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Woodrow Wilson Fellowship Mission Statement

The reason I first thought of learning the Russian language was because I am so enamored by the literature and drama that has been produced there. In high school I studied a good deal of Russian theatre and began to read some of the literature independently. The plays of Chekov and the theories of Stanislavsky have greatly affected my love of theatre and have shaped my taste in art. American realism, as it is today, exists because of their work. What I am interested in studying is the current relationship the country of Russia holds to its art. It is a subject rarely discussed as a post-Soviet Russia. The current artistic atmosphere of what was once one of the most prolific art, specifically theatre, centers of the world is ignored. How could a country with such a rich past, lose all of its artistic worth so quickly? I am also interested in America's relation to theatre. America produces a great deal of theatre still, but with schools cutting creative arts programs all across the board, the future of the place of theatre in America is at risk.

As a Sociology major I would like to study how theatre in Russia is a part of the everyday experience in relation to the American experience. I feel that the best way to explore this is by looking at the school systems in the two different countries. Here in America, art, especially theatre programs, are quick to be cut in schools. But what about the country that was once defined by its nationalistic art? What happened after the Communist regime and how have they recovered after? I would like to research, hands on, the differences and similarities between the theatre programs in schools in America and Russia by spending time

in public and private schools to discover the current theatrical atmospheres of the two countries and what the future holds for each nation's theatrical ambitions.

I am qualified to do this specific research because I have a large background in theatre, I am currently serving on the board of the Witness Theatre Collective at JHU, I am co-president of the Buttered Niblets Improv Troupe and I have experience acting, directing, stage-managing and studying theatre throughout high school and at Hopkins. I also have a large experience working with children, and would thus be able to work well in the classroom and be able to relate to the students to do the necessary research. With a minor in Russian, I am devoted to learning the language and have plans to study abroad there in my first semester junior year. While I am there I would like to have an internship at a public school through the ACTR. I would like to work with both Russian and American kids, in addition to interviewing faculty and administrators to find out each country's relation to the arts.

I personally believe that arts are vital to a child's education, especially theatre. Theatre allows for growth of confidence and creativity. It changed my life completely and I would not be the person I am today without the early exposure I had to it. And so in addition to my research, I would like to work with Baltimore schools to create an exchange between the Russian and the American students. With a dialogue set up between the two countries there could be a great opportunity presented for kids who may not have access to the arts in their regular programs. To have the students exchange drawings, poems, songs and short skits of their own making and perform the pieces would allow for both a wonderful opportunity to help aid children to discover a new culture and to directly study the difference of the programs, importance level and general atmosphere surrounding theatre in the two different countries.