

RESEARCH STATEMENT

My primary research program focuses on the metaethical and epistemological implications of the fact that certain relations can be *accidental*. This is important in moral epistemology: for us to have moral knowledge, our moral beliefs must be *non-accidentally* true. It is also relevant to the appraisal of action: for an action to be *morally worthy*, it must be *non-accidentally* right. Careful attention to these claims and the relations between them, I hold, facilitates progress in both metaethics and epistemology.

First, I maintain that the above similarity between knowledge and morally worthy action is itself no accident, for these are species of a single genus: *normative accomplishment*. Normative accomplishments involve a non-accidental conjunction between one's following a set of norms (e.g., believing in proportion to one's evidence, or responding to what one reasonably takes to be one's moral reasons) and being successful (e.g., having accurate beliefs, or acting rightly). In **On Accomplishment** (in progress), I introduce the relevant notion of 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.

Turning to moral knowledge: it is notoriously difficult for realists in metaethics to explain how our moral beliefs *could* be non-accidentally true. This challenge is often framed in terms of explaining reliability or correlations between beliefs and truth. In **Knowing What's Necessary: How Modal Conditions Threaten to Trivialize Ethical (and Other) Knowledge** (under review), I explain why it is best framed as an 'Accidentality Challenge'. A number of theorists have argued that this challenge can be easily dismissed, because showing that our moral beliefs are non-accidentally 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 truths. I argue that by attending to our intuitions about accidentality and the proper role of counterfactuals in the context of the Accidentality Challenge, it becomes clear that accidentality is not a modal condition after all.

The Accidentality Challenge is often taken to be particularly threatening for moral non-naturalism (for one because on most accounts, non-natural properties cannot explain natural ones). 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 Accidentality 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 Accidentality Challenge, and show that no explanations of the necessary kind are available to non-naturalists.

The Accidentality Challenge is also taken to be particularly threatening to *intuitionist* epistemologies (for one because of the notorious mysteriousness of *a priori* access to non-conceptual truths). 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.

A recent response¹ 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 Accidentality Challenge is concerned.

Outside this accidentality 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: Using Frege-Geach to Illuminate Expressivism's Problem with Objectivity** (*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. My next project in this area, **Fit to Be Tied**, will argue that the recent trend of 'fittingness first' theories in moral metaphysics is incompatible with moral objectivity.

I have two secondary research programs outside of metaethics. The first addresses theoretical missteps within business ethics and political philosophy. In **Wage Exploitation and the Nonworseness Claim: Allowing the Wrong, to Do More Good** (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: On the Morally Responsible Liability of Property Owners** (*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 light of these overlapping interests in theoretical and applied ethics, I co-organized a workshop in methodology in applied ethics at Georgetown (<http://davidfaraci.com/workshop>) in February 2017 with Peter Jaworski. The Georgetown Institute for the Study of Markets and Ethics has expressed interest in continuing to fund this workshop in future years, potentially in collaboration with my home institution.

Finally, I have an ongoing program in experimental philosophy with David Shoemaker (Tulane), on the relationship between ignorance and moral responsibility. We have completed three relevant studies, which appear in **Insanity, Deep Selves, and Moral Responsibility: The Case of JoJo** (*Review of Philosophy and Psychology* 2010), **Huck vs. JoJo: Moral Ignorance and the (A)symmetry of Praise and Blame** (*Oxford Studies in Experimental Philosophy* 2014), and **Good Selves, True Selves: Moral Ignorance, Responsibility, and the Presumption of Goodness** (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* forthcoming).

¹ Preston Werner, "Moral Perception Without (Prior) Moral Knowledge." *Journal of Moral Philosophy* forthcoming.