some species are able to adapt to the changed environmental conditions while other species can escape the intolerable and harmful environmental conditions by becoming dormant, the plant; or finding protection from the extreme weather, the animal.

**Physical and PsychologicalOppression**

When intentional physical oppression affects not only the body but the soul of the individual it has now become physical and psychological in nature; physical and psychological oppression. Nussbaum (2000) defines one sort of oppression as people having rights but not being in the position to exercise these rights, having the “rope
around their neck” and of “being oppressed”. A situation in life that might be illustrative of her definition would be that of slavery. What human rights do these individuals have, and how will they exercise them while in bondage by another? Consider some of the intentional oppression slaves suffer. Physical oppression is witnessed when slaves are shackled, beaten, over-worked, poorly fed and forced to live in run-down conditions. Enslaved women became the “whores” of their masters, the servants to their mistresses and their children’s “wet-nurse” and nanny. Psychological oppression within these examples is observed when the oppressive physical conditions occur over an extended period of time, the lack of hope overcomes any desire for better conditions and the individual gives up and succumbs to their lot in life; the slave’s soul is “broke”, much like that of the Wild Mustang in the example above. When one’s soul becomes lost due to intentional and unintentional oppressive conditions, the general emotional state of the enslaved are the lack of self-worth, despair and anguish. With slavery both mental and physical oppression are intentional, brought on by bondage and suffering physical and verbal abuse. The individual’s response to being enslaved would be: If the person had given up all hope of being free from the oppressive environment, they might “allow themselves to be oppressed”; knowing that if they do as they are told no more abuse will come their way (which wasn’t always the case and would depend on who was in charge of them). Or, the response to being enslaved could either be one of acceptance, thinking things could change or one of anger, because their freedom was taken from them.

Of course, slave owners might deny they oppressed their slaves or, if slaves are oppressed, that is not the intention. If slaves feel oppressed it is their problem, in spite of everything they are fed, clothed and housed. After all, the slaves in Gone with the Wind
appeared to be quite content. There is nothing oppressive about keeping a dog on a leash, training it to obey commands, even if that requires physical punishment. Similarly, the rationale could be – has been – and still is – that slaves are less than human. Even after the slaves were freed from bondage through war and laws, “cutting the rope,” they were not “free” of oppression; they still had “the rope around their neck.” In *Fried Green Tomatoes*, between World War I and World War II the blacks were fed out of the back of the Whistle Stop Café because it was a disgrace to the whites who would visit the Café to have them eating in the same place they were. In *A Raisin in the Sun* (1994) the Younger family, a poor black family of the 1950s, was highly discouraged from purchasing a house in a poor white neighborhood of Chicago; they didn’t belong and were not welcome. Even in *To Sir, With Love* (1959) when the mother of Seales, a boy who was half-white and half-black, died, his white school friends told Braithwaite that they couldn’t be seen going into a colored person’s home. Although slavery, the owning of slaves and the discrimination of individuals is not the topic of my play, the underlying theme of physical and psychological oppression of others is present.

Intentional physical and psychological oppression may not always be bad. For example, perhaps it could be argued that military training is oppressive in some ways; for the safety of others and the individual it has to be that way. Soldiers are trained to be ready to fight and follow orders unquestioningly; their survival and that of others depends on it, even if it entails some cost to their humanity. The military could say, perhaps fittingly: “We own you.” However, the owning of slaves and the “owning” of military personnel is quite different: with slavery people are bought and sold, they are treated as property, and are deprived of their freedom; with the military, people are not the property
of others and are trained to use lethal force in the interest of themselves and other citizens.

**Physical and Psychological Oppression of Animals for Human Benefit**

Physical and psychological oppression is not only observed between human beings, this type of oppression can also be observed with animals by human beings. To begin I look at human beings and their oppression of animals for pleasure, entertainment or to use as a working animal. Although there are many animals that are subjected to oppression for these reasons, I focus on the wild Mustang for the purpose of a working animal and on the elephant for the purpose of entertainment. I already addressed the wild Mustang, the essence of the American West, which was on the brink of extension before animal activists became involved. Interfering with grazing cattle on the open-range Mustangs were rounded up and sold or slaughtered (Symanski, 1985). During the time of the Wild West, the Mustang would be caught and broke to ride. While running free on the open-range, the soul of the wild Mustang displayed the essence of a spirited, proud and majestic animal. Still majestic and proud the spirited Mustang was “roped in” and became submissive under the powerful hand of the cowboy; this suppression was not to the point of the Mustang’s spirit being completely destroyed if the animal was trained with a gentle but firm hand. However, the wild and free-spirited Mustang running unencumbered by human beings now had “the rope around its neck”.

Elephants are also suppressed by human beings. With the increasing human population in Africa and Asia, the elephant’s free range has been reduced. Once free to migrate in search of food and water, these massive beasts are now forced to stay within smaller spaces and are killed if they cross the fences. Some are poached for their tusks
while others are captured and forced into working as a beast of burden or used to entertain human beings. Revisiting the elephants, Jenny and Shirley, both had been shackled and abused as circus elephants, and came to the elephant sanctuary lame and broken. “Physical punishment has always been the standard training method for animals in circuses. Animals are beaten, shocked, and whipped to make them perform—over and over again—tricks that make no sense to them” (PETA, *Circuses: Three Rings of Abuse*).

Unfortunately, this type of oppression is also observed with other wild animals which are caught, caged and trained to perform. These oppressive conditions are intentional and executed with a purpose in mind, to train the “wild beast” and either use it as a beast of burden or a beast for others’ entertainment. For whatever purpose these wild animals are used, the body and soul of these animals are oppressed and are drastically changed forever; from being free to becoming submissive.

**Psychological Oppression**

The third form of oppression is psychological, a type of oppression that does not involve a physical element; no physical marks are present and individuals are not physically held in captivity. However, those who experience psychological oppression may not be able to escape their oppressor for various reasons; the oppressed might not know any other life, they may not have any monetary means, they don’t know where to go or they may be too afraid or immature to know how to escape. Like the previously explained conditions, this type of oppression is intentional, but can be more damaging to a person’s soul than physical and psychological oppression. A person who experiences intentional psychological oppression is sometimes difficult to recognize because there are no physical signs, like bruises or broken bones. Because this type of oppression is
difficult to recognize it can go on for years before someone notices. Verbal abuse, name-calling, taunting, the silent treatment, ridicule, etc. are types of psychological oppression used to make another person feel poorly about themselves, to quash their soul.

Remember the nursery rhyme of 1872:

Sticks and stones will break my bones
But words will never hurt me.

The point of the platitude above is that words should not be allowed to harm a person’s soul; however, this isn’t always true because words can quash your soul. There are instances when it doesn’t matter how many times you said the nursery rhyme, it could just be a “smoke screen” to offset the real hurt brought on by someone’s words. I remember when someone I loved cut me to the core when he told me that I may look nice, but I will always be overweight. It would have been better had he beat me with a stick; at least the bruises and welts would go away. Because I had upset him he struck back with the one thing he knew would emotionally affect me; attacking my self-esteem and how I perceived myself. According to Evans (2003) words can be damaging to the mind as physical blows are to the body, and the scars from verbal assaults can last for years. I will develop this further in Act Two. Verbal abuse is a blatant form of bullying and of being in control of another person’s psyche; we read and hear about this type of oppression almost on a daily basis. Verbal abuse or brain-washing is not only prevalent within the individual realm but also with groups of people.

For this I look at organized religious sects. In the 1950s Jim Jones established the Peoples Temple, a Christian sect. His preaching against racism attracted many African Americans to join his multi-racial congregation. Jones moved his multi-racial followers
around within California and eventually to Guyana, where Jonestown was established in the mid-1970s. Jones had his followers believing they could escape the oppression and racism they were experiencing in the United States if they would join him in Guyana. Utopia, Jonestown wasn’t; his followers were subjected to long hours of laboring in the fields and to harsh punishment if they questioned him. On November 18, 1978, Jim Jones commanded over 900 followers to commit mass murder-suicide after an investigative visit by U.S. Congressman Leo Ryan and the defection of some of his followers. What would cause this type of psychological oppression from one person? His followers believed he was the answer to a better way of life; they had been brain-washed. Jones was crafty in his pursuit to become the leader of people who felt they could have a better life. By approaching people in a friendly, caring manner Jones showed them they had a better life as one of his followers. Unfortunately, when Jones got to Guyana he changed and life for his followers went from good to oppressive. He made them feel guilty if they took time off from laboring – even to sleep. As Jones became more obsessed with his role as a leader the psychological oppression became physical and psychological oppression. He didn’t allow his followers to think, and he controlled this by forbidding them to speak with one another. Jones taped messages and played his tapes at all hours of the day and night over a loud speaker. He talked about anti-government, death and told his followers that they could not go back to the United States because they weren’t wanted. The scenario of what happened in Jonestown has also played out within other religious sects. There are many religious sects that were started as a way to begin a better life only to end up as psychological oppression to their
followers. Jones went from being a liberator to being an oppressor; he abused his power over his followers.

**Oppressor or Liberator**

“Every society contains within itself people who are prepared to live with others on terms of mutual respect and reciprocity, and people who seek the comfort of domination” (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 29). How is a person prepared to live in a symbiotic relationship with others and not dominate them? From the time of birth, we unconsciously control those who take care of us to meet our physical needs; but an infant who only has their physical needs met and not their emotional needs may grow up lacking humanity. Studies show that children who are not nurtured have a difficult time connecting to others and these difficulties can continue through adulthood (Babbel, 2011). How our needs are met and by whom our needs are met are the major forces in how we perceive our new world outside of the womb. For those fortunate enough to grow up in a nurturing environment, the adults or someone who takes care of them become the greatest influence. If our parents show disgust towards those who are different we generally follow in their footsteps and will show disgust or intolerance for others. Our soul is sculpted by the surroundings in which we live and the people with whom we live.

From the adult societies, children learn to project disgust onto subordinate groups – “African Americans, Jews, women, homosexuals, poor people, etc.” (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 33), and unfortunately within all societal groups there are “out-groups” who are considered shameful and/or disgusting. For example, the old subway tunnels of New York City are considered a disgusting place and sometimes a dangerous place for
outsiders to visit. The people living in these places, the Mole people or tunnel-dwellers are viewed as filthy, disgusting and uneducated; they are the outcasts from all socio-economic classes living in New York City. If we are raised to disrespect those who do not meet our expectations, there could be a possibility that we might seek comfort in dominating them.

How does one become an oppressor? In the previous example success is measured by perfection of oneself and domination of others. Nussbaum (2010, p. 33) describes this learned behavior from others who live within their society as “projective disgust.”

Projective disgust is always a suspect emotion, because it involves self-repudiation and the displacement of self-repudiation onto another group that is really just a set of bodily human beings like the ones doing the projecting, only more socially powerless.

This learned behavior towards subordinate groups will continue if there are no ramifications or if the one taught to oppress doesn’t change. Unfortunately, even with laws and rules against this behavior it still continues.

One can also become an oppressor out of “hatred of one’s own internal demons” (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 36), for example, the slave who becomes the personal servant to the Master of the house and is rewarded for keeping his Master informed of any dissention among the other slaves. The “demons” within represent his inner soul, for he remembers what it is like to be a mere slave and fears going back if his Master is not pleased with him. These oppressors gain the right to whip and abuse the slaves who try to run or who do not do their work. By holding themselves to a higher standard than the rest of the
servants he becomes their abuser as well as their accuser if something goes amuck. A theatrical example of this is observed in the movie *Django*. One of the black servants became the butler and “right-hand” man to the slave owner. When the butler discovered that Django’s wife had escaped he sent the hounds and gunmen after her, who captured her and brought her back to the plantation. For punishment she was stripped of all her clothing and locked in a “hot box” (a metal box in the ground) without food and water until she agreed to serve the Master and not run away. In the meantime, the butler had complete control of her destiny while he partook in the fine whiskey and other amenities within the house of his white Master. In this example the oppressed, the black servant, became the oppressor; however, some of those oppressed can become liberators.

On the flipside of those who become oppressors are those who change and become liberators; the child who gains a “growing capacity for compassionate concern, for seeing another person as an end and not a mere means” (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 36). One who becomes a liberator of the oppressed has realized the wrongs of oppression and wants better for themselves and others. For example, a slave who becomes a sharecropper and works to better his life and his families sees the benefit in becoming an active contributor to their community. This once enslaved person treats his employees with respect and wants to help those who are oppressed. He becomes their liberator, and he knows what it is like to be enslaved. A person with empathy can generally control their aggression and recognize the good in others.

To illustrate the transformation from oppressed to liberator I focus on the character, Walter Lee Younger (*A Raisin In The Sun*, 1994) who goes through the greatest transformation illustrating Freire’s struggle of the oppressed. As a poor black
man, Walter Lee worked as a black chauffer for an effluent white man and he convinced himself that he can only better himself if he gets the money his mother, Mama or Lena, was about to receive from his deceased father’s life insurance policy. At home, the oppressed Walter Lee took his aggression and depression out on his wife Ruth, who was subservient to Walter Lee and who received his abuse without fight. The basic element of their relationship is “prescription” (Freire, 1983, p. 31), where Walter Lee (the oppressor) imposed his choices upon Ruth (the oppressed); he was dreadful and mean to the one person he knew would not leave or fight back. Ruth lacked the core idea of a human being, defined by Nussbaum (2000, p. 72):

The core idea is that of the human being as a dignified free being who shapes his or her own life in cooperation and reciprocity with others, rather than being passively shaped or pushed around by the world in the manner of a “flock” or “herd” animal.

Ruth and Walter Lee are oppressed by their situation; living in the ghetto, in their jobs and residing in the small apartment they share with the rest of the Younger family. Walter Lee tries to escape through alcohol and by becoming an oppressor. Ruth feels she has to support him to keep the family together.

When Mama took some of the money to put a down payment on a house, Walter Lee became more distraught and began to spend his time in a bar. Mama finally entrusted the remainder of the money to Walter Lee, who immediately invested it with his two friends for one-third ownership of a liquor store. When Mama gave him the money, he transformed into a jubilant, loving husband who was excited about life – his dream had come true. However, this short lived jubilation came to a bitter end after
Walter Lee discovered that one of his partners ran off with all the money he was given. Walter Lee became more depressed and felt dehumanized until he made a decision to step up and become the head of the household and take care of the family; he broke the mold of the oppressed black man and decided to work hard and better his and his family’s position in life – he liberated himself and the Younger family from the oppressive ghetto.

**Précis Scene Two**

In summary, in Scene Two I explored three types of oppression that can affect human beings as well as animals and plants, and how these types of oppression can be unintentional and intentional. Unintentional physical oppression is the first type that can be caused by the weather, a messy room, a cluttered office or school locker where one could “allow oneself to be oppressed”. For example, on an early Monday morning the educator walks into her classroom, looks at her desk and feels overwhelmed and discouraged; she is “allowing herself to be oppressed” by the condition of her cluttered desk. Unintentional physical oppression by the weather can also be observed in plants and animals, where the adaptation to these conditions can vary within the different species. An intentional type of physical oppression can be observed when a student is assigned to sit away from their best friend, an act of “being oppressed”; the student can respond by “allowing themselves to be oppressed” or sit in the assigned seat and see her friend during lunch and recess.

Intentional physical and psychological oppression is the second type which can occur in abusive relationships. I gave the example of slavery above, but there are other ways of “being oppressed”. For example domestic violence, where the police are called and the abused spouse will not file charges because deep down she is hoping that the
abuse will stop and that things will change. If she can be better and do exactly what he
wants he will stop hitting her; she has committed to become a better person and has
become submissive to his demands. In domestic abuse as well as other forms of abuse,
the fear of something worse happening to themselves or others can emotionally prevent
the abused from leaving the life of oppression. Unintentional physical and psychological
oppression is a student who is required to be in school on a day when the sun is shining
and he would rather be outside riding his skate board; he approaches the fact that he has
to be in school by feeling put upon and angry. The act of “being oppressed” is him
having to sit in class all day and not be outside, while “allowing himself to be oppressed”
is how he approaches the fact that he has to be in school – with anger. When oppression
strips human beings of their dignity, dehumanizing them and making them feel
disrespected, oppression now becomes coveting.

SCENE THREE: TO COVET OR NOT TO COVET

There is only one Lord of the Ring, only one who can bend it to his will.
And he does not share power.

In the common tongue it reads "One Ring to Rule Them All. One Ring to
Find Them. One Ring to Bring Them All and In The Darkness Bind
Them."

(Gandalf, Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring, 2001)

Overture

Soul, the nonphysical, abstract, “black box” of our lives that resides within the
body of human beings was presented in Scene One; I also argued that animals and plants
have souls, although not as sophisticated as the soul of human beings. In Scene Two I
explained the three types of oppression and how physical and/or psychological oppression can affect the soul of the human being; like having a “rope around” their neck. Because animals and plants are usually unable to “break away” from the rope, it binds them to the oppressive condition; while human beings may possess the capabilities (I use Nussbaum’s word) to “cut the rope” and have the ability to change or escape the oppressive condition. However, what happens if oppression escalates and there is no escape; the rope cannot be cut and tightens around the neck of the oppressed?

For Scene Three, to covet or not to covet, that is the question. Coveting can be done by an individual, for example, I can covet time to exercise or I can covet time to write my play; it is my time and I don’t allow anyone or anything to interrupt it. However, in this Scene I argue that coveting is the malicious intention of someone or group to take possession of another’s physical being and/or soul to satisfy their needs or to accomplish their end; where the coveted one is used a means by another rather than an end in himself or herself. Much like the difference between punishment and abuse, there is a similar difference between oppression and coveting. Going back to Johnstown where Jones went from liberating his followers from the life they were living, to psychologically oppressing his followers by making them believe his way of life was the only way, and then to the malicious act of coveting the souls of his followers by having them drink poison so that they would never leave his beloved Jonestown. To understand the act of coveting I begin with how coveting is perceived in religion.

**Coveting – In Religion**

Christian faith defines coveting as a strong desire, an evil mindset that leads to an evil act. It is taking the act of oppression to the extreme. Where oppression can be used
as a control or can be unintentional as well as intentional, coveting is the malicious act to intentionally seize something someone else possesses or even go as far as possessing an individual; a desire so strong that it could lead to the takeover of another’s being, their life, and ultimately their soul. It is when the one desiring to covet makes a conscious effort to go after the possessions, body and even the soul of another. Of course, this aim usually is not as blatant as when Satan aimed to possess the souls of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. It is the maliciousness of coveting that makes it so harmful and so dangerous.

In Exodus 20:17, the Tenth Commandment, to covet is defined as wanting to possess that which the other person has:

_Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's._

History shows that this Commandment was not always followed. For example, pirates of the high seas would loot and pillage villages and other ocean going vessels for their women, children and finery.

Memorizing the Tenth Commandment is rather easy; however, it is the ability to understand what this Commandment says and how it applies to life that can be difficult. Because I think that there is a difference between oppression and coveting along with the difficulty to understand the workings of coveting it is best illustrated through examples.

**Coveting of Plants and Animals**

Revisiting our opportunistic weed where the weed can be unintentionally oppressed by severe drought conditions or extreme wet conditions it can also be coveted,
but not necessarily by the weather. This weed, which can adapt to almost all conditions in order to survive, can be coveted by human beings through the use of weed killer. Two important points are emphasized in this scenario: (1) the coveting of the weed, by human beings, is intentional; and (2) the intention of coveting can lead to the demise of the living plant. Because the soul of a plant is defined as how some plants have the capability to adapt to environmental changes and oppressive conditions in order to survive (Scene One), the soul of the weed is coveted; our opportunistic weed did not have the time or ability to adapt to the toxic weed killer.

The example I use for coveting an animal’s soul is the wild Mustang, specifically when the horse is inhumanely broke by beating it until it submits to its captor. A broken spirited horse becomes lethargic, the head is held low, the gait is slow and mechanical, and the eyes of the animal are lifeless. This demeanor is very different than when the Mustang is oppressed, as described before. The oppressed horse still has spunk and at times will show its wild spirited side, but the horse whose soul that is coveted becomes mechanical. Unlike the weed that died, the Mustang is alive but does not possess the spirit it once had. Unfortunately, there are those who intentionally “break” another animal or human being by the use of force and punishment; they are the oppressors who maliciously take what is not theirs for their own purpose and/or pleasure. Likewise, a human being who is subjected to continual beatings, humiliation and punishment by withholding food and water can become complacent and lack self-worth when their hope for freedom is squashed. Before I delve into the coveting of the human soul, I begin with the act of coveting found in books and movies; specifically how the possession of an inanimate object, the One Ring, can covet the soul of its possessor.
Coveting Found in Books and Movies

I use examples from J. R. R. Tolkien’s the *Hobbit: The Unexpected Journey* (2012) and *Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring* (2001) to bring forth the act of coveting. To be more specific, my central character is Bilbo Baggins, who is introduced in the *Hobbit: The Unexpected Journey* (2012), and whose adventure continues in *Lord of the Ring: Fellowship of the Ring* (2001). Born of two important Hobbit families, Bilbo had a thirst for adventure and would leave the Shire for days at a time. However, when Gandalf the Grey asked Bilbo to join him and thirteen Dwarves, as the fourteenth member, for an adventure, he declined – at least until curiosity got the best of him. While on the adventure Bilbo met Gollum, a strange, loathsome little creature who lived deep in a cave along the banks of a cold lake. Gollum possessed a secret treasure, one he obtained a very, very, very long time ago, a ring of gold that made its wearer invisible. This One Ring became so much a part of Gollum that he talked to It even when he didn’t have It with him, and when he didn’t have It on him he tucked It safely away in a hole on his island in the middle of the cold and dark lake. Gollum believed It belonged to him, It was his confidant, It his life and It was his “precious”. Gollum couldn’t survive without it; wearing the One Ring made him invisible when he hunted for food or spied on the orcs working in the mines.

Unfortunately for Gollum, he wasn’t wearing the One Ring when he met Bilbo, or possibly Gollum would have had Bilbo as his dinner, a quite tasty “hobbitses”. Instead of attacking Bilbo, Gollum wanted more time to figure out what to do with him; so, Gollum challenged Bilbo to a riddle game. If Bilbo won Gollum had to show him the way out of the dark cave, Gollum’s habitat; if Gollum won then Bilbo became his dinner, and
Gollum can hardly wait. The game commenced, and while Gollum was jumping around in agitation the One Ring fell out of his pocket. Bilbo, who was crawling around the dark cave trying to find his way out, felt the One Ring on the rock, picked it up and without thinking put it in his pocket. As the game continued and Bilbo ran out of questions he remembered the One Ring in his pocket. “What have I got in my pocket?” [Bilbo] said aloud. He was talking to himself, but Gollum thought it was a riddle and became unpleasantly upset. Gollum cannot answer the riddle so Bilbo was allowed to leave the cave, and unbeknown to Gollum Bilbo takes his “precious” with him.

Coveted by the One Ring, Gollum’s soul belonged to It; for It owned him, It possessed him and It made Gollum Its slave. With the loss of It, Gollum became obsessed in finding the hobbit who stole his ring; his “precious”. During this time, the One Ring that had coveted Gollum’s soul was now on Its way to finding Its home, Its real master, the Dark Lord Sauron, the one who crafted It from the fires of Orodruin (Mount Doom). Gollum, also known as Sméagol, came into possession of the One Ring, a very long time ago. He was the first Hobbit to possess the One Ring after he strangled his friend with his bare hands because he knew what the One Ring was and the powers it possessed. Contrast this to the way Bilbo found the One Ring, on a rock underneath the Misty Mountain; he did not kill Gollum in order to possess it. Humanity was a force that controlled Bilbo’s actions. Unlike Sméagol who was immediately possessed by the One Ring and who killed to get it, Bilbo perceived the One Ring as an object that he found; It did not have the immediate power over Bilbo like It did over Sméagol. Bilbo didn’t realize the significance of possessing It or the powers It would have over him.
Unfortunately for Bilbo, over time possession of this One Ring not only extensively prolonged his life, it completely changed his personality from a quirky, adventurous hobbit to an angry and aggressive hobbit; it coveted his soul, his being and his life much like It did the life of Sméagol (Gollum). In understanding the powers of the One Ring (an outside force) Bilbo became possessive of It but not obsessed by It like Gollum. The One Ring became Gollum’s one and most intimate friend; with It he became a recluse and hid from others who might take the ring from him. His fear of losing It became an obsession and the loss of It became his mission to recover “my precious”. For Bilbo, even though the ring changed his personality he did not become a recluse; however, he did not want to relinquish it when the time came. When Bilbo was persuaded it was time to relinquish the One Ring to his nephew, Frodo, it was not a simple transition. In Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring (2001) as Bilbo was writing his life’s story to leave for Frodo, Gandalf stopped by to make sure he was leaving the one thing that is important for Frodo to have:

Bilbo: I'm leaving everything to him.

Gandalf: What about this ring of yours? Is that staying too?

Bilbo: Yes, yes. It's in an envelope over there on the mantelpiece. No, wait... it's right here in my pocket. Isn't that odd, now? And yet, why not? Why shouldn't I keep it?

Gandalf: I think you should leave the ring behind, Bilbo. Is that so hard?

Bilbo: Well, no... and yes. [agitated] Now it comes to it, I don't feel like parting with it! It's mine, I found it! It came to me!

Gandalf: There's no need to get angry.
Bilbo: Well, if I'm angry, it's your fault! [to himself] It's mine... my own...

[Hisses] My precious...

Gandalf: [alarmed] "Precious"? It's been called that before, but not by you.

Gandalf became alarmed when Bilbo called the One Ring, “my precious” he was concerned that Bilbo’s soul had become intertwined with the One Ring; much like Gollum’s soul had been coveted by the One Ring. At the council of Elrond it was decided what to do with the One Ring and who should take the One Ring to Mordor, the final quest. Gandalf and Elrond agreed that Frodo’s temperament would allow him to do the task without having the One Ring take possession of his soul. When Gandalf met with Frodo he told him that Bilbo was meant to find the One Ring and now it was Frodo’s destination to possess It and return It to Its rightful place. From the coveting of souls by the One Ring, I now focus on the coveting of the souls of children by the ones they trust, their parents.

**Coveting the Souls of Children**

Explained before was the malicious intent to covet another’s soul, whether it is the soul of a human being, animal, plant or in the example above Hobbits. But, there is another way one’s soul can be coveted, and that is when a trusted authoritative figure uses another human being to achieve their wants and desires. For example, let’s look at a parent who lives vicariously through their child as exemplified in child beauty pageants. I focus primarily on female children and their mothers; this is not to say that this doesn’t happen to young male children and either parent. According to Martina M. Cartwright (2012) these child beauty pageants are more to fulfill the needs of the parents than the
children’s needs; these “princess by proxy” pageant parents are driven by social and monetary gains through their children, and they tend to disregard their child’s health and self-esteem. Young girls who participate in these pageants are generally not allowed to play or be a child; they are thrust into the adult world of work and competition. As one of her ten capabilities, Nussbaum (1997, p. 288) believed that “play: being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities” is necessary in order to possess human rights. Observation of children at play shows that they have different forms of communication, such as: touching, body language, yelling or laughing, etc. Those not allowed to play and develop relationships with other children generally grow up too quickly and may not possess the ability to develop a non-competitive connection with another person around their age and the age of others. Being allowed the freedom to develop Nussbaum’s ten capabilities gives the individual the tools needed to choose the life they want to live and to possess human rights.

These young girls and teenagers, who participate in princess pageants, go out into the world ill-equipped to make rational decisions and possibly build a suitable life. Nussbaum (1997, p. 289) further stated that:

[T]here is a great difference between that chosen life [the life one would choose] and a life constrained by insufficient maximum-hour protections and/or the ‘double day’ that make women unable to play in many parts of the world.

These princess pageantry participants are not allowed to choose their life; their lives are controlled by their mothers, and their mothers demand that their daughters participate and exert every effort to win the coveted Tiara, the One Ring. The parents possibly display
the paranoia of what Dewey (1922, p. 110) believed to be the distrust of “amusement, play and recreation”. Winning becomes everything to these parents, so much so that taking anything but first place is unacceptable. When interviewed by redOrbit Dr. Cartwright had this to say:

I think that the “Tiger Mother” is an example of some ABPD [achievement by proxy distortion] behaviors, particularly objectification and potential abuse. For example, I recall the mom in Tiger Mother who forced her young child to learn a difficult piano piece by foregoing meals, breaks, etc., calling the child names (“garbage,” I think?) and threatening the child with the removal of favorite toys. The question is why? Was the motivation for the parent’s sake, which would be ABPD? Or was the motivation to discipline the child? If so, then this would not be ABPD.

For Tiger Mother to “fit” ABPD, the motivation would have to be for parental gain. (Becker, 2012)

When the mother’s sole motivation is for her daughter to win the Pageant only for the mother to gain prestige, bragging rights or for her own personal benefit, Becker defined the mother as having ABPD; in other words, the mother is living vicariously through her daughter and winning is everything. However, if the mother’s motivation is to punish the child and winning the pageant becomes secondary, Becker stated that the mother does not have ABPD. It then becomes the responsibility of the researcher to find out the motivation of the mother, and why the mother is so obsessed in having her daughter get ready for and participate in the pageant.
Focusing on the mother who is obsessed with her daughter’s preparation for and winning of the pageant, what happens after the daughter has won? For the mother whose daughter wins and they now have in their possession, the One Ring, the Tiara the mother has reached the ultimate goal and can tell the World how proud she is of her daughter and how they worked so hard to win. The operative word is – they, which generally means the mother worked much harder than her daughter to obtain to winning of the Tiara.

Unfortunately, the mother’s soul could become coveted by the Tiara much like Gollum’s soul became coveted by the One Ring, and should her daughter lose and have to surrender the Tiara (her “precious”), the mother would begin to push her daughter harder to regain her “precious”. It is because of this that mothers force the young girls to endure long hours of practice, hair coloring to obtain the perfect hair color, make up to accentuate their finer features and tone down the “ugly” features; denying and possessing their daughter’s soul and reducing their daughter to “looks”. These young girls are dehumanized and stripped of their personal identity. This action is explained further by Freire (1983, p. 43), who wrote:

And as an individual perceives the extent of dehumanization, he or she may ask if humanization is a viable possibility. Within history, in concrete, objective contexts, both humanization and dehumanization are possibilities for a person as an uncompleted being conscious of their incompletion.

Is reclaiming their humanity a possibility for these young women whose souls were coveted at a delicate young age? Not knowing what it is like to be an independent individual or to have experienced Nussbaum’s play is it possible for them to flourish
outside of the realm of pageantry? Do these young girls ever escape the bondage and/or regain their souls? These questions and more are for further study and beyond the scope of my play.

**Précis Scene Three**

In summary, Scene Three focused on the intentional physical and psychological nature of coveting, and how one’s soul can be coveted by another person or by an inanimate object. When coveted by another person, the one who is being coveted may or may not be aware of or know how to protect themselves from this occurring. An example of this is sex-trafficking of young and old, male and female alike for the profit of others. In *Not for Profit* (2010) by Nussbaum, her greatest concern for eliminating the humanities is the loss of creating a democratic citizen. In a World based on profit and lacking the humanistic side would more souls be coveted for unlawful doings? Coveting of one’s soul can also be coveted by an inanimate object; such as, the One Ring.

In the land of Mordor, in the fires of Mount Doom, the Dark Lord Sauron forged in secret a master Ring, to control all others. And into this Ring he poured his cruelty, his malice and his will to dominate all life. One Ring to rule them all. (Galadriel, *Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring*, 2001)

In the land of Education, in the realm of the School Boards, the United States forged accountability, to standardize all; NCLB (Appendix A). And into this standardization they poured all of the educators, all of the students and their will to equalize all educational environments. Or as Hostetler (2011, p. 2) wrote:

I think it’s fair to say that elementary and secondary education in the United States is dominated by the legacy of No Child Left Behind, with an
emphasis on high-stakes testing, a narrow curriculum, particular sorts of education research, and punishing “underperforming” schools and teachers.

The wild Mustang galloping across the wide open plains can be soulful and is seen as a free spirit, a free soul and it must be controlled. Much like a Mustang filly, the young student on her first day of school is wide-eyed and full of curiosity wanting to explore her new environment and yet wanting to be free of the four walls corralling her and stifling her inquisitiveness.

SCENE FOUR: THE EDUCATOR DID IT

It is, of course, the responsibility of every butler to devote his utmost care in the devising of a staff plan. Who knows how many quarrels, false accusations, unnecessary dismissals, how many promising careers cut short can be attributed to a butler’s slovenliness at the stage of drawing up a staff plan?

(Ishiguro, 1988, p. 5)

Overture

In Scene One I argued that human beings, animals, and plants have a soul. Their souls are not defined by their intelligence but rather they are the “black box” of the life of each individual within these three families; it defines them and makes them who they are within their environment. Scene Two explored the good, the bad and the ugly of oppression which was defined as the environmental change or the psychological change that challenges the survival of the soulful organism. Going from oppression to coveting, which is discussed in Scene Three, the soul of the intended becomes “owned” by another;
causing irreparable changes to the oppressed soul as long as the situation does not change. These delicate souls can easily be imprisoned by positive and/or negative forces.

Scene Four addresses the educator, the authoritative figure, within the educational environment. In today’s current educational arena, it is the educator who teaches the standardized curriculum in order for every student to do well on the standardized tests. So that the educational process is positive in delivering an educative plan, these educators are to know how the connections are made, the concepts are grasped, and the progress of each student who needs to learn the subject-matter. However, who is responsible for devising the curriculum and picking up those students and educators who fall through the cracks due to a poorly written and/or executed curriculum plan? Although not the topic of my play, it does merit some consideration and in some form addresses the issue of standardized testing and current curriculum design. While Hostetler (2011) and others have addressed the issue of standardized testing and its failure to teach critical thinking in their writings, my goal is to introduce a form of teaching, utilizing theatre, that could possibly be the binding entity between critical thinking and standardized testing.

Consider slogans such as “our children are our future” and that “education is vital for our nation’s global economic and political dominance.” Up until the latter part of the 20th Century the caste system persevered where children learned the trade of their parents and they were not allowed to step away from the family trade; the government, the parents and tradition coveted the souls of the young who wanted more than their parents. Within the traditional educational environment, where students sat in neat rows, didn’t ask questions, and regurgitated verbatim on an exam it was the goal of the educator to mold students into good citizens giving them a healthy dose of past knowledge with no
connection to the future or other subject-matter. Traditional educators taught from the text and disseminated their knowledge to the “empty vessels” (Freire, 1983). Their sole purpose was to instill in the student the importance of knowing the past which had already proved to be true. A student’s place was in their seat with pen and notebook, listening, memorizing, and taking tests to demonstrate how attentive they were to the educator’s lecture and if they had read the required material. Traditional education failed to teach students critical thinking and reasoning; rote memorization and “to do – and learn, as it was the part of the six hundred to do and die” (Dewey, 1938, p. 19) was the general rule.

In the later part of the 20th Century the Reagan/Bush administrations began a massive reform of the educational system promoting standardized curricula, increasing “testing for entry-level teachers,” and removing “equity considerations from the discourse of excellence.” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993, p. 1) Yet, despite these aims we should be aghast because our students’ test scores lag behind those of other countries. The PISA [Program for International Student Assessment] “an international test in math, science and reading given in 65 nations” of 2013 reported that the test results of the 15-year-olds in the United States was lower than 29 nations in math, 22 nations in science, and 19 nations in reading (Fensterwald, 2013). The common thread, between the first part of the 20th Century and the later, was that youth were treated as a means for others’ purposes; standardized testing was enforced to “define the quality of education within the individual schools and how well students going to that school are remembering the required subject-material at their grade level” (NCLB).
In Kant’s terms this shows lack of respect for persons, for their dignity as human beings and it undermines the very thread of their soul. Kant did not propose that people never could be used as a means, but they cannot be used only as a means, and they must at the same time be treated as ends in themselves; “Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never merely as a means to an end, but always at the same time as an end” (Kant, 1993, p. vii). Of course, the sloganeers will claim that this is their attitude. However, I think Kant’s perception of humanity is denied by the impoverished perceptions of education and human well-being emphasized by NCLB. Students’ welfare is measured by their scores on standardized tests; served by focusing on math, science, and reading at the cost of marginalizing or eliminating the humanities, devaluing play, etc. What students are taught is passed down to the educators, how this information is taught depends on the educator. So, what is the role of the educator?

**Dewey’s Perception of the Role of the Educator**

Although there are other educational philosophers who address the role of the educator, I use Dewey as the main philosopher in this section to further develop the soul in education in a non-oppressive educational environment; i.e. circumvent oppression to nurture the soul of the student and the educator. In Deweyan terms, the educator is someone capable of designing a relaxing learning environment that is holistic and intricately woven around a strong support system of other educators and peers utilizing the student’s background to encourage further growth and feeding the student’s soul. So, what is the proper role of the educator, and how does Dewey define this role?
Dewey’s concept of the educator’s primary role in a classroom, based on his or her own experience, is one of guiding the student towards an educative experience and presenting opportunities to engage the student. An educator possesses the ability, providing nothing stands in the way, to utilize each one of Fincher’s five categories—mind, desires, feelings, spirit, and will—in designing and presenting information to students in a non-oppressive manner. Dewey (1938/1997, p. 38) believed that:

If an experience arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future… It is then the business of the educator to see in what direction the experience is heading.

Students learning in a positive soulful environment should gain the knowledge of valuable techniques that can be extended to any kind of positive or adverse future situations. Unfortunately, not all educational experiences are positive and can become oppressive, but with the right tools and understanding of their use, the student will be able to succeed and grow intellectually and in other ways. Dewey believed that the key to an educative experience leading to further meaningful experiences is a “community” environment provided for students by the educators.

Dewey (1938) saw “community” as an essential core of the educational environment. Here too, though, we need to be clear about the sort of community needed. Most importantly, it should be a community where students are active “citizens”—the community should be student-centered, centered on student interests, and not “chaotic.” It should have order, but not order provided by “rows of desks”, strict rules and dictated information. The community should be a safe place where students can explore,
question, manipulate, and develop their theories without fear of criticism. The environment should also be a place where students can be heard and listened to by peers and elders; one with mutual respect among the members, which includes the educator. To facilitate this, the educator should become familiar with the community in which the student lives and understand the general interests of the community; i.e. what the community may have questions about or problems with, and then work within that environment so the student makes meaningful connections. Dewey (1938, p. 75) believed that the educator should:

[S]elect those things within the range of existing experience that have the promise and potentiality of presenting new problems which by stimulating new ways of observation and judgment will expand the area of further experience.

Dewey determined that if the educator introduced the subject-matter beginning with what the student already knew a more meaningful educative experience could take place.

Deweyan philosophy was that the educator constructed a holistic educational environment and one that is not oppressive.

The formation of purposes is, then, a rather complex intellectual operation. It involves (1) observation of surrounding conditions; (2) knowledge of what has happened in similar situations in the past, a knowledge obtained partly by recollection and partly from information, advice, and warning of those who have had a wider experience; and (3) judgment which puts together what is observed and what is recalled to see what they signify.

(Dewey, 1938, p. 68-69)
To succeed, the plans and method of action should be age and maturity appropriate and should have a growth objective and nurture the soul of the student. The educator should be familiar with the students and their surroundings, how the students are interacting with a task at hand and if they are ready to move forward or need to remain for a longer period. Introducing more choices before the students are ready could cause confusion and hinder the experience. When designing a curriculum with choices the educator must be able to think beyond the immediate situation. Conversing with peers, collecting ideas and observation of the co-facilitators would allow the educator to know if changes need to be made and if there are some students who are not participating in the activity; and to avoid an oppressive environment. Emphasis should not be placed on the outcome of an activity as an end, but rather as a foundation to the next experience.

In a “positive” educational environment, in which it is a pleasure to learn, the educator’s role is to help students set a strong purpose for their learning and then to help students find the path towards that purpose.

[G]rowth depends upon the presence of difficulty to be overcome by the exercise of intelligence. Once more, it is part of the educator’s responsibility to see equally to two things: First, that the problem grows out of the conditions of the experience being had in the present, and that it is within the range of the capacity of students; and, secondly, that it is such that it arouses in the learner an active quest for information and for production of new ideas. (Dewey, 1938, p. 79)

Students, who possess the ability to seek answers and for the most part develop their five capacities (Fincher, 2007) will experience “the pleasure of becoming an
An educator capable of designing a friendly learning environment that encourages students to learn, ask questions and grow in a positive direction could change the souls of those she/he teaches and avoid an oppressive educational environment. For example, in *October Sky* the traditional path of the male students was to work in the coal mine, unless they were fortunate enough to get a football scholarship to go to college; as a result the education they received was adequate at best. Homer Hickam, a high school student, did not play football and did not want to follow his father’s footsteps to work in the mine; Homer’s dream was to go into space. Miss Riley, his teacher, encouraged him to reach for the stars. She defended his actions and encouraged him to go against the traditional course despite the threats from the principal, who told her that Homer was not smart enough to become anything more than a miner.

**Précis Scene Four**

In Scene Four, I addressed the educator’s role in creating a non-oppressive educational environment that nurtures the soul of the student, as well as their souls. Using Dewey I defined the role of the educator and how important their role is in guiding the students through positive educative experiences would lead them to solid, more substantial learning and growth. The educator’s role is to help students set a strong purpose for their learning, that resists oppression, and then to help students find the path towards that purpose.

The basic belief of the true traditionalists was that children were empty vessels to be filled with preexisting knowledge from adults and textbooks. This approach did not
place value on the students’ previous experiences and the student’s only function was to receive structured subject matter. Dewey (1938) believed that children brought interests and activities from home, and he reasoned that the educator’s responsibility was to utilize this enthusiasm and information as background knowledge to begin introducing new material. Building on preexisting knowledge encouraged children to stay involved and be active participants. Generally, children are able to use their own experiences to help them build and develop an understanding of and a connection with the new material within the subject-matter. Unfortunately, the child who did not have the same experiences or knowledge would become lost, confused, and lose interest in the subject-matter. There is a difference between a dynamic learning environment where material is presented to set the background, which puts the students on an equal plane, and a static, oppressive environment where material presented is non-meaningful to the students. To take the students into the next dimension of learning the educator should be willing to guide each student through new experiences, and help students make connections to their past and present experiences. To generate a positive learning environment, educators should create “environments and experiences that bring students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves, and to make students members of communities of learners that make discoveries and solve problems” (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

But the problem is not merely failure to recognize abilities students have, as if it could be fixed by simply giving students more freedom to choose and discuss. Within the learning community dialogue between the educator, the students, and the experience requires that one curtails the traditional way of teaching and emphasizes the guided student-centered environment. A student becomes an equal member of the educational
community through the active contribution by the student, the positive reinforcement from the educator, and the encouragement by his/her peers. As a participating member of the community the student is able to make observations, interpret them, and inform others of his/her findings without fear of oppression.

In order for this to work constructive, democratic, and beneficial rules and regulations appropriate to the community should be defined. Some rules are necessary and emphasize one of the good values of traditional education, when properly asserted. A democratic community of learners consists of an educator who is organized, knowledgeable of the subject, and willing to work with each student as well as students who are willing to work with the educator and each other. With this in mind, it is important for the community of learners and educators to understand the vision of soul in the educational environment.

ACT TWO: THE VISION OF SOUL IN EDUCATION

Education is that process by which thought is opened out of the soul, and, associated with outward things, is reflected back upon itself, and thus made conscious of their reality and shape.

– Bronson Alcott, Massachusetts educator, c. 1850
(In Nussbaum, 2010, p. 1)

Overture

In Act One the concepts of soul, oppression, coveting and the importance of the educator were developed. At any point in time we are all unsuspecting souls when: (1) we let our guard down and become complacent; or (2) we lack the education or capabilities (those of Nussbaum) necessary to beware of an oppressive environment.
Because the focus of my play is on the unsuspecting soul of the student and possibly the educator, it is important to understand how oppression and coveting affect positive growth when they occur within the educational environment.

I begin Act Two by discussing the vision of soul in education, from the Greeks and Romans to today. I then use Fincher (2007) in conversation with Nussbaum (2000, 2010) to further develop the concept of soul, and discuss Nussbaum’s concern of taking the humanities out of the current curriculum. I also use two of Nussbaum’s ten capabilities as well as Hostetler and Sumner, who discuss the well-being of the soul, to bring forth the concept of soul into the educational environment. The unsuspecting souls of our students could become oppressed by those they trust, either at home or in the educational environment. Similar to what I argued before, this oppression could be intentional or unintentional, physical, physical and psychological or psychological. This oppressive environment could become one of coveting, the malicious act of taking over another’s soul, dehumanizing them and not allowing them to develop and utilize Nussbaum’s ten capabilities.

The Vision of Soul in Education

“In our system of education, we live from infancy in the midst of the Greeks and Romans, and become accustomed continually to compare them with ourselves” (DeCoulanges, 2006, p. 11). Rich in religious beliefs, the education of their offspring was passed down from generation-to-generation to control the house and ultimately the Greek and Roman societies. Survival of the family was dependent on the younger generations carrying on the specialized trade indicative of that family; these trades defined the individual families within the community. For example, if the family’s trade
was to be a cobbler all of the male offspring were taught to make shoes. The young girls would learn from their mothers how to take care of the house and raise children.

Beginning in the mid-19th Century, in the United States, education began to shift from private home schools to schools that the common people could attend. These children were not only taught subjects, but the schools were also expected to teach them life skills. Dewey (1927, p. 63) recognized that:

> There has been a steady tendency for the education of children to be regarded as properly a state charge in spite of the fact that children are the care of a family… In the degree, then, that a certain measure of instruction and training is deemed to have significant consequences for the social body, rules are laid down affecting the action of parents in relation to their children, and those who are not parents are taxed – Herbert Spencer to the contrary notwithstanding – to maintain school.

Because of this movement, to have wealthy children and common children educated in schools instead of by the family, the states began to set rules, regulations and standards to ensure equality.

Nussbaum examined how life’s unexpected factors might control the outcome of a person’s life. In discussing Plato’s *Republic*, Nussbaum (1986, p. 129) interpreted the “Socratic philosophical inquiry” to be the “working-through of the interlocutor’s ill-sorted growth”. Her interpretation of this event is similar to Dewey’s and Freire’s philosophical definitions of growth; that growth occurs through dialogue and the continuation of inquiry. Comparing current day philosophers of education with that of the Greeks and Romans come with errors because our society is unlike that of the Greeks
and Romans due to one major change in man “modified from age to age … our intelligence” (DeCoulanges, 2006, p. 11). Intelligence continues to change the life in which we live as long as growth, in a positive direction, continues; it helps to shape our souls. If, according to DeCoulanges our intelligence has modified us, who are the souls that can be modified in the educational arena?

In the educational arena, when referring to the souls of the unsuspecting I define them to be those individuals who have not developed a sense of self and who may be vulnerable to being molded or possessed by another; i.e. children and those who do not have the means or ability to develop Nussbaum’s ten capabilities, and even some people who are physically mature but emotionally immature. In the realm of education, educators can put their souls into teaching young children whose souls are impressionable, malleable and controllable. These educators might become a trusted individual with whom the unsuspecting soul connects, this trusted relationship could make the student comfortable and become easily influenced. How does concern for the soul complement learning?

Soulful learning nurtures the inner life of the student and connects it to the outer life and the environment. It acknowledges and gives priority to the human spirit rather than simply producing individuals who can “compete in the global economy.” Restoring the soul to education is not a new vision. (Miller, 2000, p. 12)

Miller’s quote emphasized the importance of maintaining a humanistic approach to education within the school, and Nussbaum (2010) emphasized her concern about the humanities being taken out of the overall curriculum in order to make room for an
educational based curriculum focusing on those subjects where students can get high paying jobs, the for profit classes; such as, math and science.

**A Future Without the Humanities**

Before addressing Nussbaum’s concerns with taking away the humanities, I want to bring attention to a possible futuristic example of how some people might perceive all of their monetary achievements along with their attitude towards animals. I begin with one of man’s many attitudes found in Adams (1979, p. 23) *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*:

For instance, on the planet Earth, man had always assumed that he was more intelligent than dolphins because he had achieved so much—the wheel, New York, wars and so on—whilst all the dolphins had ever done was muck about in the water having a good time. But conversely, the dolphins had always believed that they were far more intelligent than man—for precisely the same reasons.

In his books, Adams (1979, p. 1) portrays human beings as very arrogant, yet sad, unhappy people much of the time, “…lots of the people were mean, and most of them were miserable…”. The dolphins showed more courage when they told human beings of the impending destruction of Earth to make way for a galactic freeway, and man in his infamous wisdom thought he was smarter than the playing, uneducated dolphins. Adams portrays animals as having more soul and caring than the self-absorbed human beings who based success on materialism and profit. Adams’ quote might suggest that the human beings intelligence and possibly the soul, is dependent on the ability to acquire and build things making it better to live. The waging of war might be one way human
beings would make sure their sect would survive; survival of the fittest, a Darwinist point of view on life. War between human beings might also emphasize Hostetler’s (2011) belief, that when people were threatened or uncertain about their place in the environment they would divide instead of seeking common ground.

In summary Adams five books, although fictional and futuristic, show the ugly self-absorbed side of human beings who lack humanity and who continue to focus more on materialistic gain. To point out that this could be the future of the human race if the humanities were to disappear from the current curriculum would be unscholarly and a bit presumptuous. Nonetheless, Nussbaum (2010) does have concerns and argues against taking the humanities out of the curriculum.

**SCENE ONE: NUSSBAUM ON THE SOUL OF THE EDUCATED**

The soul has to find and hold its ground against hostile forces, sometimes embodied in ideas which frequently deny its very existence, and which indeed often seem to be trying to annul it all together.

(Bloom, 1987, p. 17)

In Act One Scene Two, I introduced Fincher (2007) and the five categories or capacities she believed are held by our souls, which define us as individuals. I also discussed how external forces could escalate to hostile forces, stripping away the soul of an individual under certain circumstances; possessing another’s soul for the sole purpose of monetary and materialistic gain. In this scene, I use Fincher in conversation with Nussbaum to develop further the soul of those within the educational environment, and I examine Nussbaum’s concern for eliminating the humanities from the school curriculum. Absolute profit driven attainment in the school’s curriculum is what Nussbaum (2010)
argued against; she believed that humanization is based on having the right and the ability to develop each of her ten capabilities (two capabilities will be discussed in Scene Three).

Why is it important to understand soul in the educational environment?

NUSSBAUM (2010, p. 6): [W]e seem to be forgetting about the soul, about what it is for thought to open out of the soul and connect person to world in rich subtle, and complicated manner; about what it is to approach another person as a soul…talk as someone who has a soul.

FINCHER (2007, p. 47): The “soul” is like red wine, grown mature but neglected in a cool, abandoned cellar. To open up the soul is as potent and rich as opening up a bottle of rare wine.

NUSSBAUM (2000, p. 72): The core idea is that of the human being as a dignified free being who shapes his or her own life in cooperation and reciprocity with others, rather than being passively shaped or pushed around by the world in the manner of a “flock” or “herd” animal.

FINCHER (2007, p. 78): Our souls prove that we are not so different. We are all human with human capacities, whether we’re actualizing them or not… The soul, with all its capacities, is the corner stone for our belief in the equality of all people.

Both, Nussbaum and Fincher, argued that soul is deeper than monetary or material gains and accomplishments; if the soul defines the person and it is the person, it is much more than materialism. Reflecting back to Adam’s perception of futuristic human beings who
become hateful, miserable and very materialistic, is it a wonder that Nussbaum is concerned about taking the humanities out of the curriculum? Without having these subjects to ground us as human beings and having our entire focus be on the economic gain, the for profit, Adam’s futuristic human beings could become a reality.

Whether it is the five capacities held by our soul: mind, desires, feelings, the spirit and the will (Fincher, 2007, p. 32) or Nussbaum’s ten capabilities: life, bodily health, bodily integrity, sense, imagination and thought, emotions, practical reason, affiliation, other species, play and control over one’s environment (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 78-80), in the educational environment it is the educator’s responsibility to nurture these souls so that they will thrive. To educate these young souls on the importance of being a responsible human being and to bring into the profit driven curriculum the humanities, which make us soulful human beings – this should be the goal of the educator.

Unfortunately, Nussbaum warned us of an impending crisis within our school systems. With radical changes occurring, within the current educational environment, on what our young are being taught our future generations will become “useful machines, rather than complete citizens” (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 2). These machines who are unable to think for themselves could exhibit the inability to care, treating others as objects, which Nussbaum stated would become the downfall of society. Nussbaum (1997, p. 218) identified seven ways in which an individual can be treated as an object, “objectification entails making into a thing, treating as a thing, something that is really not a thing”. Whether human beings are enslaved or free they can be subjected to being treated as objects, in slavery they are oppressed by their owners and as a free individual they could be oppressed by those who think they are superior; in either case the well-being, of the
one who is oppressed, is compromised. In the next Scene, I focus on the concept of well-being and its importance to the development of the human soul.

SCENE TWO: HOSTETLER WITH SUMNER ON THE WELL-BEING OF THE SOUL

If we are concerned for human well-being we need to be sensitive to the nature and possibilities of human lives, imperfect and fragile as they are. (Hostetler, 2011, p. 30)

In Act Two Scene One, I used Fincher (2007) in conversation with Nussbaum (2000, 2010) to emphasize the soulfulness of those within the educational environment and the importance of keeping the humanities in the school curriculum; so students avoid becoming machines in a profit driven world. Discussed in this Scene are two of Sumner’s (1996) central claims – subject-relativity of well-being and well-being as authentic happiness, plus Hostetler’s (2011) concept of student well-being.

In earlier societies children were taught the family trade. As society changed and parents were no longer able to teach their children what was needed, commoners joined the elite to attend public schools. Treating students as “empty vessels” (Freire, 1983) knowledge was poured into their heads from older, wiser educators; as a result:

[Students] find themselves largely creatures of others’ will – parents, teachers, policymakers, and others. They might feel content, but are they content with a life they have determined or one that has been determined for them? (Hostetler, 2011, p. 17)
Hostetler believed that the well-being of individuals consists of norms or standards, but that this well-being can be mistaken. As a result, the welfare or well-being of the unsuspecting souls, the students, is based on how they perceive their environment along with those in control, the educators. On how the mind views this, Sumner (1996, p. 33) wrote:

There are various ways in which the mind represents the world… Which aspects of our view of reality have their source in our subjective make-up and which reflect reality as it is in itself?

One example in education is how the student perceives the educator’s demeanor which can be based on the manner in which the educator approaches the subject-matter they are presenting and how the student views this approach. This perception can be either correct or mistaken depending on the ambiance of the classroom setting and the previous and/or current mind-set and background of the student. The approach to the subject-matter and the mind-set of the student are each an independent “source” that when put together can determine the student’s well-being at any particular point in time (which could range from one day to over the entire school year). Sumner (1996) believed that well-being should extend beyond a “source” and Hostetler (2011, p. 13) believed that “well-being consists of satisfying experiences”.

A student’s authentic happiness can also be independent of how the information is presented. The subject-matter could possibly be interesting enough to stimulate the student and she learns the material well enough to move forward; her learning experience is satisfying. Even though the student is interested enough to learn the material, is learning considered another intrinsic source that could contribute to the student’s well-
being? To help answer this question, Sumner (1996) made two other central claims about the welfare or well-being of individuals; these claims are also presented by Hostetler (2011).

First is Sumner’s (1996, p. 42) subject-relativity of well-being:

[T]he defining feature of all subjective theories is that they make your well-being depend on your own concerns: the things you care about, attach importance to, regard as mattering, and so on.

In education, a student caring about learning the subject-material, no matter how it is presented or by whom, depends on how the student qualifies “learning” within the scheme of her overall well-being. Does she just go to school because she has to, or because she experiences the “pleasure of becoming an educated person” (Chang on Hamilton, 2006, p. 442), or the experience of learning “provides the connection between values and the quality of life for [her]” (Hostetler, 2011, p. 14)? The latter two statements would take her in the right direction and indicate that her conception of well-being is subjective in a favorable way, and that she values the educative experience.

Second, Sumner (1996, p. 172) believed that “[w]elfare therefore consists in authentic happiness, the happiness of an informed and autonomous subject”. The student is knowledgeable enough to make an informed decision and self-directed enough to be a good judge of her own well-being. However, Hostetler (2011, p. 14) cautioned us concerning one’s judgment of their own welfare and how they can be mistaken or misled because “[b]eliefs and attitudes can be constrained, deformed, and manipulated”. For example Ruth, Walter Lee’s wife and the martyr of the Younger family in A Raisin in the Sun (1994), is willing to sacrifice her second pregnancy for the good of the family. By
not bringing another person into the household she thinks the current financial and affiliation situations will continue without further problems. Ruth sees her role as the classic “black woman”, she is uneducated, always working hard in and out of their home, and willing to work more and longer hours to help support the family; her conception of well-being is subjective in the sense that she is content. How is Ruth’s authentic happiness impacted if the choices she makes concerning her pregnancy and lot in life is merely based on how she perceives herself? Ruth’s soul is dominated by the oppressive state of the black woman and she believes she is not worthy of a better life, but instead must make sure that others in the family are cared for. She is unsure of change and fears she will be unable to adjust to a better way of life. She is the epitome of Havel’s (1985, p. 30) belief that:

the working class is enslaved in the name of the working class; the complete degradation of the individual is presented as his or her ultimate liberation; depriving people of information is called making it available; the use of power to manipulate is classed the public control of power, and the arbitrary abuse of power is called observing the legal code.

Sumner’s concept of subject-relativity is interpreted as being open to both subjective and objective theories of well-being; however, he did argue that the subjective conceptions of well-being are more analogous to subject-relativity than the objective conceptions. As subjective, the well-being of an individual is reflective of two criteria – one’s views (examination of sources) and one’s priorities (precedence of sources); Sumner envisioned that these criteria help determine one’s happiness. A complete experience is made up of many intrinsic sources that could determine the well-being of an
individual; the key issue is how the individual authentically prioritizes the many different sources to foster her own welfare on this quest.

Among the many different approaches to education taken today, one view stresses the importance of an individual’s right to make her own decisions: such as, what college to attend, what major interest of study, what course selection, etc. concerning her own well-being while the priority of these various intrinsic sources can be different for each student. For example, a student who is interested in becoming an accountant might look to enroll in the best college known for accounting, versus a student who might select a college based on the convenient times her classes are taught. Both students are accounting majors so they have the same views on what it takes to get this degree, but their methods of getting there are very different; “different individuals will have different legitimate ideas about what their welfare entails” (Hostetler, 2011, p. 15). This autonomy-based approach, might seem consistent with the subjective theory of well-being and is based on the assurance of autonomy and the belief that well-being is relative to the subject. However, akin to Sumner’s criteria, what happens if the student’s happiness is based on ignorance of her circumstances? What if she evaluates her educational experience favorably anchored merely in preconceived notions or manipulation?

A student’s experience is vital, because according to Sumner (1996, p. 36) attitude is the biggest contributor to the well-being of subjects; “if I have an attitude toward something then I am, figuratively, inclined one way or the other with respect to it”. For example, the negative attitude a student might have towards taking a science class. This preconceived opinion could result in the student having a negative
experience, causing the student’s well-being to be compromised. She perceives the class as a waste of time and non-beneficial to her major; there is no value to this fundamental class. If, on the other hand, her attitude towards the science class is positive the student may look favorably on the experience, at least at the start, and this intrinsic class could conceivably help to foster her well-being. These two examples, of one intrinsic source – the science class, illustrate that a subject’s well-being is dependent in part on their prior attitude; similar to one’s attitude towards an unintentional oppressive situation, where the act of “allowing oneself to be oppressed” depends on the mindset of the individual.

There are many other factors that could go into the overall experience, but for now, the focus is on the student’s outlook concerning her experience. How a student could perceive having to take a science class, is illustrative of Sumner’s subjective relativity of well-being. If attitude is a big contributor to the well-being of the student in education, then what sources can she use to accurately evaluate her well-being?

Sumner identifies two indicators that address the authenticity of subjective relativity of well-being, and are ways for an individual to gauge her well-being: 1) the social indicator which is objective and 2) the subjective indicator. Defined by Sumner (1996, p. 150-151), a social indicator is:

any piece of statistical evidence which can be reliably correlated with the welfare of those to whom it applies. Like welfare itself, indicators can be either subjective or objective, the former if they measure people’s perceptions of the quality of their lives, the latter if they map external social conditions which standardly affect that quality for better or worse.
Based on Sumner’s example of the economic growth debate and social welfare, I argue that students could mistakenly use social indicators as a basis for successful completion of a class. For example, in education one of the social indicators (which are objective) is grades. Some students might define success and happiness by receiving good grades in every class they complete. However, how authentic is this happiness and how relevant is it to the well-being of the student?

In some cases, having good grades could give a student a false sense of happiness and security especially if the problems and concepts taught in a prerequisite class are not learned well enough to be remembered in a subsequent class; in other words, the student did not have a good foundation of the basics to continue and be successful. As a result, the well-being of the student could later be compromised even though the happiness she experienced by passing the prerequisite class with a good grade at the time was subject-relative. So many times the value of grades are misinterpreted and misunderstood mainly due to the stigma that is attached to receiving poor grades. In some cases, the social indicator of grades is misleading and can set the person up for failure in the future. The assumption is: if you receive a good grade in a pre-requisite class, you understand and have learned the necessary material and can make the connections to past, present and future experiences (Dewey’s, 1938/1997). In order for this to occur, according to Dewey (1938/1997) educative experiences should be connected, resulting in a positive experience and should include putting the student at the center of education as a voluntary, active member of the learning process. Grades are tangible and are significant throughout education; they can also be the determining factor as to whether or not a student remains in school or be accepted into college, and they can help to evaluate the
well-being of the student. In order for the student to assess her well-being or quality of life what implicit or explicit assumptions must be made about grades?

For many students in education, they perceive their life as going well if they complete each class with a good grade (the social indicator) and are able to complete the classes required for them to reach their goal. In this case, the social indicator (grades) would influence the subjective indicator (how one feels about their life in having completed the class) and the student has a positive perception of their well-being; where Fincher (2007, p. 54) described this feeling as an emotion, and where “emotions – like fear, anxiety, anger, joy, frustration, delight, impatience, and peace – originate in our soul”. Unfortunately for some, this defined entity of well-being may be based on the misconception of grades versus learning which may or may not affect the student’s soul.

Sumner’s discussion of subjective indicators of well-being is based on the responses elicited by survey researchers (one way they can be obtained) which can be misleading and can be highly dependent on the respondent’s interpretation of the question. These indicators are subjective because they measure the individual’s perception of how well their lives are going – “their life satisfaction” (Sumner, 1996, p. 152). Within education, subjective well-being surveys could be used as an attempt to determine how well a student is doing in a class at a particular time, how well they liked the subject-material of the class, and how well they liked the educator. Unfortunately, these subjective well-being surveys can be a false reflection of the student’s authentic happiness at the moment. As a surveyor it is important to know when to give the surveys and understand how to interpret the data correctly. Like Sumner’s example of a subject’s
personal priorities not reflecting public policy, these surveys in education cover a broader range and may not reflect the overall authentic happiness of the student.

The key point Sumner (1996, p. 139) defended “does not simply identify well-being with happiness; additionally, it requires that a subject’s endorsement of the conditions of her life, or her experience of them as satisfying and fulfilling, be authentic”. To be authentic the student should be well informed, not only about what classes to take but how to succeed in each class, in terms of her well-being in order to make the best of the educational environment. For these conditions to be authentic, the subject must be informed, and based on this information, has made her own decisions; “The conditions for authenticity,…are: information and autonomy” (Sumner, 1996, p. 139). “A person is autonomous with her beliefs, or values, or aims, or decisions, or actions are, in some important sense, her own” (Sumner, 1996, p. 167). As indicated by Sumner, only when the person forms her values autonomously will the experiences contribute to her welfare. Welfare of a student is based on being well informed (knowledgeable) and on how authentic (autonomous) the educational experience might be. Nussbaum (2000) believed that being an educated individual allows one to make autonomous decisions concerning their life – that is, exercise practical reason. Sumner’s example of this is that of the uninformed housewife who doesn’t know her husband is cheating on her and she continues to believe that her life is going well. Using the same analogy for the student: how is the student’s authentic happiness impacted if the advice she received, concerning her desire to be an accountant, only pertains to a particular (unaccredited) college and that the classes taken are non-transferable?
Questions about the value of something for one’s welfare are not straightforward; in fact “they are some of the deepest and most difficult issues in philosophical ethics” (Sumner, 1996, p. 4). In education, Sumner’s subject-relativity does not mean that students should be taught whatever they want and whenever they desire, nor should they use the social indicator of grades as the only deciding factor of their well-being. The authenticity of their well-being, according to Sumner, means that the student should be well-informed and knowledgeable in order to make an autonomous decision. Their authentic happiness should not be only “at the moment” but extend throughout their academic career and beyond; “[i]f we are concerned for human well-being we need to be sensitive to the nature and possibilities of human lives, imperfect and fragile as they are” (Hostetler, 2011, p. 31). The conditions for authenticity are that a student must be informed and autonomous; however, these two requirements can be mistaken and/or deeply distorted. To help clarify these Martha Nussbaum’s I use two of her ten capabilities, practical reason and affiliation which are of special importance to students, which might offer a way for the student to think about their well-being and authentic happiness.

**SCENE THREE: NUSSBAUM'S TWO CAPABILITIES TO FEED THE SOUL**

The capabilities approach is fully universal: the capabilities in question are important for each and every citizen, in each and every nation, and each is to be treated as an end.

(Nussbaum, 2000, p. 6)

In Act Two Scene Two I used Sumner and Hostetler to discuss the nature of welfare or well-being and its intrinsic value; not solely identifying well-being with
happiness but with the subject’s authentic endorsement of the conditions and experiences of her life; “in order for a subject’s endorsement of her life to accurately reflect her own priorities, her own point of view – in order for it to be truly hers – it must be authentic, which in turn requires that it be informed” (Sumner, 1996, p. 160). In Act Two Scene Three I use two of Nussbaum’s ten capabilities to clarify the conditions for authenticity.

Nussbaum’s capabilities approach to welfare is a liberal theory of justice and human rights based on her version of Amartya Sen’s “human capability” theory which was developed as a way of addressing questions of justice and human development. Nussbaum (2000, p. 82) identifies two especially important capabilities:

Among the capabilities, two, practical reason and affiliation stand out as of special importance, since they both organize and suffuse all of the others, making their pursuit truly human. To use one’s own life without being able to do so in complex forms of discourse, concern and reciprocity with other human beings is, again to behave in an incompletely human way. To take just one example, work, to be a truly human mode of functioning, must involve the availability of both practical reason and affiliation. It must involve being able to behave as a thinking being, not just a cog in a machine, and it must be capable of being done with and towards others in a way that involves mutual recognition of humanity.

Substituting “education” in the previous statement for “work”, one can say that education should allow the individual greater latitude in developing and bettering one’s life, as long as growth in a positive direction occurs; which, for Nussbaum, entails being able to take rational control of one’s life.
Education is a participatory function of everyday life for a student, and Nussbaum’s studies show that people who are educated can free themselves from oppression. Similarly, in order for this to happen, according to Dewey (1938/1997) educative experiences should be connected, resulting in a positive experience and should include putting the student at the center of education as a voluntary, active member of the learning process. Sumner’s subject-relativity and authentic happiness imply that to do well the student would have a positive and satisfactory educative experience. For Nussbaum, this positive educative experience allows an individual to learn such things as read, write, and expand one’s knowledge about their surroundings and the conditions to choose how to live; giving the individual knowledge to critically analyze one’s life. In educative environments and particularly for students, practical reason and affiliation are most likely to be overlooked because they are difficult to offer.

Nussbaum (2000, p. 79) explained that practical reason involves “being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one’s life”. Similar to Sumner’s authentic happiness, practical reason demonstrates that the student has the ability to make proper choices concerning his/her own life based on their educative experiences. Going back to the previous example in Sumner, the student who began an accounting program at an unaccredited college and then found out the credits wouldn’t transfer, this student made an autonomous decision based on the program information at the unaccredited college. However, lacking the proper information to be able to know the difference or being told about the difference between accredited and unaccredited colleges caused problems when she went to transfer in order to further her education. This scenario is illustrative of one way in which the student
made an autonomous decision, which inadequately reflected her well-being, based on the false information she received.

Nussbaum informed us that the absence of practical reason is more easily imagined than the capability itself.

Where practical reason is concerned, we can more easily imagine the absence of the relevant function: an adult, having learned to think about the planning of a life, decides that he or she simply doesn’t want to do that any longer, and joins some authoritarian society (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 92).

Looking at the previous example, one way the student could approach her situation would be to remain at the unaccredited institution and finish her initial course of study. She decided that retaking classes at the accredited college would be too expensive, plus she didn’t want to go through the hassle of retaking classes she already passed at the unaccredited college. She relinquished her goal of furthering her accounting education and succumbed to her first choice, exemplifying the absence of practical reason or the drive to pursue a higher degree. Another underlying reason for her not to want to change colleges would be that she realized her self-confidence to pursue a higher degree was based on the social indicator (high grades) and subjective indicators of feeling she did well at the unaccredited college. But, when faced with retaking some of the same classes at another institution she realized the possibility that her grades were high at the unaccredited college because of their inflated grading scale, and that because of this she wasn’t confident with herself to retake the classes at an accredited institution. By retaking the classes at another institution there would be the possibility that their grading scale was much higher and she realized that this could compromise her high overall GPA.
Looking at the decision she made to stay and finish at the first college one could speculate that the authoritarian society is the unaccredited institution of higher education. Following Nussbaum, it is easier for her to not show practical reason and follow her original plan than to pursue a higher degree in accounting. To Fincher (2007, p. 57), the college student used her will, the main capacity kept by her soul, to direct her other capacities in making her decision – [her] emotions were governed, [her] beliefs were based on truth, [her] thoughts were ordered, [her] sensations were wholly pure, and [she] developed the virtue of self-control". Her decision to remain and finish the original program of study at the unaccredited institution or transfer and repeat some of the classes at an accredited institution could also be based on other factors not mentioned within this scenario.

Like practical reason, Nussbaum’s affiliation can be important to students, and also difficult to determine. Nussbaum’s (2000, p. 79-80) capability of affiliation relates to:

- being able to live with and toward others; to recognize and show concern for other human beings; to engage in various forms of social interactions;
- to be able to imagine the situation of another and to have compassion for that situation; to have the capability for both justice and friendship….having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliations,
- being able to be treated as dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others.

Affiliation emphasizes the need of a social base of self-respect, non-humiliation, and treatment of others as intelligent and dignified human beings. In education there are
many different ways to disseminate information to students; one way, which has become very popular, is on-line distance learning. For students in education taking online distance learning classes how does affiliation work?

One defining feature of affiliation, according to Nussbaum (2000, p. 79) is “to recognize and show concern for other human beings”. When the only form of communication is online (through the computer) how, if at all, does this occur? Students enrolled in online distance learning are engaged through the computer in organized forums, mostly. In online posting, some concern for other human beings can be shown through encouragement and agreement with one another’s answers. However, because there is no face-to-face conversation or personal interaction in and out of class, the educator might be the only one to recognize when a student is having problems or has withdrawn from the class. If this is the case, the type of affiliation with other students would depend on the individual personality of each student taking online classes. Some students may not need the “concern” from their peers in a classroom setting in order to fulfill their education requirements and finish their academic classwork. These students might have affiliation within their work setting or their home that would help them keep engaged in the online class and in other classes. While other students, who do not have out-of-class affiliations, might need more than the occasional posting of an online class to affiliate with other students taking the class. It could be that it takes a certain type of student to be able to take online classes and be affiliated without personal in class relationships.

However, Nussbaum (2000, p. 79) stated that another defining feature of affiliation is “to engage in various forms of social interactions”. This feature might very
well be counter-intuitive to Nussbaum’s first feature of affiliation, above, for students taking online classes. For online classes the main social interaction is through written communication, only seldom will the educator meet with the class before it begins and generally the meeting is for the mere purpose of explaining the context of the class. If the student’s attitude toward the online experience is positive, similar to Sumner’s belief that authentic happiness is in part based on attitude, then some sort of affiliation can be gained through a social written engagement. Affiliation could also be enhanced by establishing a written working relationship with one’s professor as well as one’s peers. “Although peers can be great mentors, establishing a relationship with one’s professors to answer questions, understand their strengths and weaknesses, …” (Carriuolo, 2006, p. 2) it can also prove to be beneficial to the student. For a “complete” academic experience Carriuolo (2006, p. 1) recommended that a combination of online and in-person courses may be what students need to be successful in higher education, “especially in courses outside of their majors, where there is little common subject interest around which to bond”. For example, classes in which the student does not have any background knowledge, it might be best for them to learn the subject in a classroom setting rather than online. In a classroom setting the student is more apt to have face-to-face interaction with a peer or colleague, versus the online setting where interaction is via computer postings.

The last defining feature discussed is Nussbaum’s (2000, p. 79) belief that affiliation is to be able “to imagine the situation of another and to have compassion for that situation.” The home life and working environments of students could be easily masked in the online classes. Similar to the telephone, the expression on a person’s face
cannot be seen; and unlike the telephone, no inflection of their voice could be heard. Of all of Nussbaum’s defining features, this could be the most difficult feature of affiliation to deal with, and one that could easily be masked by the student who is posting answers and dialoguing online. Like Sumner’s “social” indicator, the answers and/or discussions from the student could appear to be void of emotion which would allow the reader little access into the personal life of other students in the class. Possibilities of how this feature could be a defining one for a student taking online classes are beyond the scope of this play.

**Précis Act Two**

In Act Two, the concept of soul in the educational environment was introduced. I expanded the vision of soul into the educational environment and how vulnerable the unsuspecting souls, the students, are within this environment. There is a history of placing soul at the center of education (Plato), and continuing with contemporary writers who have emphasized this (Dewey, Nussbaum, Hadot, Neiman and Hostetler). To “humanize” the student the educational technique of banking is revolutionized when the educator becomes a “partner of the students in his relation with them.” (Freire, 1983, p. 62) This partnership should encourage both the student and educator to make connections, reflect and go beyond the standardized curriculum.

On the soul of the educated I used Nussbaum in conversation with Fincher (2007) to bring forth the concept of soul in education. On the meaning of soul, Nussbaum (2010, p. 6) insists on what
Tagore and Alcott meant by [the word soul]: the faculties of thought and imagination that make us human and make our relationships rich human relationships, rather than relationships of mere use and manipulation.

Hostetler and Sumner established (1) that welfare is subject-relative and (2) that happiness is based in part on life satisfaction; while questioning if “people’s self-assessments provide the most reliable measure of how satisfied they are with their lives, or with particular sectors of their lives.” (Sumner, 1996, p. 153) How reliable is a student’s self-assessment when it is based on social indicators? If their happiness is authentic, based on being a well-informed and autonomous individual, will it be sustained over a longer period of time? Sumner’s (1996, p. 168) view on the relationship of autonomy and subjective well-being is:

- a person’s values count as her own if she has identified with them, or acknowledged them as her own, or endorsed them as her standards for the conduct and assessment of her life.

And,

- on a subjective theory, individuals are the ultimate authorities concerning their own welfare. Their self-assessments are therefore determinative of their well-being unless they can be shown to be in authentic, i.e. not truly theirs. (Sumner, 1996, p. 171)

Addressing two of Nussbaum’s (2000, p. 92) capabilities practical reason and affiliation, I focus on their importance and how “they suffuse all the other capabilities, making them fully human” and important in developing the concept of human well-being. By being educated or at least knowledgeable about their specific situations in life,
the student should be able to make decisions that could improve their life style. Whether it is the educational environment or the community that is the central hub of a student’s educational experience is emphasized in Sumner’s subject-relativity and Nussbaum’s affiliation. According to Nussbaum the problem can be that the student might not exercise practical reason which could cause them to give up and fall into an authoritarian learning environment. In other words, it is easier for them to submit to an authoritarian setting within the regimented environment of the traditional educative setting making it unsuitable for learning to occur; the topic of Act Three.

**ACT THREE: THE ROPE AROUND THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT NECK**

The soul has to find and hold its ground against hostile forces, sometimes embodied in ideas which frequently deny its very existence, and which indeed often seem to be trying to annul it all together.

(Bloom, 1987, p. 17)

**Overture**

In Act One I discussed the non-religious aspect of soul and how easily the unsuspecting soul could be manipulated, oppressed and ultimately coveted by those in whom we put our trust and even by environmental changes. “You are a soul; you have a body, [and as a human being you have intelligence]. And all souls own [the five] capacities.” (Fincher, 2007, p. 60) Act Two: The Vision of Soul in Education expanded the concept of soul, developed in Act One, Scene One and put the unsuspecting soul into the educational environment. In combination with Fincher (2007) I reviewed Nussbaum’s concern about taking the humanities out of our school’s curriculum, and
how this could affect the soul of the individual and ultimately humanity of the world. Using Hostetler and Sumner I showed that subjective human well-being and objective human well-being are important in maintaining a soulful person. Bringing Nussbaum back I used two of her ten capabilities, practical reason and affiliation, to further examine student welfare (well-being).

In Act Three I focus on oppression within the educational environment and use the concepts I developed in Act One. To overcome oppression and free oneself from oppression, I use two philosophers: Dewey on positive growth; and Freire on dialogue. Dewey does distinguish between positive and negative growth that will be reviewed later in this Act. Before discussing the philosophy of each philosopher, I bring forth some of the history of education that is important for this Act.

**History of Today’s Educational Environment**

Before the 1880s the majority of education was in the home, children would learn the family trade to take over the family business. After the 1880s and the close of the frontier, family businesses were taken over by giant corporations and education by a “teacher” in a central location or school environment became more important. It was the consensus of parents as well as the community that education at home was not enough, and the children of commoners joined the children of the elite who were already being schooled outside of the home. During the middle part of the 20th Century “the fundamental impulse motivating education reform was how to help the excluded get a piece of the economic action” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1986, p. 2). Incorporation of minorities and women in the educational system became the focus of two major powers:
(1) the unions, for training the working class; and (2) the school reformists, for training the bureaucratic and professional labor.

This educational reform brought concerns from different philosophers and others. With the general philosophy being that we want everybody to achieve. Unfortunately, one result of this is that some feel we have further dumbed down education to meet these expectations. Concern for the quality of education began in the 1960s, Finn (1982, p. 32) wrote,

The sad fact is that for close to two decades now we have neglected educational quality in the name of equality. Trying to insure that every child would have access to as much education as every other child, we have failed to attend to the content of that education.

Finn also rejected the student-centered curriculum, a curriculum that was started by those who couldn’t see a positive outcome in the dictatorial manner (traditional educative environment) in which students were being taught, because he felt that “teenagers cannot be expected to know what’s good for them” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1986, p. 5). However, rejection of this type of education was not new; in his book; Experience & Education (1938/1997) Dewey gave a critical analysis of the student-centered learning environment. Dewey felt that giving the students complete freedom to partake in an experience of the subject-matter without interference from any outside source was a meaningless and disconnected experience or mis-educative experience brought about by the student’s immaturity and inability to make meaningful connections or move forward into new encounters without guidance.
Other concerned persons addressed educational issues like: Allan Bloom (1987) *The Closing of the American Mind*; Dinesh D’souza (1991) “Affirmative Action in Education”; and *A Nation at Risk* a report in 1983 that lambasted American schools and, according to the report, asked for a much needed reform of the then current school system. Similar to controversial issues addressed by concerned people there is government involvement, since the 1980s and the Reagan/Bush administration, education curriculum has been under the authority of NCLB and standardization (Appendix A). This educational reform doesn’t seem to be going away. The requirements to be successful are a way of controlling the educational environments by the oppressors. Success of the current curriculum is not black or white there are a lot of gray areas and some good, bad and ugly. I argue that by putting the student at the center of their education as a voluntary active member of the learning process, educators would teach the subject-matter in a way to avoid oppression within the educational environment.

**Student Learning**

Dewey believed that students learned by solving everyday problems and that the educator should guide them through the experiences and give them opportunities to learn through problem solving. By making students a meaningful part of the democratic learning community students would gain the knowledge and use of tools that would help them cope with their changing environment and with new tasks in the future; allowing them to be learners throughout their life. Student motivation for further learning diminished when no connection was made between the students’ present learning experiences to the past or to any future experiences; fluidity of movement from a previous experience to a new experience was hampered. Student curiosity and other
natural inquiries, which Dewey believed children instinctively have, are not shut down and they are allowed to experiment in an organized manner with an educator.

Within the educational environment these problems arise when affiliations are already established and a new inspiration tries to join the group. Education should allow the individual greater latitude in developing and bettering one’s life, as long as growth in a positive direction (to be discussed later) occurs, in particular positive in the sense of being able to take rational control of one’s life. Dewey (1909, p. 7) reminded us that “[t]here cannot be two sets of ethical principles, one for life in the school, and the other for life outside of the school”. The school has a moral obligation to society; erected by society it is “– to exercise a certain specific function in maintaining the life and advancing the welfare of society” (Dewey, 1903, p. 10). The community should take seriously their obligation to support what is learned in the school, unfortunately the community is controlled by government overreach and the school system is under its control. Similar to the two kinds of people – one with the rope around their neck and one to cut it – in the school, some educators and students have the rope due to inadequate supplies, crumbling school buildings, lack of community support and the standardized curriculum; and the one to cut it should not embrace the standardized traditional setting. Souls of the educators and students belong to the system when the rope is around their neck; educators are given a standardized curriculum to follow and students are obligated to learn the material well enough to pass the standardized tests. When the rope is cut the souls of educators and students are free to express themselves and learn in the environment Dewey set up as a guided student-centered environment.
Dewey’s Positive versus Negative Growth

My philosophical inquiry is important because it may give educators a better picture of what student growth should be and how this has been hindered or accomplished in a standardized learning and testing environment. The question then becomes why educators should be interested in understanding Dewey and other educational philosopher’s insight into student growth. The educational system has a responsibility to educate students in a way that they can take what they learned in school and apply it to planning their own lives, as Nussbaum states. If the school fulfills its moral obligation to society, these students should be able to advance society in a positive way and not hinder it; to become a responsible citizen and full human beings. Dewey does distinguish between a positive desirable and acceptable direction of growth to that of a negative undesirable and unacceptable direction of growth. Dewey’s example of negative growth is that of a robber; the more times one undergoes the process of robbing, generally the better one gets at robbing. Unfortunately, because of this act against fellow citizens, the robber’s opportunities for greater association and openness are stifled and growth within the community ceases; the robber has become a liability. As a liability, the robber has a negative impact on other members of the community and upon himself, ultimately. His actions are disruptive and can often be detrimental to the safety of others. So, even though the robber has gained expertise in the art of robbing, as a member of the community he has become a liability to himself as well as others rather than an active, contributing individual. Dewey emphasized that individual growth, social values and achievements ensue within a positive community in which conditions are present to nurture growth and development. He stated that the democratic ideal warranted the
teaching of students in a manner consistent with their becoming positively interactive, self-governing, expressive, and dynamic to enhance their individuality.

Other philosophers have had ideas about growth. Such as, Socrates (Waterfield, 1993) who believed that the “inner conscious” of the individual was the guiding force of their personal, educational, and professional growth. Many philosophers developed their thinking based on the Socratic Method. Socrates had the ability to bring students around to think about their answers to his questions through conversation, use of this form of teaching also encouraged “the student” to examine their own souls; Socrates would question his students, listen to their answer and then question them on what he heard them say. This form of questioning would encourage the students to pause and to think more about their answer which they would either repeat or refine.

How a person perceived themselves and their roll within the society in which they live was the driving force of individual growth. Is this to say that the societal expectations of the school play a large part in defining an individual and the growth of that individual; has autonomy become obsolete? If this is the case does the educational environment add a different perspective or the only perspective on individual growth? Or are society and the place where the student spends the majority of their time more of a guiding force in the growth of that individual?
SCENE ONE: DEWEY ON GROWTH TO OVERCOME OPPRESSION

[S]tuffing children full of facts and asking them to regurgitate them does not add up to an education; children need to learn to take charge of their own thinking and to engage with the world in a curious and critical spirit. (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 64)

Aronowitz and Giroux (1993, p. 24) “argued that part of the growing crisis in public education centers around the declining competence of students and others to effectively interrogate and communicate ideational content…in jeopardy is not merely the ability of students to be creative, but the very capacity for conceptual thought itself”. Taking away teachers’ creativity and “canning” texts and the delivery of educational values (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985; Apple, 2000) contribute to the lack of student growth and oppression. Dewey claimed that knowledge was not constructed from scratch, but rather it was a developmental process of learned and connected experiences building one upon the other. Dewey (1916/2009, p. 28) theorized that one condition for growth of a student should include an educational process built upon preexisting experiences; where the subsequent experience is of a “deeper and more expansive quality” than the previous encounter.

The educational environment in which teaching to the standardized tests occur has not changed from what Dewey defined as a traditional educative environment nor has it dealt with positive versus negative growth of students. Dewey’s philosophy of education and his vision of a meaningful “educative” experience are defined within Experience & Education (1938/1997) as well as other works. For Dewey (1938/1997, p. 36), the assessment of any philosophy of education should be based on the promotion of student growth, “….when and only when development in a particular line conduces to continuing
growth does it answer the criterion of education as growing”. Developing awareness of new experiences based on preexisting understanding, no matter what the student’s previous educational experience or background, the student’s success is measured by the growth made within an educative environment. This growth, that Dewey encouraged, is not only physical and emotional but mainly intellectual; it reaches the student’s soul.

Dewey was aware that there are students who come to school from a repressed background. These students commonly don’t show “natural” curiosity or enthusiasm and lack adequate communication skills with adults as well as their peers; they are often quiet, withdrawn, or anti-social. Their fear of being criticized or ridiculed makes it difficult to engage them into any learning environment. By and large they will sit quietly at the back of the room with their head and eyes focused downward. They will listen to the guidance of others as long as nobody becomes too “bossy,” at which time the student will withdraw from the group.

From this perspective, oppression occurs when Nussbaum’s capabilities are hindered or ignored. For example, Dewey (1909) proposed that students must be given the chance to exercise their own judgment about aspects of their education, a form of practical reason and control of their own environment (two of Nussbaum’s ten capabilities). When curriculum is scripted (I use this word on purpose) students and educators suffer from some degree of oppression. Educators might revert back to Dewey’s “talking head” and the students perceived as “empty vessels” in order to meet the expectations of the standardized curriculum. Dewey argued against the educators’ delivery of the subject-matter being that of facts and rules of conduct constructed in the past and brought forth as unchangeable and forthright knowledge for future generations.
Observed by Dewey, the general outcome of a standardized educative environment was an aimless and static educational experience for the students with no meaningful connection to present day or future developments.

Dewey’s (1938/1997) concept of the educator’s primary role in a classroom, based on his or her own experience, is one of guiding the student towards an educative experience and presenting opportunities as one way to allow the student to have control over one’s own environment. “If an experience arouses curiosity, strengthens initiative, and sets up desires and purposes that are sufficiently intense to carry a person over dead places in the future… It is then the business of the educator to see what direction the experience is heading.” (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 38) Dewey believed that standardization eroded the learning environment; like a rope around one’s neck along with not being in control of one’s environment. When the educator is inhibited by standardization and to teaching to standardized exams students may fall into rote memorization and test taking.

Time for interaction is limited; however how will the educator teach in a positive environment – with the rope cut? Students might be able to learn in an environment which encourages them to gain the knowledge of valuable techniques that can be extended to any type of positive or adverse future situation. Dewey’s philosophy was that the educator constructed a holistic educational environment. “The formation of purposes is, then a rather complex intellectual operation. It involves (1) observation of surrounding conditions; (2) knowledge of what has happened in similar situations in the past [aware of one’s own environment], a knowledge obtained partly by recollection and partly from information, advice, and warning of those who have had a wider experience; and (3) judgment which puts together what is observed and what is recalled to see what
they signify” (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 68-69). To succeed, the plans and method of action should be age and maturity appropriate and should be a growth objective. The educator should be familiar with the students and their surroundings, how the students are interacting with a task at hand and if they are ready to move forward or need to remain for a longer period. Introducing more choices before the students are ready could cause confusion and hinder the experience. However, Beneatha (A Raisin In The Sun, 1994) illustrated that having choices of different kinds can be exhilarating and add “spice” to one’s life. When designing curriculum with choices the educator must be able to think beyond the immediate situation. Conversing with peers and collecting ideas and possible short comings of future activities would help prevent chaos and mis-educative experiences. Observation of the co-facilitators would allow the educator to know if changes need to be made and if there are some students who are not participating in the activity. Emphasis should not be placed on the outcome of an activity as an end, but rather as a foundation of the next experience.

Oppression of the older students in To Sir, With Love (1959) could be perceived as trying to teach them the basics of each subject without taking into account that they currently don’t see the relevance in knowing what they are being taught. As a result they act out against anyone who exhibits authority or oppresses them by using punishment and when that didn’t work students were expelled from school. Braithwaite showed that the world is changing and that cruelty towards others may have positive as well as negative consequences. For the better Braithwaite’s reaction to a cruel jest by the students (burning a sanitary napkin in the furnace vent) was different than what was expected. Instead of walking out of the classroom, Braithwaite begins teaching the students about
respect; he makes the students address him as “Sir” and they are to be addressed as
Mister and Miss, he also pointed out the fact that no decent or respectable person would
burn a dirty sanitary napkin in the furnace. Along with the good of the theatrical
performance above come the bad and possibly the ugly.

Dewey argued that oppression could occur when the delivery of subject-matter is
scripted and no interaction is observed between the educator and the students. His focus
on positive growth in a guided student-centered educational environment would
courage educators to dialogue (Freire’s concept) which would allow students to
become active participants of their learning. In Scene Two I bring forth Freire’s concept
of dialoguing as one way to overcome an oppressive learning environment.

SCENE TWO: FREIRE AND FREEDOM FROM OPPRESSION

The atmosphere of the home is prolonged in the school, where the students
soon discover that (as in the home) in order to achieve some satisfaction
they must adapt to the precepts which have been set from above. One of
these precepts is not to think.

(Freire, 1983, p. 153)

Freire not only believed in a positive educative experience through dialogue, his
goal was to be able to educate those who were not so that they could escape their
oppressive position in life. Freire believed that every human being, no matter how
uneducated and oblivious to their surroundings, could dialogue with others to look at his
world. Through dialogue between educator and students connections can be made
between previously learned material, present material, and future material to be learned
and education may become enjoyable. Freire’s (1983, p. 13) conviction was: “that every
human being, no matter how ignorant or submerged in the culture of silence he may be, is capable of looking critically at his world in a dialogical encounter with others”. If an individual is given the proper tools he/she can perceive his/her environment and critically analyze his/her situation.

For the oppressed to be free of the oppressor they must recognize the causes of the “prescribed behaviors” (Freire, 1983, p. 31) which comes from within. First, introduced in Act One Scene Two, “one of the basic elements between oppressor and oppressed is prescription” (Freire, 1983, p. 31), where the oppressed takes on the behavior of the oppressor. This behavior is internalized and becomes engrained in the everyday life of the oppressed. Through the act of prescription, the oppressor attempts to dehumanize the oppressed. For example, in the traditional educative environment, dialoguing between the educator and the students does not exist. As a “prescribed behavior” (Freire, 1983, p. 31) the students sit in neat rows listening to the educator, who talks, filling them with knowledge as if they were empty vessels; they are not to think (Freire, 1983, p. 153). Students are not active members in the learning process, they do not have ownership in what they have learned and they are not asked to solve problems using their background knowledge. In a sense, the educator is the oppressor and the students are the oppressed.

Second, because of this the oppressed become fearful of freedom; where freedom would require them to become autonomous and responsible for themselves. Freedom is also unknown or has been suppressed for so long that it is a foreign concept. The oppressed has adapted to the oppression in “which they are immersed” (Freire, 1983, p. 32) and are fearful of greater oppression. Fear of the unknown and what life would be
like without the iron hand of the oppressor keeps the oppressed where they are; the oppressed suffers from “duality” (Freire, 1983, p. 32) established in their soul. As a result an inner conflict arises, do they want reject the oppressor and become autonomous? There are many conflicts the oppressed can go through in establishing his humanity and becoming liberated. For example, students who are educated in the traditional educative environment might become fearful if asked a question and their answer is not exactly what the educator just told them. Students might become fearful to step outside of the box and think about question, their actions become robotic and answers canned.

“Cultural action is always a systematic and deliberate form of action which operates upon the social structure” (Freire, 1983, p. 180), the third action he addressed. In the antidualogical action one would observe manipulation, while in the dialogical theory of action one would see the organization of people, which is linked to unity. The leader, who pursues the unity of the people by organizing themselves with others, possesses the “cultural and educational character of the revolution” (Freire, 1983, p. 177), is authentic and has culture. This cultural action is systematic and deliberate action which determines the end and defines its theory. Freire addressed two types of cultural action, cultural invasion and cultural synthesis.

In cultural invasion, the actors formulate their content from the world in which they live, their values and ideology. These are then superimposed by the actor themselves or vicariously, through technological instrumentation, on the spectators; to dominate. Cultural synthesis consists of two types of action. The first is the objective of preserving that structure which is a conscious or unconscious domination; where antidualogical cultural action may avoid the “radical transformation of reality” (Freire,
1983, p. 181). The second is transformation of the culture which consciously or unconsciously serves to liberate human beings; where dialogical cultural action causes the radical transformation. While the actors of cultural synthesis “come from “another world” to the world of the people do so not as invaders” (Freire, 1983, p. 181) and become integrated with the people to preserve the culture.

Freire’s dialogical approach to humanization influenced Boal who also used dialogue as freedom from oppression, and believed that oppression occurred when dialogue becomes monologue. Freire and Boal form links between individual and cultural transformation, both seek the problem of oppression and offer solutions. Freire makes reference to the actor as being the oppressor and the people as subjects or spectators, much like Boal perceived them which prompted his insemination of the spect-actor; which will be discussed further in Act Five.

Précis Act Three

In summary, Act Three addresses the oppression students might face within the educational environment; when given the tools, educators should be able to create “environments and experiences that bring students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves, and to make students members of communities of learners that make discoveries and solve problems” (Barr & Tagg, 1995, p. 15-25). To accomplish this the educator, one who is knowledgeable in the design of a holistic and system-wide change in teaching, would become the lead investigator within the learning environment and allow students to explore, discover, and solve problems. To clarify further, there should be no rope and education should emulate environmental conditions teaching students to
“think outside of the box.” Which means being able to take what they learn and apply it to everyday situations, plus to other subjects.

As an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment, expands or contracts. He does not find himself living in another world but in a different part or aspect of one and the same world. What he has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow. (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 28)

Dewey held that the criterion of positive growth is how it led people to explore and partake in new experiences, thus continuing growth. In order for this to occur, many new experiences should be guided by an educator, while at the same time the student becomes an active participant. It is important to understand that Dewey does not emphasize growth only in knowledge; his major emphasis was that continued growth of the student was the ability to build upon previous knowledge and connect new experiences with those of the past and into the future. For Dewey, emphasis on teaching the child to be an active learner meant that what they accomplished remained with them into the next realm and beyond; he did not recognize accumulating knowledge as being synonymous with learning. He also believed that the criteria for meaningful experiences were based on an “experiential continuum” that is “framed with references to what is to be done and how it is to be done” (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 38).

To overcome an oppressive environment and encourage liberating education, Freire (1983, p. 67) encouraged dialoging where “[t]he teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn
while being taught also teach”. The dialogical-libertarian makes it possible for the oppressed to alter the unjust reality. Although organization, the second facet to overcome oppression, is not directly linked to unity, it presents the opposite of manipulation. Where the elite organize themselves and the revolutionary leaders organize with the people, where dialogue pursues to liberate them. There are two forms of cultural action presented by Freire: cultural invasion and cultural synthesis. In cultural invasion, the actors invade another world with their own values and ideology gleaned from their world. This invasion is either done by the actor or technological instruments to “superimpose themselves on the people, who are assigned the role of spectators, or objects” (Freire, 1983, p. 182). In cultural synthesis, the actors do not invade the other world but rather to learn with the people, about the people. Much like the educator should not invade the student’s world but become a part of their world – to learn together. When students become engaged in their learning and their experience is created within the curriculum they become liberated, and both educator and student experience growth.

Freire also addressed the importance of dialoguing versus employing the banking concept, where students are perceived as empty vessels. In education, when student’s curiosity is repressed, it is difficult to create conditions to encourage them to be inquisitive. Like Dewey’s philosophy of growth, Freire believed that students who lacked the ability to connect knowledge to their lived experiences were unable to dialogue. When dialogue occurs between the student and the educator both become the learners and both are “able to be caught up into the world of thought” (Chang on Hamilton, 2006, p. 442).
Oppression could hamper student growth in the educational environment, similar to the passive conditions of traditional educational environments; where student growth is defined as development that occurs when there is interaction between the educator and student are allowed to take place. In the educational environment some educators become trusted mentors of the unsuspecting souls – the students. In doing this the student can become vulnerable and malleable. It is up to the educator not to take advantage of this by creating an oppressive educational environment and taking this oppression further to coveting.

**ACT FOUR: THE COVETING OF THE UNSUSPECTED SOULS**

To surmount the situation of oppression men must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity.  

(Freire, 1983, p. 31-32)

**Overture**

In Act Three the concept of the rope around the neck of the educational environment was discussed. I used Dewey’s concept of growth and Freire’s philosophy on dialogue to focus on the humanity of the student and to overcome oppression in education. In Act Four, I develop what it means to be dehumanized to the point that one’s soul is coveted by another. To do this I delve deeper into Freire’s perception of humanization and dehumanization and how Freire vies the coveted soul.

Freire defined dehumanization as the unconscious acceptance of oppression, and I argue that dehumanization can be taken as far as the coveting of another’s soul. An example of this is seen in the musical *Urinetown* (1998/2003) written by Greg Kotis and
music by Mark Hollmann. Kotis wrote Urinetown after traveling Europe and realizing he did not have enough change to pay to use the toilets. Considered a satirical comedy, Urinetown has many underlying themes, such as: corruption, greed, love, and revolution. One underlying theme is the dehumanization of the poor by the elite, which went as far as coveting them and denying them the freedom to pee without paying; they were further dehumanized by having to live in the underground utility tunnels. Long lines would form by persons who had to pee and if they didn’t have the correct change they had to find it, or were not allowed to relieve themselves; the imposed fee for use of all private toilets becomes very profitable for a private business. Urinetown is not the name of a town, it is a place where those who break the law are sent to be punished; unfortunately it’s the poor, who fail to pay to pee, who are sent to Urinetown. As the 20 year drought continues and water shortage worsens, the cost of peeing increases; during this time the elite could continue to relieve themselves in their sophisticated toilets.

Urinetown is exemplary of government corruption from the Bobbies to the Mayor. Tired of the unfairness and the ridiculous law imposed on the poor, Bobby Strong, the hero of the play tries to get the rest of the townspeople to revolt against the elite. When the Mayor fails to bribe Bobby not to cause the revolt, Bobby is arrested and sentenced to Urinetown where he is able to escape only to tell the others what this place really is; a tall building where people are pushed from to their death. Finally, with the help of the Mayor’s daughter and uniting the poor Bobby succeeds in overthrowing the oppressive government. After the revolution, everyone begins to overuse the facilities; this continued abuse of the already stressed reserve of water exponentially increases. Uneducated in the science of how the water cycle works, this overuse eventually causes
the entire water system to fail. Not only did the uneducated poor begin over use of the water system, they also became the oppressors of the elite (the oppressors); a concept discussed earlier using Freire. Beginning with the Mayor, those who revolted and overthrew the government began to execute the elite by sending them to *Urinetown* and pushing them off the highest building. The town eventually collapses, because the liberated oppressed did not understand their responsibility of taking care of their town. Liberation is painful and is generally not easily obtained. One way is unity through dialogue, similar to Bobby Strong organizing the poor to overthrow the elite; the opposite of divide and rule is gained by antidualogue.

In the educational environment from kindergarten through fifth grade, instead of students having to pay to pee, the standard procedure is for them to obtain a hall pass so they can go pee. If the hall pass already being used the student must wait until the other student comes back with the pass. The use of a hall pass is one way educators and administrations have of controlling the number of students out of the classroom during school hours. Their reasoning is if too many students are in the hall and bathrooms, unsupervised, chaos could occur. Conceptually, this is another form of oppression within our schools; if the educator likes the control they have over the students, this situation could become a malicious type of oppression – coveting.
SCENE ONE: FREIRE ON HUMANIZATION AND DEHUMANIZATION

Because it is a distortion of being more fully human, sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so.

(Freire, 1983, p. 28)

Freire believed that [human being’s] vocation was humanization, even though dehumanization was always present as an alternative. Unfortunately, the attainment of this vocation is “thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and violence by the oppressors” (Freire, 1983, p. 28). Freire’s definition of humanization was the ability to express one’s self and become free of oppression, where dehumanization was the unconscious acceptance of oppression that is imposed upon someone by another person. Throughout history, dehumanization has plagued the oppressed as well as the oppressor; for example, the enslaving of others for the sole purpose of possessing another person (the oppressed) for the profit or pleasure of others (the oppressor) too often will dehumanize both; the dehumanizing effect of slavery on both slave and master. For example I focus on enslaved women and their master, where some were forced to submit to their masters sexually, if this resulted in pregnancy often the woman of the house would become enraged and force the child and mother to be separated forever. Other enslaved women were forced to submit sexually to stronger black slaves, where both would endure sexual abuse in order to produce stronger offspring who were then sold by their master. Freire believed that dehumanization was manifested by the oppressed, the enslaved, and their oppressors, the master. In order to overcome the dehumanizing oppressed environment liberation of both the oppressed and the oppressor could only
occur through the oppressed (I discussed the act of becoming an oppressor or liberator in Act One).

Addressed by Freire (1983, p. 33) the central problem to liberation was: “How can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation?” Human beings in oppressive environments struggle to overcome their oppressor to regain their humanity. Yet, for those who are oppressed, the act of becoming liberated and achieving liberation is painful when freedom is achieved. In an oppressed and oppressor environment, one caveat to be concerned with is for the oppressed not to become the oppressor of the oppressor; i.e. when both are dehumanized it becomes the goal of the oppressed to restore humanity back to both but in the process becomes the oppressor or the oppressor. ‘The oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity… become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers in the humanity of both’ (Freire, 1983, p. 44). For example, a child (the oppressed) who is raised by an abusive parent or one who is perceived as an abusive parent (the oppressor) becomes the liberator or oppressor when the parent becomes ill, is unable to care for themselves, or is declared mentally incompetent. To become the liberator, the adult child could restore the humanity of both by becoming the caregiver of the enabled parent and make sure all of their needs are humanely met. The oppressed child sees value in “cutting the rope” and hopefully in setting a better example for other family members, they in turn will be liberated. If the child becomes the oppressor of the oppressor, instead of becoming the caregiver for the ailing or incompetent parent the child will abuse the parent both physically and monetarily, and some will refuse to give the ailing parent their prescribed medication or allow other family members to visit. Unfortunately, this cycle
of oppressor and oppressed could continue to have the “rope around the necks” of each involved.

Discussed before is the escape of the oppressor, to either become an oppressor of the oppressor or become the liberator of both. Another scenario would be for the oppressed to remain in the dehumanizing environment in hopes that the situation will change; hoping that the oppressor will see the wrong in what he/she is doing. For example I use Freire (1983), who analyzed society on the ideas of an oppressor class which oppresses and an oppressed class that is oppressed to look at the oppression of women in what Nussbaum (2000, p. 243) perceived as the major site of oppression of women, “the family”. History shows that this oppressed class of women is subjected to domestic violence, lack of adequate health care and education, and other physical and/or psychological abuse; they are perceived as an end for others, resulting in their dehumanization. Unfortunately, some of these abused women will remain in the relationship: they are too afraid to leave, fearing greater abuse; they don’t have the financial means; or they hope the abusive situation will change.

In education, oppression occurs when the educator treats students like empty vessels, not allowing them to explore and take ownership of their learning. When the educator teaches by narration this will force students to memorize – the “banking” concept of education (Freire, 1983, p. 58). In the banking concept knowledge is passed down from generation to generation, and the intention of the educator is to fill the student with knowledge, as if they know nothing. An example of the banking concept is the teaching of a general chemistry class where this traditional approach systematically dodges the responsibility of the educators utilizing the physical and social surroundings
to build an experience that is worthwhile (Dewey, 1938). Learning from the texts and narrating educators (the oppressors) the student (the oppressed) is to develop a good foundation in terminology and mathematical computation, to be able to continue on to the upper division science courses. In the formal classroom the freedom of intelligence, observation and judgment (Dewey, 1938) is stripped from the learner.

To avoid the oppressor/oppressed scenario the educator should dialogue (Freire, 1983) with the students so connections can be made between the text, lecture and laboratory experiments. Unfortunately, not all science class educators are able to help the students make the connection between words and observation. The freedom of intelligence, observation and of judgment (Dewey, 1938) is stripped from the learner in the formal science classroom setting. Students are not allowed to linger (May, 1991) to help them make the critical connection between the laboratory experiment and life-experiences; and ultimately connection between the laboratory experiment, text and lecture. Although learning the basics are important, this importance overshadows what should be learned – connection to the “real world”. In a science lab, the student must be given time to stop, look, and connect between the experiment, text, and experience outside of the classroom. “Exercise of observation is, then, one condition of transformation of impulse into a purpose.” (Dewey, 1938, p. 69)

Regrettably, for some students science does not make sense and with no connection made to real life experiences or dialoging between educators and students, the dehumanization perpetuates and becomes a foreboding premise for further scientific studies. Some students might regain their humanity by seeking help in order to make the necessary connections between science and the real world, others might remain
dehumanized and continue the struggle to make connections, and some may become easy targets for others to covet. In the following Scene I argue that dehumanized souls, those who unconsciously accept oppression, in the educational environment might fall prey to the oppressors.

**SCENE TWO: FREIRE AND THE COVETED SOUL**

The oppressed suffer from the duality which has established itself in their innermost being. They discover that without freedom they cannot exist authentically. Yet, although they desire authentic existence, they fear it. (Freire, 1983, p. 32)

In the previous Scene, I brought forth Freire’s perception of dehumanization, the unconscious acceptance of oppression, and humanization, the use of autonomy to make a conscious decision to overcome oppression. In education, those who are subjected to traditional education; such as lecture, memorize and regurgitate on exams, are the oppressed. Those educators who dialogue instead of monologue could engage students to become active learners, and some educational environments are constructed so that the students are “caught up into the world of thought” (Chang on Hamilton, 2006, p. 442) and their well-being is enhanced. In this Scene, I discuss further Freire’s belief that education is dialoging, where students are participants of their learning, and not antidialoging, where the educator lectures and students are treated as empty vessels, the “banking” concept. Like Dewey’s traditional educative environment the students are to receive, memorize and repeat back; much like a bank where deposits are received, filed and stored. “In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know
nothing.” (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 58) The relationship between the educator, the educated human being who is better fit for imparting a narrative, and the student, who is the recipient of this narrative, can be perceived as passive and oppressed.

Perhaps there is some kind of interaction between the students and their educator, but it is not recognized as an educative one and there appears to be no chance of change in the subject-matter or of learning taking place; where learning is perceived as the connection between past, present and future experiences. As absolute ignorance is projected on the students and “[t]he teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his existence” (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 58), and the possibility of coveting might occur.

**Characteristics of Antidialogue**

Contrary to dialogical which is necessary for the humanization of students and educators, Freire introduces the antidialogical which is an oppressor action that could lead to coveting; I discuss three characteristics of antidualoping. “The first characteristic of antidialogical action is the necessity for conquest.” (Freire, 1983, p. 133) Where the aim is to conquer someone and impose, on the conquered, their objectives, and capture their souls coveting their very being. Conquest reduces the conquered “to the status of thing” (Freire, 1983, p. 134). Reduced to a thing, the human being has no voice, no home and no culture to call his own; “[t]he negative aspects of conquest, ranging from routine oppressions to wanton slaughters and atrocities” (Sowell, 1999, p. x) extends to” many racial, ethnic, and cultural issues” (Sowell, 1999, p. x). Historically, conquests over other human beings are what shaped the world cultures of today. For example, if the conqueror is more advanced in knowledge, skill and economic prowess than those conquered these
aptitudes are spread; however, if the conqueror is less advanced than those conquered then the conquest destroyed what existed. “Ancient and irreplaceable manuscripts went up in flames when illiterate barbarian invaders or marauders set fire to libraries for the sheer pleasure of destruction.” (Sowell, 1999, p. 4) The conquest over others is more than oppression it is the act of coveting and has produced horrifying tragedies on cultural, institutional, and biological entities of those who were coveted.

Freire’s other oppressive act through antidiological action is to divide and rule, “[a]s the oppressor minority subordinates and dominates the majority, it must divide it and keep it divided in order to remain in power” (Freire, 1983, p. 137). By giving people the sense they are being helped, isolation of the majority begins to take hold; it is the will of the oppressor to further weaken the oppressed by further isolation. Done by any means possible the intention is to convenience the people they are being helped. For example, an attempt to isolate creationism from the teaching of evolution in the public schools was made by government bureaucracy in 1999 when the Kansas Board of Education voted to delete the teaching of evolution from the state’s science curriculum. Although the board’s decision didn’t require educators to teach creationism nor forbid the teaching of evolution, it did allow the educators who questioned evolution to not teach it; where some student’s would learn about evolution, while others may learn about creationism (Cabell, 1999, CNN.com). This is not the first time fundamentalists had tried to split off from true scientists; in fact, the controversy over creation and evolution and what should be taught in public high schools has gone on for decades. In 1925 John T. Scopes, a Tennessee science teacher was brought to trial for teaching evolution in a high school biology class; this famous trial is known as the Scopes “monkey” trial. He was
accused of violating the state law that prohibited the teaching of “any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible” (Larson, 1997, p. 50). In the controversy over the teaching of evolution vs. creation the oppressors and oppressed are defined by individual belief. In either case a division is made between those who believe and those who question creationism. In the case of the Scopes “monkey” trial the oppressors, were those who are antievolutionists, while the oppressed, were those who believed in the theory of evolution. In either case, there is a fundamental divide and rule present and it will continue.

The third type of antidiological action is manipulation: “Manipulation is another dimension of antidiological action” (Freire, 1983, p. 144) and instrument of conquest. Domination occurs when the masses are conformed to the objectives of the elite. Referring back to conquest, the extent of maturity of the oppressed people will determine how easily they are manipulated. Historically, pacts are used to dominate the people by the elite. These pacts are antidialogical and increase subjugation of the people only to double the tactics of manipulation when the people become no longer spectators. When the people oppressed by the dominant elite become organized they avoid further manipulation. In the case of individuals, “manipulation becomes emotional blackmail when it is used repeatedly to coerce us into complying with the blackmailer’s demands, at the expense of our own wishes and well-being.” (Forward & Frazier, 1997, p. 7) The coveting of another person through manipulation affects the welfare of the person; if the manipulation is continuous the soul of the person could be affected because they forget who they were.
Précis Act Four

In summary, in Act Four I discussed oppression and the malicious intent to own another’s soul – coveting within and away from the educational environment. I used Freire’s philosophy to help free the coveted souls of oppressed persons from banking (the act of depositing) to dialoging, communication between the oppressors and oppressed. He also believed that students should dialogue with the educator so learning occurs for both. Freire believed that an educated person would be able to free themselves of oppression and that being educated in a positive environment the students would learn.

I discussed three of Freire’s antidialogical and dehumanistic acts against the oppressed. The first is conquest, which has an historical nature. In conquest the conqueror becomes the oppressor of the conquered and dehumanizes them by stripping away all of their traditions, language and culture; by inflicting their beliefs on the oppressed. The second is, divide and rule where the minority divides the majority and keeps it divided in order to rule. The minority’s hegemony would be in threat if the divided reunite. “Concepts such as unity, organization, and struggle are immediately labeled as dangerous.” (Freire, 1983, p. 137) Thirdly, is manipulation which Freire denotes as “the objective around which all the dimensions of the theory revolve” (Freire, 1983, p. 144). Accomplished by means of pacts which dominate the dominated by the elite, who are antidialogical, to achieve their ends.

The oppressed are dehumanized, and their struggle to seek humanization liberates them from their oppressor. In education the students should become subjects, rather than objects. Similar to Dewey’s traditional educative environment where students are to receive, memorize and repeat back, Freire talked about the concept of banking, where a
repository of knowledge is dumped into students as if they were empty vessels. These unsuspecting souls, the students, can be humanized or dehumanized by the educator. To “humanize” the student the educational technique of banking is revolutionized when the educator becomes a “partner of the students in his relation with them” (Freire, 1983, p. 62). This partnership should encourage both the student and educator to make connections, reflect and go beyond the standardized curriculum.

For the truly humanist educator and the authentic revolutionary, the object of action is the reality to be transformed by them together and other men – not other men themselves. The oppressors are the ones who act upon men to indoctrinate them and adjust them to a reality which must remain untouched. (Freire, 1983, p. 83)

Using Boal’s actor and spect-actor in the educational environment – the educator is perceived as the actor with scripted information to be delivered during class time and the students, as spect-actors. Where the traditional educational environment becomes more like Dewey’s guided student-centered classroom, where students are allowed to interject their thoughts and questions and investigate the subject-matter. Application of this, in a guided student-centered educational environment, would allow the students to be able to act out their interpretation of the subject matter, explore further into the meaning of learning the subject and be caught up into Hamilton’s pleasure of becoming educated.
ACT FIVE: THEATRE, SOULFUL LEARNING

The word theatre comes from the Greeks. It means the seeing place. It is the place people come to see the truth about life and the social situation. The theatre is a spiritual and social X-ray of its time. The theatre was created to tell people the truth about life and the social situation.

Stella Adler in Bennett, *The Jason Bennett Actor’s Workshop: The Next Generation of Actor Training*

Overture

Within Act Two through Act Four I further developed the concepts of soul, oppression, coveting and the educator into the realm of the educational environment. Using selected philosophers within these Acts I discussed Dewey’s philosophy on positive growth; Freire’s philosophy on humanization, dehumanization and banking; Hostetler and Sumner’s philosophy on well-being; and two of Nussbaum’s ten capabilities.

In Act Five I argue that theatre, like a soulful person, should never end because the objective is not to close the cycle, to cause dehumanization, or to end positive growth. My objective is to encourage autonomous activity, to foster positive growth, to stimulate cultural growth, and to change spectators into central characters. The use of a variation of Boal’s spect-actor could initiate change within an oppressive educational environment. Boal introduced the concept of theatre in his native Brazil during the regime of an oppressive government. His use of theatre gave the oppressed people a voice, unity and organization to reclaim their humanity.

Why Use Theatre in the Classroom?

“Theatre is a therapy into which one enters body and soul, soma and psyche.” (Boal, 1979/1985, p. 28) Theatre began when human beings started gathering together
and listening to another’s stories; the audience, those who listened, would interact with the players, those who told their stories. Whether people gathered around the family hearth or outdoors around a communal fire, theatre was a form of communication and entertainment. The origin of Theatre, a place for viewing, began with the Ancient Greeks around 5000 years ago as a religious ceremony. Although there are no found written documents on the history of theatre, the first historical account of Greek theatre is found in the Fourth Chapter of Aristotle’s (2008, p. IV. 5) the Poetics where he writes, “…Tragedy – as well as Comedy – was at first mere improvisation”.

One-person plays allowed the artist to be free, independent and creative. A modern day version of this might be observed in secondary schools, where individual students are given a topic on which they are to argue for or against. There are also monologues that are performed during speech competitions, where the student takes on the persona of a famous person and tells of their life. From the monologue to dialogue, Aeschylus “introduced a second actor, diminished the importance of the Chorus and assigned the leading part to the dialogue;” (Aristotle, 2008, IV.6) and it was Sophocles who increased the number of actors to three. In Greek tragedy, the Chorus often, typically had better insight into reality: how the people were living under the oppression of the current government.

Historically, the performances of these various theatrical types were in many different kinds of theatre settings from the open-amphitheatres, of Greek performances, to the modern more sophisticated London Opera House. Roman amphitheatres were large circular areas surrounded by ascending seating or raked seating. Current amphitheaters have the audience sitting on one side, generally in the shape of an arc
(parts of a theatre are found in Appendix B and C). Classroom settings are similar to the End Stage, where the audience (students) and stage (educator’s desk and board) “occupy the same architectural space, with the stage at one end and the [student seating] is in front facing the stage (Theatre Projects Consultants).

Performed in these theatrical settings were many different varieties of theatrical performances which include but are not limited to arts, classical, drama, dance, music and tragedy. The ancient form of theatre, which was the type of theatre Boal changed, was used to control the masses; “the ruling classes strive to take permanent hold of the theatre and utilize it as a tool for domination…they change the very concept of what “theatre” is.” (Boal, 1979/1985, p. iv) During the oppressive Brazilian regime, monologues and dialogues presented by actors and actresses portrayed only the positive aspects of government control. The spectators (the oppressed), under the control of the regime, were not allowed to voice how conditions really were or interact with the characters. Boal, contrived the idea of the spect-actor so that those who wanted to speak out against the regime could do so without fear of persecution. People would get up on stage with the actors and begin telling their unscripted story of how they saw the oppressive conditions. Unfortunately, for the citizens of Brazil this worked for a short period of time before the regime began disallowing these outbreaks.

In education, the standard educational environment could display some of the previously described types of theatre or be a bureaucratic monologue. For my play, I focus on the curriculum dominated by NCLB, where educators perform a monologue in order to teach the students what they need to know to pass the current standardized tests; much like Freire’s “banking” approach, where the educational system believed students
knew nothing and had to be told everything by the educator. This required curriculum, or type of theatrical performance, allows very little time for reflection as well as little time for connection to past, present, and future situations for the students in the classroom. My intent is not to discourage educators from following or using the standardized curriculum of NCLB, because it is not going away any time soon. Instead, I encourage educators to use the standardized curriculum as their foundation and build into this curriculum dialogues and plays, using a variation of Boal’s spect-actor, to engage students in their learning. In doing this it would mean breaking away from the traditional classroom staging.

In some educational environments I observed, the general setting for these theatrical performances are similar to Dewey’s description. Dewey (1938/1997, p. 61) described the typical traditional schoolroom as having “fixed rows of desks and military regimen of pupils who were permitted to move only at certain fixed signals.” “Straight-jacket” and “chain-gang” (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 61) procedures put a great restriction upon intellectual and moral freedom and positive growth. The general layout of the classroom is like that of the End Stage, a theatre setting in which the audience (student) seating and stage (front of the classroom) occupy the same architectural space and are at opposite ends from each other, with the audience (students) facing the stage (educator).

Dewey’s alternative educational approach to the traditional educative environment was the guided student-center educational environment, where the non-threatening educative learning environment would instill in the learner an optimistic attitude in becoming part of a community, and encourage the student to seek further knowledge. In my play, I propose an alternative model to Dewey’s guided student-
centered educational environment, where “education is a social process; education is growth; education is not preparation for life but is life itself” (Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 38). By using different variations of Boal’s spect-actor approach, the student can enjoy the “pleasure of becoming an educated person” (Chang on Hamilton, 2006, p. 442).

**SCENE ONE: BOAL AND THE SPECT-ACTOR**

When does a session of The Theatre of the Oppressed end? Never – since the objective is not to close a cycle, to generate a catharsis, or to end a development. On the contrary, its objective is to encourage autonomous activity, to set a process in motion, to stimulate transformative creativity, to change spectators into protagonists. And it is precisely for these reasons that the Theatre of the Oppressed should be the initiator of changes the culmination of which is not the aesthetic phenomenon but real life.

(Boal, 1979/1985, p. 245)

Augusto Boal first published *Theatre of the Oppressed* in Buenos Aires in 1973 at the beginning of his 16 year exile from Brazil. It was during this time that Brazil was “under a cruel and murderous civic and military dictatorship” (Boal, 1979/1985, p. xi). This documentary-like drama based on political issues was performed in public spaces, and was a manifesto for revolutionary and socially conscious theatre. It is not the definition of oppression (discussed later), that Boal focused on but rather how theatre could allow individuals to escape their oppressive state. Through the art of acting, individuals break out from the crowd (the masses) to tell a story, the reality, or at least what the masses perceive as their current situation. Throughout the history of theatre this story has been told in different ways and under various restrictions which are explained by Boal.
Boal believed that students and teachers of theatre are really students and teachers of human beings and that Shakespeare teaches us “the history of human beings” (Boal, 1979/1985, p. xi), we discover ourselves and how we can change ourselves and the world. Studying and understanding the past helps us to create the future; however, not knowing or remembering the past can cause history to repeat itself. History shows the rise and fall of democracy only to be replaced by a dictatorship; however in some recent events it was the fall of the dictatorship to try and implement a democracy. Boal brought a different insight to the development of theatre from the spectator’s position to today’s theatre. Only after having a taste of free expression does one realize that they are oppressed and that they may be able to free themselves, body and soul, through theatrical performances. The freedom to tell their story became a way to get the message to others of the type of oppression they experienced and the true implications from this oppression.

When the first person to step out away from the crowd (the spectators) to speak out against the oppressive Brazilian regime (impromptu speaking), and was told not to do it again for fear of causing a mass uprising, Boal’s response was to hide the speaker so that they could still be able to deliver their message. Utilizing the Ancient Greeks approach of the use of masks, costumes, and makeup of bright colors to show a change in character or to represent a God or Goddess, Boal initiated the wearing of the mask and costume as a disguise to his stage productions in order for the spect-actor (the individual who steps away from the crowd and onto the stage) to deliver their monologue. When Boal’s improvisational speakers became too expressive and vocal against the oppressive Brazilian government the rulers demanded a script which would be approved or denied
before the performance. Because Boal continued to encourage the spectators to speak out the government exiled him.

After Boal’s exile from Brazil, he continued to develop the use of the spect-actor at different theatres across the world, to teach individuals how to express their feelings concerning a situation they were facing.

In what Boal calls “Forum Theater,” for example, the [spect-actors] begin with a dramatic situation from everyday life and try to find solutions—parents trying to help a child on drugs, a neighbor who is being evicted from his home, and individual confronting racial or gender discrimination, or simply a student in a new community who is shy and has difficulty making friends. (Brecht Forum Archive, downloaded 09/29/2014)

In the United States we have the First Amendment which addresses the freedom of speech, and allows individuals to speak for or against the current government. However, across the globe there are still countries in which persecution is prevalent and dictatorship and censorship abounds.

Historically, the oppressed class would either struggle against the oppressor to retain or regain their humanity which the oppressor denied them, or accept their situation in life as a way of life. However, it is not the examples of oppression that Boal (1979/1985) focused on when he wrote Theatre of the Oppressed but rather how theatre allows individuals to escape their oppressive state. Through the art of acting, individual citizens would break out from the crowd (the masses), go up on stage with the main actor and begin to tell a story; give their story of their current situation, the spectator became the spect-actor. After being exiled from Brazil, Boal continued developing theatre
exercises to make others aware of their limitations and social status. Boal (1979/1985) believed that students and educators of theatre are really students and educators of human beings. For example, much like the educator who breaks away from the assigned curriculum to tell a story either related or unrelated to the subject-matter. Theatre should be viewed as a language and not as a spectacle that is accessible to explore group solutions of oppression.

Although there are many inspirational movies where the teacher breaks away from the traditional way of teaching to encourage the students to remain in school or to make education fun and exciting which often times would lead the students into self-exploration of themselves and of the subject-matter being taught I focus on To Sir, With Love (1959). Based on the novel by E. R. Braithwaite, it is an inspirational biography that has been made into a movie and a theatrical performance where the educator – an unemployed black engineer wins the trust and respect of unruly, rebellious inner-city students. I selected this book because it illustrated how the educator and the students overcome bigotry and illiteracy of the 1950’s in an oppressive, non-growth environment; “…We taught the blacks how to combat racial prejudice—we, who were almost all very, very white…” (Boal, 1995, p. 1) Conversely, Braithwaite had to overcome his bigotry; even though the British children living in this impoverished ghetto were dirty, unfed and ill-mannered, Braithwaite had no sympathy for them – because they were white.

The students Braithwaite was assigned to teach were hoodlums and this was the last school that would take them. They were rude and crude, hygiene was not important to them and self-esteem was low. When Braithwaite (1959, p. 15) walked into his first class he was to teach, he turned around and left again; “My vision of teaching in a school
was one of straight rows of desks, and neat, well-mannered, obedient children. The room I had just left seemed like a menagerie.” Braithwaite’s vision was like that of Dewey’s (1938/1997, p. 61) typical traditional schoolroom as having “fixed rows of desks and military regimen of pupils who were permitted to move only at certain fixed signals.” Instead, what Braithwaite observed in the classroom was chaos – students laughing and talking, sitting on the desks and showing no respect for authority; they “ate” their new teachers for lunch.

When trying to teach following the standardized curriculum, Braithwaite observed that the students were more unruly and disrespectful to him and their peers; they were more interested in talking and harassing each other. Braithwaite’s breaking point to the student’s behavior occurred when he found a used feminine napkin burning on the radiator in the classroom. He ordered the boys out of the room and turned his displeasure on the girls, telling them ladies who did this were considered sluttish and that “decent women keep private at all times” (Braithwaite, 1959, p. 81), and ordered the disgusting object removed. He announced that the students would begin by respecting him and each other. He then encouraged the students to talk about their respective pleasures, problems and concerns in their everyday life; he showed the students what it is like to have pleasure in becoming an educated person and to recognize their humanity. Yet, when Braithwaite begins his new way of teaching he receives a lot of resistance and hostility from his fellow teachers, telling him it wouldn’t work and “I told you so” when there were days it didn’t work. Other teachers didn’t think the students were capable of becoming anything other than hoodlums, whores and a burden on society. Braithwaite embraced Dewey’s guided student-centered environment where the students were
allowed to explore their current environment and experience growth; he also utilized a form of Boal’s spect-actor concept, by allowing students to share what they observed and become a part of their experience.

By teaching the students respect for each other, listening to the students and showing the students real life adventures, Braithwaite brought learning into the lives of the poor, underprivileged students. I argue that educators can bring learning into their classrooms through dialogue and allowing students to become a part of their learning experience; bring a variation of Boal’s spect-actor into the classroom. Much like Braithwaite, educators should teach their students to be respectful of others, listen to their students and encourage their students to embrace real life adventures. I argue that through the use of theatre, educators could encourage students to go from spectators to spect-actors in a guided student-centered educational environment. Boal (1979/1985, p. 121) considered “the theatre as language, capable of being utilized by any person, with or without artistic talent”; where the theatre can service the oppressed to help them “express themselves” and discover new concepts”.

**SCENE TWO: FROM PLAYWRIGHT TO EDUCATOR TO PLAYWRIGHT**

Character isn't inherited. One builds it daily by the way one thinks and acts, thought by thought, action by action. If one lets fear or hate or anger take possession of the mind, they become self-forged chains.

*(Jason Bennett, *The Jason Bennett Actor’s Workshop: The Next Generation of Actor Training)*

In the Overture and Scene One, I introduced Boal and his theatre exercises to promote and encourage the spectator to become a spect-actor, along with the different
kinds of theatre settings, types of theatre and how one educator stepped away from the traditional method of “teaching”. By taking theatre back from “the ruling classes”, who separated the actors from the spectators and the protagonist from the chorus, Boal encouraged the oppressed people to make the theatre their own where “the spectator starts acting again” to “eliminate the private property” of individual characters (Boal, 1979/1985, p. 119). In Scene Two, I follow the steps of the playwright to introduce a way in which the educator could incorporate the use of a version of Boal’s spect-actor, and having the students become active participants in their learning. I think there are several ways in which students can become active learners and the educator can incorporate a variation of Boal’s spect-actor utilizing the standardized curriculum as the framework. Playwrights have certain criteria to follow to attract the type of audience for which the play is written.

**From Playwright to Educator**

First, “know your medium” (Hughes, 1997): the theatre. The Arena Theatre was Boal’s medium, where his work continued “though hampered by censorship and other restrictions imposed by the government (Boal, 1979/1985, p. 156). The medium for the educator is the classroom, in which the educator should immerse themselves. How should the classroom be arranged for the type of dialoging in which you expect to engage? Because the majority of classroom seating is in neat rows, the educator should determine if this will be the appropriate setting for a dialogue or theatre exercise. For example, one interactive exercise the educator might have her students do to understand the abstract concept of the atom could be to have some students become protons and neutrons forming the nucleus, while other students walk around as the electrons. In order
to do this, the desks would have to be moved out of their neat rows so there would be
room for the electrons to move about.

Secondly, to incorporate theatre into the curriculum, “keep in mind the unities of
Time, Place and Action” (Hughes, 1997). Having the subject-matter begin at the
beginning and proceed in an organized fashion to the end, students should be able to
make connections. However, if the dialogue or performance is incorrectly placed in the
curriculum, the students could become confused making them frustrated and not wanting
to go further. For example while teaching history, the educator should be specific instead
of general. Students are assigned a specific time in history from which they are to select
a famous person and write a first-person narrative on the history of that time (one way to
introduce Boal’s spect-actor). In a first-person narrative, the student rewrites the section
using words and phrases involving “I”, if it is one point of view, or “we” if no specific
person is identified. Performance of these could be as a monologue or a ten-minute play,
which has a beginning, middle and end. Presentation of these important people should
remain in chronological order so the history is told in sequence.

Next, “profile your characters before writing, you must allow them to be
themselves” (Hughes, 1997), much like the educator should know their students. In
working with the students while they are writing their first-person narratives or their ten-
minute plays, the educator must not interfere with their goals. As active learner students
generally make vital connections in a way that makes sense to them. When this occurs
the new information is retained and the student begins to accumulate the tools necessary
to move forward into a new dimension within the learning environment. In assigning
participatory projects the educator should be cognizant of her student’s maturity. If her students are not ready to express themselves, more foundation should be laid.

**From Educator to Playwright**

As an educator, you should know if what you are asking of your students is age appropriate. For example, if you are asking students to write a first-person narrative do they have the background and writing skills to do so? This goes back to the second part of being a playwright; uniting the time, place and action (Hughes, 1997). The educator would need to spend some time on how to incorporate theatre into the standard lecture, and allow students the time to perform the required task; rearrange the classroom to design the medium in which the students will be enacting their spect-actor part; and allow the student’s to perform their part without interruption. Critiques of the student’s performance should be positive and make suggestions if improvement is necessary.

Bringing Boal’s spect-actor into the classroom may not be easy and may take some work by the educator. In understanding their medium, maintaining a sequential order by using specifics instead of general concepts and knowing their students, educators could begin incorporating theatre into the standardized curriculum. Using the standardized curriculum as the foundation, the educator should be able to meet the expectations of the administration while learning is incorporated into the traditional educational setting.
SCENE THREE: FROM LECTURE TO THEATRE

The trouble with traditional education was not that educators took upon themselves the responsibility for providing an environment. The trouble was that they did not consider the other factor in creating an experience; …, the powers and purposes of those taught.  

(Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 45)

In Scene Two I translated the rules of the playwright to illustrate how an educator can introduce theatre into the standardized curriculum. The major emphasis of this Scene is for the educator to understand her medium, provide unity and most important to know her students and their ability to do what is asked of them; avoid an even more oppressive learning environment. In Scene Three, I bring forth the various ways in which the educator can utilize Boal’s spect-actor within the current standardized curriculum of NCLB. To set the stage for my One Act Play in Scene Four, I begin by explaining my perception of a typical day for an elementary school teacher.

A Typical Day for the Educator

Miss Blaine teaches in a public elementary school, and like most elementary school teachers she teaches several subjects during the school day. Her first period of the day is science, probably not her favorite subject, but it is in the standardized curriculum she received when she started teaching at her elementary school. She finds this standardized curriculum to be oppressive and “allows herself to be oppressed”; as a result her teaching style is much like that of the traditional education approach – to lecture. The goal of this science class is to get students ready to score well on the standardized exam at the end of the school year; emphasized by Hostetler (2011, p. 2) who wrote,
I think it’s fair to say the elementary and secondary education in the United States is dominated by the legacy of No Child Left Behind, with its emphasis on high-stakes testing, a narrow curriculum, particular sorts of education research, and punishing “underperforming” schools and teachers.

Miss Blaine understands that her students must do well in order for her school to receive the Federal funding needed.

**Miss Blaine’s Day Begins**

On a bright sunny morning or maybe it was a cloudy day, I really don’t remember; sometimes the days are undistinguishable and begin to blend into one. Anyway, wearing a dark blue dress with her red hair pulled back into a ponytail, Miss Blaine (the educator) enters her classroom (her medium). At the front of the classroom (the stage) – her neatly stacked piles of books and papers are on her desk which is to the left of the white board. She crosses the empty room and sets the graded papers on her desk. From the front and looking out over the student seats (the rest of the classroom) she sees that all of the desks are in neat rows, and she makes sure that on each desk is the name of a student. This is the seating arrangement and no student is to change their seat. Oddly, this habit of sitting in a designated seat – “my seat” – continues with us throughout our lives. Miss Blaine turns and begins writing the days’ assignment on the board; along with it she writes the question of the day, this is to emphasize the importance of reading the assignment before
coming to class. As she continues to write the first bell rings and the students (the spectators) enter noisily to take their respective seats. After the second bell rings quiet ensues, all you can hear is the shuffling of papers and the opening of books to the days’ assignment.

MISS BLAINE: “Good morning class.”

STUDENTS: “Good morning, Miss Blaine.”

MISS BLAINE: “Please close your books, take out a piece of paper and a pencil and answer the question on the board.”

Even though this is a daily routine there are still groans heard throughout the room and some students talk under their breath; some struggle with the answer, they either didn’t read the assignment or didn’t understand it well enough to answer the specific question; while the rest of the students automatically write down the answer to the question without hesitation. After picking up the papers Miss Blaine continues with her monologue.

MISS BLAINE: “Today we are going to study the electron, its relationship to the atom and its importance to science.”

The students groan again, they haven’t any idea why they need to know this “stuff” or what it has to do with what is going on in their world today. Learning about science is mandatory and a major portion of the students don’t see the relevance; it doesn’t help that Miss Blaine shows no enthusiasm in teaching science.
Miss Blaine’s Traditional Lecture

What follows is a traditional lecture given to an elementary science classes. The purpose of the lecture is to help students understand the electron. The following lecture is found in most elementary school science books.

MISS BLAINE: (The general practice is to stand in front of the classroom at the board, where she can write down important points as well as draw the structure of the electron as she speaks). “The electron was discovered in 1897 by J. J. Thomson, an English physicist, by passing different colored gases through a vacuum tube. This vacuum tube is called a cathode ray tube and has a negative end and a positive end (see Appendix D). Thomson’s experiment was the first to show that a neutrally charged atom has two counteracting charges: a positive charge or proton and a negative charge, which Thomson initially called corpuscles – electrons.

Electrons are negatively charged sub-atomic particles, having a mass of 9.109 x 10^{-31} kg, which is so miniscule that it is not included in calculating the mass number of the atom. These sub-atomic particles encircle the nucleus which consists of protons and neutrons. In a neutrally charged atom the number of protons equals the number of electrons. Under normal conditions the electrons are held around the nuclei by the oppositely charged proton. Electrons move about the nucleus in orbits, which are organized concentric shells. These electrons like to travel in pairs in their respective shells. The closer to the nuclei the tighter they are
held by the positively charged nucleus; this hold weakens as the number of shells increases and the electrons become farther from the attractive force.”

Miss Blaine continues her lecture and goes through the different stages; while the students listen, take notes, and write down the next day’s homework assignment. Those students who are completely disconnected from the subject-matter are too busy watching the clock, rather than pay attention to what Miss Blaine has to say. Some of the students robotically take notes, while others are somewhat engaged with what is being said. No questions are asked to help clarify the concept of the atom, and no dialoging occurs between the students and Miss Blaine. This scenario could be similar to that of a bad movie or theatrical performance.

**Philosophers Assessments**

Dewey (1938/1997) argued against this type of static educational environment that he deemed traditionalism, where the educators’ delivery of the subject-matter is that of facts and rules of conduct constructed in the past and brought forth as unchangeable and forthright knowledge for future generations. Observed by Dewey (1938/1997), the general outcome of this traditional educative environment was an aimless and static educational experience for the students with no meaningful connection to present day or future developments. Based on isolated learning skills, traditional education generally stifled the growth of the student.

Freire (1983, p. 58) believed that “[n]arration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into “containers,” into “receptacles” to be “filled” by the teacher”. Miss Blaine’s lecture is
exemplary of Freire’s “banking” concept, an act of depositing without communication. Where the teacher teaches, the student receives and no dialogue ensues. To overcome this oppressive educational environment and acknowledge that the students are “inside” and not outside of the educational environment, Freire suggested that the educator become a “partner” to the students. During Miss Blaine’s class no participation from the students occurred, they were not engaged in their learning.

Boal’s introduction of the spect-actor enabled individuals to become part of the dialogue between actors and the audience. By doing this Boal observed that through participation the audience members became active members in the change from their oppressive life styles. There are various types of theatre in which the audience can become participants. One way to incorporate a variation of Boal’s spect-actor would be for the educator, Miss Blaine, to rewrite her lecture to include her students as the spect-actors acting out the specific particles making up the atom. Scene Four is an example of how Miss Blaine might rewrite her lecture.

**SCENE FOUR: A ONE ACT PLAY**

Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-student and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach.

(Freire, 1983, p. 67)

In Scene Three, I presented a teaching day in an elementary class, where science was the first subject taught. The setup of the medium (Miss Blaine’s classroom) is the traditional neat rows of desks with Miss Blaine’s desk and the
board are at the front of the classroom; similar to the End Stage type of theatre arrangement. She does follow the chronological order of the curriculum; and knows her students. However, her lack of enthusiasm in teaching science, along with “allowing herself to be oppressed” has spilled over into her teaching; she has become an oppressor. Some of her students are engaged in learning about the electron, some are mechanically taking notes, and some are not paying any attention to her lecture. To overcome this static traditional way of teaching, in Scene Four I show an example of how Miss Blaine could engage her students in learning about science. For this to occur, Miss Blaine must overcome the act of “allowing herself to be oppressed” and become a liberator. In order for her students to enact the structure of the atom and to emphasize the placement of the electron, Miss Blaine will have to change the medium by moving the desks along the walls; this will open up the Center/Stage.

Miss Blaine Becomes a Playwright

Miss Blaine begins the one act play with a prologue, or introduction to the concept of the atom and its importance to the sciences. During this time, the chorus, her class, is encouraged to ask questions.

The following is my example of Miss Blaine’s rewritten lecture.

THE ATOM

MISS BLAINE: Similar to the lines used to make a letter, there are small particles that make up the atom; the smallest, indivisible unit that makes up material. The atom cannot be divided into anything
smaller; you are made up of these atoms. Atoms are made up by protons, neutrons and electrons. (Miss Blaine pauses.)

STUDENT ONE (Electron): (Walks to center stage.) “I am “Electron!”

STUDENT TWO (J. J Thomson): (Joins Electron at center stage.) My name is J. J. Thomson. I discovered “Electron” in 1987 by using a cathode ray tube; a vacuum tube (See Appendix D) (Holds up a diagram of the cathode ray tube). I discovered that the electron is a very small (sub-atomic) particle (Illustrates with their fingers, how small Electron is. The student exits to join the rest of his classmates.)

ELECTRON: J. J. Thomas discovered that I have a negative charge. (Holds up a sign illustrating the negative symbol). I hang out with my weird friends, Proton and Neutron (Who move to center stage with Electron); together we form an atom, which cannot be divided.

STUDENT THREE (Proton): I am “Proton” and I am positively charged, and am very attracted to the electron. (Student moves closer to Electron and holds up a sign illustrating the positive symbol.)

STUDENT FOUR (Neutron): I am “Neutron”, I don’t have a charge. (Student stands next to Proton and holds up a blank sign that illustrates they don’t have a charge)

MISS BLAINE: The electron weighs in at 9.0109 x 10⁻³¹ kilogram, while the proton and neutron each weigh one atomic mass unit.
ELECTRON: My mass is so miniscule that I am not included in calculating the mass of the atom. *(Electron holds up a small feather, to illustrate how light Electron is.)*

PROTON: I weigh more than Electron. In fact, together with our friend Neutron we give our atom mass (or weight). *(Proton and Neutron each hold up a rock, to illustrate how different their mass is.)*

PROTON AND NEUTRON: We are members of a sect who live in the nucleus of our home, the atom. *(Proton and Neutron move closer together.)*

ELECTRON: Unlike my buddies in the group I am free to zip around “free as a bird” as a member of a two electron shell. *(Electron begins to move about the room, once in a while moving closer to Proton, but for the most part Electron can be found anywhere in the classroom.)*

MISS BLAINE: The closer the electron gets to proton the tighter her hold; however, her attraction for electron lessens the farther away he is from the nucleus. *(Proton and Electron engage in a simulated tug-of-war, where Electron moves close and then away from Proton. Neutron just walks around Proton and doesn’t interact with either Proton or Electron.)*

ELECTRON: Some would say I am schizoid because they never know where I am or will be. When I am one-on-one with Proton things are cool and our atom has no charge; because I have a negative
charge, Proton has a positive charge, and together we don’t have a charge. *(Electron continues walking around the classroom and Proton and Neutron are in the center of the classroom.)*

MISS BLAINE: If you think of the charges of Electron and Proton like a math problem; when you add two and then take away two you get zero \((+2 - 2 = 0)\).

You see that Electron is never in one place for very long. If I add energy, like a flame, Electron begins jumping around and gets excited; when the energy is removed Electron is not so excited.

STUDENT FIVE (A Flame): *(Holding a picture of a lit candle, Flame approaches Electron; Electron responds by moving faster and further away from Proton. Flame then moves back to the rest of the students and Electron acts as if falling closer to Proton.)*

MISS BLAINE: Electrons are generally found in pairs and share a common shell. When an Electron is alone in a shell it will either leave its shell to seek an empty spot in the shell of another electron, which is around its friends the Proton and Neutron; or will invite another Electron to join them in their shell.

ELECTRON: I do like another Electron to share my shell, and if I am the only one living in a two electron shell sometimes I will ask another Electron to join me. When this happens, my atom now has a negative charge, because there are more negative charges than positive charges; we have formed an anion. *(Another student, who*
has a negative sign, begins walking around Proton and Neutron; being careful not to touch each other.)

MISS BLAINE: If Electron has other Electrons around the same atom they do repulse one another and are never seen side-by-side.

ELECTRON: If I am encouraged to join another Electron in their shell and leave my friends, Proton and Neutron, my atom now has a positive charge; together they form a cation, because Proton has a positive charge. (Electron goes to be with the rest of the students.)

MISS BLAINE: Because an atom cannot be seen without the aid of a microscope, it is difficult to visualize. This play was written to help you understand what makes up an atom and why they are important to know about. Are there any questions?

If Miss Blaine would like to illustrate the formation of a molecule, she would use more students as the protons, neutrons, and electrons. Having the students become active participants should help them remember what an atom is and how some electrons, of the atom, can come and go to give the atom a charge; forming an ion.

The Atom as First-Person Narrative

In this section students were asked to rewrite Miss Blaine’s lecture as a first-person narrative, in other words, become an electron and tell their story. During the narrative the student can use props to designate the various particles that form the atom.
**Student’s Theatrical Performance:**

“I am “Electron!” As a negatively charged sub-atomic particle I have a strong attraction for a positively charged particle, which J. J. Thomson discovered in 1897 using the cathode ray, a vacuum tube. I hang out with my weird friends like the Proton, who has a very strong attraction for me because of his positive charge, and the Neutron, who is neutral about the whole matter. Proton and Neutron are members of a sect who live in the nucleus of our home, the atom. Weighing in at 9.0109 \( \times 10^{-31} \) kg, my mass is so minuscule that I am not included in calculating the mass (or weight) of our home.

Unlike my buddies in the group I am free to zip around as a member of a two electron shell. If I have a partner sharing my shell, we repulse each other as we whirr around our mutual friends in the nucleus. The closer I am to Proton the tighter his hold; however, his attraction for me lessens the farther away I am from the nucleus. Some would say I am schizoid because they never know where to find me. When I am one-on-one with Proton things are cool and our atom has a neutral charge. Like a jumping bean, I am more stable when I am not excited; but when energy comes to play I jump away only to fall back to where I belong.

Because I like company, if I am alone in my shell I will seek companionship and either go whizzing off to be with another electron in their shell, causing my atom to become positively charged or have an
electron join me in mine, causing my atom to become negatively charged.

Either way we become very excited and seek to become neutral again.”

**Further Engagement of Students**

Engaging students as spect-actors takes time and energy. Using the standardized curriculum as the foundation and incorporating a variation of Boal’s spect-actor the educator could bring learning into a traditional educative environment.

There are videos showing the model of the atom and of molecules found on U-Tube, and other interactive websites; however through the use of theatre, students become physically and mentally engaged. There are other ways in which the students can become involved in learning the abstract concept of the electron. For example if students are hands-on learners, models of atoms could be made using different colored M & M’s as the protons and neutrons pushed into a marshmallow to form the nucleus, and pretzels as the electrons. This type of model can be used to correctly show the atoms of Hydrogen and Helium. If students like to draw, they could be asked to draw an atom to illustrate the relationship between protons, neutrons and electrons. Creativity on the part of the educator in having students become active learners within the classroom is limitless. However, to avoid chaos the educator should set guidelines for these activities and keep in mind the age of the participants.

**Précis Act Five**

In Act Five, I discussed Boal’s development of the spect-actor, as well as explained the different kinds of theatre arrangements and theatre productions. Boal’s original stage was the Arena Stage in São Paulo, Brazil where he encouraged the
spectators to step-up onto the stage and express how they viewed their current situation; he encouraged the oppressed to take action against the oppressor in a positive, non-threatening way. After his second exile from Brazil, Boal continued his work in other countries and schools, his teachings that began with the oppressed persons in his beloved country of Brazil were now focused on students and those in search of community; encouraging them to act out their current situations. As the central focus of my play, I used a variation of Boal’s spect-actor to rewrite a traditional lecture delivered to elementary students to teach an abstract scientific concept to encourage students to become active participants in their learning.

Rewriting Miss Blaine’s lecture, from a traditional monologue to a student-centered dialogue also encouraged Miss Blaine to become a liberator. Even though she was delivered a standardized curriculum from which to teach the basic concepts in order for her students to score well on the standardized tests, Miss Blaine was able to use this curriculum as a foundation to build an active, participatory method of teaching. The one act play also encouraged dialoging between the educator and students as well as between the students. Along with Boal’s spect-actor, communication or dialoging between the educator and her students is one of many ways to enhance student learning. Interaction between the activities of the educator and the activities of the one being educated may be illustrative of the concept that successful teaching controls learning.

Educators should begin their teaching at the level of the learner and communicate with the learner using examples familiar to the learner. To introduce new terminology within the subject a commonality must be obtained in order to bring the learner “up” to a higher level of understanding. Miss Blaine used theatre to help her
students understand an important concept, the atom, which is the indivisible particle that is the basis for all material, including human beings. I think that communication and a variation of Boal’s spect-actor concept are sorely missing in the teaching of science. Much like a foreign language, students should become familiar with the terminology and its usage to understand the abstract concepts. Some educators might fall back into the traditional way of teaching (Dewey, 1938/1997), because the standardized curriculum of NCLB is ready to be used, and educators know what their students need in order to do well on the standardized exam. Breaking away from the traditional educational environment takes time and patience.

In summary, digging deep into the soul of each individual so that they feel a part of their own educational endeavor encourages learning. Where “[e]ducation is that process by which thought is opened out of the soul, and associated with outward things, is reflected back upon itself, and thus made conscious of their reality and shape.” (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 1) Utilizing this process as part of the educational experience students should become active learners – in a multi-faceted direction, where they are involved in and participate in their learning, and are not passive learners – in a linear direction, where students sit, take notes and regurgitate what they have learned on an exam. “Learning is an emotional experience, and there is no reason to avoid such emotions.” (Boal, 1979/198, p. 28)
ACT SIX: THE EPILOGUE

We taught the peasants how to fight for their lands—we, who lived in the big cities. We taught the blacks how to combat racial prejudice—we, who were almost all very, very white. We taught women how to struggle against their oppressors. Which oppressors? Why us since we were feminists to a man—and virtually all of us were men.

Boal, 1995, p. 1

I wrote The Coveted Souls of Oppressed Persons to encourage educators to incorporate theatre into their teaching curriculum. By building upon the standardized curriculum of NCLB, the use of theatre could transform a traditional, static educational environment into a guided student-centered (Dewey, 1916/2009, 1938, and 1899), participatory educational environment. I argued that the concept of soul is not perceived by intelligence of or knowledge gained by an individual; however, the intelligence of human beings enhances the development of their soul. I also brought forth the idea of oppression as a limiting condition, belief, rule or situation forced upon a human being, animal and plant; and that only the oppressed could liberate the oppressed as well as the oppressor, and others. In education, liberation from an oppressive learning environment could occur when the educator, an oppressed person, incorporates the use of theatre to encourage students to become active learners; by becoming a liberator, the educator could avoid becoming an oppressor. Transformation of an oppressive educational environment into a creative, flexible environment through the utilization of theatre could liberate both the educator and the students.

I began my philosophical inquiry (my play) with the introduction of those who brought to light the concept of soul. Plato in the Republic talked about the nature of the soul and Nussbaum (2010 p. 6) believed we “seem to be forgetting about the soul…”. 
Soul was also addressed by Hostetler (2011, p. 175) when he gave attention “to “seducing souls” as an aim for education for human well-being. Essentially, the goal is to draw students into experiences…” Fincher (2007, p. 51) defined the human soul as the keeper of our five capacities: “mind, where thoughts and beliefs work; desires, where our attractions and dislikes are pushed and pulled; feelings, where sensations and emotions play; the spirit, where we introspect and meditate; and the will, where our choices begin”. In summary, our soul is the “black box” of who we are; it harbors our life experiences, successes and failures all from which we learn. It is important for educators to understand the non-religious concept of soul and how vulnerable the unsuspecting souls, the students, are. Introducing theatre into the standardized curriculum might liberate the souls of the educator and the students. When designing their curriculum, educators should keep in mind the goal of the educational administration, as well as NCLB, which is for all students to do well on the standardized exams; or as Hostetler (2011, p. 25) wrote “to get everyone materially satisfied”. I argued that liberation can be achieved and positive growth can occur in a non-oppressive educational environment. For example, in October Sky Homer Hickam, Jr. overcame a poor education and became excited about learning when his teacher, Miss Riley, encouraged him to “reach for the stars”. Miss Riley buys Homer the book “Principles of Guided Missile Design”, which he used to calculate the trajectory of a rocket he and his friends launched to exonerate them from the accusation of causing a damaging forest fire. In order for educators to avoid an oppressive educational environment it is important for them to understand what oppression is.
There are numerous philosophers from Aristotle forward who address oppression similar to but not exclusive to “Aristotle’s Athens, the oppressed included women, slaves and workers” (Knight, 2007, p. 1). In an oppressive situation there is the oppressor, one who dominates, and the oppressed, one who is dominated. Generally, the oppressor does not show compassion for the oppressed or the environment in which the oppressed lives, works, or plays, and will continue to be oppressive until something changes. In my play, I defined three types of oppression: (1) physical, the act of abuse or enslavement of one’s body without the intention of mental abuse; (2) physical and psychological, the act of both bodily and mental abuse; and (3) psychological, the verbal act to dehumanize the oppressed. In education there are two souls that can become oppressed: (1) the educator, who is required to follow a standardized curriculum so their students will score well on the standardized exams; and (2) the student, who is subjected to a traditional, static educative environment. I then addressed the difference between oppression and coveting; where oppression can be intentional as well as unintentional depending on the source and it can be harmful or helpful depending on the circumstance, while coveting can be the malicious intention to dehumanize the oppressed.

Throughout my play I discussed the different philosophies on liberating the oppressing. Freire’s goal in life was to eliminate oppression through education; he knew what it was like to be humiliated and believed that education could possibly bring back self-respect and non-humiliation. Boal’s ambition was to give the oppressed a voice through theatre, which was used to control the masses and deliver the dogmas of the oppressor. He believed that if the masses could speak out without fear they might be able join together with other oppressed persons and overcome the oppressive Brazilian
government. After Boal was exiled he began to teach theatre as a means of expression. Dewey’s aim was to develop an educative environment in which students were allowed to investigate and question their discoveries, to have social bases. On growth, I used the philosophy of John Dewey (1938/1997, p. 38) where “education is a social process; education is growth; education is not preparation for life but is life itself”. Nussbaum believed that possessing the ten capabilities would help overcome oppression, especially of women. Nussbaum (2011, p. 20) believed these capabilities not only reside inside a person “but also the freedoms or opportunities created by a combination of personal abilities and the political, social, and economic environments.” Sumner and Hostetler wrote on the well-being of students within the educational environment to help overcome oppression; where “the fundamental aim of education should be to serve people’s well-being, to help them live well” (Hostetler, 2011, p. 1). As a way to conquer an oppressive educational environment, I introduce the concept of theatre, specifically Boal’s spectator; which could be achieved when the educator uses the standardized curriculum as a foundation.

On coveting, Ovid a learned poet and author wrote, “We are ever striving after what is forbidden, and coveting what is denied us” (Maier on Ovid, 2013, p. 90). Ovid’s statement could be interpreted as a good kind of coveting, or at least one where the goal of coveting is not of malicious intent; such as, one who covets time to read, which means they take the time regardless of what is going on. However, for my play I defined coveting as the intentional dehumanization of those who lack the education or capabilities (those of Nussbaum) necessary to beware of an oppressive environment.
My theatrical portrayal of the aforementioned philosophers, along with other philosophers, were used to illustrate my viewpoint on how the use of theatre in our current educational system may actively engage student learning and put the “pleasure of becoming an educated [and soulful] person” (Chang on Hamilton, 2006, p. 442) into education. “If it is time that thought has meaning only when generated by action upon the world, the subordination of students to teachers becomes impossible.” (Freire, 1983, p. 64)

Hamilton believed that education should be a pleasurable experience and a participatory function of everyday life for a student (Chang on Hamilton, 2006, p. 442), and Nussbaum’s studies showed that people who are educated could free themselves from oppression. For Nussbaum, this positive educative experience allows an individual to learn and expand one’s knowledge about their surroundings and the conditions to choose how to live; giving the individual knowledge to critically analyze one’s life and re-take possession of one’s soul. Nussbaum (2000) believed that an individual who has the proper tools has a greater ability to make autonomous decisions concerning their life – that is, exercise practical reason.

Humanity, practical reason and affiliation are based on the same belief Boal had when he introduced Theatre of the Oppressed – where the oppressed are able to establish a social base of self-respect and are treated as dignified human beings through the ability of expression without fear of persecution. Freire emphasized dialogue which is one of the three defining features of Nussbaum’s (2000) affiliation, “to engage in various forms of social interactions”, and Dewey distinguished between a positive desirable and acceptable direction to a negative undesirable and unacceptable direction of growth. This
was also an underlying theme in *To Sir, With Love* (1959) when Braithwaite began treating the students as adults and allowing them to talk about their issues. Their previous teachers maintained that they learn their subjects from the textbooks the way subjects were meant to be learned; there was no connection between the subject-matter to the student’s current situations and they rebelled, they exemplified Dewey’s negative undesirable and unacceptable direction of growth. Braithwaite encouraged the students to become spect-actors in an oppressive situation in order to connect with them and be able to show them that it is a pleasure to become educated. He brought Boal’s concept of theatre into the classroom along with Dewey’s student-centered educational environment. Braithwaite also exemplified the belief of Freire, that educational experiences occur through dialogue and of Nussbaum, that humanity is important to the development of the soul.

In “The Coveted Souls of Oppressed Persons” I explored the possibility of using theatre in the classroom to engage the students in learning. Because educators are generally not encouraged to write their own curriculum because they have a standardized curriculum to follow, the use of theatre would be incorporated within; in other words, use the standardized curriculum as the foundation and incorporating a version of Boal’s spect-actor specific to the subject-matter. From the educators’ perspective, adding theatre into an already standardized lecture would take time, patience and energy. However, this could be accomplished by following the rules of a playwright; where one goes from playwright – to educator – to playwright. By putting the student at the center of education as a voluntary, active member of the learning process educators would teach the subject-matter in a way that would break the rote memorization. Boal believed that
freedom of oppression began with the oppressed, while Dewey believed that students learned by solving everyday problems and that the educator should guide them through the experiences and give them opportunities to learn. In having students become spectators they would be able to solve problems and understand abstract concepts.

Life is about change. We can suppress the changes, gain knowledge from the changes, or try to make sense of the changes. Heraclitus believed “the world and all things in it are in constant flux, and the permanent condition of change is the only unchangeable thing. The appearance of stability is a mere illusion of the senses and must be corrected by reason.” (Boal, 1979/1985, p. 3) Manifestations of these changes take place through experiences, people, places, and things around us; like Alice in Wonderland our world is a creation through our illusion. Stories of the people and by the people who mold our world help to make sense of the person we have become. It also shows the various changes a person goes through during a life time and the interaction between the different generations.
APPENDIX A: NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

Standardized essay tests in public education began in 1845 in the United States. (Mathews, 2006) The original use of standardized essay tests was to determine how well a student was prepared to continue their education; this method of testing went from essay form to the No. 2 pencil bubble tests around the beginning of the 20th century. “Many Americans accepted these tests as efficient tools to help build a society based on merit, not birth or race or wealth.” (Mathews, 2006) Changed from focusing on “innate intelligence” to focusing on “measuring learning” (Mathews, 2006) today, standardized tests are now used because of the “nation’s demand for educational accountability” (Popham, 2004, p. 6) On January 8, 2002, George W. Bush signed the NCLB [No Child Left Behind] Act which would use standardized achievement tests to define the quality of education within the individual schools and how well students going to that school are remembering the required subject-material at their grade level. According to Popham (2004), the extreme pressure for students to have higher test scores has led to “a serious erosion of educational quality in many parts of the nation.” (p. 6)

Under the G.W. Bush administration the NCLB Act of 2002, schools and school systems whose students did not do well on the standardized tests were scrutinized. Welfarism or the action of welfare in education (Sumner, 1996) is described using Bush’s No Child Left Behind Act. “Since 1965, when the federal government embarked on its first major elementary-secondary education initiative, federal policy has strongly influenced America's schools.” (National Education Association) Disappointing results in some of these projects led some to think the federal government should stay out of education, while others think new programs should be added into the old system. The
welfare of the students and the future of our government depend on all children having an equal opportunity for the best education.
APPENDIX C: PARTS OF A THEATRE BUILDING
APPENDIX D: J. J. THOMSON’S CATHODE RAY TUBE

REFERENCES


NEA (National Education Association). *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*. Downloaded on 09/29/2014 from http://www.nea.org/home/NoChildLeftBehindAct.html


