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**In Defense of the Search for Beauty:
*Using Nonobjective Aesthetic Education for
Future Cultural Participants***

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Dedicated to the young people in Serbia and the U.S.A. who do not yet know where their intelligence and spirit will take them.

Résumé

Pour la défense de la recherche de la beauté: Utilisation de l'éducation esthétique non objective pour créer des futurs participants culturels

Cette thèse-ci défend le droit des jeunes à la recherche de leur propre culture, notamment par l'éducation et le droit à un lien affectif avec l'art qui se forme à travers des obstacles socioéconomiques. Cette défense conduit à une étude de méthodes de l'éducation esthétique qui peuvent être appliquées aux programmes éducatifs lancés par des organisations culturelles. J'affirme que toute stratégie de développement de l'audience doit s'appuyer sur l'éducation comme sa fonction principale pour créer une demande à long terme. A l'aide des recherches théoriques, études de cas, observation, entretiens et mon propre travail dans le domaine, j'ai trouvé qu'une «culture globale» a produit des points communs dans le domaine culturel entre les États-Unis et la Serbie. Cela justifie une comparaison entre les deux pays culturellement disparates. Donc, je vais essayer de recommander des stratégies éducatives pour les responsables qui travaillent dans le domaine de développement de l'audience en Serbie pour lutter contre l'influence répandue des valeurs de marché sur les jeunes.

Mon hypothèse principale est que l'éducation esthétique non objective peut avoir des résultats positifs à long terme pour les individus et provoquer un intérêt qui les conduira à devenir les acteurs culturels sans les exposer au marketing de masse. L'intérêt est définie comme la recherche de la beauté. Ce type d'éducation aidera les responsables à former des participants culturels à long terme par une combinaison du développement de l'audience et de la programmation de l'éducation. En réalité, le développement de l'audience et la programmation de l'éducation sont intrinsèquement la même chose. Ensuite, j'ai comparé mes recherches observationnelles en Serbie aux études de cas des États-Unis pour appuyer ma défense des émotions comme la base de la participation et de l'éducation culturelles et ma conviction que ces émotions sont universelles. J'espère bien que cela mènera aux recommandations réelles et applicables d'une programmation de l'éducation dans les organisations culturelles serbes basée sur la méthodologie de l'éducation esthétique non objective.

La méthodologie de recherche utilisée dans cette thèse-ci compare le déclin des participants culturels aux États-Unis et en Serbie. Cette comparaison est inspirée de mon développement

personnel en tant que participante culturelle aux États-Unis, mon travail dans le secteur culturel aux États-Unis et aussi, mon intégration actuelle dans le domaine culturel de Serbie. Le lien personnel avec ces deux mondes me permet de faire des observations comparatives qui sont importantes pour la recherche. Le cadre théorique est aussi une étude comparative des théories postulées par John Dewey, Maxine Greene, Lev Vygotski et Friedrich Schiller. Par une comparaison de ces théoriciens des époques différentes et des milieux culturels hétérogènes on a révélé les points communs qui peuvent être appliqués à l'éducation esthétique des jeunes en 2014.

La méthodologie utilisée pour la recherche de terrain comprenait des entretiens semi-structurés avec les parties intéressées, y compris les deux professeurs de lycée qui enseignent actuellement à Belgrade, un étudiant qui parlait de son rapport passé avec la culture, deux agents culturels et un groupe de discussion composé de dix élèves de 11 à 17 ans. J'ai également effectué une session observationnelle avec 20 participants, qui a duré un mois, utilisant des idées et des théories découvertes dans les modèles théoriques et les études de cas. J'ai comparé ce travail de terrain avec une analyse des modèles d'éducation esthétique qui avaient du succès aux États-Unis et au Royaume-Uni pour mieux comprendre les objectifs communs et les demandes spécifiques de chaque groupe de participants culturels, en espérant de trouver des méthodes communes qui résultent en un succès constant.

Le cadre théorique introduit l'idée de l'éducation esthétique et explique ce qu'elle est, ce qu'elle signifie, ainsi que sa fonction dans la société. Par exemple, l'extrait du premier chapitre de cette thèse-ci: Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) a reconnu la valeur d'une éducation esthétique dans la préservation de la liberté d'une personne et donc celle d'une société. " C'est l'éducation qui doit remettre l'homme en liberté et l'aider à remplir toute l'idée de sa nature. " (Schiller, *Essais esthétiques*, Lettre I) John Dewey fait écho à cette idée en 1934 dans son chef-d'oeuvre *L'art comme expérience*: " La philosophie et les réformes éducatives de John Dewey (1859-1952) sont imprégnées d'un type de démocratie où la pluralité et l'enquête intelligente sont les fondements d'un opinion publique sain. " (Premier chapitre de cette thèse-ci, p.27) Une comparaison entre les travaux de Dewey et de Vygotsky suit. Ces deux théoriciens partagent la conviction que l'éducation dans les arts et autour des arts est essentiel pour l'amélioration de la société dans son ensemble. Tout en abordant le sujet de différentes manières, ils parviennent à la même conclusion.

Maxine Greene, actuellement philosophe en résidence à l'Institut des arts de Lincoln centre, rapporte les principes de Dewey dans le 21ème siècle et y ajoute son propre point de vue sur les tests standardisés, les discussions actuelles dans l'éducation et le développement de l'empathie comme une pierre angulaire de l'amélioration de la société. Greene croit que la capacité des arts à inspirer l'empathie est incomparable avec celle d'une autre matière et ainsi, une partie nécessaire de l'éducation qui a été injustement négligée, " ... la mesure dans laquelle nous pouvons appréhender le monde d'autrui dépend de notre capacité existante de faire de notre imagination un usage poétique, d'engendrer les mondes de 'comme si' créés par des écrivains, des peintres, des sculpteurs, des cinéastes ... et d'être, d'une manière ou d'une autre, participants dans les mondes d'artistes en allant loin en arrière et en avant dans le temps. " (Greene, 1995 p. 4)

J'utilise ce cadre théorique pour soutenir la notion d'étude d'arts «non objective» ou orientée sur les processus et fondée sur les émotions. " Être capable de porter un jugement sur une chose ou une personne en toute objectivité rationnelle, c'est un don rare, une aptitude qui est approprié aux salles d'audience, mais pas à une salle de classe réelle ou au participation à l'art. La décision d'un individu de participer à la culture, à un titre quelconque, est non objective, tout comme la décision d'une personne de poursuivre une carrière qui fournit la satisfaction et le bonheur au lieu des hauts salaires est une décision non objective. " (Cette thèse-ci, p. 43) Hormis l'aspect affectif de la vie d'un étudiant, «non objectif» se réfère également au travail orienté sur les processus qui inclut l'expérimentation et la possibilité d'échec. Un certain risque est nécessaire à la fois pour le participant culturel et pour l'organisation culturelle, mais les solutions et l'imagination ne peuvent pas être atteints avec le risque d'échec : " Une approche non objective n'est pas nécessairement sans forme ou chaotique, elle peut même être guidée par une ébauche, un plan structuré ou un ensemble de règles qui exigent discipline et mettent au défi à la fois le formateur et le participant. Ce n'est pas au chaos de la pensée qu'une approche non objective est intéressée, mais c'est à l'imagination spontanée. " (Cette thèse-ci, p. 44) J'ai trouvé au cours de mes entretiens et mon observation que l'échec est quelque chose à éviter dans la société serbe. Beaucoup d'étudiants ont affirmé qu'ils ont peur d'échouer, tandis que quelque-uns affirment qu'ils croient que leur pays a déjà «échoué» sur la scène internationale, ce qui fait pression sur eux de récupérer l'image de leur pays par leur propre succès. Beaucoup de ces étudiants estiment que la seule voie du succès est quitter la Serbie.

Suite à l'étude théorique, j'ai analysé des études de cas sur la participation culturelle et l'éducation esthétique. *Cultiver la demande des arts: apprentissage des arts, engagement dans les arts et politique artistique de l'État* par Laura Zakaras et Julia F. Lowell contient des données quantitatives faites par le Fond national pour les arts (NEA) sur le déclin de la participation culturelle aux États-Unis. Cette étude a offert une ressource précieuse pour fonder mon hypothèse. Une fois de plus, j'ai comparé les données de l'étude mentionnée ci-dessus avec l'étude serbe faite par Slodoban Mrdja pour *Zavod za proučavanje kulturnog razvitka* (L'Institut pour le développement culturel). Les données compilées de Mrdja dans *Kulturni život i potrebe učenika srednjih škola u Srbiji* (La vie culturelle et les besoins des élèves des écoles secondaires en Serbie) reflète les habitudes culturelles des élèves des écoles secondaires en Serbie au cours de onze ans, de 2000 à 2011. Les deux études montrent que chaque pays a connu une tendance à la baisse dans la participation culturelle depuis l'année 2000 ; dans le premier cas – la participation générale et dans le second – la participation des élèves des écoles secondaires. Par une comparaison des études, j'ai trouvé que la Serbie et les États-Unis ont connu une diminution de la participation culturelle. Dans l'étude des États-Unis les auteurs soulignent l'éducation à la fois comme le problème et la solution, mais ils ne soutiennent pas cette conclusion des preuves acquis directement des jeunes. De l'autre côté, l'étude de Serbie ne jette pas le blâme sur un système ou contexte particulier, mais elle révèle que les étudiants semblent être mécontents de leur éducation.

Suite à cette comparaison des données sur la participation culturelle, j'ai évalué les rapports sur les projets d'éducation esthétique aux États-Unis et au Royaume-Uni: Lycée pour les arts, l'imagination et l'enquête (HSAIL) de Lincoln centre pour les arts en éducation (LCI), *Enseignement de l'alphabétisation à travers l'art* du Musée Salomon R. Guggenheim, une drame de processus d'une école de Floride rapportée par *Drame de processus et littératies multiples*, ainsi que trois projets dans un recueil d'articles appelé *Rencontres creatives* publié par la Fondation Wallace. J'ai trouvé que la plupart des évaluations des modèles d'éducation esthétique sont présentées par les institutions ou organisations qui ont exécutés les projets et donc ont un biais positif. Il y a une exception, le Musée Guggenheim de New York, qui a demandé à une équipe de recherche externe de suivre leur processus tout au long. L'équipe de recherche a révélé que les résultats des tests standardisés *n'ont pas reflété* les résultats positifs de projet d'éducation du Musée Guggenheim, tandis que les éducateurs impliqués dans le projet ont noté un résultat positif. Cela implique que l'impact de l'art comme un outil

pédagogique, celui qui inspire future participation culturelle, est difficile à mesurer et qu'une vaste expérimentation et recherche dans le domaine de l'évaluation d'impact sont encore nécessaires. Pourtant, en raison de succès que j'ai eu dans mon propre travail observationnel, je suis enclin à croire que l'éducation esthétique, bien qu'elle manque de l'évaluation, a les résultats très positifs avec les jeunes et le potentiel de les inspirer à rechercher des expériences culturelles. Puisque le montant de l'évaluation à long terme dans le domaine de l'éducation esthétique ne correspond pas à la grande quantité de recherches théoriques, j'ai choisi d'évaluer un ensemble de projets pour trouver des éléments et des observations communs.

J'ai effectué quatre entretiens avec les parties intéressées et j'ai inclus un auto-entretien. J'ai aussi demandé aux participants de l'étude observationnelle de contribuer à un groupe de discussion. Un entretien a été réalisée avec un professeur de langue et littérature serbe dans un lycée de Belgrade. Elle a demandé à son collègue, un professeur d'anglais, de se joindre à l'entretien comme un traducteur, mais puisque le sujet concerne également son travail, l'entretien est devenu entretien conjoint plutôt que d'un dialogue traduit. Une chose semblable s'est produite dans mon entretien avec le coordonnateur du programme de l'American Corner. Le bibliothécaire en service a exprimé un intérêt pour l'entretien et nous a rejoint lors d'un entretien conjoint. J'ai aussi inclus un entretien avec un étudiant de l'université qui a parlé de sa découverte de la culture et de sa participation culturelle à l'école secondaire et l'université. Dans une analyse des entretiens, certaine corrélation a apparue parmi les raisons invoquées pour lesquelles les jeunes ne participent pas à la culture. Au cours de l'entretien avec l'étudiant et les groupes de discussion, les jeunes ont dit qu'ils pensaient que la technologie et l'Internet sont les raisons pour lesquelles leurs amis ne participent aux arts. Les enseignants et les étudiants m'ont informé que les notes semblent être beaucoup plus importantes que les connaissances. Les enseignants ont ajouté que les étudiants se concentrent aux notes de plus en plus au cours des 20 dernières années qu'ils ont passé comme enseignants. Le groupe de discussion a également signalé qu'ils ont peu d'intérêt à assister aux cours qui ne résultent pas en une note. Cependant, ils expliquent que ce n'est pas qu'ils ne veulent pas apprendre, mais qu'ils pensent que ce qui leur est enseigné ne concerne pas le monde où ils vivent et alors, ils terminent les tâches scolaires tout simplement pour «en finir avec». Il paraît également que les étudiants assimilent les institutions et organisations culturelles à l'autorité et qu'ils les considèrent comme des entités alliés avec leur école, en d'autres termes, comme une partie du même système éducatif qui frustre leurs espérances. Ce

n'est que quand je leur ai rappelé que les cinémas et les salles de concert pourraient également être considérés comme espaces culturels qu'ils ont changé d'avis. Les enseignants ont exprimé leur frustration parce qu'ils devaient divertir les jeunes plutôt que leur enseigner, tandis que les étudiants se sont plaints que les enseignants ne comprenaient pas leurs besoins dans le monde moderne et ont dit que l'école n'avait pas fait un bon travail de les introduire à l'art. Les agents culturels de l'American Corner m'ont informé que leur organisation culturelle accueille plus de 500 programmes culturels de formation par an, mais que seulement trois d'entre eux sont spécifiques aux jeunes. Chaque personne interrogée, tout en exprimant des préoccupations individualisées sur la baisse de la participation culturelle, a également partagé quelques problèmes qui se chevauchent les uns les autres, comme la dépendance de la jeune génération de la technologie et des médias et l'échec du système éducatif à intégrer la culture dans le programme éducatif.

La recherche observationnelle en éducation esthétique non objective a été menée à l'American Corner à Belgrade du 7 juillet à 8 août 2014 dans un atelier intitulé «Anglais et les arts». J'ai limité le groupe à 20 étudiants en raison de la taille de l'espace et parce que tous les emplacements ont été remplis avant le premier jour de l'atelier. Le programme a été divisé en quatre étapes, une pour chaque semaine: 1) la première semaine – la joie, 2) la deuxième semaine – le douleur ou le chagrin, 3) la troisième semaine – la colère, 4) la quatrième semaine – la peur. L'émotion correspondante indiquée après chaque semaine était plutôt un thème qu'une recherche approfondie en psychologie. Quand la vie affective ne s'appliquait pas à un projet, nous ne l'avons pas utilisée, mais la discussion des émotions et de l'art a conduit aux conversations captivantes avec les participants sur leur vie quotidienne, leurs intérêts et ce qu'ils attendaient du monde. Il paraît aussi que cela a aidé les participants à mieux se comprendre et créer des liens émotionnels entre eux. Chaque jour que nous nous sommes rencontrés a également eu un thème: les lundis étaient jours de musique, les mercredis d'arts visuels et les vendredis étaient réservés pour la performance artistique et la littérature. Parfois, ces thèmes se chevauchaient naturellement, il n'y avait pas une division stricte des formes d'art, mais sachant à quoi s'attendre chaque jour semblaient aider les étudiants à organiser leurs pensées. L'oeuvre artistique comprenait tous les genres de musique, tous les types d'art visuel, de performance artistique, de théâtre, de cinéma et d'écriture. Certaines oeuvres d'art étaient des chefs-d'oeuvre, d'autres alternatives ou de contre-culture, la seule condition était qu'elles évoquent des questions, des thèmes ou des expériences pertinents pour les

participants. J'ai arrangé des cours sur la base de mes découvertes dans la théorie de l'éducation esthétique et dans les études de cas sur les modèles réussis d'éducation esthétique. Par exemple, dans tous les études de cas réussies les participants ont été chargés de quelque chose, ils ont agi de manière indépendante et l'instructeur était flexible pour «l'imagination spontanée» des participants. D'autres points communs était l'encouragement de l'expérimentation, l'observation et l'enquête régulière. Les participants n'étaient pas informés sur le sujet de cette thèse-ci jusqu'à la fin de l'interrogation de groupe de discussion. Quatre projets de groupes thématiques étaient «assignés» au groupe, mais les discussions et l'exploration de sujets étaient menées par les jeunes participants. J'ai agi comme médiateur et j'ai introduit continuellement des modèles et des problèmes interconnectés que nous avons étudiés ensemble à l'aide d'une connexion Internet. Les séances observationnelles ont utilisés les littératies multiples pour encourager la recherche, la confiance et la communication ainsi que pour présenter aux participants de nouvelles conceptions artistiques, des chef-d'oeuvres et des dirigeants dans les arts. J'ai trouvé que, bien que le projet n'ait pas tout à fait réussi avec tous les participants, la majorité des participants étaient très satisfaits de leur expérience et ils avaient l'impression qu'ils en ont tiré les connaissances. Lors de la séance de groupe de discussion, les participants ont demandé plus de cours et ils ont dit qu'ils étaient plus intéressés à ce qui se passe dans les organisations et les institutions culturelles. Quand on a demandé aux participants quel type d'institution culturelle ils créeraient s'ils étaient en charge, ils ont répondu presque unanimement que ce serait un certain type d'institut pour l'éducation créative.

Depuis l'avènement de l'Internet et de la communication de masse individualisée, une culture globale est née. Chaque participant, agent culturel et pair qui a soit directement participé à cette recherche pour le thèse soit discuté de ses conclusions avec moi, a dit que l'Internet et la technologie ont complètement changé la façon dont ils participent à la culture. Si cela est vrai, alors il va sans dire que si la culture des jeunes devient global, c'est le même avec les problèmes de la culture, l'un d'eux étant une diminution constante de la participation culturelle.

Chaque individu a le droit de rechercher librement un lien affectif et du sens dans l'art, il vaut mieux pour la société si cette recherche est soutenue par des connaissances offertes à travers l'éducation, par l'empathie acquise avec l'expérience et par la confiance de poser des questions et faire des critiques. Il fait partie de la curiosité naturelle à l'homme de questionner,

d'enquêter sur l'étrange et de rechercher du sens. Cependant, cette recherche n'est pas quelque chose qui peut être transformé en marchandise, par conséquent, elle ne rentre pas dans un cadre économique et elle est négligée par la version néolibérale des systèmes d'éducation et de valeurs, ce qui semble être recopié dans le monde entier. En d'autres termes, l'art n'est pas encore considéré comme une nécessité par la plupart des gens, il est considéré comme un luxe, car il a une valeur économique seulement comme un produit de luxe. Même si l'art a été introduit comme un outil de développement social, le point de vue dominant est qu'il fait partie du monde privilégié. Il semble que les institutions et les organisations culturelles aux États-Unis et en Serbie sont tributaires de ce même système de valeur économique pour le financement, les participants et les volontaires. Cela laisse les organisations culturelles en position de faiblesse qu'elles ne peuvent pas exiger beaucoup de la programmation et cela conduit finalement à la stagnation ou aux programmes éducatifs inconstants, de courte durée. Ce cadre ne soutient pas le développement bien équilibré d'une vie culturelle riche pour un individu, parce que souvent la voie à la participation culturelle régulière, qui est personnelle et riche en émotions, est aussi détournée et surprenante que la vie elle-même. Avec un système qui n'aide pas les jeunes au développement culturel, alors il n'est pas étonnant qu'ils cherchent des réponses sur leur monde à travers l'Internet, un «lieu» où ils peuvent prendre un rôle actif, s'exprimer, obtenir des réponses rapides, faire partie d'une «communauté» et expérimenter à très peu de frais pour eux-mêmes.

L'éducation esthétique non objective semble combler les trous que la technologie laisse dans le développement culturel, tel que la collaboration, l'interaction sociale, l'exploration émotionnelle et la résolution de problèmes en temps réel, en utilisant en même temps la technologie comme un outil. Selon mes conclusions avec le groupe de discussion et au cours des séances observationnelles, les jeunes Serbes sont intrigués par des possibilités que la technologie et les communications globales leur offrent, mais ils sont aussi intéressés à s'engager avec leurs pairs aux entreprises créatives. Quand on leur a offert le choix entre aller voir une pièce applaudie par la critique ou passer du temps avec leurs amis, ils ont choisi leurs amis. Il n'est pas surprenant que les jeunes sont un groupe social très unie, alors cela suggère qu'un programme qui inclurait les jeunes dans le processus de prise de décision, en formant des comités de jeunes ou en permettant aux groupes de jeunes déjà établis d'utiliser des espaces culturels, peut être un bon début pour les organisations culturelles de construire le développement de l'audience ou un programme d'éducation. L'expérience avec les participants

individuels au sein de la session observationnelle suggère également qu'une approche flexible à l'éducation culturelle, à la fois inclusive, peut avoir du succès. Cela encouragerait la participation des étudiants qui croient qu'ils «n'ont pas de talent» ou qu'ils «ne sont pas bon à l'art». En plus, les programmes qui intègrent l'art dans les autres matières avec une approche interdisciplinaire ont sûrement un attrait plus large, comme en témoignent les séances observationnelles au cours desquelles chaque élève a eu la possibilité d'explorer ses intérêts et goûts personnels à différents moments dans le programme qui a duré un mois. Cela a eu un effet pyramidal qui a permis aux participants de présenter les uns aux autres le sujet traité et d'autres formes d'art ce qui a conduit, construit l'un sur l'autre, aux enquêtes approfondies sur la vie et le travail de l'artiste. Cela a également aidé à mettre une oeuvre artistique dans le contexte du monde et ainsi souligner son importance dans la société sans devoir rappeler de force les jeunes participants de l'importance de l'art.

Selon mes entretiens avec les enseignants et les agents culturels, il paraît qu'il existe une résistance contre la collaboration entre les parties intéressées en Serbie. Le coordonnateur du programme à l'American Corner a cité comme la raison un manque de motivation parce que beaucoup de programmes ne parviennent pas à devenir programmes à long terme ou à obtenir un bénéfice financier pour les parties concernées. Cependant, les partenariats solides avec les parties intéressées dans toutes les disciplines peuvent être la première étape importante du changement du statut de l'art dans l'éducation et de l'encouragement de futurs participants culturels. Cette recommandation a également été transmise aux organisations et décideurs par Laura Zakaras et Julia F. Lowell dans *Cultiver la demande des arts: apprentissage des arts, engagement dans les arts et politique artistique de l'État*.

Selon les réponses au cours de la réponse des groupes de discussion, ainsi que tout au long de la session observationnelle, les participants ont exprimé leur frustration d'être exclus de la conversation sur la culture et l'art. Cela suggère que la première étape de la planification peut être demander aux jeunes ce qu'ils aimeraient voir et faire dans la culture. Les questions inconclusives semblaient laisser les sondés confus et elles ont souvent eu des réponses simples ou paresseux. Pourtant, les questions spécifiques ont souvent éveillé des réponses imaginatives. Par exemple, au lieu de demander ce qu'ils aimeraient faire ou voir, j'ai demandé quel type d'endroit culturel ils créeraient s'ils avaient du pouvoir. Cette question a suscité une vive réaction des participants de la session observationnelle, ce qui a abouti à un vote unanime pour un institut pour l'enseignement créatif.

Mes résultats de la recherche, ainsi que mon expérience en Serbie de 2012 à 2014, suggèrent qu'il existe ce que Slobodan Mrdja appelle une «capacité proactive préservé» (p. 121) chez les jeunes, mais que les jeunes, même ceux des milieux privilégiés, sont frustrés par un système qui ne s'occupe pas des questions de leur génération. L'Internet a joué un rôle essentiel dans la façon dont les jeunes participent à la culture; cela est vrai aux États-Unis et en Serbie. Les deux pays, les États-Unis et la Serbie, connaissent une baisse constante de la participation culturelle. Tous les participants à cette étude-ci reconnaissent les problèmes de la participation culturelle et expriment le désir de changer cette tendance à la baisse; quelques-uns reconnaissent l'éducation culturelle à long terme comme un moyen de changer les choses.

Mes recherches de terrain montrent qu'un programme éducatif flexible et interdisciplinaire au sein d'une stratégie de développement de l'audience peut être efficace, mais seulement si les jeunes se sentent impliqués dans la prise de décision. Il y a quelques groupes qui travaillent sur le lancement des programmes d'éducation esthétique intégrés en Serbie et leur travail pourrait être précieux pour les responsables visant à créer une participation culturelle à long terme.

Sur la base de ces résultats, je suis en mesure de proposer des recommandations pour les organisations et les institutions culturelles en développement des initiatives éducatives de développement des publics: 1) assumer la responsabilité civique et sociale, 2) la construction et le renforcement des partenariats, 3) mettre en œuvre des méthodes d'évaluation cohérentes en dehors des exigences des organismes de financement, 4) offrir du perfectionnement professionnel pour les artistes d'enseignement 5) les systèmes de valeurs de réévaluer et soutenir les efforts visant à intégrer les arts dans la société par l'éducation 6) planification de l'éducation de base sur les discussions entre toutes les parties prenantes, y compris les jeunes 7) être à l'aise avec l'ambiguïté et de l'expérimentation.

Abstract

This thesis defends the right of youth to seek out their own culture, particularly through education, and the right to an emotional connection with art that is formed across socioeconomic barriers. I argue that all audience development strategies should rely on education as their main function for building long-term demand. This defense leads to an investigation into methods in aesthetic education that can be applied to educational programs initiated by cultural organizations. Through theoretical research, case studies, observation, interviews, and my own work in the field I have found that a shared “global culture” has produced commonalities in the cultural sphere between the United States and Serbia. This warrants a comparison between the two culturally disparate countries. As such, I will attempt to recommend educational strategies to managers working in audience development in Serbia to combat the pervasive influence of market values on youth.

My primary hypothesis is that nonobjective aesthetic education can have long-term positive results in individuals and plant a seed of inquiry that will lead them to become cultural participants without exposure to mass marketing. The seed of inquiry is defined as the search for beauty. This type of education will assist managers in building long-term cultural participants through a combination of audience development and educational programming. In fact, audience development and educational programming are intrinsically the same thing. Second, I compared my observational research in Serbia to case studies from the United States to support my defense of emotions as the basis of cultural participation and education, and that these emotions are universal. I hope this will lead to real and applicable recommendations for educational programming in Serbian cultural organizations based on nonobjective aesthetic education methodology.

The research methodology used in this thesis compares the decline of cultural participants in the United States and Serbia. The comparison is inspired by this author’s personal development as a cultural participant in the United States, work in the cultural sector in the U.S.A., and my current integration into the cultural scene in Serbia. A personal connection to these worlds puts me in a position to make comparative observations that are relevant to the research. The theoretical framework is also a comparative study of theories posited by John Dewey, Maxine Greene, Lev Vygotsky, and Friedrich Schiller. Through a

comparison of these theorists from heterogenous eras and cultural backgrounds, commonalities were revealed that can be applied to the aesthetic education of young people in 2014.

The methodology employed for field research included semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, including two high school teachers currently teaching in Belgrade, one college student reflecting on her past experience with culture, two culture workers, and a focus group comprised of ten high school students ages 11 to 17. I also conducted a month-long observational session with 20 participants employing ideas and theories discovered in the theoretical models and case studies. I've compared this field work with an analyzation of successful aesthetic education models in the U.S.A. and the U.K. to better understand the shared goals and the specific issues of each group of cultural participants.

My fieldwork revealed some shared values and common themes among youth cultural participation. First, that technology plays a big part in how the youth participate in culture, and what they consider culture. Since the advent of the Internet and mass communication, a global culture has emerged. Every participant, culture worker, and peer that has either directly participated in this thesis research, or discussed its findings with me, has said that the Internet¹ and technology have completely changed the way they participate in culture. If this is true, that the culture of young people may be becoming global, so are the problems of culture, one of these being a steady decline in cultural participation.

I believe that each individual has a right to freely seek out an emotional connection and meaning in artwork. It is better for society if this search is supported by knowledge offered through education, empathy acquired through experience, and confidence to ask questions and offer criticism. However, this search is not something that can be commodified, therefore it does not fit into an economic framework and is neglected by a neoliberal version of education and value systems. In other words, art is still not considered a necessity by most people, it is considered a luxury, because it only has economic value as a luxury item.

Nonobjective aesthetic education seems to fill the holes in cultural development that technology leaves behind, such as collaboration, social interaction, emotional exploration, and real-time problem-solving, while at the same time using technology as a tool. According to my findings within the focus group and observation sessions, Serbian young people are

¹ The Internet and World Wide Web are different things, but the Internet is the commonly accepted term to refer to both the connection and the information address on the World Wide Web.

intrigued by the opportunities technology and global communications offer them, but they are also interested in engaging with peers in person on creative endeavors. When asked if they had a choice between going to a critically acclaimed play or hanging out with their friends, they chose their friends, mostly for the sense of togetherness and active engagement that viewing a play doesn't give them. Consequently, programs that integrate art into other subject matters with an interdisciplinary approach are bound to have wider appeal, as evidenced by the observation sessions in which every student had a chance to explore their own personal interests and tastes at different points within the month-long program. This had a scaffolding effect that allowed participants to introduce each other to new subject matter and led to in-depth inquiries into artist's lives and work. It also helped to put artwork into the context of the world and thereby emphasize its importance in society without having to forcibly remind the young participants of art's significance. According to responses during the focus group, as well as throughout the observation session, participants expressed frustration at being left out of the conversation about culture and art. Open-ended questions about their cultural habits and aspirations seemed to leave respondents confused and often garnered easy, or lazy, answers. However, specific questions often engaged imaginative responses.

According to my interviews with teachers and culture workers, there seems to be a resistance to collaboration among stakeholders in Serbia. The program coordinator at American Corner cited the reason as being a lack of motivation because so many programs fail to become long-term or have any financial benefit for the parties involved. However, strong partnerships with stakeholders across disciplines may be an important first step to changing the status of the arts within education and helping to foster future cultural participants.

My research findings, as well as my experience in Serbia from 2012 to 2014, suggest that there is what Slobodan Mrdja (2011) calls a "preserved proactive capacity" (p. 121) among young people. However, young people, even those from privileged backgrounds, are frustrated by a system that does not address the issues of their generation. Interviewees claim that students are more interested in marks, or grades, than ever before and claim that there is an apathy about culture that is prevalent among youth. I have found that an obsession with marks may be tied to an unstable future that demands nothing more of them than results, i.e. a grade. I have also found that young people seem frustrated with their learning process, many say it does not apply to the "real" world. However, in practice young people seem eager to

learn and very open to creative approaches in learning. Also, the Internet has played a pivotal role in the way young people participate in culture; this is true in the United States and in Serbia. All the participants in this study recognize the problems in cultural participation and express a desire to change the trend; however, few recognize long-term cultural education as way to make a difference. Also, there is a resistance to partnering in Serbian organizations. The culture workers I interviewed point to a lack of motivation, and/or a lack of hope.

My field research suggests that a flexible and interdisciplinary educational program within an audience development strategy may be successful, but only if young people feel involved in the decision-making. There are a few groups working to initiate integrated aesthetic education programs in Serbia and their work may be invaluable to managers aiming to build long-term participation.

Based on these findings I am able to offer recommendations for cultural organizations and institutions developing audience development educational initiatives: 1) assume civic and social responsibility, 2) building and strengthening partnerships, 3) implement consistent evaluation methodology outside of the demands of funding bodies, 4) provide professional development for teaching artists 5) reassess value systems and support efforts to integrate the arts into society through education 6) base educational planning on discussions between all stakeholders, including young people 7) be comfortable with ambiguity and experimentation.

Introduction

“It is education that must give back liberty to man, and help him to complete the whole idea of his nature.” Friedrich Schiller, *The Aesthetical and Philosophical Essays*, 1792-1795

Although education is tied to culture in direct and particular ways, the former is often neglected by the later during tumultuous times, in transitional states, or even in booming market economies where organizations must specialize to survive. However, education is the life-long core of personal development, it is usually the impetus of a person choosing one career over another, one book over another, or one artistic experience over another. These very personal choices of artistic preference are not wholly governed by socio-economic background, but also by the schooling a person has received, the emotions, the desire to ask questions, and to find answers in a medium that makes the person feel, and experience.² It is art that develops perception and an awareness of one’s individual place in the world. Schiller points out that “...he (the human) prefers to have them (answers) ready-made in art rather than seek them painfully in nature”³ and Vygotsky states that “artistic narrative helps social man define reality”⁴.

Supported by theoretical thought from four different eras: Friedrich Schiller, Lev Vygotsky, John Dewey, and Maxine Greene, I will explore nonobjective aesthetic education as one of the keys to building the cultural participants of a multicultural, technologically based future. I hope to illustrate how experiential, emotion-based, interdisciplinary educational techniques have a universal effect that can reach beyond socio-economic circumstances and plant the seed of inquiry that leads to a search for beauty. Before continuing further, I must clarify my choice of terminology: beauty is not the subjective word used to define something pleasing to the eye, but in this context it represents truth⁵. Nonobjective refers to education that is emotional and feeling, and that is not goal-oriented but rather inquiry and process-oriented, as well as accounting for the subjectivity of a

² Further discussion about art as experience will be supported by John Dewey, *Art as Experience*, G.P. Putnam’s Sons 1980, original copyright 1934.

³ Friedrich Schiller, *The Aesthetical Essays*, 1792-1795, sourced on Project Gutenberg, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/6798>

⁴ Lev Vygotsky, *The Psychology of Art*, original publication 1925, The MIT Press 1974

⁵ John Keats *Ode to a Grecian Urn* refers to this meaning ‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty.’ This will be discussed further within the theoretical framework.

student's artistic perception. Participants refers to both those who directly participate in art experiences and the audience, but neither of these groups should be considered consumers as there is an active give and take involved in both conditions.

In this thesis I will argue that a preference for art has its roots in emotion, feeling, empathy and imagination, not purely intellect and exposure, and as the basic emotions are universal and timeless⁶, persons from all walks of life are capable of appreciating them because "...imagination is what, above all, makes empathy possible" (Maxine Greene, 1995)⁷. If managers and policy makers wish to cultivate lasting cultural demand, then audience development must be closely tied to long-term educational programming. I will argue further that instilling a desire for the arts is not about the immediate satisfaction of predetermined goals, but from the recognition of the liberty of imagination and the individual cultural participant's life path and natural curiosity. I will continue by studying the effects of nonobjective aesthetic education on programming, funding, and the mutually generous act of cultural attendance. Most importantly, I will study specific educational models in the arts that do not rely on artificially imposed goals. As Maxine Greene (1995) states in *Releasing the Imagination* "We cannot assume that there is any longer a consensus about what is valuable and useful and what ought to be taught, despite all the official definitions of necessary outcomes and desired goals." (p. 3)

Cultural institutions in the United States experienced a funding boom in the 1960s and 1970s⁸ that resulted in the expansion of the field, but did not result in the expansion of participants, in this case, audience. This meant that when the funding dropped off, the institutions resorted to higher ticket prices and exclusivity. This follows Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) "cultural capital" class theory, (p. 241-258) a natural inclination for culture to become exclusive to the upper classes.⁹ However, it is also generally accepted by the artistic

⁶ Paul Ekman's six basic human emotions, but also the evolution and purpose of emotion elaborated on by Charles Darwin (see reference to David Matsumoto PhD. San Francisco State University,) as well as the four basic emotions taught to actors like myself in Sanford Meisner training courses. In the former case, the facial expressions play a part, but the latter is more experiential and refers to an individual range of emotions within the four basic: joy, pain, rage, terror.

⁸ Laura Zakaras, Julia F. Lowell, *Cultivating Demand for the Arts*, RAND Research for the Arts and the Wallace Foundation, 2008 part 1

community that an expensive education does not guarantee artistic understanding, and culture makers often express a desire to “democratize” art. This implies that a cultural experience is an active form of give and take, with both parties desiring mutual emotional satisfaction from the exchange. This is a connection that cannot be artificially manifest simply because both stakeholders are the bearers of college degrees. The success of this exchange relies on the understanding between the creator, or artist, and those he or she created for, the participants. All relationships are emotional and if the emotions are universal, then it is logical that all aesthetic education should be accessible despite the socio-economic barriers that precede the experience.

Nonobjective aesthetic education may not only produce results in the development of an individual participant, but like most actions has a domino effect, in this instance, on all aspects of audience development. The nonobjectivity, or process-oriented subjective approach, is something that also has an indirect effect on funding. Process-oriented work by its very nature is difficult to quantify, or reveal measurable success, so this creates a hurdle when asking grantors to release funds in support of educational programs whose results may not manifest for years to come. This topic requires a completely separate study, but it would be impossible to research educational programming and education’s effect on audience development without relating it to funding at least in a general sense, as the latter issue is often blamed for a lack of development in the former. However, as stated in the above paragraph, funding does not always directly correlate to cultural participation.

In any case, a drop in audience or participant numbers requires managers to make quick audience development solutions to make up for the loss of ticket sales, funding, and general lack of interest. Often this solution comes in the form of marketing: a boost in Internet activity, promotions, events, advertising, corporate sponsorship, and while much of this may help diversify income, one major long-term factor is overlooked: education.

My research will relate case studies taken from the United States and United Kingdom with my current observations in Serbia. The literature referenced applies to the development of a wide berth of cultural participants, but the correlation between the United States and Serbia is essential because of my own background in America and my current life in Serbia. The “transitional” Serbia has plunged head first into rampant free-market capitalism and an unstable economy. From my conversations with culture workers who are struggling with

financial difficulties associated with this shift, one of them being audience development, much of the problem-solving inside cultural institutions seems to take the shape of marketing schemes and partnerships with private enterprise that mimic the U.S.A.'s strategies. Having grown-up in the cultural world produced by the latter, I have an experiential knowledge of the long-term individualized solutions that are lacking in most marketing schemes. Also, focus on marketing may lead organizations to neglect the education of the forthcoming generation of cultural participants, making them prey to clever advertising that leaves the participant unfulfilled. I witnessed this with my own generation in the United States, where movie quotes from blockbusters are passed around as witticisms and the fine arts are promoted alongside ads for liposuction on Buzzfeed. Not surprisingly, the two vastly different economies of the United States and Serbia are both suffering from the same fall off of cultural participants.¹⁰ However, I do not believe this is a cause for despair, only a signal of change that forces me to question the new demands of young cultural participants and attempt to close the divide between the 'haves' and 'have nots' once again. After all, I was taught by my performance professor, Kathryn Gately-Poole, that to define the truth of the moment I must never stop asking why.

“Liberty, with all its drawbacks, is everywhere vastly more attractive to a noble soul than good social order, without it—than society like a flock of sheep, or machine working like a watch. This mechanism makes of man only a product; liberty makes him the citizen of a better world.” (Friedrich Schiller, 1792-1795)

My primary hypothesis is that nonobjective aesthetic education can have long-term positive results in individuals, and plant a seed of inquiry that will lead them to become cultural participants without exposure to mass marketing. The seed of inquiry is defined as the search for beauty. This type of education will assist managers in building long-term cultural participants through a combination of audience development and educational programming. In fact, audience development and educational programming are intrinsically the same thing. Secondly, I will compare my observational research in Serbia to case studies from the United States in hope of supporting my defense of emotions as the basis of cultural participation and

¹⁰ A comparison of Lowell and Zakaras' *Cultivating Demand for the Arts* and Slodoban Mrdja's *Kulturi Život i Potrebe Učenika Srednjih Škola u Srbiji 2011* is included in the methodology of this thesis.

education, and that these emotions are universal. I hope this will lead to real and applicable recommendations for educational programming in Serbian cultural organizations based on nonobjective aesthetic education techniques that can be implemented within audience development programs.

Chapter 1- A Theoretical Framework for Aesthetic Education

The influence of education on art participation seems obvious at first glance and is often taken for granted. It is logical that an individual exposed to the arts at a young age will be more likely to seek out arts in their adult life, indeed, this is true in a general sense. In one example from Predrag Cvettičanin's 2007 study of cultural tastes and habits of people in the Balkan region, 69.7% of people with a high level of education (university degree and higher) liked reading books as a leisure time activity, while only 13.3 % of those with an elementary education liked reading books. (Cvettičanin 2007 p. 51)¹¹ The reason for this seems logical, the former group was exposed and educated in the field of art, they like reading because they are 'good at it' and it brings them pleasure: the latter group are not well-educated and exposed, never perceived themselves as being skilled readers and most likely don't derive much pleasure from the experience. It can be said with relative certainty that this applies to every nation's arts participation numbers, once again proving Bourdieu's 'cultural capital' theory. Another example comes from the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) in the U.S.. The NEA conducted studies in 1982, 1992, and 2002 (Zakaras and Lowell 2008 p. 18)¹² which consistently point to education as the key common factor for arts participation in adult life; in fact, it supersedes income, gender, age, occupation, and ethnicity¹³, meaning that as long as an individual is educated (at least secondary school) other life factors can be overcome in regards to the individual's participation in the arts. Another study conducted by Orend and Keegan in 1996 revealed that socialization and exposure through social interactions in the arts increased arts participation among less well-educated groups of

¹¹ Cvettičanin's study is an important and often referenced source of participant demographics in Serbia.

¹² In these same surveys the NEA found that when population growth and education levels are held at constant, participation in the arts still declined, (Zakaras and Lowell, 2008 p. 3 and McCarthy et al., 2001)

¹³ I question why ethnicity is included in this study. Apart from the isolation of certain groups, would not the same socioeconomic and educational numbers apply?

individuals (Zakaras and Lowell, 2008 p. 18)¹⁴. The last of these studies also noted a correlation in the age of students that most benefited from education in the arts. It suggests that education for arts participation seemed most effective after age 12 and before age 25. (Zakaras and Lowell, 2008 p. 18-19) This age group is most in need of aesthetic education, the most open to it, and also a group that is the most vulnerable to virulent market campaigns that strive to hook consumers early in life.

Research in the field of aesthetic education is lacking in studies of the *type* of education that is most successful at encouraging arts participation in young people. There is scant evidence, or none that I've found, that definitively proves guaranteed success with the use of one single methodology or technique. Perhaps this is because to produce these studies may have negative effects on the freedom of the instructors to dictate the methodology of the classroom, or because so many different methods exist that it is not possible to clump them together for the sake of producing concrete success rates. Studies in this category may also inhibit teachers who work on instinct to address the individual needs of students as they arise, and thereby force them to overlook the emotional truth of the moment.¹⁵ It is evident that it is not realistic to recommend one way of doing anything, particularly in the cultural sector.

Even without research of proven techniques within the field, schools of thought have surfaced. Arts education is one model that tends to stress the production of art as a core method in educating students about the arts. This model often offers art classes exclusively for the purpose of learning the techniques of an art form: drama lessons, painting classes, music lessons, etc. It is also the most commonly used model within the public school system and among cultural organizations. Certainly, arts education has positive effects and may result in a lifelong interest in an individual, especially if the individual discovers a talent, as François Matarasso's compiled study found in Great Britain in 1997 (p.7). But again, the comprehensive studies evaluated in *Cultivating Demand for the Arts* give a broader perspective that reveals that merely producing a work of art may not be enough, and a more well-rounded approach may be needed to truly plant a seed of inquiry, "It [the studies evaluated] also suggests that a broad-based approach to arts education, which we define below, is more likely to stimulate long-term involvement in the arts than is an approach

¹⁴ Although, Orend and Keegan's study refers to these groups as "art consumers" and is interested in the consumption of art as it is a product.

¹⁵ This will be discussed further along with supporting examples within the theoretical framework.

focused solely on arts production.” (Zakaras and Lowell 2008 p. 17) This is not to imply that the two schools of thought are, or ought, to be opposed to each other. One is rather an extension of the other and the two rely on each other. Aesthetic education would not be complete without exposure to technique, and arts education stands to gain from the broad scope offered by aesthetic education. The difference between traditional arts education and aesthetic education is a contentious topic. However, it can be summed up in a few sentences: arts education is usually dominated by art-making, while aesthetic education seeks to cultivate aesthetic perception, historical and social context, and uses various art media and artistic techniques to illustrate themes and patterns. However, the two are both essential and complement each other rather than oppose each other, and often the two overlap, making the distinction between them equivocal. Essentially, aesthetic education is well-rounded and can be applied to a number of subjects through the use of art. It is not solely concerned with the production of art or the development of crafting techniques but also infuses every subject with creative problem-solving. This thesis is concerned with aesthetic education because of the scope and scale which this school of thought allows for, and also because in order to investigate the role of human emotion in the learning and artistic process, an educational technique must be extremely flexible. Aesthetic education is, by its nature, inclusive and challenges students to perceive rather than repeat. In the reality of practice, all artistic education is likely to be broad in scope, these two schools of thought exist in theory and may have an impact on policy, but any art teacher can attest to art instruction being much more than just technique.

Friedrich Schiller and his contemporaries refer to, and in some cases write extensively, about ‘man’s’ need for aesthetic education, but in the context of Schiller’s era this holds a moral and spiritual implication. The creation of a piece of artwork was generally believed to be a divine act executed by a gifted person, and the act of man’s creation being akin to the act of God’s creation. (Schiller, *The Moral Utility of Aesthetic Manners*)¹⁶ The theory of aesthetic education has been elaborated on many times in 18th and 19th century Europe, but it didn’t enter the educational philosophy of the United States until the 20th century when John Dewey introduced the topic in both *Art as Experience* (1934/1980) and *Democracy in Education*

¹⁶ A portion of *The Aesthetical Essays* titled in letter number four.

(1916). He included an aesthetic education as an essential part of experience that benefits an individual's overall development and quality of life. It is Dewey's theories that evolved into a school of thought on education and social development led by scholars, including Maxine Greene, that was mostly active between the 1960s to 1980s. Eventually this led to the founding of the Getty Center for Education in the Arts which is now known as the Lincoln Center Institute for Education in the Arts.

Another scholar whose studies in child psychology, the psychology of art, and education echo aesthetic education principles and philosophies is Lev Vygotsky. It is interesting to note that Vygotsky's theories preceded Dewey's only slightly, and yet both appeared in different cultures and political environments on opposite sides of the world within a twenty year period. This similarity of conclusions derived by different means among such disparate socio-political perspectives -- Dewey a lover of democracy and an American philosopher, and Vygotsky a Soviet Russian psychologist -- may be only a coincidence, but the contrast reflects the instinctive and emotional quality in education that may have its roots in something fundamentally human which can cross great divides in ideology. This relationship of contrasts will become important in the discussion of aesthetic education techniques across the boundaries of ethnicity, religion, nationality, and language, especially within the context of teaching in former Yugoslavian nations.

Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) recognized the value of an aesthetic education to maintaining the freedom of a person and thereby a society, "It is education that must give back liberty to man, and help him to complete the whole idea of his nature." (*The Aesthetical Essays, Letter I*) The education Schiller refers to is man's recognition of the "beautiful," in this case a spiritual and transcendent beauty, as well as that of form which relies completely on feeling, according to Schiller, and is in opposition to thinking.¹⁷ Even though much of the *Aesthetical Essays* has been surpassed by more recent studies¹⁸, the core principles behind the function of an aesthetic education, and the process by which the mind accepts what is beautiful and good, has a timeless quality that strikes the reader as a tragically ironic

¹⁷ Throughout Letters I and II of *The Aesthetical Essays* Schiller cites 18th century's dependence on utility and 'understanding' as something that gets in the way of 'feeling.'

¹⁸ Indeed some of the language reflects values of the 18th century that no longer apply to contemporary society, in particular the division of men and women, the one thinking and the other feeling.

statement on our own era, “utility is the idol of our time...” (*Letter II*). For Schiller the development of artistic taste, and the ability to recognize what is beautiful from what is not, is the fulfillment of a person’s true freedom. However, this is the last of a person’s capacities to develop, “but happily it enters into the plan of nature, that taste, although it first comes into bloom, is the last to ripen of all the faculties of the mind. During this interval, man has time to store up in his mind a provision of ideas, a treasure of principles in his heart, and then to develop especially, in drawing from reason, his feeling for the great, the sublime.” (*On the Sublime, Letter IV*) It is during this “ripening” period that education occurs and feeds the seed of inquiry. For a cultural participant to move through change and upheaval, supported by a foundation of knowledge that gives him or her the ability to critically evaluate the output of a creative process, is an ideal outcome of an aesthetic education. Schiller recognizes the ability to do this as a ‘good mind,’ acknowledging that a good mind is dissatisfied with anything that is not ‘beautiful and good’ and demands art that is timely and excites a participant’s search for beauty, thus leading to another inquiry. Beauty in Schiller’s view is something with form, but that is not strictly sensual, although it may ignite the sensual at first, “the sublime must be joined to the beautiful to complete the aesthetic education and to enlarge man’s heart beyond the sensuous world.” (*On the Sublime, Letter IV*) So, it is not education that ignites the feelings felt when exposed to a beautiful work of art, but education that brings an understanding to these feelings. Education is meant to give an individual the advantage of appreciating the value of something beautiful within the context of the world, thereby giving a person the key to the ‘sublime.’ The latter of course refers to the spiritually sublime. Schiller gives art its function as the ‘beautiful:’ beautiful in structure, or symmetry, rational thinking, proportion, pleasing: items, objects which evoke feeling and are well-crafted: words that evoke emotion and pleasure. But he recognizes the omniscient power of art to reach beyond simple pleasure and act as a force that can govern the reasoning capacity of the mind. In the 18th century, art, with the exception of folk arts, were somewhat exclusive to high society, seen as a decorative part of life that increased pleasure and/or is linked with the religious or spiritual realm, but it was neither necessary nor revolutionary in most cases in and of itself, although art too can, and has been, used as a weapon. In the 18th century, fine art was a representative of the aristocracy and power, something people were rejecting through revolution. Revolutionaries recycled art to symbolize their own power, or power overturned: iconoclasm was rampant. Even still the idea that art was an essential part of every man and

woman's education was an ideal that had yet to be realized. Even the artist who occasionally stepped outside the bounds of polite society's comfort zone did not go so far as to integrate art into standardized education. However, within Schiller's essays the appreciation of art is given a specific function as an educational milestone on the road of a person's development, and he includes in his defense of aesthetic education a recognition of the artist as an educator, or what is termed the teaching artist in contemporary texts, "The political and educating artist follows a very different course, while man at once his material and his end." (*Letter IV*) meaning that humanity is both the ends and the means in the educating artist's work.

John Dewey's (1859-1952) philosophy and educational reforms are imbued with a type of democracy where plurality and intelligent inquiry are the foundations of healthy public opinion. It is for this reason that I discuss his *Art as Experience* (1934, 1980) text together with Lev Vygotsky's doctorate thesis text *The Psychology of Art* (1925). Vygotsky's devotion to Marxist theory was just as much a motivator for the latter text as Dewey's democratic public was for *Art as Experience*. In fact, *The Psychology of Art* was Vygotsky's first attempt at developing a cohesive theory of Marxist psychology that articulates his belief that psychological development is governed by society. He believes art is a tool of perception in a larger sociological framework, particularly in the way art uses narrative: "artistic narrative helps social man define reality." (Vygotsky, 1925 p. 10) The philosopher Dewey and the psychologist Vygotsky seem so opposed in their culture, education, world view, and ultimately their life path, that it is remarkable that their basic theories of childhood learning coincide. However, both philosophies take their foundational principles from Hegelian thought: Dewey taking the Hegelian right with civil society, and Vygotsky positioned on the left with political society and Karl Marx. Where the two theorists part ways is in approach, with Dewey ultimately being deemed an empiricist and Vygotsky a dialectical realist (Dewey et. al, 1980, Langford, 2005 p.5). Dewey, the empiricist, stresses the importance of experience in his seminal work on the topic *Art as Experience*. It is this work which is the foundational philosophy of The New School began by Dewey and his contemporaries, and the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education in New York that was founded by educators from the Dewey school of thought and will be discussed later in this thesis.

Vygotsky's dialectical realism, rather than relying on empiricism, simplified the psychological process by organizing it into three stages with dynamic student adaptations taking place within each of the three stages of growth: the first stage is based on tools (or tactile, sensual, and experiential), the second stage on symbols (i.e. words, ideas, and logic given to the child by someone), and the third a combination of the prior two with both methodologies required. While these stages applied to all subjects and learning, in the *Psychology of Art*, particularly the chapter on *Art as Perception*, Vygotsky compares the process of interpreting and perceiving an artwork with the process of perceiving a word, or symbol. This comparison implies that art as a form of communication is relevant for developing the perception necessary for fully understanding the world: "It is asserted that the psychological processes of the perception and creation of a work of art coincide with the identical processes of perception and creation of a word." (1925 *Art as Perception* chapter, p. 2) He goes on to state that it is perception that often gives meaning to language in realistic circumstances, not definitions, "...In the psychology of language, that is, in terms of realistic thinking (not always formally logical), what matters is how something is said, how it is thought, and how the content is presented, not WHAT is said or thought." (p. 3) He ties this reality with the reality of perceiving art, and the perception of new meanings, "...a work of art can be applied as a predicate to new imperceptible phenomena or ideas, to apperceive them in the same way as the image in a word helps apperceive the new meaning. What we are unable to understand immediately and directly can be understood in a roundabout way, allegorically. The whole psychological effect of a work of art can then be entirely credited to this indirectness." (Vygotsky, 1925 p. 3) Vygotsky's psychological approach to an individual's perception of art complements Dewey's aesthetic experience rather than countering it. However, a disparity exists in the interpretation of how a person interacts with the world at large. Vygotsky's view of social man places him as a part of a whole, while Dewey defines an experience as wholly individualized. The latter briefly simplifies the psychological contributions of a person in this way: "The organism brings with it through its own structure, native and acquired, forces that play a part in the interaction." (Dewey, 1934/1980 p. 19) This individualized approach is more in line with the modern educator's contemporary view of the world. Dewey's pragmatism gives credence to the individual's subjective experience, while at the same time stating that if the pattern and cognitive relation to this experience is broken and fragmented then a discussion would be based on nothing. Rather there is shared human

experience in the way our species perceives and digests a work of art, but the way a work of art is interpreted through the cultural standpoint of an individual defines the experience in a different way than what may be predicted by society. But he also points to the “extraordinary ineptitude of a compartmentalized psychology to serve as an instrument for a theory of art.” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 248) This is because art by its very nature is meant to be a unifying force that transcends the individual while at the same time giving richness to an individual’s personality. Therefore it must be discussed outside the limitations of the personality. It is interesting to note that Dewey overtly states that a “badly ordered” society is one where strict divisions are made between the skill sets and personalities of its members. This contradicts with the current state of education in which specialized skill sets are pushed onto a student for the sake of creating workers rather than perceptive individuals. Paulo Freire calls this “the banking concept of education” and passionately chides it: “The capability of banking education to minimize or annul the students’ creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed.” (Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 73, 1970/1993) Noam Chomsky is another often cited contemporary voice in the argument against current educational models. In the realm of cultural management, one of the goals of many audience development strategies is to override contemporary society’s tendency to place limitations around personality types, particularly in education and socio-economic class. The intention is to try to reach outside its regular audience base to extend cultural services to more diverse groups. This relationship between aesthetic education theory and audience development strategy will be discussed further.

Although Dewey’s approach shows respect to the individual’s personal development, he does so to emphasize that a free and perceptive mind that experiences art is one that will question tyranny: placing the fully developed, questioning, aesthetically perceptive individual at the center of a high-functioning society. So even when individual freedom is the core motivator, society as a whole is the beneficiary. In this way Vygotsky’s realism comes head to head with Dewey’s pragmatism. Both come to the conclusion that an education in the arts, in how to perceive the arts in one case, and how to draw meaning from artistic experience in the other, is essential to the betterment of society. It is vital to point out that these two modes of thinking came from men on opposite sides of the world and opposed world views, and yet both recognize an aesthetic education as something life-long and personal. Both also

recognize the overall benefit to society of a public that is demanding and perceptive of their culture. There is a consensus between the two that the perception of art goes beyond the intellectual, or cognitive, and reaches into a part of the self that is emotional and elusive. Neither thinker discredit emotion as something that must be overcome. It is this emotional quality that dictates an individual's reaction to a great work of art, and later, his or her attachment to that artwork. Even Vygotsky recognizes that if an emotional connection is lost than an artwork will mean nothing, even if it is placed inside the context of society: "The emotional context of an individual experience makes narrative timeless while a larger social framework means understanding of the inner form loses its meaning and the appreciation of the work is lost." (Vygotsky, 1925 *Art as Perception* p. 11) A connection to a piece of art that is general may recognize something as art despite personal taste, but does little to ignite passion. Whereas an emotional connection leads the viewer to forego the general and passionless reaction of "I don't understand, I don't like it, so I won't waste my time" to the more specific and self-aware "Why don't I understand? Why don't I like it? What am I missing? This deserves my attention."

Maxine Greene, philosopher-in-residence at the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education, correlates aesthetic education with social equality in *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change* (1995). Her supposition that imagination is the first step to true empathy is the founding principle behind the "Capacities" governing the Lincoln Center Institute for Education in the Arts. Greene says "...the extent to which we grasp another's world depends on our existing ability to make poetic use of our imagination, to bring into being the "as if" worlds created by writers, painters, sculptors, film-makers...and to be in some manner a participant in artist's worlds reaching far back and ahead in time." (Greene, 1995 p. 4) Her belief in empathy as the chief goal in aesthetic education is in direct opposition to her contemporaries in the public education sector. Greene perceives that the dominant discussions in education in the last twenty years fail to understand their responsibility to the next generation, "standards, assessment, outcomes, and achievement: these concepts are the currency of educational discussion today." (Greene, 1995, p. 9) It is this last criticism offered by Greene that is recognized within the definition of nonobjective education, or rather education for the sake of education and the betterment of the individual. It is the neglect of the reality of human development that leads to the loss of art programs in

schools and reduced funding. Producing marketable outcomes in the form of workers is the modus operandi of the majority of public school programming in the United States. It is this system that Greene's work with the Lincoln Center Institute for Education in the Arts strives to influence. Her emphasis on empathy, and the understanding of artwork as a precursor to empathy in an individual, is a noteworthy aspect of her work which creates a connection to Dewey, Vygotsky, and Schiller. The Lincoln Center Institute 2007/2009 report on arts in education draws attention to empathy as an essential aspect of Greene's work. "Indeed Greene reminds us of the importance of the imagination if empathy is to exist. She speaks of imagination as the cognitive capacity that permits us to give credence to alternative realities, to grasp another's world." (LCI, 2007/2009 p. 6) Greene believes that an education that involves aesthetic interpretations and allows students to 'step into another's shoes,' allows them to reflect on the moral and social implications of their actions from another's point of view inside the safety of richly layered hypothetical places. However, Greene does not assume empathy is a foregone conclusion in aesthetic education and warns that an active imagination without empathy can be destructive. In the same way that imagination without empathy could be destructive, emotional life without focus can also lead to destruction.

Each of these theorists have produced an extensive amount of work in the field of aesthetic education, its benefits to society, and the importance of art as an everyday mode of communication. I can confidently state that every aesthetic education scholar concurs about the necessity of education in and around the arts, its positive role in society, and the benefits to the individual, but the specific methodologies to achieve aesthetic education's aspirations are a source of debate. However, art forms are as individualized as the participants who enjoy them and this requires a flexibility that cannot be commodified. The route to inquiry, imagination, and, in Greene's view, empathy, is personal and asks patience from each previous generation to allow the generation following them to forge their own path with the tools the era gives them.

Chapter 2- Emotions and Education without Objectives

"Liberty and delight" and "to make me relish... duty by an unforced will, and of my own voluntary motion... without any severity or constraint..." Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*¹⁹

The first, and most contentious, aspect of my proposal is the idea of emotional truth, followed closely by its use as a teaching tool in aesthetic education. It is necessary to not only define the various theories of emotional truth in its psychological origins, but what it means inside the artistic process and the individual participant. My own performance training was centered on the idea of a simplified emotional truth that could be built upon to develop characters. Spattered over the walls of our acting studio were the remnants of “emotional truths” in the form of smashed fruit and fist holes left over from acting exercises. Sometimes an actor would get carried away and the classroom became a psychologist’s dream observational platform. This process always struck me as dangerous: perhaps that was its attraction. The knowledge that at any moment one of my classmates could ‘lose it’ had a certain edgy quality that made time move faster. But at the same time there was the every present “why?” what was this acting “therapy” really achieving? At the end of our training those with the most riotous emotional outbursts had a quality of sensual self-indulgence that led them to revel in the “feelings” they were feeling. It was the actors who held back and made us (the observers) guess a little that felt self-realized. There was always something deeper to the look in their eyes, something more profound than the performers who were eager to show us everything. It was as if they had been to the edge, and when they came back they could tell no one about it. These were the actors that truly moved us. They displayed a sensitivity to the human condition that was palpable. I walked away with some of this, but also with the dissatisfaction of a young student who was given a chaotic and intense four year education, but was left alone to let it congeal. I also had a nagging sense that this wasn’t quite...”it,” for lack of a better word. It wasn’t until I had worked alone as a professional that I discovered it, an emotional truth -- an interconnectivity among humankind seen from a vista: binding us and defining us at the same time. It was this understanding of humanity that

¹⁹ This was is reference to the education he received through a carefully planned arrangement from a forward-thinking father and group of tutors who taught the boy through games, conversation, exposure, inquiry, and exploiting his natural curiosity.

enabled those actors I admired to read a character once and immediately understand what it must be like to lose a child, fight a war, fall in love, live in poverty, even if the majority of their lives were spent in middle class comfort. It was true empathy that as my acting teacher said “never made the implicit explicit.”

I once played the character of Maria in a staged version of Fyodor Dostovesky’s *The Possessed*²⁰. The character was the opposite of everything I perceive myself to be: childlike, fragile, clairvoyant, disabled, victimized. She is a dainty thing that only the most vicious of people would take advantage of. So when Stavrogin does take advantage of her, it makes the reader’s stomach turn over in disgust. In the production, each of the actors played multiple roles: Maria was only one of mine. How I ended up with this particular character had more to do with logistics than anything else, but I was intrigued by the incongruity of the assignment. The challenge of becoming something more than what I was pushed me to reread the novel, study Russian history, mysticism, think critically about translation, form an opinion on politics and populace, memorize, experiment, and “perform” my work in front of audiences. None of the listed tasks felt like work. Not to imply that building the character of Maria wasn’t difficult, it was, but it was rewarding and relevant. Something happened in me before I walked on stage as Maria. I imagined what it might be like to only understand love and not hate, to only give and never expect to be given, to see things in people that they don’t see themselves. I became what I interpreted Maria to be.

Maria’s pivotal scene called for a monologue about her dead baby which had been taken to the woods and buried in secret. When I told the story my eyes locked on the spot where the child was buried, secret and silent in the woods. I saw it there as if it were real and for those few minutes I could imagine what a mother who lost an infant must feel; her eyes locked on the damp earth where the child sleeps, but never seeing the child’s face. I was aware of the audience. I could hear them stop their breath stop towards the monologue’s end. But in true dramatic fashion. Maria breaks the spell and offers her guest a cup of tea, because that’s what people do. Swaddling a bundle of rags and with glassed over eyes, the young mother drops a sugar cube in the guest’s tea and smiles. My own mother watched this performance. She’s never read Dostoevsky and knows little of Russian culture or history, but

²⁰ *The Possessed* is a Constance Garnett translation released in 2004. In 1995 the novel was released as *The Demons* translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. It was hotly contested which was the better translation during our rehearsal process. The two read very differently, *The Possessed* brings to light the absurdity of small town Russia, while *The Demons* is a sharp social commentary.

she told me she didn't recognize me, that something happened in the audience that was shared and she believes they all saw the damp earth where the baby was buried and mourned with Maria. Reviews in major print media echoed my mother's feelings, as did strangers who approached me after the performance. For them it wasn't sentiment, it was simply true.

I tell this story because it is an example of an artist's quest for emotional truth. It was a performance, in other words, a lie. I am not Maria. I did not lose a baby that I buried in secret. I have not been to Russia. but these truths are not important in performance. It was the emotional truth that made all of it real. However, there is an element of manipulation that lies at the bottom of all performance. Usually that manipulation is of the emotional variety and this can be dangerous, this is where the emotional life of a cultural participant diverges from the professional performer. Empathy and critical thinking must be coupled with imaginative work to benefit society at large. But my own experience illustrates the difference between primitive emotions and a deep sense of empathy: the difference between *showing* your feelings and *feeling* your feelings is as vast as an ocean. The former is just a superficial form that can be seen, measured, codified, faked, and used as a tool, the latter is personal, empathetic, and mysterious. It is the superficial type that is displayed in polite society, or used by a teenager to torture parents. It is the personal and empathetic that generally stays hidden until our passion is ignited. Two things that I've discovered to be of utmost importance on my own emotional journey from adolescence to adulthood is that passion must be personal. In other words, an ownership of a feeling that belongs to the person feeling it. Passion must be discovered by the person feeling it. It is only later in life that I recognized that I was not the only one discovering these same feelings. The means by which I discovered it were the only individualized part of the process. As an adult this revelation brought me comfort and a love of humanity that made me appreciate frailty, failings, and mistakes as creative sideshows that were just as necessary as success, if not more so. As an adolescent my internal life was confused, trapped and frustrated, much the same as adolescents today. I had the beginnings of something and wanted to talk about it, but hid this something away in the same way I see my own students in the beginning of our classes. I know how they feel. I too was educated in rooms with no character and told to have character. I was told feeling was irrational and education made you rational: technology and television were bad for me: but mindless, repetitive homework was good. That good grades would manifest as big paychecks later in life. Teachers bemoaned the word processor because it meant handwriting would suffer and

sneaky cellphone use in the classroom was on the rise. My generation saw the first school shootings in the United States, one of which happened only a few miles from my high school. That meant that along with these other frustrations of creativity, we also had to fear for our lives. We had to mistrust each other, and go through “drills” that required us to stop class, lock the door and hide against the walls so we would be ready in the event one of our classmates went on a rampage. My generation experienced the world becoming more open with the World Wide Web²¹, then it closed down again with fear from unknown foes. It was a tease for us. We wanted to know the whole world but were denied on the premise of unknown threats. I have no doubt that some students today feel the same way. What constitutes education has become archaic to them. When you can find the definition to a word, the full biography of a historic personage, a topographical map of Norway, the news of wars in Africa, all with the click of a button in your own home, what good is it having an authority figure standing in front of you expostulating about unrelated subjects? Freire (2005) articulates this teaching process in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*: “The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable. Or else he expounds on a topic complete alien to the existential experience of the students. His task is to “fill” the students with the content of this narration-contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from totality that engendered them and could give them significance.” (Freire, p. 70). Cultural organizations are in a unique position to open the world back up for coming generations of cultural participants and support them on their quest for beauty. Just as cultural places did for me when I was a teenager, such as my time volunteering at Actor’s Theatre of Louisville²² and taking acting classes at Walden Theatre School.²³

However, before elaborating on how cultural organizations can attract participants I will further illustrate the emotional need for beauty in the face of disadvantage, or crisis, by giving a handful of examples of emotional truth and beauty in the field of applied arts, or art appreciation in general. The search for beauty is something intuitive that can only be fostered

²¹ The Internet and the World Wide Web are two different things. However, after this point I will be referring to the Internet, because this is the accepted term used for both Internet and World Wide Web activities.

²² Actor’s Theatre of Louisville, a recognized regional theater in the U.S., uses volunteer ushers for their performances. It was unusual for a teenager to volunteer, but not unheard of. I enjoyed the time I spent the retired adults who regularly volunteered. Since then, many students now act as volunteers, <http://actorstheatre.org/participate/volunteer/>

²³ A successful theatre for young people in Louisville, KY. <http://www.waldentheatre.org>

and encouraged by education, but which is an innate part of the human experience even in trying times.

The first example is one of beauty being both abused and used to exhibit the truth of the human condition. The concentration camp of Terezin (or Theresienstadt) in what is now the Czech Republic housed the Jewish artists, writers, leaders, and intellectuals of the region inside a fortress that was, ironically, built to protect the area. This camp, where over 200,000 lost their lives, was the poster campaign for the Nazi's "quality" treatment of the Jewish people. Often prisoners were forced to perform songs in choral groups and dress up to pose for propaganda photos that intended to show the world how well-cared for the Jewish people were under the SS' watch. This was not beauty, but merely the manipulation of beauty to pull a blinder over the eyes of the public. The Red Cross was allowed a visit to Terezin. Only on that day were there loaves of bread in the bakery windows, children singing, and well-dressed camp inmates who were instructed to stand at points along the Red Cross' tour. Behind this spurious guise of images another kind of beauty was being sought. Many of the artists, musicians, intellectuals, and writers did not cease their craft under the oppression and atrocities of the SS. Rather, the crafting became more poignant, served even more of a purpose and continued the narrative of their lives in secret. Even in the most trying of circumstances their search for beauty did not seem irrelevant. In fact, it was the most relevant of pursuits. When everything is taken: home, food, shelter, medicine, money, belongings, even life, the need for something beautiful is ever present and inalienable. This determination to hunt for what small morsels of beauty were available may be evidence of a kind of ownership of beauty. It may be beauty representing something beyond itself, such as an emotional truth in the human experience that binds us together, or perhaps the last vestige of freedom. What was created during the inmates time at Terezin also begs the question what is truth? Drawings that the inmates created and hid from the guards depicted the day to day life in the camp. Many of these were drawn by the children in the camp (90% of these children died). However, they didn't just create works of art bemoaning their fate, they also composed music like the Bumble Bee or Brundibar.

Toward the end of WWII, when the Nazis knew that their defeat was eminent, the largest number of mass killings took place. During this period, train loads of Terezin inmates were transported further east to what they knew was certain death. Shortly before each train

left, the inmates were allowed to stage performances and play music. It is not songs of lament and goodbye that filled the small room where they met, but musical comedies and songs of joy. Perhaps because this is all they were allowed to perform or perhaps a joyful send-off seemed more appropriate than a lament. This is a story that was relayed to me during a personal visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland. It is something I have never forgotten and continues to inspire me to this day.

After an earthquake with a measure of 7.1 on the Richter scale hit Christchurch, New Zealand, Peter O'Connor traveled to the area.²⁴ His assignment was to help teachers work with traumatized students in the school buildings. It was just a few days after the quake and the schools were already reopening, even with aftershocks rattling the town every day. It was felt that the normality of attending school would help children and parents cope with the aftermath of the quake, including the clean-up, bureaucracy, and most importantly, the loss of life. A 30-year veteran of applied theater, O'Connor understood that to simply act as if math problems and reading tests were important in the face of this disaster would do more to hurt than to help. So as a mediator for the teachers, many of whom had experienced their own loss during the disaster, he designed a simple and elegant approach to story-telling that would help teachers communicate with their students. Storytelling classes included a narrative of a little girl who wakes up one morning and accidentally rips her dream cloth, a cloth that is made up of all her dreams. After a brief introduction to the character of the little girl, O'Connor asked a room of 8-12 year olds if they wanted to help the girl. They replied with an enthusiastic yes, and offered up a number of solutions to help the little girl restore her dream cloth. One child even offered to replace the little girl's cloth with her own dreams. This improvised story built upon the suggestions of the children until one student said that in order to repair the cloth the girl needed magic thread. O'Connor asked the children to make a list of ingredients for magic thread. At the end of this list was an ingredient offered by a young girl that gave O'Connor pause: a teaspoon of light from the darkest of tunnels.

This exercise caught the attention of the applied theater community and O'Connor has since had to tell the story again and again. Why the little girl said what she did is, O'Connor

²⁴ From a report about the experience by Peter O'Connor called *Theatre in Crisis: Moments of Beauty in Applied theatre*.

admits, “perplexing,” but it is evidence of what he calls the “emotional wisdom” of a child. It is a statement that reveals that perhaps emotional intelligence goes beyond the reading of facial expressions and can cross the boundary into something that is wise. He continues by pointing out that this emotional wisdom may be “aroused by the arts.”

The third example of a search for beauty comes from the impoverished town of Imizamo Yethu in South Africa. Veronica Baxter of the University of Cape Town conducted an applied theater workshop in the public library of Imizamo Yethu.²⁵ The workshop was taught mostly in English with the older children often acting as interpreters for the teachers and younger children.²⁶ At the start of the project, an atmosphere of complete chaos dominated. For example, a handful of boys would often leave the small library office where the teachers were holding class and go outside to make faces at the other children through the window, and the girls were clingy and demanding of the teacher’s attention. This anarchy continued while the teachers struggled to create a piece of theater that addressed the fissures the children were experiencing in their community. The planned exercises were intended to bridge the gap between the battling factions of natives and migrants that the town was notorious for. At the onset it was clear to Baxter that the objective for the project had already failed because the children were all from Xhosa-speaking Southern African families, while the foreign children from migrant families used the Hout Bay library on the other side of town. Therefore the original goal behind the project was eclipsed by the more immediate need of dealing with the lack of structure and poverty in these children’s everyday lives. Disheartened at first, Baxter was determined and eventually reached a breakthrough after she presented the children with drawings to accompany an African story. The children found the drawings beautiful and were even more thrilled when Baxter asked them to ‘color-in’ the pictures with the colors of their choice. The class calmed down and began to listen more carefully to the story. Pleased with the positive results, Baxter integrated the use of pictures and visual art projects into her everyday activities and gradually the children became so invested that they hung on every word she said and proudly took their drawings home to show others. At the end of her narrative, Baxter points out that although the initial goal was not met, an unexpected success came in the form of simple story-telling and visual art. Instead of

²⁵ Although two of the examples are from applied theater, I am looking at their general effect as examples of the need for beauty, and not exclusively at the technique of using theater so the rules of aesthetic education apply.

²⁶ The native language is Xhosa.

encouraging the children to deal with the social issues that their community was facing, the workshop became a place where a child could simply explore beauty outside of the bleakness of the town's terrible living conditions. Baxter also points out another vital part of the children's search for beauty when she talks about their "ownership" of the drawings: "They all clamored for the picture, to do with it whatever they wanted. It was theirs- they could take it home, 'color-in,' or stick it on their wall. It seemed as if it was their own, as nothing before had been." (pg. 7) The thrill of owning something beautiful to do with as they please is an important aspect of the emotional truth of art appreciation. It is the personal ownership of our relationship to a work of art as ours and ours alone. This overrides mere possession of a thing, and should not imply that an art participant should want to possess all that is beautiful, but rather it should illustrate the personal and individual pleasure in an artistic experience which belongs wholly to the participant.

An example closer to home in former-Yugoslavia is the SOROS camp initiated by Dr. Ljubica Belhanski-Ristic during the 1990s Balkan Wars. The camp focused on refugee children removed from their homes and placed in shelters in Serbia. The children studied theater technique, mask-making, storytelling, and performance in the Serbian artistic refuge of Subotica. In a documentary film that received a partial screening at Dom Omaldine to a small group from Art in Times of Need, children were shown dancing, acting, and sharing their experience as refugees. The young Dr. Ristic said in the film, "it was about keeping the goodness in the children, and in ourselves." Although, some of the organizers of the camp expected the children to express pain, fear, anger, or even imitate the violence they had seen, the opposite happened. All of the children created stories of heroes, imaginary creatures that lost something, or someone, but were able to help good prevail.²⁷ Once again a child-like instinct to find the beautiful in the midst of chaos, disorder, or catastrophe is stronger than the need to seek revenge. According to Dr. Ristic, the project did just as much for the teachers and psychologists involved as it did for the children, producing, in effect, a new hope that was desperately needed during the wars. Dr. Ristic continues her work today with CEDEUM, the Center for Drama in Education and Arts, an association that works to develop education using theater and performance by uniting educators and artists in the field. Her work is a manifestation of what Dewey points is a creative force in conflict: "Under conditions of

²⁷ The camp brought children together from the different warring factions of society. <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/15/world/balkan-children-meet-in-friendship-at-camp.html>

resistance and conflict, aspects and elements of the self and the world that are implicated in this interaction qualify experience with emotions and ideas so that conscious intent emerges.” (1934/1980 p. 35).

The above are all examples of the search for beauty within the title of this thesis. It is not beauty in form, necessarily, but self-expression as a beautiful act that is both necessary and relevant. I chose examples from communities in crisis because I believe that the youth of the world are in perpetual crisis, Serbia just as much as the United States. The youth of every generation carry a heavy weight on their shoulders that they will have to come to terms with in their own way, as Vygotsky (1925) states “...each generation, each era uses a work of art in its own way.” (p. 11), but he continues that in order to use the art it must first be perceived, “...to be used a work of art must be felt in the first place.” (p.11).

To better understand how emotions play a part in the individual pursuits of a young student it is best to look toward the facts offered by science. There are limitations to this as well, but combined with the implicit emotional perception that is part of art-making and art-enjoyment it is my hope that a clear picture will appear. Emotions in the study of psychology are communicative and reactive, serving the evolutionary purpose of bonding, building trust, and warning. Many of the studies of human emotion either seem to be justifying its existence, or in a more general sense, demystifying the processes in order to better understand when things go wrong. Kraus R. Scherer’s²⁸ approach of codifying the emotions with a number system was an attempt to measure the emotions from a neutral standpoint. His codification simplifies the emotions under the same four major feelings that were propounded by my Meisner acting training: joy, sadness, fear, and anger. Scherer found that questionnaires that collect information from the respondent about what they were feeling, for how long, when, and the situational context were the best way to deduce the universality of emotions in particular situations, including exposure to culture²⁹. These emotions can be categorized as reactive emotions that are transmitted through facial expression and words. But it is not just the reactive emotions that are concerned with the interpretation and appreciation of art, even

²⁸ Scherer’s work remains one of the most complex in measuring and understanding emotion as exhibited in his works *Emotion: Theory, Research and Experience* and *Facets of emotion*.

²⁹ Interestingly, these emotional reactions are classified under “joy” without differentiating between the kaleidoscope of emotions felt when experiencing a complex piece of artwork. In this model, the mere act of participating in culture is a level of joy.

though there are times when these reactive emotions may be stimulated. The reactive emotions are fleeting and volatile. The emotional connection to a work of art is something that transcends the initial reaction beyond its paroxysm and can be felt for many years after the first encounter. Examples from day to day life would include the emotions of love, hope, or its opposite - emptiness. John Dewey calls these emotions significant and differentiates them from what he calls the “simple or compact” reactive emotions. Dewey says “We are given to thinking of emotions as things as simple and compact as are the words by which we name them: joy, sorrow, hope, fear, anger....In fact emotions are qualities, when they are significant, of a complex experience that moves and changes.” Then he continues to describe the emotional quality of an experience, “*experience is emotional but there are no separate things called emotions in it.*” (1934/1980, p. 41 and 42). It is this definition of emotional as the significant and substantial emotions that is implied in emotional truth.

Truth poses another problem as a term because the word itself implies that there is one way that is true and another that is false, rather than simply different. Also the idea of truth being all that is beautiful is a dangerous supposition to impressionable students. The mathematical theory of the Golden Mean, or the truth of symmetry, meaning that if it is mathematically symmetrical it must be beautiful, is a definition employed by sculptors and architects. This recognition of proportion and harmony as the basis to judge beauty is rooted in ancient Greek philosophies. But again Dewey makes a distinction between the beauty of symmetry and proportion and the beauty of the artistic experience, “The Greek identification of good conduct with conduct having proportion, grace, and harmony, *kalon-agathon*, is a more obvious example of distinctive aesthetic quality in moral action. One great defect in what passes as morality is its anesthetic quality. Instead of exemplifying wholehearted action, it takes the form of grudging piecemeal concessions to the demands of duty.” (Dewey 1934/1980, p. 7) So, truth as proportion and moral grace is not the meaning we are looking for either. Another concrete example from the world of literature will better illustrate what is meant by seeking beauty and emotional truth.

The idea that beauty and truth are one in the same is nothing new, but to equate the two in this simple way is insufficient to explain the importance of an artistic experience. For example, the young John Keats’ encounter with a Grecian urn inspired one of his most celebrated and controversial short poems. While the first four stanzas of *Ode to a Grecian*

Urn speak directly to the figures frozen in time on its surface, the last two lines are written as a quote to an indeterminate audience:

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," - that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know. (Keats 1819)

In the 20th century, these two lines sparked a literary debate between critics that continues to this day. The debate began when poet laureate Robert Bridges argued in an essay that the last two lines to *Ode to a Grecian Urn* redeem an otherwise bad poem with their directness. However, this charge met with many responses, including T.S. Eliot (1932) who said "I am at first inclined to agree ... But on re-reading the whole Ode, this line strikes me as a serious blemish on a beautiful poem..." (Eliot p. 230) But let's look at the poem itself as a piece of art relating the feelings of a young person observing a work of art. In the first stanza the author observes a scene on the urn of young men chasing women and questions if they are mortals or gods: this is inquiry. In the second stanza he observes two lovers lying under a tree that cannot lose its leaves. He speaks directly to the young man telling him not to be sad because the beauty of his lady will never fade: this is relating to the artwork. The third stanza is a cry of envy for the lovers who will be forever in love, unlike in reality where passion abates and leaves "A burning forehead, and a parching tongue:" this is putting the artwork in a larger context. The fourth stanza continues the inquiry into location and history. In the fifth stanza the disputed two lines arrive and seem to be the urn addressing the reader, but could also be the poet speaking to the urn. The only truth the urn will ever know is the timeless beauty that is captured on its surface, whereas those that view it will pass to time with their ever evolving truths. Dennis R. Dean clarified the last lines in the *Philological Quarterly* in 1997 by pointing out that the quote "Beauty in truth, truth beauty..." is from Sir Joshua Reynolds, an authority on art at the time of Keats' education, and words that would have been recognizable to Keats' readers when the poem was published. In this context the meaning is clear, as Dean states "Because of the uniformity of human minds and passions, moreover, the figures inscribed on the urn (which puzzle the observer at first glance) become intelligible as we relate them to our own experience." (Dean 1997). Keats' poem is a direct result of his encounter with another work of art. This is an example of both an artwork's timeless power in the shape of a poem,

and in the urn itself. As a young person, he analyzes this experience and his emotional connection to a work of art using skills that are developed in an aesthetic education.

Nonobjective, or not goal-oriented, is another troublesome term to wrap one's head around as an educator. The term is defined in the Webster Dictionary two ways: 1) (of a person or their judgment) influenced by personal feeling or opinions in considering and representing facts 2) of or relating to abstract art.

The first of the definitions concerns the topic at hand, but with an added variant of the word. Objective is also a noun representing a goal or something sought after, so to negate the word may imply that it is anti-goal, or without goal. In this case, nonobjective could mean an emotion driven exercise that is not goal-oriented. In other words, nonobjective leads to a wide range of problems for educational programming. After all, to be rational is to be objective, or to stand outside of events and judge them according to fact. It is a rare gift to be able to cast judgment on a thing or person with complete rational objectivity, and a gift that is appropriate in courtrooms, but not in a realistic classroom setting or art participation. An individual's decision to participate in culture, in any capacity, is nonobjective, just as our decision to pursue a career that provides satisfaction and happiness instead of high wages is a nonobjective decision. For the most part, teachers become teachers because their parents were teachers, or because they love children, or they feel strongly about education in society. Artists become artists because they have convictions that must be expressed: students, on the other hand, are students because they have to be. This is where the cycle of nonobjective choice is broken. It is vital to remember that an educator, or cultural manager, chose to be an educator or to work in the arts at some juncture in his or her's adult life. A student (in primary and secondary school, sometimes university) is there because they have to be. Herein lies an emotional conundrum. It is important to recognize that each student brings with him or her their own story. Each has a narrative that leads them to choose one elective over another, one friend over another, or one favorite subject over another. Within the cramped confines of a classroom, a group of developing individuals, each with a dynamic emotional life burbling beneath, is asked to sit behind a desk and do as they are told for the sake of a future that is unknown to them, or possibly even unstable. It is emotions, not necessarily objective reasoning, that play a strong part in the decision-making process of a young person in this situation. A nonobjective standpoint from a cultural organization's educational programming

would recognize each individual's emotional journey, without discounting the instructor's own emotional journey. Therefore giving the student the ability to grow on their own terms rather than 'instruct' the student on what is 'good' or 'correct' art. An objective format sets a tone or agenda before recognizing the individuality of the student: it asks the student to appreciate art because they 'should,' because educated people 'should' understand art. After all, to be high status is to contribute to the arts. To achieve they must partake in the cultural sphere because that is 'what is done.'

Greene states "traditional notions of ways to achieve efficiency feed into claims that schools can be manipulated from without to meet predetermined goals." (Greene 1995 p. 9)³⁰ This is true of curricula that aim to manufacture workers rather than thinkers. However, the determination to meet goals extends beyond the public education system. For example, it is the objective, goal-oriented programs that bemoan the fall off among cultural participants and decide to solve the problem by holding classes in which only children from educated or artistic families are taught, claiming that the general public simply isn't interested.³¹ While a cultural organization with a nonobjective approach may enter the same situation and ask questions, discover the root of the issue, think deeply, and use a whole range of outreach programs. These may be initiated in the name of audience development, but not with the aim of selling tickets and filling seats, rather to bring fulfillment to the people they reach. A nonobjective approach is not necessarily formless or chaotic. It may even be guided by a rough outline, a structured plan, or a set of rules that require discipline and that challenge both instructor and participant. It is not the chaos of thoughts that a nonobjective approach is concerned with, but spontaneous imagination. As Schiller points out: "there is for the results of thought only one way by which they can penetrate into the will and pass into life; that is by spontaneous imagination..." (Schiller 1792-1795).

³⁰ Although I am concerned with the life of the classroom on a specific level, the entire school system can be seen as a macrocosm of the classroom, where the system's agenda is imposed upon both teacher and student.

³¹ This is a claim I have heard from a handful of cultural organizations, both in Serbia and the United States.

Chapter 3- Nonobjective Aesthetic Education's Relationship to Audience Development Strategies in Cultural Institutions, or Building Future Cultural Participants

Berowne: ...What is the end of study, let me know?

Ferdinand: Why that to know which else wee should not know.

Berowne: Things hid & bard (you meane) fró common sense.

Ferdinand: I, that is studies god-like recompence.

Berowne: Come on then, I will sweare to studie so,
To know the thing I am forbid to know

Love's Labours Lost, Shakespeare's First Folio (p. 122, 55-61)

The ability to predict outcomes is a skill that has long been sought after in almost every field of business, and arts management is no exception. A manager who can effectively predict what the new cultural audience wants, and does so in a seemingly effortless way, is a successful manager indeed. But few managers are able to balance a market economy approach and still retain the admiration of young people. The editors of *The Responsive Museum: Working with Audiences in the 21st Century* report evidence from a study group of young people that "...just simply "making it funky on your flyer" was not the answer, and that young people needed to be involved and feel some ownership." (Lang, Reeve, Voolland 2006 p. 52) Even those managers that are reputedly skilled in marketing are witnessing a drop off of participants. In the United States, a place where marketing techniques were born and where the best of marketing professionals seek their education, meaningful cultural participation for those not working directly in the arts has been steadily declining, even with all the clever pitches and imagery. This also extends to the cultural policy sector at a governmental level: "For various reasons, policies for cultivating demand for the arts- that is, for stimulating most American's broad interest in and knowledge of the arts- have been either ineffective or nonexistent." (Lowell and Zakaras 2008 p. 1). Perhaps educational systems and institutional audience development programs suffer from the same problem: education aims to produce workers for the sake of the economy, audience development aims to sell tickets and keep seats full in order to attract grant money. These two systems are both governed by goals, or objectives, that define the economic end game of their actions as dictated by the neoliberal agenda: if something is acted upon then it must result in profit. In education's case this may be a numerical grade given to a student, as in the case of standardized testing in the US. In a

cultural institution's case this may mean the number of attendees at an event, or increased ticket sales.

While education and its relationship to cultural institutions is key to this discussion, society's current obsession with objectives in every aspect of development is no doubt directly related. This may be a reaction to global economic crisis or the feeling of insecurity created by shifting economies, burgeoning populations, and impending climate catastrophes. It may be that students, as future cultural participants, simply have more ready access to entertainment and artwork via technology. Being more aware of a wider array of topics via these channels, young people have come to see the archaic traditions of cultural institutions as inferior to what they can teach themselves quickly and independently. While all of these situations seem to overdramatize the circumstances of a cultural organization building an audience development plan, in reality the behaviors that students acquire during their education directly affect the success, or non-success, in engaging the next generation of cultural participants. The domino effect of global issues cannot be overemphasized. Examples of the prevalence of goal-setting and objective-based thinking are everywhere, from business to child rearing. Teachers with long careers are an excellent source of feedback about how students' behavior and attitude towards knowledge and art has changed over the past few decades.

For example, in my interview with Violeta Milicevic, a Serbian language and literature teacher at 2nd Belgrade High School, she said students nowadays will only respond to work that results in a grade. Even when what is called "civil education³²" is offered, students will opt out because it does not affect their grade. This was seconded by art participant and college student, Ana Reb, who attended civil education courses in high school with only two other students.³³ The management of cultural institutions also reflects this trend toward predictable, goal-oriented planning: "Mission statements have become a fashionable management tool in recent years: it is scarcely possible to enter a reception area without being confronted with a list of service objectives written in an oddly similar style." (Matarasso 2009 p. 74)

³² Civil education is a loose translation of a series of workshop-style classes taught on high school campuses that teach students practical information, as well as subjects with wide-berth that relate to their age group such as psychology, contemporary social issues, planning budgets, etc. These classes also offer students a casual environment for discussion.

³³ These interviews will be discussed in-depth in the methodology chapter. Transcripts of the interviews are appendixes A and B respectively.

As mentioned in the introduction, Maxine Greene eloquently gives voice to the aesthetic education community's frustration with this "standards and assessments" based structure in educational systems: "...the dominant voices are still those of the officials who assume the objective worth of certain kinds of knowledge, who take for granted that the school's main mission is to meet national economic and technical needs." (Greene 1995 p. 9)

Is it possible to confront these all-encompassing issues with an audience development plan? The answer is no, at least not on the large scale. But with further effort to integrate cultural programs on a civic level with regular educational systems, it may come to pass that the arts become a necessary part of everyday life.

As Illinois State University's *Increasing Cultural Participation Handbook* points out "well-planned and evaluated audience development projects have the potential to transform the cultural landscape." (Connolly and Cady 2001 p. 121) Although the handbook falls short of realizing that art is NOT a consumable product. Even with the good intention of using 'cultural participation' in the title, the body of the text reverts back to 'consumer,' 'art consumption,' and 'marketing goals.' However, the sentiments expressed that well-managed audience development and art participation programs can result in long-term positive change is valid.

Again, an objective-oriented society demands that the creator answer 'what for?' before they've presented the creation, much like the petulant teenagers that cultural organizations wish to reach ask "what's the point?". The funders of art participation projects often require the statement of outcomes before the project has been executed; but even in this regard grant committees are made up of art lovers and decisions are not made with complete objectivity. O'Connor alludes to the emotional decision-making of the grant committees "Measurements of effectiveness, of change brought about by the work might be useful for funders (although in 30 years of practice, I have always found the power of narrative far more convincing for funders than numbers.)" (O'Connor 2007 p. 10) This firsthand account is something I can second as a manager having written a handful grants for an upstart theater company.

Both the demands of the market and of the funders have two side effects. First, demands leave no room for exploration, the same exploration that Matarasso asserts as a successful outcome of art participation projects "...allow people to explore their values, meanings, and dreams." (Matarasso 1997 p.67) Second, the pressure of an outcome may

either stifle the creativity of the creator or cause them to outright exaggerate to cover the requirement without the intention of following through. Therefore losing opportunities for funding in the future. Suffice it to say that objective-based thinking permeates every aspect of planning in art participation projects.

Another challenge that must be overcome by managers with art participation and audience development is the stigmatization of arts among young people. A long-standing cultural institution may be the epicenter of culture making for a city. A place that educators propound to their students as a “must visit,” but this may work counter to the educator’s intention and incite the rebelliousness of a young person. It may also serve to stigmatize the institution as something outdated and belonging to a time that is no longer in touch with the ‘now.’ This may force a manager to find something about their organization or institution that young people will find ‘cool,’ and by doing so overlook the institution’s assets. For example, a party may be held in an art museum for adolescents, but if viewing the artwork housed in the museum is not part of the event then what has the museum accomplished in the long run? It attracted young people because of the novelty of the venue, but fails to serve its purpose as a museum. Once again, young people have a desire for ownership and discovery. This applies as much to the artwork hanging in a museum as it does to the building itself. Here is an example of an alternative program: instead of a marketing scheme where a space is converted into a “cool party,” a student may be asked to write a creative piece about a work of art housed there without mentioning its name and who painted it. They then give their essay to a student from a different school. The second student would be asked to find this work of art in the space based on the creative text, with an incentive prize if he or she is successful. The second young person involved would not only be challenged to interpret the text of a peer and reflect on its meaning, but to study the artwork closely so that they may be the one to win the game. This is one example of an aesthetic educational development concept that goes beyond marketing. It touches on the total development of an individual student including communication, social interaction, creative writing, critical thinking, and problem-solving. This one example of a cultural institution initiative can allow for flexibility to the possibilities of how young people can be challenged to develop opinions, thoughts, and passions. It does so by setting challenges rather than simply giving information that they must be repeated for the sake of a mark.

One of the advantages, and in some cases disadvantages, of the institutional examples above is space. Museums, theaters, music halls, all have space that is enclosed from the outside world and must be entered by participants to experience culture. This, by its very nature, alienates young people who are concerned about the stigma of liking the arts, or those who feel like they will be condescended to once they enter the doors of the institution. On the other hand, space gives managers of institutions the advantage of offering consistent programs that could benefit both the artists and the participants. Itinerant organizations have a certain freedom of movement that challenges them to re-invent themselves according to the space that is available, whether outside, in a school, in a rented professional space, or even a home. The latter is unstable and may have trouble maintaining a full program of events, but they are also adaptable and used to seeking out their audience wherever they may be. So, both types of cultural organizations have different needs when it comes to audience development that can be met by specialized educational outreach.

Technology is now recognized as a useful tool in the classroom and is often included as part of everyday teaching in modern schools in the United States, particularly at the university level. In fact, the PowerPoint presentation has become almost ubiquitous in classrooms, as has YouTube and Google. The introduction of technology in the classroom is largely applauded as “progressive.” It is a tool that saves time, money, the environment, paper waste, and promotes efficiency. Yet, technology, like any tool, lies inert without the imagination of the user. Technology also has the potential to become a gateway for the arts. The most obvious example of this is visual art and the use of design tools, but also music, photography, film, and online resources for literature. Again, technology has been commandeered by the educational system as a means to an end (or an objective) that marks the school out as “progressive,” while the full potential of technology in the classroom has only been realized on a micro-level. I venture to state that a student who has ready access to technology, and may have excelled beyond his or her teacher’s own technological abilities, expects more from a live instructor in a classroom environment. In this case, technology presents an opportunity for the students to become the teachers and usher in new ways of utilizing daily technological advances. Yet again, this is a different thesis, but it is not unrelated. Aesthetic educational models allow room for experimentation in the ever expanding field of technology-inspired art and culture. Advances in technology are not

excluded from an individual's search for beauty, to the contrary, technology is more a part of the discussion of art than ever before. It is the means by which many young people in the West place themselves inside the larger context of the world and form opinions about what constitutes art. However, the Internet and broadcast media also pose a danger to the development of a cultural participant. The reliance on the social world of the Internet, and the constant marketing campaigns that dominate webpages, can serve as a deterrent to a would-be cultural participant. The Internet has also changed the way young people absorb information. For example, a printed newspaper is a rare thing and much of the news is now transmitted via short blurbs online. Ebooks are a new way to participate in literature and entire literary movements have shaped themselves around the Internet. For example, a literary movement in the United States has surfaced called "Alt Lit." It is comprised of young people who use Google Chat conversations, Twitter feeds, and Instagram as the premise for their creative work. Some writers build long form poems on Twitter that are instantly released to the public line by line as they are being written.³⁴ Anyone can become a member of the movement by tagging their work as #allit making the movement difficult to define in terms of style and very inclusive. In any case, this instant gratification, intimacy between artist and participant, 'everyone is an artist if they are online' mentality is made possible by the Internet, which is both friend and foe to cultural organizations wishing to cultivate demand.

Environmental changes, migration, wars, ethnic tensions, population growth, economic crisis, myriad choices in lifestyle, lay a heavy burden on the emotional life of young cultural participants. One of the downsides to technological immersion, particularly the Internet, is the expectation of the quick answer to these big questions: this, once again, may reflect the ever present pressure to hit the objective. It is a problem aesthetic education faces in promoting inquiry and deep thinking. It is faced with a generation that was taught to take tests instead of accrue knowledge. This is not to suggest that there is no spirit of inquiry in the young. In reality there is likely more than ever before, but the problem is the depth of the inquiry. There is a superficiality to the questions that are being asked, along with the expectation of immediate and direct answers. Art, or more broadly culture, doesn't often give clear answers. In most cases it may inspire more questions. So, the first step is not to give the

³⁴ Oscar Schwartz is currently analyzing Alt Lit online for a forthcoming PhD. Alt Lit, <http://altlitpress.com/post/65901302691/please-submit-100-word-definition-of-alt-lit-and-become>

art, but to give a student the self-confidence to ask the big questions and accept ambiguity as a result.

A nonobjective education model for art participation projects may be one that requires trust and positive risk-taking³⁵, and, in the educational field, a close relationship to educators. All audience development and participation may begin with education, whether intentionally or indirectly. “David Fleming once told a rather astonished Portuguese museums conference, ‘a museum really needs only one policy - an education policy.’” (Lang, Reeve, Voolland 2006 p. 45) To reaffirm, art participation begins *before* formal education - usually within the family - but exposure through structured educational systems has an equal hand in developing the tastes of future cultural participants. A shift in the perspective of merely selling tickets to cultivating long-lasting demand in future cultural participants is an ambitious thing to ask of managers. The payoff may be a sustainable approach to building demand for organizations that ensures that their doors stay open, and that a wider range of the population has consistent access. A participatory community of engaged audience is, after all, one that asks much of an organization and raises the bar of quality for the arts.

Furthermore, to embark on a nonobjective education program requires a great deal of trust from cultural organizations and the bodies that fund them. This trust is often based on the quality and extent of evaluation and impact assessment for projects. However, impact assessment in the field of applied arts, aesthetic education, and arts education is difficult, and very few comprehensive impact assessment examples exist that give any view of the positive, or negative results.³⁶ However, given the nature of the work in the field of creative education, it is likely that structured impact assessment may in fact harm trust, rather than build it. This seems contradictory, but as Tim Prentki and Michael Etherton point out in *Impact Assessment and Applied Drama*, that a demand for concrete results may trivialize the specific issues of a given group, on a given day, and in given circumstances because most impact assessment is based on the number of participants and standardized objectives that fail to take into account the needs of diverse groups. Furthermore, education in the arts is concerned with the development of an individual, and an individual’s artistic participation does not develop along

³⁵ Positive risk-taking is mentioned repeatedly in Matarasso’s report as a successful attribute of the projects in his report.

³⁶ There are some exceptions to this, one of which is discussed in the case studies.

a linear path, but rather upon a complex series of decisions that are emotional and specific to that individual, especially in times of crisis, or in projects that aim to engage a group that has never been exposed to the ‘great tradition’ of art in the West. Prentki and Etherton’s work focuses on applied theater for the purposes of societal development. However, I argue that this has a direct relationship to what cultural managers strive to achieve with audience development and art participation strategies: to reach out to a group that has not been exposed to the organization’s work before and could derive fulfillment or benefit from it. Therefore, impact assessment applies to the microcosm of an organization as much as it does to the larger realm of applied arts practitioners around the world. One of the shared aspects of applied theater and every other cultural outreach project is how impossible it is to assess their work. Often this leads to arts workers making quantitative claims, as mentioned earlier, about their work without true evaluation or any evidence of sustainability: “ Yet, in the present climate, it is almost second nature to arts workers to write proposals to potential funders - including the NGOs - for projects that build in measurable outcomes in order that they can become one of seeking the lowest common denominator amongst the quantitative data, such as number of participants...” (Etherton and Prentki 2006 p. 144) My interview with the program director of American Corner corroborated this, stating that the only evaluation that their funders ask for is the number of participants in their myriad programs. Etherton and Prentki add that a few prudently selected phrases account for the qualitative evaluation, which has the potential to be the more revealing of the two assessment methods. Often outcomes are assessed based on how much better the participants and mediators “feel” about themselves after the project is over. Although, much of this thesis is in support of the emotional life and ‘feelings’ of participants, it is in the arena of evaluation that the initial “feel-good” gets in the way of the critical assessment: “The drama process itself contains enormous potential for supporting participants in feeling better about themselves but impact assessment has to do with whether such feelings outlive the duration of the process, and even if they do, whether these changed feelings lead to changed lives and fairer social systems.” (Etherton and Prentki 2006 p. 146) Assessing the true and long-term impact is a difficult, but necessary, task that cultural organizations and institutions must consider if they wish to build a sustainable outreach program with far-reaching aims. However, no one suffers being reduced to a number, especially in something as personal as cultural taste. As William Bruce Cameron said of the field of sociology in 1963, "It would be nice if all of the data which sociologists require could

be enumerated because then we could run them through IBM machines and draw charts as the economists do. However, not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted." (Cameron 1963)

Nonobjective aesthetic education is related to the growth and development of future cultural participants as roots are related to the flowering of a cherry tree. On the level of an individual cultural organization, building an audience development strategy that incorporates educational outreach is a logical and, I argue, necessary step. However, a flexible and broad aesthetic education experience, although attractive, does pose problems for insular companies. For example, education with impact requires longevity, in-depth evaluation, and strong partnerships. More than that, it requires patience, trust, and commitment. An investigation of the realities of cultural education from the viewpoints of teachers, managers, and young people is essential to getting closer to effective ways to improve the lives of young people through culture.

Chapter 4- Methodology: Case Studies in Aesthetic Education and a Discussion of Current Trends in Audience Development

“Contrast, which runs through all the works of creation, and may probably have a large share in constituting in us the idea of all beauty, as well natural as artificial: for what demonstrates in the beauty and excellence of anything but its reverse?” *Tom Jones*, Henry Fielding (p. 136)³⁷

By using qualitative methodology in the form of case studies of aesthetic education programs, interviews with teachers and managers, a self-interview, a focus group, and an observation period, I hope to come to some conclusions about the reality of building future cultural participants from a variety of perspectives. The case studies profile well-developed programs that utilize aesthetic education: both the strengths and the weaknesses of each program are discussed. The case studies are primarily from the United States where well-developed programs in aesthetic education have appeared at a handful of cultural institutions. The field work is located in Belgrade, Serbia. This contrast in locations may reveal some

³⁷ The Wordsworth Classics edition.

insights into cross-cultural perspectives on education and culture. Although that is not the focus of this thesis, any new questions that arise from the research should not be overlooked.

The first two cases are research studies that give a comprehensive picture of the decline of cultural demand in both the U.S.A. and Serbia. It is essential to take an in-depth look at these studies prior to evaluating ‘successful’ cases to better understand the current problems surrounding the development of future cultural participants. The latter four case studies profile aesthetic education programs in the U.S. and the U.K.. The evaluation of these programs is purposely brief because most of the papers were produced by the institutions which created the programs and represent a mostly positive outlook. Very little independent research in the field has been done to contradict these claims. However, the progressive nature of their work, and the enlightened ideals within which the programs have been founded, make it easy to sympathize with them, but there is still room for critique. Although not perfect, these examples may serve as foundational models for cultural organizations wishing to develop comprehensive educational outreach programs that will stand the test of time.

A short evaluation of current audience development and art participation trends analyzes recommended methods for audience development and cultivating new participants. In my interviews and discussions in Belgrade, I discovered that much of audience development on an organizational level is managed on an *ad hoc* basis and often approached as an afterthought, or it is assumed that development will happen naturally once the programming is in full swing. Those involved in teaching, whether as professional teachers or teaching artists, seem to be more aware of the necessity of cultivating demand.

Due to limitations of time and resources the focus group and observation group were made up of the same students. Twenty students signed up for the observational session, but because of summer holiday traveling, illness, and family obligations the average attendance was about ten students, with students coming at intervals according to their availability.

Studies in Audience Participation

A comparison of U.S. and Serbian studies in audience and participant demand reveals some correlation between in cultural participation among young people in both locations.

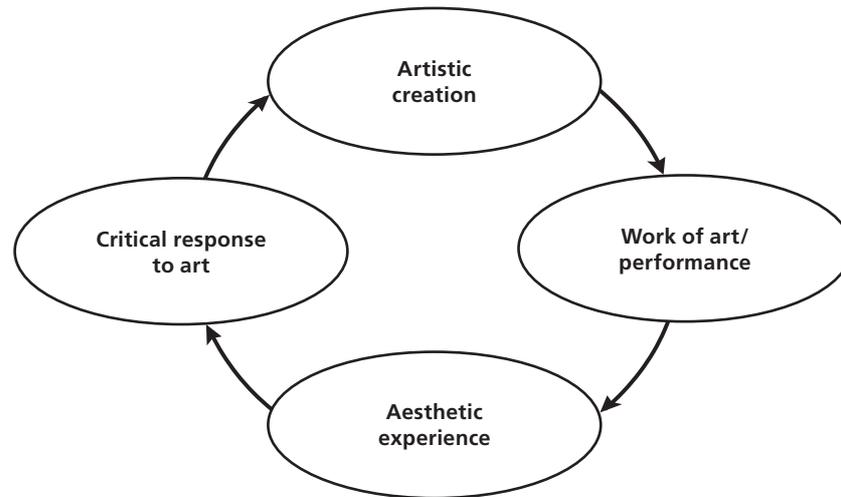
The United States

Cultivating Demand for the Arts: Arts Learning, Arts Engagement, and State Arts Policy by Laura Zakaras and Julia F. Lowell is a study that was released in the United States in 2008 with the intent to clarify the mechanisms of cultivating demand for the arts, particularly in regards to state policymakers and funders. The authors state that a boom in the cultural sector in the U.S. in the 1960s, which continues to this day, does not correspond to the modern decrease in arts participation. “The growth and spread of artists and nonprofit arts organizations generated a corresponding surge in arts participation among members of the baby boomer generation in the 1970s and 1980s. More recent trends, however, show that demand is not keeping up with supply.” (p. 2) Majority of quantitative information from this study is derived from research released by the NEA in 2001. “When growth in population and growth in education levels are held constant, the participation rate (the number of participants as a percentage of the adult population) can be seen to decline in all seven of the benchmark art forms³⁸ surveyed by the NEA (McCarthy et al., 2001). This decline holds true for all age and education groups.” (p. 3) It is important to note that the benchmark art forms were determined by the NEA without regard to the personal taste of the participants, especially young people.

Cultivating Demand for the Arts: Arts Learning, Arts Engagement, and State Arts Policy is over 150 pages of pertinent research that highlights the need for education in what the study calls the “communicative cycle” of art.

³⁸ According to the NEA the benchmark art forms are ballet, classical music, jazz, musical theater, opera, theater, and the visual arts.

Figure 2.1
The Communicative Cycle of the Arts



SOURCE: Adapted from McCarthy et al., 2004.
RAND MG640-2.1

39

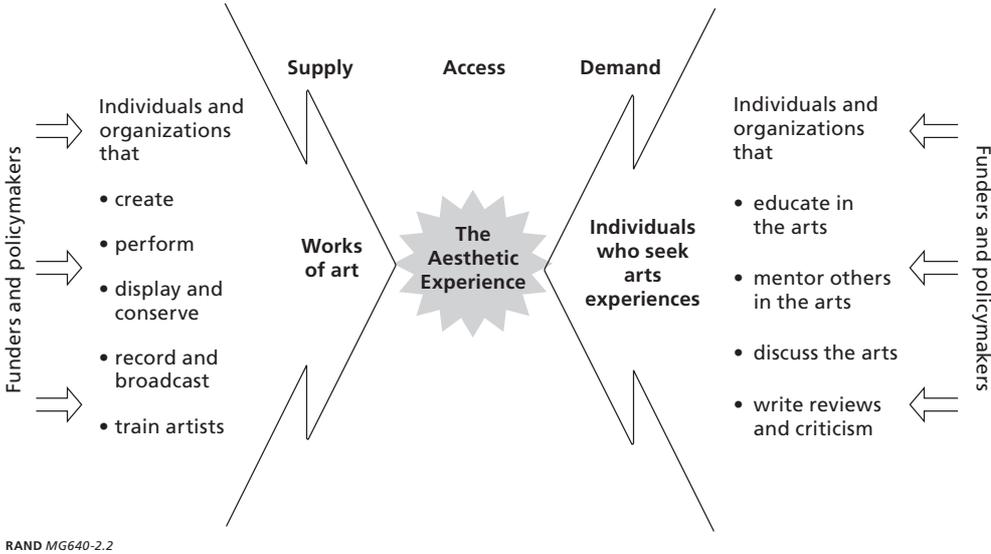
However, the 2008 study has a glaring flaw that serves rather as an annoyance than a research weakness, but also points to the irrepressible market thinking in the U.S. in all sectors of society. Firstly, the title uses the word “demand” instead of cultivating participation. This refers, of course, to “supply and demand,” a frequently used phrase in the economic literature of free-market economies.⁴⁰ The language of economy permeates the study throughout, with participants sometimes being referred to as participants, and in other contexts as consumers. In fact, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the study conducted by Richard J. Orend and Carol Keegan, both refer to art participants as consumers. The word ‘consumers’ implies passive absorption of the arts rather than the communicative cycle. However, I understand that the study is meant to communicate to parties who work within the semantics of the market economy. Still, the acceptance of these synthesized terms in arts and aesthetic education leaves me uneasy as an artist and a new teacher. For, in my limited experience, I find that frustration surrounding budgets and money can often dampen passion, and if selling tickets is the aim of a cultural participation strategy, than it is not likely to achieve sustainability. Even though strategies are needed at an organizational level, education is about a cooperative effort to improve the conditions of every human being, not

³⁹ Figure 2.1, pg. 10

⁴⁰ The phrase first entered mainstream literature in the early 19th century. An in-depth discussion on the phrase’s origin can be found A Note on the Origin of the Phrase, “Supply and Demand” P. D. Groenewegen, *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 83, No. 330 (Jun., 1973), pp. 505-509.

vie for their patronage at a specific organization. In this way the arts fall slightly outside the normal “supply and demand” cycle of economy. A table demonstrating the cycle of cultural demand provided by the study helps to visualize the collaborative process by which individuals have an aesthetic experience.

Figure 2.2
Concept of Supply, Access, and Demand in the Arts



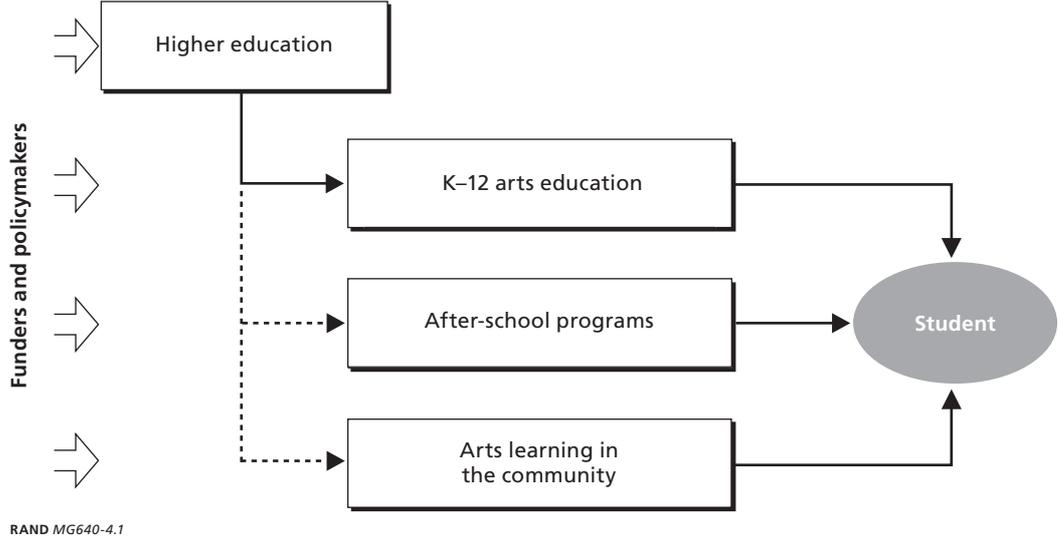
The above chart is almost comical in its simplification of an individual’s discovery of aesthetic experience, but the visualization of the support system behind encouraging demand makes clear that ‘it takes a village.’

“Survey data and empirical research offer evidence that education level in general, and arts learning in particular, are in fact strongly correlated with arts involvement as adults. First, data from the NEA’s SPPA in 1982, 1992, and 2002 show that education level is by far the most important individual characteristic in predicting arts participation—stronger than income, occupation, age, gender, or ethnicity.” (p. 18) The federal government in the U.S. acknowledges the necessity of quality teaching in the arts, but fails to follow up recommended standards with funding or training. Therefore, art and aesthetic education in schools is left at the discretion of individual schools and states. However, at state level the same lack of funding, incentives, or mandates fails to assist programs within the school

41 Figure 2.2, pg. 10

system: “Although almost every state now mandates standards-based arts education⁴², states have not provided the resources, incentives, or accountability mechanisms needed to carry out that mandate schools decide to offer it.” (pg. 30) To clarify, below is a simple graph published in the study that illustrates the different routes to art education within the U.S. system.

Figure 4.1
Support Infrastructure for Youth Arts Learning



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“Arts learning in the community” refers to civic organizations, which play an important role in the U.S.’s cultural participation by filling in the gaps left by the educational system and large cultural institutions. Moreover, civic and community programs in the U.S. have increasingly begun to integrate themselves within the school system and more established institutions. “One of the most positive developments we describe is the trend toward greater integration of community-based and school-based programs to provide more comprehensive arts learning to students. A single high-quality program with a limited purpose can be effective in getting young people engaged with an art form; for example, a mentoring program that pays for theater enthusiasts to take a few high school students from low-income families to a play and spend 90 minutes discussing the experience with them afterward (the Open Doors program supported by the Theater Development Fund in New York), or a museum tour for children that invites them to look at paintings in a specific way. Such one-time programs can play an important part in creating interest in the arts and are particularly

⁴² As a child of the “standardized” educational system in the U.S., I think that implementing standards-based art education may not be the answer. In fact, it may be very destructive.

⁴³ Figure 4.1 p. 28

effective when combined with comprehensive school-based arts programs that build greater skills over a longer period of time” (p. 29).

While states and schools laud the efforts of civic initiatives, they do little in the way of direct support. Often this is not because of lack of interest but “Pressures for accountability in non-arts subject areas and decreases in districts’ discretionary budgets have created hostile conditions for sustained arts education” (p. 30). This means that most civic initiatives rely on strong leaders as aesthetic and art education champions to sustain programs (p. 30).

The demographic of young people who are exposed to arts and aesthetic education also varies by state. For example, only 25% of low-income students in California are exposed to the arts, while surveys from West Virginia show that middle school students have high exposure to the arts across all income levels (p.34). But throughout the U.S. middle and high school students are no longer required to take art classes and few innovative teaching methods are being introduced. Furthermore, a study of high school art teachers mentioned by Zakaras and Lowell revealed that many were teaching high school art classes in the same way teachers instruct elementary and middle school children: “75 percent of the high school teachers...surveyed taught drawing, design, painting, sculpture, and ceramics in the same way teachers taught them in elementary and middle school” (p. 75). The same seems to be true as a young person progresses into college, and Gillespie (1991)⁴⁴ makes a similar point about theater education: “[I]t is fragmented and discontinuous; that is, the college curriculum assumes nothing from high school, nor the high school from the elementary school. . . . It pays relatively little explicit attention to aesthetic issues at any level” (p. 38, p. 76).

Often art organizations help fill the gap by offering skilled creative instruction with certified art teachers and artists outside of school. In fact, over half of high schools offer after-school programming in the arts as an alternative to in-school art programs. A sample chart below displays these percentages for the state of Kentucky.

⁴⁴ Gillespie, Patti P., “Theater Education and Hirsch’s Contextualism: How Do We Get There, and Do We Want to Go?” in Ralph A. Smith, ed., *Cultural Literacy and Arts Education*, Urbana and Chicago, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1991, pp. 31–47.

Table 4.1
After-School Programs in the Arts in Kentucky Schools

Type of school	Percentage of Schools with After-School Program in:			
	Music	Visual Arts	Dance	Drama/Theater
Elementary	43	33	16	24
Middle	60	27	19	41
High	66	31	21	55

SOURCE: Collaborative for Teaching and Learning, 2005.

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After-school programs have advantages and disadvantages, but in terms of cultivating future participants there are some obstacles. Firstly, after-school programs attract students who already have a solid commitment to learning, usually enjoy school, and have an interest in the subject matter; similar to students who attend Belgrade high school’s civic education programs. Secondly, many students are bussed to school from distances extending ten miles. If these students are not guaranteed transport, then they cannot stay after school, even if they have an interest in the subject matter. Lastly, students who do not enjoy school and have not been exposed to the arts will avoid after school programming. The mere existence of after-school programs, although a popular solution to arts education, is not enough to build future cultural participants. Furthermore, as a former participant in the state of Kentucky’s after-school programs⁴⁶, I can attest that the numbers in the chart are misleading. Professional artists were never brought to our school to teach after-school programs, and many of the programs that succeeded were initiated and managed by the students themselves. There was also a very real and very upsetting segregation of skills within the school that prevented many students from joining the after-school programs: i.e. advanced placement students, honors students, regular students, and “those students who needed assistance”⁴⁷ were divided into different classes and often didn’t mix socially. Not surprisingly, after-school programs were dominated by advanced placement and honors students. The strict division of these groups in

⁴⁵ Table 4.1 *Cultivating Demand for the Arts: Arts Learning, Arts Engagement, and State Arts Policy* p. 39. It is also interesting to note that the state of Kentucky is one of the only states with a statewide standardized art assessment.

⁴⁶ I attended Eastern High School in Louisville, KY. The school’s population at that time was over 2,000 students. My graduating class from the year 2000 had 800 students alone. Only a small percentage of these students were high achievers and there was a need for cultural organizations to conduct programming. The school is located in Kentucky’s largest city and in the four years I was there, I did not see one group of professional artists visit our school or extend programming to the students.

⁴⁷ Often students who fell into this category were from impoverished or dysfunctional families.

the school meant that the advanced placement students never saw the students who needed assistance.

Zakaras and Lowell's clear and fluid assessment of the decline in participants, and the imbalance in funding for comprehensive art and aesthetic education, is a vital contribution to research in the field. The report ends with practical recommendations for policymakers, including the support for programs that bring arts to all socioeconomic groups, supporting research in the field, and redistributing funds to rebalance art production and demand. The last of these recommendations, it could be argued, could set state policymakers on the wrong track. However, the two most practical recommendations that can be applied to both the U.S. and Serbia are "support collaborative programs that increase the amount and breadth of arts learning" and "build a coalition for arts learning that represents the entire infrastructure for supply and demand" (p. 102).

Again, the language used in defense of these recommendations supports the free market, economic ideal: "We have emphasized that arts learning plays a more critical role in the cultural sector than is generally realized. Those who function largely on the supply side in our supply/demand framework have long been aware that their financial survival depends on the existence of adequate demand but may not fully recognize the role of arts learning in cultivating that demand. Arts educators and the faculty who train them often focus on developing future artists and may not understand the extent to which they could help create future audiences" (p. 102). While this is true, the emphasis on cultivating participants for the sake of stability in a "supply/demand" cycle may not be the right approach. Young people are aware when they are being used as a pawn inside a system, in this case part of the "demand" needed to sustain institutions. For that matter, even managers in the arts typically do not enter the field of arts because they long to make money for organizations and institutions.

Serbia

Slodoban Mrdja's *Kulturni Život i Potrebe Učenika Srednjih Škola u Srbiji* (*Cultural life and the needs of students in secondary schools in Serbia*) is a comprehensive study that compiles research from 2000 to 2011. Mrdja divides youth culture into three social and cultural groups specific to their age: 1) subculture within general culture, (2) a subculture that is differentiated from the general culture, (3) and counterculture. Mrdja states: "Youth, in

the opinion of this author, is not a statistical aggregate of a diffuse grouping, but a social group.” (p. 60).

Unlike Zakaras and Lowell, Mrdja recognizes that the youth seek to define their values. He claims that youth culture is a social group seeking their identity between childhood and adulthood, but that in a current social environment that is dictated by market principles rather than value systems this is difficult. “But, on the other hand, this culture is the only "breathing space" between childhood and maturity, a space that allows young people to shape their own identity in a society where such value is valid only for what it offers market and market relations.” (p. 60). Mrdja defines the counter and subcultures as a resistance against this market society, or what he calls a technocracy. “Basically, the counterculture protest is directed against technocracy as a ruling power.” (p. 60).

The study outlines how much free time young people have, what they prefer to do with their free time, and how often they produce art. In a survey of 3,000 students from different areas of Serbia, 61.4% said they watch TV, listen to music, do recreational sports (including walking), use computers, hang out with friends and clubbing. This finding contradicted the second portion of Mrdja’s initial hypothesis that most young people spend their free time hanging out with friends, bored, or sleeping. However, the first part of the hypothesis, that Serbian young people passively participate in art, *is* supported by the research findings.

Tabela 4. Omiljeni načini provođenja slobodnog vremena srednjoškolaca u Srbiji (otvoreno pitanje)²⁵

Aktivnosti	I izbor	%	II izbor	%	III izbor	%
Odmaranje/spavanje	167	6.8	50	2.1	41	1.7
Učenje	15	0.6	7	0.3	3	0.1
Gledanje TV, slušanje muzike	420	17.2	224	9.2	68	2.8
Korišćenje računara	298	12.2	176	7.2	71	2.9
Igranje igrica na računaru	65	2.7	39	1.6	14	0.6
Čitanje (knjiga, časopisa, novina)	155	6.4	104	4.3	35	1.4
Bavljenje umetnošću	96	3.9	50	2.1	17	0.7
Druženje sa prijateljima	234	9.6	123	5.0	71	2.9
Odlazak u pozorište, muzeje, koncerte...	2	0.1	4	0.2	1	0
Sa partnerom	29	1.2	20	0.8	5	0.2
Izlazak u grad (kafić, klubovi...)	175	7.2	115	4.7	48	2.0
Bavljenje sportom (šetnja, rekreacija)	371	15.2	168	6.9	79	3.2
Nema slobodnog vremena	3	0.1	-	-	-	-
Bez odgovora	409	16.8	1359	55.7	1986	81.4
Ukupno	2439	100	2439	100	2439	100

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⁴⁸ Table 4, pg. 59

The chart above lists the results for the survey question “what do you do in your free time?” 17.2% replied with watching TV and listening to music, 15.2% said they play sports or practice outdoor recreation, 12.2% use the computer. Only 3.9% said they practice an art, and a very low 0.1% visit cultural institutions. The predominant ways of spending free time are passive and do not require much from the young people in question. When questions were isolated to only cultural activities slightly different results emerged, although this is to be expected since the students did not have the option of choosing something outside the cultural sphere. Watching TV and listening to music remained a top choice at 62.4%, followed by reading books at 23%, practicing art at 14.3%, and visiting cultural institutions at so low a percentage that it could only be evaluated on an individual basis. (p. 60)

Mrdja hypothesized that the amount of spending money available to young people may play a role in their cultural participation, so he analyzed the amount of pocket money teens have in relation to their free time. He found that the majority of young people do have some type of allowance, but that their budget for cultural activities averages around 2,000 RSD (about \$23) for an entire month. (p. 66) Even with student discounts, this amount is not enough to meet the cultural needs of a young person. However, young people in the U.S. who do have enough of an allowance for cultural needs are also not choosing to spend it on culture, not to mention the many free spaces and programs available for youth. The expense associated with cultural institutions is certainly a factor in low participation numbers, but it may also be used as an excuse. Another consideration is the availability of free media, including films, television, books, and music that is available online. It is no surprise that Mrdja’s 2011 surveys found that the percentage of young people who use a computer in their free time had gone up since 2000. This access to free media without the inconvenience of travel certainly plays a part in the decline of cultural participation among young people.

During the observation session for this thesis, as well as my work teaching Serbian youth since my arrival in 2012, I have found that the prevalent attitude of young people about Serbian culture is one of frustration. Many students have said that they find culture in Serbia at a lower level than Western Europe and the United States, but few have offered specific examples of what they mean. It is interesting to note that much of the talent they are referring to, they have found on the Internet, or on television. Many young people in my classes recognize the same celebrity names I do and watch the same television shows, although they have little or no knowledge about the countercultures in the countries they admire. They all

say they do not attend cultural events in Serbia often, which Mrdja corroborates in his research. He goes further to point out that there is an “absence of a consistent set of values” (p. 74) among the youth. My students often tell me that they feel burdened by the social disorder in Serbia and many high achievers seem to be determined to leave Serbia as soon as possible. They claim that they like the lifestyle here but feel like they have no future. Granted, these students are from Belgrade, generally well-educated, and come from families that have exposed them to culture at an early age.

Another important finding in Mrdja’s report is the amount of time young people spend practicing culture: “The participation of high school students in artistic creation is very important for any society, because this population has yet to explore and express all your creative possibilities.” (p. 88) The majority of young people, irrespective of region, said they do not produce art, or practice culture on their own, “...from these data it is clear that over 85.0% of high school students do not participate in cultural production, regardless of the level of participation.” (p.91) 61.1% reported this was because they simply were not interested, while 17.0% said they don’t have the time. (p. 91) This is a disturbing trend if the previous surveys about cultural participation are taken into account, “If we take into account the previously presented data on the lack of interest as the most important reason for the rare visits to cultural institutions and cultural events, we can conclude that about two-thirds of high schoolers are completely indifferent to cultural participation.” (p. 91) Mrdja theorizes that the possible reason for this may be a carry-over from the crisis in the 1990s when young people didn’t have much direct support for developing cultural habits and tastes. He goes on to say that this caused an “extended process of maturation.” (p. 121) This may be true in some ways; however, I found exactly the opposite in my discussions with young people. Throughout the Western world young people, who are not from marginalized groups, are usually isolated from conflict and struggle. They are often carefully protected by a well-developed support system that shelters them throughout their education. In Serbia, this is not the case. Young people faced the crisis of the 90s along with their families and this early confrontation with the reality of war, hate, self-preservation, and identity has led to a worldview that may, in some cases, be more mature than their Western counterparts. However, the biggest negative effect of war and upheaval on the generation who did not experience it directly that I’ve observed is a lack of self-confidence and trust, not a lack of

maturity. Perhaps it is because young people feel left out of the cultural discussion that they do not participate.

Mrdja does give young people credit for a “preserved proactive capacity.” (p. 121) This capacity, Mrdja believes, is untapped by the cultural policymakers and institutions because young people are excluded from the decision-making process. In the last section of his report, Mrdja, asks young people what they believe are the issues of their generation and who they think should be helping. Many of the students said that a bad financial situation and unemployment were issues affecting their generation, with a bad educational system also taking a prominent position. Mrdja theorizes that student’s dissatisfaction with school may be related to feeling left out of the decision-making process. “what may be the problem is that very few high school students in Serbia consider what is one of their biggest problems, which is being excluded from the decision-making process.” (p. 124) Mrdja asked the students who they thought should help solve these issues: 49.5% said parents, 46.4% said themselves (young people), 38.6% said the Serbian government. “Also, schools and youth organizations are recognized by high school students as potential participants in solving problems” (p. 127).

Mrdja’s research seems to suggest that Serbian high school students are passive in their art participation. A negligible amount of students attend cultural events or visit cultural institutions and young people feel mostly indifferent to art production. However, they also seem to be concerned for the future and aware that there is a support system to help them.

A Discussion of Audience Development Strategies

To assess the current trends in audience development strategies, I spent many research hours investigating the various models that institutions use to attract participants. I found that audience development and outreach models depended a great deal on the location of the institution, the size of the organization, traditions embedded within cultural communities, trends in the area, and expectations of funding bodies.⁴⁹ This array of programming made it difficult to evaluate the current strategies in a general way. Furthermore, few studies

⁴⁹ Two handbooks: *Developing Multicultural Audiences for the Arts: Adjust Your View* published by the Australia’s Council for the Arts and *Increasing Cultural Participation* by Paul Connolly and Marcelle Hinand Cady published by the Wallace Foundation. These are full of suggestions but not evaluations.

measuring the success of strategies reveal any conclusive evidence that one form of programming is guaranteed to be more successful than another; although there seem to be isolated cases of successful growth that often rely on the leadership of one manager, as in the case of the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival and Matt Wallace.⁵⁰ Wallace took over from an artistic director who was dismissed in a personal and professional scandal. Doubtless the media attention around the scandal may have helped draw attention to the struggling company as much as Wallace's positive reforms did. However, Wallace countered the negative attention by increasing the company's programming from one show to eight, with all of the shows running in repertory. He recruited local talent by partnering with smaller performance groups in Louisville and giving them stage time. Prior to these partnerships, the talent on stage had been mostly out-of-town professionals. He also began an outreach program with civic organizations that use theater as an educational tool. The result was a surge in participation that went from a few thousand attendees last year to over 25,000 participants. As evidenced by this example, it is a complex series of events and programs that led to a growth in participation. First, it is located in an American city that is growing economically and attracting young residents from larger cities who are already demanding cultural participants. Second, the company had already garnered attention, albeit negative, from the media prior to Wallace's reforms. Third, Wallace is a local leader and familiar with local issues, small artistic groups, and civic initiatives, so he already had connections within the city that could be rallied quickly to save the reputation of theater.

Almost every cultural institution I researched listed outreach as part of its programming in the U.S. and the U.K., less so in Serbia. However, the methods used to implement this outreach varied. Some organizations define outreach through education programs held at the institution's location, others hold classes off site. Some work in partnership with other charitable organizations, while others simply fund civic initiatives. One of the most interesting finds is a trend among larger cultural institutions to contract consultancy groups that design an audience development plan for them, such as Australia's Culture Thrive. Even though this consultancy's offices are located in Sydney, they have designed audience development concepts and programs for institutions in the U.S.A., such as

⁵⁰ Matt Wallace's take-over of the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival in Louisville is a story I've followed closely in 2014. The professional theater had stagnated for years and pared down its programming to one performance per summer before Wallace was hired as the artistic director.

the “Doors Open Denver,” a city wide program and “One Book, One Denver.”⁵¹ On perusal of some of the U.K.’s audience development suggestions, I found most are based in marketing, with street spectacles being particularly popular. In preparation for the 2012 Olympics in London the 2008 Arts Council England⁵² funded and implemented a city wide series of outdoor events and public art. While street spectacles may do much for adding color and excitement to a city street, they are ephemeral and short-lived. I also question what long-term solutions do street spectacles provide for cultural organization’s participants? The same can be applied to short-term outreach programs. A one-off workshop with a professional artist is a good start, but is it enough to inspire future participants to notice deeply and continue their own search for beauty?

The previous examples are of large, city wide, well-funded programs. It seems that mid-range to small organizations are often the groups that have more developed outreach programs, such as 92nd Street Y’s Educational Outreach program for inner city schools in New York City,⁵³ or ApsArt⁵⁴ in Belgrade. The latter is another example of a strong leader who pushes through barriers to engage her intended audience. Both are examples of cultural organizations whose main aim is education, therapy, and bringing art to underserved segments of society. These organizations are specialized to provide this service and have created partnerships with schools, educators, prisons, and orphanages so that they have access to their beneficiaries. However, their work has not been recognized as methodology that should be introduced into mainstream education or educational programming in well-funded cultural institutions. Associations and partner organizations may be needed to foster these relationships between art education civic initiatives and other stakeholders. For example, Dr. Ristic’s CEDEUM association is one organization in Serbia that is attempting to integrate teaching artists into the Serbian school system, among other related goals.

⁵¹ These are city wide culture programs promoting culture in the city, which makes it even stranger that professionals in Sydney are designing programs for visitors and residents half a world away in Denver, Colorado. <http://culturethrive.org/programming/>

⁵² This programming funded ten major London arts venues from 2008 to 2012.

⁵³ This program sends professional artists to schools to work with teachers and students, provides professional development in the arts to teachers and educators, and partners with student initiatives. <http://www.92y.org/uptown/educational-outreach-programs-in-the-arts>

⁵⁴ ApsArt <http://www.apsart.org/index.php?id=35>

Case Studies in Aesthetic Education

Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education

As of 2014, the Lincoln Center for the Arts in Education (LCI) has been providing arts education and “arts integration”⁵⁵ for 35 years, “...aesthetic education includes interactions with high quality works of art supported by an inquiry process particularly developed for those interactions, along with art-making explorations. Fundamentally, what the institute has done is turn traditional skills-based arts instruction inside-out by starting directly with the perception of artworks.” (2007/2009 p. 1)

LCI is an educational and research institute that operates outside the mainstream educational system. This case study of LCI is based on a summary report called *Aesthetic Education, Imagination and Inquiry*, a paper released in 2009 that provides an overview of the institute’s high school program but does not include an impact assessment. In fact, I was not able to locate any formal evaluation of the LCI’s programs outside of summary reports from successful programs, such as the high school program in *Aesthetic Education, Imagination and Inquiry*. There is no doubt that the institute’s work is influential for the stakeholders and is making strides in education, but what exactly those strides are is clouded by the inspiring papers produced by the institute.

This case is special because it deals with an institute that is well-funded and runs a high school full-time, as well as charter school programs, as opposed to a one-time, or short-lived program. The institute has been influential in the field of aesthetic education, and the observations from instructors at the institute may prove invaluable in the future. The institute also targets an adolescent age group and offers an alternative way of looking at education that is addressed directly to the students.

LCI was given the opportunity to build a school from the ground up in 2005 when the New York City Department of Education began a program to open new small public high schools with outside organizations. LCI used what they had learned at the research institute to create the High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry (HSAIL), a different type of school using philosophies and research from the institute’s own aesthetic education inquiries,

⁵⁵ The center combines these two into their definition of aesthetic education.

primarily with John Dewey's and Maxine Greene's work. Maxine Greene is the resident philosopher at the institute and works directly with the development of their programs.

For the LCI's proposal to the New York City Department of Education they were asked to write down what a 9th grader might learn at the school in language that the prospective student could understand. This request resulted in a condensed list of foundational principles: the "Capacities for Aesthetic Learning," which later changed to the more evocative "Capacities for Imaginative Learning." The Capacities were based on the process of an artist and the qualities the artist exhibits when in the process of creation. A noteworthy aspect of the capacities is that they demand nothing concrete but expect much.

Noticing Deeply: To identify and articulate layers of detail in a work of art or other object of study through continuous interaction with it over time.

Embodying: To experience a work of art or other object of study through your senses, as well as emotionally, and also to physically represent that experience.

Questioning: To ask questions throughout your explorations that further your own learning, to ask the question, "What if?"

Identifying Patterns: To find relationships among the details that you notice, group them, and recognize patterns.

Making Connections: To connect what you notice and the patterns you see to your prior knowledge and experience, to others' knowledge and experiences, and to text and multimedia resources.

Exhibiting Empathy: To respect the diverse perspectives of others in the community; to understand the experiences of others emotionally, as well as intellectually.

Living with Ambiguity: To understand that issues have more than one interpretation, that not all problems have immediate or clear cut solutions, and to be patient while a resolution becomes clear.

Creating Meaning: To create your own interpretations based on the previous capacities, see these in the light of others in the community, create a synthesis and express it in your own voice.

Taking Action: To try out new ideas, behaviors or situations, in ways that are neither too easy, nor too dangerous or difficult, based on the synthesis of what you have learned in your explorations.

Reflecting/Assessing: To look back on your learning, continually assess what you have learned, assess/identify what challenges remain, and assess/identify what further learning needs to happen. This occurs not only at the end of a learning experience, but is part of what happens throughout that experience. It is also not the end of your learning; it is part of the beginning to learn something else. (*Aesthetic Education, Inquiry, and the Imagination* 2007/2009 p. 3)

These capacities were primarily applied to the study of art, but the institute found through its work with “focus schools” (schools that used some of the institute’s programming in other curricula besides art) that art content does not always apply, but the Capacities “remain relevant no matter what the curricular area.” (p. 4) However, because of the broad nature of the Capacities LCI also found that they occur on “many levels in expectedly non-linear ways.” (2007/2009 p. 4)

Another aspect worth mentioning within this context is the reliance on John Dewey’s interpretation of perception through art and imagination. LCI states “As John Dewey reminds us, the arts rely, for their very being, on sensations and emotions united with meaning, and embody possibility. As such, they are different, and become, for Dewey, as well as for LCI, the best evidence of the ‘true nature of imagination.’” (p. 5) The arts are assumed to be the highest order of imagination and an impetus for other intellectual conquest.

A critique of the success LCI’s High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry is impossible with the information given in the report. This is ironic considering the last of the capacities is reflecting and assessing. However, an evaluation that merely produces quantitative information would perhaps upset the principles on which the high school was founded in the first place. The report does mention that while the LCI was compelled to make a list of the Capacities for the sake of a proposal, this list does not reflect the reality of working with students and how they interpret the Capacities. “Pragmatically presented as the list on page 4 for the purposes of a proposal to create a school, the form of the Capacities lent itself to assumptions about linearity and hierarchy that did not echo what we knew, based on experience, about how students learn through aesthetic education.” (p. 5) There is a disparate and individualized way of making connections across broad topics using imagination, and the LCI recognizes that patience is needed to let the process take its course, for this alone they could be called a commendable and highly successful school.

While flexibility and adaptability is implicit in the school's programming, what LCI did discover is that there tends to be a type of scaffolding that happens where embodying, noticing deeply, and asking questions occurs with entry-level students first before the other six Capacities, but not in that particular order. Also, no matter what the order of the Capacities, they all seem to culminate in a mental image, "a basic construct of imagination." (p. 5). Greene makes the supposition that it is the passion for seeing things and looking at them as if they could be otherwise that opens the door to imaginative perception. (Greene 1995 p. 16)⁵⁶ There is a relationship to Bertolt Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* in that an observer may feel for a character but with a consciousness that makes him or her able to make decisions, instead of forgetting one's self inside a play: "Acceptance or rejection of the characters' words is thus placed in the conscious realm, not, as hitherto, in the spectator's subconscious." (Brecht, Bial and Martin 2000 p. 13). In this light, aesthetic education seeks to put creative thinking on the same level with critical thinking.

Teachers, researchers, and philosophers involved in LCI's High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry's operations continue to log extensive observations in regards to their particular brand of education. While this case is a full-time school, not a program run by a cultural institution, the "Capacities" and the implications they hold for the possibilities of future programming, and the role artistic process plays in everyday problem-solving, could be a jumping off point for a cultural manager working in audience development with aesthetic education methods.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's "Teaching Literacy Through Art"

The Solomon R. Guggenheim museum's decades long history as a home for the most contemporary of art and ideas makes it the ideal leader in art education. Coincidentally, the first of the Guggenheim museums to open was the "Museum of Non-Objective Painting" in 1939. But it is a recent educational initiative *Teaching Literacy Through Art* that most interests me. A noteworthy aspect of this analysis is the Guggenheim's effort to evaluate their own program throughout the process with outside researchers from Randi Korn and

⁵⁶ Greene also relates this ability to social progress, noticing that things could be better by imagining what they could be, instead of accepting them as they are. (Greene, 1995 p. 14-17)

Associates, Inc. based in Alexandria Virginia. This intimate and collaborative research took place alongside the program's planning and implementation. This allowed researchers to observe the students, teacher, and teaching artists and distribute questionnaires while experiences from the program were still fresh.

Urban schools located in the Bronx and Queens were asked to participate. A small percentage of the participating students did not speak English at home. Almost 90% had never visited the Guggenheim Museum. (Korn p.3) Researchers organized the research into Treatment Group A and Treatment Group B, both groups participated in the program, while Treatment Group B teachers received additional professional development classes. The researchers also chose two control groups that did not participate in the program. A final report of the program was released in 2004-05 and 2005-06 and made available to the public. The report included statistically significant findings, as well as the executive summary and discussion of the programs which were funded by a three-year Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The quasi-experimental approach of the research team came to the conclusion that the program was a success based on the critical assessment of the participants and the measurable results in literacy. One of the tools used to measure the impact on the students was standardized test scores. *Surprisingly, the treatment groups that participated in the art program and demonstrated increased confidence, communication skills, vocabulary acquisition, and creative thinking did not receive higher test scores on the standardized test compared to control groups.* However, according to the treatment group's teachers, the students involved in the project showed improvement in the classroom and with literacy based exercises. The treatment group also achieved a higher word count in interviews with the researchers, and an overall increase in positive feelings about art in general. Perhaps most notably, many more of the treatment group students said they would like to bring their families to the Guggenheim and share with them what they learned. Students who visited the museum without participating in the program reported enjoying the museum, but *did not* express a desire to bring their families there. After the program ended, Treatment Groups A and B, and the control groups were asked to define art. More control group students described an artist as "someone who draws really well," or "makes beautiful things," while more Treatment Group students described an artist as "someone who works hard and practices," "has good ideas," "experiments with different materials." A larger number of Treatment group students agreed

with the survey statement “I enjoy talking about artwork by well-known artists.” (Korn p. 3 and 4) Overall the program instilled confidence and a sense of “I can do this too,” that carried into other subjects. However, it is important to note that the positive outcomes of the program could not be measured by a testing process administered by the state of New York.

The program included a visit to the museum, courses taught by a teaching artist, and professional development for the regular teachers. The simplicity of the program is one of its strong points and helped the researchers and participants fully immerse themselves without any managerial distractions. Another strong point is the variety of locations: a field trip to the museum, guest teaching artists in the classroom, and a development program for teachers that took place in the museum and in the classroom. In the latter case, teachers take the skills and tools acquired in the development courses and implement them in daily classroom activities. The simple and direct approach allowed the researchers to conduct their work and collect clear results and feedback. However, it is not clear from this report whether a follow-up was made to see if the teachers continued using what they had learned in the professional development classes.

In the critical feedback given by the teaching artists and teachers, the vast majority praised the program for the strong management and the opportunities it made for the children. Those who partook in the professional development program from Treatment Group B expressed a rejuvenated feeling and said that they learned new ways to approach subjects and include the arts in their everyday curriculum. (Korn p.11-12) Both the teachers and the students in Treatment Groups A and B said that their favorite segments of the program was working with the teaching artist and visiting the museum.

The Guggenheim program had the advantage of Federal support and a generous grant. However, this would have not been the case had the Guggenheim not had its record of high achievement in arts education. But even apart from the money available, the program is exemplary in its achievement of producing statistically significant results of art education, including an illuminating, unexpected result, that arts and aesthetic education’s positive outcomes may not be measurable by the standardized testing system. It is also an example of a cultural institution working directly with teachers and schools to integrate arts into the regular curriculum, rather than offer it as an exclusive activity after school hours. The Guggenheim displayed forward-thinking in working alongside researchers, anticipating that the positive outcomes of their program may not be expressed in the way a governmental

system would call success, i.e. test scores. The research supports their continued work and ensures that they will not be overlooked when educational funding is being distributed among cultural institutions. Furthermore, this educational program is an extension of audience development. This is revealed by the survey question “would you take your family to the museum.” In this too the Guggenheim was successful, as the majority of Treatment Group students replied that they would take their families to the museum, presumably because they looked forward to displaying their newly acquired knowledge about the artwork there. By far the most important achievement of this program was its collaboration with teachers who are an everyday part of the children’s lives. This helps to integrate art as a natural and essential part of the everyday, and gives teachers the opportunity to continue to lead by example once the program is over.

It is unfortunate that the funding ran dry at the end of three years. Guggenheim did run a year long program with each Treatment Group, however there is no assurance that the lessons the children learned will continue to deepen in the coming years. For example, Randi Korn and Associates point out that all the students had a positive attitude toward school, reading, and learning before the program, which is normal at the third grade level. It is in middle school that students begin to report dissatisfaction with education. (Korn p. 14) The teen years are also high risk years for youth in the socio-economic conditions in the Queens and the Bronx, and without continued exposure to the aesthetic education models throughout these formative years the positive impact of the initial program may wear off.

Process Drama and Multiple Literacies

Process Drama and Multiple Literacies is a collection of case studies that use theater and performance exercises in the classroom to teach sociology, culture, and/or acceptance. These exercises are also used to explore a literary text: such as a play, poem, novel, etc. Their methodology is based on the language learning concepts of Vygotsky (1978) and much of the teachers who use process drama are inspired by Greene’s theories on building empathy for social change. One of the most informative case studies comes from a report from Florida educators Karen S. Kelley and Toni Lazzaro. The latter teaches a multiage class of 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students, while the former is an assistant principal at Lazzaro’s school who observed his teaching process and conducted informal interviews with the students. In this

case study, Lazzaro used concepts of process drama, or applied theater, proposed by Cecily O'Neill and others to teach the text *The Watsons Go to Birmingham- 1963* (Curtis 1995)⁵⁷. The theory preceding the course was that theater, or acting out a piece of literature, allows students to bring a story to life and take ownership of it, thereby developing the student in deep and multi-layered ways that are personalized and inspire empathy. In this case, the multiple literacies are: reading comprehension, writing, public speaking, performance, confronting racism, debate, questioning social class, dealing with family crisis and the judicial system. The events in 1963 Birmingham presented in the text are based on fact, while the Watsons' family struggles are fictional, adding history to the list of literacies. The selection of a text is an important first step for process drama in the classroom because it dictates the "modes of activity" (O'Neill 1995 p. 131) that a teacher uses to plan the exploration. Some of these modes of activity are: observing, inquiry, contests, games, roles within roles, ritual, public and private dimensions. The roles within roles refers to a student playing a role that is individualized, but also understanding their character's function inside the story. Public and private dimensions refer to the distinction made between what the student presents in the public eye and how the student feels, or what he/she says, as a character in private. Collaboration among the student group was an important focus of the planning and implementation of the project. The plan also integrated the use of the internet as a learning tool. For example:

Week One:

- lessons from WebQuest⁵⁸
- reading chapters 1-5
- character group discussions and journal entries
- modeling of journal entries in role (Kelley 2006 p. 75)

During my observation sessions with Serbian participants, I also frequently used the internet as a tool and stressed collaboration as an essential mode of learning with much success. In

⁵⁷ *The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963* is a historical fiction by Christopher Paul Curtis published in 1995 by Yearling. The story revolves around a fictitious family who arrive in Birmingham just before the 16th Street Baptist Church Bombing.

⁵⁸ WebQuest (Lazzaro 2003) is an inquiry-based group of activities in which students locate all the information they need to complete the activities on the Web.

fact, I believe the collaboration of my students, ages 11 to 18, all strangers to each other prior to the workshop, was one of the greatest successes of the observation. I also used a pre-text, Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*, as an inspirational text for our character building exercise in process drama. These methods and the results will be discussed in-depth later in the thesis.

In the case study profiling *The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963*, focus is placed on the journey of seven girls who were tasked with becoming Joetta. The character of Joetta is the only daughter and youngest child of the Watson family. She is a self-appointed "princess" and struggles to understand her older brother's delinquent tendencies, as well as her parents' fear. The girls were asked to work as a group to discuss their character, rewrite portions of the text from Joetta's point of view, and participate in the classroom performance activities, or what O'Neill calls "appearances." (O'Neill 1995). Before the performances, students were divided into groups and assigned a character from the book. The Joetta character group was made of the youngest girls in the classroom. These groups work independently rewriting portions of the novel to fit their character and keeping journals from their characters point-of-view throughout the project. This social educational model was garnered from both Vygotsky, David W. Johnson, and Roger T. Johnson: "First, we viewed learning from a sociocultural perspective, and therefore as a social enterprise (Vygotsky 1986). High-performing cooperative learning groups are defined as groups in which "students are given two responsibilities: to maximize their own learning and to maximize the learning of all other groups members" (Johnson and Johnson 1999, 24). Therefore, we wanted the group members to exhibit the highest level of commitment to each other." (Schneider, Crumpler, Rogers 2006 p. 73-74).

The group's personal journals showed a developing connection between the emotional reality of the students and the world of the novel. Each student was asked to write from the perspective of the character about the events that happen to them in the book. Then the group met together to discuss their entries and to rewrite the story from their point-of-view. Karen Kelley writes of her first interaction with the Joetta groups "As I observed the Joetta character group intentionally and spontaneously orally revising the text so it would be told from their character's point of view, I realized we were experiencing something much more. [than what we intended]" (Schneider, Crumpler, Rogers 2006 p. 71). The initial purpose of incorporating process drama into the curriculum was to find ways to increase reading comprehension and to

raise awareness of the racial tensions, but Kelley observed that what actually happened transcended race or reading comprehension and the girls really behaved as if they were Joetta.

Following journaling, and after the class had finished reading the book, they performed a mock trial for Byron, Joetta's delinquent brother. Two of the Joettas were asked to speak in the witness box while the others internalized the experience from the courtroom's audience. The group of Joettas became so invested in the proceedings that Kelley, acting as the judge, had to bring them to order. The second drama event asked the students to participate in a family dinner. The dinner was repeated five times so that each student portraying the characters would have an opportunity to participate. In each dramatized event, each participating character was given space to respond to stimuli and questions in their own way. In other words, the participants improvised within the character and, depending on their individual interpretations, different results occurred.

Kelley says that these combined exercises created a "text-to-self" (p. 83) connection. The Joetta characters were asked to give feedback about the process after the project ended. In their feedback, this "text-to-self" connection became evident not only with the participants relating the text to themselves, but also relating the text to the rest of the group working with the character, "As we started to know each other a lot of us had things in common with each other and with Joetta." (p. 83) However, the connections to race or the racial struggles of 1963 that play a significant role in the novel were completely absent from the character connection of the group. This has an correlation to Baxter's work in South Africa, although in the latter case it was because the children from one of the social groups she was trying to integrate were not in the same library. In the former case the young participants did not perceive racism, rather they perceived family problems and their individual place within the family structure. Perhaps the original aim to educate about racial tensions in Alabama had more to do with the needs of the organizers than the needs of the young students, whereas the young students did not see race as an important dividing factor and fully accepted that they were in fact just like Joetta, thereby transcending race altogether. In fact, Kelley recognizes this weakness at the end of the paper: "The two-tiered instructional goals that Toni and I set out to accomplish blinded us to the potential of process drama as a point of connection across racial lines. Our goal to improve reading comprehension (tier one) and our goal to increase awareness of larger societal issues (tier two), while noble, missed the mark." (p. 85) Instead, the success of the project had more to do with the ability of the young participants to step into another

character's shoes and see the world from a completely different point of view, thus resulting in an empathic understanding of the character's trials.

Creative Encounters

The journal *Creative Encounters* is a collection of articles profiling the experience of educators, philosophers, and artists who use art to illuminate scientific principles in schools and outreach programs. While all of the articles attest to successful interdisciplinary programs, only a handful of the articles can be applied directly to the principles discussed in this thesis. Although all of the projects used professional artists who collaborated with scientists and educators to develop projects that utilized all of the students' senses. Each article took a different approach to achieve this full immersion in scientific and artistic learning with projects that addressed the following: place, context, methodology, content. An array of artistic media were used in conjunction with the regular curricula: film, theater, dance, sculpture, magic (illusions-multimedia art), literature. But despite the disparate methods, a foundation of relevance applied to all the projects, "Creative encounters may be deeply surreal and involve hybrid dolls, dancing synapses and ghostly pillow-headed figures. However, they also need a root in real human experience, a sense that they have a real or important rationale or an authenticity outside the context of the learning situation." (Lotto et al. 2009 p. 198)

The first example is Joe Winston's⁵⁹ *Mathematics, Science and the Liberating Beauty of Theatre*. In the opening paragraph of his report on theater and mathematics he defends beauty as "central to children's learning," (p. 30), while acknowledging that the methodology of including experience in education is not straightforward. Echoing Greene's critique of contemporary educational systems, Winston bemoans the demand for measurable results "It is nothing controversial to argue that current educational thinking, in policy and practice, is dominated by the languages of target-setting, performance management, skills acquisition and quantifiable assessment criteria. Behind this lies the belief that only what can be measured, or demonstrated clearly, or backed up by facts can be trusted..." (p. 30) Winston proposes that

⁵⁹ Joe Winston is an Associate Professor in Drama and Education at the University of Warwick. His published works include *Drama, Narrative and Moral Education* (RoutledgeFalmer, 1998), *Beginning Drama 4-11* (co-authored with Miles Tandy, David Fulton Press 2008), co-editor of the international journal *Research in Drama Education*, and *Beauty and Education* (Routledge 2009)

the elusive qualities of beauty, specifically in the arts, have a place in all types of education, “...to ignore this is to fail to appreciate the power of beauty to motivate a desire to learn.” (p. 30) To illustrate his point Winston uses the play *A Disappearing Number*.

A Disappearing Number is a play conceived and directed by Simon McBurney for Theatre Complicité that follows the pursuit of a mathematical problem constructed by Srinivasa Ramannujan and pondered in the present day by the fictional character Sarah. Alex, a non-mathematical everyman, falls in love with Sarah, but in order to understand the object of his affection he must also attempt to understand the mathematical puzzles that drive her passion. The play’s episodic storytelling crosses boundaries of time and space and relates two parallel narratives in an experimental manner. What is especially exciting about this theatrical project is the interconnectivity of themes: one thematic principle fluidly transposes itself upon another. According to Winston, this is an exceptional example of performance unlocking the mystery of numbers to students. However, the reverse may also be true, that numbers unlock the mystery of performance for students who know that being ‘good’ at math makes them smart, but that the arts are for ‘people who make beautiful things.’ The combination of narrative and numbers may be the key to igniting an interest in the possibility of performance.

Winston gives an example of a pedagogical model developed by Pugh and Girod⁶⁰ that helps turn concepts into actionable ideas within an educational program:

1) Restore concepts to the experience in which they had their origin and significance:

historical context, 2) Foster anticipation and a vital, personal experiencing: *treat the lesson as a dramatist would treat a plot*, 3) Use metaphors and re-seeing to expand perception: *helping us to things anew by breaking routine*, 4) Model a passion for the content: *the teachers fosters and demonstrates their passion for science* (in this thesis’ case, the arts), 5) Scaffolding student’s action, perception and valuing: *help students into deeper levels of understanding by providing experiences that move them.*” (Winston p. 39)

Measurable results were not the aim of Winston’s paper, so there are no quantitative results that reveal any measurable success from the students viewing of *The Disappearing*

⁶⁰ Kevin Pugh and Mark Girod PhD are the authors of *Art and Experience, Constructing a Science Pedagogy from Dewey’s Aesthetics* (Journal of Science Teacher Education, 2007).

Number, or the methodology proposed⁶¹. In fact, he rather asks the reader to trust the desire to pursue beauty without the satisfaction of achievable objectives.

The second example from *Creative Encounters* is *Using Illusions to Teach Children About the Science and Art of Seeing* by Sara J. Downham, R. Beau Lotto and David Strudwick. The project executed by the authors of the paper experimented with visual art and sound to help children understand the difference between seeing and perceiving. In this project, art is used as a tool, and the instinctive perception an artist uses in his or her process is the inspiration: “Goethe in the mid-19th century ‘discovered’ that a grey shadow appears anything but grey when surrounded by light of a different colour.” (p. 64)

The three authors of the paper implemented their experimental project at a primary school in Devon with five to six-year-old children. Although the children are younger than the focus of my study, the project’s methodology can easily be transferred to adolescents. They began by asking the students to observe the space, in this instance the classroom, and look for patterns, not just things and objects. The children were asked to draw and paint their patterns. They were then asked to go outside and find more patterns, again drawing and painting their findings, and, if possible, bringing the objects they discovered back to the classroom. The children were divided into groups and asked to present their patterns to the class. Some of the most creative examples were the texture of grass, repetition of tiles, lines on the road, bumblebee stripes and the shape of a face. The project was led, in large part, by the children themselves while the teachers acted as mediators and helpers. The second day of the workshop the children were asked to perform a similar exercise with sounds they heard, with the same creative results. On the third day the children were asked to relate the patterns they observed with their eyes with the sound they heard with their ears. The moderators asked questions like “What do the stripes on Anna’s shirt sound like?” The day ended with a craft project that asked the children to create a song with images. They were each given a sheet of black paper and a pile of colored paper, scissors and glue. The children cut the colored paper into shapes to make visual “sounds” often humming while they worked. The collages that the children made were then sent to Beau Lotto’s Lotto Lab⁶² to be what he calls “synthesized” into actual music by using a computer program that reads a shape and produces musical notes.

⁶² R. Beau Lotto’s Lotto Lab continues implementing educational programs, <http://www.lottolab.org>.

The new music was a huge success with the children who took obvious pride in what they have made. Notably they also enjoyed each other's music and were quick to praise.

This project did include a follow-up evaluation with the children, their parents and the teachers. Again, only positive results were reported. Some of the parents claimed that their child had not previously been "artistic," but after the program they came home daily to "do art." This implies that the children gained an appreciation for the process of making something and enjoyed doing it themselves. (p. 72)

To the authors of the text, the project was not only successful in encouraging appreciation for the artistic process and perception, but also in the development of empathy for other views. "...we tend to see only those patterns that support our world-view. In other words, if you believe that you are good at something, you will come to see the world through that filter, finding, collecting and creating information that support the 'truth.'...The learner can be shown in real terms that their perceived truths are not necessarily *the* reality, but *one* reality among others." (p. 73 -74)

Creative Encounters is essentially a collection of narratives about progressive modes of education, rather than a report or evaluation of those methods. It is used as a case study to present yet another way of approaching educational methodology within an outreach program: namely by working in congress with other subject matter, partnering with schools and teachers, as well as breaking the boundaries of space. This approach may be key for a student to understand the interconnectivity of artwork in the context of the world and perhaps foster the inquiry that leads a young person to seek answers in the halls of museums, in theaters, or in a book.

Certainly *Creative Encounters* is inspiring. Creativity that builds confidence and encourages children to think outside the box is difficult to argue with. But why is it necessary to justify art by using it as a tool in mathematics and science? Interest in math, science, technology, and engineering among young students is of such large concern that it has developed its own acronym, STEM development⁶³. The need for mastery and new innovations in the field is high, particularly with the depletion of resources that provide energy and the whole of society's reliance on technology. If we consider the studies in the first section of the methodology about cultural participation decreasing and compare them to a

⁶³ STEM development is primarily concerned with middle to high school education and opening doors to women in the field. <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1035&context=etd>

decreased interest in the sciences, perhaps it's fair to say that general interest in all types of strenuous intellectual activity is decreasing. These seemingly unrelated fields do in fact complement each other, but projects that attempt to address both issues at the same time may not always be successful. Moreover, as stated before, the evaluation process for projects using creative education are fraught with difficulty. "Creative encounters will not be easy to measure and will present serious challenges for many forms of evaluation used by policymakers and assessment prevalent in formal education...This in itself might require a high level of interdisciplinary collaboration." (p. 196)

One commonality shared between these case studies is a new interpretation of a teacher's relationship to the students. By nature of the methodology and philosophy of aesthetic education, the teacher necessarily becomes an active collaborator, the teaching artist in particular. This is a very different way of instructing than the traditional learning experience where knowledge is passed from the knowledgeable to the presumed un-knowledgeable. Freire offers sharp criticism of teaching tradition: "Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat." (Freire p. 72) Education in and around the arts is one that promotes dialogue about the art itself, but also why art exists in the first place, thus helping the learning to ask further questions and the teacher to be continually challenged with the answers. This dialogue is what Freire calls an "existential necessity" (Freire p. 88) that pushes the progress and maintains the freedom of an individual: "Since dialogue is the encounter in which the united reflection and action of the dialoguers are addressed to the world which is to be transformed and humanized, this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person's depositing ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to "consumed" by the discussants." (Freire p. 89)

Chapter 5- Interviews with Teachers, Students, and Cultural Managers

"Give every man thine eare; but few thy voyce:" *Hamlet*, Shakespeare's First Folio (p. 746, 515)

Teachers

On May 14th 2014, I sat down with Violeta Milicevic and Olivera Nedeljkovic⁶⁴ at Belgrade First Economics School⁶⁵. Our interview lasted for almost two hours over the course of which we discussed culture in general and specifically in regards to their students of Serbian literature and the English language. I began the interview by asking if they remember their first “cultural experience,” i.e. theater play, story book, movie, or concert. After thinking for a moment, both teachers said that their first experience was in primary school. Milicevic stated that her first significant experience was receiving a Russian fairytale as a reward for her writing when she was in primary school.⁶⁶ Milisevic was careful to point out to me that her entire family were workers and did not do much to expose her to the arts. She credits school with exposing her to literature and art. She spent her childhood in a small village where she was raised by her grandparents and aunts. Her parents left Serbia to work in Germany when she was twelve-years-old. She did not have access to cultural events, such as theater, film, or concerts in her village, so, according to Milicevic, her only creative outlet was literature.

According to both teachers, students with high marks received a book at the end of each school year during their primary education. However, the schools stopped providing money for this award system, so the teachers began collecting funds from the parents to continue the tradition of a “prize” book. This stopped too because, according to the teachers, the students lost interest in the books. Nedeljkovic said “No, they don’t have money, but parents usually agree to collect money and buy that in primary school. (she translates for Milicevic who nods to her.) I did that with my parents [of her students] we collected money and bought them books. But we stopped that after five years, because they [students] didn’t like our books. We tried to buy them something about science or something like that, but we stop that because they didn’t want that, they want some easy literature. That’s what my daughter said and she had read two or three books that we bought.” (Appendix A p. 124)

Milicevic added that once a year her high school organized a large performance with poetry readings, short plays, music, theater, and dance. Both Milicevic and Nedeljkovic said that children felt honored to be a part of the performance, “They were very serious about that,

⁶⁴ Transcription is available in Appendix A.

⁶⁵ This is a secondary school with an emphasis in economics, but which offers a liberal arts style of curriculum, much like magnet schools in the U.S.A.

⁶⁶ Neither teacher could remember the name of the fairy tale during the interview. Further research revealed that Violeta’s award was the “The Little Humpbacked Horse,” a popular Russian fairy tale for children.

they took it very seriously. It was a great honor to take part in that, a great honor to take part.” (Appendix A p.124)

Both teachers have worked in their field for almost 20 years, coming into the profession during the 1990s. I asked them how their students had changed from the beginning of their careers to today. Both teachers replied that their students are more demanding of the teacher’s energy and insist on being “entertained,” while at the same time being more relaxed about expectations for themselves: “They want to be entertained more. I think in their early [childhood] they were not given enough, I don’t know...um, support because the parents were out working or something like that, so they didn’t have the chances. They are also more relaxed. They are more interested in marks, not knowledge, they want just to have good grades. They just want to pass the exam and all that, and I think they are not really ready to work hard. That’s it, they are not patient enough. They want easy money, or something like that.” (Appendix A p. 127) The first part of this statement is in direct correlation with Mrdja’s theory that a lack of support early on is to blame for young people’s decline in cultural participation. Earlier in the interview the teachers also expressed their frustration at being constant entertainers and equated their work to that of an artist, “They like that, but they expect from us to be some sort of, not teacher, not educator, but sort of entertainer. To entertain them, we call that entertaining. A little like artists, so usually we make jokes or tell them something jokingly.” (Appendix A. p.126) It is interesting to note that when I asked the student focus group about school they expressed a general frustration with the curricula and teacher practices, particularly for it being outdated and not related to the realities of their time. The attitude with which the students answered this question about school and cultural life was a younger version of the frustration expressed by the teachers over the new generation’s lack of work ethic.

Once again, there is focus on the result, the mark or grade, rather than the process of learning and work ethic. This change in students’ attitudes may be caused by a combination of factors after the war years: economic collapse with little hope of reward in risk-taking, identity crisis, loss of confidence and trust, and a “what’s the point?” attitude. I asked the teachers what they think would happen if students were asked to participate in programs that were not marked. They replied that they would not participate, because they wouldn’t see the purpose, Milicevic said “You know, we have some subjects that are not marked and usually the teachers have a problem with that. Although they are very creative you know, it’s

something like civil education, or something like that. They have some workshops, some very interesting workshops, something on psychology or something like that. But they are not interested, they don't want to go because it's not marked, so that's it." (Appendix A p. 130)

This same frustration among the students carried over to their feelings about cultural life in the city. So, when Ms. Milicevic and Olivera Nedeljkovic said, "Sometimes, as a class master I want to say, sometimes I push them. For example, some kids they don't want to go and I say yes, you have to go. Otherwise you'll get [bad grade], you know you press them." (Appendix A p.128) I wonder if this pushing is the right approach. In my interviews with students, it wasn't that the students were not interested in experiencing something interesting and different, it is that young people resented the generation prior to them shoving their own discoveries down young people's throats. However, Milicevic makes up for this by incorporating these lessons in culture with her classroom lessons to integrate the experiences into an interdisciplinary approach that gives the students ownership over concepts and ideas. She says "It is very important for kids, to give them the task to do something. They enjoy that, to be given something to do." (Appendix A. p.125) I have also found this in my own work with young people, giving a young person responsibility and trust seems to be the surest way to win their respect. This also goes hand-in-hand with a permission to fail and recognizing failure as a kind of success. I've found the emphasis on marks, results manifest in a grade, puts pressure on all aspects of a young person's outlook, perhaps leading them to take the easiest route to recognizable success, the grade.

When I asked the teachers if they bring professionals into the classroom, or on school grounds to interact with students, they said they did not think they were allowed to do that. This was assumed by both instructors, but neither had tried to bring professional artists into class. They believe they are not allowed to bring outside parties onto the school grounds without special permission, but neither had ever tried. Milicevic did say that she organized a drama club in the school for ten years that exchanged performances with another school. However, both assumed that any request to allow professionals onto the school grounds for workshops would be organizationally difficult, although neither had tried to initiate a program involving local artists.

Overall, I found that both teachers were enthusiastic about their work and participate in culture regularly themselves. Violeta Milicevic is a published author, so her participation is not only as an art lover, but as a writer. Olivera Nedeljkovic partakes in cultural events when

she has the time and encourages her students to do so. Milicevic frequently uses creative teaching methods and takes extra time outside the teaching day to introduce her students to the cultural life of the city. Being from a background isolated from diverse cultural experiences, she is the exception rather than the rule.

Both teachers claim that young people's attitudes towards education and society have changed making it more difficult to introduce them to activities that don't result in grades. Both recognize culture and art as vitally important and express a willingness to collaborate with local artists and organizations to create programs for their students. As discussed in the manager interview, the lack of organized collaboration between groups seems to be an issue in Belgrade, and perhaps all of Serbia.

Cultural Managers

On July 30th, 2014 I sat down with Sandra Nikolic, program coordinator at the American Corner and Jelena Devic, librarian on duty, to talk about educational programing in their organization. I have worked with both women at the American Corner on various projects since my arrival in Belgrade. Because of our past positive working relationship, our interview was casual and both women felt comfortable offering critiques of their work, as well as sharing in-depth views on working in culture in Belgrade. Nikolic is exceptional in the amount energy and positive risk-taking she brings to her work, but even still I was surprised to learn that the Corner supports over 500 educational programs each year. However, many of these meet only once a week and are self-organized by the participants, such as Friday English conversation hours. Another exceptional aspect of the Corner's work is the implementation of programs based on the demands of volunteers and participants. For instance, a group of 65+ participants insisted on English classes for their age group so that they could communicate with grandchildren living abroad. The Corner found a teacher and provided the group with space for learning. Likewise, after my observational work was complete, the participants asked for more classes. Nikolic immediately approached me about planning for the coming months and offered to assist me in writing proposals for funding. In addition, Nikolic and Devic tell me that many of their programs are initiated by volunteers who approach them with skills. For instance, a visiting American with a background in film-making may want to organize a screening and discussion. The Corner markets the discussion hour among their members, provides a space, and access to any tools or supplies the volunteer

may need. They say that they gladly do this so that the volunteer can focus on the work they want to do.

Both Nikolic and Devic had early exposure to the arts themselves, but while Nikolic gives credit to her family for introducing her to the arts, Devic gives credit to education, saying that her family are “more TV people.” Both had early experiences with libraries, but neither expected to end up working in the cultural sphere, or libraries in particular. Nikolic was in medical school, but became unmotivated after realizing that her only hope for a position in a hospital would be through connections, which she didn’t have. She was encouraged to continue her studies in library sciences by contacts at the American Corner.

Both Devic and Nikolic recognize that technology and the Internet have changed the way people read and digest information. Having used the library as a resource myself, I often find that the computers are full, while only a few people are perusing the shelves. However, Devic and Nikolic are from my generation, grew up with technology themselves, and see no problem with technology or its infringement on the printed word. Both think that digital reading and Internet resources are a natural progression and should be embraced. However, they believe that people who really love reading will always demand books:

Nikolic: I think those that really love, love, love to read, first, at least from our experience here, they want to feel the actual book. Then they’re okay with the Kindles. Somehow I feel there is a distance between the real book and the Kindle. Somehow they are closer to that world with the real book in their hands. Like, these are just 0s and 1s and a bunch of bites, and these are letters.

Devic: That is something that is connected to emotions.

Nikolic: Probably. (Appendix C p.141)

Nikolic says that their organization does more than loan books, and they originally began as a type of cultural center. Devic and Nikolic say that their programming is almost 100% educational. However, as stated above, these programs are often initiated by volunteers. As such, there is no formal evaluation or long-term programming feedback. The only evaluation required by the U.S. Embassy is the number of participants. Nikolic told a story about a program held at the Corner that gave high school students a chance to present their talents to their peers. One of these presentations was a play directed by a drama teacher. The play was so successful that the Corner repeated the project the next year, but asked to group to perform a play by an American writer. The teacher chose to stage *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* by Ken Kesey. The performance was well received in Belgrade and the Corner helped the group

write a proposal to fund a tour of Serbia at other American Corner locations. The audience of youth had an odd reaction to the play in Niš. They spent most of the time laughing in a way that struck the organizers as inappropriate. I inquired if anyone asked the audience why they had laughed. Nikolic said “no, they just left.”

Also, only a handful of the programs out of 505 last year dealt with the arts, or had an artistic aim. Namely film screenings, a two day creative writing workshop, an annual performance by a high school theater group and my own workshop. In order to attract desirable participant numbers the Corner holds long-term programs in language and business:

Nikolic: ...As for their conversation classes, they practice their English speaking skills, math classes, at your next job interview teaching people how to behave on a job interview, business English, also learning...um

Devic: But we do play movies, we have board games, computer classes.

Nikolic: In theory, even the game time for kids has educational purposes. (Appendix C p. 142)

I asked Nikolic if the reason they were able arrange so many programs had to do with the funding they receive from the U.S. Embassy. She replied that they had only received funding for programs for the last two years, yet they’ve maintained about 500 programs for much longer than that. She said this is possible because of the volunteers who run their own programs at the Corner. I asked her to compare the number of educational programs at the Corner to other libraries in Belgrade. She said that Belgrade City Library has about half of the programs that the Corner does, but they used to have more before the city cut back on funding for culture. In light of this information, it is clear that the American Corner has a slight advantage with international funding; although, Nikolic assures me that this is also precarious.

The library also has standards that are passed to them from the US Department of State in Washington DC. The standards are based on categories devised by the US Department of State that organize both domestic and international cultural centers according to their library holdings and the number and types of programs. The standards are the same for each cultural center in a category no matter if one is located in Serbia or Bangladesh. However, both Devic and Nikolic say that these standards don’t play a huge part in the day to day operations of the Corner. Devic asked Nikolic if one of the standards is to reach out to young people and Nikolic said yes, but that they should be doing that anyway. Again, Nikolic pointed out that they like to get their program ideas from their members and volunteers, so they are serving the needs of the community that uses the space.

When I asked both Devic and Nikolic if they have outreach programs planned that would bring marginalized groups into their space, they said they would like to but that these would groups would need to learn English first. They did not see much value in just using the space as a safe or creative space for these groups. They said that the US Embassy had intended to implement an outreach program with Roma children throughout the city with Dom Omladine. However, Dom Omladine backed out of the project so the embassy opened a contest for a group to take their place. The project required a two year commitment. Nikolic planned to enter the contest in partnership with the Belgrade City Library, but the city library was not interested and did not finish the paperwork required for the contest. Nikolic also pointed out that two years is a long commitment and they didn't know if their library could manage a program for two years alone. She did not elaborate why she thought they could not handle a two year program.

Both agreed that partnering with other organizations was a frustrating prospect:

Nikolic: We've collaborated with NGOs and other cultural centers. We had a joint project [lists names], and with other libraries. As for libraries, it's more of a personal contact you have there. If you have somebody there who is going to push that and then I think you're going to make it happen.

Ross: Do you find resistance to that? Or are people open to partnerships?

Devic: Resistance I would say.

Ross: Why do you think that is?

Devic: Frustration with everything, I think.

Ross: With money or the system? What?

Devic: People aren't really motivated. They've had it. (Appendix D p.144)

The women agreed that it is only through a connection to an individual that they base their strong partnerships, such as the connections they have to high schools through teachers, not through the administration.

Nikolic and Devic are both energetic and enthusiastic culture workers. Both said that they enjoy their job and that working in the community brings them great satisfaction.

However, they expressed frustration with partnerships with other NGOs and cultural centers.

They prefer to work with motivated individuals that they can rely on because they said it is typical to be disappointed when working with other Serbian organizations. They are exceptional for the amount of educational programs that they manage and they claim this would not be possible without their volunteers. They are also exceptional in their openness and willingness to implement programs that their members ask for. However, this leads to

many programs just being repeats of English classes. It also makes it difficult to evaluate which of the programs is truly beneficial.

The standards and evaluation methods for the Corner are dictated by the U.S. government, but they are not oppressive, so Nikolic and Devic do as much as they are asked and adjust according to their members needs. They say they have autonomy for the most part and only when they need an official document stamped or signed do the standards and rules become a hindrance. They also say they are interested in the arts, but that again they are not partnered with any arts organizations.

Self-interview

It is unorthodox to include a self-interview in an academic study, but within the context of this thesis the approach is relevant. The personal pursuit of culture and the determination to participate in culture is initiated by feelings and the drive to express oneself. It stands to reason that a defense of this personal search for beauty should include the author's own story. It is also my hope that through a critical self-evaluation I will discover the roots of my own bias towards a nonobjective aesthetic education approach. It goes without saying that I carry this bias into all of my field research and my approach to case study evaluations. I also hope to illustrate the shared paths of the young people in Serbia with the youth in the United States. Perhaps through a self-interview a link may come to light that helps define the cause of the drop off in cultural participation among youth in both the United States and Serbia.

My first exposure to the arts was most likely before I can remember. My mother is a painter and I remember having many books, creative toys, and art supplies as a very young child. However, my first memories of participating in cultural events come from church. My family lived in a small town in a desert valley of southern California, in the area called the "inland empire," not far from Death Valley. As a young girl I was a member of a church club, the choir, and I participated in the church's annual Christmas pageant. Because of the size of the town, the church acted as a community hub and held a number of programs and events outside of religious worship. Outside of the church, my exposure to culture was limited to television, radio, and the occasion cinema visit. My family embraced technological advances and our house was equipped with an Internet connection shortly after they became available to the public, but it wouldn't be until my college years that I took advantage of the World

Wide Web's possibilities. In fact, my mother indulged in technology long before her children by playing games and using email to manage her business.

My childhood was full of activity, travel, and community until age thirteen when my family pulled up roots moved across the country to Louisville Kentucky. Louisville is a much larger city with a growing cultural scene, so I expected more activity, but was disappointed when I entered the public school system. I was fortunate in that I already had a seed of cultural participation planted. Even though my school in Kentucky did not offer substantial cultural exposure, I had enough desire to seek it out on my own. I noticed that many of my colleagues did not and remained uninterested in participation in local culture.

The 90s in the United States saw the implementation of federal testing standards and pressure on teachers to raise test scores. I remember spending entire English classes that teachers intended for discussion in standardized test preparation. I found myself often frustrated and bored with school and went so far as to leave campus during the day or skip school altogether. I found solace in a volunteer program at Actor's Theater of Louisville and theater classes at Walden Theater School. The majority of the participants in this program shared my socioeconomic background, and most participants were girls. In general, I found that my peers stigmatized the arts as something reserved for 'dorks,' 'girls,' or 'rich people.' The way art was introduced within the community and school system did not contradict their assumptions about who it was intended for either: art clubs being offered after-school and as electives that only students with high grades had room in their schedules for. Some art organizations in the city seemed to reach out, but most waited for young people to come to them, so it was not unusual to see the same students who participated in art clubs participating in city culture.

My delinquent behavior was the cause of some consternation on the part of my teachers and parents, often leading them to make false accusations, presumptions, and taking panicky (sometimes absurd) punishment measures. I was skipping school, sneaking out at night, and generally driving my parents crazy. During this period the arts became a refuge and sanctuary, particularly performance and literature. I credit these frustrated and tumultuous teenage years with some of the most important choices and achievements of my life to date. What led me down the path of culture as a career and the belief that art is an everyday necessity was what I was *not* given in school. Cultural organizations and institutions outside

the school were an important part of the process, and while I may have skipped school, I was always punctual for a play or a drama class.

The time I spent seeking answers during my high school years was formative and led to my college choice, my career as an actor, and ultimately the writing of this thesis. But again, after completing university and almost eight years on stage as a professional actor I became frustrated with the imbalance of gender in leadership positions in the arts, as well as the predictable attendance at events and performances. The “preaching to the choir” problem that persists in the arts in general is a particular problem for the small to mid-range theater companies I worked with in Chicago. The audience was often full of colleagues and repeat audience from the professional sphere. Outreach programs were an afterthought and often approached as a way to attract grant money. I distinctly remember a conversation I had with a close friend and fellow actor where the subject of who are we really performing for came up. She said “in the end theater is a luxury item, tickets are expensive and we’re performing little stories for the retirees. That’s it.” This conversation, among others, led to the decision to leave the theater world and pursue literature, travel. I was determined to find a way to use what’s wonderful about art to enrich the lives of people who do not consider it a necessity, who have never been exposed to it, and who stand to benefit as individuals. I, like many young people, was impatient to see real results from my artwork and I wanted to feel like I was making some kind of difference, rather than simply entertaining.

I believe my own cultural participation did not only enrich my education, but molded me as an individual. The company I kept during my teen years was mostly people alienated from the fine art world: drug dealers, dropouts, low-income, uneducated. Witnessing this world made me realize my own privilege. I recognized art as more than an achievement on the quest of self-actualization, but something that can save an individual from utter degradation.

It wasn’t until I began traveling in Europe at age 18⁶⁷, that I heard about “a person’s right to culture” for the first time. This concept is a foreign one in the United States as the predominant value system is one that supports “to each their own” and any valuing on family and culture by the federal government is perceived as a threat to personal freedom and choice.

⁶⁷ I traveled alone on money I had earned working two part time jobs, not on a supervised school visit. I mention this because I think the two experiences are very different, as evidenced by Ana Reb’s testimonial about her school trip to Italy.

For example, the U.S. is the only country besides Somalia that did not sign the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Both President Clinton and Obama have pushed to become a signatory, but neither has been able to get the two thirds vote from the senate to approve a ratification. A group of rightwing senators claim that it will give foreign powers the right to interfere with the way individuals in America choose to raise their children.⁶⁸ My exposure to the Europeans' fierce protection of their right to culture has no doubt equally influenced my views on the importance of art and culture to everyday living, and to education in particular.

Although I was skipping school and had neglected some of my studies, I also held a part-time job. The money I made at the job I spent on plane tickets to Europe and acting classes at Walden Theatre.

I found my way to culture despite a non-supportive educational system, as many people of my socio-economic background do. Thanks in part to my family and local programs designed for my age group. However, I noticed the disparity in the types of people who participate in culture and the segregation of cultural groups in education early on is partially to blame. This lack of social responsibility in cultural organizations is something that I believe the United States is paying for with its low participation numbers. To this day, the fine arts are assumed to be luxury items that are accessible for those with money, or those who work in the arts. The arts are often reserved for a relaxing night out, or a hobby. The capability of art to help an individual rise above their circumstances, develop intellectually, and think deeply is taken for granted, or simply assumed to be consigned to "they either have it, or they don't." For me, the arts were my key to the whole world: not just a key to understanding the cultures I came across in Europe, but also to understand the culture I encountered among high school dropouts, and societal outsiders. I believe that to overlook the cultivation of an individual's search for beauty is to deprive him or her of their key to understanding humanity.

Students

On the 16th of May 2014 I sat down with Ana Reb at a cafe in Belgrade's city center. Ms. Reb was a student of mine for an advanced English course that focused on the creative use of the language in 2013. I asked her for an interview because she is an example of a young person intensely interested in the arts, but who decided not to pursue it as a profession

⁶⁸ *Obama Administration Seeks to Join U.N. Rights of the Child Convention* by John Helprin http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/06/23/obama-administration-seek_n_219511.html

and not to participate in cultural events. She is struggling with her decision to study law, and says she is unhappy, and although she seems passionate about creativity, her knowledge of the art world hasn't deepened much since high school. She blames a lack of time due to her studies and the fact that she is simply not aware of what is going on in culture. She is an interesting case because she is sympathetic to culture yet neglects it, and not for financial reasons. She also claims that she prefers to create art rather than simply viewing it.

She recently turned 21, but at the time of our interview she was 20 years old and studying law. During our interview she shared some emotional reflections on the discovery of her own artistic talent, who pushed her there, her experience in school, and why she decided to enroll in law school. She told me she is very unhappy at the university but she felt pressured by her parents to pursue a career that will 'pay the bills,' although she gives credit to her mother and grandmother for introducing her to some of her artistic interests. Her true introduction into what she called 'the world of art' came from an art teacher in high school who recognized her potential and encouraged her to create. This same teacher was very angry with her when she told him she decided to study law instead and insisted that she reconsider. Reb plaintively stated, "I thought of arts maybe, but it will be a problem in the future, because you can't live just on arts." (Appendix B p.131) I asked her who told her she couldn't live on arts and she said her parents and everyone else around her with the exception of the aforementioned teacher. She claims that she was a different kind of child, very non-materialistic and says that she likes to write about her childhood, "maybe I am searching for...I wrote many things about that in this period. I can't remember it now. It was metaphorical comparisons and criticizing the society." (Appendix B p.132)

I continued to ask her about the teacher who supported her interest in the arts and she said that not all students enjoyed his teaching. Apparently this was due to disputes over marks. Reb said "I just admire one teacher and he was completely different to many other teachers. He had the power to interest me when he talks about a topic. And at first you might be scared because he is talking about some weird stuff, some of us were maybe not that mature as I was and it was difficult to go to work with him. He was like the most strict one with marks and some of the students go to the administrator and wanted to throw him out." (Appendix B p.133) She continued to describe how he graded the group on the act of creation in his class, their emotional commitment and problem-solving process, not the

product. This meant that students who were used to getting high marks in classes that were exam based could receive a low mark in his classes.

I asked Ms. Reb if she continues to read and attend events since she left this teacher's tutelage. She says she does not have the time to read for pleasure outside of her studies, except things on the Internet. She says when she does read she mostly enjoys something that she can relate to, "I like to read something about life, something about emotions, or something about personal experience of life and things affect me somehow. Like something that could be about yourself is there, like somebody said what you meant for a longtime." (Appendix B p. 134) Although she enjoys theater, she very rarely attends, again due to time. She also pointed out that there are not many original Serbian plays and she would like to see more.

I asked Ms. Reb if there were many young people at her school interested in arts. She said that there were not and I asked her why she thinks that is, she blamed technology:

Reb: Because the kids at my school aren't so interested in arts in general.

Ross: Why do you think that is?

Reb: There are only a few of them.

Ross: But why, in your opinion, do you think that is?

Reb: There are more computers and technology and they don't go out, outside. They are just on their social networks. Too much technology, the computer destroyed that.

Ross: Do you think technology has replaced artwork?

Reb: Maybe. Yes.

Ross: But you can access artwork online too.

Reb: Which is great. You have of course pros and cons in everything that goes with technology.

Ross: If someone were to come to you and say, "let's find a solution to this problem and try to get young people more interested in the arts" what would you do to make that happen?

Reb: I would change our educational system. (Appendix B, p.135)

Interestingly, I did not explain to Ms. Reb what the thesis was about before the interview, because I did not want to sway her opinions one way or another. The same goes for my students in the observational group. They participated in the class but were not told about the specifics of the thesis until after the focus group discussion at the end of the month long observation. In both instances the young people said the first thing they would fix is the educational system. This is no surprise because school is a large part of all young people's lives. What is surprising is that to them their peers' interest in the arts is directly connected to flaws within the system. I asked the focus group a similar hypothetical question "If you were given authority, and money wasn't an issue, what type of cultural place would you build?" All

of the students who participated in the focus group replied with some type of institution for creative education.

Ms. Reb's lack of cultural participation had nothing to do with indifference, but rather a depression. As I spoke to her, she seemed very excited by past accomplishments in the arts, but disheartened about the life path she chose. This disappointment led a neglect of the arts, almost as if participating in social cultural events, such as visiting a museum, would remind her of the opportunity she passed up.

Student Focus Group

Ross: Do you think art can address big issues in life?

YP6: Big shoes?

Ross: [Issues.] It's like a big problem. So, can arts talk about big problems?

YP6: Yes, even a problem with big shoes. (Appendix E p. 153)

Two days before the last class of the observation session, I asked the students to answer some questions. This was a planned focus group, but I approached it casually and with little warning because I felt their answers were more likely to be unfiltered if the questions didn't put pressure on them. While they were working on the last pieces of a collage project I asked them about art, cultural participation, creation, and their schools. The young people ages 11 to 17 are all good students and interested in learning, but their attachment to the arts varied at the beginning of the observation session. This focus group became an opportunity to see how their perspective of cultural activities and creation had changed since the beginning of the sessions and to discover some of their cultural habits.

The serious work of inquiry during the focus group was offset by an upbeat sense of fun. The above quote is just one insistence of good-humored repartee that passed between me and the young people. This lighthearted approach to teaching and questioning showed positive results with this particular age group.

I began by asking the group if they like the arts and if they consider themselves "artsy kids." Young Person 5⁶⁹ (YP5) responded that she likes music. YP5 had one of the lowest levels of English at the beginning of the class, but by the end she was communicating regularly with the more advanced participants. This is the first time she shared her interest in

⁶⁹ The names of the participants are kept anonymous to respect their privacy. Each participant is assigned a number; for example, Young Person 5 is YP5.

music. YP1 also said she considers herself more of a musician. Again, this is the first time she shared her interest in music. YP1 showed the most dramatic change of all the participants. Her particular case is discussed in the observation section. The remainder of the students expressed some interest in arts, with three of the participants being enthusiastically interested, and two others implying that the arts are ‘okay,’ but they like to do different and interesting things in general, not specific to the arts. I asked the group why they came to the classes again, just as I had at the beginning of the observation session. This time the answers were different. Some said that they had come to practice English and it was free, just as they said when I asked them at the beginning of the observation session. However, this time they added that they wanted to practice the language in an interesting and “exciting” way. Interestingly, when I asked the participants what they had learned in class, only one participant said the English language, although it was obvious some participants had increased confidence communicating in English. Instead they said they learned: “how to manage people,” (YP1), “any improvisation can be good if you’re following it, because ideas are good and improvisation can be good” (YP3), “I learned how to use my imagination” (YP1), “It helped me a lot to write in my own work and writing at school in papers.” (YP2). Each of the participants had a specific part of the session that they considered the most useful in their lives, so each volunteered different answers for what they had learned.

I asked the participants what types of cultural events do they attend in their free time. Based off the previous analyses, their answers were not surprising. Only one participant, the 11-year-old YP6, visits museums regularly. The rest of the group prefers film or hanging out with their friends. Once again, this is a group of young people who come from a socioeconomic demographic which is expected to participate in culture. I asked the participants if they were aware that cultural participation in their age group was declining. They confidently replied ‘yes, we know.’ I asked them why they think that is and without hesitation YP5 replied “the Internet.” I asked YP5, age 15, to explain her reasoning, she said, “because they spend a lot of time on the Internet and they forgot all around them.” (Appendix D, p.155) The statement led to an disagreement among the participants:

YP5: The Internet.

Ross: Why do you think the Internet?

YP5: Because they spend a lot of time on the Internet and they forgot all around them.

YP6: They become stupid.

YP1: Excuse me, we should not blame the teenagers but the people making computers [she says ironically].

YP5: No.

YP3: Yes.

Ross: But does the Internet make you stupid? Is that proven?

YP3: It makes you smarter.

YP2: Sometimes it makes you stupid. If you're playing "League of Legends," I don't know.

YP6: Hey, I like League of Legends.

YP3: If you're clever enough, you can make it better.

YP2: Not stupid, but less important.

YP5: A cultural place, like a museum, I don't know. They are just in the town.

Ross: That's a good point, you're thinking of people who don't live in the city. They don't have a museum or concert hall.

YP3: But they do have the Internet. It is educational. If you're clever, it just contributes to your knowledge.

Ross: Do you think that the reason people don't leave the house as often to spend money on cultural places is because of the Internet?

Group: Yeah, yes.

YP3: It's not that bad, it's good in some ways.

Ross: (name) you want to say something?

YP6: Yes, there's a lot of new things we have...spending time gladly, but it's really interesting because it's kind of like good thing for children, because we can make new friends and they can make their English more good.

Ross: Better.

YP6: Yes, and it's not spending time badly.

YP2: Yes, but my friend spends six or seven hours.

YP3: If you do something and are actually happy playing that certain game, it's good. For example, I watch a lot of series on the Internet that I can't watch on my television. (Appendix D p. 154)

The effects of technology on cultural participation is clear, yet even among youth, whether technology is a good or bad thing for them is a point of contention. The participants didn't seem aware of how the discussion of the Internet had entered into the focus group earlier than this disagreement, and how their cultural activities on the Internet continued to come up in questioning. For example, when I asked the participants how often they go out to see a film YP4 replied "I download films. Rarely, I don't want to pay so much money, so I go to the Internet." (Appendix D p. 149). Again, when I asked the participants if they want people to see their artwork, two participants said they regularly post blogs and fan fiction online for millions of strangers to read:

YP3: I write fan fiction on the Internet, so I show my work to a lot of people.

Ross: You write fan fiction on the Internet?

YP3: Yeah. And (name) you also write on the Internet?

YP2: Yeah, on Wattpad.⁷⁰

YP3: Me too.

YP2: Really? Can you send me a link on Facebook? (Appendix D p. 122)

The Internet came up again when I asked the students if they are aware of cultural institutions advertising for their age group.

Ross: When cultural places want young people to come and they make special advertisements for you, are you aware of that?

Group: Yes.

Ross: Does it work?

Group: No.

Ross: Why? Why doesn't it work?

YP1: Again, and again, and again, and again. The first time okay, but again, oh god.

Ross: So, how do you find about events usually?

YP1: Someone tells me.

YP3: The Internet. (Appendix D p. 156)

It seemed from their answers that some were frustrated with the amount of time their peers spend online, while others found the Internet a useful tool. YP3 is thirteen years old and writes fan fiction which she posts on sites along with writers in their 20s. She seems to be proud of this inclusion into a set of writers in their 20s. The genre is not recognized as a literary movement in the same way that Altlit is, but she seems to enjoy having an equal say alongside older writers. I wondered if frustration at being excluded from decision-making processes in the cultural sphere may be a partial cause of the group's lack of participation. When I asked the participants if they felt they had a voice in culture they said 'no,' then I asked them if given the opportunity would they join a youth committee to make decisions at a cultural organization the majority silent, only YP4 replied 'maybe.' I then asked the participants if they consider themselves to be confident people.

Ross: Would you call yourselves confident people?

Group: No.

Ross: Why would you say that?

YP3: I'm working on it.

YP4: I am not confident at all.

Ross: After you make art do you feel more confident?

YP2: Yeah.

⁷⁰ Wattpad is a popular blogging spot for writers to share their work. <https://www.wattpad.com>

YP4: It depends what I'm making.

YP2: For example, when I finish something I write that and put it with my picture, some people say the writing is good, and some people not, so I am starting to believe that maybe I am a good writer and I started to develop my confidence.

YP3: I don't need people to tell me I'm a good writer.

YP6: You need animals!?! (Appendix D p. 156)

Perhaps the reason there was so little enthusiasm for joining a committee of young people at a cultural institution may be directly related to the young people's lack of confidence, not necessarily apathy, because when I asked about having a voice in decision-making and building their own cultural place they offered well thought out and impassioned answers.

Ross: Let's pretend budget isn't an issue, and you were given the power to make your own cultural place, what would you make?

YP2: A better school for the creation of things, because a lot of kids like creative things. For example, writing and things, but only one school in Serbia is that style of school. And I, and many of my friends don't have school option, so I think a public school for creating. Centers for talented kids, or something...

Ross: Anybody else.

YP3: I'd make a free school of creative writing for the children who have the talent for it and the children who want to write.

YP1: I would want our parents to get better paid, a better salary.

Ross: That's a social change you would make, but if you built a cultural institution what would you make?

YP1: I would make a school where we don't have to sit down, with false bricks or the walls or I don't know.

Ross: Anybody? It doesn't have to be a school, could be anything.

YP4: I would make some center where the young people could express themselves. For example, making graphics, doing some music...

Ross: Wasn't Dom Omladine supposed to be like that?

YP4: Yes, but there are some big mistakes.

Ross: Tell us what they are, it's okay. Like what, what mistakes?

YP4: For example, sometimes they make some festival or something, [she lists a couple of festivals quietly, inaudible] and we don't know about it.

YP1: Then with the bands.

Ross: So they advertise and you don't know about it?

YP4: Yes.

Ross: So, your center would be organized and free?

YP4: Yes.

Ross: What about you (name)?

YP6: If that ever happens I would make a visual art school, something like this, because I think kids who like to make things, draw things.

YP2: They have a visual arts school in Belgrade.

YP6: But I think the kids who like that need to have a chance to show themselves.

Ross: And what would be special about your school?

YP6: Everyone can come, also people from other countries, and kids can also be, like in that school you were all showing us, kids can be like teachers or something like that. [She is referring a talk on independence where we watched a short documentary on an independent education project in a Massachusetts high school.]

Ross: So they can be independent?

YP6: Yes, everyone can do whatever he likes.

Ross: What about you (name)?

YP7: A cultural institution? I, I would like to make a museum.

Ross: What kind of museum?

YP7: It seems classical and ancient Greece.

Ross: And how would your museum be special?

YP7: It would focus on Greek mythology.

YP3: You could have plays on Greek mythology, that would nice, then people could dress as famous characters in costumes. (Appendix D p.155)

Whether the effect of a globalized technological society or the prevalence of Americanized culture, the issue of individuality frequently came up in the observation sessions and in the focus group. Even still, empirically what seemed important was their emotional connection to me, each other, and feeling moved or intrigued by what they were doing. Even though our discussions about art's place in society always ended with the participants relating the artwork back to themselves, in the same way Keats related the Grecian urn to his own feelings on love and time, engagement with other people was paramount. YP3 articulated her feelings on the approach to teaching used in the observation: "I think these classes were committed to children and the people who attend it, and it's not just to everyone, you're not talking to everyone, you're talking to individuals and asking them questions and you're interested in the answers. I think it's really great that the teacher has an interest to pupils and not just the work she's doing." (Appendix D p.151). In other words, she is not just a number, statistic, or a grade on a standardized test, she wants to be questioned and treated as an individual. It was through the act of creation, discussion, and debate that this particular group of individuals were thoughtfully beginning to define their tastes.

Chapter 6- Observation with a Nonobjective Aesthetic Education Model

I conducted observational research in nonobjective aesthetic education at the American Corner Belgrade from July 7th to August 8th, 2014. The workshop was called "English and the Arts." The group was limited to 20 students because of the size of the space. All the slots

were filled, but because of the summer season the attendance of some students was erratic⁷¹. I had expected this before the observation session began and tried to structure the classes in a way that a student could come to one, skip a few, and come back without feeling left behind. This was partially successful, but inevitably as projects progressed and built on each other it became more difficult to accommodate the students who left and came back. Instead I used this opportunity to foster collaboration and communication between the participants by asking those who came regularly to help those who had missed a class. There were some hurdles to overcome in the observational session from the very beginning: 1) due to the language barrier I have limited access to marginalized groups within Serbia, so all of my students came from educated families in the city, 2) the majority of participants who signed up were aged 11 to 15, meaning the older students, ages 17 and 18, felt out of place, 3) the language skills of the participants varied from beginners to advanced, making communication complicated. The latter two of these hurdles were solved within the first week as the older participants began to take care of the younger participants. I encouraged the older participants to use their extra years of language acquisition to assist the younger participants. This was very successful, the younger participants looked up to the older participants and wanted to communicate on their level, and the older participants seemed to take pleasure in acting the teacher and being given responsibility. There was only one exception to this positive outcome. One participant, a 17-year-old male, who only attended four of the classes was not interested in participating with the younger students.



As this peer learning and scaffolding began to happen within the first week, the language barrier started to break down. Students who were shy and nervous about their

⁷¹ This was due to family holidays and illness, not lack of interest. Students informed me when they would be traveling.

language skills began to open up and struggle through sentences, because they *had* to communicate about the project we were building. Their peers supported them and by the end of the four weeks those with the lowest level of English were participating in group discussions, performance, and conversations.

Because “English and the Arts” was a summer program, I set the tone of a casual class different from what they are used to in school. I told them they do not have to ask for my permission to take a break, that if an interesting topic comes up in discussion then we will take time to investigate it, and don’t be afraid to ask questions, although I told them questions are always better when they are specific and related. I began the session by asking them a question: “so what do you want to do?” This caught them off guard and annoyed them at first, so I clarified: “see, specific questions are better, so why are you here?” I got a surprising variety of answers in response. One participant, aged 11, said she loves “anything artistic,” another replied that their parents “found it online.” Still another said she likes the English language, but she’s not into the arts. Finally, most probably a very honest answer, “because it’s hot outside, there’s nothing to do, and it’s free.” Before the classes began I presumed that participants would be young people who already knew about the library, came from a highly educated background, and had an interest in the arts. While some participants fit this description, I was surprised to discover that about half of the students preferred science and found the arts baffling. I was also surprised when the program coordinator told me she had never seen many of the participants in the library. Indeed, when I asked the participants how many had been there, many said never. It may be that a free class taught by a native English-speaking foreigner lured the group of participants to the library. I didn’t ask about this. Although I have found in my time in Serbia that the mystique of foreign people and things is strong and often that is enough to attract students or participants, again this seems to be related to the assumption that talent from foreign superpowers is somehow artistically superior to local talent. However, in this situation this false presumption worked to my advantage by attracting a more diverse group of young people than I had expected.

The program was divided into four stages, one for each week: 1) first week- joy, 2) second week-pain or grief, 3) third week-rage, 4) fourth week-fear. The class met every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from two o’clock to five o’clock in the afternoon. Some classes were released early, while others extended over the three hours. The students were

allowed to take breaks when they needed, but I found that when I gave them a break they often wanted to continue their work.

The corresponding emotion listed after each week was a theme rather than an in-depth investigation into psychology. When emotional life didn't apply to a project, we didn't use it. However the discussion of emotions and art led to compelling conversations with the participants about their daily life, their interests, and what they expect of the world. It also seemed to help the participants better understand themselves and build bonds between each other. I noticed that within the first few days of the workshop, participants had exchanged contact info and were discussing classes among themselves outside of workshop hours. Even the youngest of the participants, aged 11, was included in these outside discussions.



The investigation of deeper emotions also led to the discovery of artwork, usually through biographies of the artists who created the work. For example, during our week of “grief” we searched for the saddest song in the world, finally discovering Samuel Barber’s “*Adagio for Strings*” and his struggle with depression and alcoholism. A short presentation about the relationship between madness, suffering, and creation followed. This led to a discussion of how music can be emotionally manipulative and we decided to find out why sad music seems to make us feel better when we are sad. So we searched for a psychological study on brain function. After discussing how emotions work we talked about personal ways to deal with grief and the importance of music. Then each participant wrote one verse for the “*Saddest Song in the World.*” We put the verses together and read the song out loud. In the end, the

song was so gut wrenching that it became very amusing. This led us to another discussion of the attraction of opposites, as well as the importance of humor. We also began a project that lasted for the entire four weeks, rewriting Schiller's *Ode to Joy* to fit their generation. We discussed how Beethoven's music has been misappropriated, how it was used by Stanley Kubrick in *A Clockwork Orange*, and what the original intent could have been for Schiller's poem in 18th-century Germany. Although I introduced the subject matter and mediated the flow of discussions, the participants were completely free to discuss amongst themselves and we kept a big screen TV hooked up to a laptop to research as discussions progressed. I challenged the students by asking if they agree with Kubrick's interpretation of the *Ode to Joy*, and how they perceive things have changed since the 18th century. Students were actively challenged to form their own opinions and be critical of the information we found online. This is one example of how classes were 'structured' with the participants taking a leading role in discussions, but continually being introduced to new connections and patterns by a mediator. Their insightful inquiries guided the topic within a theme. Those inquiries that were not as insightful were usually quickly dealt with by the participants themselves, almost like an active adolescent peer review, but this never turned into bullying or condescension. I was often taken aback by the rationality and wisdom participants displayed, and I observed that as these discussions became more involved, participants who started the classes shy or uninterested started passionately contributing to the group. One student interested in science said "because it wasn't just art, I can talk about this stuff too." This loosely structured approach seemed to work well. It allowed for us as a group to learn things together, ask questions that may not have been directly related to art and connect everything to a bigger picture.



Each day also had a theme: Mondays were music days, Wednesdays were visual art, and Friday was reserved for performance and literature. Sometimes these themes would overlap naturally. There was not a strict division of art forms, but knowing what to expect on each day seemed to help the students organize their thoughts. The artwork included music from all genres, visual art of all types, performance, theater, film, and writing. Some of the artworks were masterpieces, others underground or counterculture. The only requisite was that they be timely and evoke issues, themes, or experiences relevant for the participants. We worked on four large group projects besides the writing exercises and discussion: a group garbage sculpture, a collage, a film organized and directed by the participants, and the new *Ode to Joy*. I contributed my own work to help them with the projects, so we became a team. I offered suggestions and shared past experience, but the participants were free to create as they saw fit. When they got stuck then I would intervene with a lesson that would take them to the next level of creation. Each project presented the group with specific challenges. The first of these was collaboration on the group sculpture: I suggested that they find out what everyone is good at and organize themselves that way. This resulted in a group working together on the body of the sculpture, while participants who felt more comfortable working independently focused on a small piece of the sculpture to be attached later. The workshop purposely had no extra budget, although we were free to use left-over supplies from the American Corner's office. I pulled out supplies and clean garbage that would have otherwise been thrown away and this pile of materials were the only resources the group was allowed to use.

As an instructor, it was challenging to find the boundary between structure and chaos that best suited a happy working environment. On days with too little structure, the participants became easily bored, while on the days with too much structure I noticed the same result. This constantly kept me on my toes and became a gratifying challenge from a teaching perspective: one that fostered a strong connection between me and the participants. By the second week the participants who began the workshop skeptical and bored were actively participating, and they felt free enough to let me know when they had become bored with a specific project and wanted something new. For example, not every participant wanted to work on the garbage sculpture because they did not think they were good with their hands, or they simply weren't interested in crafting art. In this case, I would engage them in discussions about books, films, or television while we were gluing and cutting on the sculpture. It wouldn't take long before the participant in question would pick up a bottle of

glue and start working, or begin working independently on an individual project. If they started listening to headphones while we were working, it was a simple matter of talking about the music they were listening to and asking if they could introduce us to it while we work. In this way I tried to preserve their freedom without enabling anarchy.



When the class began it was clear that the participants were all used to the prescribed educational model of sitting in class meekly as “depositories” (Freire 1970 p. 72). In the early days of our discussions they sat quietly and waited for me to present information to them. To inspire discussion, I put them in a position where they had to defend themselves. On one of our literature and performance days I brought with me an article written by Spanish novelist Javier Marías for the Three Penny Review. The article is called *Seven Reasons Not to Write Novels and One Reason to Write Them* (2014). Instead of handing out copies, I read the article out loud and “performed” it as the impassioned, cynical writer. All seven reasons Marías gives for not writing a novel are convincing and come from a place of hard won knowledge. However, after I reached the end and said “I guess none of you should write novels.” The participants maintained that the one reason Marías gave for writing a book was stronger than all seven together. This is part of that reason: “Writing novels allows the novelist to spend much of his time in a fictional world, which is really the only or at least the most bearable place to be. This means that he can live in the realm of what might have been and never was,

and therefore in the land of what is still possible, of what will always be about to happen, what has not yet been dismissed as having happened already or because everyone knows it will never happen.” (Marías 2014) The participants defended their right to write and chastised me for saying otherwise. This activity was a turning point in our discussions and their vehement defense of their right to write, despite all the hardships in the life of a writer, seem to inspire them to start contributing to other discussions.

I found the students who were not interested in art, but were interested in the English language, were the most difficult to engage. These participants said they preferred math and science: art seemed purposeless to them, and they felt like they were untalented. I will use one participant as a case study, YP1, a 15-year-old female. YP1 seemed like a student in school who would be deemed “socially awkward.” The coordinators at American Corner commented on her strange voice and she isolated herself from the rest of the participants during the first two weeks of the workshop. She openly said she doesn’t participate in art and she only came to practice English. During my first day of presentations she interrupted me frequently and would sometimes sleep for a portion of the class. During the second class of interruptions, I stopped and said “I know you are interrupting me because you’re bored. So we can change the subject if you tell me what your passion is.” She replied that she did not have a passion, and I responded by saying “yes, you do, only passionate people get disruptive.” She did not sleep for the rest of class and I had no other interruptions during my presentation, although it took a few more classes before she began participating in the discussions. She seemed to be testing me, and her behavior seemed to stem from insecurity rather than anti-authoritarian sentiment. After all, the mere fact that she kept attending class was reason enough to assume some part of her wanted to be there. She remained quiet, but slowly began working on small side projects. Our last project was the creation of a film. The group had to build a storyboard and work as a team. There would be no script, instead they were asked to improvise as a character within the story they had created together. I assigned myself the role of acting coach and consultant and I assigned the tasks in this project, giving YP1 the position of director. She immediately set to work and began coming up with ideas, managing the group, and overseeing the project. The film project was a favorite with the group and they commandeered the entire library as a set. They recruited the staff to play roles in the film, scouted locations, organized their shoot schedule and worked with the staff to adjust the

space. My jaw dropped when I saw “socially awkward” YP1 announce to a library full of adult strangers that they are making a film and asking them to participate.

The story the participants created was a mockumentary⁷² that followed a group of filmmakers and their unreliable director. The director character had promised money and a big star to carry the film, but neither make an appearance, much to the chagrin of the cast. In the end, the entire affair ends up being a dream of one of the actors. She can simply wake up and all is set right. Building a story of the corrupt authority figure full of empty promises seemed to be cathartic for the participants. Making the entire story a dream that can easily be forgotten was the only solution they thought probable in such a situation. Although I believe it is easy to read too deeply into the participant’s film, they did mention more than once in class that they wished their parents had higher salaries and were happier in their jobs. I couldn’t help but make the comparison between what they told me of their reality and the way they chose to solve a similar problem in their creative work.



Not all of the changes in the students were as dramatic as YP1, but I found that the barriers that existed between age, gender, and social skill faded quickly as we worked creatively. On the last day I scheduled a party with snacks and invited the participants’ parents and friends to come see the work. This gave the participants a social presentation to look forward to and added enough pressure for them to want to be ‘good’ since others would be judging it, but

⁷² A film made in mock documentary style.

apart from that the only objective was to create. It was hard work, and the constant intellectual engagement required to recognize patterns, offer the next inquiry, and problem solve seemed to make the participants forget that they “didn’t care,” “didn’t like something,” “didn’t see the point” or “weren’t any good at something.” These were all sentiments they expressed in the beginning. I explained that sometimes an artistic process is sloppy, chaotic, frustrating, or even manic. It’s the struggle to overcome these things that makes for great art. This lesson resonated with the participants and they related it to their struggles as young people without any prompting from me. YP3’s statement “you’re not talking to everyone, you’re talking to individuals” was revelatory. I did not commiserate with the participants about the difficult economy in their country. I did not talk about the differences between Serbia and United States, or pressure them to express themselves about Serbian problems. Instead I asked them “what do you think?” And challenged them with “so, you’re human, what are you going to do about it?” Originally, I did this because there was no need to address socioeconomic issues in such a uniform group, but in retrospect, even in a more socioeconomically diverse group, I would have done the same. The participants are individuals, and no matter their background, all of them seek answers and strive for beauty.

However, it is not possible to reach every young person and I lost one 17-year-old participant early on. I also think that the course could have benefited from slightly more structure within the themes. But before our party, I asked the students to answer some questions and give feedback. This is the focus group discussion, and overall the participants were very positive about what they had learned and very eager to know when the next set of classes would be held. Granted, these are students with families who support them and who probably do well in at least some of their school subjects. They are also young people who were interested in developing themselves further before attending the class. Although the observational session was revealing and successful in some ways, it was a failure when it came to crossing socioeconomic barriers with aesthetic education. However, having worked with groups of Roma children at flood shelters in May 2014 on just two occasions, I found that these marginalized children were even more responsive and open to working with artistic mediums than the participants in the observation group. I found that the Roma children were eager to accept everything offered and were hungry for imaginative play. On one occasion I led the children, ages four to twelve, through a dramatic imagination exercise where they took

on the role of a rogue ship crew. We acted like good-hearted pirates stuck in a storm who had to save animals from an island. A volunteer from UNICEF helped with translation and we used an outdoor area as our “classroom.” The participants in this exercise chased the animals at first because two of the boys wanted to be hunters, but then one stopped and said “no, they are friendly animals and we need to help them.” All the other “pirates” sheathed their cutlasses and begin taking care of the animals. At each step of the exercise, one child would add more to the story and the rest of the group would eagerly follow along without judgment. So in some ways attracting the interest of the privileged participants, and meeting their expectations, proved more difficult than crossing socioeconomic barriers. The issues to the marginalized group are not equal to those of the privileged group. In the former situation it is a question of access and economy, not a lack of interest: in the latter group it is fighting through stigma.

Chapter 7- Discussion of Findings and Patterns in Field Research

“I was not born to be forced. I will breathe after my own fashion.” *Civil Disobedience*, Henry David Thoreau (p. 376)

The most obvious of the patterns to emerge in the fieldwork was young people’s reliance on technology, and especially the Internet, as an outlet for self-expression, a tool for learning, and a way to find cultural community. There is no denying that affordability of telecommunications make it a practical route in the marketing arena. However, young people seem to turn to the Internet not just because of cost, but because of inclusion. The difficult and awkward phases of adolescence can hide behind an anonymous identity and young people can express themselves without a backlash of judgement. Their voices are measured equal to an adult’s in issues they feel excluded from in the “real world.” This is their generation’s gateway to the world, so it is not surprising that artistic movements with a basis in Internet communications are being accepted outside institutionalized methods of displaying artwork, such as the Altlit movement and the Open Culture self-education website. Mrdja, and other researchers, point to young people’s apathy, indifference, and passive participation as a reason for the sharp decline in participation. But apathy in large numbers can also be a dissent on the status quo, particularly in a society that has been dissatisfied with the results of a very active

revolution. Mrdja is right to point to the psychological domino effect of war and revolution, but what then can we blame it on in the United States?

The quest for what technology means for the production and dissemination of artwork is a journey for the young. It is part of the young generation's search for beauty. It seems, while there is disagreement about the value of the Internet, even among young people, there is no denying the leveling effect it has.

Based on the fieldwork for this thesis, as well as my own experience, I find that many cultural organizations and institutions recognize the need to engage young people. However, only a few have taken definitive steps to incorporate long-term programs that cultivate demand. There seems to be a general attitude of despair about the "apathy" in the current generation of young people, but few concrete solutions are offered. With the exception of a few exclusive programs that inevitably draw participation from segments of society that already know the benefit of arts and desire alternative education. Another common attitude seems to be that of Sandra Nikolic at the American Corner: they know they should attract youth, but they wait for the youth to come to them and express an interest. There seems to be a far-reaching economic pressure that leaves no member of society untouched. Every party interviewed mentioned the difficulty of surviving on the funding available, or in Ana Reb's case, being talked out of a career in art by the fear that she will not make money. Young people's priority shift on marks over learning is no surprise when these economic pressures are taken into account. Society tells both organizations and individuals that education and participation in anything, whether art or a hobby, must show results which eventually make money. The only young participant in the observation group who claimed that both her and her parents want her to be an artist was the 11-year-old. Every other participant, whether they were interested in art or not, did not consider a future in the arts.

In the United States, the young generation is becoming more aware that the expensive education they are paying for will not result in a job within their field. It is not that young people in Serbia and the United States are not interested in learning, it is that they feel their learning systems are not in touch with the world they know. I believe that young people are already making demands on culture in their own way: by ignoring it in the open, but investigating it in secret using the silent voice of the Internet. Those savvy enough have already begun to turn technology into careers. If I look at the icons and heroes of today's

youth in the U.S. I see Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg YouTube self-made stars.⁷³ Even major political movements, such as the overthrow of the Egyptian government began on a social network. More nefarious campaigns like ISIS Twitter feeds⁷⁴ have attempted to spread fear through social media channels. Both heroics and wars are taking advantage of a tool that is shaping the perceptions of the young generation.

Predictions of what this untamed creative initiative means to the future economy are being made by writers like Richard Florida and his *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002). It is through work like this that a monetary value is being put on creativity: it is already becoming a commodity to be bought and sold. This may inevitably lead to educational systems taking education in aesthetics more seriously. This seems idealistic, however, systems are already adjusting according to research on creativity. Dr. Adele Diamond's⁷⁵ research in cognitive development and the importance of play and creativity influenced change in the value system of the schools in British Columbia. Dr. Ken Robinson⁷⁶ talks on creativity and the role of education is one of the most popular TED talks to date. However, there is always a risk that if an economic value is placed on human need, emotional life, and creativity then there is chance it will be corrupted. If this happens, it may become the responsibility of cultural organizations to preserve the true purpose of creative thought: the betterment of an individual and society, it's history, context, and self-expression outside of economic value.

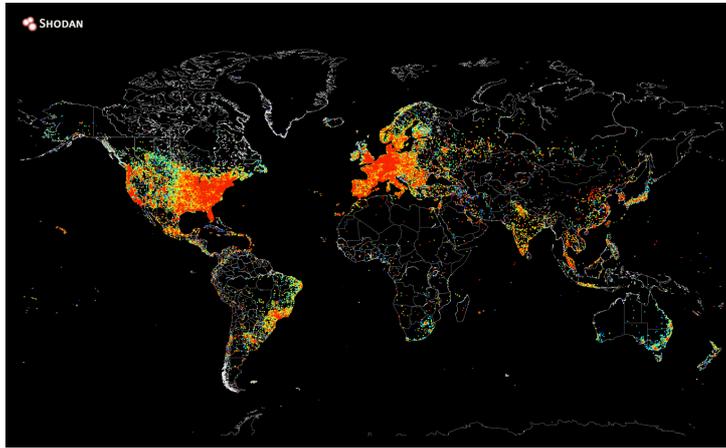
It is also important to point out that technology competing with culture is a Western problem. The image below was created in August 2014 by John Matherly.

⁷³ In one of my weekend English classes I assigned an essay project to my students. One, age 14, chose to write an essay on a YouTube group. He outlined the entire process of collecting views on YouTube and turned it into a business model. He had researched the field, knew the names of entrepreneurs, and assembled a list of the equipment he needed. This same student was not receiving high marks in his history or math classes.

⁷⁴ One of the feed posts included a map of Europe and north Africa taken from a computer game developed by Paradox Development Studio.

⁷⁵ Dr. Adele Diamond is an American scholar working in Canada at the University of British Columbia.

⁷⁶ Sir Ken Robinson is a scholar, author, and speaker from the U.K. who is working in the USA.



The red on the image marks the places where people are connected to the Internet. It is clear that I've focused on two Western societies and their decline in cultural participation despite the opportunities offered to them.

However, technology is merely a tool and if young people are to learn to use it well, they need guidance. Deep thinking and feeling is as much a learned ability as any other skill. I observed this in my students. However, this skill is often overlooked when talking about art with students. Teachers and cultural managers seem to have a “they either have it or they don't” attitude. Because of this attitude, from a young person's point of view, cultural organizations are viewed as groups that are part of the same system that is leaving them educated and unemployed.

The arts are still associated with luxury and free time, not as integral to the wholeness of an individual. This is by far the biggest obstacle to engaging youth in culture. No one educational or outreach program can solve societal and political problems of this scale. However, cultural organizations assuming their civic responsibility rather than working hard to achieve numbers that appease funders may be an important part of the process⁷⁷. Aesthetic education is an essential part of an individual's intellectual, spiritual, societal, and emotional development. To ignore this is to destroy one's own audience. The decline in cultural participation in the United States and Serbia are two distinct problems, but both countries must look to their own value systems as one source of the problem. For too long art, and particularly aesthetic sensibility, has been considered a hobby, a special talent, or an accidental gift reserved for the select few individuals lucky enough to grasp it. The participants in the observational session did not perceive of themselves as talented, confident, or artistic, yet they created art, solved problems in aesthetics together, and were proud of their

⁷⁷ As in ticket sales and number of participants.

work. Art is not exclusively a hobby, but an essential skill set that helps each individual place themselves within the larger framework of a global society: assisting him or her to think deeply and critically, and to have ideas that allow that individual to rise above the mediocrity of making it to the next paycheck. When established institutions and organizations fail to provide development in this area, young people turn to where they feel free to express themselves and be heard: in the modern world this is the Internet. This self-created world brings the emotional satisfaction of culture at half the cost. It is here that young people believe they can discover and begin to own culture without the ever present eye of a supervisor, or “depositor” as Freire describes traditional teachers. Young people seem to be aware when marketing is targeting them and this too seems to have a contradictory effect to what advertisers intend. YP1 summed this up when she said “Again, and again, and again, and again. The first time okay, but again, oh god.” (Appendix D p.156)

However, cultural institutions and organizations that embark on nonobjective aesthetic education programs are still faced with the problem of evaluating their methodology. But perhaps the lack of critical evaluation is not only a fear of losing funds, but of losing face. The arts have had to justify themselves within education for far too long and to report a misstep at this stage may be perceived as a betrayal to the practitioners that have fought their way into school systems, social institutions, and organizations. Impact assessment that measures the long-term social result is needed, but traditional evaluation methods that produce percentages and quantitative data may not be conducive to aesthetic education evaluation. In general there seems to be a palpable frustration with target-driven, economy-driven educational objectives. Every educational initiative I researched, including some of the theory, seems to have been galvanized by this frustration. Cultural institutions and organization, whether aware or not, are also suffering from the emphasis on measurable objectives. Attempting to solve the problem through marketing methods stolen from business models meant for products has not proven a sustainable solution. There also seems to be an “every man for himself” survival attitude among cultural organizations and institutions that influences decision-making. For example, educational programming is seen as a way for organizations to attract grants, but sometimes not taken seriously as audience development, i.e. “kids and marginalized groups don’t have the money for tickets, so why should I focus on them?” This is destructive to kids and cultural organizations. Also, the emphasis in discussion among cultural organizations is “what do we do to survive?” “what do we do to sustain ourselves?” These questions are a type of

institutional navel-gazing that takes cultural institutions and organizations out of the larger framework of society, but also overlooks their civic responsibility. Empirically, I've both witnessed this attitude as well as been part of it. This discussion has made headlines lately in *Art Journal* in an article called *The Arts in a Civic World Upside Down* by Diane Ragsdale and in a speech by Mark Ravenhill of the Royal Shakespeare Company at the 2013 Edinburgh Festival. In essence, cultural managers are facing a generational conundrum where whole nations and communities are questioning their identity in an increasingly globalized society. Culture has long relied on being a luxury item for the affluent classes, but these patrons are dying off and the younger generation has fewer prospects, less money to spend, and less attachment to what once constituted 'great art.' In the struggle to keep their doors open, cultural organizations tend to look internally and have become competitive and more and more detached from the communities they are meant to be a part of. Ragsdale argues that cultural institutions and organizations must accept their responsibility as civic leaders and start listening to the community. This includes all facets of the community, from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Chapter 8- Recommendations for Encouraging Future Cultural Participants in the 21st Century Using Nonobjective Aesthetic Education

Nonobjective aesthetic education is not perfect, but may be closer to how the young generation absorbs information. It recognizes that human beings make emotional decisions, love narrative, and seek interconnected patterns. Also, the spontaneity, freedom, creativity, and collaboration of nonobjective aesthetic education demand that the participant take responsibility and follow through. It presents a challenge beyond the digital world and encourages a higher order of thinking. However, it is not aesthetic education methodology that I discovered in my research, but a more pervasive set of attitudes that may prevent it from being implemented in the first place. It is impossible to begin experimenting with methodology if the value system is not there to support it. The following recommendations are based off the findings in the fieldwork and the theory. They are addressed to the organizations in the U.S. and Serbia but can be applied in a range of cultural contexts.

1. Assume civic and social responsibility.

Cultural institutions and organizations in the arts are generally modeled to support the arts: in other words, themselves. However, their place inside a larger whole is often taken for

granted. But the “if you build it, they will come” philosophy is not only not sustainable in a competitive economy, but is not sustainable in a socially diverse world. It is not enough to voice frustration at the fissures in society that prevent individuals from participating in culture. Organizations must take responsibility for their own role in cultivating demand. This will be a difficult recommendation to follow because it may mean that an organization will have to accept that it is time to shut their doors and change focus. It may also mean more work and restructuring.

One of the most important aspects of taking responsibility is listening to what young people want. As YP3 said: “I think these classes were committed to children and the people who attend it, and it’s not just to everyone, you’re not talking to everyone, you’re talking to individuals and asking them questions and you’re interested in the answers. I think it’s really great that the teacher has an interest to pupils and not just the work she’s doing.” (Appendix D p. 151).

2. Building and strengthening partnerships.

Education as audience development strategy is an approach that requires a strengthening of partnerships. Lowell and Zakaras also point to collaboration as a beneficial for all parties as evidenced by their recommendation: “Support Collaborative Programs That Increase the Amount and Breadth of Arts Learning.” (Lowell and Zakaras 2009 p. 101). This means partnerships between all stakeholders, not just other NGOs with the same aims, but civic initiatives, schools, teachers, teaching artists, cultural organizations, and associations. These partnerships are often instituted in tumultuous times as a self-preservation measure. However, in this case partnerships are a necessary part of understanding the beneficiary’s needs even in a stable society and economy. A number of motivated groups in Serbia are already organized in support of creative education and inclusion, such as Dr. Ristic and the CEDEUM association, ApsArt’s work with the disadvantaged and marginalized, the IDC or Initiative for Development and Cooperation, and El Sistema. Successful initiatives outside of Serbia can be used as models for the creation of partnered programs, such as The Creative School Initiative in Sweden that Ulrika Lindblad presented in 2011 at the Belgrade Cultural Centre.

3. Implement consistent evaluation methodology outside of the demands of funding bodies.

The evaluation procedures for funding bodies are not likely to change quickly. The investment necessary to research, standardize, and implement evaluation changes is prohibitive. However, implementing evaluation methods within an institution or organization, outside of what is demanded by funding bodies, is a first step to better quality programming. This may require further partnerships with research groups that can follow the entire process of an educational program, like the Guggenheim's literacy project.

4. Provide professional development for teaching artists.

Teaching artists are the foundation of educational outreach. Professional development of their skills is essential in the creation of outreach programs. This is beneficial not just for the groups that come in contact with teaching artists, but to the artists themselves. It is also a process where the artist has as much to gain as participant. This is because of the dialogue and deep inquiry that takes place between all participating parties.

5. Reassess value systems. Support efforts to integrate the arts into society through education.

Reassess the value system within organizations and ask tough questions. Why did the organization begin in the first place? Has it served its purpose? How has it grown, not grown? What has it done for society? Who benefits from its work? These are examples of questions that cultural organizations must answer. These are not questions that can be brushed aside with the instatement of standards or a mission statement. They are questions that should be asked frequently throughout an organization's lifespan. The value system of an organization should always be based on who benefits from the work and if that is achieved.

6. Base education planning on discussions between all stakeholders, including young people.

Young people, as much as any other social group, like to contribute to decision-making that directly affects their life. For an organization to exclude the very demographic that it hopes to reach is impractical. Inclusion in the form of focus groups, elected committees, and socially engaging events that foster discussion are likely to be more successful than online surveys or questionnaires. Mrdja is right to classify youth as a social group.

7. Be comfortable with ambiguity and experimentation.

Educational programming may fail, just as any other risk-taking venture. However, it is by failing that invaluable lessons are learned. In the observational sessions, each participant

developed differently, processed information differently, and used the skills they acquired in sessions according to their tastes. Some participants made mistakes while working on their art pieces, this deflated them and they protested that they simply “weren’t good at it.” I’ve witnessed the same attitude at cultural organizations. However, it is by keeping with a project and refining it with concentrated effort and hard work that results will eventually be seen. Here organizations must borrow a lesson from LCI’s Capacities and learn to accept ambiguity and not rely on the concrete results expected on grant proposals. As Maxine Greene says: “All we can do, I believe, is cultivate multiple ways of seeing and multiple dialogues in a world where nothing stays the same.” (Greene 1995 p. 16)

Conclusion

To think creatively is to think critically and to notice deeply, they are the quintessential skills of an artist. But these skills can threaten an established order and a struggling economy provides the perfect excuse to silence a search for beauty. However, apathy and lack of initiative may be an act of defiance against an industrial and post-industrial society that built too much and put the young generation in the position to clean up the mess. If so, then the art of the young generation will reflect this frustration outside of the cultural institutions that appear to serve their antagonists. This is a natural conflict between generations that has happened before, but in this case it seems to be an unconscious rebellion, quiet, and not purpose-driven. Rather, the mantra for this generation is “if I can get it free online, why should I pay? I’ve seen everything you’ve done before? What’s the point?” This is a symptom of a burgeoning “global culture” or “globalization.” No longer is the Serbian History Museum sharing audience with the Yugoslav Museum of History, now they are sharing an audience with YouTube and Facebook. No amount of flashy spectacle will compete. I’ve observed that what young people desire is true experience, involvement, and the interaction that the a screen and keyboard will never be able to give them. There is also a desire to collaborate, tactile stimulus, discussion, and experimentation. These are all things that technology on its own cannot offer them and something cultural organizations do best. It is because young people desire interaction that I believe educational programming is the key to building a demanding generation of participants.

It is not enough to simply hand select those with talent and give them the tools for a better future. Humanity surrounds itself with beauty, even when it has nothing. We add beauty to the way we eat our food, the way we dress ourselves, and the way we spend our money. Our search for beauty is personal, deeply felt, and I do not know one person who would tolerate their right to personal taste being deprived for very long. Art is not a luxury, it is a necessity. One that has the capacity to instill empathy, emotional depth, and constant inquiry. However, in the modern world the search of beauty may be defined better as the struggle for beauty. For it is only in times of struggle that we truly appreciate its power.

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Appendix A - Transcription of Interview with Teachers

Transcription of interview with Violeta Milicevic, teacher of Serbian and literature at Belgrade First Economics School (Secondary school) for 18 years, and Olivera Nedeljkovic acting as translator and contributing as an English teacher at the same school for 20 years. Interview conducted on the 13th of May 2014. B represents Olivera Nedeljkovic and A represents Violeta Milicevic.

Introductions and presentation of thesis topic.

Ross: So, we'll start...because I think it's important how you became a teacher, your own background...where, um...

B: (translates)

Ross: I have a specific question to get the conversation started. Can you remember what was the first play you ever saw?

B: (translates) From your whole life?

Ross: Yes, from the theater or...?

B: (translates)

A: No.

Ross: What about the first book you ever read?

A: First?

B: Yes.

A: (answers in Serbian)

B: Her background is her parents are workers, her father was, he died. She doesn't have anyone in that profession, she doesn't have interaction (with art) with her family.

A: (in Serbian)

B: When they (she was) twelve they left Serbia and went to Germany to work.

A: (in Serbian)

B: She was left with her aunts and grandparents in Serbia.

A: (in Serbian)

B: In a village, not a town, in a village.

A: (in Serbian)

B: So, it's a small village and she didn't have a chance to visit theater, or there wasn't any kind of cultural events.

Ross: Okay.

A: (in Serbian)

B: Literature was the only way to learn something about things, so she started reading books.

A: (in Serbian)

B: We have a good habit (tradition) to receive a book at the end of a school year. (The students) in primary school got the book as a reward for good results.

A: (in Serbian)

B: She remembered that the first book she got from the first year of primary school was a Russian fairytale.

A: (in Serbian)

B: Something like a small horse, something like a horse flying in the title, I can't translate the title.

Ross: Pegasus?

A: Ne, ne..

B: A horse that has a hump, or something like that, like a camel, but it flies.

Ross: I'll look it up and see if I can find it.

B: Maybe she can find the Russian title.

A: Da, da, da...

B: But it's a fairytale. We usually got fairytales from different parts of the world in the first three or four years of our primary school. I also got that as well, because I'm uh, I'm uh a bit older than (she gestures to us and laughs.) I am six years older than A.

A: Da,da..

B: So, we started with that good habit (tradition) to have books. If you ask me about my age, I am 50 years old, so that's that. (she laughs)

Ross: Do they still give books to children in primary school (as a reward)?

B: No, they don't have money, but parents usually agree to collect money and buy that in primary school. (she translates for A who nods to her.) I did that with my parents (of her students) we collected money and bought them books. But we stopped that after five years, because they (students) didn't like our books. We tried to buy them something about science or something like that, but we stop that because they didn't want that, they want some easy literature. That's what my daughter said and she had read two or three books that we bought.

Ross: Okay, okay. So you answered the first AND second question.

A: (in Serbian to B)

B: Ah-ha, she wants to tell you something about theater.

A: (in Serbian)

B: Some holiday, some national day, some celebration they had some performance they prepared with the teacher. They perform some play, dance, drama poems, acting, something like that. The teacher organized that.

Ross: Is this something the children enjoyed?

A. Da (in Serbian)

B: They were very serious about that, they took it very seriously. It was a great honor to take part in that, a great honor to take part.

A: (in Serbian)

B: There was some competition where you send your poems, your writings. People voted for that and you got the first, second prize, something like that.

A: (in Serbian)

B: We still have that today, somewhere in the country, some literature competition.

A: (in Serbian)

B: But it's very important that the teacher initiate that, help them, help the student, give them some advice, or encourage them to take part in that.

A: (in Serbian)

B: That was very important to her, that as a pupil, but she as a teacher feels it is the same situation today. If you find some students who are interested in that how to encourage them to do that.

A: (in Serbian)

B: And she had drama club here for 10 years. In our school.

A: (in Serbian)

B: It is very important for kids, to give them the task to do something. They enjoy that, to be given something to do.

Ross: And when you have the time, if you have any free time, do you still go out and seek these things (art and culture) out for yourself, for your own pleasure?

B: (translates)

A: Da, da, da...(in Serbian)

B: Very often. And she, okay I say, she makes a group of students and goes together with them outside to the theater or something like that.

Ross: oh, good

B: She got the cheaper tickets for them and that's it. (translates) At least once a month, I think. Cause I know that (they both laugh.)

A: (in Serbian)

B: Even more than once a month she offers them a couple of plays or something like that.

Ross: Do you find that your taste (in this context, desire and quality of work) has grown as you've grown into an adult?

A: (in Serbian)

B: The more you watch the plays the more you deserve from them, the more critical you are.

Ross: Do you have a favorite art form? Has it always been literature?

B: (translates)

A: (in Serbian) She started from literature, she likes literature, dance, film and exhibition. She takes the students out for exhibitions.

Ross: So, there is no limit, if something is good, it's good.

(A and B discuss in Serbian)

B: If one likes art, he likes all aspects of art.

Ross: Have you ever imagined yourself an artist?

B: I will answer that, because she is writer and she write poems.

Ross: So, you are an artist.

B: Yes, she is an artist.

(A blushes and becomes shy, B is obviously proud of her friend.)

B: (translates)

A: (in Serbian)

B: She didn't imagine, but it somehow came out of her.

Ross: It is out of a need, a need she has.

(They discuss together in Serbian)

B: Da, the need to express yourself.

(they discuss again)

B: She has two books, one is a poetry and one is a travel book. Something like that.

Ross: A travelogue?

B: Yes, something like that.

Ross: Why is traveling important?

A: (in Serbian)

B: At first, in the beginning, she wanted to see what she read about.

A: (in Serbian)

B: Paris, Venice, Italy because she read about that. Spain, all that.

A: (in Serbian)

B: Where some writers, artists lived and to see their work.

A: (in Serbian)

B: And later she got friends there, from that countries and went to visit them.

A: (in Serbian)

B: And it is a way for them to learn about OUR culture, from this interaction.

Ross: Do you use art as a tool? And how often to you use it? For example, do you bring in a painting and ask students to write about it, or to compose a poem based on a piece of music. Things like that, mixing mediums.

B: (translates)

A: (in Serbian)

B: She uses Powerpoint presentation.

A: (in Serbian)

B: She copies a painting there, and gives asks them write a poem about that.

A: (in Serbian)

B: For example, now they do Anna Karenina and a character Vronsky, he was a historical character, he was buried in Serbia, real historic, and she brought a picture of his monument grave where he was buried in (near the village) Gornji Adrovac (real historic character's name is Nikolay Raevsky). And she told them he was buried there and that's the character from that novel, with Anna Karenina novel, so that's it. Make some connection with reality, with something that exists here. So, that's at present what she is doing.

A: (in Serbian)

B: She has...(they laugh and discuss in Serbian) She has a tape with an original Neruda recording...

A: (in Serbian)

B: Ah-ha, there is a poem of his reading and she plays it for her students. They can here the rhythm of flamenco dance or something like that.

Ross: I imagine the students like this very much, that's it's successful.

B: (translates)

A: (in Serbian)

B: They like that, but they expect from us to be some sort of, not teacher, not educator, but sort of entertainer. To entertain them, we call that entertaining.

A: (in Serbian)

B: A little like artists, so usually we make jokes or tell them something jokingly.

Ross: Do you find that irritating?

B: (translates)

A: (in Serbian)

B: No, not to much but sometimes she would like them to be more serious and to give them more facts, usually they don't like facts.

(we all laugh)

Ross: Do you find students....first of all, how long have you been teaching? Both of you can answer.

A: 18 years, B: About B0.

B: Before that I worked in an export/import company.

Ross: So something totally different.

B: Because of the economic situation here, because there was a war here. So I stopped that and started teaching because it was the only job I could find.

Ross: Do you notice a change in the students from when you started teaching until now?

B: (translates) Yes.

Ross: If you were to describe it brief. What is the major change?

A: (in Serbian)

B: She noticed a difference after the bombing, the kids after the war. They are less interested in real knowledge.

A: (in Serbian)

B: They want to be entertained more. I think in their early children they were not given enough, I don't know...um, support because the parents were out working or something like that, so they didn't have the chances. They are also more relaxed. They are more interested in marks, not knowledge, they want just to have good grades. They just want to pass the exam and all that, and I think they are not really ready to work hard. That's it they are not patient enough. They want easy money, or something like that.

(Some conversational digression involving this same trend in the United States.)

Ross: How do you as teachers evaluate the success of your student outside of just giving a grade? How can you tell your classroom session has been successful?

B: (translates)

A: (in Serbian)

B: We as teachers do a lot to follow all the trends. We attend some lectures, read a lot about methodology, or about psychology of students or that sort of work, that's it.

A: (in Serbian)

B: We are telling them all the time that they should not stop learning, that there is life learning, as they say.

A: (in Serbian)

B: We also encourage them to learn by internet because they have all the knowledge more available than we did, for example. For example, I don't have English books here. I have only photocopies. They have television, cable TV, internet.

Ross: Do you have students coming into class and saying "look what I found?" Do they bring information they found these different ways to you?

B: (translates)

A: (in Serbian)

B: Yes, if we tell them the topic, or something like that.

A: (in Serbian)

B: If we tell them that we are going to talk about something, about Hemingway, or something like that, then they will go and find some information from somewhere else. But we have to tell them the topic.

Ross: So for instance, they don't come in and say 'oh, Hemingway is interesting, but guess what I found? This Colette in France, she's also cool' or something like that?

B: Yes, that's exactly right. But sometimes they say about history or about politics they found out, something that's not related to the topic, yes. Something from the newspaper, or something from history, if they're interested in that.

A: (in Serbian)

B: Ah-ha, we are talking about majority, there is some...there are some exceptions.

Ross: Do you notice in the beginning that your students already have a general knowledge about art? Or are you starting from the very beginning?

B: (translates)

A: (let's out a long sigh and begins in Serbian)

B: Art in general? Or...?

Ross: In general.

B: In general, for instance, they know the Mona Lisa, etc. Who painted it? etc.

A and B: Da, da...they know, they know from primary school.

B: Here is an economics school, they don't have art subjects and I think they are missing that.

Ross: Is it that the students are interested in the arts, they just happen to go to a school where it is not offered as much?

B: (translates)

A: (in Serbian)

B: Always after, they enroll in school but there are always students that later find out that they don't like economics and they want something else

A: (in Serbian)

B: If she finds the students are interested in art, or in acting or something, she pays more attention to this.

A: (in Serbian)

B: That's they way, she had Student A (a colleague) find out. He had good marks in economics, but she knew he would go to study literature.

Ross: And every year do you have a few students like that?

A: Da.

Ross: When you expose your students to cultural events do you find that they become more interested in everything else? Do you see a result from taking them to these cultural events? Are they better in school, are their studies a bit more focused, do they start to become more interested in things, etc. ?

B: translates

A: Da.

B: It always helps.

Ross: Can you see it in their behavior?

B: (translates)

A: (in Serbian)

B: They listen more carefully. There is always, there is a small group of people that regularly follow some cultural events. Yes, in each class. Sometimes, as a class master I want to say, sometimes I push them. For example, some kids they don't want to go and I say yes, you have to go. Otherwise you'll get, you know you press them.

Ross: Our teachers offered extra credit.

B: If we press them a couple of times, I feel that some of them go along with that. They got used to it and start going alone. But sometimes you have to push them. Even as a parent I did that with my kids, you have to go and you repeat, repeat and after that they start doing that.

Ross: Have you ever solicited help outside of school, maybe friends of yours or an organization you really like, and asked them to come to the school?

B: (translates)

A: (in Serbian)

B: Yes, she went with her play to Stana Krusvac (?) and they invited them to come to the school and play as well, from another town.

Ross: Another group of students then?

B: Yes, another from another school.

A: (in Serbian)

B: She used to play in amateur group and she invites them here (the school) to come and play.

Ross: It's an amateur theater group of ex-students?

B: Yes, ex-students of hers.

Ross: And they come back?

B: They come back and play with other groups.

Ross: Have you ever worked with professionals in the field?

B: (translates) You mean actors or something?

Ross: Yeah, for instance, an actor coming into a class and reading a piece of literature or teaching a workshop.

B: (translates)

A: (in Serbian)

B: I am not sure we are allowed to do that. I think we need special consent for a class. So it could be outside the class, maybe for an evening or something like that, but not really in the class. I think we are not allowed to do that if we don't get some sort of approval for that.

Ross: So there is some red tape?

B: (rolls her eyes) Yes.

A: (in Serbian, also rolls her eyes).

Ross: If you found this was made available to you, would you be interested in using it?

B: Da (translates). Of course we would.

A: (in Serbian)

B: Of course, she would love to do that.

Ross: Do you find that, because this new group of students demands entertainment, do you find you have to change lesson plans in the moment?

B: (translates)

A: (in Serbian)

B: No, she does not change the plan, but sometimes she has to give up, give them less information or something like that.

A: (in Serbian)

B: Because there is not enough time. She has only three lessons a week.

Ross: How long are the classes?

B: 45 minutes and I think it's not enough.

Ross: It's very short.

B: Yes, you start something then you're stopped. That's why I ask next year I want a double class.

Ross: Is that possible?

B: I have done it before. But they said they cannot do that it is not possible for the future.

(A and B confer in Serbian)

B: She said it is much better when you have two classes together.

Ross: How big a role does discussion play when you have so little time?

B: (translates)

A: (in Serbian)

B: Yes, she is like a speaker, and there is usually some group, like a group work. She gives the work to someone, they are speaking and there is someone who has argument for, or argument against. So that's, that's it, you do like that.

A: (in Serbian)

B: Now she is doing the Anna Karenina novel and there are always those students who approve her behavior and those against her behavior. And even after classes they discuss or argue about that.

(we all laugh)

B: So that is how you set the topic. So they can learn to make arguments for or against.

Ross: In light of this, I know you said that students were very goal-oriented and gloss over the process, what do you think it would look like if grades/marks were eradicated?

B: (translates)

Ross: In an imaginary world.

A: (in Serbian)

B: She wouldn't like that.

Ross: So they serve a purpose?

A: (in Serbian)

B: You know, we have some subjects that are not marked and usually the teachers have a problem with that. Although they are very creative you know, it's something like civil education, or something like that. So they still have purpose so that we can force them to do something and skip (press) them with the mark, unfortunately.

Ross: What happens when you don't have marks?

B: They're not interested. They don't want, even if they...(in Serbian)

A: (in Serbian)

B: They have some workshops, some very interesting workshops, something on psychology or something like that. But they are interested, they don't want to go because it's not marked, so that's it.

Ross: So you find you are using the marks as bait?

B: Yes.

Ross: Let's pretend I am one of your students. How would you explain to me that it's important to work for a mark without making it too important?

(A and B discuss in Serbian)

A: (in Serbian)

B: So we talk to them about big figures, Nikola Tesla and Novak Jocavac, about those big figures who reach something, who achieve something.

A: (in Serbian, pauses and looks lost)

B: Actually it is difficult to balance that.

(They discuss in Serbian)

B: Sometimes I say to my students, 'one day you will someone who is very important to you and he will know a lot, a lot of things and you will be ashamed that you don't know that.'

Ross: That's true.

(we all laugh)

B: You know you meet someone who is very important and you will be ashamed at how little you know, so work on yourself. You'll feel more confident, you'll have experience, you'll be interesting to some people. So that's it, something from personal life, yes that's it.

(A and B discuss in Serbian)

A: (in Serbian)

B: Yes, you fall in love with someone and you cannot win them because you are inferior to that person, or something like that.

Ross: So the fear of inferiority.

B: Yes, that's the truth. Yes, it works.

A: (in Serbian)

B: Sometimes we start thinking about that and some of them have that experience.

Ross: Have you kept in touch with students you left you many years ago? Have they excelled and have any of them surprised you in some way?

B: (translates)

A: (in Serbian)

B: No, usually you can tell. It is easy to see what will become.

Appendix B - Transcription of Interview with Student

Transcribed interview with Ana Reb, age 20, law student. Interview was conducted on May 16th 2014 at Apropos, a cafe in the center of Belgrade.

Ana: I am studying law right now.

Ross: Why?

Ana: Because of my school, my school was social sciences and I didn't have another option. I thought of arts maybe, but it will be a problem in the future, because you can't live just on arts. Maybe one I will enroll in another faculty.

Ross: Who told you you can't live on art?

Ana: My mom and all the people around me. One of my teachers in high school were literally yelling at me because I am going to study law. He said I am an artist and I mustn't go there. (inaudible)

Ross: You're teacher said that.

Reb: Yeah.

Ross: Why did your teacher care so much?

Reb: Because he liked me. I mean he likes teaches a writing course, and he really presented to me the world of arts. It was the fourth year when I met him. And he studied contemporary art like from Expressionist to Modern art. It was really interesting to me and we have to make a project like conceptual art. Something like Marina Abramovic, but comment on something. We have to create our own project, our own idea. And I was like the winner of my generation and he said I a genius. He wrote in his teacher's book that I am a genius and must go to a professional organization (institution).

Ross: For conceptual art?

Reb: Yes. My theme was about animals actually...

(some unrelated chit-chat as the coffee was served)

Ross: So, your theme was about animals. What did you do with animals?

Reb: My title was "(inaudible)" it's a kind of metaphor. I don't know how to translate that. It was a metaphor of killing animals and I am strongly against that. And we have to take that

first six of them, the first six pictures, and it has to be connected to our theme. I took a picture of myself, my face, and I was kind of a mutated African tribal and animals actually. I chose that and I have to write my own abstract for it and I wrote that they [animals] have more heart than many people around them nowadays. Because they are making ceremonies when a monkey dies [for example], [inaudible] and stuff like that...

Ross: So it was activist art?

Reb: Yeah, yeah. And I have to compare my art to one of the famous artist and I compare myself to Picasso's Guernica because of the activity. It was like social something, social background. It don't have to do something with youth. I mean, you like at something with youth and maybe it's funny, but Guernica has strong message but it is so simple and my work is like that.

Ross: Did your parents take you to museums when you were young to see these things?

Reb: Well, yes, my mom was always reading me fairy tales. And then, I don't know how, my grandparents like to travel and they buy lots of interesting things. They have lots of pictures and things on the wall and it is kind of natural to me. We have lots of books with pictures and things. I don't know how, but it was a natural thing from childhood.

Ross: If your parents support the arts did you ever ask them why they don't support you becoming an artist?

Reb: I don't know. It's some kind of education. I don't know. They never forced me, I like the nature and...I was an untypical child, an extraordinary child and I prefer to play with flowers and things, then buy things. I wasn't materialistic like other kids. I was like that, I don't know. Maybe I am born like that. Maybe I am searching for...I wrote many things about that in this period. I can't remember it now. It was metaphorical comparisons and criticizing the society. [Reb shows Ross a picture of her artwork]

Ross: Are there any other subjects you like besides art?

Reb: I like art, history, literature and Serbian language. We have to read a lot of books by famous writers. I think it affected me very much...oh, and Serbian philosophy. The sum of my knowledge is in Serbian language, literature, and art. I read everything. And I hated math, I was good at it, but I hate it because it is without soul, just numbers and physics. I really hated physics.

Ross: Why do you think math and physics doesn't have soul?

Reb: Because I didn't see it. Maybe they have, it's okay for the ones who love it, but I don't.

Ross: Tell me about your teachers.

Reb: I just admire one Violeta Milicevicnd he was completely different to many other teachers. He had the power to interest me when he talks about a topic. And at first you might be scared because he is talking about some weird stuff, some of us were maybe not that mature as I was and it was difficult to go to work with him. He was like the most strict one with marks and some of the students go to the administrator and wanted to throw him out.

Ross: Because of marks?

Reb: Yeah. Because he gave one, two or three maybe in his classes. I didn't have a problem, I got five. Because he wasn't grading the production, he was grading the creation and the act, like how you are talking about art, our emotion or something like that.

Ross: Is this the same teacher who really likes your work?

Reb. Yeah.

Ross: So he was grading the students on the kind of people they were?

Reb: Maybe, maybe. I don't know but many of them have problems. And the material [book] we had to know was so large and it had the materials to work like an art's dictionary, and a list of four pages of specific artists...uh...how you say it? Ah, stupid words there...it was hard...but somehow I learned it. And about 100 pictures to recognize and to know. To recognize the artist and it was like extra material. And the official book of course. and it was like, so much for them.

Ross: In terms of grades, are you very concerned about your grades?

Reb: I was. I was. In primary school and high school I always had all the best marks. But now in faculty it's like a disaster. I don't have the most higher marks and I am unhappy. It's not my fault, it's the kind of system that is bad at my faculty.

Ross: Why do you think it's the system's fault?

Reb: I don't know maybe because the people there. They are strict and unfair and they are even on television. Some students [inaudible] to court of them. And there is nothing you can do. They are strong and in high position and have lots of [inaudible]. They are unfair. I like fairness of course. It's not...I am not crying or something, just it affects me, maybe I am oversensitive or something like that. I really hate unfairness.

Ross: And you should, there's nothing wrong with that.

Reb: I am always like other people, they get success somehow and I just don't. I am becoming very nervous and I can't concentrate.

Ross: Maybe you're teacher was right.

Reb: Because actually he enrolled in law also and he was there for one year and just run out of it. My teacher of history also, so I know some people.

Ross: Did you have a good history Violeta Milicevics well?

Reb: Yeah, I liked her very much.

Ross: Why did you like her? What did she do in the classroom?

Reb: She was strict but she liked me. I was at history competitions every year. There were some details you have to know.

Ross: Years and things like that.

Reb: Some like really details...

Ross: For the competition, for the exams too?

Reb: No, for the exams she wanted for us to understand the material. And again, some students were complaining about her because she wanted us not to just repeat.

Ross: What did they say when they complained about her?

Reb: They say she is too strict and unfair and something like that.

Ross: Was she?

Reb: No, she wasn't. She just wanted us not to learn by heart, just to understand it and to know how to retell it in our own way, not just the way it's written in the book.

Ross: Sounds fair.

Reb: It's fair to me.

Ross: Since you have a background in the arts and you like history and literature, these things are related, I assume you read a lot?

Reb: Yeah.

Ross: Law books?

[laughter]

Reb: No, I hate law books. I took literature in high school and I got to know...most I liked Dostoevsky and our writer Ivo Andric. We have to read a lot really, I can't remember all the things, but it was a lot of them from every period of literature.

Ross: Do you still read [for pleasure]?

Reb: I don't, because I don't have time. Just something on the Internet.

Ross: When is the last time you went to see a play at the theater?

Reb: I'm not sure.

Ross: You don't remember?

Reb: I like going to theaters and my mother also when I was small I have a habit of going to theaters.

Ross: It's a habit yeah?

Reb: I like it really, and we don't have many theaters here.

Ross: Do you like the theater you see, when you see it? Do you think the theater in Serbia is 'good'?

Reb: Yeah, it is, but we don't have a lot of plays unfortunately.

Ross: Let's assume you have some time to read, when you read what kinds of books do you like to read?

Reb: I like to read something about life, something about emotions, or something about personal experience of life and things affect me somehow. Like something that could be about yourself is there, like somebody said what you meant for a long time. And you can romance [meaning romanticize] about that.

Ross: What about film?

Reb: I am not used to film because I hate violence [inaudible], there are too many films that have murders and stuff like that and I don't like it. I like classical films, maybe Serbian classical films and some American ones. Maybe, "Pirates of the Caribbean" as a comedy and because of Johnny Depp, I like him as an actor.

Ross: What about independent film?

Reb: Like what?

Ross: Films that aren't produced by bigger companies, smaller films, experimental. Things like that.

Reb: No, I didn't.

Ross: What about experimental literature?

Reb: No.

Ross: What about theater? The avant garde or underground?

Reb: I never heard of it and I don't have the opportunity to participate.

Ross: If someone introduced you would you check it out?

Reb: Yeah, why not? Cause it's interesting and small and I like to see something like that..And I am sick of all that stuff that is in the media all the time, it's kind of boring. I like to research my own and to find. I think it's hard to do these days. It's not in the media and you don't have commercials so you don't know where to search for it. But if I know where is something, I will see it, definitely

Ross: Let's go back to your education. If you were offered a class that introduced you to strange things, didn't have grades, but experimental stuff, projects, would you attend?

Reb: Yeah. Because we had like, how to say it, civil...I don't know how to translate.

Ross: Like civil education, I've heard of that.

Reb: Yes, civil education, and it was interesting, it was just education without marks.

Ross: How many people went to those classes?

Reb: Just three or four of us. They wasn't interested because there were no marks. I wanted to...just more interesting subjects. Because she was introducing us to life. We talked about serious things, discrimination, blind people, problems in society and about psychology also.

Ross: But because there is no grade, nobody came.

Reb: It is kind of sad.

Ross: Was there ever an instance when outside artists or professionals came into your school to give talks or teach a workshop?

Reb: No.

Ross: Never?

Reb: No. That project that my professor had us do in the fourth year was the most creative I have done since the day I started school until the day I finished high school nothing creative besides that. Maybe there were options in the afternoon other places but I don't know.

Ross: Talk to me about some of your classmates. I know some of them were already interested in the arts before they came to school, but in general would you say...

Reb: In general in high school, I was umm...how you say...I was...I had, I didn't have many friends. Just a couple of them, and I don't know but the class hated me. I don't know, I have friends from primary school and kindergarten. They just hated me because I was too ambitious. I wanted to travel and get good marks and behave, and I was that way.

[unrelated question]

Reb: Because the kids at my school aren't so interested in arts in general.

Ross: Why do you think that is?

Reb: There are only a few of them.

Ross: But why, in your opinion, do you think that is?

Reb: There are more computers and technology and they don't go out, outside. They are just on their social networks. Too much technology, the computer destroyed that.

Ross: Do you think technology has replaced artwork?

Reb: Maybe. Yes.

Ross: But you can access artwork online too.

Reb: Which is great. You have of course pros and cons in everything that goes with technology.

Ross: If someone were to come to you and say, "let's find a solution to this problem and try to get young people more interested in the arts" what would you do to make that happen?

Reb: I would change our educational system.

Ross: The whole system?

Reb: From childhood maybe and maybe up to college, maybe. I don't know, but in our educational system...I don't know...to create...to make projects. To give them opportunity to make something, to express themselves.

Ross: So it is important that they make something?

Reb: No matter what, no matter how small it is, it doesn't matter. It is just that their satisfied and that they are creating something.

Ross: Did everyone have the opportunity to make something in school?

Reb: We had some project, but it wasn't ours. It was reproduction.

Ross: When you say reproduction do you mean you are taking information and just spitting it back out again?

Reb: Yeah, yeah...the same way it was invented, we have to repeat. [we need] to be more original. And just for [inaudible] or something like that, I would like to have some public speaking classes. Because now I will be a lawyer, I will have to, and I am scared of public speaking. I don't have much chance to practice or participate, or something, and to have an audience. Maybe something like a theater in the school.

Ross: You didn't have any theater in your school?

Reb: We had some functions, but it wasn't serious.

Ross: Many studies have found that people exposed to art at a young age who come from a highly educated family are more likely to seek out art. Did you already see a division between people at your high school?

Reb: I saw the difference of course, and that people who I recognize their parents as high education, I was friends with them, they accepted me. And the others they don't, they just hate me, for no reason.

Ross: Is there hope for these people who hated you to change?

Reb: Yeah, there is hope, but parents have to do it from a young age.

Ross: You think its only parents?

Reb: No only them, but primarily.

Ross: If all the artists who work in museums, theater, film, etc. came to your school, how do you think that would change your education?

Reb: I think it will.

Ross: But how?

Reb: If someone came and said I can film a movie or direct something, I would be more interested in that, and maybe there is someone who make history film and I could be an actor. Maybe someday I will write something, or be a director, something like that. I will start something from that. I think the others would feel the same.

[unrelated chatting]

Ross: How often did your teachers hold discussions in the classroom? How often were students allowed to openly discuss?

Reb: Great question. Almost never. Actually, we had one discussion in philosophy class about abortion.

Ross: And what was that like?

Reb: It was more interesting, but I didn't like that the teacher forced her opinion too much and she was criticizing the different opinions too much, and I didn't like it. But it is good to have discussions when you are free to express yourself and you learn to respect other people who are different from you. I thought faculty would be a bit more interesting and now that I am there I want to get back to high school, but when I was in high school I hated it and I wanted to get back to primary school. Because when you are older, things are getting harder. Maybe it's just me.

Ross: Can you think of an instance when you weren't in school, but where you learned a great lesson?

Reb: I have to think about it.

[paused the recording to give Ms. Reb some time]

Reb: When I was in young I believed in fairy tales, that they are great and good, that they are all sincere, everything like that. But in life I confronted liars, friends who betrayed me, people who cheated me, and it was hard for me. It was one of the hardest life lessons. You can not

learn to be [inaudible] I think education is one part of your life, the other is friends, relationships, and they come together at school. It is everything what your opinion is.

Ross: Is art a part of that social education? Has it allowed you express your feelings about it?

Reb: Yes, they come out in my essays and things. Somehow though I don't want to express it, the things are hiding deep in my mind, but sometimes they pop out and I just have to express it.

Ross: Is creating art more important to you than seeing new art?

Reb: I prefer creating.

Ross: Have you ever seen a work of art that made you want to create?

Reb: Maybe Picasso's work, because it looks so simple but it's a strong message. I can't relay, but it's not like typical painting. I also Mondrian's pictures, if you know. Some people say, why is this art? I can do it, I can paint it. I actually read Mondrian's manifesto with that squares he wanted to present the equality of society, democratic values. His manifesto, that's great. It's kind of special to me and I see beauty in his work. And also, minimalism artists.

Ross: Has looking at their artwork made your artwork better?

Reb: Well, yeah...because...how do I say...I don't have abilities like Michelangelo, it's kind of encouraging...after...to...I am more brave to do art actually. It doesn't have to be perfectly beautiful and perfectly sized, or portraits. Art is more wider [broad]. It doesn't have to do anything with beauty sometimes. They are so free and relaxed. In high school I was angry because during our excursions we didn't enter any museums. For example, we went to Florence and didn't go into the gallery Uffizi. They just show us, 'oh, this is the gallery' and run away.

Ross: Why was that?

Reb: I don't know. We were in front of Rome's national museum and they say "this is Marcus Aurelius" of course, this is that, this is that, then just go. And, like, why? I want to see it and search it. And in Rome they take us instead to the commercial part and I didn't have a chance to go there and search it. They just don't care about it. And every excursion was like that, 'this is that, this is that,' just the building, just the entrance. It was really sad.

Ross: Was that because of budget or because the teachers weren't interested?

Reb: The teachers don't care.

Ross: Do think your teachers don't care about art?

Reb: Yeah, I am sure, definitely.

Ross: Why?

Reb: They don't see it as important.

Ross: They don't see it as important to society, or to themselves, personally?

Reb: Personally I mean, they are not interested. My teacher who was the um, main teacher, who does the chair for my class...I don't know how to say...head teacher...something like that, was lecturing biology, doesn't have to do anything with art or the social sciences. I chose to study the social sciences school and I expected the head teacher to be an artist, to lecture Serbian language or something like that, but she was lecturing biology. So, she doesn't care about art.

Ross: Can biology be as interesting as art?

Reb: Yes, but nobody ever makes it like that. It all depends on how somebody is teaching. The way of teaching, not just the facts. The way is more important.

Ross: Talk to me about your classroom space.

Reb: They are just ordinary, nothing special. Nothing interesting

Ross: Let's switch gears, would you say that your personal search for beauty began with fairy tales, not at school?

Reb: Maybe. That's why no matter what happens to me, I always have some hope, maybe because of fairy tales, I don't know. Maybe because of fairy tales I am optimistic. My mother was always reading to me, my grandmother and I we acted. We would put silly stuff all over us and tell silly stories to the family. Like Aladdin, I was Jasmine and she would play Aladdin, stuff like that. I always like to laugh and I was a happy child.

[End of interview]

Appendix C - Transcription of Interview with Cultural Workers

Interview conducted with program coordinators at American Corner, Sandra Nikolic and Jelena Devic, on Wednesday, July 30th 2014 at the American Corner Belgrade.

Ross: Can you remember the first cultural experience you had?

Devic: It was probably elementary school and the *Emperor's New Clothes*. I think that was the first one [play] I saw, it was the first one I remember.

Ross: Do you remember what you thought of it?

Devic: It's hard to tell now, but I often think of it as something that is really symbolic and that speaks a lot about society and how society makes you think in a certain way. I am not sure if I saw it right then, but it probably intrigued me in some way. That one person sees things in one way and the other person...just pressure that person to just accept their idea, the common idea.

Nikolic: As for me, first when you asked me about a play, I remembered the play Poor Trachovisky (?) which I saw five years ago. But now when she talked, I remember the first that I actual remember going to a play is when my mom took me to the Smurfs play performance at Dom Simekate. I think it was like a New Year, New Year play performance. I was in elementary school and I think that my mom took me, that I wasn't with the class.

[They share the name of the group in Serbian.]

Devic: Ah, they were pretty popular in the 80s.

Nikolic: They were comedians.

Devic: And singers

Nikolic: And music.

Devic: Band or something.

[They began to get nostalgic and start discussing the names of bands in Serbian.]

Nikolic: Like a parody...like the [Serbian name, inaudible]

Nikolic: Gosh, I hated them so much.

Devic: They were like folk music rock or something and any folk elements in this society, like umm...how should I explain it?

Ross: You don't have to explain it.

Devic: You known when we talked about peasants or...

Nikolic: Everything sounded ridiculous. It was okay, but I think that I hated them because my father was so much into them.

Devic: They technically made fun of the society.

Ross: Would you say you give credit to your education or your family for introducing you to culture?

Nikolic: Family, definitely.

Devic: Education.

Nikolic: The first thing I remember is my mom reading me stories and songs when I was little. And I remember her saying when she tried to skip a part, I would tell her, “no no no, you didn’t read this part, go back and read the entire story.”

Devic: My mom also introduced me to books and she read to me a lot, but I can’t say my family is generally into reading and going to theater or whatever. They’re more TV people.

Ross: From those early beginnings, what brought you into the library as a profession?

Nikolic: There was a library near or flat where I used to live with mom and I would go to borrow a book and I would stay there for hours. My mom would call the librarian and ask “is my daughter still there?” and she would say “yes, yes I will send her home now.” The ridiculous thing is that I was first at medical school and I dropped after the first year. I didn’t know what to do and I heard that there was an American Corner opening right in my library. The library was shaped like the letter ‘H’ and in the right part was the library and in the left part was the American Corner, so I just started coming there and Ada, or colleague was working there. I was just killing time there and at one point I asked her if I could help her out with some papers and she gave me brochures to fold. That’s how it started. I was helping with the library and I was thinking about my faculty, what will I do, um, what will I do when I graduate. I figured out that I don’t have any connections in the medical world and I will be stuck in the bureau for years or worse, not do what I would like to do. I wanted to be a pediatrician. And my colleagues now told me about working at the library and persuaded me to go to library school. And it was the best move that I did, ‘cause I really, really like working at the library. And it was funny that Olga was my librarian at first. She was first my librarian, then she was my colleague and it was great.

Ross: What about you Jelena?

Devic: I don’t remember going to a library before I went to school. I had my own books and I learned how to read before I went to school. I took some preschool preparation, but that’s something we usually do here. And with that group we went to join a library, but I remember that place as a really old, lonely, and dusty place I didn’t like it very much. Then when I first went to borrow a book the librarian wasn’t really helpful in my own way of thinking, because, well on the other hand I wasn’t a very reasonable child. I think I was 7 or 8 when I asked Romeo and Juliet. She said “no, that’s not a book for you,” and I told her “I just want to see it and flip through it.” She told me no and I was angry at her because I didn’t get the book. So, no, my first experience in a library wasn’t that inspiring to me personally. But it didn’t drive me away from books, during my education I spent so much time around books reading that it just became part of my life.

Ross: In your opinion, what does a library have to contribute to culture?

Nikolic: First, you get to know your own culture, then you can get to know other cultures. In a way, if you can not travel, you travel to books into other worlds. For me libraries were always like a place where you can get lost in an imaginary world. As for culture, before computers you could learn a lot from books. Now, pretty much the younger generation, first go through the computers finding out and then only when they need more of it, they use the library for studying.

Ross: How do you feel about libraries going online and the youth using technology as a library? Does it bother you or is it something you support?

Nikolic: That's just a normal transformation of the library, keeping up, keeping pace with all the changes in the world.

Ross: For example you have Kindles in your library.

Nikolic: We have Kindles and we borrow [loan] them to people. It would be perfect if we had a virtual library and people had their own Kindles and they could transfer books, so they could be there for the physical user in the library and the virtual user out there.

Devic: And people have a different relationship to books, to reading. Some people just look for information and with a few clicks here and there you get it, whatever text you need, but some people have a more intimate relationship to books, they like to feel the books. I think Kindle isn't really... (she makes a face.)

Nikolic: I think those that really love, love, love to read, first, at least from our experience here, they want to feel the actual book. Then they're okay with the Kindles. Somehow I feel there is a distance between the real book and the Kindle. Somehow they are closer to that world with the real book in their hands. Like, these are just 0s and 1s and a bunch of bites, and these are letters.

Devic: That is something that is connected to emotions.

Nikolic: Probably.

Devic: Something very private for each person. But you know, like Sandra said, it is something that is normal development. The way people read, it has to be in digital form as well.

Nikolic: If you compare American Corner with other libraries in Belgrade there is a huge difference and there is a huge gap. Because now, actually, because from the start we were more into programs than borrowing [loaning] books.

Ross: How many programs do you have on a yearly basis?

Nikolic: Last year we had 505 programs that actually happened in the Corner premises, and 14 programs we conducted outside. Among those programs we conducted outside were Belgrade Book Fair, Participation in Education, participation in the International Conference of English Language Teachers.

Ross: Do you know how that compares to other Serbian libraries?

Nikolic: I can compare it to the Belgrade City Library.

Ross: Okay.

Nikolic: I think the Belgrade City Library has about half of those programs. That is information you can pull out on their website.

[some exchange regarding web address.]

Devic: They have, uh, literary competitions.

Nikolic: Book promotions, exhibitions. The library started a program a couple of years ago called Nočići (?) Which was supported by U.S.AID one of the branches here on financial literacy. And there were three programs conducted in high schools and the librarians went through the training program and they were trained to educate the kids about credit cards, interest rates and everything else. Technically, what it was is they were encouraged to, when they deal with the bank, to read all the small letters and to ask questions. To know in advance, but to be in a way liberated to ask what they want to. There was that and, when did 65+ IT program start? Three or four years ago I think.

Devic: It's been much longer. Because when I started work in 2007...

Nikolic: They already had it?

Devic: Yes.

Nikolic: Okay. 65+ IT course is a course they had for a couple years where librarians taught the elderly people to use computers, to use the Internet. That was good. Then they came here for the final class, for the Skype session. When we presented what we have here in the library, they said 'oh, that's great but we do not know English, we can't use it' but then after that course they insisted on having English classes. So we found a moderator for the English classes and we had that for two and a half years. And majority of the students they were into it because they wanted to communicate with their granddaughters and grandsons abroad.

Ross: So you help each other, there is a collaboration between some libraries?

Nikolic: Somewhat.

Ross: Is the reason you have so many more programs here mostly to do with funding?

Nikolic: We've gotten funds for the programs only in the last two years. Prior to that we only had one paid program. All of the other programs were on a voluntary basis. We would get in contact with some person, tell them what we do, what we have in mind, what we would like to do with him or her. Sometimes they would agree, sometimes no. But mostly when people hear there is an American Corner and that person is in any way related to the United States, they would offer to do a program on their own. They would come to us.

Ross: Like I did.

Nikolic: Yep. So, in a way, they were the ones who influenced, or took a lot of parts in our programming. Because we wouldn't have the programs without them. We used to be, I mean we are still, encouraged from the embassy, like how to find a volunteer or who can be our volunteer. But also the general libraries can do that as well. As for programs, I think, like for children's programs you used to do it, the librarians used to do it. The city would finance programs, but with the lack of finances on a city level, the number of programs just dropped. The Belgrade City Library used to have chess classes, they used to illustration classes for comics. The children's department used to have a lot of programs.

Ross: So, they've suffered from an economic downturn?

Devic: They've had to cut down drastically.

Nikolic: Yeah, because the culture here is only financed 3% of the entire budget for all the cultural institutions.

Ross: Including libraries?

Nikolic: Yes, and, um...

Ross: And most of your programs are educational in nature?

Nikolic: Yes.

Ross: 100% of them or 90%?

Devic: All of them have some educational value.

Nikolic: Pretty much all of them. As for their conversation classes, they practice their English speaking skills, math classes, at your next job interview teaching people how to behave on a job interview, business English, also learning...um

Devic: But we do play movies, we have board games, computer classes.

Nikolic: In theory, even the game time for kids has educational purposes. Maybe some of the film screenings we have don't have educational purposes, because at the screenings we don't always have someone who will teach something about the film so the kids actually learn something, it's just what they observe in that film.

Ross: How do you think that this programming helps the library? What have you observed?

Nikolic: The programs that help our members learn something or feel more secure in themselves, connects them somehow with us and they return their satisfaction. They return because they think we will offer some other programs where they can improve themselves.

Devic: The library is a place where you can spend some quality time and also offers something you need to improve yourself.

Ross: As an organization do you have an audience development plan? Or strategy?

Devic: (she laughs) We have strategies for everything. (a joke)

Nikolic: Nope, we don't. In writing we don't have that.

Ross: Okay, so not written, but do you have one amongst yourselves?

Nikolic: Generally, I think we do.

Ross: What is it?

Nikolic: You go first.

Devic: We should give priority to young people. To high schoolers, students, that's our target audience. That's something that is written in our standards, right?

Nikolic: But it's not, okay, we have some standards, that we got from Washington [D.C. in the U.S.A.] and the Corners are categorized in three categories depending on the number of programs, services they offer, and the type of collections that we have.

Ross: And these are from Washington D.C.?

Nikolic: Yes, from D.C. from the State Department.

Ross: Just to clarify something. Do you consider yourself a Serbian cultural center [as in for Serbs and run by Serbs] or an American cultural center [to serve America]?

Nikolic: Combined.

Ross: So, it's even.

Nikolic: Generally, we cannot apply everything that is in American libraries. But on the book and the type of programs that we have, we look more like an American library, and we look upon [up to] American libraries more than Serbian libraries.

Ross: So you're modeling yourself after standards sent you to by the U.S. but your audience is Serbian.

Nikolic: Yes.

Ross: Do you find that tricky? Or do people come here for exactly that?

Devic: I think people need.

Ross: So you're fulfilling a need?

Devic: Yeah, at some point, but on the other hand people say they like spending time here. A lot of people say they enjoy themselves here.

Nikolic: We always try to make people feel that the library is their second home. We are there to help them out. If enough of the kids, or older people, doesn't matter their ages, comes in and asks for a certain service or a certain program, like the elderly ladies when they came and asked 'can we have that classes, that would be great.' Okay, we thought why wouldn't we have that. They become or members every time when they come. Since the membership is free of charge and we are the only library in Serbia where it is free of charge. In all the other libraries you have to pay an annual fee to borrow books. So, we talked with our boss at the embassy Yasna, and she talked to Ryan who asked his wife, she found Julie who said 'I want to give it a try, to teach elderly ladies English.' So when enough of the people tell we want something, we try to make it happen.

Ross: So, you would say you listen to your audience?

Nikolic: Yes, and they would kill if at any point we dropped teen conversation classes on Fridays.

Ross: Is there a particular group that you would like to reach in Serbia that you've never had access to?

Nikolic: Youth. Oh, that we've never had access to?

Ross: Or that you have difficulty with, like a troublesome group to get to the library? Like a marginalized group?

Nikolic: First, we need to come to them and teach them English to use this library. The embassy wanted to start a project with the Youth Cultural Center where they would select 15 or 20 kids from marginalized groups to learn English. Probably for Roma kids, but Youth Cultural Center dropped out of that, and the embassy made that a public project, so whoever wanted could apply for that.

[Some unrelated discussion about contact for project and website info.]

Nikolic: And that would give a grant to a person who is willing to conduct and make a syllabus and find facilities for the classes. We wanted to participate with the library space with Mina who does here TOEFL classes and beginner English language. She's alumni, and she spent a year in United States in undergraduate studies, we wanted to participate but that was like a two year commitment I think.

Devic: Yes.

Nikolic: So instead we made a connection between Mina and Belgrade City Library. Because the library has 70 branches in total.

Devic: Umm, I don't think..

Nikolic: Or at least 20...How many municipalities do we have?

Devic: 15.

Nikolic: Okay, we have 15 municipalities and a main municipal library in each of them. If we don't count the other branches of the libraries, we would have at least 15 libraries that would be part of the job, because I assume the kids would be from different parts of the city. It could be something that could circle through the town. Like, one month we're there, one month we're there. But we couldn't oblige them for two years, to give them 100% space because we have other programs to conduct, and we couldn't count on the debate room because that is not our premises, we are talking back and forth with Youth Cultural Center. This would be a good thing for the Belgrade City Library but they didn't want to do that because of the paperwork. They started communicating with Mina and just dropped at one point. They didn't even want to give it a shot. And that would be a good thing for the library and for the kids as well.

Ross: So it was a possibly collaboration but someone just didn't want to fill out the forms?

Nikolic: Mina would fill out the forms, but I think _____ [name redacted] just didn't want to deal with it, so she blew it off.

Ross: In general do you pursue other collaborations or just with the Belgrade City Library? Such as, maybe, mid-size cultural organizations, theaters, research centers, etc.?

Nikolic: We've collaborated with NGOs and other cultural centers. We had a joint project with a Parabrad (?) with a REX, and with other libraries. As for libraries, it's more of a personal contact you have there. If you have somebody there who is going to push that and then I think you're going to make it happen.

Ross: Do you find resistance to that? Or are people open to partnerships?

Devic: Resistance I would say.

Ross: Why do you think that is?

Devic: Frustration with everything, I think.

Ross: With money or the system? What?

Devic: People aren't really motivated. They've had it.

Nikolic: The recent issue, not issue, but the recent thing. The embassy is bringing Mary Lee Cunningham from University of Houston to teach creative writing. She will be here two days at the Corner and four more Corners. And Yasna, from the embassy put it in her agenda, into her program and asked to organize a talk at the Belgrade City Library [some mumbled logistics with dates] So I wrote them about that. I wrote them about how Mary Lee is really great with the kids and she comes every summer, we've had three other creative writing workshops in the past. And they were like 'Okay, well, we can organize that, but you know, a lot of people are not here, they are on vacation. The other aren't working at the library, so we don't know how many of them will be able to actually come...And somehow I got the feeling, well we'll do that because the US embassy is asking for it and technically you're our partner, but we would skip it.

Devic: It's also difficult I think here, even Jim said, people here are like really interested in an idea than after a few days they're gone.

Nikolic: When you actually start to work on it they are not motivated anymore.

Devic: Not much enthusiasm.

Ross: But do you find when you partner with organizations and it works that you have more people coming to the library?

[some chatter and confusion between the two of them. The program for elderly women came up again.]

Ross: Yeah, but that was like they had a need and they asked for it. It wasn't like the Belgrade City Library came up to you and offered. The people had a need and they demanded it of them.

Nikolic: They didn't demand from them, they demanded from us. Once they got a library card. They asked 'do you have beginner English, I would love to participate in that. Then we found, we approached the embassy and asked them for help.

Devic: I think in the city there not offered much for that part of the population, so they don't have much of an opportunity to get up and around and do things together with people their own age. The city has been offering money for projects, but in cultural institutions there have been only a couple of people to sit down and come up with a program, a budget and submit a proposal. And also people can feel bad when they sit down, write that, do that, and they have a good project and the city just dismiss that, or cuts the project to some extremely basic needs or gives them really, really small amount of money and they can not do anything for the project. When that happens once, twice, three times they don't even want to submit projects anymore.

Ross: Have some people found ways to circumvent...I mean do things without asking for money?

Nikolic: We had a situation now with the redesigning or the Belgrade Souvenirs workshop and

Devic: Many cultural institutions were involved in that.

Nikolic: And some of the groups backed out, so they were left without a space to conduct lectures. They came to us and asked for a space. In some ways, we would love to do so much more, but with some things our hands are tied, we technically levitate between the Belgrade City Library, Youth Cultural Center and the US Embassy. And whatever we would like to do

outside of our space we have to go through one of these places and that just complicates things a lot.

Nikolic: We have a lot of liberty as long as there isn't an official document to be signed.

Ross: So, bureaucracy holds you back?

Nikolic: Yes.

[chatter]

Ross: So, you said earlier that attracting youth is one of the standards given to you by Washington D.C.. Have you ever had a young person, or people, come to you in the way the elderly women did and say 'I want this kind of program.?'

Nikolic: A few years back a couple of them came and said they want to learn about design, blogging and Irina, an intern, was in the third year student at a graphic high school. They were all in conversation class and said they wanted to learn editing photos and things. Irena said if you have the space, I can teach them. So, she started teaching them for six months. Then once an English teachers from an elementary school came and said she has some great student and she is into poetry, she writes poetry in English. We said okay, we can promote that in a way. So we started a cycle, how did we start that? What the youth is doing something special, something unusual, we would present it to their age group. [A list of presentations] Then a Belgrade High School presented their play performance and from that year, now every we have their plays in Youth Cultural Center. Last year we had our 10th anniversary, so we asked them if they could something by an American author for our anniversary and they did *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* in Serbian for youth, and that was great. We wrote a proposal for them to the embassy.

Nikolic: They had performances in different cities in Serbia. They had a problem in Niš where there was as strange reaction. The audience laughed. They didn't have exposure to plays or to art, or at least that group.

Ross: In the end, did anyone ask the kids why they laughed? Or get feedback?

Devic: No, they just left.

Ross: Was there any evaluation process at all for some of these programs?

Nikolic: Um, no, the only evaluation was the number of the visitors. That was the only thing that was asked from the embassy. And here they ask how people come to programs, can we increase the number and the number of programs. We have a pretty constant fight whether to have a quality or a quantity, because we can always go to a high school where they have the kids and we have friends and say 'okay give me the names of the kids of this generation' and we have 500 new members, but they don't understand what the Corner is or they've never come to the corner to see what the library is.

Ross: When kids do come to you, do they tend to be kids you would expect to show up to after school programs?

Devic: They are normally excellent students.

Ross: But you want those who wouldn't normally come to come?

Devic: Right. But they don't come because they think it's uncool.

Nikolic: I think before they come here they think we are like every other library they have. I think that before they come here they have only gone to the school library, and school libraries are kinda awful. But the schools also don't have money to set aside for the school libraries.

Ross: Do you ever do outreach programs where you go directly to the schools and talk to kids in the classrooms?

Nikolic: We go to the director and the English teachers and we arrange to bring the kids here, to have a teen conversation class or some other program based on their needs here.

Ross: Are schools open to letting volunteers into classrooms, or do you collaborate with teachers directly?

Nikolic: Some teachers are interested, some teachers are not interested. And where we have interested teachers, the director sometimes don't understand the needs of the teachers, because here when you say "American Corner" they just hear American and it sometimes goes down the drain. When we have interested teachers we tell them to take this approach and not to say American Corner, but to say branch of the Belgrade City Library where there is only American literature or literature in English.

Ross: Is it because they think your programs have a political agenda?

Devic: It is because there is no library in that name, 'American Corner.' Sometimes people come in and say 'what do you do here?' [she says aggressively] I feel like it's an attack. I tell them 'we're a library.'

Nikolic: We started as a cultural center in 2003, but more and more, the term that's used now is that we're like the 'post for public diplomacy.'

[Interview ended to begin class at 14h]

Appendix D - Transcription of Focus Group

Focus group session held on August 6th, 2014 at 16:00 CET at American Corner Belgrade. The session followed the last class on the observation session. Ten students ages 11 to 17 participated. To protect the young people's privacy, they will be labeled YP1, YP2, etc. in order which they spoke.

YP1: I wanna go first.

Ross: First question? Well, I'm going to ask the whole group and you can answer then. Why did you guys come to this class? And be honest.

YP1: I love English.

Ross: Great, okay.

YP2: I want to learn something new and meet new people.

YP3: I want to meet new people and develop my creativity and imagination a little bit more, because I don't think there is ever enough imagination.

Ross: Okay.

YP4: I saw it on the Internet and it is a great way to waste my time on something that is good, and to meet new people, of course.

Ross: Okay, cool. What about you?

YP5: I want to practice English and in an exciting way.

Ross: (name)?

YP6: I came because like this, I like making everything and I love English. Also, I wanted to meet new people.

Ross: (name)?

YP7: I wanted to improve my English without a...you know...with listening.

Ross: How many of you like the arts?
YP3: I do.
Ross: Who of you would describe yourself as an artsy person?
YP1: I'm more of a musician, than an artist.
YP6: I'm always drawing, painting, and doing everything.
YP1: I think I'm too clumsy.
Ross: You're clumsy?
YP1: yeah.
YP3: Does writing count as art?
Ross: Everybody's clumsy in the beginning. But you say you're a musician, that's a type of artist too. What instrument do you play?
YP1: I just love singing.
YP3: Does writing make me an artsy person?
Ross: Yes, and journalistic writing counts too.
YP2: I like creative writing more.
YP3: Yes, it's better.
Ross: Why do you like creative writing more?
YP2: Sometimes I like to write stories, but sometimes I like to write articles for the school newspaper or something. Depends on the day, sometimes I like to write stories, other times articles.
YP5: I like writing songs.
Ross: Do you sing your songs?
YP5: No, just write text. I don't know how to write music.
YP2: You write music, like the notes and story? Or...
YP3: Words.
Ross: They're called lyrics.
YP5: Yeah.
Ross: So, how often to you guys go out in the city to see a play?
YP1: When someone invites me.
Ross: But not by yourself?
YP1: No, it's kinda boring.
Ross: Does anyone like theater?
YP6, YP3, YP2: I do.
Ross: How often do you go see a movie?
YP3: Once or twice a month, I like film, more than theater.
YP4: I download films. Rarely, I don't want to pay so much money, so I go to the Internet.
Ross: Okay
YP1: Yeah.
YP2: Yes.
YP6: I know there are subtitles for some movies, but I like to go to the movies to listen to English.
Ross: Why?
YP6: Because I can understand, and it's more fun when you are listening to their real voices.
YP3: Because if they translate, they often make a mistake.
Ross: How often do you go to museums?
YP6: Almost every week.

Ross: With school or with your family?

YP6: By myself because I love them.

Ross: To look at artwork?

YP6: Everything, sculptures, but sometimes they are closed. [The national gallery has been closed for over 10 years in the center of Belgrade.]

YP1: Once or twice a year on an excursion.

Ross: Why would you choose not to go to a museum?

YP1: Not a lot of people I know go there. I they have people there who talk to about the stuff and I get bored listening to them.

Ross: So it's boring?

YP1: Yeah, it's fine looking, but I don't want to hear about this stuff.

YP3: I went to the museum, the Museum of Natural History in Vienna, and it's much more beautiful really. I think it's better than the museums in Serbia. I don't like our museums.

YP6: Yes, there are not too many good museums. We were in that same natural museum [Vienna] and I didn't want to go because it was our last day there, of our trip, so we needed to hurry up. But I didn't want to go from that museum because it was so amazing, and I didn't saw the whole museum.

Ross: How often to you guys make artwork on your own? That includes writing, drawing, any sort of artistic medium.

YP6: Every hour.

Ross: You're living the life.

YP6: Yes.

YP2: When I have free time, every minute I have free time.

YP5: I write songs when I am free.

Ross: How often are you free?

YP5: When I go to school, I am not often free, but when it's holiday or something like that.

YP4: I draw at least once a week.

Ross: Once a week, okay.

YP3: Three or four times a week of writing, I don't really draw, so...

Ross: When you create art privately, do you feel like you are contributing something to society, or is it just for you?

YP3: It's just for me.

YP5: Yeah.

Ross: What's more important to you? That it makes you happy or that you feel like you're part of something?

YP1: That it makes me happy.

Ross: How many of you would like to show people your artwork?

YP6: Me!

Ross: You are all over it!

YP6: Once I was drawing lots of things and I tried to sell them. I sold about ten of my drawings to my family and my friends.

YP5: I don't like to show other people my artwork because that is a place where I get out my feelings and sometimes I like that's just for me. I don't like to show other people my project, but sometimes I do, just sometimes.

YP3: I write fan fiction on the Internet, so I show my work to a lot of people.

Ross: You write fan fiction on the Internet?

YP3: Yeah. And (name) you also write on the Internet?
YP2: Yeah, on Wattpad.
YP3: Me too.
YP2: Really? Can you send me a link on Facebook?
Ross: Aha, you found each other.
YP3: Yeah I will, what's your Facebook name?
YP2: (name). You are her friend on FB?
YP3: Yeah. So, add me.
Ross: What's more important to you? You go some place with lots of your friends? Or to go to some place with nice artwork?
Entire group: With my friends.
Ross: What do you think of school?
YP6: (age 11) I love it.
Rest of group: Hate it.
YP6: Like to see my friends, it's fun.
YP1: I like it because of my friends, but I don't like school.
YP2: The school in Serbia are bad, yes? There are a lot things we do not for ourselves, but we just do it for grades. There are a lot of things that are not practical in life. For example, all the history of wars is heavy...and it is important for culture or something...but what do we do with that?
Ross: Do you have teachers who do creative lessons:
YP2: Only one.
YP3: Yes, one.
YP6: I have a teacher who uses computers and things, it's like this class.
Ross: Do you have teachers that are very inspiring?
YP1, YP2, YP4, YP7: No, not really.
YP3: I do. Just one.
YP6: I have two teachers and both of them are really inspiring.
Ross: Do your teachers encourage you to do artistic things outside of school?
YP2: Yeah, my teacher of sociology.
YP5: In my school, we make a presentation that is creative and I like that.
YP3: Today's scholarship I think that today's students are limited because today's children have various needs and talents. I don't think everyone should be put in the same box. So, yeah I think it's [the system] is really old.
Ross: Compare this month long session to school:
YP1: This is so much better.
YP3, YP2, YP6, YP4, YP5: It's better, way..
Ross: Why do you say that? Be honest, you can say you didn't like it. [This was problematic because I was sitting right there, but they had been critical of the class in the past without compunction, so I'd thought I'd risk it.]
YP1: Because it's creative and you can do something fun and you like and not boring stuff, not stuff you don't like.
YP6: We had a really interesting teacher.
Ross: But this is important, did you feel like you learned something?
All group, except YP7: Yeah.
Ross: What did you learn?

YP6: English.

[They all talk at once.]

YP1: I learned how to manage people, like come together people. [she jokes about playing the bossy director on our film project.]

Ross: In all seriousness.

YP3: I think these classes were committed to children and the people who attend it, and it's not just to everyone, you're not talking to everyone, you're talking to individuals and asking them questions and you're interested in the answers. I think it's really great that the teacher has an interest to pupils and not just the work she's doing.

Ross: Do you think that some of the things we talked about in class were interesting enough that you would find out more on your own?

YP3: Yeah.

[Head nods, 'yes']

Ross: Did it make you want to do more things creatively outside school?

YP3: I already do that, but it did encourage me to do more.

Ross: Okay. Anything you want to add?

YP2: Yeah, I think that workshops like that are good because you ask us to do some things, like creative writing, or whatever, in a practical way, not just sit there and say it "creative writing is a process...blah, blah." So, like in school say you are doing some test, and the professor writes on the board okay a test on something, now do it. But here we practice and it's more practical.

YP5: More interesting way.

YP2: Yeah, more interesting way, we can learn it better and not just memorize it. [inaudible]

Ross: So will you walk away with any lessons that you can use other places in life?

Entire group: Definitely yes.

Ross: Like what, gave you give me an example?

YP3: Like with acting, any improvisation can be good if you're following it, because ideas are good and improvisation can be good.

Ross: You mean the 'never say no' rule in improv?

YP3: Yeah, never say no.

YP1: I learned how to use my imagination.

YP2: This project about writing a monologue with facts, but interesting facts [The creative assignment was to use themselves as a character in fictional circumstances. So, they are the fact, the situation is the fiction.] It helped me a lot to write in my own work and writing at school in papers.

Ross: I know we had a short, intense month. But if you think about a second, did you notice any new connections in the world after you left a particular class? The answer may be no, and that's okay.

YP3: I noticed I am much more descriptive of things when I leave class.

Ross: So, the rest of you a 'no'. Fair enough, that was kind of a big, messy question. So, did each of you have a favorite part of class?

YP1: Yes!

YP6: Building the minion. [group garbage sculpture.]

YP1, YP3, YP4: Acting!

YP3: I didn't like acting before this.

YP1: I never tried.

YP6: Before I did not know how to act, and here I learned how to act.
Ross: You got a little taste of it, but there is much more.
YP6: I listen to music much more than before, much more.
Ross: What do you think about artists coming to your schools?
YP1: I would gladly accept.
[All agree.]
YP6: I want you to be my teacher.
YP3: We all do.
Ross: If you had artists working with your teachers to do classes like this, even if it was after school hours, would you do it?
[All say yes.]
Ross: Do any of you think you will grow up to be an artist?
YP6: I don't know, I want, but my mom also wants me to be an artist.
YP2: I think everyone can be an artist.
Ross: But do you want to?
[Inaudible, talking at the same time.]
YP2: You can be, for example, a businessman and you can be artist at the same time, because you can find something creative in your work, so you can make out anything.
Ross: Do you think art can address big issues in life?
YP3: Yeah, definitely.
YP2: Yes.
[The rest nod 'yes.']
YP6: Big shoes?
Ross: [laughter] You're a trip. Big issues, do you know what an issue is?
[She shakes her head 'no.']
Ross: It's like a big problem. So, can arts talk about big problems?
YP3: Yes.
YP6: Yes, even a problem with big shoes.
Ross: Can art address your problem with big shoes?
YP6: Yes, I am an artist, I can make new shoes.
Ross: Can anyone give me an example when art dealt with a big problem?
YP3: [Inaudible, maybe fans?]
YP2: Articles.
YP1: They can write about their big shoes, like "I have red, blue, yellow big feet," and I need help with my giant shoes.
YP2: People write about some problems, for example *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, I learned that oppression there can destroy your life. For example, if you read it you see that all this pessimistic way of life destroyed him and he finished in a hospital at the end.
Ross: You checked that out recently yes?
YP3: Yes, I am about 50 pages into it, but I am annoyed with it.
Ross: Did you find the *Bell Jar*?
YP3: What?
Ross: Remember I told you, Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar*. Look for it. Do you think art can address big problems with young people?
Group: It can.

Ross: Do you guys think that you have a lot of colleagues who would agree, who also like art?

YP3: Just a few.

Ross: You have a lot in your school?

YP2: Not in school, but I know a lot of people who don't go to my school. I think it's normal because I go to business school [magnet school] and there are classes for economy, business, for example. It's not a problem, because if you haven't got any interest in that, it will be hard on your life. I am in first year now and I will go to second year, but the fourth year will come very soon and they don't have any idea what is the next part of their life, so...

YP5: Many people like musical art.

Ross: Did you know that young people participating in cultural activities is down by a lot.

YP3: We know.

Ross: Most people watch TV, go clubbing, some do some sports. What do you think of that?

YP3: I think it's all about fashion actually. If reading is not in fashion, they won't read. But now that reading is in fashion, everyone is reading. Everyone is watching artistic films just because it's trendy.

Ross: Do you think teenagers do things because they're social trends?

Group: Yeah.

YP3: Most of them.

YP6: I'm not a teenager, so I don't know.

Ross: You will be soon, so you can talk about that. Actually, you have an interesting perspective because you're not a teenager yet, and you can look at all these other teenagers around you can share your ideas about them.

Ross: Why do you think art participation would be down? Especially visiting cultural places?

YP5: The Internet.

Ross: Why do you think the Internet?

YP5: Because they spend a lot of time on the Internet and they forgot all around them.

YP6: They become stupid.

YP1: Excuse me, we should not blame the teenagers but the people making computers [she says ironically].

YP5: No.

YP3: Yes.

Ross: But does the Internet make you stupid? Is that proven?

YP3: It makes you smarter.

YP2: Sometimes it makes you stupid. If you're playing "League of Legends" I don't know.

YP6: Hey, I like League of Legends.

YP3: If you're clever enough, you can make it better.

YP2: Not stupid, but less important.

YP5: A cultural place, like a museum, I don't know. They are just in the town.

Ross: That's a good point, you're thinking of people who don't live in the city. They don't have a museum or concert hall.

YP3: But they do have the Internet. It is educational. If you're clever, it just contributes to your knowledge.

Ross: Do you think that the reason people don't leave the house as often to spend money on cultural places is because of the Internet?

Group: Yeah, yes.

YP3: It's not that bad, it's good in some ways.

Ross: (name) you want to say something?

YP6: Yes, there's a lot of new things we have...spending time gladly, but it's really interesting because it's kind of like good thing for children, because we can make new friends and they can make their English more good.

Ross: Better.

YP6: Yes, and it's not spending time badly.

YP2: Yes, but my friend spends six or seven hours.

YP3: If you do something and are actually happy playing that certain game it's good. For example, I watch a lot of series on the Internet that I can't watch on my television.

[Some noise as one of the student's announces she has to leave.]

Ross: Would you like it if you had more freedom and power to make decisions in education?

Group: Yes.

YP6: I want more power in my house.

Ross: Do you have power to make decisions now?

YP2: I have no power.

YP6: Once I was president of the class at my school.

YP3: That's not power, that's sacrifice.

Ross: If you were put into a decision-making group or committee, would you be interested in that?

[no response]

Ross: What if I asked you what plays should I do at my theater?

YP1: Comedy!

Ross: Say they asked you to make a program for young people. Would you be interested?

YP4: Maybe.

Ross: Do you feel like you have a voice now?

YP3: No.

Ross: Why do you feel that way?

YP3: Because people consider us little children until we're 18 or 19 and they don't allow us to say anything because they think we're not mature enough.

Ross: Do you have things you want to say?

YP2: Yeah.

YP3: Well, of course we do.

Ross: Let's pretend budget isn't an issue, and you were given the power to make your own cultural place, what would you make?

YP2: A better school for the creation of things, because a lot of kids like creative things. For example, writing and things, but only one school in Serbia is that style of school. And I, and many of my friends don't have school option, so I think a public school for creating. Centers for talented kids, or something...

Ross: Anybody else.

YP3: I'd make a free school of creative writing for the children who have the talent for it and the children who want to write.

YP1: I would want our parents to get better paid, a better salary.

Ross: That's a social change you would make, but if you built a cultural institution what would you make?

YP1: I would make a school where we don't have to sit down, with false bricks or the walls or I don't know.

Ross: Anybody? It doesn't have to be a school, could be anything.

YP4: I would make some center where the young people could express themselves. For example, making graphics, doing some music...

Ross: Wasn't Dom Omladine supposed to be like that?

YP4: Yes, but there are some big mistakes.

Ross: Tell us what they are, it's okay. Like what, what mistakes?

YP4: For example, sometimes they make some festival or something, [she lists a couple of festivals quietly, inaudible] and we don't know about it.

YP1: Then with the bands.

Ross: So they advertise and you don't know about it?

YP4: Yes.

Ross: So, your center would be organized and free?

YP4: Yes.

Ross: What about you (name)?

YP6: If that ever happens I would make a visual art school, something like this, because I think kids who like to make things, draw things.

YP2: They have a visual arts school in Belgrade.

YP6: But I think the kids who like that need to have a chance to show themselves.

Ross: And what would be special about your school?

YP6: Everyone can come, also people from other countries, and kids can also be, like in that school you were all showing us, kids can be like teachers or something like that. [She is referring a talk on independence where we watched a short documentary on an independent education project in a Massachusetts high school.]

Ross: So they can be independent?

YP6: Yes, everyone can do whatever he likes.

Ross: What about you (name)?

YP7: A cultural institution? I, I would like to make a museum.

Ross: What kind of museum?

YP7: It seems classical and ancient Greece.

Ross: And how would your museum be special?

YP7: It would focus on Greek mythology.

YP3: You could have plays on Greek mythology, that would nice, then people could dress as famous characters in costumes.

YP7: Yeh..

Ross: Cool. When cultural places want young people to come and they make special advertisements for you, are you aware of that?

Group: Yes.

Ross: Does it work?

Group: No.

Ross: Why? Why doesn't it work?

YP1: Again, and again, and again, and again. The first time okay, but again, oh god.

Ross: So, how do you find about events usually?

YP1: Someone tells me.

YP3: The Internet.

Ross: Do you ever get bored and say ‘I gotta get out here’ and go and seek something out?

YP6: My mom does that for me.

YP3: Sometimes.

YP6: Yes, my mom says “what about a class, or museum or something?” And I say “oh yes, of course, because I am getting really, really bored.”

YP3: I’m never bored.

Ross: How often are you guys bored?

Group: Sometimes.

YP6: Sometimes when I’m on my computer.

[The talk amongst themselves.]

YP3: Mostly I am watching series, reading fan fiction, writing fan fiction, so mostly I’m not bored.

Ross: Would you call yourselves confident people?

Group: No.

Ross: Why would you say that?

YP3: I’m working on it.

YP4: I am not confident at all.

Ross: After you make art do you feel more confident?

YP2: Yeah.

YP4: It depends what I’m making.

YP2: For example, when I finish something I write that and put it with my picture, some people say the writing is good, and some people not, so I am starting to believe that maybe I am a good writer and I started to develop my confidence.

YP3: I don’t need people to tell me I’m a good writer.

YP6: You need animals!?

[laughter all around]

YP3: No really, I like my work. The only thing I’m confident about is my work, so I really only write fan fiction and it’s not really long. I write it more for myself, then I publish and I think it’s good. I’m a perfectionist totally about my work, nothing else.

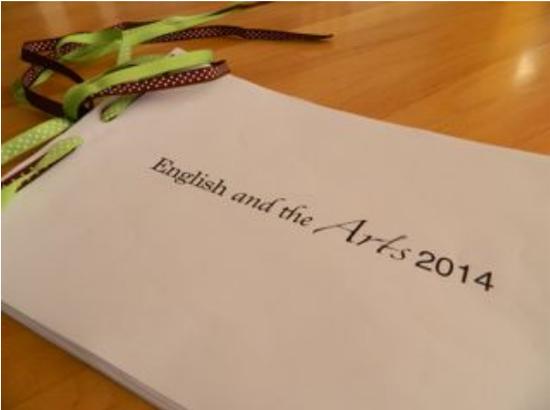
Ross: Do you have any questions for me?

YP1: When is the next class goin’ be?

[Some casual conversation.]

[End of Focus Group]

Appendix E - Observation Session Images



Biography

Tiffany Joy Ross was born in 1982 in Redlands California and grew up in Hemet, CA. At age thirteen Ross moved across the country to Louisville, Kentucky where she attended Eastern High School advanced courses. She left home to study performance at Northern Illinois University where she was on the Dean's List and received an academic scholarship (albeit a small one). She finished her bachelor of fine arts in performance arts one semester early in December of 2004 and moved to Chicago. She spent just under eight years as an actress and culture worker. In that time she performed in over 40 productions with reputable theaters such as City Lit, Lifeline, Trapdoor and Bruised Orange. She is still an honorary ensemble member of the award-winning Trapdoor Theatre. Her acting work has been praised in TimeOut Chicago, the Chicago Tribune, the Sun-Times, the Chicago Reader, and many others. She was an ensemble member of award-winning and top-ranked productions. She has worked with Romanian UNITER award-winning director Radu Alexandru Nica and performed at the Sibiu International Theater Festival. Her work also appeared alongside the Berlin Symphony Orchestra in Catherine Sullivan's *Lulu*. She also spent time as a managing director, producer, and worked backstage. After playing Ophelia in *Hamletmachine* directed by Max Truax in 2010, she left the United States. Over the course of two years she lived in Spain, England, Finland, Turkey, Romania, Serbia, with visits to Morocco and France. During this time she produced a work of fiction called *ApartFrom* under the nom de plume "Constance A. Dunn" that was published by KUBOA (an arthouse press) in the United States in October 2013. As a writer she is published in a number of online and print media. She is a monthly columnist for the Prague Revue (TPR) and currently working on a second novel, a collection of short stories, and a series of books for children.

During her time in Serbia she has developed and taught a popular workshop called "The Narcissist" at Knoz Prozor Fabrika and at the 2014 FIST Festival at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts. She has also taught creative language acquisition at a number of schools. She hosts and produces an independent podcast called "On the Couch..." where she interviews Balkan artists.

She is an Honorary Kentucky Colonel appointed by Governor Steven L. Beshear and a member of PEN America.