

SOAR Summer Proposal, 2014

Memoir as a Cornerstone for Peace and Justice Education

Dr. Daniel Jasper, Associate Professor, Sociology

Dr. Kelly Denton-Borhaug, Associate Professor, Religion

Students: Dylan Grubb, GPA: X.XX

Timeline: May 15 through July 30

Faculty Proposal

Drs. Denton-Borhaug and Jasper have been engaged in collaborative work teaching, researching and writing regarding the use of memoir as a cornerstone of Peace and Justice Education. We have employed the reading and writing of memoir in our course, IDIS 165 “Lifewalk of Peace and Justice” in each of the four offerings of this course. This is a required entry-level course for the new minor in Peace and Justice Studies recently approved by the faculty. Additionally, we have engaged in research on memoir, exploring the usefulness of this genre to introduce students to the interdisciplinary field of Peace and Justice Studies.¹ Reading memoirs introduces students to the ways in which peace and justice interweave with the actions, relationships, characters, and values in the lives of individuals. Our approach explores and draws upon memoir as a form of contemplative practice that deepens student engagement with the course material by focusing upon the ways that memoir illuminates the workings of peace and justice in the lives of individuals. Additionally, as students approach the task of writing their own peace and justice memoir over the course of the semester, this assignment encourages students to deeply explore their own engagement with issues of peace and justice over the course of their lives.

Though Dylan’s current GPA is below a 3.00, we believe that he is exceptionally qualified for this SOAR project. A low grade in Calculus has artificially lowered his GPA, and we are confident that by the end of the current term his GPA will be close to, if not above, a 3.0. As a current student in Peace and Justice Studies, Dylan is familiar with our approach to memoir and its links to critical pedagogy, contemplative practice, and Peace and Justice Studies. He has expressed a desire to work further with memoir. His academic major in Sociology, along with intent to minor in Peace and Justice Studies, makes him an ideal candidate to work with us during the summer.

During the summer of 2014, we will continue our research on memoir focusing upon three areas.

- 1.) We will further explore the Moravian tradition of *lebenslaufe*, spiritual memoirs written by members of the community and read at the person’s funeral services. *Lebenslaufe* is a significant area to explore for a number of reasons. First, it draws on the tradition that gave rise to our college as part of an experiment in collective, egalitarian living. Second, this tradition highlights the communal nature of individual experience and personal growth, a feature of both Peace and Justice Studies and Critical Pedagogy. Third, the Moravian Archives is a repository of these documents, providing us with ready access to materials which allow us to explore the ways in which themes of collective engagement

¹ We have presented this research at the 2011 annual meetings of the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education. We currently have one article under review with the *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*.

on pressing issues of the day impacted different individuals. We are interested in a number of specific peace and justice themes in this literature, such as the ways in which social distinctions, including gender, ethnic and religious identity, etc., have shaped the engagement with these themes.

- 2.) We have already compiled a sizable list of memoirs that directly explore issues of Peace and Justice and will continue to expand this list. Currently, the works we have identified and drawn upon come primarily, but not solely, from the Civil Rights and Anti-War Movements in the United States. We would like to expand our resource list to include a wider array of authors and issues explored through the genre of memoir.
- 3.) The importance of place. Specifically, we will explore how Bethlehem has developed economically and socially. We will investigate, collect, and evaluate 'memoirs' in multiple forms that shed light on the development of the place in which Moravian college is located.

We will proceed on this research in the following ways, assigning various tasks below to our student.

First steps:

- 1.) We will work with Dylan to conduct a thorough literature search on extant scholarship focusing on the use of memoir in educational settings. (weeks 1-3)
- 2.) We will work with our student to conduct a thorough literature search on extant scholarship addressing memoir as a contemplative practice. (weeks 1-3)
- 3.) We will make initial contacts with Archivists from the Moravian Archives, the Museum of Industrial Heritage, and the Steelworker's Archive to learn about their collections. We will also access archives of the Moravian College Newspaper and Yearbook to determine how these resources might represent 'collective memoirs'. (weeks 1-3)

Second Steps:

- 4.) We will work with Dylan to help him develop a list of memoirs that we believe address themes of Peace and Justice with respect to the specific themes he is researching. Dylan will create an annotated bibliography of memoirs that we will add to our lists for further use in the Intro PJ course and the minor as a whole (weeks 3-6).
- 5.) We will work with the archivists mentioned above to develop strategies for selecting relevant samples to review. . In particular we will seek our examples that illuminate the economic system of Bethlehem during the period of the early Moravian settlement. (week 4-5)
- 6.) We will begin to read the memoirs collected from the archives. (weeks 4-7)

Third Steps

- 7.) We also work with our Dylan to arrange interviews with local peace and justice activists—especially those involved with economic issues, the closing of the steel mill, and the preservation of the legacy of labor in the Lehigh Valley. These 'oral memoirs' will provide our students with tangible examples of how individual lives intersect with peace and justice. This will assist Dylan in his attempts to understand socioeconomic disparities in contemporary Bethlehem in comparison with other eras. By preparing and executing interviews, Dylan will be able demonstrate their growing understanding of the literature, while also providing them an introduction to another research technique. (week 7-10)

- 8.) With Dylan, we will explore a particular theme(s) from the memoirs that we collectively identify as worthy of further exploration. We will begin to analyze this data, though this is a process we anticipate only beginning over this summer. While we will help Dylan focus on his research regarding socioeconomic practices, we also will examine the *lebenslaufe* with attention to peace and justice themes that already have come to our attention: relations between men and women, and between Caucasian and native peoples; structures of labor, leisure, sexuality; and the interplay of religious ideas and convictions throughout. In addition, we will analyze the significance of “place” as a peace and justice theme. (weeks 7-10)
- 9.) We will analyze the experience of interviewing as well as upon the ‘oral memoir’ interviews conducted by students to deepen our understanding of how individuals intervene to promote peace and justice. (weeks 7-10)

Final Products that we envision from our research.

- 1.) We expect Dylan will present his research at both Scholars Day and at the Social Research Social Justice Conference held each spring at Muhlenberg. In addition, we will work with him to submit his research for presentation at larger venues. In particular, we will help him to prepare submissions for the next meetings of the Peace and Justice Studies Association in October of 2015.
- 2.) Additions to our building of bibliographies on “Memoir as Contemplative Practice” and “The Pedagogical Uses of Memoir”.
- 3.) An annotated bibliography and research summaries on articles related to “Using the Contemplative Practice of Memoir for Critical Pedagogy”. This will be incredibly useful for our continuing research and writing on this subject.
- 4.) A resource list of memoirs focusing issues of peace and justice. This resource list will include brief analyses of how the works address peace and justice concerns. We will be willing to share this resource list with colleagues in Peace and Justice Studies. This list also will be very useful for us in our course, since all students are required to read a Peace and Justice-oriented memoir prior to beginning the semester.
- 5.) The resource list will be accompanied by a collection of précis that will provide the basis of analytic essays on themes of peace and justice in memoir.
- 6.) We will improve the aspect of the course that specifically deals with preparing and supporting students in the practice of their own peace and justice interventions.

Expense Proposal

\$200.00 PJ pedagogical and memoir resources, which will become part of the Moravian PJ library following this summer.

\$100.00 Student Travel to visit and conduct “oral memoir” interviews with local and regional Peace Justice Activists/Scholars.

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Student Statement of Purpose:

The Distribution of wealth is clearly observable in different parts of Bethlehem and the surrounding Lehigh Valley. The slums of Bethlehem are across the river from million dollar homes. Bethlehem's wealth has often been disproportionately divided. Upon coming to Moravian one of the first things I noticed was the deserted Bethlehem steel skyscraper in the horizon. Many years ago this was a symbol of Bethlehem's economic wealth and power. The city was literally reaching new heights of excellence when the steel industry was booming. Now it is a symbol reminding the citizens of their once great past and seemingly un-prosperous future. Bethlehem was founded in 1741, April 2 by the Moravian Church. Initially this plot of land was 500 acres in size and located at the intersection of the Monocacy Creek and Lehigh River. Twenty years later the town had over 50 buildings, operated over fifty different industries and was well over 2000 acres of land. The Moravians lived a life that revolved around the community. They were able to thrive economically by putting all of the community's resources together. Moravians had a higher sense of spirituality due to the moral standards brought on by living in a religious community. However, by 1762 communal living was no longer manageable in the growing economy. Rather than living communally it became more common to operate on the traditional cash based economy of capitalism. It wasn't until 1844 that this community opened up to non-Moravians.

In the spring of 2014 I began to take the course Introduction to Peace and Justice Studies that is taught by Drs. Daniel Jasper and Dr. Kelly Denton Borhaug. The course focuses on ways to truly promote peace and justice and identifying what peace and justice really mean. The course uses Memoirs to introduce peace and justice themes. The course also focuses on critical pedagogy as a way to promote peace. The genre of memoir demonstrates the way that peace and justice issues are embedded in the raw material of individual lives and communities. In my research I will draw upon memoirs from different eras to explore the peace and justice of socioeconomic wealth distribution. In particular, I wish to research how Moravian went from being a morally devout religious community that was economically thriving, to the modern day Bethlehem where the recent Job growth is -.71% and the national average is +.35. I believe that memoirs will help highlight the various peace and justice issues that caused Bethlehem's economy to inevitably crash.

From weeks one to four I will research literature on scholarship. I will primarily focus on the use of memoirs in educational settings. From weeks 3 to six I

will concentrate on developing a list of memoirs regarding the Bethlehem steel industry's effects on the community. Weeks four to five Dr. Jasper, Dr. Denton-Borhaug and I will also meet with the local archivists to identify which samples would help in my research. From weeks seven to ten I will interview local peace and justice activists to learn more about the socioeconomics of modern day Bethlehem in comparison to other eras, and learn how individuals intervene to promote peace and justice. I will present my research at both Scholars Day at the Social Research Justice Conference held in the spring at Muhlenberg. I intend also to submit my research findings to the next meetings of the Peace and Justice Studies Association in October of 2015. I will also create an annotated bibliography and research summaries on articles related to "Using the Contemplative Practice of Memoir for Critical Pedagogy". In addition to my own specific research theme, I will assist professors in their research of using memoir to explore issues of peace and justice related to gender roles, race and structures of labor, leisure religion, sexuality and "place"

Distribution of wealth and inequality can be understood by examining the area throughout different periods of time. Throughout this program I will examine three different time periods in Bethlehem's history that is essential for understanding the socioeconomic landscape of Bethlehem. The first period I will study will be Bethlehem from 1741 to 1844. I will be using various academic resources for this project; my main source of information will come from memoirs of individuals who lived in different eras of Bethlehem's history. I will then examine the area during the rise of the steel industry, looking at the years between its opening in 1857 under its original name the Saucona Iron Company and through WW2. I will use primarily student written articles found in the Comenian and the school newspaper that will be published electronically to study the times around WW2 to get a sense of how students were experiencing Bethlehem at this time. I also plan on visiting the National Museum of Industrial History to ascertain several different memoirs that will hopefully give me a first hand view of Bethlehem steel industry and its effects on society. I will also be visiting the steelworker's online archives to provide the point of view from steel workers through the use of the diaries they kept.

The third era of Bethlehem's history I will study is modern day Bethlehem. In other words I will study the period after Bethlehem steel closed down in 2001, and its subsequent socioeconomic effects on the area. The memoirs I get will be from interviews I do with various individuals in Bethlehem. During the summer I will be doing volunteer work with the new Bethany ministry. It is possible that I will be able to gain further insight to the economics of Bethlehem. This will give me access to people I would have never met staying on Moravians campus, and give me real insight to what it means to be poor in Bethlehem. Overall the Soar Program will provide insights to Peace and Justice in Bethlehem and highlight the effects of Capitalism on communities, which is a significant peace and justice issue that effects everyone who lives in Bethlehem.