

Difference-in-Pay Leave Report

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Fall, 2019

During the 2018-19 academic year, I was on difference-in-pay leave. This leave was proposed to write a book manuscript, tentatively titled *Human Significance*. The original goal was for the first full draft of the manuscript to be completed at the end of the year, to be followed by revisions and eventually submission for publication sometime in 2020.

My work this year both exceeded and fell short of these expectations. First the good news. I had anticipated writing an eight chapter book, and I ended up writing a manuscript with twenty-one chapters (at over 43,000 words, which is in the ballpark of what I was shooting for, 30,000-50,000 words). The overall thrust of the arguments is that we are, all of us, unimportant, but that this is okay, because being important is over-rated. I believe that this represents an expansion of the field of value theory, and that the book will contribute to our overall understanding of the value of a human life. In short, the goal of the leave was secured, and I believe the results to be a full success, in terms of taking research leave to support extended focus on a dedicated project with concrete outcomes.

The less good news is that I now doubt that the book will be submitted for publication in 2020. The research is done, and most of the arguments are in place. And if I were writing a typical philosophy monography, it would surely be ready by mid-2020. However, the aim is for it to be engaging to a wide, public audience, as a piece of public scholarship in the humanities. On this front, I'm afraid the manuscript needs to undergo several more rounds of revision and stylistic massaging, which will take multiple years. Appealing to both the academic and public audiences at the same time is a delicate task that will require some slow cooking.

That said, I was also able to use the year to finalize the contract for, and finish for publication, another book, *The Solace: Finding Value in Death through Gratitude for Life*. This also is intended as a 'crossover' book that appeals to academic and public audiences, and I believe that the process of writing it will aid in the book on our significance. And given that the book on significance includes substantial novel content, I expect the overall extension on the time-frame to be a positive thing overall.

Without the DIP leave, I would not have been able to write the full draft I now have, and I look forward to revising it for publication.