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Passion and addiction.

**The approach by Helmuth Plessner's
philosophical anthropology¹**

It is difficult to speak of phenomena of passion and addiction. Such a presentation can only succeed if the audience are prepared to participate. Both types of phenomena can be attributed to what we commonly call collecting life-experience. They are not phenomena which can be measured in intervals of seconds or minutes, as current talk of emotional states would suggest. They develop gradually, can characterise a life for years or decades, end happily, sadly or catastrophically, affecting not just one life but often several. I am broaching this important theme, insofar it belongs still and once more to the Human Condition that consists in dynamic structures, which are open to further interpretation and change in future². According to Plessner, an access to these pheno-

¹ Many thanks to Phillip Honenberger (Philadelphia) for corrections of my first draft in English.

² For Plessner, the essence of human living beings does not exist in their final determination, but, rather more in their dynamic structures of conduct. Human living beings are put into questions by these dynamic structures and can take over responsibility for their responses to them in history. See Plessner 1983: 39-41.

mena needs a combination of methods, namely, a phenomenological description of them, a hermeneutic exchange of these experiences in their articulations, and a dialectic openness for critical inversions in these phenomena³.

What structures enable these phenomena? To sum up at the beginning, we can understand addictions and passions through the following five steps of exploration. First, we might first notice addictions and passions by the way that the addicted or passionate person falls-short-of or exceeds one or another occupied role-position in society. Second, we notice that this exceeding or falling-short constitutes a doubling-up of the person wherein they become individualized, apart from their role-position, through affiliation (a dependency or an attachment) with some external power. This is a doubling-up because the distinction between the role-bearer and the role-player is thereby brought to the fore. It is also "all too human" because the person has become monstrously strongly identified with one of their exceptional (ex-centric) possibilities (that is, their situation has become more than usually extraordinary rather than ordinary, by breaking with everyday roles rather than fitting with them). Thirdly, addiction and passion risk compromising and destroying the "personal" structure of human lives. This occurs through a sensorimotor narrowing or intensification of specific affectivities, on the part of the addicted or passionate person. Eventually, this can turn the person into something like a machine – merely a physical

³ Regarding Plessner's combination of philosophical methods see Krüger 2009: 58-9.

body, not a lived body or person. Fourth, such a trajectory compromises personhood because it disrupts the constitutive structure of personhood, which necessarily involves “play with roles” within boundaries of what would be no-longer-merely-played behavior, as in laughing and crying. The addict or passionate person is like someone who cries or laughs insofar as they have lost the playfulness that allows for self-limiting. This reveals the relation between ex-centering and con-centering that is fundamental to Plessner’s philosophical anthropology. A person can only successfully live when they imaginatively integrate their individualized self with the ex-centric background that constitutes their world (including social conditions): this is the “categorical subjective”). Fifth, this points to the significance and indispensability of both “play” and “non-played limits” to the maintenance of a personal dimension (maintenance of persons) in human existence – which are threatened under contemporary social-political conditions.

First step: passion and addiction as deviations from the established roles of persons. First of all, please imagine the phenomena of passion. This can only be achieved in an exemplary mode and each of us recalls a different experience of passion in which we ourselves or others were involved. We cannot – even simply for want of time – recount all the specifics of the content of these experiences, but rather we can ask what aspect of these phenomena impresses us as exemplary, what it is that allows us to speak of passion. How do phenomena of passion catch our attention? It seems to me that they strike us by surpassing, outdoing, transcending expectations that we

consider normal in the conduct of our lives. She who is in the grip of passion does not perform the role within the commonly given parameters for the realization of a role. She goes beyond it. She is, for instance, not simply a school-girl, but exceeds this role, not simply a wife, but surpasses the expectations one has of a wife. He who is in passion's grip is not simply a teacher or a lover, but is more than this bundle of expectations can allow us to envisage. He seems to have entered an alliance with something in the world which lends him a holistic strength exceeding that assumed in the normal course of events. He has entered into an attachment to something, someone, or a task in the world. In a modern society we all take on different roles – amongst relations, with friends and acquaintances, professionally, economically, socially, politically, culturally. But they who are passionately moved by something or someone do not limit themselves to this or that partial role. The exceeding of a role that for impartial observers appears as one part amongst many increasingly takes hold of this person as a whole.

Recall now please phenomena of addiction as you have experienced them in yourself and in others. In what way do these phenomena strike you as being exemplary of addiction? Yes, one can be addicted to alcohol, sex, cocaine, internet, gambling, a role or an occupation. I agree with Plessner's belief that in reconstructing the specific character of addictions – just as with the specific character of passions – we won't get far if we assume that these phenomena can be defined by a certain content (Plessner 1983a: 68, 74). For the individual con-

cerned, the content of his addiction or passion is naturally irreplaceable. But for us outsiders it is not this content that gives us to understand that we are looking at an addiction. As far as the contents are concerned, one can have a passion for all manner of things, small or great. Likewise the contents of an addiction can comprise all manner of things, small or great. So what is it that draws our attention to a phenomenon of addiction? It seems to me that an addiction is conspicuous in that it also deviates from the norm, but this time not in going beyond, but rather in its not living up to a mesh of expectations which defines a role. Somehow, with an addiction, a socio-culturally established role-standard is fallen short of, subverted, insufficiently achieved. The scope for playing the role falls below normal expectations. When one questions what the reason could be, one perceives or assumes a dependency in the person affected by the addiction. She who is under the influence of an addiction is somehow made to fall short of the role by a dependency. The addiction phenomena too have a tendency to affect the whole life of those in their grip. In the beginning they may be limited to this or that partial role or first become conspicuous there, but the phenomenon matures and becomes a phenomenon intersecting the whole conduct of life.

In the initial phase of the phenomena they become conspicuous through deviating from the normal room for manoeuvre to be expected in the exercise of personal roles. Though being moved is their common feature, the directions of their deviation are diametrically opposed. Whilst passions somehow exceed the established roles

through a strong attachment of the person concerned, addictions fall short of these roles through a dependency of the person concerned. Nevertheless, at first sight, both types of phenomena have in common that they tend to go beyond being a partial role. Their direction of movement indicates an overall tendency of the respective person in the conduct of their life. But how should one now better understand this conspicuousness of the phenomena from the standpoint of socio-culturally established roles? To answer this, we need to scrutinize more closely what lies behind the normal standard of personal roles. For this, Plessner puts a number of distinctions to the test. It is part of the normal performance of personal roles that they have an ordinary everyday and an extraordinary dimension. It stands then to reason that we understand the conspicuousness of passions and addictions in the sense of their extraordinary dimension.

Second step: the all-to-human in extraordinary plays with roles. In the second step let's first of all clarify why it is that we can feel a certain empathetic pleasure in both the passions as well as the addictions of persons. It is simply that they strike us as more interesting than the average person we encounter in our everyday dealings. Our everyday lives consist of routinised habits which lend us stability and support. But, as Hegel aptly says, they are also where dying begins if they are no longer being brought to life by something extraordinary, beyond the habitual. One is incrustated, ossified within them. What is the point of so much daily routine where life dissolves into various parts, which pull in different directions like tow-ropes in response to outside demands. The passion-

ate being gains distance to the everyday by reducing it and instrumentalizing it for his/her attachment to the extraordinary. Here the doubling up of the person becomes clearly apparent. Human beings are bearers of roles into which they grow. They become persons by playing *in* their roles. But humans don't only play *in* roles, but also *with* roles. They become players with roles insofar as they emancipate themselves from the roles, step out of the roles and play them from somewhere else. The passionate being is a good example of one who has long been playing with the role-bearing function, because he has a strong attachment to an excess going beyond the role. He individualises himself, i.e. his personal role, into which he had grown. He makes something out of it which goes beyond it. This is the source of a certain admiration which we feel for the phenomena of passion. There is an extraordinary fulfilment in them in which the individual becomes attuned to themselves. They take over – through their attachment to something or someone in the world – the conduct of their life.

It is also the case that in a person affected by an addiction an extraordinary distance develops to the everyday routine of the roles into which they have grown. From the standpoint of the shared socio-cultural role expectation, the addict does appear – in comparison to the passion-driven – to be in the worse position. After all, this person suffers not from overfulfilment, but rather from underfulfilment of the role. But if we change the measuring standard, as we already have with the passion-driven, then the addict also appears in a different light. We are then dealing with a mode of individualising

roles. Individualisation here means that the player of the role becomes differentiated from the role-bearer. The addict too, in cultivating his dependency as his extraordinary, beyond-everyday life, becomes distanced from the roles he has grown into. He too attunes to himself as a player as opposed to a bearer of the roles. He breaks out of the everyday in an extraordinary way. His fulfilment no longer comprises of bearing the role, but rather in constructing, in the pleasure derived from the dependency, an extraordinary dimension in life which allows for his individualisation. Initially it even appears coincidental what dependency or what attachment one falls into during one's youth. The main thing is that one achieves a distance to adulthood in order to find oneself. This detour, only accessing oneself through roles, is apparent in the extraordinary as opposed to the everyday. Structurally it corresponds to a doubling up of oneself in the individualisation of the person. One not only comes back from the other to oneself in order to be able to play the role properly in front of the other. One also steps outside of oneself, the role-bearer, into a dependency (in the case of addiction) or an attachment (in the case of passion) and now from this position one plays with one's roles.

Plessner calls this affirmative aspect of both addictions as well as passions the all-too-human. They strike us as all too human. It is not that we can take on the particular content of a specific addiction or passion of another for ourselves. I personally, for instance, cannot understand how one can love snakes, because they simply nauseate me. My psyche cannot understand either how

someone can be afflicted with an addiction to power. But when considering the structure of these phenomena it is not a question of these personal preferences. The all-too-human about them is to be found in the doubling up of the person which transforms the role-bearer, who has fused with his role, into the mature player of roles. For the latter, playing with roles, a distance is required to these roles. This distance is not only produced by the passionate being in his attachment to another person or thing, but also by the addict in his dependence on another person or thing. (Plessner 1983a: 75). Through this, be it an attachment or a dependency, the individual tunes into themselves as a player rather than a bearer of roles. From this position, from the attachment or the dependency, one now plays with the roles. This attachment or dependency actualises the potentiality of the lived body (*Leib*) that is really moved in being attached or dependent. From this position, the roles appear ever more as socio-cultural embodiments or even masks that are not to be taken seriously. For the lived body the roles become a body that they have consisting of its attachment to or its dependency on another person or thing. The lived body is not one's own organism separated from the world. Its life consists rather more of attuning to interactions with other persons, organisms or things in the world. The extraordinary, beyond everyday aspect of this tuning into the world becomes conspicuous in addictions and passions. These present interactive units with the world in which the individual is not substitutable. In neither the passionate nor the addictive unit does the individual wish to be replaced with someone or

something else in the world. This is implied in the expression "being a body" (*Leibsein*) as opposed to "having a body" (*Körperhaben*), i.e. as opposed to the behavioural dimensions in which a person can see themselves as substitutable, exchangeable and even replaceable (Plessner 1970: chap. 5.2.).

In the first step of the analysis, these phenomena struck us as deviations from the established standard roles. In the second step of the reconstruction, they revealed themselves as phenomena of the doubling up of the person in the world. We are dealing here with phenomena of the lived body individualisation of persons. The doubling up of the person is one of the structures necessary for human life to be possible. It is all too human to cultivate for the everyday process of leading one's life a fulfilment beyond the everyday routine. In this way routine daily life acquires an analogous focus on the fulfilment of extraordinary values. Suspense and intensity enter into the conduct of one's life. It is precisely in the individual attachment or dependency leading to the conflict of norms that it comes alive. How can the everyday and the extraordinary be integrated into the personal conduct of life? The answer is by the person attaching conditions to the alteration between everyday and extraordinary. In all socio-cultures the personal roles acquire such conditions, which are ritually and institutionally practised. Erotic drives can be acted upon or not acted upon e.g. according to the calendar, at certain times and certain places, outside of and within the marriage. Most people become adults in their socio-culture through learning to establish the conditions for equilib-

rium between the everyday and extraordinary dimensions of their roles. In this sense their addictions or passions remain determined by the framework of the familiar roles. These are the expected or conventionally allowable addictions and passions associated with particular roles. They can be defined or conditioned by the persons within their socio-culture and to this extent belong to the all-too-human. Let us call them the "small" passions and addictions, because they can be more or less defined in accordance with the scope of the role.

But passions and addictions also dispose of a dynamic which can go beyond the historically given ensemble of roles and their contingencies. Let's call them the comparatively "big" passions and addictions.

Third step: conflicts between the standard measure of the role and the individualising requirements of the person. We have now reached the third step in the reconstruction of the phenomena. These phenomena contain a conflict. What appears as all too human does not have to remain so. Lurking within the all too human are deviations or reversals. The senselessness of a personal conduct of life which ossifies in the everyday without being able to fulfil itself in the extraordinary is only matched by the danger of conducting one's life so that the extraordinary takes the place of the everyday. With this latter we are dealing with the reverse situation of the dissolution of the difference between the everyday and the extraordinary, this time not in the ordinariness of the everyday, but rather in the extraordinary, the unusual, the non-everyday of the respective passion or addiction which

renders one sleepless, which no organic body can endure indefinitely.

Let's look more closely at this tilting movement in the phenomena. The third step brings us into the conflict between the standard measure of the role (1st step) and the individualising requirements of the person (2nd step). In the case of conflict we are dealing with the primacy of the extraordinary prevailing against the everyday through passions or addictions. The attachments in a passion or the dependencies in an addiction are experienced by those concerned as the lived-body fulfilment of their lived-body individuality, which is to be unconditionally defended, because the normal tolerance range of the established roles renders this fulfilment impossible. For those affected, the respective passion or addiction is something unconditional which is not to be sacrificed to the normal conditions for the exercising of the roles. The everyday role-bearing bodies (*Körper*) are not even worth their instrumentalization for those affected. Generally speaking, the unobtrusively functioning lived body habitually produces the unity of the body with something else in the world. It integrates physical, psychical and mental dimensions in the behaviour of persons. But what task does the lived body take on when it is a question of asserting the extraordinary against the familiar everyday by means of passion or addiction?

The dependency in an addiction means that the switch over from everyday to extraordinary is sensomotorically conveyed and the return from extraordinary to everyday is sensomotorically hindered. Consciousness is based on the coupling of the sensory and motor func-

tions. The dependency in an addiction manipulates this coupling and thus also consciousness. The manipulation of the coupling of sensory and motor functions can proceed externally through the consumption of drugs, but can also be achieved through training, whose effect within a group is often stronger than it is on single individuals. The attachment in passion also foreshortens and intensifies the deployment of the lived body. The coupling between sensory and motor functions is short-circuited by the generation of affects. Whatever the passionate being encounters is evaluated according to its use for the respective passion, so it is accordingly rejected, integrated, or worshipped. Whether it be a dependency or an attachment, the reduction of the habitual possibilities of an adult person to the sensomotoric of the respective addiction or the affectivity of the respective passion drastically decreases all mediations. The detours where other perspectives are taken on, where one learns for oneself, acts out one's own respective plurality of possibilities become ever rarer. As the passion or addiction becomes unconditional the person dissolves within it. Inter-personal and intra-personal relations deteriorate and the passion or addiction is accordingly instrumentalizing them. Finally the unconditional passion disintegrates into its affective lived body and the unconditional addiction into its sensomotoric procedures. The person surrenders their life conduct to their now short-circuited lived body. They are in danger of becoming victim to a restricted lived embodiment. In the conflict which is irresolvable in the here and now, what remains of the person is an affect or a sensomotoric short-circuit

which disintegrates into the automatism of the physical body (*Körper*). It's not unusual for both groups of phenomena to end in naked violence against the person themselves and others. The game of strong evaluations has become one of life and death.

In the third step of this irreconcilable conflict, the phenomena have inverted themselves. In the second step they were necessary for the individualisation of the person. It is, however, part of the dynamic of the passionate attachment to some other being or thing or the addictive dependency on another being or thing that they can slip away from the person concerned and all the more so when the person, in order to approach their life's fulfilment, refuses the return to the established fabric of roles. What has gone wrong at the end of this third step in the disintegration of the person concerned into an act of violence. What were they lacking? In a fourth step we will now examine this question.

Fourth step: contrast to and connection with laughing and crying. The consequences of the phenomena becoming unconditional leads to the question of the boundary of personal behavioural development. As we know, Plessner attempted to answer this question through an exploration of the phenomena of laughing and crying. If a person in the here and now gets into an unanswerable situation, they cede the response to the situation to their *Körperleib*. But since the person has handed over the responsibility for answering, they can no longer produce the unity of having a body and being a body. Thus socio-cultural/physical body and lived-body fall ever more apart. In crying, the person disappears

from the world into their lived-body until this too finally slumps into its organism. In laughing the person flies out of the lived-body into the world in which too many conflicting embodiments are becoming apparent. There are indeed parallels to the passions and addictions when laughing and crying are no longer viewed as phenomena which can be played by those concerned, but rather as phenomena which appear unplayed. This difference between played and unplayed is important to me. As long as one can playact laughing and crying, one is only signalling to the interacting partner and to oneself to go no further as one would then reach a boundary of behavioural development. As long as one is still playing, the limits are confirmed. This fits in with the passions and addictions as long as they can be determined by the person concerned. They belong then to the all-too-human, to step 2. If, however, one turns to the laughing and crying which can no longer be played by those concerned, the similarity to passion and addiction becoming unconditional becomes apparent. Then the addiction which has become unconditional is similar to the non-played crying and the passion which has become unconditional resembles the non-played laughing. It is as if, at the end point of the absolutisation of an addiction, the possibility of crying in a non-playacted way has been paralysed. The self-limiting of the person through their experience of having to cry in a non-playacted way is rendered impossible. And it also seems that at the end of the absolutisation of a passion, the possibility for the person concerned to laugh in a non-playacted manner has also been paralysed. With this, however, this person is lacking

the possibility to experience their behavioural limits. They can no longer limit themselves.

I think that I am not imposing these parallels between Plessner's essays on passions and addictions and his book on laughing and crying, even if he doesn't explicitly go into these similarities in the essays. When a passion or an addiction becomes an absolute, the person concerned can no longer experience their behavioural limits. Thus the additional reference to the non-playacted laughing and crying seemed to me to be an experience of limitation in the spirit of Plessner. Due to affects or sensomotoric manipulation, those who are in the grip of unconditional passion or addiction can no longer have such border experiences, or such experiences are immediately overridden and suppressed. Addicts and passionates who are at the furthest extremity of their addiction or passion can no longer cry or laugh. The person runs a serious risk of ending in the automatism of their passion or addiction. And since each person consists of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, it is not uncommon that others get swept along in their wake. As the title of one of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's film goes: "Love is colder than death."

At the same time Plessner insists that this possibility of capsizing into the unconditional of destruction of oneself and others is part of the human condition, both factually and also conceptually. Why? When the passions and addictions become absolute, the underlying basis of personal behavioural development becomes apparent. This underlying basis is a break, namely the break between the ex-centred and the re-centred positionings in

the personal life. A person develops exemplarily insofar as this living being enters into a passionate attachment going beyond the correlation between the physical and the psychical that is necessary for the interaction of the organism with its environment. Plessner calls this the excentric positioning. It leads to the person being able to step out and stand next to the interaction of their organism with the environment. Through passion, the ordinary everyday role, which the person has to play in an established socio-cultural environment, was surpassed in an extraordinary manner. But each excentric positioning must be capable of being lived⁴. Therefore it must be capable of being carried out as a unit within the concentricity of the lived body. The lived body functions to the extent that organism and environment can attune concentrically to one another. In order to *live* this body (*Leib*), it must also be possible to *have* it as a body (*Körper*). This lived-body dependency on bodies is expressed in the addiction. Thus it seems exemplary for recentring

⁴ This is an *additional* doubling of the person, beyond the *basic* structure of persons who are living in the spectrum between concentric and excentric positions. In the basic structure, the person takes over a role from other persons (inter-personal relation) as its excentric distance from where the person can learn to live (concentrically) and to have (instrumentally) its body in socio-cultural terms. In the additional structure, the centered livable place is occupied by the socio-culturally recognized and maintained role positions (rather than by the lived body in the basic structure), and the distance from this that one achieves (in addiction and in passion) is the excentric component (even if this involves a collapse into a reification of the lived body that eventually becomes a purely physical body reification through sensorimotor shortcircuiting). I thank Phillip Honenberger who recommended me to make this difference (basic and additional structure) explicit in the reoccurrence of the same spectrum between concentric and excentric behavior of persons.

the person in their lived body. But the addicted lived body no longer instrumentalises the bodies for itself, but rather it itself becomes the instrument of its dependency on certain bodies. It inverts itself and, as the addiction becomes absolute, disappears into the addiction's bodies. The lived body no longer has the body of the addiction, but rather the bodies of the addiction have the lived body and thus also the person. As the passion becomes absolute, the person's excentric attachment overburdens their lived body (*Leib*) and their body (*Körper*). As the addiction becomes absolute the physical dependency overburdens the lived body and thus its person. The break thus appears on both sides of the conduct of life, on the excentric side through passion and on the centric side through addiction.

The task in the personal conduct of one's life is all the more understandable in its inverted form. It consists in living with this break by uniting both of its sides, which can be enacted through one's behaviour. The realisation of such behavioural units requires imagination. In one's imagination the person is not only in the here and now, but simultaneously also in another place and another time. The imagination frames the foreground – in which an interaction of the living being in its environment is proceeding in the here and now – with a world in the background. Through the participation of the person in interpersonal and intrapersonal relations in the background, thus in a world, they perceive the foreground in the here and now. In the case of the affirmation of their life, the person brings about their concentricity in the

foreground in such a manner that in the same process they simultaneously fulfil their life's excentric world.

Plessner calls this apparition of the enactment the "categorical subjunctive" (*kategorische Konjunktiv*: Plessner 1983c), i.e. a subjunctive which is vitally necessary for leading one's personal life. He explains this subjunctive with the philosophy of language when he recalls the expression possibilities of the subjunctive as opposed to the indicative. In the indicative we differentiate between possibility and reality according to conditions which must be fulfilled. But in the subjunctive we are expressing the kind of life enactment that is concerned, what mode of must, should, being able to be or live. Measured against physical reality, the subjunctive appears as the reference to the unreal. But from the perspective of the leading of one's life, the subjunctive concerns the question of what kind of fulfilment in life we are dealing with. Elsewhere I have drawn an analogy between Plessner's differentiation between the indicative and subjunctive linguistic usages and Austin's differentiation between the constative and performative speech acts (Krüger 2001). For complete speech acts one requires both component parts, both the indicative or constative as well as the subjunctive or performative speech acts. In this sense Plessner expounds the usage of personal pronouns, especially the usage of the "I" pronoun. It plays out in a spectrum, which is limited on one side by the "I" whose lived body enactment is unsubstitutable, unrepresentable, irreplaceable in the here and now. On the other side of the spectrum, however, is the anonymous structure of all persons who can call themselves "I" and in

precisely this are representable, substitutable and replaceable. If both extremes of the spectrum meet, the antinomy of the I-position arises (Plessner 1983c: 340 ff.), which requires a process of becoming in order to be capable of allocating its paradox and tautology within the conduct of life.

However, the categorical conjunctive in the personal conduct of life is not exhausted in that which can be linguistically explained. Language, according to Plessner, only has the function of specifying behaviour. The function of thematisation precedes it and the function of developing behavioural patterns succeeds it (see his book *Einheit der Sinne. Ästhesiologie des Geistes: Unity of the senses. Aesthesiology of the mind*, 1923). The thematisation ensues through an imaginary integration of sense modes from sight to hearing and touch, up to the proprioceptive sense organs. The double structure of language specifies a selection from the aesthesiological possibilities of thematisation. The techniques of the *habitus* schematise a selection from this specification. The categorical subjunctive has to prevail in all basic functions of the conduct of life. Its concrete form can also only be altered in all three basic functions through life-experience. A passion which has become dangerous can, if at all, be best deflected by another passion. Similarly an addiction turned dangerous can, if at all, be best deflected by another addiction. Here I quote a monstrous remark of Plessner on the lived-body phantasm of a person in their world: "As the human sees himself, so he will become" (Plessner 1983b: 116).

I summarize my four steps taken until now. In the first step passions and addictions struck us initially as deviations from personal roles common within the given socio-culture. In passion the attachment of a person to something or someone goes beyond normal expectations. In addiction the dependency of a person on something or someone leads to the underfulfilment of the role. In both phenomena, there is a comprehensive tendency within the persons' conduct of their life. In the second step we pursued a certain sympathy for passions and addictions. In both phenomena, the persons are individualised. They double up as the bearer of the role, who plays in roles, and the player of the role, who plays with these roles. The doubling up of the person is all too human. The everyday life of individualised persons requires a beyond-everyday, extraordinary fulfilment. In the third step we faced the conflict between the role criterion and the criterion of the individualisation. In this, we assumed that typically the standard measure of the role already includes a balancing out between everyday and extraordinary life. By contrast, in the case of conflict, the primacy of the extraordinary life is advocated by the personalised individual. Passion becoming absolute led to the inverse result of addiction becoming absolute. But the switch in both from the phenomena becoming conditional to the phenomena becoming unconditional for the person in their grip reveals a real possibility that the complete life conduct of the person concerned could fundamentally derail. Thus they can destroy themselves and others too. At the same time, in this failure the cause emerges which we looked into in the fourth step. Per-

sonal life ruptures as it is no longer capable of limiting itself. It ruptures in opposing directions. On the one hand the excentric attachment of the person to something or someone else overburdens their lived body and physical/socio-cultural body (*Körper*). On the other hand the physical dependency of the addiction overburdens the lived body and the person who is in the grip of this addiction. In this extraordinary breaking apart of the personal conduct of life, the break emerges between the excentring and re-centring of the position. Personal roles normally respond to the questionability of this break by allowing a lived body apparition which can be allocated to the everyday and the extraordinary.

Fifth step: outlook for our socio-cultural reality. I now come to the fifth and final step. In view of this sequence of steps which contains a certain dramatic enhancement, it becomes understandable why Plessner sees the playing *in* roles and *with* roles as "normal", something which is by no means obvious (Krüger 1999). His play theory contradicts authoritarian conformism which is found in other role theories, e.g. that of Arnold Gehlen. Thinking backwards from the failure at the end, it becomes clear what explanatory force lies in the play conception of personal roles. It already provides a response to the serious possibility of failure. Personal roles cannot survive without the doubling up of the person and the experience of their behavioural limits in successive generations. Through playing and non-played self limitation it can become possible for the person to fulfil their tasks in leading their lives. Through the experience of non-played behavioural boundaries the person tunes into themselves existen-

tially. But does this understanding of the personal roles – as playful engagement with roles, respect for non-played self-limitation, and a public negotiation – correspond to our socio-cultural reality?

I fear not, for the majority of people today (on four reasons for misanthropy in his time, see Plessner 1983b: 107-15). Today we are supposed to laugh incessantly with a tear pricking our eye only when the advertised product is not to our taste, and non-playacted laughing and crying is not permitted at all. Advertisement promises us a never-ending tapestry of passion, whilst in reality, through consuming the products, we become ever more dependent. The end result is a bunch of addicts. The society of persons and families has become one of jobholders and singles who get by, barely making ends meet and stop questioning their historical role in the generational succession. Personal life is biopolitically normalised (Foucault). The malfunction of the personality is treated therapeutically (Illich, Ehrenberg) as long as the health insurance pays. The lifeworld is colonised, by both the capitalist economy as well as by the welfare state bureaucracy (Habermas). We are supposed to dissolve into the probability of Big Data industry. On average the "enhancement" will thus increase. In these current keywords a new topic is apparent – that of the distinction between the private and public sides of personal roles. In this distinction there is another figure of the necessary doubling up of persons in social life. Plessner understood the public as the enablement of new politics for the civil society of all citizens. But the political in Plessner's phi-

losophical anthropology wasn't our theme here (Krüger 2009).

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