RESEARCH STATEMENT

When you know something, it is no coincidence that you believe the truth. When you do something fully morally worthy, it is no coincidence that your action is morally right. My central research program focuses on these platitudes about knowledge and moral worth: I hold that proper understanding of the relevant kind of *non-coincidentality,* and of the relations between these claims, facilitates progress in both metaethics and epistemology.

In addition to other work in metaethics, I have two independent research programs, one at the intersection of business ethics and political philosophy, the other in the experimental philosophy of moral responsibility. The former brings my expertise in theoretical ethics to bear on the relevant literatures, identifying cases in which faulty theoretical assumptions have led to errors at the applied level. In the latter, experimental program, David Shoemaker (Tulane) and I have thus far completed three projects concerning the relationship between ignorance and moral responsibility.

Metaethics and Epistemology

I maintain that the similarities between the platitudes mentioned above are themselves no coincidence, for knowledge and moral worth are species of a single genus: *normative accomplishment.* Normative accomplishments involve a non-coincidental conjunction between one's following a set of norms (e.g., believing in proportion to one's evidence) and being successful (e.g., having accurate beliefs). In **On Accomplishment** (in progress), I introduce accomplishment and draw out three lessons in epistemology and metaethics: first, understanding knowledge as a species of accomplishment provides a dialectically helpful framing of the debate between internalists and externalists about knowledge; second, it shows why we should reject so-called 'knowledge first' epistemologies; third, it helps adjudicate a recent dispute in metaethics over the conditions for morally worthy action.

Other projects in this program focus directly on moral knowledge. It is notoriously difficult for realists in metaethics to explain how the truth of our moral beliefs *could* be no coincidence. A number of theorists have argued that this 'Coincidence Challenge' can be easily dismissed, because showing that the truth of our moral beliefs is no coincidence true merely requires showing that they are true across some set of possible worlds—a nearly trivial task, given that the fundamental moral truths are necessary. In **Knowing What's Necessary** (revise and resubmit at *Philosophers' Imprint*), I argue that by attending to our intuitions about coincidence and the proper role of counterfactuals in the context of this challenge, it becomes clear that coincidence is not a modal condition after all; the challenge to realism stands.

The Coincidence Challenge is taken to be particularly threatening for moral non-naturalism. In **Non-Naturalism and the 'Third-Factor' Gambit** (under review), Aaron Elliott (Nebraska) and I vindicate this charge. Most non-naturalists accept that the only way for them to respond to the Coincidence Challenge is to appeal to explanations whereby some 'third factor' explains the correlation between our beliefs and the truth. We argue that only certain third-factor explanations help meet the Coincidence Challenge, and show that no explanations of the necessary kind are available to non-naturalists.

The Coincidence Challenge is also taken to be particularly threatening to *intuitionist* epistemologies. In part because of this, an increasing number of theorists have defended *perceptual* moral epistemologies. In **A Hard Look at Moral Perception** (*Philosophical Studies* 2015), I argue that though moral

perception may be possible, it would necessarily be parasitic on non-perceptual moral knowledge, and thus moral perception cannot help us address fundamental questions about the possibility of moral knowledge. In a recent response, Preston Werner (Hebrew University) charges that my argument rests on an over-intellectualized picture of perception. In **Moral Perception and the Reliability Challenge** (*Journal of Moral Philosophy* forthcoming), I show that even if this is the case, my original argument can be extended to show that perceptualism offers no improvement over intuitionism where the Coincidence Challenge is concerned. I was recently afforded the opportunity of discussing these issues further in a critical discussion of Werner's paper on the blog [PEA Soup](), and anticipate further research opportunities in this area as Werner and others reply on behalf of perceptualism.

Outside this coincidence program, my metaethical work concerns the implications of moral objectivity for debates in moral epistemology, metaphysics and philosophy of language. In **On Leaving Room for Doubt** (*Oxford Studies in Metaethics* 2017), I show how the Frege-Geach problem can be used to vindicate intuitive worries that expressivism is in tension with moral objectivity. In my next project in this area, I will argue that the recent trend of 'fittingness first' theories in moral metaphysics is incompatible with moral objectivity.

Business Ethics & Political Philosophy
In **Wage Exploitation and the Nonworseness Claim** (second-round revise and resubmit at *Business Ethics Quarterly*), I show how the contemporary literature on wage exploitation illicitly obscures the theoretical space for the view that even if employers engage in wrongfully exploitative practices, those practices may be sufficiently beneficial that we as third parties should be reluctant to interfere with them. In **To Inspect and Make Safe** (*Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 2014), Peter Jaworski (Georgetown) and I show how contemporary liability law fails to adequately acknowledge our implicit views about when and why property owners are morally responsible for damages caused by their property. We offer such a view and discuss its implications for questions of legal liability. In **Do Property Rights Presuppose Scarcity?** (*Journal of Business Ethics* 2014), I argue that the standard intuitive argument for the claim that property rights presuppose scarcity lacks any support from the historically most popular theories of property rights (Lockean, Hegelian, consequentialist) and consider the practical implications in a world in which technological advancements have the potential to greatly increase the number of non-scarce good types. In my next project in this area, I will defend the claim that intuitions about wrongful exploitation are made relative to a *moral baseline,* and that understanding this can both help address certain theoretical puzzles about the nature of exploitation and offer a helpful framing for debates about charges of wrongful exploitation in the real world.

Experimental Philosophy
Our first study, which appears in **Insanity, Deep Selves, and Moral Responsibility** (*Review of Philosophy and Psychology* 2010) provides evidence that assessments of blameworthiness are mitigated by certain kinds of ignorance and offers an explanatory hypothesis. The second, **Huck vs. JoJo** (*Oxford Studies in Experimental Philosophy* 2014) offers evidence of and a potential explanation for an apparent asymmetry: ignorance that mitigates blameworthiness may *augment* praiseworthiness. The third, **Good Selves, True Selves** (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* forthcoming) offers evidence that our previous results are explained by judgments about the *good self,* and explores the implications of this result both for our previous hypotheses and the increasingly popular proposal from other authors that moral responsibility judgments are influenced by a general tendency to presume that others are fundamentally good. Shoemaker and I have discussed a fourth installment, examining the relationship between the effect of ignorance on praise and blame, and certain forms of privilege.