

# Moral-Epistemic Enhancement

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## Abstract

The idea of using biomedical means to make people more likely to behave morally may have a certain appeal. However, it is very hard to find two persons – let alone two moral philosophers – who agree on what it means to be moral or to act morally. After discussing some of the proposals for moral enhancements that all ethicists could agree on, I engage more closely with the recent idea of “procedural moral enhancement” that aims at improving deliberative processes instead of particular moral views, motivations, or dispositions. I argue that it is better understood as a contribution to moral epistemology and should thus be labeled “moral-epistemic enhancement”. I then defend perspective-taking as a moral epistemic capacity which can be enhanced by both traditional and non-traditional biomedical means; a capacity which almost always contributes to the epistemic value of moral decision-making. Perspective-taking seems to be an uncontroversial non-trivial capacity for moral decision-making reasonably widely shared by proponents of ethical beliefs within the academic community. The enhancement of this capacity is thus a good candidate for an uncontroversial non-trivial moral enhancement.

## 1. Introduction: Moral Bioenhancement Without Uncontroversial Presuppositions?

The idea of using biomedical means to make people more likely to behave morally may have a certain appeal. Who would be against a world with more moral behaviour? However, it is very hard to find two persons – let alone two moral philosophers – who agree on what it means to be moral or to act morally. Some proponents of the idea of moral bioenhancement (roughly, the use of biomedical means to enhance people’s moral dispositions)<sup>1</sup> try to circumvent the problem of determining what it is to be moral by invoking changes in humans that seem relatively uncontroversial, such as enhanced empathy. Unfortunately, there do not seem to be any *non-trivial substantial*

<sup>1</sup> For puzzles concerning the precise definition of moral enhancement, see Kasper Raus, et al., ‘On Defining Moral Enhancement: A Clarificatory Taxonomy’, *Neuroethics* 7:3 (2014), 263–273; Brian D. Earp, Thomas Douglas, and Julian Savulescu, ‘Moral Neuroenhancement’, in L. Syd, M. Johnson, and Karen S. Rommelfanger (eds), *Routledge Handbook of Neuroethics* (New York: Routledge, 2017) 166–184.

*moral dispositions* of which it would be uncontroversial to say that to act on them is morally good in all circumstances. Empathy, to stick with this example, might be a good disposition to have in many (if not most) circumstances. Similarly, being more empathic would be morally better than being less empathic in most circumstances. But empathy can also yield immoral behaviour, for instance if it makes people unreasonably favourable to the members of their particular in-group and unreasonably hostile to members of out-groups;<sup>2</sup> it might also lead to or deepen morally questionable forms of partiality.<sup>3</sup> As far as I can see, an uncontroversial non-trivial moral disposition has not yet been found. Also, some authors doubt that the empirical findings are promising for the idea of moral enhancement.<sup>4</sup>

However, one might argue that the need to find moral dispositions that are uncontroversial would not necessarily pose a problem for more restrained understandings of moral bioenhancement. Suppose you are a proponent of effective altruism. As such you could argue that it would be morally good if everyone were to have enhanced dispositions to act more altruistically. This would be a restrained understanding of moral bioenhancement – *moral bioenhancement for effective altruists*, say – as opposed to moral bioenhancement *for all ethicists\**, i.e., an enhancement of which moral philosophers of all stripes would agree that it truly enhances morality.<sup>5</sup>

Another possibility to make sense of the idea of moral bioenhancement is to argue that even if there is no uncontroversial non-trivial moral disposition, some moral dispositions seem to be so widely

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jesse Prinz, ‘Against Empathy’, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 49:1 (2011), 214–33; Paul Bloom, *Against Empathy: The Case for Rational Compassion* (New York: Ecco, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> See Brian Feltham and John Cottingham (eds), *Partiality and Impartiality: Morality, Special Relationships, and the Wider World* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> For instance, Veljko Dubljević and Eric Racine, ‘Moral Enhancement Meets Normative and Empirical Reality: Assessing the Practical Feasibility of Moral Enhancement Neurotechnologies’, *Bioethics* 31:5 (2017), 338–48; Harris Wiseman, *The Myth of the Moral Brain: The Limits of Moral Enhancement* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), chap. 4 and 5.

<sup>5</sup> I hasten to add that the demand to find a disposition about which literally all ethicists agree that it enhances morality is arguably too high; there are always outliers defending views almost no peers find persuasive. I use “all ethicists” here and in what follows as a short way to express a more qualified demand – something like “all proponents of ethical beliefs reasonably widely shared within the current academic community”. I indicate this use with an asterisk.

accepted that they can be used as a guideline for what we might want to enhance biomedically if we wish to enhance moral behaviour. After all, the world religions would appear to share a moral core; and even most nation states apparently share some form of common-sense morality. Without such a core, we would not be able to agree on what should be considered criminal conduct, which human rights to adopt, whether or not to combat climate change, how to regulate global trade, and even which morals our children should be taught at school,<sup>6</sup> or so the argument goes.<sup>7</sup>

But what exactly is that moral core? Is there any non-trivial moral disposition that is universally accepted, one that is not relative to a certain culture or historical period? One might reject the idea of such a moral core out of hand, given the seemingly widespread moral relativity within any given modern-day plural society, let alone across the world and across the centuries. However, moral relativity of views publicly articulated does not necessarily imply that an underlying moral core cannot be reconstructed. In fact, some philosophers have argued for a *universal common-sense morality* that is not relative to culture or historical period, in contrast to the many particular moralities, which consist of relatively concrete

<sup>6</sup> In Austria, teaching empathy is one explicit aim of ethics classes in school, although as we have seen, it is said to not always be conducive to moral behaviour. So proponents of moral bioenhancement might want to argue we should not be asking more of moral bioenhancement than of traditional forms of moral education. After all, when we accept empathy as a proper aim of *moral* education in schools, we should also be willing to call biomedical enhancements of empathy *moral* enhancement. However, the fact that higher levels of empathy are regarded as being sufficiently morally valuable to be included in the school curriculum does not answer the philosophical question of whether enhanced empathy would be *moral* enhancement. After all, school policy can err; the mere fact that in some school districts creationism is taught should not in itself count as evidence for the belief that creationism is scientifically credible. Similarly, biomedical enhancements of empathy might count as moral enhancements for Austrian ethics teachers, but certainly not for all ethicists\*.

<sup>7</sup> This line of argument can be found in Ingmar Persson and Julian Savulescu, 'The Art of Misunderstanding Moral Bioenhancement: Two Cases', *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics* 24:1 (2015), 48–57. For the somewhat similar idea of an 'overlapping consensus' see David DeGrazia, 'Moral Enhancement, Freedom, and What We (Should) Value in Moral Behaviour', *Journal of Medical Ethics* 40:6 (2014): 361–368; and the critique in Norbert Paulo and Jan Christoph Bublitz, 'How (Not) to Argue For Moral Enhancement: Reflections on a Decade of Debate', *Topoi* (2017), doi:10.1007/s11245-017-9492-6.

norms that are not universal, such as (some) religious or legal norms. The concept of a common (or common-sense) morality owes much to Alan Donagan,<sup>8</sup> whose natural-law and Kant-inspired ethics was very influential in North American philosophy in the late 1970s. It is no coincidence that two widely discussed moral theories by American ethicists developed in the 1970s – Bernard Gert’s ten moral rules and Tom Beauchamp and James Childress’s principlism in medical ethics – draw on Donagan’s ideas and ground their respective theories on common morality. In the words of Beauchamp and Childress, the idea is that ‘[a]ll persons living a moral life grasp the core dimensions of morality. They know not to lie, not to steal others’ property, to keep promises, to respect the rights of others, not to kill or cause harm to innocent persons, and the like. All persons committed to morality do not doubt the relevance and importance of these rules. [...] [We] rightly judge all human conduct by its standards’.<sup>9</sup>

This idea of a universal common morality also faces some more or less obvious criticism.<sup>10</sup> The most obvious line of criticism is that a universal morality, which is said not to be relative to culture or historical period, is profoundly counterintuitive given the changes of moral practices over time – just think about the relatively recent changes in attitudes towards discrimination on grounds of race or gender, or about the quite recent moral concern for animals and the environment. The argument for a universal common morality would need to be substantiated with empirical support from cross-cultural field observations, which will be hard to conduct.<sup>11</sup> This is ultimately an

<sup>8</sup> Alan Donagan, *Theory of Morality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

<sup>9</sup> Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress, *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, 7<sup>th</sup> edn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3. The tradition of common morality or common sense morality of course also includes philosophers of earlier periods, such as Thomas Reid, Richard Price, or W. D. Ross.

<sup>10</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Katarzyna de Lazari-Radek and Peter Singer, *The Point of View of the Universe: Sidgwick and Contemporary Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 82 ff.; Norbert Paulo, *The Confluence of Philosophy and Law in Applied Ethics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 116 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Leigh Turner, ‘Zones of Consensus and Zones of Conflict: Questioning the “Common Morality” Presumption in Bioethics’, *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 13:3 (2003), 193–218; Peter Herissone-Kelly, ‘Determining the Common Morality’s Norms in the Sixth Edition of Principles of Biomedical Ethics’, *Journal of Medical Ethics* 37:10 (2011), 584–87.

empirical question. But as long as there is no empirical support of this kind, it seems plausible to assume that there is no universal common morality, but rather particular moralities only (that are more or less overlapping). Note, however, that this way to flesh out the idea of moral bioenhancement in terms of a common morality is just as conceivable as other restricted forms of moral bioenhancement. It would be a *moral bioenhancement for common-sense philosophers*; it would not be moral bioenhancement *for all ethicists*\*.

Closely related to common (or common-sense) morality is the idea of *prima facie* moral norms. W. D. Ross famously developed the idea of *prima facie* norms; and it has been fruitfully used by proponents of a common morality such as Beauchamp and Childress. The idea is, roughly, that moral norms 'are binding other things being equal, but each can be outweighed in a particular context by another principle or rule. However, the principles' different weights cannot be assigned in advance; they can only be determined in particular contexts in addressing cases or policies'.<sup>12</sup> The idea is also widely used in basic rights and human rights adjudication.<sup>13</sup> This understanding of moral norms as binding *prima facie* only might also be a way to solve the problem and to explain what a moral bioenhancement *for all ethicists*\* could look like. One could claim that certain moral dispositions hold *prima facie* universally without necessarily trumping other moral considerations or dispositions in all circumstances. And this seems to be the strategy of Ingmar Persson and Julian Savulescu in a recent paper defending moral bioenhancement. They argue that one of their critics, Michael Hauskeller, the co-editor of this volume,

seems to assume that effective moral bioenhancement requires knowing what is the morally right thing to do in every situation. So he objects that "it seems that there is hardly any action that is always wrong, or always right, independent of the context and the individual circumstances in which every concrete action is embedded". However, because we take moral bioenhancement to consist in enhancing the motivation to act on reasons, it is

<sup>12</sup> James F. Childress, 'Methods in Bioethics', in Bonnie Steinbock (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Bioethics* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 22.

<sup>13</sup> T. Alexander Aleinikoff, 'Constitutional Law in the Age of Balancing', *The Yale Law Journal* 96:5 (1987), 943–1005; Kai Möller, 'Balancing and the Structure of Constitutional Rights', *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 5:3 (2007), 453–68; Stavros Tsakyrakis, 'Proportionality: An Assault on Human Rights?', *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 7:3 (2009), 468–93.

enough that we can identify considerations that are always moral reasons. And we can do this: for instance, the fact that an action is causing someone else considerable pain is always a moral reason (of beneficence or nonmaleficence) against doing it, or the fact that someone has done you a favor is always a moral reason (of justice) to return the favor. Certainly, in particular situations, these reasons can be outweighed by other reasons, so ensuring that people are more motivated by them [...] is not to ensure that they act in any specific way in the particular situations.<sup>14</sup>

Persson and Savulescu now seem to defend a version of moral bioenhancement that aims at enhancing the disposition to be motivated to act on certain reasons that are universally accepted as *prima facie* moral reasons, i.e., reasons that always count for or against something without necessarily determining the moral verdict all things considered. This version of moral enhancement escapes some of the problems mentioned above. For instance, being empathetic with another person might always be *prima facie* morally good, although one will need to have to override empathy with other considerations in rare circumstances all things considered. Take the example of a judge in court feeling empathy with one of the parties involved in the case. She has moral reasons not to be moved by these feelings if, in fact, the law demands action against that person. Enhanced empathy might, in such cases, make it more likely that judges will act immorally when they find it harder to override their empathetic feelings. Persson and Savulescu would argue that these empathetic feelings still have some moral weight, but they should be outweighed by for example, the considerations of impartiality.

Such a proposal not only requires a thoroughly fine-tuned – although theoretically conceivable – form of moral bioenhancement (that makes you more likely to act on moral reasons – just not too much so); it also faces a deeper and more theoretical objection. The objection is that not even the idea of *prima facie* norms (or *prima facie* moral dispositions) makes for a moral bioenhancement for all ethicists\*. Just consider moral particularists such as Jonathan Dancy. He defends what he calls holism in the theory of reasons, according to which ‘a feature that is a reason in one case may be no

<sup>14</sup> Persson and Savulescu, ‘The Art of Misunderstanding Moral Bioenhancement’, 52. The authors’ reference to three of the four principles of biomedical ethics proposed by Beauchamp and Childress (autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice) underlines the similarity, mentioned earlier, to theories of common morality coupled with *prima facie* norms.

reason at all, or an opposite reason, in another', as opposed to atomism in the theory of reasons, according to which 'a feature that is a reason in one case must remain a reason, and retain the same polarity, in any other. The atomist holds that features carry their practical relevance around from place to place; the holist thinks that context can affect the ability of a feature to make a difference in a new case'.<sup>15</sup>

Thus Dancy and other particularists would argue that when one should not act out of empathy all things considered, then empathy does not provide *any reason* to act. For particularists, the picture is not one of empathy providing *prima facie* reasons that are outweighed by other considerations. It is rather that empathy does not provide any moral reasons in this situation – but it might well provide moral reasons in other cases. To be sure, the particularism camp in ethics is relatively small; but the main claims of this group are, I assume, shared reasonably widely and taken seriously within the academic community in order to conclude that not even the idea of *prima facie* moral norms (or dispositions) makes for a moral bioenhancement for all ethicists\*.

That being said, however, fleshing out the idea of moral bioenhancement in terms of widely-shared *prima facie* moral norms (or dispositions) is – similarly to the other restricted forms mentioned above – yet another conceivable restricted form of moral bioenhancement. It would be a *moral bioenhancement for atomists in the theory of reasons* or, if you prefer, *for generalists in ethics*.<sup>16</sup> Note that this version of moral bioenhancement is likely to find more support among moral philosophers than the other restricted forms of moral bioenhancement discussed above; and it is possible that at some point, all particularists (and proponents of related theories such as ethical casuistry) will become convinced of atomism or generalism and abandon their theories. But as of now, it seems that proponents of moral bioenhancement do not have a concept of moral enhancement that all ethicists\* would subscribe to.

I have just argued that different ways in which proponents of moral bioenhancement have tried to determine what counts as *moral*

<sup>15</sup> Jonathan Dancy, *Ethics Without Principles* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 7; see also Shelly Kagan, 'The Additive Fallacy', *Ethics* 99:1 (1988), 5–31.

<sup>16</sup> On generalism vs particularism in ethics, see Sean McKeever and Michael Ridge, *Principled Ethics: Generalism as a Regulative Ideal* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); and Jan Gertken, *Prinzipien in der Ethik* (Paderborn: Mentis, 2014).

enhancement hinge on controversial substantial or metaethical presuppositions, i.e., presuppositions not shared by all ethicists\*. Although different versions of moral bioenhancement seem to be conceivable as restricted forms of moral enhancement, proponents of moral enhancement continue searching for a version that is not thus restricted – albeit with a surprising shift. They have recently defended a kind of moral enhancement – called “procedural moral enhancement” – that improves deliberative processes instead of particular moral views, motivations, or dispositions. In what follows I will outline and discuss this shift towards a procedural form of moral enhancement (sec. 2) and argue that what is at stake is better described as “moral-epistemic enhancement” (sec. 3). I will defend the view that moral-epistemic (bio-)enhancement in the form of perspective-taking can count as a moral enhancement for all ethicists\*.

## **2. Procedural Moral Enhancement**

The main idea behind “procedural moral enhancement” is pretty straightforward. Instead of enhancing views, motivations, or dispositions about which there is no agreement if they would constitute *moral* enhancements, it might be uncontroversial to say that the enhancement of certain deliberative processes makes people more morally reliable. Drawing on the characteristics John Rawls famously proposed for ‘competent judges’ in his ‘Decision Procedure for Ethics’ and, later, in *A Theory of Justice*,<sup>17</sup> Owen Schaefer and Julian Savulescu suggest that the following capacities contribute to reliable moral decisions: logical competence, conceptual understanding, empirical competence, empathetic understanding, openness to revision, and bias avoidance.<sup>18</sup> Schaefer and Savulescu argue that biomedical enhancements of such capacities are conducive to reliable moral decision-making in a variety of normative settings, thus avoiding the critique of other forms of moral bioenhancement mentioned above.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> John Rawls, ‘Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics’, *Philosophical Review* 60:2 (1951), 177–197; John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2005).

<sup>18</sup> Owen Schaefer and Julian Savulescu, ‘Procedural Moral Enhancement’, *Neuroethics* (2016), doi:10.1007/s12152-016-9258-7.

<sup>19</sup> In Owen Schaefer and Julian Savulescu, ‘Better Minds, Better Morals: A Procedural Guide to Better Judgment’, *Journal of Posthuman Studies* 1:1, 26–43, the authors further develop these ideas; some of which are already to be found in Will Jefferson, et al., ‘Enhancement and Civic Virtue’, *Social Theory and Practice* 40:3 (2014), 499–527.



Logical competence, conceptual understanding, and empirical competence can be described as cognitive capacities.<sup>20</sup> For instance, logical competence might help in coming closer to the moral truth in that one can recognise the implications of one's views and identify inconsistencies between them. One reason for being logically consistent is that consistency is a minimal condition for truth. Of any two inconsistent moral beliefs, at least one does not track the moral truth. It is in this sense that inconsistencies can be problematic when they lead to the revision of one's beliefs.<sup>21</sup> Logical competence alone does not tell you how to revise your beliefs, but it helps you to recognise the need for revision. Similarly, having a better understanding of moral concepts does not magically give you the "right" moral concepts. It rather helps to avoid confusion and misapprehension of such concepts, because one is better able to clearly formulate moral ideas and to distinguish between different ideas. And so on for the other competences, some of which will be described in more detail below.

As is widely known, the aim of Rawls' decision procedure sets out to provide an answer to this question: 'what is the test of whether a judgment in a particular case is rational?' His 'answer is that a judgment in a particular case is evidenced to be rational by showing that, given the facts and the conflicting interests of the case, the judgment is capable of being explicated by a justifiable principle'.<sup>22</sup> The decision procedure has roughly two parts, the first of which determines the relevant judgements about cases to be taken into account; the second part is the justification of the principles invoked in rationalising these judgements. The first part begins with relatively stable and certain intuitive judgements about particular cases. Already here Rawls names idealising narrowing conditions which pave the way for the rationality judgement. He is not interested in all judgements, but in considered judgements by competent judges. In the procedure's second part, the preselected judgements get rationalised by various means. For instance, the judgements must be explicable by simple moral rules, which are the result of 'moral insight', determined without 'strong emotional or physical duress'.<sup>23</sup> The rules must in turn justify the judgements; they must further be action-guiding in

<sup>20</sup> Schaefer and Savulescu, 'Better Minds, Better Morals: A Procedural Guide to Better Judgment'. In what follows, I am drawing on this paper.

<sup>21</sup> On how to do this, see Richmond Campbell and Victor Kumar, 'Moral Reasoning on the Ground', *Ethics* 122:2 (2012), 273–312.

<sup>22</sup> Rawls, 'Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics', 187.

<sup>23</sup> Rawls, 'Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics', 187.

non-trivial future cases and stand trial against alternative rules and other judgements.

As mentioned, Rawls only takes into account *considered judgements* by *competent judges*. One requirement for a judgement to count as considered is that the competent judge is not herself affected by the case.<sup>24</sup> This impartiality constraint might make sense in many circumstances, but also has a tendency to render the procedure under-inclusive.<sup>25</sup> We have already seen some criteria for competent moral judges. They are supposed to have ‘a certain requisite degree of intelligence, which may be thought of as that ability which intelligence tests are designed to measure. [...] I am inclined to say that a competent moral judge need not be more than normally intelligent’. They are also ‘required to know those things concerning the world about him and those consequences of frequently performed actions, which it is reasonable to expect the average intelligent man to know. Further, a competent judge is expected to know, in all cases whereupon he is called to express his opinion, the peculiar facts of those cases’. Moreover, a competent moral judge is required to be a ‘reasonable man’, who ‘shows a willingness, if not a desire, to use the criteria of inductive logic in order to determine what is proper for him to believe’; who ‘whenever he is confronted with a moral question, shows a disposition to find reasons for and against the possible lines of conduct which are open to him’; who ‘exhibits a desire to consider questions with an open mind’; and who ‘knows, or tries to know, his own emotional, intellectual, and moral predilections and makes a conscientious effort to take them into account in weighing the merits of any question. He is not unaware of the influences of prejudice and bias even in his most sincere efforts to annul them’. Finally, to be a competent judge, one is further required to have ‘sympathetic knowledge of those human interests which, by conflicting in particular cases, give rise to the need to make a moral decision’.<sup>26</sup>

The procedure thus described is meant to identify what Guy Kahane calls ‘non-accidental patterns in non-accidental intuitions’,<sup>27</sup> i.e., moral intuitions that survive various steps of epistemic screening, which in turn justify decisions in particular moral cases. Or, in Rawls’ words, ‘[i]f competent judges are those persons most likely to make

<sup>24</sup> Rawls, ‘Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics’, 181 f.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Kelly and Sarah McGrath, ‘Is Reflective Equilibrium Enough?’, *Philosophical Perspectives* 24:1 (2010), 325–359.

<sup>26</sup> Rawls, ‘Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics’, 178 f.

<sup>27</sup> Guy Kahane, ‘The Armchair and the Trolley: An Argument for Experimental Ethics’, *Philosophical Studies* 162:2 (2013), 421–445, 430.

correct decisions, then we should take care to abstract those judgments of theirs which, from the conditions and circumstances under which they are made, are most likely to be correct'.<sup>28</sup> I believe it is fair to say that Rawls' decision procedure is an extremely demanding thought exercise: one is (individually) to imagine a (social) process in which one abstracts from hypothetical judgements of hypothetical competent judges, which are moreover understood as being extremely gifted and conscious about their own psychological dispositions and patterns of (actual) reasoning.

What is more important for the purpose of this essay, however, is to emphasise that Rawls really proposed a *procedure*; it takes various steps before one can tell 'whether a judgment in a particular case is rational'. What Schaefer and Savulescu take from Rawls is only one element, namely the features defining competent judges. Just as Rawls holds that 'competent judges are those persons most likely to make correct decisions', so Schaefer and Savulescu claim that competent judges are all the more morally reliable the better their logical competence, conceptual understanding, empirical competence, empathetic understanding, openness to revision, and bias avoidance. All of these features of competent judges are said to contribute to reliable moral decisions and thus do not assess moral decision-making in terms of certain outputs. But even though the contribution to moral decision-making has to do with how people come to a certain decision, the enhancement of logical competence, conceptual understanding, etc. has nothing to do with a procedure that describes several consecutive steps that must be followed.

### 3. Moral-Epistemic Enhancement

Schaefer and Savulescu argue that certain capacities are always conducive to more reliable moral decision making,<sup>29</sup> and that biomedical enhancements of those capacities are to be understood as moral bioenhancements for all ethicists\*. I suggest taking this argumentative goal seriously and to give up the talk of "procedural moral enhancement". The proposal is better described, I suggest, as

<sup>28</sup> Rawls, 'Outline of a Decision Procedure for Ethics', 183.

<sup>29</sup> Note that this does not imply persons thus enhanced always reach moral decisions that are better than decisions by the not enhanced. After all, a group of not enhanced persons might employ Rawls' decision procedure, merely imagining the moral deliberation among competent judges, and thus reaching a better moral decision. They might also simply follow their gut feelings, which by chance point them to the better moral decision.

“moral-epistemic enhancement”. After all, the proposal does not offer anything like a decision procedure to arrive at correct or reliable moral decisions. It is rather a contribution to moral epistemology, hence the label “moral-epistemic enhancement”.

I take it that Schaefer and Savulescu offer a plausible way to think about moral-epistemic enhancements. One could at least conceive biomedical means to make people more likely to avoid biases, to be more open to revisions, to be more open to empirical evidence, and so on, even if the two authors do not offer more precise ideas concerning what these biomedical means to bring about the desired enhancements might look like. In what follows, I will further pursue the idea of moral-epistemic enhancement, but I will focus on another capacity, namely perspective-taking. I assume that perspective-taking is generally epistemically valuable in moral decision-making. By this I mean that it contributes to the epistemic value of moral decision-making when one is able to put oneself in someone else’s shoes, to take the point of view of other persons, to imagine what a decision would mean for other persons, etc. For now I take this to be uncontroversial, but I will consider some objections later in the chapter.

### *3.1. Perspective-Taking as Moral-Epistemic Enhancement*

Let me begin my argument for moral-epistemic enhancement in the form of perspective-taking by motivating the idea that we, as humans, are always influenced by certain biochemical states. This is probably most obvious when untypical biochemical states lead to unusual choices or behaviour. Simply consider the typical cravings for certain foods caused by hormones during pregnancy, or impatience caused by low blood sugar levels. Blood sugar levels are even said to significantly influence the rulings of experienced judges.<sup>30</sup> There are many more biochemical influences that seem to play a role in moral decision-making, although we do not recognise them when making decisions. For instance, the neurotransmitter serotonin not only seems to have an effect on impulsivity; it also seems to influence decisions regarding whether to co-operate with others, and especially how to react to unfair behaviour.<sup>31</sup> I am not saying that such

<sup>30</sup> Shai Danziger, Jonathan Levav, and Liora Avnaim-Pesso, ‘Extraneous Factors in Judicial Decisions’, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* **108**:17 (2011), 6889–92.

<sup>31</sup> Molly J. Crockett, et al., ‘Serotonin Modulates Behavioral Reactions to Unfairness’, *Science* **320**:5884 (2008), 1739.

influences fully determine how people act. What I am saying is that they can have some influence on how we feel, think, and act.

To make this point one does not even need to invoke scientific research on such influences. Just recall your first serious crush as a teenager, or the last time you fell in love with another person. Many will remember that falling in love deeply changed how they perceived the world around them; that they were suddenly more optimistic, more open and friendly to others; that they began to care less about school or their job; and that they became interested in things they had never cared about previously. Many will also remember the feeling of lovesickness; how jealousy made them think and act in ways they knew to be completely silly. Or remember severe headaches and migraines and how they affect the way you feel, think, and act. Some will also be familiar with more drastic biochemical influences on feelings, motivation, and behaviour. You might know a person who has received hormone therapy; it is often reported that persons change significantly during or after such treatments. You might also know someone who has or had severe depression and received biochemical treatment; the whole point of such treatments is to change the person, sometimes to a degree that makes one wonder if the treatment still treats the person or rather creates a different one. These are all examples for biochemical influences on how people feel, think, and act.<sup>32</sup> They all causally influence people's mind-sets and emotional patterns, such as levels of anxiety, joy, or empathy.

The second step in my argument for moral-epistemic enhancement in the form of perspective-taking is that changing such biochemical states could have epistemically valuable effects. Many people assume that what is natural is generally preferable to what is not natural. But why should our natural biochemical states be any better than a different biochemical state, which one can induce through biomedical means? It is certainly true that there are always worries about possible side-effects. However, our natural biochemical states also have significant effects on almost all aspects of our lives. Some people are more energetic than others and perform much better in competitive tasks; some are more able to sit quietly and follow the teacher in school. Why should the natural lottery that produces biochemical states, which are partly responsible for such differences, be any better than artificially altered or created biochemical states that might have positive effects? This general question is too broad and complex to be answered

<sup>32</sup> I am not claiming that these effects referred to in the examples can be reduced to biochemical influences, only that biochemistry plays a (more or less significant) role in them.

in this chapter.<sup>33</sup> But it stands behind my moral-epistemic argument. Changing one's biochemical state can put you in someone else's shoes and thus enable perspective-taking. Imagine the use of already existing forms of talking therapy, which potentially facilitate self-understanding by overcoming ego-defenses. Why not use such therapies to more deeply understand others? And why not couple this with biomedical means that enhance the ability for perspective-taking? Take, for instance, cannabis. It is a widely used substance, although it is illegal to possess, sell, or consume cannabis in many jurisdictions. Apparently, it has de-stressing and relaxing effects, which is why it is also used for medical and recreational purposes. It is also said to have aggression-reducing effects – it is not by accident that advocates call it “the drug against wars”. So if cannabis has such effects, why not give cannabis to overly aggressive people (integrated into therapy and supervised by a doctor in order to control for unwanted side-effects), thereby letting them experience a less aggressive and more laid-back view of the world? This might enable them to understand persons who are more anxious, people who fear aggression and violence, people who are paralysed by dominant behaviour. In other words, cannabis might help them to take the perspective of people with different feelings, of people they never took seriously before. Experiencing their anxieties might lead them to reach very different conclusions about how to act.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> But see Neil Levy, *Neuroethics: Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 147 ff.

<sup>34</sup> Some of these ideas have been mentioned in Paulo and Bublitz, ‘How (Not) to Argue For Moral Enhancement’. Note that I do not want to commit myself to a substantial view about how precisely to understand perspective-taking, and how to distinguish it from empathising. For instance, one question would be whether perspective-taking is imagining *how another person feels* or rather imagining *how you would feel* in her situation: see C. Daniel Batson, Shannon Early, and Giovanni Salvarani, ‘Perspective Taking: Imagining How Another Feels Versus Imaging How You Would Feel’, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* **23**:7 (1997), 751–58; Amy Coplan, ‘Will the Real Empathy Please Stand Up? A Case for a Narrow Conceptualization’, *Southern Journal of Philosophy* **49**:1 (2011), 40–65. I think that, for the purposes of the present essay, both count as epistemically valuable forms of perspective-taking. I am leaving aside the question whether ego-dissolving effects that generate feelings of somehow being one with and intimately connected with the natural world, which certain psychedelic substances are said to possess, should count as valuable forms of perspective-taking; I am limiting my discussion here to the perspectives of other humans.

## Moral-Epistemic Enhancement

This proposal has some similarities to traditional forms of enhancing the ability for perspective-taking. It is commonly assumed that being exposed to and spending time with people who look, think, or behave differently (for example, due to ethnicity, nationality, social background, upbringing, religion, cognitive or motoric abilities, etc.) helps to take their interests and feelings seriously and in turn, enhances the chance for better moral decision-making.<sup>35</sup> Similar effects are commonly ascribed to reading novels and seeing great plays in the theatre.<sup>36</sup> All these traditional forms of moral enhancement can be understood as being moral-epistemic enhancements in the sense that they enable or enhance perspective-taking – being exposed to a wide variety of people, getting to know their emotional lives as well as those of notable fictional characters as well as their social circumstances, allows one to take their perspectives seriously, which is always epistemically valuable in moral decision-making. The same holds for biochemical changes that complement (or, perhaps, substitute) such traditional forms of moral enhancement.

It is important to understand that perspective-taking as moral-epistemic enhancement does not imply that certain perspectives are morally or moral-epistemically more valuable than others. So when I said that the moral decision-making of overly aggressive persons could benefit from certain forms of therapy that include the use of cannabis in order to help them to perceive the world from a less aggressive and more mellow perspective, this does not imply that the latter perspective is the right one to take. My argument also applies to a very relaxed and laid-back pothead. For her, it would be epistemically valuable to take the perspective of a stressed or even aggressive person. In fact, the argument does not only apply to extreme personalities, but to all. Everyone has his or her perspective – some more narrow than others – and might very well benefit, epistemically, from enhanced perspective-taking capacities.

So the argument for moral-epistemic enhancement in the form of perspective-taking is altogether very simple. It says that we as humans are always influenced by certain biochemical states which – to some degree at least – determine how we think, feel, and act.

<sup>35</sup> See Sylvia Terbeck, *The Social Neuroscience of Intergroup Relations: Prejudice, Can We Cure It?* (Heidelberg and New York: Springer, 2016).

<sup>36</sup> On the use of novels in ethics, see Peter Johnson, *Moral Philosophers and the Novel: A Study of Winch, Nussbaum and Rorty* (Cham: Springer, 2004). See also Michael J. Pardales, “‘So, How Did You Arrive at That Decision?’ Connecting Moral Imagination and Moral Judgement”, *Journal of Moral Education* 31:4 (2002), 423–437.

Changing such biochemical states could have epistemically valuable effects by helping us to understand how other people with other biochemical states, think, feel, and act.

Before I come to objections against this proposal, it is worth adding a few words of caution. First, note that the argument does not say or imply that it is morally desirable to be enhanced moral-epistemically in the way outlined above. The claim is merely hypothetical, i.e., if one wants to make a moral decision that is epistemically valuable, then this kind of enhancement will always conduce to the moral-epistemic value of the decision. Second, note again that the idea is not to use cannabis or other means to change the biochemical states of people in order to make them less (or more) aggressive or more (or less) trusting. The idea is rather to use such means to help people experience the state-of-mind (not) to be aggressive or (not) to be trusting, i.e., to perceive the world through the eyes of a person with a different mind-set. Third, note further that I am not arguing for or against the moral desirability of moral-epistemic enhancements – let alone a moral duty to enhance others or to be enhanced, be it voluntarily or compulsory.<sup>37</sup> Such questions are interesting and important. However, they are beyond the scope of the present chapter in which I merely argue that moral-epistemic enhancements in the form of perspective-taking might be a solution to the problem of finding dispositions the enhancement of which is always conducive to better moral decision-making.

### 3.2. Objections

Let me now discuss some possible objections against moral-epistemic enhancement. I will begin with the objection that the kind of perspective-taking I am advocating is not genuine. Then I will discuss the objection that the claimed effects for moral decision making might vanish too fast to be meaningful, and that one never knows if one really has acquired the precise feeling or mind-set of another person. Only then will I discuss the most serious objection, namely

<sup>37</sup> In other work Christoph Bublitz and I have discussed some of the social and political problems society-wide moral enhancements would cause: see our 'Pow(d)er to the People? Voter Manipulation, Legitimacy, and the Relevance of Moral Psychology for Democratic Theory', *Neuroethics* (2016), doi:10.1007/s12152-016-9266-7; and Norbert Paulo, 'Liberal Perspectives on Moral Enhancement', *Ethics & Politics* **XVIII**:3 (2016), 397–421.



that moral-epistemic enhancement might not, in fact, always contribute to better moral decision-making because it could lead to outrageous moral positions and because it might lead people to acquire biases which lower the epistemic value in future moral decisions. Responding to all these objections allows me to clarify the proposal.

*Objection 1:* One might object that perspective-taking is not genuine when it is merely biochemically triggered. The kind of perspective-taking usually meant in moral discourse is a rational procedure in which one is asked to think about the point of view of another person, not merely to feel it.

*Response:* This objection presupposes a substantial view about what constitutes perspective-taking. I said above that I do not wish to commit myself to such a substantial view about how precisely to understand perspective-taking, and how to distinguish it from empathising and related notions. I take both imagining how another person feels and imagining how you would feel in her situation, as epistemically valuable forms of perspective-taking. Also, nothing in my proposal excludes the possibility that the effect of rational perspective-taking and perspective-taking through biochemical changes could have the exact same effects. Moreover, it is compatible with my proposal to combine the two ways of perspective-taking.

*Objection 2:* A related objection is that when the biochemical effects vanish, the effect for moral decision-making also vanishes, simply because one did not achieve the change in perspective rationally, but only emotionally.

*Response:* Since this objection is related to the first one, my response also mirrors the response to the first objection. First, objection 2 is based on an empirical assumption the credibility of which I feel unable to judge. It might be true, but it might also well be unsubstantiated. So it is at least possible to stipulate that the effects remain for similar periods of time. To motivate the possibility that a relevant kind of memory of the biochemically induced feeling remains cognitively available as plausible, just remember, again, your first crush as teenager, lovesickness or a severe headache. I assume that most of us can easily remember what it felt like being in these situations, and how it affected our perspective on many issues, although these were largely biochemically triggered. Second, as I said before, my proposal does not exclude the possibility of combining the rational and biochemically induced perspective-taking. This would undermine the

## Norbert Paulo

objection, because it seems plausible to assume that the biochemically induced perspective-taking would support or even strengthen the effect of rational perspective-taking, rather than weaken it.

*Objection 3:* A third objection is that one never knows if one has acquired the feeling or mind-set of another person. That is, one might end up taking a perspective that no-one actually has.

*Response:* The obvious response to this objection is that one never knows if one really has acquired the feeling or mind-set of another person. One can surely try to design very specific biochemical means, but the required level of specificity is arguably too high to hope for success. One can also try to reassure oneself through questions or mirroring exercises. But as legions of therapists will testify, one can come very close to an understanding of another's perspective, but complete understanding is probably asking too much. What is important for the purposes of the present essay is that it does not seem to be crucial for moral-epistemic enhancement to acquire the exact feeling or mind-set of another person. There might well be moral decisions where it is important to take a very specific point of view (for instance in some moral problems concerning close personal relationships), which might not be possible to attain through biomedical means. However, this is an empirical question, and in most cases specific perspectives are not what moral epistemology asks for. It is always epistemically valuable to take different perspectives, no matter whether or not these are the precise perspectives of another person. This also answers the second part of the objection, namely whether it might be a problem that one might end up taking a perspective that no-one actually has. I do not see how this could be a problem from the standpoint of moral epistemology, at least as long as the perspective is one that others could have. After all, even when moral philosophers promote moral imagination as a means of achieving better informed moral judgement, they are asking for creativity and not so much for a fixed set of moral options.<sup>38</sup> In this sense, moral-epistemic enhancement in the form of perspective-taking can be understood as a means to facilitate moral imagination.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, Steven Fesmire, *John Dewey and Moral Imagination: Pragmatism in Ethics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003); Pardales, 'So, How Did You Arrive at That Decision?'

*Objection 4:* What I take to be the most serious objection to the idea of moral-epistemic enhancement is that the proposal would not meet the high standard I set for successful moral enhancement proposals. Following the development of the moral enhancement debate, I described the standard-setting litmus test such that it is fulfilled only by proposals to enhance dispositions that are uncontroversial among all ethicists\*. I have outlined moral-epistemic enhancement as a promising attempt to fulfill that litmus test. Now the objection is that moral-epistemic enhancements can lead to both epistemically less valuable moral decisions and to morally worse situations (in a substantial sense). Let me explain.

Imagine a person living in a big city in a western democracy. Let us call him Donald. He has a bunch of loosely connected liberal views, including beliefs about equality, human rights, and fairness; but he also has some nationalist and racist views – some implicit, some explicit – which rarely surface. Now, Donald chooses to undergo a safe and effective form of moral-epistemic enhancement to the effect that he now has a very good ability to take, *inter alia*, the perspective of those of his fellow citizens who lost their industry-related jobs due to globalisation or due to the influx of foreigners who are willing to do the same jobs for lower pay.<sup>39</sup> He now feels his fellow citizens' losses and anxieties very strongly and he comes to understand their hatred of mainstream politics and foreigners. Although he himself is in a very different position, living a life full of opportunities and without worries about future developments, he comes to take the positions of his worse-off fellow citizens far more seriously than before. This might lead Donald to feel more confident in his nationalist and racist views, and less confident in his liberal views. So the enhanced ability for perspective-taking might make Donald more nationalist and racist and less liberal, which can be seen as a morally worse situation – in a substantial sense – than before the enhancement. From a moral-epistemic perspective, being more racist is widely considered a (negatively connotated) bias which might in turn yield epistemically less valuable moral decisions.

And this is only the objection concerning perspective-taking. The possible negative effect can be further strengthened through other moral-epistemic enhancements such as improved conceptual understanding and logical competence. That is, Donald might not only

<sup>39</sup> For rich descriptions of such persons (and of many others), see Arlie Russell Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right* (New York; London: New Press, 2016).

become more racist and nationalist in a loose sense. Having better conceptual understanding might help him understand the many implications such views actually have, thus extending his racism and nationalism beyond abstract political views to his everyday life and possibly leading to discrimination against certain neighbours, avoiding shops run by immigrants, or much worse developments. Enhanced logical competence might make him realise how racism and nationalism conflict with his more liberal views, which might in turn lead to the abandonment of the latter, making him even more racist and nationalist. Again, I take it that these developments count – in a substantial, first-order morality sense – as being morally bad. From a moral-epistemic perspective, the now even stronger racial bias might lead to epistemically less valuable moral decisions. So the objection is that moral-epistemic enhancements can lead to both epistemically less valuable moral decisions and to morally worse situations (in a substantial sense). Moral-epistemic enhancement would thus not meet the litmus test for successful moral enhancement proposals.

*Response:* First of all, in this essay I am not concerned with good moral outcomes in a substantial, first-order morality sense. I am merely concerned with the epistemic value of moral decision-making. This being said, it seems perfectly possible that an epistemically better moral decision-making process leads to a worse decision than a completely unreflected or uninformed one. Take the example of Huckleberry Finn. In Mark Twain's novel, Huck is unsure whether or not to return his friend Jim, a runaway slave, to his master. It has been argued that Huck believes the overriding moral reasons would speak for returning Jim.<sup>40</sup> But Huck nonetheless decides, out of sympathy for Jim, not to return him. Schaefer and Savulescu raise the following point: 'what if Huck was a better reasoner, and more open to revising his judgments on the basis of the weight of reasons? He may well have recognized the force of what he took to be good reasons, excluded the "bias" of friendship from consideration, and turned Jim in'.<sup>41</sup> So, yes, Huck might have made a morally worse decision had he been more rational, or more motivated to act on what he thought were overriding moral reasons. But, as I said before, the possibility that moral-epistemic enhancements might, in some cases, lead to morally worse or even outrageous

<sup>40</sup> Jonathan Bennett, 'The Conscience of Huckleberry Finn', *Philosophy* 49:188 (1974), 123–34.

<sup>41</sup> Schaefer and Savulescu, 'Procedural Moral Enhancement'.

outcomes does not affect the moral-epistemic argument as presented in this essay.<sup>42</sup>

This does not do away with the objection, however, that moral-epistemic enhancement might lead to epistemically less valuable moral decisions, which would undermine my argument. Remember that the objection is that moral-epistemic enhancement might not only lead to racist decisions, but also to epistemically less valuable moral decisions. The enhanced ability for perspective-taking might make Donald more nationalistic and racist and these can be understood as biases, which one might argue, are by definition of negative epistemic value.

As for this latter challenge, I wish to emphasise that perspective-taking, as envisioned here, could in Donald's case also include the victims of racism and nationalism. Perspective-taking differs from empathy, which is known to extend primarily to in-group members, in that it makes it easier to take a whole variety of perspectives and thereby to extend the range of concerns. It should thus extend beyond in-group members. One of the most salient features in perspective-taking is that it allows one to empathise with and understand people one is not close to, or who are not similar to oneself. As I described the case of Donald, he came to feel with his fellow citizens who live a life distinctly different from his own. The same kind of moral-epistemic enhancement could enable him to take the perspectives of those who suffer from racism and nationalism. The point at issue here is that moral-epistemic enhancement in the form of perspective-taking is not likely to yield to biases.

This is at least true when the respective enhancer works in that broader way, enabling Donald to take many more morally relevant perspectives than those that potentially yield racism and nationalism. Recall objection 3, above, that one never knows if one has acquired the precise feeling or mind-set of another person. The idea there was that some situations require taking into account a very specific point of view in order to be able to, for instance, treat another person fairly. Responding to this objection I said it is always epistemically valuable to take different perspectives, whether or not these are the precise perspectives of another person. That is to say, even

<sup>42</sup> But note that moral-epistemic enhancement is likely to lead to morally better decisions in most, if not almost all cases, *inter alia* because the potentially harmful capacities are likely to be countered by other moral-epistemic capacities, see Schaefer and Savulescu, 'Procedural Moral Enhancement'.

if taking a particular point of view were better, it would still be epistemically valuable to take another perspective. From this standpoint every broadening of the range of perspectives being taken into account is epistemically valuable.

The only epistemically problematic case thus appears to rest on the empirical assumption that the respective enhancer is extremely specific and, for instance, only enables Donald to take the point of view of racists. Having available the point of view of racists in addition to one's own does not sound like an epistemically valuable thing to have. But if the view is correct that every broadening of the range of perspectives being taken into account is epistemically valuable, then this should also hold for the racist-only perspective. And indeed, having taken the enhancer, Donald gained the perspective of some of his fellow citizens, namely the perspective of the racists. Why should this broadening of moral perspectives not be epistemically valuable? Even the perspective of racists, sexists, and religious fanatics would appear to be not entirely without their moral-epistemic value.

First, I am not interested in first-order morality but in moral epistemology; and I do not presuppose any view about which first-order moral views are either good or bad, and this includes the possibility – however slim it might be – that racism, sexism, or any of the fanatic religious views might turn out to be morally right or appropriate. From an epistemic perspective, it would be an odd step to rule out this possibility.

Second, taking another's perspective and taking it seriously once the immediate effect of the enhancer vanishes, does not mean to support everything that person believes or does. One can take someone's perspective and understand her better than before, but still be critical of her views.<sup>43</sup> Even if you are strictly anti-racist, it might inform your self-understanding and your moral-decision making to engage with racists. The same applies for religious fanatics. Two fanatics of different denominations – or one religious fanatic and one fanatic atheist for that matter – will not agree on many things, even after the immediate effect of the enhancer vanishes, but they might learn a lot from taking the other fanatic's perspective. Their views and their moral decision-making will be epistemically richer than they were previously.

Third, the worry behind the objection that moral-epistemic enhancement in the form of perspective-taking might lead to biases

<sup>43</sup> This is, for instance, the idea behind Hochschild's illuminating book, *Strangers in Their Own Land*.

such as racism seems to be a temporal problem for the epistemic value in question. One might distinguish between a moral decision being made now, and other moral decisions being made in the future. As for the former, gaining the point of view of racists counts as epistemically valuable in the ways described above. In this situation it is unlikely that the moral judge already has completely subscribed to the new moral outlook (racism). She will thus still have the moral perspective she started with, plus the racist perspective. As for the latter situation, later on, it is possible that she came to adopt the racist view and abandoned her earlier views, just as Donald did in the example. So she might now have a (racial) bias she might not have had otherwise. This bias reduces, by definition, the epistemic value of the moral decision-making. However, she will still remember her earlier perspective – or at least I see no reason of any kind for assuming this will not be the case. She will thus have more perspectives to take into account in her moral decision-making, which again is epistemically valuable. The difference between the moral decision now and future moral decisions is merely that of which perspective she considers to be her own. I feel unable to say whether, in the future cases where she has adopted the biased perspective as her own, the gained perspective outweighs, in terms of moral-epistemic value, the loss caused by the bias.

I cannot confidently rule out the possibility that in rare cases – remember: when the enhancer is so specific as to allow for very precise perspective-taking only, when the moral judge comes over time to adopt the new perspective as her own and when this new perspective is a bias – the moral-epistemic value will turn out to be lower. Yet I want to emphasise that the argumentative bar for this view is very high. Simply imagine someone objecting to history classes in school for the reason that learning about the Nazis poses the risk that some kids might – at some point in the future – become attracted to antisemitism. I believe it would be very hard to present a good case for the view that history classes should be banned, because the expected epistemic gain from such lessons will in almost all cases by far outweigh the risk of some individuals becoming anti-Semites as a result of what they have learned. Sure, one might argue that in history classes pupils are normally presented with the Nazis as the paradigmatic evil, and not as a neutral moral outlook one is asked to seriously consider for oneself. But when we learn about the Nazis at school, part of what it means to truly understand how all these horrors could

## Norbert Paulo

happen is to understand the mind-set of fanatic Nazis as well as of the hanger-on who is typical of any totalitarian system.<sup>44</sup> Without that kind of understanding, history classes would arguably lose much of their alleged power to prevent the return of nationalism and antisemitism.

Similarly, it would be very hard to make the case for the view that perspective-taking is not moral-epistemically valuable, because with some very specific enhancer some individuals might acquire biases that outweigh the epistemic gain from the additional perspectives that have been opened to them.

### 4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have defended perspective-taking as a capacity which can be enhanced by both traditional and non-traditional bio-medical means; a capacity which arguably always – but at least almost always – contributes to the epistemic value of moral decision-making. Other than the proposals for moral bioenhancement discussed in section 1, perspective-taking seems to be an uncontroversial, non-trivial capacity for moral decision-making, which all proponents of ethical beliefs that are at present widely and with good reason shared within the academic community can agree upon. That is to say, moral-epistemic (bio)enhancement in the form of perspective-taking can count as a moral enhancement for all ethicists\*.

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<sup>44</sup> This is precisely what many great books about the Third Reich do: see, for example, Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006); Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006); Herlinde Pauer-Studer and J. David Velleman, *Konrad Morgen: The Conscience of a Nazi Judge* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).