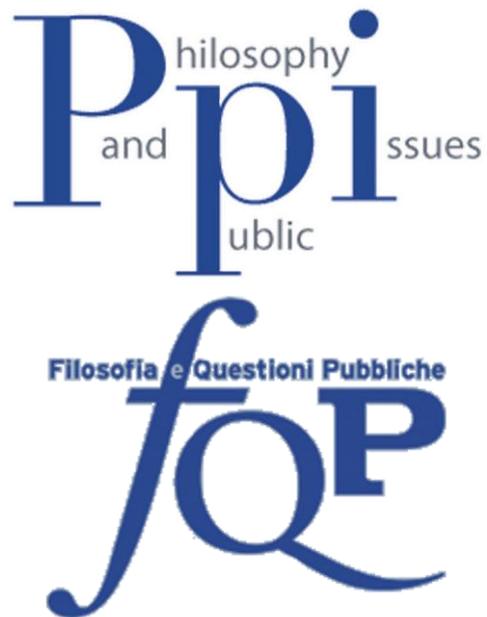


ENHANCING LOVE?



CHEMICAL DEHUMANISATION OF LOVE VS
AUTHENTIC EVOLUTION OF LOVE

BY

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Chemical Dehumanisation of Love vs Authentic Evolution of Love*

Zlatica Plašienková and Martin Farbák

In their latest publication (Earp and Savulescu 2020) Brian Earp and Julian Savulescu presented their vision of enhanced love which can be considered one of the transhumanist visions. According to them, we might be able to use so-called drugs of love to bring our romantic relationships to a higher level. Nevertheless, the authors do not talk about a vision of love relationships turned into a romantic fairy tale thanks to some miraculous elixirs. They put their concept of enhanced love into the realities of our actual lives – with all its positive and negative aspects, which the drugs themselves, namely MDMA and oxytocin (these are the substances they talk about) do not change completely. Yet, under certified experts' guidance, these substances might facilitate the painful course of romantic relationships. Each loving couple has their own story, and the authors take into account the individual nature of each case, in which drugs might help. In particular, they might solve the issue of burned-out relationships and restore the original spark, or permit to depart two lovers peacefully and without any painful dramas. However, Earp and Savulescu take a severe approach in their claims and do not want to risk anything. They would never advise

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using these drugs without prior thorough research and experimentation. Therefore, they do not consider the issue just from one perspective and accept opinions criticising this kind of theories and practices. Their assumptions are based mainly on psychological, medical, biological, social, but also on philosophical points of view. We appreciate such an approach and do not want to reject it without considering the arguments suggested by the proponents of the presented vision of enhanced love. We believe their objective to provide their audience with the most up-to-date scientific knowledge and with ethical tools to decide for themselves whether love drugs or anti-love drugs should be part of their lives and society or not (*ibid.*, 15). Despite this goal, the book is strongly directed by authors' views, who accept the use of chemical enhancement of romantic relationships considering it even a kind of moral imperative under specific conditions and circumstances (*ibid.*, 30).

I

Love according to Earp and Savulescu

Before we approach the critical reflection on the actual use of the drugs of love, as proposed by Earp and Savulescu, we would like to analyse their view of love more closely, because we consider this an essential aspect of our further reflection. It is crucial to bear in mind from the very beginning that the authors realise that love takes various forms and shapes: from mother's love through friendly love to intimate love. However, in their study, they focus on relationships with an erotic, intimate character, which they most often call romantic love. Even this kind of love has its typology and specifics. At the beginning of our reflections, together with the authors, we face a philosophical question: What does it really mean to fall in love? (*ibid.*, 10). Although the meaning of the term "love"

can be understood normatively, exclusively as a part of relationships that are essentially positive, good, and healthy, the authors admit that even relationships that include suffering and abuse do not have to be without love entirely.

The authors do not try to define love on behalf of other people; they do not want to circumvent their individual judgments to avoid a risk of slipping into a narrow-minded, paternalistic way of thinking that underestimates other people's life experiences. To illustrate, they use an example of love between persons of the same gender. According to the prevailing views, this kind of love used to be considered impossible several decades ago, as true love could only arise between a man and a woman. We can agree with the authors that normative definitions of love often suit ruling groups whose point of view may not always be correct, although they may have good intentions (*ibid.*, 10). The tendency to "cure" love based on the claim that only a particular form of love is "healthy" can be an example of this normative approach to love. We believe it is important to ask if the chemical curing of love's issues is not another human attempt to control our love-related emotions. The authors did not consider this as a possible way of instrumentalising love, but we want to take this into account. The authors take a well-founded approach to avoid such a definition of love and leave its understanding up to the individual perception of each person who experiences it. Yet they understand the term "love" as *romantic experiences* between individual persons. They find any more complicated philosophical discourse on love counterproductive. They are convinced of the need to adopt an open meaning of the word love which in each person evokes the relevant context of its understanding based on his/her own intuitions (*ibid.*, 10-11). In doing so, they also rely on the definition of the Danish-American philosopher Berit Brogaard, who says that love is an emotion in the first place. Brogaard defines love as a subjective, conscious and relational emotion enduring in various conditions, and its duration

is influenced only by the individual (individuality) experiencing the love. To put it simply: if you believe you are in love, then it is love.

In contrast with Earp's and Savulescu's open understanding of love, we prefer a deeper philosophical view on this phenomenon, which we consider essential for full comprehension of love (not separated from other aspects of human life). For this, we recall French thinker Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's philosophical concept of love. In his works, love is occurring in four different forms. The first form in human life is sexual love. Through sexual love, one gets to know oneself; one confirms his individuality. Teilhard noticed that this form of love has started to be more and more "debiologized" which allows it to manifest itself in the field of our psyche and personality. The second form of love has got socio-cultural, communal, and more universal character. It represents a higher stage of the anthropogenesis process, which is the process of humanisation. The third form is cosmic love. It does psychologically connect us with the entirety of human existence and the whole universe. A fourth form is an omegal¹ love which is a spiritual type of love. This form of love exceeds a person's past and presence and leads to the future. It is the formation of the highest synthesis in our perspective future (Teilhard de Chardin 1962a, 97-101).

Earp and Savulescu pay special attention only to the two-dimensionality of love. Love has, so to speak, a dual nature. The first dimension of love is *biological*; the second one is *psychosocial* and *historical*. The biological essence of our experience of love is rooted in our evolutionary history. It is a basic sexual urge and desire for bondage. Thus, these are the basic instincts necessary for the continuation of the human species. They make us care for and

¹ Omega is the last letter of the Greek alphabet. Teilhard used it in a Christian meaning to be a final point of the cosmic evolution and human life and spiritual effort.

protect our defenceless offspring and fulfil the deep need for unconditional support, which helps us survive. The psychosocial and historical dimension of love is related to psychological, cultural, social, and ideological influences, which vary depending on the time and region in which we live² (Earp and Savulescu 2020, 11). The authors assume that both dimensions of love can be changed as required. They illustrate it in the case of Sofia, who maintains her relationship with a tyrant she loves despite all the pain he causes to her. They say the psychosocial ties that bind her to this person can be so strong she cannot terminate the relationship, which can lead to tragic consequences. In this case, the adjustment of the biological dimension of love might work and help Sofia free herself from the relationship that had been destructive to her and recover from the trauma caused to her (*ibid.*, 12).

Based on the above, we can conclude that the authors defend the biological and psychosocial dimension of love, i.e. the duality of love. They agree with the opinions of the philosopher C. Jenkins, who describes such a duality of love in the book *What Love Is*. Jenkins talks about specific forms of romantic love that have been gradually evolving depending on different cultures during man's history. Higher cultural and social factors have always influenced the fundamental elements of love at the biological level (*ibid.*, 19). For example, they mention King Oedipus, who completely changed his view of his lover after discovering she was his mother. The social, psychological, and broader historical aspects of love must not be underestimated. Although love is understood differently in each culture, its basis is the same everywhere. (*ibid.*, 20). At the same time, the authors emphasise

² The authors do not always call the second dimension of love in the same way; sometimes, they also call it socio-cultural or only social or cultural.

that human sexual and love experiences are neither dominantly *cultural* nor *biological*. Still, they must always be understood as a product of a strong interaction between biological and social factors instead (*ibid.*, 21)³.

Earp and Savulescu take the above-mentioned social perception of same-gender relationships to prove that the cultural and social aspects that affect love itself can change. But they ask: Can also the biological nature of love change? Human history is full of various examples of controlling our sexual preferences and behaviours, such as chastity belts, castration, the demonisation of masturbation, warnings against falling in love with a “wrong” person, etc. (*ibid.*, 26). The authors defend the *Default Natural Ethics* principle, which states that the biological dimension of love and sexuality is usually the right one, while the socio-cultural one can distort love. Society should, therefore apply regulations that are as consistent as possible with the naturally developed human nature (e.g., sexual orientation) (*ibid.*, 27). The authors acknowledge that love’s biological dimension may also have evolutionarily negative manifestations, such as rape or paedophilia. Any sexual practices that do not respect the other individual’s freedom (who must be an adult) must be prohibited by law and reasonably condemned (*ibid.*, 29). The authors’ point of view is clear: all societies should set their cultural and ethical standards based on the most profound biological features and dispositions. Here we ask whether chemical enhancing of the love proposed by authors is not in a conflict with the *Default Natural Ethics* principle they mentioned.

We appreciate the authors’ interpretation concerning the relevance of the principle of a human individual’s autonomy in his/her relationships. It is the search for true *happiness*, which is a

³ In addition to the mentioned dual understanding of love, authors also mention its subjective and objective side, which they explain using the artistic understanding of the Mona Lisa painting (Earp and Savulescu 2020, 23).

fundamental value that, according to the authors, plays a notable role. But as Earp and Savulescu note, an individual's autonomous decision-making can be more difficult under the pressure of a promise of fidelity, which is typical for marriages and love relationships. Consequently, we must assume that the individual may find him/herself in a relationship, in which he/she is not happy (*ibid.*, 76). The principle of autonomy and happiness of the individual is crucial for the authors with what we agree. Still, we reflect critically on their approach on how to reach true happiness in full autonomy. They understand autonomy only from the liberty point of view, which can be summarised in the well-known ethical phrase "my liberty ends where yours begins." We live in a pluralistic world, where everyone wants to fulfil their vision of a good and happy life, but even that has its limits. The principle of autonomy and happiness should always be present in every social system. If someone decides to leave a marriage, in which he/she is not happy, he/she should have such a possibility (*ibid.*, 78). We perceive autonomy as a condition needed for the authentic personal evolution and finding a meaning of life as well.

II

Two-dimensional vs three-dimensional understanding of love

The above described Earp and Savulescu's view of love is thus apparent. If one wants to experience the unity of autonomy, happiness, and love in the relationship, one must respect the above-mentioned dual nature of love, they propose (*ibid.*, 51). Let us shortly repeat the authors' dual concept of love. On the one hand, we are determined by our biological nature evolved to ensure the survival of all mankind. On the other hand, we are defined by society, culture, and history, which directly and indirectly dictate

what forms of romantic love are acceptable or unacceptable. As we have mentioned, the authors also include the psychological dimension of human individuality in the second dimension, which is confusing, in our opinion.⁴ We believe that this psychological generalisation reduces the essence of love and prevents us from fully understanding its function in human life. The dual view of love seems insufficient because the psychological aspect of love is not clearly anchored in the given concept, and the spiritual element is absent entirely.

Therefore, we suggest a **three-dimensional model of love** that would better capture the essence of its experience in human life. The spiritual dimensions of love in this model represent a separate component alongside the Earp's and Savulescu's biological and socio-cultural (historical) dimension which we also modified. Here we are inspired by the interpretation of the Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Although we do not copy the whole complex of his love's typology, we take the mainframe of his understanding of love. We propose a three-dimensional model of love: a) *sexual* (intimate) love⁵, b) love in its *diverse* manifestation, its socio-cultural, communal, and universal character⁶, c) the *spiritual* form of love. The psychological aspect is incorporated in all three dimensions as a connecting element of human personality. We do not understand the spiritual type of love exclusively in Teilhard de Chardin's religious understanding, but more generally as the highest synthesis of our past and present evolution, leading to the future. The spiritual form of love is not separate from other

⁴ Although at the beginning of the book, the authors assign a psychological aspect to psychosocial and historical determinants, they tend to speak of it indirectly as a part of the biological determinants of the perception of love elsewhere (*ibid.*, 20, 184).

⁵ Including its "debiologized" manifestations.

⁶ Here we include also the third cosmic form of love which in Teilhard's sense relates to the entirety of human existence.

dimensions. Moreover, it is above all of them, and a human being can achieve it through all dimensions.

Setting our three-dimension model of love we would like to emphasise our different understanding of sexual love than Earp's and Savulescu's. Following the Teilhard's comprehension of sexuality, we do not recognise it only as a biologically based love form, but from a vital⁷ point of view, as an addition to one's individuality. In a sense, one gets to know oneself, confirming identity through this kind of love. Teilhard suggests that this form of love also has its evolution within a historical-biological framework. Its power and intensity do not only grow in the purely biological dimension; it is linked with the psychological and spiritual dimensions too. Teilhard de Chardin goes as far with his visions to assume that, given the "debiologised" conditions of sexual love, it can manifest itself more and more on a social, mental and *spiritual* personality level. The emphasis is no longer placed on fertilisation, but on the transformation and much greater sublimation of sexual love into higher dimensions of love related to humans' personal growth, making them less egoistic (Teilhard de Chardin 1962a, 91). Unlike Earp and Savulescu proposing an artificial enhancement of love, Teilhard sees a space for the natural sublimation of intimate love to higher forms.

In the context of current discourse related to spirituality and personal evolution, we take into account the works of contemporary authors who research the importance of spirituality

⁷ For a better description of this vital approach, we found very beneficial the explanation in Susan Wolf and Jonathan Haidt's discussion in which they talk about vital engagement that determines meaningful and generative lives and relationships. They relate to the definition of psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi who describes vital engagement as a relationship to the world that is characterized both by experiences of life's flow and meaning. During the person's evolution vital engagement is emerging and becoming an encompassing web of knowledge, action, identity, and relationships (Wolf 2010, 94).

for human life. Thaddeus Metz examines spirituality as something supernatural and from the naturalistic perspective as something that gives meaningfulness to human life. He defends the “pluralist analysis” in which life’s meaning is understood as something different from pleasure and happiness (Metz 2013, 35-36). He declares we cannot automatically identify life full of pleasures as meaningful. He develops a “purpose theory” which says that the meaningfulness of life requires a purpose. From a supernatural position, the purpose can be given to the man only by God. Still, Metz does not hold only to a supernatural position and defend the purpose theory also in the naturalistic sense.

When we talk about the naturalistic approach towards spirituality, we should not omit Fiona Ellis, who deals with these issues in her book *God, Value & Nature* (Ellis 2014). She expresses a significant statement criticising the current discourse in which spirituality is understood antagonistically towards the naturalistic explaining of human existence. She believes naturalism and theism are not logically incompatible anymore. The dividing point of view between these two ideas is the relation with the concept of value. The classic explanation says that theism derives its chain of value from God, while naturalism derives all the values exclusively from the human. Fiona Ellis emphasises the Levinas’ “expansive naturalism” which says that the relation to value in theism is not solely determined by God (*ibid.*, 118). We hold to the position of “expansive naturalism” when we interpret the spiritual dimension of love.

Going back to Metz, we also agree with his understanding of pleasure in the relevance to spirituality. Metz states pleasure is necessary for obtaining meaning in life, but it does not constitute it. Reacting to Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* he says: “being subjugated and manipulated while feeling upbeat because of psychotropic drugs would not be a way for one’s life to matter”

(Metz 2013, 27). In his transcendence analysis, he concludes identifying primary internal candidates for a meaningful life consisting of integrity, virtue, authenticity, autonomy, self-respect, and knowledge (*ibid.*, 29). Holding to that, we propose the chemical enhancement of love may harm the *authenticity* and *autonomy* of its participants.

Next author who deals with the spirituality and the meaning of life is John Cottingham. Metz criticised him for his statement that the only way to achieve the meaningfulness of life is through God (*ibid.*, 85). Even though our approach is not God-centred, there are many good arguments that Cottingham puts into the discussion anyway. He recognises the existential urge in human relationships. Cottingham describes it as “something in most of us that is nervously sensitive to life challenges about how we are justified in continuing to live our comfortable lives” (Cottingham 2003, 81). He names it “Brave New World problem” recalling Huxley. The hypothetical question he asks is whether humans could find meaning in life when all the problems and discomforts would be eradicated. We can compare it with the attempt to eliminate issues in the romantic relationships ignoring the spiritual substance of love and life’s meaning.⁸ Cottingham argues that using drugs could dull our sensibilities (and mitigate our existential urge), but such existence would quickly become bland and meaningless. A loving relationship always carries a risk. It involves a complex of affection, trust, conflict, resolution, challenge and change. A deep relationship is still dynamic, and lovers cannot avoid the element of risk – the possibility of pain and even sadness, says Cottingham (*ibid.*, 82). What the actual goals of spirituality in such a fragile yet wonderful life are? In more recent work, he expresses the role of

⁸ More about negative things that may positively influence our love life can be found in the anthology of the Philosophy Department of Rhodes University edited by Pedro A. Tabensky, *The Positive Function of Evil* (Tabensky 2009).

spirituality more clearly as a transformative power that is “capable of supplying a deficit in our fragmented and vulnerable human existence and thus rendering our lives incomparably richer and more meaningful than they would otherwise have been” (Cottingham 2005, 126). He defines it also as the *tranquillity* of mind – “the peace that passes all understanding,” but not only as escape strategy but more specifically as a peaceful mental state – acceptance, called by Greeks *ataraxia*. In its core, it results from something more important to be recognised “from a certain kind of *awareness* or *focus*” which Cottingham links with the meaningfulness of life (Cottingham 2003, 83). Here we must point out that with the chemical ways of enhancing our love relationships, *awareness* and *focus* might be disrupted and consequently also our authentic and autonomous process of achieving life’s meaningfulness.

We do not deny that the biological dimension conditions our sexuality and its manifestations. It affects the fact that we find someone physically attractive, ensures the ability to perform the sexual activity, conditions the process of falling in love, the so-called “period of rose coloured glasses.” Yet does it mean that we can explain the experience of close soul mates, friendship, boundless fidelity, or the feeling of love, happiness, and the meaning of life purely biologically or only socio-culturally? To appreciate a person in her/his entirety, we must also accept her/his psyche and spirituality. The biologically conditioned sexual attraction tends to weaken in every relationship over time, and a phase of certain *greyness* occurs, as also mentioned by Earp and Savulescu. They characterise it as a state of extinction of love and weakening of bonds between partners. When this happens, what is a partnership’s bond that holds the couple together? Is this a powerful yet limited set of connections that are fixed in our brains by the forces of evolution so that mammals (including humans) maintain their relationship to be able to raise young? Earp and

Savulescu claim that the partnership bondage has not been “designed” for the modern world. It was not set to last for life. They rely on research on human evolution, which shows that human couples have been evolutionarily adjusted to stay together for about four years, which was the period required to ensure their offspring’s healthy development. Several studies confirm that the first four years of a child are crucial for further healthy growth. In other words, a child is the most vulnerable during the first four years and needs a stable environment to continue his/her healthy development. An analysis of divorce statistics in the U.S., referred by authors, compiled by Hellen Fischer in the 1980s, suggests that most couples divorce just four years after marriage (Earp and Savulescu 2020, 103-104). With such “evolutionary logic” they emphasise that we must not underestimate the biological predispositions that limit lifelong partnerships. Multiple studies have confirmed the existence of such an evolutionary strategy of the human species, and there is no point in doubting it. However, we don’t find the way Earp and Savulescu explain it to be correct. Researches authors rely on, do not mean that intimate human partnerships are evolutionarily set for failure after a short time. Several other studies are confirming the exact opposite.⁹ The family, as the basic unit of human society, functions as a much longer reproductive project. Of course, in order to survive, human offspring must be viable and less vulnerable as soon as possible. Even today, it is not uncommon that a child’s parents die from an illness or injury. The time required for raising human’s “young” is much longer than in the animal kingdom. This evolutionary strategy protects our offspring in its long process of growth.

⁹ An excellent example of negative results of the stable family absence for older children is presented in the study “Psychological Characteristics of Adolescents Orphans with Different Experience of Living in a Family” (Shulga, Savchenko and Filinkova 2016).

In the study entitled *Part and Parcel in Animal and Human Societies*, firstly published in 1950, the Austrian ethologist Konrad Lorenz speaks of humans as animals who have an extraordinary ability to learn and adopt the culture through the long childhood. He talks about the power of continuous development, which he considers a gift that we owe the *neotenic* nature of humankind. He classifies it as a characteristic feature, without which we cannot imagine the human personality of man¹⁰ (Lorenz 1971). Earp and Savulescu's argument that human relationships are evolutionarily predisposed to last until the fourth year of their offspring's life seems likely, mostly because of divorce statistics, but otherwise is not based on solid arguments. Above all, humans are *neotenic* beings, who develop over a long time, and a stable family environment is crucial for their life prosperity.

III

Love in the context of the meaning of life

As we have emphasised in our proposed three-component model of love, the spiritual dimension plays a vital role. Let us, therefore, point out that the understanding of love also requires the knowledge of a human, i.e. the anthropological analysis, which is the basis of a comprehensive concept of man. In particular, we mean the philosophical anthropology, which also respects the knowledge of other sciences examining humans. However, in the presented monograph *Love Drugs. The Chemical Future of Our Relationships*, there is no initial philosophical definition of a human used by the authors as a background. We did not find out the

¹⁰ The term neotenic being has been invented by the Dutch doctor and anatomist L. Bolek. It is the characteristic of a man as a neotenic being meaning that he maintains juvenile feature till adult age (due to delayed development rate). Still, he can develop, learn etc. at the same time.

anthropological foundations of their understanding of human, which is crucial for the presented vision of biochemically enhanced relationships.

At this point, we can perhaps recall the words of the German philosopher Max Scheler, who as early as at the beginning of the 20th century pointed out that we live in an era when man became problematic as he realises that he no longer knows who he is (Scheler 2009). He also aspired to create a science that examines the man himself and his relationship to nature in the form of a new philosophical discipline – philosophical anthropology. Love was also an essential category of his concept. He mainly talked about love in his book *Ordo amoris* (Scheler 1971). It is love that “chooses values” in life and is the basis for understanding its meaning. In their work, Earp and Savulescu use the knowledge of various scientific disciplines that deal with man, but the philosophical dimension of their analysis, unfortunately, is not dominant because they do not look at the man from the philosophical perspective.

Our philosophical and anthropological starting point is understanding man as the unity of his physical (biological), socio-cultural, psychological, and spiritual side. It is a being constituted primarily in relations with the world (its cultural and social structures), with other beings (or even God), with himself, and therefore with his own life. Man is thus a relational being, characterised not only by biological and psychosocial, but also spiritual needs, which are also related to love. The authors Earp and Savulescu only approach love as a physical (biological) and psychosocial (historical) phenomenon. The *spiritual* aspect is missing here, which, in our opinion, distorts their view of romantic love as well as its place and significance in human life. Experiencing an intimate romantic relationship (being in love) is an integral part of something bigger, namely the individual’s life as a relational being. Humans can relate and identify in various ways

with ourselves, with other people, and with the world, maintaining a distance from everything at the same time. This ability allows us to understand ourselves and the world. It enables us to acquire happiness, manifest and maintain our own life in dynamic continuity and personal integrity; to self-affirm and authentically experience “touches with life,” with the existence. Even in situations that make us happy and even hurt us and are often a source of pain, torment, and suffering of various kinds. These situations are also associated with experiencing feelings and states of loneliness, abandonment, i.e. something to which (at least at first glance) we do not want to assign any meaning and importance (Plašienková 2015, 37).

At this point, we face the question of the meaning of life, which can only be answered in the context of personal evolution. Suppose man’s spiritual dimension and the spiritual dimension of love are missing from visions of romantic relationships’ biochemical enhancement. In that case, it could (if fulfilled) cause the *dehumanisation* of romantic, intimate love and erosion of our evolutionary process of personal growth and maturation. Since this is a question of the authenticity and unique identity of a human, which has a spiritual dimension (and is also related to our understanding of life’s meaning), we should ask together with N. Agar what makes the continuous line of our existence meaningful and valuable? Agar writes about an *evaluative approach* to identity; he critically asks what types of interventions might erode or even permanently damage the meaning or value we attach to our lives. Like Cottingham, he concludes it is an *awareness* or sense of our selves (Agar 2014, 57). We can lose it naturally because of neurodegenerative conditions, but Agar talks about it differently in the relevance to radical enhancement. He says “you are less likely to retain autobiographical memories of your past if enhancement makes the events that they refer to less remarkable and therefore less memorable” (*ibid.*, 63).

V. E. Frankl, the well-known neurologist and psychiatrist, emphasises the meaning of life is linked to values (our activities, experiences, and attitudes to life) and is derived from the fundamental “will to meaning.” Frankl elaborated his concept based on existential analysis – the “logotherapy” which focuses on finding the meaning of one’s existence. It is a crisis at the human spirit level, which leads to an “existential vacuum,” in other words, the loss of the meaning of life (Frankl 1984). In our opinion, the principle of “will to meaning” must also be cultivated in our romantic relationships’ greyness crisis. Erich Fromm has developed a similar idea in his concept of the “biophilic orientation” of man. Fromm understands the essence of this orientation in experiencing the love of life, which is transferred to all human activities and relationships. He believes that man is biologically endowed with the ability of biophilia (Fromm 2010, 35-36), but the modern man manifests signs of necrophilia by diverting his focus from an authentic experience of living. A necrophilous person approaches life mechanically; such a person tends to instrumentalise everything turning it into “things”, including himself and his ability to love (Fromm 2010, 30). Within Fromm’s reasoning, any attempts to enhance our relationships using chemicals can be considered a sign of necrophilia, as the effects of a drug instrumentalise (dehumanise) our free will, being thus artificially influenced.

Earp and Savulescu recommend using love drugs to treat healthy people who struggle to find passion and happiness in *grey* relationships. Yet the authors themselves point to the research results that have shown the excellent success of MDMA in treating specific mental illnesses (PTSD, depression), where current treatment reduces libido and ability to establish relationships. Instead, they focus on using these substances in everyday life of people who are considered healthy (Earp and Savulescu 2020, 6). That is something which should make us cautious. According to

the authors, couples stuck in *grey* relationships are perfect adepts for using love drugs, referring to the historian Pamela Haag, who says that the average (*grey*) marriages are most vulnerable and divorce most often. Even more than violent or otherwise impaired relationships and despite the fact that *grey* relationships are not fundamentally dysfunctional and partners are personally appropriate (*ibid.*, 74-75). According to Earp and Savulescu, the love drugs might help partners who maintain their *grey* marriages at the expense of their happiness. They ask a simple question: Would it not be better to bring love and joy back into marriage instead of sacrificing one's happiness or divorcing (for the good of one's children)? At this point, we disagree with the authors' answer. While Earp and Savulescu suggest using love drugs (together with self-work and therapy) which could help restore partners' hope and the happiness (*ibid.*, 81), we think, on the contrary, that *grey* relationships are for the individuals, who experience it, the best opportunity and challenge. Accepting this challenge can authenticate their personal and spiritual maturation, which is essential in searching for life's meaning. Earp and Savulescu only focus on the emotional side of romantic relationships. They want to refresh it through a biochemical enhancement while missing the more important, spiritual dimension of love in the context of one's life.

At this point, we can return to the inspiring considerations of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin again, who speaks about the "personalisation process" of man. Even the experiences of pain, torment, and suffering also play a role in it. Spiritual coping with them (through the process of personalisation) can be the accelerator of a person's evolution (Teilhard de Chardin 1962b, 63-64). There is a fundamental difference between understanding the natural evolutionary dynamics of the human being's maturation on the one hand and its artificial enhancement on the other hand. Earp and Savulescu only approach man's suffering or torment

from a “material” point of view, considering it an evil that needs to be eliminated. They only attribute a positive value to it as long as it contributes to our personal growth (Earp and Savulescu 2020, 137). However, they mean deepening a life skill, missing the spiritual side of the person’s evolution completely.

The perception of romantic love only through the lens of its pleasures or hardships reduces the role it plays in man’s personalisation. Should chemicals intervene in our personal inner growth and our union with others? There is a real threat that we would not be able to authentically mature and find life’s meaning. Similar criticism of unjustified human enhancement was made by Jürgen Habermas, who argued in *The Future of Human Nature* (Habermas 2003) that the enhancement undermines human moral freedom and, among other things, generates future asymmetrical relationships between individuals¹¹. Although one chooses to freely take the drug of love and only a small dose that does not significantly change his/her perception of reality, it can still affect his/her evolutionary trajectory. The drug’s effects temporarily release us, allow us to open up more to our partner, renew the bond, and cope with previous traumas. But, once these effects expire, there is no guarantee that we will be able to use the fruits of such experiences in everyday life. There is a risk of creating an addiction to the emotions that the drug evokes. We argue that the drug actually “does” work for us – the work we should do ourselves as a part of our personalisation process. It is, metaphorically and also literally speaking, “cheating” in our personal growth that disrupts the process of acquiring life wisdom and experiencing the true meaning of life. It is just like in any other human activity – unless one acquires something through one’s efforts, one does not actually have it or does not know its value.

¹¹ Habermas addresses the issue within the current liberal eugenics, its positive and negative form, and the therapeutic and non-therapeutic enhancement level.

One can deceive oneself and people around temporarily, but after some time, the truth will come to the surface, as is the case with athletes who use illegal doping.

Instead of an Epilogue. Bio-enhancement or dehumanisation of man?

Earp and Savulescu consider the biochemical enhancement of our relationships sort of a moral imperative. According to them, we must improve morally, both at the individual and the species level (Earp and Savulescu 2020, 30). They say we can sometimes have a good reason to intervene in every complex phenomenon in human culture, psychology, and biology if our goal is to promote well-being. Whether or not we should interfere is not determined by whether the phenomenon is natural or unnatural. The moral aspect is decisive (*ibid.*, 31).¹²

Until recently, the ethical discourse had intensively examined the origins of morality and the definition of ethics. In the current era of scientific and technological progress, more practical aspects of the moral status and moral dispositions of 21st-century man have been examined. Scientific progress has opened up unimaginable possibilities for man and placed him on the threshold of a new anthropological milestone. With due certainty, we can state that anthropological research and further direction of man and humanity today significantly affect (if not wholly determines) the world of science and new (bio)technological achievements. The world of science and technology offers a whole range of certainties as well as uncertainties, hopes, and threats, overcoming physical, cognitive, and spiritual limits to modern man and humanity (ageing

¹² It is important to note that Savulescu is also well known for his scholarly works about moral enhancement together with Ingmar Persson (Persson and Savulescu 2008, 2010, 2014).

issue, prolonging life, overcoming death, cyborgization of body and spirit, connecting the human brain to the computer, etc.). Man is like a complicated mathematical equation that can be solved and adjusted to current needs (to be healthier, smarter, happier, and significantly more powerful). The man understood by Nietzsche as an "undetermined animal" that has not completed its development yet is still only the embryo of the future man. But what kind of man and what kind of future are we heading to?

It has never been possible to "design" a human being to such an extent before – meaning its creation, physical and mental capacities. However, the power we have gained through science and technology is not only pleasant but also frightening. In today's globalised world, in which several nuclear powers play a crucial role. It is necessary to take responsibility for exploiting the potential of biotechnology on the one hand, but inapprehensible on the other hand (also considering illegal experiments that are not under control).

Today's humankind, which inhabits and "controls" the entire Earth, has been – in addition to challenges of biochemical enhancing – facing a significant number of other issues, such as the global environmental crisis or the threat of nuclear war. Not to speak about social problems, the unhealthy geopolitical division of the world in which rich countries benefit from others' poverty. Even the human rights issue is far from being addressed fairly, and human enhancement can divide rich and poor even more. Therefore, it is appropriate to ask how any further development of human enhancement affects this situation. How about a threat of the moral status degradation of unenhanced people to a lower level? (Agar 2014, 180)

The transhumanist discourse differs in its arguments in answering what tools to use to improve human. Thus, there are at least two different approaches in the transhumanist visions: more

conservative (or more moderate) and more radical. Those representing the radical direction take a position that suggests using all available scientific and technological advances, including our romantic relationships' biochemical enhancement. A more conservative approach described in particular by Nicholas Agar offers a "truly human enhancement". This is an original concept that sees man's enhancement as a good thing in principle but considers only its moderate forms to be permissible. Mild enhancement improves the same man's attributes and abilities as a radical enhancement but only to a degree similar to what the man has already acquired without exceeding it substantially (*ibid.*, 2). Agar argues that fulfilling our desires and dreams, which provide us with the meaning and value in life, would be disrupted by radical enhancement because this approach would exceed objective limits. He likened it to earning the first million, which one experiences completely different from when one is already a multimillionaire. The joy which the value of money brings us is lower, and it will be the same when evaluating the quality of life and its meaning with a post-human person (*ibid.*, 21). Is it also essential to ask about the moral value of a biochemically improved person's deeds? What if the identity's authenticity of an enhanced person is irreversibly disrupted? Will we be still able to talk about free will or will it be instrumentalised and dehumanised?

Further to the above mentioned, we can ask ourselves an ethical question: What approach to enhancing our intimate love is the proper one from a moral perspective? Is the preferential utilitarian approach adopted in Earp and Savulescu's visions sufficient? We do not think so. We rather agree with Nicholas Agar who concluded that adverse consequences of a radical human enhancement might be so severe that even with the modest probability of their fulfilment, would be morally wrong not to prevent them, or at least not to try to do so (*ibid.*, 181). From a methodological point of view, we could call this position the

“heuristic of fear”. Hans Jonas elaborated this concept in the well-known study called *The Imperative of Responsibility*¹³ (Jonas 1984). It is not that we want to generate worries; it is about the need to examine our fears (not only our desires and wishes). We might say that accepting the Jonas-formulated imperative of responsibility in the current biotechnological age means the following: the combination of our imperfect knowledge and awareness of possible risks arising from human biochemical enhancement (the consequences of which are merely unpredictable), is a sufficient reason for prudence. The imperative of responsibility represents selfless fear and interest in future people’s lives. This existentially motivated yet at the same time prudent fear not only mobilises but becomes a real moral feeling that works as a value criterion (*ibid.*, 38-40). The imperative of responsibility defined this way can be the basis for the ethics of the future. The same imperative also applies to biochemical enhancement along these lines, which can turn very quickly into a dehumanisation process.

Reflection of our existential experiences has got tremendous importance, and only authentic review of life’s nature gives us the evidence of our existence. Chemical enhancement of love arises philosophical and moral implications that can negatively affect the autonomous ability to gain and evaluate life’s values and meaning. We cannot reduce the evolution of the love to chemical elimination of its sorrows. Love drugs or chemicals that ease the human effort’s hardship cause dehumanisation because they erode what makes us human – our ability to deal with life’s difficulties.

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¹³ Translated from German original *Das Prinzip Verantwortung*, 1979.

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