University of San Francisco

Where East Meets West:
Human Rights Education in Bulgaria

A Field Project presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in International and Multicultural Education

by
Barbara Jeanne Arduini
May 2016

Where East Meets West:
Human Rights Education in Bulgaria

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

in

INTERNATIONAL AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

by
Barbara Jeanne Arduini
May 2016

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this field project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

<u>Dr. Onllwyn C. Dixon</u>
Instructor/Chairperson   Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ABSTRACT

In today's increasingly globalized world, both the US and Bulgaria are at a cultural crossroads. The rise of immigration due to war and the changing economic landscape ensures that both nations will become increasingly more diverse. This project focuses on developing creative writing curriculum based upon Human Rights Education (HRE) to provide U.S. teachers with foundational resources to teach Bulgarian students about human rights to build intercultural tolerance. It provides U.S. teachers in Bulgaria with a creative writing curriculum that promotes intercultural tolerance based upon human rights principles. This curriculum emphasizes two specific areas of development. The first area is strengthening English language writing skills. The second area is using the process of creative writing to critically analyze various human rights issues. This curriculum primarily focuses on the need to humanize minority and immigrant groups, in turn, recognizing their inherent human rights. When teaching human rights through creative writing, both Bulgarian students and their American teachers have the opportunity to experience meaningful intercultural exchange with people who view the world through vastly different social and historical perspectives. Through this curriculum, both teachers and students may engage as active participants and learners. In this way, true intercultural competence, based on mutual respect, may be achieved. It is my hope that this curriculum will serve as a jumping off point for continued learning and meaningful intercultural exchange between people of the US and Bulgaria.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In my third week of work as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, my students and I read and discussed an excerpt from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. In an effort to connect medieval English literature to my students' lives, I asked them to write their own satires, chapters from an imagined *Bulgarian Tales*. To help them get started with the assignment, I gave them notes on the various tropes employed by Chaucer to highlight the social and political corruption of his times. Then, I asked them to work in small groups to brainstorm what tropes could be used to satirize modern day Bulgaria.

Different groups approached the assignment from various angles. For example, one group came up with the "Zlatka" trope – women notorious for chasing wealthy men, or "gold diggers" as my students described them. Another group discussed pensioners as angry older people who were devastated by the shift from Communism to capitalism and lived in abject poverty often yelling at innocent youth on buses. Other students discussed politicians, highlighting the rampant corruption in Bulgarian politics perpetuated by leaders who bought votes and engaged in nepotism, caring nothing for the good of the citizens or the country as a whole. Furthermore, several students depicted the Roma as poor thieves and prostitutes who scam the government and subsist off the hard-earned taxes of *real* Bulgarians.

On one hand, this type of stereotyping of different social groups was not what I had in mind for the assignment. It left me in a difficult position. As an outsider in Bulgaria – and a Western foreigner – my students made it explicitly clear that any criticism of their depiction of Bulgarian society was invalid. Also, as a non-Bulgarian, I perceived they thought what I regarded as *stereotypes* were simply truths.

On the other hand, I felt a moral obligation as a teacher and a human being to address racist, ageist, and sexist stereotypes – to have my students critically analyze their perceptions and generalizations of categories of people and to question their assumptions. I posed a series of questions I thought would be thought-provoking. What economic opportunities were available for women in Bulgaria? What economic opportunities were available for pensioners? Why is corruption so rampant? Why do so many Roma people live in such poverty?

This line of questioning, however, did not go over well among my students, particularly concerning the Roma. One student told me, "Americans and Western Europeans love to talk about human rights. But when they have to deal with the gypsies, they do the same things that we do here. So who are they to talk? They want to tell us how to fix our problems, but when gypsies want to immigrate to their countries, they don't want them either."

My student made a valid point. Discrimination against the Roma is rampant, not only in Eastern Europe but elsewhere. Despite efforts by the United Nations and international organizations such as the World Bank and Open Society Institute, perceptions of the Roma remain largely negative and the movement for Roma rights still lacks legitimacy in many people's eyes.

Underneath this particular issue, however, I could also tell that my students felt as though the very construct of human rights was based in Western values, a new breed of cultural imperialism that outsiders (like myself) sought to impose upon their country. Experiences like these were transformative for me and led me to ask: How can human rights be taught in Bulgaria as a way to empower youth?

To begin with, it quickly became clear that if I were teach about human rights to Bulgarian students, I would have to focus on issues that did not put me into conflict with my students. In order to achieve this, I decided to focus curriculum on human rights issues in the US and personal experience, rather than to try teaching students about human rights issues in Bulgaria. If introduced to the broader tenets of human rights, I reasoned, students would formulate their own solutions to human rights issues in the Bulgarian context – and probably far more effectively than I could.

Furthermore, I realized that it was necessary for me to consider not only my positionality in the classroom as a foreigner and as an American, but to also investigate the ways in which understandings of human rights may differ between the US and Bulgaria. The creation of relevant curriculum on human rights for Bulgarian students necessitates an analysis of rights through a specific Eastern European lens.

Bulgarians and the Bulgarian state have historically endured long periods of oppression and influence from external actors. For 500 years, Bulgaria was subsumed by the Ottoman Empire, achieving independence only after Russian intervention. During World War II, Bulgaria was more or less forced into alliance with Hitler, despite objections to Hitler's concentration camps. Then, after the war, the U.S.S.R. used its historical friendship with their fellow Slavs to greatly influence Bulgaria's communist government under dictator Todor Zhivkov. To sum up these historical events, it is fair to say the Bulgaria has had to fight to keep hold of both its own cultural identity and political autonomy.

The concept of human rights developed in Bulgaria, like many countries in Eastern and Central Europe, within a different historical context than in the US. When the United Nations formed following the atrocities of World War II, Bulgaria (along with many states allied with

the Soviet Union) did not sign onto the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) –

likely because of the UDHR's emphasis on individual rights. As a country with a collectivist

governmental structure, individual rights often seemed at odds with the collectivist rights. In

fact, although Bulgaria had ratified other UN conventions, it did not sign the UDHR until 1998

(United Nations, 2000), almost ten years after the revolution that shifted its government from

communist to democratic.

To understand the Bulgarian perspective on minority rights, such as those pertaining to

the Roma and Bulgarian Turks, it is essential to consider the state today from a collectivist

perspective, in which the good of the overall community may supersede the rights of individual

members of the community. In his research on states in Eastern Central Europe (ECE) Andre

Liebich (1998) draws attention to the underlying causes of minority-majority tensions, placing

these issues within historical context of the region and explaining the contrast between ECE and

Western European perspectives on minority rights. Liebich (1998) emphasizes the historical

context of ECE as a collection of states that have been repeatedly conquered by neighboring

empires, leaving a lingering preoccupation with aspects of state identity (most notably,

territorial boundaries) that Western Europe simply has not dealt with in many years. The

borders of the states included in his study have been repeatedly altered by more powerful

external actors, resulting in ethnic, linguistic, and religious minority groups in Bulgaria.

In Bulgaria's case, a substantial area of land was lost after World War II as a

punishment for having fought with the Axis powers. The loss of statehood and identity is still a

pertinent concern for many Bulgarians (Liakova, 2012). During my year in Bulgaria, I often

heard Bulgarians express the fear that Turkey will try to put Bulgaria back "under the yoke" of

oppression, while others suggested that Russia continually infiltrates its political system and

media. While these fears certainly feed discrimination against minorities, they are not wholly unfounded. Particularly in light of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, Bulgaria's potential loss of physical territory may be highly unlikely but is not completely outside the realm of possibility.

The US has taken an active role in shaping Bulgaria's educational system since World War I. Before this time, the then-Kingdom of Bulgaria was a primarily agricultural society (Stephanove, 2014). After World War I, however, Bulgarian literacy rates greatly increased, largely as a result of Bulgaria's openness to foreign investment from the US. Upper-class Bulgarians often received support from U.S. private institutions through exchange programs at the university level. In a report on the Ministry of Education in 1924, Constantino Stephanove (2014) asserted that "Robert College and other American institutions 'gave to many of the leading Bulgarian citizens their education'" (p. 393). When Bulgarians who graduated from universities in the US returned home and took leadership positions in the Kingdom, they often brought with them educational principles common to the West (Stephanove, 2014).

Following World War II, however, this influence abruptly halted as Bulgaria, closely allied with the Soviet Union, isolated itself from the West behind the Iron Curtain. Under the Soviet-influenced educational system, collective rights such the rights to healthcare and work were stressed over free speech and expression. Teachers generally discouraged students from challenging authority, and individualism was viewed a threat to national unity (Bogomilova, 2015). Despite this lack of free speech, however, many older Bulgarians hold that the educational system was more rigorous and effective in the past (Templer, 2014). Though Bulgaria had little contact with the US during this period, English language schools developed

throughout the nation with aid from the United Kingdom, which placed native English speakers in Bulgarian schools (O'Reilly, 1996).

The treatment of minorities during the socialist period is contested. Minorities were not officially recognized by the government and were often forced to assimilate into mainstream society (Bogomilova, 2014). This forcible immersion had both pros and cons. On the one hand, all Bulgarian citizens were – in theory – equally and appropriately educated, regardless of ethnicity. In fact, the success of the socialist system was quite remarkable: "According to national surveys, at the end of the 1980s, the employment ratio of the two groups [Bulgarian Turks and Roma] was above 80 percent and the percentage of illiterates was less than 10 percent" (Trentini, 2014, p. 111). On the other hand, however, there is evidence to suggest that the government deliberately educated minorities primarily for agricultural and/or industrial labor, leaving ethnic Bulgarians with access to higher education and thus positions of power in the nation (Boyadjieva, 2013). Furthermore, the Bulgarian government during the last years of Todor Zhivkov's rule perpetrated grave human rights violations against minority groups, most notably the forced assimilation/migration of thousands of Bulgarian Turks.

Since the fall of the Communism in 1989 and accession into the European Union in 2007, teaching and learning in Bulgaria has shifted to again favor typically Western values, including democratic principles, minority rights, and religious pluralism (Bogomilova, 2014). The government abruptly dropped the Russian language requirement in 1990, and specifically invited the US to Bulgaria to develop English language classes. This invitation, however, was not done in the spirit of intercultural exchange as purported by UDHR, but rather had a more pragmatic intent. The US was to encourage the success of Bulgarians in the context of business education, to help citizens adjust to the new capitalist economy (O'Reilly, 1996). That said,

public schools now directly address specific individual human rights that were largely ignored during socialism, such as free speech and civic protest.

Bulgaria has undergone several major changes in its educational system. My own experience as a teacher at the English Language School in Plovdiv revealed that it shares many qualities with what Paulo Freire (2000) termed the "banking model of education" (p. 73). In general, students are encouraged to sit quietly, listen, and take notes on their instructors' lectures. One student told me, "In class there is only one right answer, and that is the teacher's." Many of my students performed well on exams. Nevertheless, I observed much of their learning emphasized rote memorization of their textbooks. According to my students, their educational experiences focused on activities that emphasized rote memorization rather than critical analysis and creative thought. Individualism in the classroom could even be construed as disruptive to the learning environment. Based on my experiences, the educational environment in Bulgaria seems to reinforce conformity, emphasizing achieving the highest grades possible rather than developing innovative or creative thought.

Human rights education (HRE), on the other hand, "seeks to raise awareness of human rights and promote a culture that encourages individuals to demand their own rights and to respect the rights of others" (MacNaughton, 2015, p. 537). Utilizing HRE in a Bulgarian classroom could allow for the type of participatory learning that encourages students to view themselves as empowered actors within society, rather than as "'receptors' to be 'filled' by the teacher" (Freire, 2000, p. 72) with messages that do not challenge the status quo. For this project, I focus on developing creative writing curriculum based upon HRE to provide U.S. teachers with foundational resources to teach Bulgarian students about human rights to build intercultural tolerance.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to provide U.S. teachers in Bulgaria with a creative writing curriculum that promotes intercultural tolerance based upon human rights principles. This curriculum emphasizes two specific areas of development. The first area is strengthening English language writing skills. The second area is using the process of creative writing to critically analyze various human rights issues. This curriculum primarily focuses on the need to humanize minority and immigrant groups, in turn, recognizing their inherent human rights. In both the US and Bulgaria, immigration is a key issue evident in public discourse and media. I have chosen to focus lessons plans primarily on the US to provide Bulgarian students opportunities to compare and contrast cultural norms and values specific to the countries. Furthermore, to build the requisite trust needed for intercultural exchange, I believe it vital that U.S. educators be cognizant of interacting with or teaching students from an ethnocentric perspective. Such an approach, in my experience, would only serve to alienate and disempower youth. Furthermore, the nature of intercultural exchange, as developed through this project, is not designed to be confined within a particular lesson or activity but rather should be the bedrock upon which substantive and transformative discourse in the classroom is based.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this project is intercultural communication, as defined by Myron Lustig and Jolene Koester. Intercultural competence is often rooted in a pragmatic need for people to develop competencies in order to communicate effectively across cultural and national boundaries (Lustig & Koester, 2003). Lustig and Koester (2003) provide a useful perspective on intercultural communication. They specifically view intercultural

communication through a transactional lens, which emphasizes constructing shared messages and meaning. The transactional lens positions all parties equally during interactions.

Within an educational setting, transactional intercultural communication allows for both teachers and learners to be viewed as authorities on their own cultural experiences, thus disrupting the banking style of education (Freire, 2000). For the purpose of this project, students and teacher develop increased understanding and tolerance of cultural differences.

Significance of the Project

This project primarily aims to help U.S. teachers in Bulgaria navigate the complicated discourse of human rights in Bulgaria. Because Bulgaria and the US differ considerably in their historical development, such dialogue can often be rife with misunderstanding. Many Americans serving through educator exchange programs have some flexibility to teach elective courses, so I have created this curriculum to be used through a creative writing course. In this respect, the activities will not interfere with the many required lessons of the typical English class. Currently, there are scant English-language creative writing lesson plans created specifically with Bulgarian youth in mind – it is my hope that the curriculum provided will serve as a resource for teachers who hope to strengthen their students understanding of human rights issues as well as develop their students' individual creativity.

This field project at its heart aims to meet the needs of students. In my experience as a Fulbrighter, many of my Bulgarian youth had little to no exposure to creative writing. I found a means of integrating human rights into the course, particularly while focusing on intercultural communication. It was through these lessons that the hierarchical nature of the classroom was most equalized because the students and I learned from each other and explored different modes of creative expression.

Many educational resources intended to promote activism and advocacy in Bulgaria are geared specifically toward minority students, such as the Roma. Nevertheless, ethnic Bulgarians in high-achieving schools often receive few resources concerning activism or inequality. In order to build solidarity between members of the ethnic majority and members of minority groups, I believe that both parties need access to HRE. Otherwise, human rights become pertinent only to those who suffer oppression.

As globalization continues to transform relationships between both states and individuals, intercultural competence becomes more vital to transformative interactions, particularly as it relates to cultural differences. It is my hope that this project will offer an example of how individuals from disparate backgrounds can learn from each other within a classroom setting, build solidarity with each other, and (most importantly) motivate each other to take action for the betterment of human rights.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

In order for U.S. teachers to effectively implement human rights curriculum for Bulgarian secondary students, it is necessary for them to develop a deeper understanding of Bulgarian social and political history. This familiarity is essential not only for the creation of relevant lesson plans, but also to aid in the development of intercultural communication. As an educator, I know from first-hand experience that the one of the most effective methods of establishing a positive classroom community is through learning more about my students' lives and sharing with them relevant aspects of my experience. However, I discovered that some of the ways in which I had developed rapport with my American students were less germane in Bulgaria. I frequently did not recognize their cultural allusions and they often misunderstood my use of irony and humor. I found that, despite my years of successful teaching in the US, I needed to adjust my pedagogical style for the benefit of my students. In order to accomplish this, I first needed to understand my students' world – not only on a personal level, but also within a broader sociocultural context.

This literature review provides an overview of relevant research on Bulgaria for US educators. To provide an essential cultural context for the potential role human rights education (HRE) may serve in Bulgaria, this section highlights the nation's historical background, educational system, and discourse on human rights. The literature review concludes by making specific connections between the reviewed literature and my field project, which utilizes HRE in a creative writing unit designed to build intercultural competence and empathy.

Historical Background of Bulgaria

To understand Bulgarian youth, it is crucial to gain familiarity with Bulgarian history. Bulgaria is a nation with a long, turbulent history, and many aspects of the past still play a powerful role in shaping people's perspective on today's human rights issues, particularly as they relate to the treatment of minorities. Unfortunately, many people in the US have limited knowledge of historical movements that directly influence Bulgarian education and the perspectives of Bulgarian students on current events. The following sections address three periods of Bulgarian history that are critical for US educators to understand if they are to contextualize human rights for the Bulgarian classroom.

Bulgaria under the Ottoman Empire (1396-1878)

One of Bulgaria's most famous works of literature is Ivan Vazov's *Under the Yoke* (1971), a fictionalized version of the April Uprising of 1876 (first published in 1894), in which Bulgarians were massacred by the oppressive Ottoman Empire as punishment for attempted rebellion. In the novel, Bulgarian nationalists struggle – and ultimately fail – to garner support for a revolution. Patriots and their lovers are betrayed by corrupt countrymen and mercilessly executed by the Turks. However, the brutality with which this revolt was thwarted inspired the subsequent decade of rebellion, known the National Revival period, which culminated in Bulgaria's liberation during the Russo-Turkish War. This novel, as part of the Bulgarian literary canon, is read in schools throughout the nation – virtually every Bulgarian is familiar with both the novel and its historical context.

The brutality of Ottoman rule in Bulgaria became popularized in the West largely because of William Gladstone, an English politician and writer, who published a pamphlet entitled "Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East" in 1876 (as cited in Sandmeier, 2015).

This report called upon Western states to take action in response to the rumors that Turks massacred thousands of Bulgarian men, women, and children. Reports indicated that 30,000 Bulgarians were killed and over a hundred villages destroyed. One report stated, "I pass over stories of the burning of forty or fifty Bulgarian girls in a stable and the massacre of upwards of a hundred children in the village school house" (p. 144). Although many of these stories lacked verifiable sources (Whitehead, 2015), they soon galvanized international efforts to support Bulgarian revolutionaries against the Ottoman Empire. Today, the atrocities of the Ottoman Empire remain a key element of Bulgarian national identity, regardless of their contested historical accuracy.

The Bulgarian preoccupation with the National Revival period can hardly be underestimated. Evelina Kelbecheva's (2013) study of Bulgarian collective historical memory demonstrated the extent of this preoccupation among Bulgarians of all ethnic backgrounds, and also offered an informative insight into both the roots and significance of this collective memory. A survey consisting of open-ended questions was administered to 1009 Bulgarian citizens of all ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds. Respondents identified the most critical places, events, and people in Bulgarian history. While there was a wide range of responses, by far the most common theme among all participants was the great emphasis on war, revolutions, and politics – especially those associated with the National Revival period (Kelbecheva, 2013). Interestingly, the Revival remained markedly more vivid in Bulgarian collective memory than associations with the preceding nearly 500 years of Ottoman rule. Although Kelbecheva noted that, "Ottoman rule is generally perceived as the most tragic and fatal phenomenon of Bulgarian history" (p. 36), the revolution elicited specific places, events,

and historical figures, whereas the occupation was described in far more ambiguous – and wholly negative – terms.

What creates such strong historical memories for Bulgarian citizens, and what does this indicate about Bulgarian culture? Moreover, how should knowledge of this tendency inform human rights educators teaching in Bulgaria? In answer to the first question, Kelbecheva (2013) argued that the role of historical textbooks and classroom lessons directly influence the Bulgarian identification with the National Revival period, far more so than any other source of information. Indeed, almost two thirds of participants listed textbooks and/or classroom lectures on their source of knowledge. Kelbecheva (2013) explained that "during Communism . . . the traumatic memory of the 'Turkish Yoke' was recreated in even darker tones" (p. 39), and that this focus on the evils of the Ottoman Empire served as a means of building nationalism and solidarity among Bulgarians by way of propaganda. Furthermore, this "obsession with the past" (p. 36) allows contemporary Bulgarian society to focus on prior achievements (i.e.: the successful revolution) rather than the more complicated and nuanced social and political issues of the present, turning this tendency into "a kind of social neurosis" (p. 36). For non-Bulgarian HRE practitioners, several valuable lessons may be garnered from Kelbecheva's (2013) study.

To begin with, it demonstrates the power of the state and the educational system on shaping collective memory and cultural identity. The fact, for instance, that both Muslim and Eastern Orthodox Bulgarians described the Ottoman Empire as "evil" (Kelbecheva, 2013, p. 34) may indicate that educational institutions have a greater influence on perception than that of individual or family religious beliefs. Furthermore, the lack of critical analysis of the "evil" depiction of Turks also bespeaks the banking method of education, as described by Freire (2000), for neither students nor educators are encouraged to challenge this presentation of

history. Indeed, given the Bulgarian concentration camps for political opponents to the

Communist Party (Kelbecheva, 2013), even questioning the state-sanctioned version of history

could have severe consequences.

Despite significant progress in the protection of free speech made since the fall of

Communism, this biased narrative is still prevalent in contemporary Bulgarian academic

communities. The collective memory of Turkish atrocities strongly inform Bulgarian national

identity today. Kelbecheva (2013) explained, "It is impossible for Bulgarian historians to be

neutral on issues concerning the Bulgarian Revival period, and hence for academic discourse to

dominate over nationalistic excitement" (p. 37). Indeed, as with many Balkan states,

identifying accurate historical research on the Ottoman Empire opens a Pandora's box of ethnic

tension. For this reason, foreign educators in Bulgaria should take special care when addressing

this time period, as the risk of alienating both students and colleagues runs high. In an effort to

address similar human rights concerns without creating antagonism, the curriculum of this

project focuses instead on relevant issues within the US. This indirect approach allows students

to access HRE through a more neutral lens, thus building both on intercultural exchange and

open communication.

The need to build intercultural communication is noted not only by Kelbecheva, but also

by contemporary Turkish academics. While, Kelbecheva (2013) noted that "only few attempts

have been made to infuse the new achievements of Ottomoan histiography into the grand

national narrative" (p. 37), this resistance is not only found on the Bulgarian side of the border.

Mehmet Hacisalıhoğlu (2006), a Turkish researcher, also commented on the disparities between

Balkan and Turkish histiography, particularly as it pertains to Ottoman rule of Bulgaria and

Macedonia. Although academics conduct extensive studies on this era in both Bulgaria and

Turkey, there is an obvious dearth of communication between researchers from the two countries. Moreover, Hacisalıhoğlu (2006) argued that not only is this disconnect between the two nations, but also within the Turkish academic community. For example, he notes that some political developments had been ignored by Turkish historians despite their importance for the history of Bulgaria. His study attempted to synthesize the various research conducted by Turkish and Balkan historians on Ottoman management of Bulgaria and Macedonia; it offers useful insight into the region. Additionally, I believe his article highlights the great need for intercultural communication concerning this key period of Bulgarian history.

 In his extensive review of literature, Hacisalihoglu (2006) commented on the nationalistic perspectives of Bulgarian historians, confirming Kelbecheva's (2013) analysis. He stated that the historiography on the national movements in [Balkan] countries is still greatly influenced by heroic perceptions of the struggle for national independence. Even in countries like Bulgaria, where a tradition of Ottoman research already exists, history of the national awakening and the establishment of a national state have been written by historians who have not utilized Ottoman sources" (p. 96). Hacisalıhoğlu (2006) does not spare Turkish historians, either.

To explain conflicting historical positions, Hacisalıhoğlu (2006) posited that these historians often draw on different sources and have little exposure to competing theories on Ottoman rule in the Balkans, concluding that "It is therefore imperative in the future for Bulgarian, Macedonian and Turkish historians working on the central Balkan lands in 19th century to cooperate on common projects concerning different topics in question. In so doing, they would contribute greatly to overcoming the existing bias" (p. 112). In this light, it is clear that the development of intercultural competence in Bulgarian secondary schools would not

only build solidarity among Bulgarian nationals of all ethnicities but may also aid in the development of self-critical analysis of Bulgarian history and identity.

Communist Bulgaria (1946-1990)

In both World Wars I and II, Bulgaria sided with Germany, largely in an effort to gain territory in Macedonia, which was then part of Yugoslavia. Following Germany's defeat in each war, as part of the Treaty of Yalta, Bulgaria both lost its newly-acquired land and was left in the Soviet zone, under Russian influence (Pisarev, 2006). These circumstances left many in the nation resentful of both the freshly drawn state boundaries as well as the aristocratic regime that had led them twice into failure (Jackson, 1990). In such a social and political climate, the nation was ripe for a change. At this time, strengthened by their support from the Soviet Union, the communists came to power.

In the beginning, Communism was embraced as part of the Anti-Fascist Resistance following World War II. Pavel Pisarev (2006) provided a useful analysis of the era, drawing on both his research as well as his personal experiences of the political transition. Pisarev (2006) argues that, initially, Communism in Bulgaria was decidedly different than that of Stalin's Russia. Communist leader Georgi Dimitrov attempted to engage the voices of various political parties in the Bulgarian government and press, and sought to engage internationally with neighboring states, such as Yugoslavia, Poland, Romania, and Greece. This tolerance, however, was essentially crushed by the Soviet Union, as Stalin himself took Dimitrov to task for his efforts (Pisarev, 2006). Although Bulgaria was not technically a part of the Soviet Union, its national policies were allowed not natural development. After Dimitrov died in Moscow in 1949, likely as a result of lead poisoning (Pisarev, 2006), Communism in Bulgaria took a similar totalitarian shape as in the rest of the Eastern Bloc.

Politically, Bulgaria was ruled by the dictator Todor Zhivkov from 1954 through 1989. As leader of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP), he imposed drastic policy changes affecting all aspects of life. Arguably, many of these changes bettered the quality of life for Bulgarian citizens. As Pisarev (2006) explained, illiteracy and unemployment were eradicated, even for ethnic minorities such as the Bulgarian Turks and Roma. Education and healthcare were free, and most families were allowed weeks of vacation, free of charge, to spas and resorts in the mountains or by Black Sea. The government also heavily funded the arts, sciences, and music, inventing in strengthening Bulgarian culture (Pisarev, 2006; Templer, 2014).

These improvements, however, were made possible by the uniquely close relationship between Bulgaria and the Soviet Union, which stabilized the Bulgarian economy. Although the Soviet Union exerted oppressive control over the nation's development, many Bulgarians viewed (and still view) Russia as a great protector from hostile neighbors. This perception stems from Russia's aid in liberating Bulgaria from Ottoman rule. Indeed, communist Bulgaria has been called "the most docile ally and attentive pupil of the USSR" (Grant, 1970, p. 179). This positive positioning between the two nations served as the foundation for communist Bulgaria's economy.

Prior to Communism, Bulgarian life relied primarily upon agriculture. When Zhivkov came to power, however, the government systematically urbanized its citizens and industrialized the economy. Marvin Jackson (1991) explored the formation of Communism in Bulgaria through an economic lens, explicitly tying its development to Bulgaria's dependence on Russia. He posited that Bulgaria's transformation under Communism "depended on a willingness to link [the Bulgarian] economy to the Soviet Union's (Jackson, 1991, p. 205). In short, Bulgaria received much need materials and energy from the Soviet Union at an affordable

price, while the Soviet Union consumed Bulgaria's manufactured goods. Jackson (1991) remarked that "perhaps no other country received such a generous stimulus" (p. 205) from the USSR. This mutually beneficial economic relationship also served to further consolidate the positive view of Russia and, by extension, Communism.

However, as with much of Bulgarian history, a surface analysis reveals little about the daily life of the people. While Bulgaria's newly industrialized economy looked like growth, in truth the nation struggled under the forced economic transition. Jackson (1991) clarified this perception, noting that "collectivization was resisted and accompanied by force and violence" (p. 204). Furthermore, the efforts of the government to transform the economy did not necessarily correspond with the transformation of the workforce. Bulgarian productivity suffered from a lack of qualified managers, a problem exacerbated by the Soviet Union's influence over which industries Bulgaria was allowed to develop (Jackson, 1991). Despite the positive picture painted by the two governments, the economic changes imposed by the communist governments were ridden with flaws, rendering the any early advances in development unsustainable. That these problems were overlooked, however, may be a testament to the impact of the communist education system. The impact of communist education is discussed in depth later in this analysis.

Despite the social improvements, Zhivkov's rule also served to simultaneously obscure and exacerbate ethnic tensions in the country. During Communism, the Bulgarian government went to great efforts to build nationalism, to create a unified Bulgarian identity. As part of this process, all citizens were entitled to the benefits of Communism, such as education and healthcare. In this respect, minorities such as the Bulgarian Turks and the Roma initially fared considerably well during the era, especially during in the years preceding Zhivkov's rule.

During this early period of Communism, minorities in Bulgaria were accommodated rather than forcibly assimilated – they were subject to the same rights and freedoms as ethnic Bulgarians, and even given the opportunity to develop their own language and culture (Bojkov, 2004). After Zhivkov took control of the Bulgarian Communist Party, however, these rights and privileges gradually eroded in favor of building a unified Bulgarian ethos. As Victor Bojkov (2004) argued, the solidification of Bulgarian identity "had some positive resonance with the Bulgarian ethnicity by employing common value and custom codes, but for the same reason alienated the ethnic Turk minority" (p. 345). Zhivkov's policies towards minorities grew more oppressive until, near the end of his reign, Zhivkov publicly stated, "There are no Turks in Bulgaria!" (Bojkov, 2004, p. 346). This exhortation matched Zhivkov's extreme attempts to assimilate the Bulgarian Turks: The government issued new identity cards to minorities, changing people's names from Turkish (or Muslim-sounding) to Bulgarian, destroyed mosques, outlawed Muslim practices, abruptly halted Turkish language education, and even published scientific studies that "proved" that Bulgarian Turks were actually ethnic Bulgarians.

While these measures were enacted for all ethnic minorities, including the Roma and Pomaks (ethnic Bulgarian Muslims), the Turkish minority suffered the most under Zhivkov's rule. The Pomaks are a very small minority, and the Roma are a heterogeneous ethnicity without unified cultural, religions, or linguistic practices. The Bulgarian Turks, however, had strong traditional practices and a cohesive sense of community, therefore posing the greatest threat to the communist vision of a unified ethnic Bulgarian identity. By 1985, the cracks in Bulgaria's economy started to become more obvious, and quality of life began to deteriorate. Bulgaria's international image had also been tarnished by various scandals, including a Bulgarian's attempted assassination of the Pope and the accusation of arms dealing in the West

(Bojkov, 2004). In light of these issues, Zhivkov used the Bulgarian Turks as a point of focus to galvanize nationalism within the state.

The forced assimilation of the Bulgarian Turks resulted the murder of men, women, and children. Bulgarian Turks who resisted oppression risked interment in labor camps. Government officials even planned to take their children, and have them raised with ethnic Bulgarian families – ironically, a plan "very much resembling the *devshirme* tradition within the Ottoman Empire" (Bojkov, 2006, p. 360). By 1989, however, it was evident that these measures had failed. The communist government then forcibly displaced over 300,000 Bulgarian Turks from Bulgaria to Turkey. As one Bulgarian official stated, "The country has an interest to let out some blood. What is unclean must flow out" (as cited in Bojkov, 2006, p. 366).

While the international outcry over this issue influenced the 1989 revolution that overthrew the communist government, Western educators should take note that, among ethnic Bulgarians, this period is rarely mentioned. As Kelbecheva (2013) explained, the collective memory of Communism has yet to be formed. In fact, the only ethnicity that identified the expulsion of Bulgarian Turks as a key historical event was, perhaps unsurprisingly, the Bulgarian Turks themselves (Kelbecheva, 2013). The human rights violations associated with the history of Communism are often ignored in the Bulgarian public school system, while the histories (and voices) of ethnic minorities in Bulgaria are mostly absent from the typical classroom.

Post-Communist Bulgaria (1990-present day)

One possible cause for the erasure of minority voices and human rights violations from the mainstream national dialogue is that Bulgaria's 1989 revolution was, for the most part,

peaceful. Bulgaria's transition to democracy and capitalism bore little resemblance to Romania's bloody revolt against Ceaușescu, nor did the country devolve into genocidal ethnic strife as did the former Yugoslavia. Although the Bulgarian Turks, Roma, and Muslims suffered grave injustices, the formation of a democratic Bulgaria included efforts to integrate minority groups within the new political structure. For example, rights were granted to the Turkish minority, including the reversal of repressive policies, such as allowing Bulgarian Turks to revert back to their Arabic names and attend Turkish-language schools (Vassilev, 2010). And thus, the concept of a "Bulgarian ethnic model" was born – a "tradition of religious and ethnic tolerance" (Rechel, 2007, p. 1201) that many Bulgarian leaders have since upheld as part of their national identity.

Although the Bulgarian ethnic model has been touted by some as an example of "inter-ethnic peace . . . comprehending the foundations for an effective European integration strategy for Southeastern Europe" (DeDominicis, 2011, p. 141), it is worth noting that much of the praise comes by way of the ethnic Bulgarian majority, not the lower-status minority groups who are on the receiving end of such peace. For instance, some minority leaders believe that emphasis on the relatively peaceful coexistence between ethnic Bulgarians and the Turkish minority has actually had a negative effect on the relationship between the two entities. In the words of Medres Kongun, leader of a Turkish NGO, "the Bulgarian ethnic model is a tumor that needs be operated on as soon as possible" (as cited in Kavalski, 2007, p. 32) for the way in which it denies the continued discriminatory practices against Bulgarian Turks. Furthermore, Rechel (2007) noted that, "While Bulgaria has now embraced the notion that minorities exist within the country, it has not extended recognition to all minorities. The right to free ethnic self-identification has been denied to Pomaks [Bulgarian Muslims]" (p. 1208). Similarly, the

Roma people face extreme marginalization and segregation in almost all aspects of civic life (Kosseva & Hajdinjak, 2011).

Despite the abrupt halting of the gross human rights violations perpetrated by the Zkivkov regime, it is clear that denying minorities of either their identity or their experience of discrimination is still highly problematic. Ironically, this in some way parallels the relationship between Bulgaria and its former oppressor, the Ottoman Empire. Turkey denies much of the rape, murder, and repression Bulgarians experienced under the "Ottoman yoke" – which further heightened the sense of Bulgarian nationality (Hacisalıhoğlu, 2006; DeDominicis, 2007). Similarly, the romantic ideology of the Bulgarian ethnic model is inherently repressive, for it marginalizes minority populations while simultaneously denying the responsibility of the majority to make appropriate accommodations.

Politically, Bulgaria today is still in the difficult transition between Communism and democracy. Although the nation was accepted as a member of the European Union (EU) in 2007, the political system is still rife with corruption. To understand the general Bulgarian mindset toward civic rights, Venelin Ganev (2014) provided a useful analysis on post-communist Bulgaria, particularly in light of how Bulgarian democracy differs from that of more established democracies. Ganev's analysis of mass protests that took place in Sofia throughout 2013 offer helpful insights for American educators.

The first wave of protests in 2013 initially sparked after energy prices in Bulgaria suddenly rose beyond what most citizens in the nation could afford. The nationwide protests, which included "six self-immolations [and] several incidents of police brutality" (Ganev, 2014, p. 35) resulted in the resignation of prime minister, Boyko Borisov, within only a few weeks. The next wave of protests was in response to the actions of the newly elected prime minister,

Plamen Oresharski. While espousing his desire to reform the government, Oresharski appointed people who were well-known to be corrupt as various advisors. The citizens initially accepted these actions until Oresharski appointed a known criminal, Deylan Peevski, to head the State Agency for National Security (Ganev, 2014). This appointment, although fully within Oresharski's legal role as prime minister, constituted such an abuse of power that Bulgarians took to the streets for months, calling not only for Peevski to be denied the post but also for Oresharski's resignation. While the protests were successful in obtaining the resignation of corrupt leaders, however, the actually cleansing of government corruption has yet to be seen. The re-election of Boyko Borisov in 2014 demonstrated that the Bulgarian people do not necessarily have many options to choose from when it comes to uncompromised political leaders.

Ganev's (2014) research, however, observed not only the causes and conditions for Bulgaria's wave of protests, but also offers insight into the post-communist mindset that allows for a higher tolerance of overt corruption than generally found in many other democratic societies. For example, Ganev (2014) observed that most Bulgarian's possess a "passive attitude decisively shaped by 'the open secret' that politics is the domain of crooked individuals" (p. 36), which directly roots from years of disempowerment under oppressive governments. For American educators in Bulgaria, understanding this passivity is essential, for it represents a stark contrast to the mindset that individuals can ever enact meaningful change.

Ganev (2014) connected the corruption of Bulgaria's politicians to the uninvolved citizenry. Since the fall of Communism, Bulgaria has suffered from a dearth of true, democratic, upright leadership. However, Ganev (2014) argued, "Bulgarian citizens have nobody to blame but themselves. Thus today's civic anger is the emotional response of a self-

reflective citizenry whose revulsion at the actions of the elites ('they') is intermingled with the clear understanding that the people themselves ('we') had long been too permissive, submissive, and inert" (p. 40). In this sense, Ganev calls the people themselves to account for the passive acceptance of overtly corrupt leadership – if they want their government to change, they need to demand such change. Otherwise, "Public apathy and individual passivity [may be seen] as chains that shackle whole generations to a demeaning status quo" (Ganev, 2014, p. 44). Such a stance, however, begs the question: If such passivity has been engrained into a people for generations, how may such a dramatic shift in national consciousness take place? I believe that the answer to this, in part, lies in the role of education to empower individuals to build respect for human rights.

Education in Bulgaria

Education in today's Bulgaria is at a critical juncture in which the communist past directly impacts its democratic present and future. While there have been efforts to align the Bulgarian educational system with its post-communist values, much of the curriculum has yet to be updated to reflect the changes that have taken place since 1990. Just as Bulgarian culture must be contextualized within its historical framework, so must its educational system be understood as an amalgam of sociopolitical values, past and present. The appropriate implementation and efficacy of HRE directly depend upon Bulgaria's historical and educational realities.

The Impact of Communist Education

Although 25 years have passed since the fall of Communism, Bulgaria's education system and national identity is still powerfully influenced by its socialist past. While American educators may be quick to criticize the many rights violations perpetuated by the communist

system, it is vitally important to consider the past from the point of view of those who arguably fared better under oppression – namely, ethnic minorities in Bulgaria such as the Roma and the Bulgarian Turks. Although, paradoxically, these same demographics often suffered from the grossest violations of human rights, they initially enjoyed under Communism greater access to education, housing, and employment. For instance, as an older Roma man living in one of the poorest and most segregated Roma communities in Bulgaria, stated, "Life was better under Todor Zhivkov. . . . We didn't have rights back then, but we had work. Now we have rights, but you can't feed your family on freedom" (Kenarov, 2008, pp. 145-146).

This section addresses conflicting views of the communist educational system in order to better contextualize contemporary Bulgarian attitudes towards human rights education. That said, educators should bear in mind that the influence of Communism is generally not analyzed in Bulgarian classrooms. As Kelbecheva (2013) discovered, the communist era is somewhat of a blank spot in the modern Bulgarian history class, particularly since many school have not updated their textbooks since the transition to democracy. This implies that socialist values may still be tacitly perpetuated through formal education – particularly those of conformity and collectivity.

To understand the effects of the communist education system in Bulgaria, especially for foreign teachers hailing from staunchly capitalism countries, an overview of the system offers important insight. To begin with, the isolationist effects of Communism cannot be undermined. After liberation from the Ottoman Empire, Bulgaria was initially greatly influenced by Western Europe and the US. Despite the lack the human rights based education, national literacy rates greatly increased during this time period, in large part because of Bulgaria's openness to foreign investment from the US. Upper-class Bulgarians often received support from US private

institutions through exchange programs at the university level. In a report on the Ministry of Education in 1924, Constantino Stephanove (2014) asserted that "Robert College and other American institutions 'gave to many of the leading Bulgarian citizens their education'" (p. 393). When Bulgarians who graduated from universities in the US returned home and took leadership positions in the Kingdom, they often brought with them educational principles common to the West (Stephanove, 2014). The educational system shifted to include many different subjects, including foreign languages, philosophy, religion, and music.

Bulgaria's transition to Communism in 1944, however, effectively ended most democratic influence on the educational system. Julia Stefanova (2006) provided a useful analysis of this transition, stating, "The totalitarian model was unacceptable to many, but it was so powerfully and comprehensively imposed that in a couple of decades the prewar experience felt like a fading dream, a dangerous memory" (pp. 160-161). Although traces of the former, more open, society could be seen in the general structure of the educational system, the content was politicized and altered in order to support party ideology. For instance, while students continued to study philosophy in public schools, the theories covered in classes "started and ended with Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and their successors" (p. 161). Moreover, despite language that espoused support for individual development and growth, the educational model served primarily to reinforce communist values. Individuals were only free to develop in ways approved by the state.

The treatment of ethnic minorities under Communism also holds many contradictory elements. As stated above, many argue (including ethnic minorities within Bulgaria) that minorities experienced less discrimination under Communism than they do today. Stefanova (2006) analyzed this perspective, concluding that these positive views consider only the surface

of educational policies from the communist era. Much as people were only nominally allowed

the freedom of individual development, minorities were only nominally integrated into the

dominant Bulgarian society. For instance, under Communism Bulgarian Turks and Roma

citizens were mandated access to public education. Several researchers, however, have

challenged the view that communist education garnered positive results for minorities. For

instance, Petya Boyadjieva (2013) noted the ways in which the Communist government

appeared to offer citizens greater access to higher education, but in truth formulated admissions

policies that primarily favored Bulgarians sympathetic to Party values. Moreover, despite

providing educational opportunities to the Roma and Bulgarian Turks, the system prepared such

citizens for lower-skilled occupations – many of which have been rendered obsolete since the

fall of Communism (Boyadijeva, 2013). This tracking of students according to ethnic identity

and/or political affiliation is confirmed by Stefanova's (2006) research. Loyal party favorites

received rewards. One significant reward was that their children were ensured admittance to

prestigious secondary language schools and elite universities, while other children attended

mainstream or vocational schools through which citizens could rarely rise to positions of power

or influence.

In terms of human rights, Stefanova (2006) explained how the state-controlled

curriculum (especially in restricting the use of Turkish language educational materials)

essentially represented efforts at building "ethnic unification" through "ethnic assimilation and

even annihilation" (p. 162). Despite attempts to alleviate inequalities in education, the

communist educational system reinforced discrimination against ethnic minorities. The only

means of survival in such a system, for all citizens, was to conform.

If the communist system was so repressive, however, then why do many Bulgarians still look fondly upon that aspect of their past? Despite the egregious violations of the communist government, this question is necessary for foreign educators to explore. For instance, independent researcher Bill Templer (2014) detailed the positive aspects of communist Bulgaria, in stark contrast to today's capitalistic system. Whereas Stefanova (2006) posited that teachers, while respected, were primarily feared because of their dual roles as educators and party members, Templer (2014) extolled the educational success of Bulgaria's former political and economic system. Templer wrote, "Education was of remarkably high quality, and all school leavers and university graduates were guaranteed a job. Teachers were respected and received equitable state pay. In some ways, Bulgaria was perhaps the most successful of the smaller real-socialist experiments, with relatively low levels of dissidence" (p. 28). While Templer's analysis contains truth, his argument that most Bulgarian's demonstrated little resistance against the government calls for deeper analysis – especially in light of both the human rights violations perpetrated by the communist government as well as what Ganev (2014) noted as Bulgarian apathy and passivity to oppression – not because people truly accepted their leaders, but rather out of sense of despair in their ability to change the system.

Similarly, Templer (2014) noted that "Little open dissent was tolerated" (p. 49) during in the communist classroom. However, while Templer holds that as a positive attribute of the system, I argue that a lack of dissent stems from an educational system that denies the validity individual of student voices. If education is to further human rights, if it is to build intercultural competence, if it is to empower people and encourage solidarity – then "dissent" may very well be a sign of healthy discourse. It is one of the goals of the curriculum in this field project to

facilitate student communication and collaboration, allowing them to feel validated in their own learning rather than tacitly accepting answers or perspectives provided to them.

The Influence of Western-Dominated International Organizations

After the fall of Communism in 1989, Bulgaria's educational system suddenly re-opened to Western influence. Although the communist past still plays a powerful role in the educational landscape, as discussed above, it is no longer the sole shaping force of Bulgarian learning. For instance, Stefanova (2006) revealed the emergence of internationally-funded programs from organizations such as the Fulbright Commission and Open Society Fund. The curriculum of this field project ties directly to such programs, as they offer educational exchanges for teachers and students. These programs are often geared to facilitate Bulgaria's transition from the isolation of Eastern Bloc into the globalized world.

The influence of Western Europe on Bulgaria is evident through new state policies regarding the education of minorities. Bulgaria's entrance into to the EU was partly contingent upon improving the quality of life for minorities, as well as economic stability (Rechel, 2008). To meet that demand, the democratic government passed several acts to uphold minority rights. In direct contrast to Zhivkov's oppressive policies towards the Bulgarian Turks, the current education system allows students to receive textbooks and instruction in their native languages, in addition to Bulgarian (Stefanova, 2006). This shift to better accommodate the needs of minorities, however, often seems to come when the Bulgarian government receives pressure from external forces such as the European Union and the World Bank. In some ways, this is similar to the pressure exerted on the state during Communism. Whereas the Soviet Union required its allies to Sovietize all citizens, regardless of their ethnicity, now the EU requires Bulgaria to humanize its people. While these efforts to uphold minority rights should be

lauded, practitioners of HRE should acknowledge that these humanizing sentiments are not necessarily shared by the mainstream Bulgarian population. Although discrimination is addressed (in part) through education, the roots causes of inequality may not be analyzed with any depth.

Stefanova (2006) delineated the rapid changes in the Bulgarian education system since the fall of Communism and its attempt to join the EU, arguing that these sudden shifts do little to support the individual needs of the Bulgarian people. She stated, "the latest academic reform again shows little concern for the growth of human individuality, for the need to change the methodology of teaching and learning and orient it towards the student" (p. 166). From this perspective, the problematic aspect of Western influence on Bulgaria's education is not the message of democracy and capitalism, but rather the manner in which students are taught. The revolution succeeded in changing the government, it failed to build the respect for individualism and human rights that constitutes the foundation of an equitable society and a working democracy.

Human Rights in Bulgaria

According to the Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), all people have equal and inalienable rights, and nations "shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms" (United Nations, 1948). At the time of the UDHR's drafting, tensions between the communist states of Eastern Europe and the democratic states of the West were escalating. These tensions would later culminate in the Cold War. As a result, many members of the Eastern Bloc, including Russia, abstained from signing the document. Bulgaria did not sign the UDHR until 1998 (United Nations, 2000). This delay stems from Bulgaria's communist history, as many communist leaders found the UDHR's

inclusion of individual freedoms contrary to their emphasis on collective rights. While the current Bulgarian government is now an active member of the United Nations, the foundational concept of human rights lacks development, both in research and among the general population. In this section, I will explore two main challenges to human rights discourse in Bulgaria and how they may effect Human Rights Education in Bulgarian classrooms.

One challenge to HRE in Bulgaria is the common perception of "human rights" as a Western construct, imposed upon Bulgaria by external actors such as the EU. To gain membership in the EU, accession countries must demonstrate their efforts to uphold the human rights of all citizens (Kymlicka, 2015). In such cases, however, it is the economic benefits of EU membership that serve as a catalyst for change, rather than a genuine embrace of the principles upheld in the UDHR. For practitioners of HRE in the typical Bulgarian classroom, this is a key point to understand. Basic human rights are generally accepted (at least in theory) throughout much of the West, but Bulgaria's historical experience of oppression has led many to be suspicious rather than embrace the concept.

To demonstrate this point, an analysis of multicultural or ethnic rights is useful to appreciate the cultural differences between historically democratic and communist countries. Will Kymlicka (2015) explored this divide in his article, "Multicultural and Minority Rights: West and East." Kymlicka (2015) examined four critical assumptions imbedded in human rights efforts in Eastern and Central Europe:

> (i) that there are certain common standards or models in the Western democracies; (ii) that they are working well in the West; (iii) that they are applicable to Eastern and Central Europe (hereafter ECE), and would work well there if adopted; (iv) that there is a legitimate role for the international community to play in promoting or imposing these standards. (pp. 4-5)

Although Kymlicka's (2015) research focused particularly on national minorities and indigenous peoples and analyzes ECE generally rather through specific states, he provides useful comments of the seeming hypocrisy of the West from the perspective of a formerly communist country, such as Bulgaria. In the first two assumptions, Kymlicka (2015) made clear that not only to various Western countries address minority rights in vastly different ways, but also that many of these efforts to create an equitable, integrated society have essentially failed. In the best case scenario, Kymlicka (2015) argued, "most citizens in the dominant group are ignorant of, and indifferent to, the internal life of minority groups, and vice versa" (p. 13). Given this perspective, what gives Western states the right to impose their human rights standards and integration methods onto the newly formed democracies of ECE?

The historical context of ECE also shapes the government (and citizen) perspective on minority rights. Unlike in many Western democracies, many ethnic majorities in ECE once experienced long periods of oppression by what are now national minorities. Bulgaria, for instance, was "enslaved" by the Turks for almost 500 years. Kymlicka (2015) argued, "Dominant groups throughout the region feel they have been victimized by their minorities acting in collaboration with foreign enemies" (p. 21) – an argument that certainly applies to Bulgaria. In this light, the Bulgarian state and ethnic Bulgarian people may perceive minority rights as a threat to their own statehood. Andre Liebich (1998) described this phenomenon as the "existential distress of these small nations, where the question of survival - an absurd question for the old continuous states of Western Europe is - is posed ever anew" (p. 3). Many Western democracies simply have not struggled with shifting state boundaries in centuries, and thus territorial concerns are virtually nonexistent. These differences play powerful roles in how citizens may view the safety of ensuring equal human rights to all members of society.

Another challenge to human rights discourse in Bulgaria lies in the perception that much of the energy devoted towards the betterment of society focuses on minority populations, particularly toward the Roma who are the recipient of many international development programs funded by the World Bank and Open Society Institute. While Bulgarians certainly experienced no historical oppression by this segment of the population, there still remains great resistance towards integrating the Roma into mainstream society. Liebich (1998) examined the role of perception in shaping resistance, observing, "If minorities are seen as profiting from the transition more than the majority population (or, at least, suffering less), resentment against them ensues. This is particularly relevant for the case of the Roma" (p. 5). Bulgaria's economy suffered greatly after both the fall of Communism in 1989 and the global recession of 2008; today, it is among the poorest countries in Europe. Although the economy shows signs of improvement, many people of all ethnicities still live in abject poverty. Resources dedicated to the ease the suffering of ethnic minorities may be perceived (however unfairly) as preferential treatment. As many of the international organizations funding such programs hold as their mission to further human rights, many Bulgarians may question the legitimacy of "human rights" in their entirety. Teachers utilizing HRE in Bulgarian classrooms will need to be cognizant of these tensions while working with Bulgarian students on issues regarding minority rights.

Summary

Given the development of Bulgarian identity as shaped by oppressive forces, particularly the Ottoman Empire and to a lesser extent the Soviet Union, it is essential for U.S. educators to understand that these historical events are still vitally relevant for Bulgarian students today. The experience of occupation is the lens through which many Bulgarians see the world and their

place in the world. In this light, ethnic Bulgarians often see themselves as the victims of human

rights abuses, rather than perpetrators against minorities such as the Roma and the Bulgarian

Turks. Western educators should expect both students and colleagues to be initially hesitant

towards human rights pedagogy, for it is vastly different from the educational methods of the

past in both its ideology and implementation. As HRE emphasizes respect for individualism

and student-centered teaching strategies, it must be noted that this method may be quite foreign

to young people. Human rights work has primarily been directed toward minority populations

in Bulgaria; ethnic Bulgarians may not be overly familiar with these concepts nor see a direct

relevance to their lives. The creative writing unit included in the project is my effort to meet

those needs for these students, to enable them access to these vital principles for building more

equitable communities. While framed around the UDHR and human rights movements in the

US, the focus is on creating a learning space in which Bulgarian students are free to develop

their own voices and make connections to each other. As people who have historically lived

under various controlling regimes, it is my hope that exposure to and engagement with the

principles of HRE will serve as a catalyst for these young people to speak for those who have

too long been rendered voiceless in the face of oppression.

CHAPTER III
THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

Description of the Project

This project includes a series of six lessons for a Bulgarian creative writing elective course that meets once a week for 90 minutes. Through the various writing prompts and activities, the students develop their facility with poetry, prose, and nonfiction. The lessons are connected to the theme of identity, and offer a way for students to connect to their own stories while learning to see the experiences of others, beyond stereotypical descriptions. The first three lessons allow students to explore their own identities, and the latter lessons use creative writing to guide students in understanding the experience of minorities and minorities in the US. Given the lack of resources in many Bulgarian classrooms, I have intentionally designed these lessons for implementation with little or no technology, beyond the students' cellphones. I believe this allows the project to be more immediately useful for educators in Bulgaria.

Development of the Project

The idea to teach human rights through creative writing came directly out of my experience as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Bulgaria from September 2014 through June 2015. As a Fulbright recipient, one of my key objectives was to build meaningful intercultural exchange between me and my students, who were primarily ethnic Bulgarians. For an independent research project, however, I worked with Arête, a Bulgarian NGO that supports Roma citizens integrate into mainstream Bulgarian society. When I mentioned to my Bulgarian students that I also tutored Roma students through this organization, they were both shocked and, I believe, slightly amused that I would spend time on what they perceived as a hopeless and meaningless activity. This started a dialogue on race and ethnicity that continued for the duration of the year. It became clear to me that my students perceived the belief in human

rights to be an American or Western peculiarity – and a hypocritical one, at that. As the protests in Ferguson, Missouri captured international headlines, my students questioned both the actions of protestors (whom many referred to as rioters) and my own beliefs in racial equality. How could I judge the inequalities in Bulgarian society when the US clearly suffered from similar issues?

This curriculum is, in part, my response to their question. The lessons included, however, do not directly answer such a multi-faceted and complicated issue. Rather, they focus on building intercultural communication between American teachers in Bulgarian classrooms. By learning about the development of human rights and the connection between equality and the formation of the US, it is my hope that both teachers and students can work together to critically examine minority rights. My hope is that while such learning may not offer easy answers, it may instead raise relevant questions.

The decision to teach this curriculum through a creative writing elective rather than to integrate it into English class curriculum is also based on my practical experience. Given the tightly controlled nature of the Bulgarian education, there is simply not enough time in English class for students to delve into these issues while also meeting the requirements of the state mandated curriculum. Elective classes, which function much in the way that clubs do in U.S. high schools, allow more freedom to extend discussions based on student interest. Furthermore, the nature of creative writing allows students for more opportunities to both develop their own individual voices and to imagine their way into the lived experiences of others.

As a bridge between Bulgarian and American cultures, the curriculum centers on stereotypes and migration issues. I chose to apply a human rights lens to this context because it presents scenarios that many Bulgarian students may experience upon graduation from high

school. Many Bulgarians immigrate to other countries in search of economic and educational opportunities; in the future, then, those who are empowered in their home countries become minorities when they move abroad. The various lessons require students to imagine and describe this experience, to examine cultural differences, stereotypes, and the effects of discrimination.

A unique feature of this curriculum is also that of its intended audience: ethnic Bulgarian teenagers. Because of the economic segregation within the Bulgarian society, many ethnic Bulgarians have little contact if any contact with minorities. Such lack of meaningful interaction serves only to solidify ethnic stereotypes. While there are several organizations working to promote Roma rights and equality in Bulgaria, I soon found that my Bulgarian students had almost no knowledge of these efforts. I hope that through teaching this human rights curriculum to Bulgarian students, which focuses primarily on U.S. social issues, they may begin to question the ethnic division within their own society.

The Project

Please see the Appendix.

CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

In today's increasingly globalized world, both the US and Bulgaria are at a cultural crossroads. The rise of immigration due to war and the changing economic landscape ensures that both nations will become increasingly more diverse. One nation's politics affects not only those within that nation, but also people throughout the world. Moreover, given increasing technological advancements, people have greater access than ever before to information, news media, and the lived experiences of others. Therefore, human rights education has never been more relevant and essential for building intercultural tolerance and a more peaceable world. Moreover, it is essential for cultural beliefs and practices to be examined in their own contexts through a deep understanding of the historical movements by which they were shaped. This project serves to meet that need in one small way, through building intercultural dialogue regarding human rights between American teachers in Bulgarian secondary schools

While this project primarily focuses on presenting Bulgarian students with an alternative educational methods and opportunities to critically analyze international social issues, it is my belief that teachers may benefit as much as their students through teaching this curriculum. Education should be a reciprocal process in which students and teachers offer contributions and learn from each other. When teaching human rights through creative writing, both Bulgarian students and their American teachers have the opportunity to experience meaningful intercultural exchange with people who view the world through vastly different social and historical perspectives. That said, both teachers and students may engage as active participants and learners. Only in this way, may true intercultural competence, based on mutual respect, be achieved.

Recommendations

The curriculum provided in this field project offers a set of lessons that investigate human rights issues that directly relate to both US and Bulgarian contexts. In order for this curriculum to be most effective, however, the class community should first be developed to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all students. Many Bulgarians students may not be accustomed to open-ended class discussions in which their answers are not evaluated as right or wrong. Initially, it is likely that students will look to their teachers for affirmation of the "correct" response. Because of this dynamic, teachers must tread carefully in how they respond to their students' ideas. Genuine intercultural exchange can easily be stifled if it seems as though teachers have an agenda. That being said, however, education is never truly neutral or objective. Because of this, I recommend that American teachers approach the topic of human rights both honestly but with cultural humility. In other words, they should be mindful of framing their interactions with students from an overly ethnocentric perspective. For example, rather than telling students that their perspectives are racist, I found it far more effective to ask my students where their ideas come from. When I approached sensitive topics with this more curious approach, I found that students would more readily engage in critical discourse rather than simply falling silent.

As an American teacher in Bulgaria, I also found it essential to learn about Bulgarian history and culture not only through research, but also through listening to my students. The stories of individuals and their families provide insights into culture that are too often absent in history books and government reports. Furthermore, honoring the personal voice is the foundation of developing creative writing. Not only did concern with my students' lives

demonstrate my genuine care for them as individuals, it also showed them that I truly wanted to understand their world, even though it was very different from my own.

Other aspects essential for learning that are not included in this curriculum include providing students with general instruction on basic principles of creative writing. In my experience, I found that students appreciated exposure to different styles of creative writing before independently applying these methods to their own work. While such instruction has not been included in this project, pre-teaching specific creative writing techniques before starting this unit would enable more students access to the various writing activities included in the lessons. Also, as students adjust to a different learning environment, I found it helpful to initially blend traditional classroom practices with student-centered pedagogical methods. When I attempted to generate student-based discussions without such scaffolding, students remained quiet and ill at ease. Intentional scaffolding allowed students to adjust more easily to an environment that placed equal value on their voices as my own.

Finally, this project is intended to function as a framework for teaching human rights through creative writing, but may be altered to fit the specific needs of individual classes. For instance, I selected the news articles used in this project specifically to connect US and Bulgarian immigration issues. However, as time goes by it is my expectation that these articles will become less relevant. While the framework of the curriculum will still apply, updated articles may be included that bear more connection to current issues. Ideally, human rights issues will not be studied as events of the past but rather as current challenges in need of humanistic and creative solutions. The curriculum provided in this project works more as a living document to be adjusted as necessary. Just as our understanding of human rights continue to develop, so too should the teaching material. In this way, both teachers and students

may start their work together from a common ground, specific to their context. It is my hope

that this curriculum will serve as a jumping off point for continued learning and meaningful

intercultural exchange.

REFERENCES

Bogomilova, N. (2015). Problems of teaching religion in public schools in Bulgaria today: Retrospective and prospective. *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*, *35*(1), 11-25.

Bojkov, V. (2004). Bulgaria's Turks in the 1980s: A minority endangered. *Journal of Genocide Research*, *6*(3), 343-369.

Boyadjieva, P. A. (2013). Admissions policies as a mechanism for social engineering: The case of the Communist regime. *Comparative Education Review*, *57*(3), 503-526.

DeDominicis, B. E. (2011). The Bulgarian ethnic model: Post-1989 Bulgarian ethnic conflict resolution. *Nationalities Papers*, *39*(3), 441-460. doi:10.1080/00905992.2011.565317

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum.

Ganev, V. I. (2014). The legacies of 1989: Bulgaria's year of civic anger. *Journal of Democracy*, *25*(1), 33-45.

Grant, N. (1970). Educational reform in Bulgaria. *Comparative Education*, *6,* 179-191.

Hacisalıhoğlu, M. (2006). The Ottoman administration of Bulgaria and Macedonia during the 19th - 20th centuries in recent Turkish historiography: Contributions, deficiencies and perspectives. *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies*, (11), 85-123.

Jackson, M. (1991). The rise and decay of the socialist economy in Bulgaria. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *5*(4), 203-209.

Kavalski, E. (2007). "Do not play with fire": The end of the Bulgarian ethnic model or the persistence of inter-ethnic tensions in Bulgaria?. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, *27*(1), 25-36. doi:10.1080/13602000701308806

Kelbecheva, E. (2013). National history as a fairy tale: A study of Bulgarian historical memory.*Baltic Worlds*, *6*(2), 33-40.

Kenarov, D. (2008). Game over, perseverance, all I want is everything. *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *84*(3), 130-149.

Kymlicka, W. (2015). Multiculturalism and minority rights: West and East. *Journal on Ethnolopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, *14*(4), 4-25.

Kosseva, M., & Hajdinjak, M. (2011). *Living next door to "Europe": Bulgarian education between tradition and modernity, and between the European and national* (SSH-CT-2009-215949).

Liakova M. (2013). The Turkish minority in Bulgaria. *Euxeinos: Governance and Culture in the Black Sea Region*, 12-18.

Liebich, A. (1998). *Ethnic minorities and long-term implications of EU enlargement* (Working Paper RSC No 98/49). Geneva, Switzerland: The Graduate Institute of International Studies, 1-21.

Lustig, M. W., & Koester, J. (2003). *Intercultural competence: Interpersonal communication across cultures* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

MacNaughton, G. (2015). Human rights education for all: A proposal for the post-2015 development agenda. *Washington International Law Journal*, *24*(3), 537-569.

O'Reilly, L. M. (1998). English language cultures in Bulgaria: A linguistic sibling rivalry? *World Englishes*, *17*(1), 71-84.

Pisarev, P. (2006). To Communism and back again. *Journal for Labor and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe*, *9*(3), 25-34.

Rechel, B. (2007). The "Bulgarian ethnic model" – Reality or ideology?. *Europe-Asia Studies*, *59*(7), 1201-1215.

Sandmeier, M. (2015). The Bulgarian horrors through the eyes of an American journalist: Januarius Aloysius MacGahan's role in the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman empire, 1876-1878. *Altanta Review of Journalism History*, *12*, 143-167.

Stefanova, J. (2006). The four transitions in Bulgarian education. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2006(179), pp. 155-167.

Stephanove, C. (2014). Bulgaria. *Bulgarian Journal of Science and Education Policy*, *8*(2), 392-411.

Templer, B. (2014). Capitalism reborn, chaos and the post-social freefall: A view from Europe's 'new periphery'. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, *12*(1), 22-72.

Trentini, C. (2014). Ethnic patterns of returns to education in Bulgaria. *Economics of Transition*, *22*(1), 105-137. doi:10.1111/ecot.12035

United Nations. (1948, December 10). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/history.shtml

United Nations. (2000). *Bulgaria: Bulgaria governmental report*. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/responses/BULGARIA-English.pdf

Vazov, I. M. (1971). *Under the yoke*. New York, NY: Twayne Publishers.

Vassilev, R. (2010). Restoring the ethnolinguistic rights of Bulgaria's Turkish minority. *Ethnopolitics*, *9*(3/4), 295-309. doi:10.1080/17449050903551859

Whitehead, C. (2015). Reading beside the lines: Marginalia, W.E. Gladstone, and the international history of the Bulgarian horrors. *International History Review*, *37*(4), 864-886. doi:10.1080/07075332.2014.974652

APPENDIX

Where East Meets West:
Teaching Human Rights through Creative Writing in Bulgaria Secondary Schools

Where East Meets West

Teaching Human Rights through Creative Writing in Bulgaria Secondary Schools

Barbara Jeanne Arduini

Table of Contents

Introductory Information:

"Where East Meets West" Curriculum:

Brief Overview of the Unit Goals

This curriculum unit provides a creative approach through which to educate Bulgarian secondary students about human rights. Through writing poetry, fiction, and nonfiction, students explore both the meaning and relevance of human rights to people's lives. It incorporates both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and individual student research to deepen intercultural understanding, encouraging students to look at "American" history through the eyes of the oppressed – particularly immigrants and ethnic minorities – and find their own connections to human rights within a Bulgarian context.

Pedagogical Approach

The pedagogical approach used in this unit is rooted in the principles of Human Rights Education – education about human rights, through human rights, and for human rights. This educational model connects both the techniques of creative writing and lessons on US history to Bulgarian students' lived experiences and cultural context. The goal is to use creative writing as a conduit through which to both educate and empower young people about their own human rights.

Intended Audience

This unit is designed for a Creative Writing elective course at a Bulgarian English language secondary school. As electives allow for more flexible curriculum, the lessons are not designed to be used with the literary texts required of typical Bulgarian English classes. That said, much of the curriculum may be adapted for regular classroom use. The unit assumes anywhere of 15 to 30 students in participation – the collaborative activities may be adjusted accordingly, depending on student attendance. Depending on the school schedule, students may be freshman, sophomore, juniors, seniors, or any combination. In terms of English language fluency, this curriculum assumes students are fluent speakers and readers of English. However, given the likely variety in student demographics (younger students may not be as fluent as older students), all lessons include modifications for English language learners.

Given the technological limitations of many Bulgarian public schools, most lessons are designed to for use in classrooms without computers or projectors. Teachers using this curriculum may alter the lessons if they have these resources available – showing video clips or playing music would certainly optimize the material. However, while these may not be available for classroom use, teachers may trust that most students will have internet access through their cell phones. This unit incorporates cell phone use for individual and small group activities.

In my experience, many electives in Bulgaria are voluntary and take place either before or after the standard school day. In this sense, they function similarly to clubs in US institutions – teacher-facilitators may take attendance, but assignments are not evaluated or officially documented. Upon conclusion of the course, students receive a certificate of completion rather than a grade. In that light, the suggested writing extensions beyond class time allow students

the opportunity to explore human rights issues through creative writing. Student participation in these activities, however, is optional.

Unit Structure

Each lesson in this unit is designed for one 90 minute class period which meets once a week. As students will need time to write during class, the lessons in practice may stretch into two sessions. All lesson involve various activities to develop the classroom community and include subject matter relevant to the students' lives. Given that the nature of creative writing generally involves substantial time spent in reflection and alone, the activities of this unit also present individual writing prompts. The end goal of this unit is not necessarily for students to complete a finished draft or project, but rather to energize the students' creative thinking about human rights so that they may pursue whichever extension activities that interest them.

The first two lessons build a foundation for human rights. They connect human rights to creative writing through free expression, use articles from the UDHR as writing prompts, and explore stereotypes as examples of weak writing that may feed human rights violations. The third and fourth lessons explore cultural identity. Students examine concepts such as the American Dream and Hemingway's Iceberg Theory of Writing to develop three-dimensional characters and realistic stories. The fifth and sixth lessons focus on writing about immigration, both from the perspective of people who choose to immigrate and people who are forcibly displaced. Writing activities encourage students to research and interviews avoid stereotypes. Cumulatively, all lessons in the unit build intercultural competence between the students and the instructor, helping students to write stories that embrace diversity and honor the humanity of all people.

Brief Summary of Lessons:

Lesson One: Introduction to Human Rights – This lesson introduces students to the concept of human rights, and examines their historical development. It connects creative writing to the right of free expression, and allows students to collaboratively explore the articles of the Universal Declaration of human rights. The culminating activity asks students to write a personal or fiction piece, using an article of the UDHR to frame their story.

Lesson Two: Understanding and Avoiding Stereotypes – This lesson connects stereotypes to human rights violations. Students examine how stereotypes weaken writing, and use their own experiences and those of their peers to write three-dimensional characters.

Lesson Three: Historical Fiction: Writing the Other Accurately – This lesson explores the difficulties in writing accurately about foreign cultures/peoples. Students are introduced to the concept of the American Dream and read a news article about undocumented Bulgarians living in the US. Relying on both personal experiences and research, students write about cultural differences between Americans and Bulgarians.

Lesson Four: Writing Icebergs: Understanding Cultural Identity – This lesson continues the analysis of cultural differences between Americans and Bulgarians through exploring the concepts of cultural identity. Students apply Hemingway's Iceberg Theory to both writing and cultural identity.

Lesson Five: The Hero's Journey: Immigrant Stories – This lesson uses the concept of the Hero's Journey to write about the experience of immigrants to the US. Students work together to make an outline of a story, then individually develop a heroic tale to depict immigration.

Lesson Six: Refugees and Forced Displacement – This lesson focuses on the experience of forced displacement through analyzing narrative from refugees. Students create non-stereotypical characters that must undergo the difficulties faced by many refugees fleeing war-torn countries.

Lesson One

Introduction to Human Rights

Essential Questions:

What are human rights? How do human rights relate to creative expression?

Hook Activity:

(15 minutes) **Opening Writing Prompt**:

Write a scene involving a character that is not allowed to voice his/her thoughts or opinions.

Use the Think-Write-Pair-Share model: Give students time to think and write. When finished, have students share with a partner. After, ask volunteers to share with the class. If students do not feel comfortable reading their writing, ask students to explain the situations they wrote about.

Body of Lesson:

(5 minutes) **Transition:**

Ask students how freedom of expression is important to creative writing and literature. (If teacher has projector or students have cell phones, ask them to look up **www.pen.org** and explore the "Defending Free Expression" tab.)

(10 minutes) **Cultural Exchange Discussion:**

Read together "**Background Information on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**." Discuss the conflict of freedom of expression between the US and Soviet Union.   Explain that this right is among the most highly defended in the US, and that the unit will focus on developing creative writing through the lens of human rights.

(20 minutes) **Jigsaw Activity:**

Give students copy of the **UDHR**. In groups, have students break down the language of the document and collaboratively rewrite them in their own words. Assign different articles of the UDHR to different groups, and ask them to create an illustration of how each article could be upheld or violated.

(10 minutes) **Presentations:**

Ask each group to share their illustrations and explain them to the class.

(10 minutes) **Collaborative Brainstorming:**

As a class, discuss which articles of the UDHR they think are most important. Record their ideas on the whiteboard. Discuss different ways in which those articles could be violated or upheld on a personal, local, and global level.

(15 minutes) **Individual Writing Activity:**

Give students the following writing prompt: Write a story that demonstrates how any article of the UDHR could be upheld or violated. Students may also continue working on the opening prompt of the day, if they want to.

Closure:

(5 minutes) **Closing discussion:**

Ask students to either read their writing to the class or share their ideas for the prompt with the class.

Accommodations:

Depending on fluency of English language ability, the "**Plain Language UDHR"** may be used in lieu of the official document.

Students may need essential vocabulary defined. They can either ask for definitions or look them up in their dictionaries.

If students have access to the internet, using the website **www.youthforhumanrights.org** may help them to understand the articles in their group work. If class has a projector, the website has a video "The History of Human Rights" that may be used in place of the introductory reading.

Extension Activity:

Encourage students to continue working on their in class writing. Collection of writing is generally up to teacher discretion.

Resources Needed:

Handouts needed for lesson:
       Background of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
       Universal Declaration of Human Rights
       Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Plain Language Version

Materials needed:
       Whiteboard markers (or chalk)
       Color markers or crayons
       Paper for illustrations

Useful websites (if internet access available):
       www.pen.org
       www.youthforhumanrights.org

Lesson Two

Understanding and Avoiding Stereotypes

Essential Questions:

What are stereotypes? How do stereotypes lead to human rights violations? How can stereotypes be avoided in creative writing?

Hook Activity:

(15 minutes) **Opening Writing Prompt and Discussion**:

Have students complete the following statements:

American people are…
Bulgarian people are…

Students may choose to brainstorm adjectives or answer in paragraph form. Encourage students to be honest, and to not worry about offending teacher if American stereotypes are unflattering.

Use the Think-Write-Pair-Share model: Give students time to think and write. When finished, have students share with a partner. In class discussion, keep track of ideas on the board. Ask students if their answers contradict each other at all, or if students had different perspectives on Americans/Bulgarians. Ask students to reflect on where their ideas came from.

Body of Lesson:

(15 minutes) **Cultural Exchange Discussion**

Ask students to copy the following definition of stereotypes into their notes:

> Stereotype: a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

Ask students to reflect on the following quote from author **Chimamanda Adichie**:

"The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story."

Response Writing and/or Discussion: Ask students if they can think of examples from their experience when they have been unfairly stereotyped for their nationality, gender, appearance, religion, interests, etc. Share experiences of your own.

Ask students how stereotypical characters can weaken writing.

(10 minutes) **Reading and Discussion**

Read aloud **"3 Stereotypes to Avoid"** and discuss questions on the danger of stereotypes. As a class, brainstorm ideas on HOW to avoid stereotypes in writing.

(20 minutes) **Peer Interview**

If students have not brainstormed this suggestion, explain that one strategy to avoid stereotypes in writing is to build authentic three-dimensional characters including realistic details. This activity will give them a chance to work on developing realistic characters, using each other as resources.

Hand out **"Characterization Worksheet"** and have students work in pairs to interview each other. After ten minutes, ask students to switch partners so that both students get a chance to talk.

(20 minutes) **Individual Writing Activity**

Using their peer interview worksheets as a starting point, have students write a story using their peer as a character. The story may be fictionalized or may be based on an experience their partner shared. Remind students that when their ideas are based on real people, they should consider the impact of their writing on their subject. This is a consideration for many writers, especially if they want to share their work with a larger audience.

* Tell students that this work may be collected and read to the class as part of a closing game.

Closure:

(10 minutes) **Guessing Game Activity**:

Collect individual writing from previous activity. Mix up the papers. Read a few to the class and ask them if they can guess who the story is based on. (Make sure to scan for appropriateness.)

<u>Accommodations:</u>

Students may need help with some vocabulary. Encourage them to ask for definitions or use their dictionaries.

If internet access and projector is available, students may benefit from watching and discussing Chimamanda Adichies's TED Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story" from www.ted.com. Though this would take up some class time, Adichie's personal story is relevant to the class and works well for discussion of stereotypes.

<u>Extension Activity:</u>

Ask students to write a story about Americans that defies stereotypes. This concept will be built upon in the next class.

Resources Needed:

Handouts needed for lesson:
　　　"3 Stereotypes to Avoid"
　　　"Characterization Worksheet"

Materials needed:
　　　Whiteboard markers (or chalk)

Useful websites (if internet access available):
　　　www.ted.com

Lesson Three

Historical Fiction: Writing the Other Accurately

Essential Questions:

How can studying human rights in history help to develop better characters in writing? How can stereotypes be avoided when writing about people we do not personally know?

Hook Activity:

(10 minutes) **Opening Writing Prompt**:

Describe a color of your choice to someone who is blind. You may write as a story or in poem form. Avoid using the name of the color in your writing.

(10 minutes) **Game**

Ask volunteers to read their work aloud and have the class guess what color they were trying to describe. Discuss with students how they approached the task, and if they think it would be successful in reality.

Body of Lesson:

(10 minutes) **Cultural Exchange Discussion**

Discuss with students: How could it be difficult to describe something you've never experienced? What is the danger? As writers, how can we accurately write about what we don't know from our own lives?

Transition into writing accurately about other cultures, without relying on stereotypes. The focus today will be on writing about immigration and analyzing the concept of the American Dream. (Some students may be familiar with this concept, while other likely will not.)

Ask students to copy the following note:

> American Dream: the ideal that every US citizen should have an equal opportunity to achieve success and prosperity through hard work, determination, and initiative.

Discuss the following questions: Do students think that this concept is true for the US? Is it true for Bulgaria? How could the concept of the American Dream influence the general culture of the country?

(10 minutes) **Reading and Discussion**

Read aloud short essay **"What is the American Dream?"** Discuss with students the different ideas presented as variations on the American Dream.

(15 minutes) **News Article Annotation and Discussion**

Have students read silently **"40,000 Illegal Bulgarian Immigrants to Benefit from Obama's Reform"**. Students should annotate while they read – mark unfamiliar words and look them up, summarize and respond to the text in the margins. After reading, discuss students' reactions. This is a good entryway to explain the controversial term "illegal immigration" as a dehumanizing phrase.

(20 minutes) **Individual Writing Activity**

This activity is meant to blend the familiar with the unfamiliar, and to work on writing free from stereotypes. Have students give a human voice to the news article they read – write a story about an undocumented Bulgarian living in the US. Why did the character move to the US? Does he/she want to return to Bulgaria? Does this character believe in the American Dream? Why or why not? Have students try to focus their writing on one specific interaction that demonstrates their character's personality and situation.

(10 minutes) **Peer Editing**

Students exchange papers with a partner and give feedback to each other on character development – have are the characters (Bulgarian and American) developed? Are they unique? Three-dimensional? Do they seem real? Why or why not? Ask students to also discuss why they chose to write the characters the way they did.

Closure:

(5 minutes) **Future Planning**

After peer edit, have students write down three aspects of their story that could developed more realistically if they did more reading/research. Have all students in the class share one thing from their list.

<u>Accommodations</u>:

Students may need help reading "What is the American Dream?" because the essay includes some difficult vocabulary. It may help students to pre-teach some vocabulary words.

If technology is accessible, more resources on the American Dream are available on the Library of Congress website, including many primary resources and audio recordings. The website is www.loc.gov.

<u>Extension Activity</u>:

Students may follow up with their future plans, reading more about the world of their characters and revising their stories.

Resources Needed:

Handouts needed for lesson:
 "What is the American Dream?"
 "40,000 Illegal Bulgarian Immigrants to Benefit from Obama's Reform"

Materials needed:
 Whiteboard markers (or chalk)

Useful websites (if internet access available):
 www.loc.gov

Lesson Four

Writing Icebergs: Understanding Cultural Identity

Essential Questions:

What are the indicators of cultural identity? What facets define US and Bulgarian culture? How can cultural heroes be used to develop personal narratives?

Hook Activity:

(10 minutes) **Opening Writing Prompt**:

Who is a great Bulgarian hero? Describe this person, explaining why he/she is so highly respected.

(10 minutes) **Cultural Exchange Discussion**

Ask students to share the heroes they wrote about. Keep track of their ideas on the whiteboard for later reference. Ask students what qualities these people possess that are still admired today. Share about a significant US hero, revered by the vast majority of Americans, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or Abraham Lincoln. Highlight the contributions of these people as activists, who worked for racial equality, who fought against the majority in order to achieve a moral good.

Body of Lesson:

(20 minutes) **Reading and Discussion**

Read aloud the handout "**Ernest Hemingway: The Iceberg Theory of Writing"** and answer the discussion questions.

Draw a picture of an iceberg on the board. Ask students to reflect on the news story they read in the last class about undocumented Bulgarians in the US. What details are "visible" to the reader and what information is obscured?

Give students the handout **"The Iceberg of Cultural Identity"**. Look at the different indicators of cultural identity that are explicit and implicit (above and below the water line).

(20 minutes) **Partner/Class Activity**

Have students draw an iceberg on their papers. Have them complete it for Bulgarian culture – identifying what is explicit and implicit. Draw an iceberg on the board, and elicit answers to complete it as a class. Note what differences and similarities different pairs identified.

Draw another iceberg on the board for American culture. Explain that the visible aspects of American culture are often especially visible to people who are outside the US. Elicit details about US culture from students, focusing first on the visible part of the iceberg and then moving below.

Discuss: What is the relationship between the visible and obscured parts of the iceberg?

(20 minutes) **Individual Writing Activity**

Ask students to return to their stories from last class which were based on the news article about undocumented Bulgarians in the US. As students to continue writing the story, adding on a scene in which the underlying cultural values of their narrator shape the way in which they deal with a situation or another character. Encourage students to "show, not tell" – to demonstrate the implied cultural influences without stating them outright.

Closure:

(10 minutes) **Discussion**

Go around the room and ask students to either share their writing or to explain the situation and cultural values they are attempting to portray. Ask students to share any difficulties they have with this activity as well as how they overcame that difficulty.

Accommodations:

The writing activity at the end of this lesson may be difficult for students to approach. It may be helpful to offer a more specific situation, based on what was discussed during the iceberg activities. For instance, people in the US tend to smile at strangers more often than Bulgarians do. Write about a Bulgarian immigrant to the US who is encouraged to "smile more." How does the character feel when given that advice?

Extension Activity:

Students may continue working on the news article writing assignment.

Resources Needed:

Handouts needed for lesson:
        "Ernest Hemingway: The Iceberg Theory of Writing"
        "The Iceberg of Cultural Identity"

Materials needed:
        Whiteboard markers (or chalk)
        Drawing paper for student iceberg activity

Lesson Five

The Hero's Journey: Immigrant Stories

Essential Questions:

For what reasons do people choose to immigrate to new country? What challenges do people need to overcome when they undertake such a move? How can ordinary people be heroes?

Hook Activity:

(15 minutes) **Opening Writing Prompt**:

Write a story about leaving home.

Students can interpret this theme in whatever way they choose.

Use the Think-Write-Pair-Share model: Give students time to think and write. When finished, have students share with a partner. After, ask volunteers to share with the class. If students do not feel comfortable reading their writing, ask students to explain the situations they wrote about.

Body of Lesson:

(15 minutes) **Lecture on the Hero's Journey**

Tell students that today they will be writing heroic stories based on the experience of immigrants to the US. Give students **"The Hero's Journey"** handout and read aloud with students. Ask students about stories they have read or movies they have seen that follow the arch of the story myth.

(10 minutes) **Collaborative Brainstorming**

Give students the following story frame: Write a story about an immigrant to the US through the lens of the hero's journey. As a class, decide on where the characters are from, why they move, etc. Discuss how different aspects of the hero's tale could be utilized for the story. Keep track of student ideas on the whiteboard. Encourage students to consider areas in need of research for creating realistic narratives.

(20 minutes) **Individual Writing Activity**

After brainstorming give students time to work individually on the immigrant hero story they brainstormed together.

(10 minutes) **Peer Analysis**

Ask students to work in pairs to read each other stories and discuss how they incorporated the hero's journey into their partner's stories. Ask students for examples of how they incorporated the hero's journey frame into their own writing.

Closure:

(10 minutes) **Poetry Discussion**

Read Naomi Shihab Nye's poem **"Making a Fist."** Explain that Nye is Arab-American and often writes about the experiences of immigrants/refugees. Discuss how this short poems emphasizes the strength of immigrants – what language does she use to create this resilient mood? What could students incorporate into their own writing?

Accommodations:

For readings, allow students to use dictionaries and/or define unfamiliar words. If available, play the audio reading of "Making a Fist" while students read. Have two or three different students read "Making a Fist" aloud, in order for students to hear how different people may emphasize different aspects of the poem.

Extension Activity:

Students may write their own "Making a Fist" poems to demonstrate the strength of immigrants.

Resources Needed:

Handouts needed for lesson:
 "The Hero's Journey"
 "Making a Fist"

Materials needed:
 Whiteboard markers (or chalk)
Useful websites (if internet access available):
 For an audio reading of "Making a Fist": www.poets.org

Lesson Six

Refugees and Forced Displacement

Essential Questions:

What is the difference between an immigrant and a refugee? How is the experience of forced displacement different from other types of immigration?

Hook Activity:

(15 minutes) **Opening Writing Prompt**:

Write a story or poem in which the following quote is used:

"No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark."
> - Warsan Shire

Use the Think-Write-Pair-Share model: Give students time to think and write. When finished, have students share with a partner. After, ask volunteers to share with the class. If students do not feel comfortable reading their writing, ask students to explain the situations they wrote about. Keep track of ideas on the white board for later reference.

Body of Lesson:

(15 minutes) **Cultural Exchange Discussion**

1. Write the following statement on the whiteboard:
    > "America is a nation of immigrants."

Discuss: How is American a nation of immigrants? What does this mean about "American" identity? Is Bulgaria a nation of immigrants?

2. Write the following definitions on the whiteboard:
    > Immigrant: a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country.
    > Refugee: a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster

Discuss: How might refugees experience immigration differently from those who are not forcibly displaced?

(20 minutes) **Jigsaw: Reading, Analysis, Presentation**

From the website http://stories.unhcr.org/ - choose a variety of refugee stories for students to read and analyze in small groups of 2 or 3. Give each group a different story and ask them to do the following:
1. Who immigrated? From where? To where? Why?
2. What human rights were violated/upheld in this narrative?
3. Give three specific details (quotes, phrases, etc.) from the reading that stuck out to you or made the reading more moving.

Have students present their readings to the class.

(15 minutes) **Individual Writing Activity (Part I)**

Ask students to complete another **"Characterization Worksheet"** (using the same worksheet used from Lesson Two) for an imagined refugee. Encourage students to apply earlier lessons on avoiding stereotypes and building into their descriptions a three-dimensional understanding of cultural influences. They may use their phones for research, if they need to look up factual information about their characters.

After writing, have students share out their ideas for their characters.

(15 minutes) **Individual Writing Activity (Part II)**

Building on the characters they developed in the previous writing activity, ask students to write a story or narrative in which the person they created has to undergo one of the following experiences: (Write options on the whiteboard.)

a. Crossing a dangerous border
b. Living in a refugee camp
c. Receiving help from strangers

Encourage students to not simply depict refugees as powerless victims or to only focus on maudlin details. Many stories have glimmers of hope and small acts of kindness, even in the worst situations. On the other hand, most "happy" stories still have aspects that are dark or negative. In general, people and experiences are a mixed bag of good and bad.

Closure:

(10 minutes)

Go around the room and ask students to either share their writing or to explain the situation they chose to explore. Ask students to share any difficulties they have with this activity as well as how they overcame that difficulty.

Accommodations:

Many online resources are available through www.unhrc.org – if students have internet access on their phones, they could as a group choose stories to analyze.

Extension Activity:

Students may continue working on their stories/poems. Encourage students to reach out to people who have immigrated (either by choice or force), to learn what the experience was like for real people. This will help them to build more realism into their writing, and give them the opportunity to understand the lived experiences of others.

Resources Needed:

Handouts needed for lesson:
"Characterization Worksheet"
Refugee Narratives from http://stories.unhcr.org/

Materials needed:
Whiteboard markers (or chalk)

Useful websites (if internet access available):
http://stories.unhcr.org/

Materials for Unit

Handouts included below:

"Background of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights"
 "3 Stereotypes to Avoid"
"What is the American Dream?"
"40,000 Illegal Bulgarian Immigrants to Benefit from Obama's Reform"
"Ernest Hemingway: The Iceberg Theory of Writing"
"The Iceberg of Cultural Identity"
"The Hero's Journey"
"Making a Fist" by Naomi Shibab Nye

Internet resources for other needed materials:

"Universal Declaration of Human Rights" can be downloaded from:
http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/

"Plain Language Universal Declaration of Human Rights" can be downloaded from:
http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/foundation_gr3/blms/3-2-3b.pdf

The following website provides a link that shows how writers are working to protect and preserve freedom of expression: www.pen.org

"Background of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and many other free teaching materials for Human Rights Education are available on: www.youthforhumanrights.org

Chimamanda Adichi's TED Talk can be found on: www.ted.com

"What is the American Dream?" and many other free resources on teaching U.S. history (including primary sources and lesson plans) are available on: www.loc.gov

"Making a Fist" by Naomi Shihab Nye, as well as many other poems, can be found: www.poets.org

"Characterization Worksheet": Useful free downloads for characterization worksheets can be found at the following website:
http://www.the-writers-craft.com/creative-writing-worksheets.html

Refugee Narratives: These can be found on: http://stories.unhcr.org/

THE WORLD AS IT COULD BE

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Background Information on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

A. UDHR History and Current Status

Definition of Human Rights

Human rights are held by all persons equally, universally, and forever. Human rights are the basic standards without which people cannot live in dignity. These rights are inalienable. This means you cannot lose these rights just as you cannot cease to be a human being. Human rights are indivisible. In other words, no right is more important than another. Human rights are interdependent. Each right is connected with other rights.

The UDHR is both inspirational and practical. Human rights principles hold the vision of a free, just, and peaceful world. On a practical level, the UDHR sets minimum standards of how individuals and institutions everywhere should treat people. To promote human rights is to demand that the human dignity of all people is respected. By accepting universal human rights, ones also accept duties to the community to defend human dignity.

Human rights should not be understood as only issues that occur in far-away places. Human rights are present in our everyday lives and in our local community. As Eleanor Roosevelt said, "Where, after all, do universal rights begin? In small places, close to home…Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere."

Historical Context of the UDHR

The UDHR grew from a global commitment to prevent future atrocities experienced during World War II. The concept of defending human dignity based on a sense of shared community has its roots in many cultural and religious traditions. Sacred texts such as the Koran and the bible, as well as civic documents, such as the Magna Carta (1215) and the US Constitution and Bill of Rights (1791) provide a foundation for human rights.

At the end of World War II, nations came together to create the United Nations with a charter to promote international peace and prevent conflict. Calls from across the globe voiced their demand for mechanisms beyond international conflict resolution. Strong support for an international framework to protect citizens from abuses by their government and to hold nations accountable for the treatment of those living in their borders culminated in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Drafting and Adoption of the UDHR - Human Rights Commission

A Human Rights Commission was created with members including human rights experts from around the world. In 1945 over 5,000 participants attended the conference in San Francisco to address the role of individual rights within the United Nations. The Commission elected Eleanor Roosevelt as their chairperson because of her political stature and personal commitment to social justice. Under the leadership of the "First Lady of the World" the document survived various iterations, attacks and political pressure stemming from the emerging Cold War.

On December 10, 1948, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by forty-eight of the fifty-six members of the United Nations, with eight abstentions. The abstaining members were Byelorussia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Ukraine, The USSR, Yugoslavia, South Africa and Saudi Arabia.

The language of the document was designed to not simply suggest or recommend, but to proclaim a universal vision. By creating it as a universal declaration, not a treaty, it was intended not to be legally binding, but morally binding. Over the last sixty years, the influence of the document has been substantial. Its principles have been incorporated by most of the more than 185 nations in the UN. The UDHR has become an international standard for all people and nations.

Cold War Controversies: Civil and Political versus Economic, Social and Cultural

Due to Cold War tensions primarily between the US and the Soviet Union the creation of one legally binding human rights treaty was unrealistic. Therefore two distinct treaties containing the ideals of the UDHR were drafted. The International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) together with the UDHR are commonly referred to the International Bill of Rights. The ICCPR focuses on such rights as the freedom of speech, right to vote, and the freedom of religion. This treaty is similar to the rights within the US Bill of Rights. The ICESCR contains the right to employment, shelter, healthcare and education among others. To date both treaties have been ratified by over 160 of the 195 UN member nations. The US has signed and ratified the ICCPR. The US signed the ICESCR in 1977 but as of September of 2009, the Senate has not ratified the treaty.

Clarification of differences between Declaration and Convention/Covenant/Treaty

Convention, covenant and treaty are synonymous and refer to a legally binding agreement between governments that have signed them. In the US a treaty may be signed by the President, but must be ratified by the US Senate. A Declaration is a document stating agreed upon standards, but it is not legally binding.

Core Human Rights Treaties that grew from the UDHR

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

B. Relevance of the UDHR to current civic dialogue and engagement

- Since 1948 the document has served to articulate a promise of all countries to create a world described by its words
- While the document calls for widespread education to make its message known, only 8% of the U.S. population are aware of its existence
- The document provides a framework to see current endeavors, whether civil rights, women's rights, or other such pursuits, share a common goal of achieving fairness, equality and dignity for all.
- Requires individual and local action to realize its words.

Sources:

Flowers, N. (Ed.). (1998). *Human rights here and now: Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Minneapolis, MN: Human Rights USA Resource Center.

Jolly, R., Emmerij, L., & Weiss, T. (2009) *UN ideas that changed the world*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Lauren, P. G., (2003). The evolution of international human rights. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Martin, L. (Ed.). (2000). *Speak truth to power: An educational and advocacy package in collaboration with Amnesty International and Umbrage Editions*. New York, NY: Umbrage Editions.

United Nations Office of the High Commission for Human Rights. (2009). Retrieved September 20, 2009, from http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/

3 Stereotypes to Avoid

Stereotype is a dirty word in our society because no one wants to be generalized. Yet most people throw the word around without really knowing it in a literary context, as the use of commonly-known generalizations to build two-dimensional, rubber-stamped characters.

Archetypes

Generalizations don't always destroy a story. Archetype is the good use of a generalization to build deep characters on a familiar foundation. What's the difference? **Archetype helps frame a story, while stereotype only serves as a substitute for complex people**: the "hero on a quest" is an archetype, while "the drunken Irishman" is a stereotype. Maybe you could create a good story about a drunk Irish hero on a quest--but he MUST have deep individual traits that make him unique. A writer over at Enchanted Inkpot says best: archetype means using generalization as a beginning from which to work a story, while stereotype uses generalization as its end.

You can think about stereotypes in three classes: stereotypical characters, behaviors, and situations. Writers often already know to avoid stereotyping characters with features such as race, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation. However, the other two types of stereotypes should be avoided with as much diligence.

Perhaps the hardest stereotypes to avoid are behavior stereotypes, especially those centered on beliefs. Intolerant Christian parents, licentious atheists, rugged individualists, ever-meditating Buddhists, and radical communists are very prevalent behavioral stereotypes. Behavior stereotypes dominate film industry and pop culture. Think about the frequency with which you've been exposed to a hostile minority, or a mother begging her daughter to find a husband and settle down. These are behavioral stereotypes that show little imagination.

You should also think about avoiding situational stereotypes like the faithful dog rescuing Jimmy out of the well, or the classic boy and girl meet and hate each other but end up falling in love. Situational stereotypes may not be perpetuating a negative social idea in the way of character and behavioral stereotypes, but threaten to bore readers.

Avoiding all three classes of stereotype is a great start to ensuring your story will bring innovation to print, and lack unwanted predictability. Good characters--even villains--are people like you, not just cardboard cut-outs for you to thumb-tack your plot and themes onto at will. Likewise, well thought out behaviors and scenarios should keep the reader engaged and guessing at every turn.

Veldhuyzen, Jen. "3 Stereotypes to Avoid." *LifeRich Publishing*. Trusted Media Brands, Inc. and Author Solutions, LLC - See more at:, 2016. Web. 20 May 2016. <http://www.liferichpublishing.com/AuthorResources/Fiction/3-Stereotypes-to-Avoid.aspx#sthash.CRScCGIA.dpuf>.

What is the American Dream?

James Truslow Adams, in his book The Epic of America, which was written in 1931, stated that the American dream is "that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position" (p. 214-215).

The authors of the US' Declaration of Independence held certain truths to be self-evident: that "all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." Might this sentiment be considered the foundation of the American Dream?

Were homesteaders who left the big cities of the east to find happiness and their piece of land in the unknown wilderness pursuing these inalienable Rights? Were the immigrants who came to the US looking for their bit of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, their Dream? And what did the desire of the veteran of World War II - to settle down, to have a home, a car and a family - tell us about this evolving Dream? Is the American Dream attainable by all Americans?

Some say, that the American Dream has become the pursuit of material prosperity - that people work more hours to get bigger cars, fancier homes, the fruits of prosperity for their families - but have less time to enjoy their prosperity. Others say that the American Dream is beyond the grasp of the working poor who must work two jobs to insure their family's survival. Yet others look toward a new American Dream with less focus on financial gain and more emphasis on living a simple, fulfilling life.

Thomas Wolfe said, "…to every man, regardless of his birth, his shining, golden opportunity ….the right to live, to work, to be himself, and to become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him."

Is this your American Dream?

"The American Dream." *Library of Congress*. Library of Congress, n.d. Web. 20 May 2016.
    <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/american-dream/students/thedream.html>.

40 000 Illegal Bulgarian Immigrants to Benefit from Obama's Reform

July 2, 2010

There are between 15 000 and 40 000 Bulgarians residing illegally in the **USA**, according to estimates of **Assen Assenov**, a Bulgarian professor at the American University School of International Service.

In the wake of **US** President **Barack Obama**'s speech on Thursday pressing for immigration reform, Assenov, an economist researching the issues of Bulgarian immigration to the **US**, has commented that the passing of the bill would improve substantially the lot of the illegal Bulgarians, as cited by the Bulgarian edition of Deutsche Welle.

Of the 11-14 million **illegal immigrants** in the US, some 8.5 million are estimated to be Mexicans, while the rest come from all around the world including Bulgaria.

"According to my estimates there are between 15 000 and 40 000 Bulgarians with illegal status in the US. Many of them have been here for 10-15 years. They can't be hired to work legally, and aid for their kids is unavailable. Medical help is also limited. Thus, an immigration reform will be something very positive for these Bulgarians. This will also be great news for their relatives back home because these people will finally be able to visit them," Assenov has said.

He has forecast that despite Obama's pressing for the immigration reform bill, the reform will hardly come through quickly.

"We should be very cautious in our expectations. The things that Obama expresses as views on the reform in principle are a first step. There is a long period ahead of months, maybe years, of the actual implementation of these ideas and turning them into real reform," the Bulgarian professor thinks.

40 000 illegal Bulgarian immigrants to benefit from Obama's reform. (2010, July 2). Retrieved from
http://www.novinite.com/articles/117729/40+000+Illegal+Bulgarian+Immigrants+to+Benefit+from+Obama's+Reform

Ernest Hemingway: The Iceberg Theory of Writing

The **Iceberg Theory** is the writing style of American writer Ernest Hemingway. Influenced by his journalistic career, Hemingway contended that by omitting superfluous and extraneous matter, writing becomes more interesting. When he became a writer of short stories, he retained this minimalistic style, focusing on surface elements without explicitly discussing the underlying themes. Hemingway believed the true meaning of a piece of writing should not be evident from the surface story, rather, the crux of the story lies below the surface and should be allowed to shine through. Critics such as Jackson Benson claim that his iceberg theory, also known as the **theory of omission**, in combination with his distinctive clarity of writing, functioned as a means to distance himself from the characters he created.

Hemingway summarizes his theory as follows:

> If a writer of prose knows enough of what he is writing about he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an ice-berg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. A writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing

<div align="right">

Ernest Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon*

</div>

Ernest Hemingway's style of writing. (2016). Retrieved from
http://www.myenglishpages.com/site_php_files/reading-ernest-hemingway-style.php

The Iceberg Theory of Cultural Identity

What is culture?

Culture is everywhere. It is the characteristics of a particular group of people. Culture forms beliefs, perceptions, values, norms and knowledge, as well as attitude, behavior and language. It also determines what is right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable in each society. People from different cultures have different ways to follow the rules and the patterns of behavior that their ancestors have passed down to their society. To put it another way, culture determines who the person is.

Culture is like an iceberg!
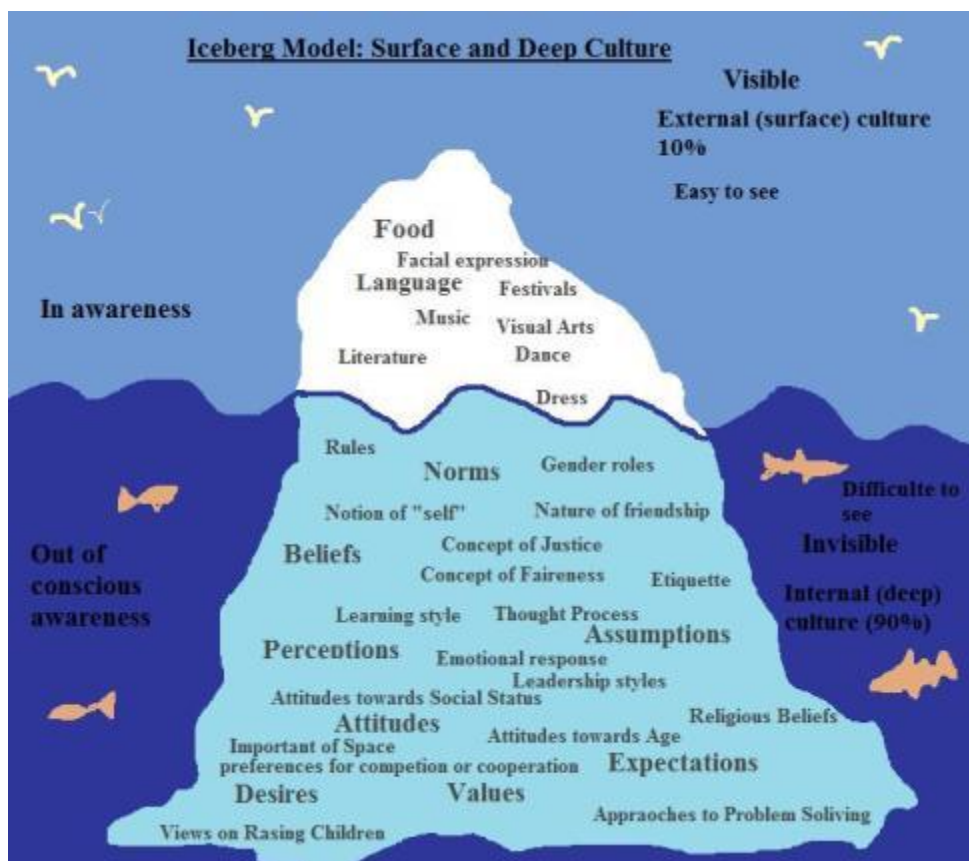
When we see an iceberg, the visible portion that we can see above the waterline, is very small compared to the whole. Like an iceberg, the majority of culture lies beneath the surface. People often think that they can examine other cultures from observable characteristics such as languages, arts, foods, music and appearances. However, in reality, there are many cultural components that are invisible and lie below surface.

Kaeojinda, J. (2013, November 9). Cultural Conflict. Retrieved from
https://culturalconflict.wordpress.com/tag/cultural-identity/
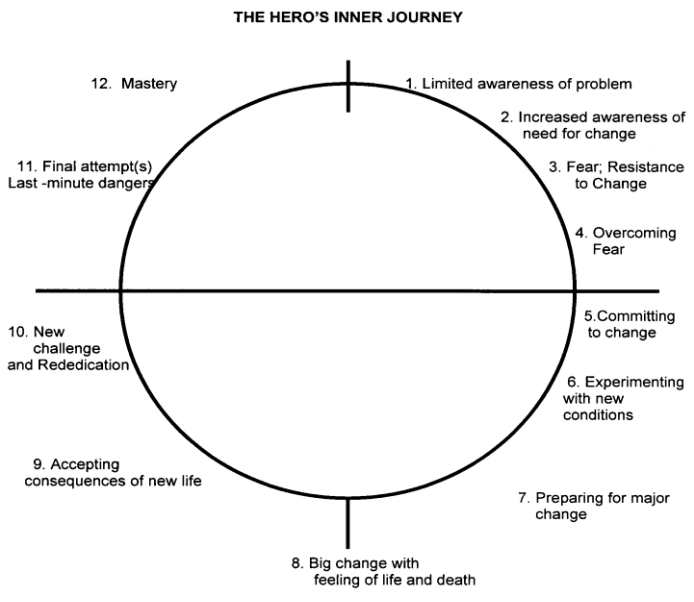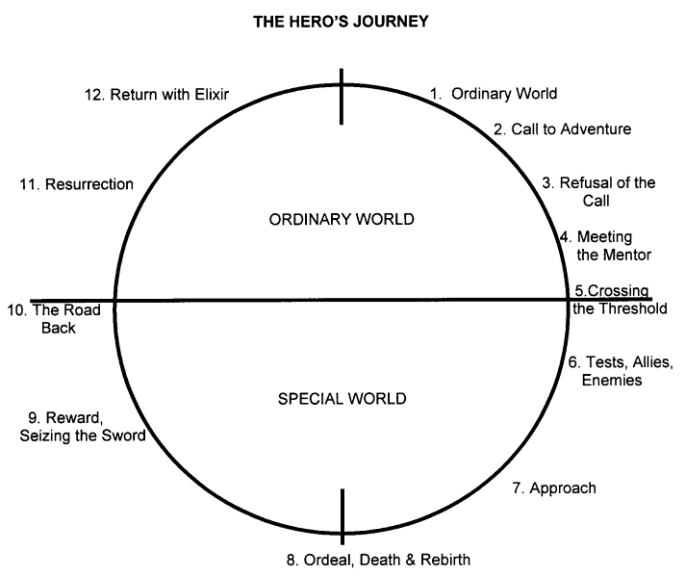
The Hero's Journey

The Hero's Journey is a pattern of narrative identified by the American scholar Joseph Campbell that appears in drama, storytelling, myth, religious ritual, and psychological development. It describes the typical adventure of the archetype known as The Hero, the person who goes out and achieves great deeds on behalf of the group, tribe, or civilization.

Its stages are:

1.   THE ORDINARY WORLD. The hero, uneasy, uncomfortable or unaware, is introduced sympathetically so the audience can identify with the situation or dilemma. The hero is shown against a background of environment, heredity, and personal history. Some kind of polarity in the hero's life is pulling in different directions and causing stress.

2.   THE CALL TO ADVENTURE. Something shakes up the situation, either from external pressures or from something rising up from deep within, so the hero must face the beginnings of change.

3.   REFUSAL OF THE CALL. The hero feels the fear of the unknown and tries to turn away from the adventure, however briefly. Alternately, another character may express the uncertainty and danger ahead.

4.   MEETING WITH THE MENTOR. The hero comes across a seasoned traveler of the worlds who gives him or her training, equipment, or advice that will help on the journey. Or the hero reaches within to a source of courage and wisdom.

5.   CROSSING THE THRESHOLD. At the end of Act One, the hero commits to leaving the Ordinary World and entering a new region or condition with unfamiliar rules and values.

6.   TESTS, ALLIES AND ENEMIES. The hero is tested and sorts out allegiances in the Special World.

7.   APPROACH. The hero and newfound allies prepare for the major challenge in the Special world.

8.   THE ORDEAL. Near the middle of the story, the hero enters a central space in the Special World and confronts death or faces his or her greatest fear. Out of the moment of death comes a new life.

9.   THE REWARD. The hero takes possession of the treasure won by facing death. There may be celebration, but there is also danger of losing the treasure again.

10.   THE ROAD BACK. About three-fourths of the way through the story, the hero is driven to complete the adventure, leaving the Special World to be sure the treasure is brought home. Often a chase scene signals the urgency and danger of the mission.

11.   THE RESURRECTION. At the climax, the hero is severely tested once more on the threshold of home. He or she is purified by a last sacrifice, another moment of death and

rebirth, but on a higher and more complete level. By the hero's action, the polarities that were in conflict at the beginning are finally resolved.

12.   RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR.   The hero returns home or continues the journey, bearing some element of the treasure that has the power to transform the world as the hero has been transformed.

THE HERO'S JOURNEY

- 12. Return with Elixir
- 1. Ordinary World
- 2. Call to Adventure
- 11. Resurrection
- 3. Refusal of the Call
- ORDINARY WORLD
- 4. Meeting the Mentor
- 5.Crossing the Threshold
- 10. The Road Back
- 6. Tests, Allies, Enemies
- SPECIAL WORLD
- 9. Reward, Seizing the Sword
- 7. Approach
- 8. Ordeal, Death & Rebirth

THE HERO'S INNER JOURNEY

- 12. Mastery
- 1. Limited awareness of problem
- 2. Increased awareness of need for change
- 11. Final attempt(s) Last -minute dangers
- 3. Fear; Resistance to Change
- 4. Overcoming Fear
- 5.Committing to change
- 10. New challenge and Rededication
- 6. Experimenting with new conditions
- 9. Accepting consequences of new life
- 7. Preparing for major change
- 8. Big change with feeling of life and death

Vogler, C. (1985). Hero's journey. Retrieved from
http://www.thewritersjourney.com/hero's_journey.htm

Making a Fist

Naomi Shihab Nye, 1952

For the first time, on the road north of Tampico,
I felt the life sliding out of me,
a drum in the desert, harder and harder to hear.
I was seven, I lay in the car
watching palm trees swirl a sickening pattern past the glass.
My stomach was a melon split wide inside my skin.

"How do you know if you are going to die?"
I begged my mother.
We had been traveling for days.
With strange confidence she answered,
"When you can no longer make a fist."

Years later I smile to think of that journey,
the borders we must cross separately,
stamped with our unanswerable woes.
I who did not die, who am still living,
still lying in the backseat behind all my questions,
clenching and opening one small hand.