

Professional Development Assignment

Report

2015-2016

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During my PDA I managed to accomplish many things. I started new research, finished articles, and presented work in various places. In what follows I briefly summarize the accomplishments I was able to make over the course of my year of leave.

1 Research Conducted

During the PDA I began work on a new area of research. This new research focuses on breaks in understanding, what I refer to as hermeneutical impasses. The underlying question I am posing concerns how to close interpretive gaps that arise between people. In order to develop this line of inquiry I compiled articles and books on topics like hermeneutics, theories of interpretation, epistemic injustice, power, and understanding. I also attended a conference at Yale University on ideology. The talks at this conference provided fruitful considerations for my work.

Additionally, I also began new research on the literary figure and activist James Baldwin. My desire is to develop a research specialty on Baldwin and his works in the hopes of contributing to Baldwin scholarship by showing his importance for social philosophy. This has included reading through Baldwin's novels and essays, as well as engaging with the secondary literature. In order to gain expertise, I will also have to engage with Baldwin's influences and contemporaries, people like Henry James, Richard Wright, and Langston Hughes.

Other research conducted during the PDA includes work on racial satire and artistic appreciation. The work on racial satire involved viewing several satirical performances and reading articles and books concerning humor and racism. Because I was considering linguistic arguments that attempt to establish a certain kind of immunity for purportedly humorous products, I also read articles that analyzed the semantics and syntactic properties of satirical works.

2 Manuscripts

I completed three manuscripts during this time. The first, "Modeling Inclusive Pedagogy: Five Approaches to the Canon" looks at the issue of diversity in higher education and offers five pedagogical strategies for diversifying course syllabi. The second

manuscript, “Epistemic Injustice and the Philosophy of Race” examines the effects of post-racial strategies for addressing racial injustice on our interpretive and discursive practices. And finally, the third manuscript, “Calling, Addressing, and Appropriation” provides a novel argument for why it is that members of an in-group can typically appropriate a slurring expression and use it endearingly whereas out-group members generally cannot.

I also wrote a blog post for a highly visible blog in philosophy, *Philosopher*. The post is based on research I am currently conducting about hermeneutical impasses. In the post I introduced, in a preliminary way, some of the major concepts I am working to develop.

Finally, I began work on a co-edited volume entitled *Philosophers on the N-Word*. The volume seeks to present essays by African American philosophers on the semantics and ethics of N-word use within the in-group. My co-editor and I began work on drafting a proposal and securing abstracts from contributors.

3 Conference Presentations and Other Talks

I gave a number of talks during the year. I presented work on the appropriation of the expression ‘thug’ by Black males at the University of San Francisco and the University of Colorado-Boulder. My work on inclusive pedagogy was presented at Princeton University. In the spring I gave a talk on epistemic injustice at a conference at the University of California-Davis. An interdisciplinary conference on humor provided me the opportunity to present my research on racial satire, and I gave a presentation, “Can White People Appreciate Rap?” at a workshop at Stonehill College honoring the political philosopher Bernard Boxill. Finally, I presented an early version of my work on hermeneutical impasses at the GRSelona3 conference in Barcelona.