

Report on Sabbatical Leave

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I spent my sabbatical leave as an affiliate member of the Department of Philosophy at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. The goal of my research was to produce a book-length manuscript on the subject of moral self-improvement as an individual and collective imperative. I intended to write a series of papers that would evolve into chapters for the book I planned. I found that my schedule was much too ambitious and that I was unable to complete all the papers/book chapters in the time allowed (approximately 4 months). I also found that, except for the first paper/chapter, I was unable to write the succeeding ones as self-contained papers that could stand alone as journal articles. The reason is that the arguments in the later papers relied so intimately on the arguments in the preceding papers that they would not be very comprehensible without the earlier papers as background. I decided, therefore, to concentrate on the book manuscript itself by familiarizing myself with recent work in the relevant areas, including personal identity theory, virtue ethics, game theory (as employed in social and political theory), personality theory, and behavior modification and then synthesizing the insights I gained into a new theory of moral self-improvement. This has turned out to be a very exciting and challenging undertaking, with which I am still occupied.

One product of my research was an essay entitled “The Moral Risks of Promising,” which I have submitted for publication and am now revising in response to reviewers’ comments. I have also completed drafts of 4 of the 6 book chapters that I originally envisioned. I expect to complete the manuscript and submit it to a publisher sometime in the next 12-18 months. I believe that it will be a ground-breaking addition to the literature of moral philosophy and provide considerable opportunity for future development and expansion.

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