

Possibility, actuality and impossibility: the modal problem in psychoanalysis

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to show how psychoanalytic work may be formalized starting from the six modal categories and the laws that regulate their relations in the sphere of reality identified by Nicolai Hartmann in *Possibility and Actuality*. This might seem surprising given the paucity of literature addressing the relationship between Hartmann's thought and psychoanalysis. By contrast, several essays on psychoanalysis address the role of modality, especially in Lacan, who frequently used Aristotelian modal categories to describe both psychic life and psychoanalytic work in his seminars and writings. Yet, in our opinion, their revision proposed by Hartmann in 1937 better serves the goals pursued by Lacan than Aristotle's table and its laws.

1. A few preliminary remarks

The subtitle of this work – “The modal problem in psychoanalysis” – evokes a problem, while the modal categories cited in the title – “possibility, actuality and impossibility” – focus on the challenge involved in resolving it. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, modality is a problem because, despite being assigned a different meaning, the modal categories employed by Lacan (possible and impossible, contingent and necessary) retain the same sense they had for Aristotle, a sense that, according to Hartmann, is insufficient for grasping «real becoming» (Hartmann 2013, 13). For Hartmann, the Aristotelian interpretation, centred on the opposition between potentiality and actuality, leads to a misrepresentation of real being (Ronchi 2017, 71-75) and thus, since psychoanalysis is a real process, also to a misrepresentation of psychoanalytical work. “Problem”, therefore, refers to the need for a substitution, while “modal” clarifies the area in which such a substitution must take place.

Now, let's take a closer look at what the three categories cited in the title mean, starting with the first. “Possibility” (“Möglichkeit” in German) is the modal category which Hartmann reflects on most in his 1937 work. It is not really a psychoanalytic category – Lacan rarely employs or comments on it – but can become one without too much forcing because, even for the French psychoanalyst, replacing a merely binary sense of possibility with the notions of “divided” and “total” possibility (Hartmann 2013, 122-23; 135; 166-69) is, in a way, the premise for a rectification of the subjective position towards the Real. Indeed, the so-called “imaginary register” (the Hartmanian “cognitive sphere”) is the field in which disjunctive possibility is master and yet, the task of psychoanalysis is to assert its division or, as Lacan puts it, to promote “acceptance of castration”. “Actuality” (“Wirklichkeit” in German), on the other hand, is a psychoanalytic category already specified by Freud, who often used the terms “Wirklichkeit” and “Wirkung” to describe the continuous action of the unconscious in consciousness. Lacan chooses these terms to designate both the efficacy of the Symbolic, that is, the causal incidence of trauma in psychic life, as well as the Real considered in itself, that is to say regardless of its reference to a subject (according to Seminar IV, the Real is the entirety of what actually takes place, thus the entirety of what produces effects). In other words, even from a psychoanalytic point of view, the actual is the «highest mode» (Hartmann 2013, 186-88) and the articulation of its relationship with the possible is the way to grasp real processes – both psychic and analytical – without misrepresentation.

And what about impossibility? For Hartmann, the impossible translates the “cannot be so” and, as such, also the nonactual “not being so”. “Nonactuality”, in fact, is part of impossibility because something actual cannot – given intermodal laws – be impossible. Actuality always presupposes possibility and, from a psychoanalytic point of view, the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious is isomorphic to the one between the possible and the actual: what is conscious always presupposes the unconscious. Lacan, like Hartmann, thinks of their relationship as determined, in its contingency, by a sudden passage from the impossible to the necessary. The symptom is the product of this instant “meeting” and, therefore, also the immanent result of the combination of “what does

not cease to not write” (as Lacan defines the impossible) and “what does not cease to write” (as Lacan defines the necessary).

2. The exorcism of neurotic spectra

“To write”, for Lacan, means to signify enjoyment and, then, “what does not cease to not write” is an expression describing enjoyment unhitched from the signifier (the impossible), while “what does not cease to write” describes enjoyment engaged with the signifier (the necessary). The contingency that results from their intersection, and which Lacan intends by “what ceases not to write”, is the symptom encountered in its Real, that is to say in the equivalence, which characterizes it, between a signifier and a way of *jouissance*. That is why, in almost all of his writings and seminars, Lacan promotes contingency as the mode of the Real considered in itself and, since the symptom is what is maximally real, even as the privileged mode of the latter. Psychoanalysis should find it hidden under the subject’s repetition compulsion and, in doing so, has to assume the impossible as a very precious marker. According to Lacan, in fact, the impossible is the way the Real looks from the point of view of the subject or, what is the same thing, from the point of view of the Symbolic.

In daily life, the Real is seen as the impossible to symbolize and, above all, as the impossible to bear. Therefore, in its distinction from reality, we can say that the Real manifests itself in at least two ways: as impossible and as contingent (the symptom is what the subject complains about not withstanding). The understanding of this twofold, but unified, character of its givenness is what allows us to weld the Copernican character of the psychoanalytical revolution to the Copernican character of the Hartmanian modal revolution. Both, in the end, consist of an awakening and an exorcism. The first concerns the understanding of the reciprocal implication, albeit paradoxical, of possibility, necessity and actuality. The second, which is the premise of the first, conversely relates to the crossing and banning of a threefold anthropocentric ghost: 1. that the possible is broader than the real; 2. that the necessary is more actual than the real; 3. that the relationship between the possible and the necessary is of the order of the impossible, i.e. non-existent. Each of these convictions expresses the structural partiality of the human point of view and the inadequacy of human consciousness when pitted against the Real (Hartmann 2013, 181; 202-03).

Notably, for both Lacan and Hartmann the hiatus separating the *ratio cognoscendi* and *ratio essendi* is unrecoverable: the Borromean knot between the registers, Lacan explains, needs something – i.e. the symptom – to give it consistency, otherwise it does not hold (Lacan 2016); the sphere of reality, warns Hartmann, is intrinsically metastable because the implication between possibility and the necessity that characterizes it is not synonymous with their identity but, only with «the identity of their conditions» (Hartmann 2013, 174). And neurosis, either as a rejection of castration or as a rejection of the «hardness of the real» (Hartmann 2013, 139-141), is nothing more than the consequence of the irreparability of this fracture: the effect of the tension, or freedom, which holds between the strata of the sphere of reality. In other words, neurosis is a symptom of the imbalance that is immanent in the determinedness of the real: when it is hysterical or aesthetic, that imbalance marks the advantage of the possible over the real; when it is obsessive or ethical, it instead enshrines the autonomy of the necessary. In any case, however, it presents itself as a disease of the possible: when it exceeds necessity, we are in a state of hysteria (the aesthetic field of Hartmann – Hartmann 2013, 277-282); when it falls short, we are in a state of obsessive neurosis (the ethical ambit of Hartmann – Hartmann 2013, 265-277).

3. The Lacanian imperative

As you may deduce from these brief considerations, the field of this investigation is rather restricted. The Lacan we are interested in is the Lacan that faces the Aristotelian modal categories (Seminars XI, XIX and XX); while the Hartmann we are in dialogue with, is the Hartmann of the second part of *Possibility and Actuality*: the cornerstone of the modal revolution. However, before going further, a number of premises are necessary in order to justify the autonomy of our orientation. They consist in three equivalences: 1. that the field of subjectivity is equivalent to the Hartmanian

sphere of reality, 2. that a cure is equivalent to a journey to its borders and 3. that the psychoanalytical space is equivalent to the scope of the incomplete reality to which the sixth section of the second part of *Possibility and Actuality* is dedicated. This means that the psychoanalytical space is, at the same time, both ethical and aesthetic because, for Hartmann, ethics and aesthetics are the two liminal areas – this means “incomplete” – similar to those formed by the ontically prime serial elements and the entirety of the sphere of reality.

More specifically, a psychoanalysis aims to complete the sphere of reality in order to restore its equilibrium (the condition for the possibility of a cure is a so-called “rupture of homeostasis”, that is the sudden unbearable of something). And Lacan describes this completion in two ways, both revealing what a cure entails. For the “mystic” Lacan of Seminar I, what takes place during psychoanalysis relates to a certain “becoming essential” because, as the couplet of Angelus Silesius says, «when the world fails at last, the contingent falls away, but Essence, that stands fast» (Silesius 1932, 166; Lacan 1988, 232); while, for the latter Lacan, in a psychoanalysis it is rather a question of «raising the impotence, that gives reason to the fantasy, to the level of impossibility, that embodies the Real, i.e. to complete the lottery of the signs which human fate gambles with» (Lacan 2001, 551). In spite of the diversity of these formulations, both the essential becoming and the elevation of impotence to impossibility are images that Lacan uses to describe the process of making an act effective and the production of something new (Hartmann 2013, 250; 272). Combined together, they show: 1. that psychoanalysis entails a real becoming in the Hartmanian sense (the new, or essential, emerges through the production of the missing conditions); 2. that its end consists in the experience of the “hardness of the real” (the completeness of the conditions is synonymous with determined possibility and fulfilled necessity); 3. that treatment of contingency is the keystone to the restoration of the balance between necessity and possibility.

4. Meet the missed encounter

Following Hartmann, we can look at Lacanian psychoanalysis as a journey to the borders of reality, borders at which reigns the contingency in Hartmann’s fifth meaning: contingency as the Leibnizian *convenientia*, i.e. the absolute lack of necessity of the ground (Hartmann 2013, 44-45; 99-100). And it resolves itself through this journey because, according to the Lacan of Seminar XXIII, the stigma of the Real that psychoanalysis must aim to meet is «to attach itself to nothing» (Lacan 2016, 120; Žižek 2006a, 7). The *meaning-less* character of the Real is the expression of a radical contingency and, yet, the psychoanalytical device is such that it still succeeds in hooking the Real. But how, since the meeting with the Real is, because of its nonsense, a «missed encounter» (Lacan 1998, 51)? And what is the relationship between an encounter with contingency and the acceptance of what Hartmann calls “the hardness of the real”?

Lacan says that the aim of psychoanalysis is to encourage an effective act, that is to lead the subject to take a decision on his own Real. In other terms, psychoanalysis works for the exhaustion of the possible disjunctive or, still using the language of Hartmann, for the reduction of the «circle of the possible» (Hartmann 2013, 245-48). The result is that decommissioning of the autonomy of the partial possibility that Lacan calls «pure desire» (Lacan 1998, 276) and connects to the sacrifice of the desire’s cause (Žižek 1997; Žižek 2006b; Zupančič 2000, 238-245). In fact, travelling to the boundaries of *reality* means travelling until the *real* cause of repetition compulsion is located, a cause which, when found, must be ceded. Discovered behind the subject’s repetition compulsion, the enigmatic cause of the desire must be sacrificed, says Lacan, in order not to sacrifice the desire itself.

More specifically, the ethical cause must fall to the ground like a severed head (Campo 2019) to be found in the same way as any-object-whatever (Zupančič 2000, 243-244): such is the object of the drive, an aesthetic object but, as we shall see, not in the Hartmanian sense. Indeed, when it is understood correctly, the Lacanian imperative asks us to transform *all the need to be into being*, that is, as Hartmann says, to make the nonactual actual by making the impossible really possible and really necessary (Hartmann 2013, 272-73). As an ethical experience, a psychoanalysis must give real possibility the form of an anticipated necessity because, as long as duty is free from the narrowness

of the possible real (Hartmann 2013, 268-270), it commands what, in reality, is not possible: when duty is free only from an ideal point of view, it projects itself beyond the possible real and thus, unfortunately, even beyond the actual. Duty opposes the nonactual to the real actual as merely necessary and yet, observes Hartmann, also the will of a “not really possible” «is really possible», i.e. actual (Hartmann 2013, 269).

For Hartmann, will is never found outside of real being: like freedom, will is rather a mode for its determination. So, when it is allied in a non-masochistic way to the law, it corresponds precisely to the beginning of making the merely necessary actual, that is to say 1. to make the impossible possible (duty is an «actual not possible» – Hartmann 2013, 267) by the production of the “missing” conditions (duty is the duty to collect the conditions for its possibility) and the adaptation of the requirements of duty to the weight of the real (Hartmann 2013, 273); 2. To make the real nonactual, i.e. the need to be as a mode of the real which is intermediate between actual and nonactual, actual. Psychoanalysis must reconnect duty to real possibility and real necessity in order to stem «the eternally unrealizable» (Hartmann 2013, 277) of neurosis. And then, its ontological sense is the same as that conveyed by the Hartmanian Real Law of Possibility: «to cast out the ghosts» (Hartmann 2013, 181) through the restoration of the Real Law of Actuality (Hartmann 2013, 201-208).

However, just as the modal analysis is a complex analysis that rejects simple dualisms for new and stratified oppositions, even the division of psychoanalytical work cannot be satisfied by being understood as having only two simple opposing moments in time. As in the Lacanian essay on *Logical Time* (Lacan 2006, 161-175), here too we find that rather the intersubjective time of psychoanalysis is divided into the “instant of the glance”, “time for understanding” and “moment of concluding” and that, the conditions for the possibility of what comes at the end are analytically included at the beginning although they require a certain temporal interval to be carried out (Whitehead 1978, 28-29; 45-47; 69; 83-88; 151; 222; Campo 2018, 70; 322). Nonetheless, it is only following Hartmann that we can go further and identify six steps along the psychoanalytical path, steps with which we will conclude our exposition.

5. A tree has fallen, an act is accomplished

In summary, according to Lacan, psychoanalysis must construct a constraint, that is, produce all the conditions for the act to fall like a «over-ripe fruit» (Bergson 1910, 176) from the neurotic tree. This means, as Lacan explains, to complete the lottery of the signs with which human fate gambles by elevating impotence, which gives reason to fantasy, to the impossibility that, instead, embodies the Real. But when is the lottery complete and an act fulfilled? In other words, when does something new happen? Answering these questions in *Possibility and Actuality*, Hartmann provides the example of the falling tree. The tree, says Hartmann, falls when the totality of the conditions indispensable to the event “fall” are complete. As long as the last one («the blast of wind» – Hartmann 2013, 249) remains unfulfilled, the fall is impossible: «it cannot as long as it does not “have to”, and it “has to” as soon as it “can”» (Hartmann 2013, 174).

According to Hartmann, something only happens when its real conditions are fully present and, therefore, only a singular event happens, nothing more. Yet, even for Lacan, the encounter with the Real is a unique situation. This is proved by the fact that, during the preliminary work of significant topology with which the wandering of impotence is interrupted and the fantasy is discovered (Badiou 2013, 199; 201), there must follow, although not chronologically, all the «art of the singularity» (Badiou 2013, 202) of which the psychoanalyst is capable of. Lacan, indeed, neither believes that there is a formal theory for the impossibility of logical enunciation which is a priori valid for all cases, nor does he presume that there is one which is entirely valid even within a single case. That the act is «the edge effect of a correct symbolization» (Lacan 2001, 423) means, rather, that it is the edge effect of a failed symbolization.

To use other terms, it is only when the interpretation stumbles and the formalization closes in a point of *impasse*, that the act happens, thus proving that no lottery is ever really complete or, rather, that each lottery is so only when it is perforated, partial. According to Lacan, in fact, the

psychoanalyst's symbolization (i.e. interpretation) is complete when it finds its completeness in the patient's act. So, it is complete not despite, but thanks to something that symbolization is not. *Cum-tingentia*, here, means that the conditions of the fall, fall along with the thing that falls because, creating the correctness of the formalization that did not exist before, the act creates the formalization too and, at the same time, makes it pass. Building a network of constraints (the Hartmanian totality of the conditions corresponding to only one real possible – Hartmann 2013, 19; 246-47; 253-55), the symbolization completes the lottery of the signs of the destiny of the subject and puts his back against the wall of contingency. And for Lacan, this exhaustion of the bilateral possible corresponds, *simul*, to the act as a good outcome.

Indeed, if the first time of the cure is the time of the comprehension of the contingent in its only phenomenological modes (Hartmann 2013, 43-4), the second is the time of its elevation to a logical impossibility, a time intrinsically doubled because characterized, within it, by the simultaneity of two operations: the encounter with the contingent at the borders of reality, which is not the Real, and the fall of the contingent as only accidental in comparison to an ideal essence (Hartmann 2013, 43-4). Symbolization and act, therefore, stand together and fall together, because when the *con-tingentia* is *con-venientia*, at the impossibility of the formal elevation corresponds, *simul*, the production of the act. In other words, there is not first correctness and then the act: if the symbolization is correct, the act proves its correctness immediately. The act, better to say, is the same as the correctness of the formalization: nothing more than its failure.

6. The psychoanalytical manoeuvre

To rectify the relationship of the subject to the Real by dropping the symptomatic ways with which he refuses it instead adopting ways to welcome it, encompasses the entire sense of the psychoanalytical operation. But the psychoanalytical operation, like every artistic production, needs to make room for this manoeuvre to be fulfilled. To put it in another way, if the boundaries of reality were not the boundaries of the *alea*, the psychoanalytical manoeuvre would not succeed and no one could finally say “I am what I am”. Indeed, “being able to relive an experience”, as Freud notes in his *Studies on Hysteria* (Freud 2004) or “to meet the Real”, as Lacan hopes to do, are operations that would not be possible if the limits of reality were not the limits of the chance, because the process of «reordering past contingencies by conferring on them the sense of necessities to come» (Lacan 2006, 48) takes place, only within a «scant freedom» (*ibidem*).

To put it differently, nothing can break away, at some moment, if it is not, in a way, already broken away from all eternity. Freedom, for Lacan, even if it's limited, interlayered says Hartmann (Hartmann 2013, 222-24), is however the degree of power we are owed and that the psychoanalyst must embody by presenting what is on the borders – of the setting and the subject (for Hartmann, contingency is the external boundary of the determination – Hartmann 2013, 225-26) – inside the borders – of the setting and the subject (for Hartmann, freedom is the internal boundary of the determination – Hartmann 2013, 225-26). Only when the psychoanalyst succeeds, on the other hand, does he allow patients to rectify their position toward their own Real. The encounter with nonsense produces belatedly (“nachträglich”, “après-coup”), by rebound or kickback, significance and, since what comes next is not successive (both for Lacan and Hartmann the transition from the impossible to the necessary is sudden), the encounter with nonsense is, in reality, the direct cause of the signification. But how does this meeting happen? And what are the modes that build it?

In *Possibility and Actuality*, Hartmann shows us that necessity becomes contingency when it crosses the boundaries of the sphere of reality, while contingency, outside and along the borders of the sphere, takes the place of necessity in the sense that it confiscates the sufficiency of all its reasons (Hartmann 2013, 96-7). Yet, it's only by pushing up to this “major” contingency that lies behind the necessity of which the subject complains before and during a psychoanalysis, that one can discover how, beside the contingency there is an actuality that frees as the pure and simple, but not indifferent, «to be so and not otherwise» (Hartmann 2013, 31; 63-5). For this reason, it's fair to say that the psychoanalytical manoeuvre exploits the restoration of indifferences and the suspension of the

intermodal laws that occur at the borders of the sphere of reality (Hartmann 2013, 228-29). Thanks to this, it is able to make the contingent actual after having made the necessary contingent. And making the contingent actual after meeting the *tyche* in the *automaton* (Lacan 1998, 53-64) means to decide, preventing the actuality from being indifferent to contingency and necessity.

To put it differently, at the end of a psychoanalysis it's always a question of returning to the sphere of reality after having crossed its borders, although this result, as we shall see, consists in some respects in a neutralization of these very borders. Being able to relive an experience, in fact, means to say "yes" by consenting to the hardness of the real once this has been reconstituted. But a similar "yes", at least for Lacan, is possible only after having impacted, in the absence of reason, the relentlessness of the Real. Attempting to express the same point in Hartmann's words, we can say that consciousness accepts the subordinate character of partial possibility only when it recognizes that its autonomy ends with non-existence: the possible apart from the necessary is impossible and, if the psychoanalyst is "good enough", he succeeds because earlier sessions have made the future patient sensitive to this consequence.

In short, impotence cannot be eliminated: it can only be located in the hope of nailing it, with the help of the will, in the first place, and freedom in the second, to something that impotence is not, i.e. something that, when it is, cannot be (is the actual) and that, as long as it's not, can't be (it is the nonactual).

7. A Hartmanian formalization of psychoanalytical work

To sum up, we find that psychoanalysis is a matter of

1. Making the nonactual impossible;
2. Making the impossible possible;
3. Making the possible necessary;
4. Making the necessary contingent
5. Making the contingent actual;
6. Making the actual nonactual.

The first three moments of this formalization correspond to the Hartmanian "making actual the nonactual" by "making possible the impossible" (Hartmann 2013, 272), while the second three recall the Lacanian rectification of the subjective position towards the Real. More specifically, the first moment is that in which the process of the formal elevation of impotence is initiated and one passes from the individual "I cannot" of the symptom, to the universal "it is not possible" of the castration (in the language of Hartmann: from the "little is impossible" of the ideal sphere to the "much is impossible" of the real sphere); the second one, instead, is the moment in which the will, which Lacan calls "desire", is put at the service of duty, which Lacan calls "law", and works to concretize it as a real possibility (in the language of Hartmann: the little possible resulting from the Law of Total Possibility); the third, finally, is the one in which duty ceases to be current ("aktuell" in German) in order to become actual ("wirklich" in German) in the form of the anticipated necessity of a possibility, i.e. as the only real possible. From the psychoanalytic point of view, they correspond respectively to the experience of the fact that not everything is possible (only what is actual or will be actual is possible), that something is possible precisely for this reason (the impossibility of non-A, explains Hartmann, is the possibility of A) and, thirdly, that it is possible necessarily (the impossibility of the nonactuality of A is the necessity of the actuality of A and vice versa).

Therefore, at the end of these three operations, the sphere of reality can be said to be reconstituted: the missing conditions have been collected and the equilibrium of the sphere is restored. From a psychoanalytic point of view, the "subject of the complaint" is implied in the "subject of the enjoyment" and, however, posed such that the perfect overlap of possibility and necessity in the real actuality coincides with their disappearing in it – the Real Law of Actuality, says Hartmann, «is

simultaneously its own veiling for consciousness» (Hartmann 2013, 205-07) –, the actuality, even if reconstituted, and indeed precisely for this reason, begins to get confused with contingency...

8. Contingency or actuality?

According to Hartmann, from a phenomenological point of view, actuality and contingency are given in the same way and, both the experience of the real actual and the experience of the absolutely contingent crush knowledge by spreading across the consciousness of the subject. In fact, at the end of the ethical process of making actual the nonactual, the sphere of reality wobbles and the balance just obtained seems to rest on nothing: necessity fades into contingency and the latter begins to fluctuate between actuality and nonactuality allowing for disjunctive possibility to regain ground. «Wherever chance holds sway, the positively possible is not necessary, and thus its nonbeing is also possible» (Hartmann 2013, 154); on the other hand, «wherever possibility is indifferent toward actuality and nonactuality, no necessity holds sway; and then, whatever is actual is so by chance» (Hartmann 2013, 144). Consequently, in order to make an act effective, and not only contingent, some other operations are necessary. Their codification is faithful to the conception of the end-analysis that the so-called “later Lacan” elaborates, and yet, in our opinion their formulation is consistent with some of the motivations that inspired the Hartmanian revolution as well.

To recap, we said that at the third point (making the possible necessary) the sphere of reality is reconstituted and that the demarcation of its borders nevertheless begins to oscillate between contingency and necessity. One can hypothesize, in fact, that only the indifference of possibility to actuality and nonactuality and of the latter towards possibility and impossibility have been annulled. The indifference of actuality towards contingency and necessity, on the other hand, can still be active. Hartmann, indeed, judges it «special» (Hartmann 2013, 153) insofar as it relates, at the same time, to what is outside and inside the sphere of reality. The actual, in other terms, can be such without being necessary and necessity, for its part, carries in itself the principle of its own self-annulment by implying contingency as its external limit (Hartmann 2013, 97-9). During a cure, nonetheless, it is a question of pushing precisely in the direction of this contingency. And the fourth and the sixth moment of our formalization (making the necessary contingent and making the actual non actual) are the logical moments in which this radicalization takes place. They correspond to the two concomitant ways in which, according to Lacan, the Real is given: the impossibility of formalization (the “cutting of the head” – Dean 1986) and the contingency of the act (its fall to the ground).

Yet, between these two, we have assumed that there is another one: the moment of making actual the contingent. So, one or the other: either the *con-tingentia* between the correctness of the formalization and the act as its instant by-product, is not a real *con-venientia*, or this fifth moment, that average between the fourth and the sixth and corresponds to the Lacanian “moment of concluding”, is not different from one of the two.

9. Making actual the contingent

Proceeding with the explanation of our formalization, we find that the fourth moment – making the necessary contingent – is, properly, the moment in which one sacrifices the cause of the desire (this means to lose one’s head). The resolution of the latter through drive (Lacan 1998, 269) involves, in the language of Hartmann, the discovery of the impossibility of being anything else from what one has become and, together with this, an acceptance of the contingent character inherent in the ground of this becoming. However, in our opinion, the suspension of the intermodal laws combined with the return of indifferences is the condition for the possibility of this operation but not of the following. The fifth moment (making the contingent actual), in fact, is the moment of the decision, a decision which, on the one hand, is made possible by the relativity of contingency to the fundamental modes and by its indifference towards possibility and necessity, that is to say, by the fact that, for an instant that is strictly speaking timeless (the Lacanian “scant freedom”), it is possible to seize the absolute contingency of the actuality as ground (Hartmann 2013, 97-9; 206). On the other hand, however, the resolution of the desire of which this fifth moment is the expression implies that the actuality cannot,

so to speak, remain indifferent to contingency and necessity for a long time: the actuality must decide (Hartmann 2013, 235-246) and, thus, show its superiority over the irregular mode of contingency.

Even if Hartmann is not sufficiently clear on this point, according to the main sense of his modal revolution, the process of making the contingent actual must coincide, in our opinion, with a process in which contingency's resources are exploited and exhausted by a free act that breaks the spell of the apparent fairness of the actual. And, if the annulment of the first indifference which Lacan calls «weaning of the sense» (Lacan 2001, 34) is completed in the sixth moment instead of in the fifth, it is because the act is fulfilled, and the cause is found on the ground as an any-object-whatever, only when the actual takes action within the sphere neutralizing its boundaries with a kickback. The act is, indeed, this same side of the actual, a side which, Hartmann maintains, has its necessary and sufficient condition in the Law of Division of Real Possibility (Hartmann 2013, 135). In other words, the determination of the real infiltrates the possible and, thence, spreads to the whole construction of the real modes. When possibility is not indifferent, but appears as a positive divided possibility, the actual cannot be contingent: then the actual is necessary, being the actuality of the real something that is not conditioned in itself but – as Hartmann continues to explain – only by its relationship to the relational positive modes (real possibility and real necessity root the actual in its antecedent and its consequent – Hartmann 2013, 203; 208).

Now, it is precisely this link that accounts for the operation that takes place in the last two moments of psychoanalytical work: “making actual the contingent” and “making nonactual the actual”. And, in order to understand the nature of this operation, also grasping how actuality distances itself from contingency as from its shadow, we have to remember, above all, that the divided possibility is precisely what the implication of the subject in the symptom, that is making the nonactual actual by making possible the impossible, has produced. According to Hartmann, in fact, the annulment of the special indifference of actuality to contingency and necessity could be deduced directly from the Real Law of Necessity, if it were not that, in this way, it would not become sufficiently clear what, in this resolution, happens to contingency (Hartmann 2013, 155). Then, in order to understand how contingency is eliminated, we must take the cross-street of the relationship between possibility and contingency, recognizing that the latter is eliminated through its own indifference to possibility and necessity together with any remaining indifferences. But how? And what does this concurrent cancellation mean?

10. Natura non facit saltus

To answer these questions, we can start by noting that, what is witnessed in the last phases of a psychoanalysis, is the attraction of the only real possible towards actuality encountered in its absoluteness. The «decidedness of the real» (Hartmann 2013, 157) introduces itself into the possible by transmitting from there to the whole construction of the real modes, but this, in reality, means that real possibility is a radial possibility, different, however, from the «unfettered» possibility (Hartmann 2013, 280) characteristic of the aesthetic object and connected to the anthropomorphic representation of the «load of the future» (Hartmann 2013, 240; 257-59). In fact, applying the division of logical time proposed by Lacan to our formalization, we now obtain that the third moment of our formalization – making the possible necessary – corresponds to the first moment of the logical time that Lacan calls the “instant of the glance” and qualifies as the moment of an anticipated certainty; the fourth – making the necessary contingent -, instead, corresponds to the Lacanian “time for understanding”, that is for understanding that the anticipated certainty is not based on knowledge but rather on nonsense; the fifth – making the contingent actual - is finally the “moment of concluding” that Lacan presents as analytically contained in the first – our third (making the possible necessary) – even if its effects unfold only afterwards – in our sixth (making the actual non actual).

In a similar way, in contrast to an anthropomorphic conception of time and becoming (Hartmann 2013, 239-242), Hartmann affirms how, at any procedural stage, different things are not possible in the following stages, because only one thing is ever possible: «namely the one that afterwards becomes actual» (Hartmann 2013, 255). Indeed, according to Hartmann, that a possibility becomes

actual later means that it becomes actual after being for a few moments “pending”, that is, in Lacanian language, present at the same time in the actuality of the “instant of the glance” and in the actuality of the “moment of concluding”. But how to think of such a suspension if «the *nexus realis* is generally pervasive» (Hartmann 2013, 222)? And what does that “afterwards” mean if the indeterminacy is continually resolved (Hartmann 2013, 234-35; 252-53)?

Hartmann points out that suspension, synonymous with indeterminacy, concerns only the missing element, which is possible, in the sense of not yet actual, insofar as possible is only what is not eliminated by the conditions that have become actual up to that time. So, Hartmann tells us, the missing element *is possible to the extent that it is actual*. In fact, what is not eliminated by the conditions that have become actual up to that time is actual until that time, and the Real Law of Determination (Hartmann 2013, 213-18) establishes that it will be actual even at the next moment. The procedural character of the real implies that the conditions under which something becomes possible are assembled only progressively one after the other (Hartmann 2013, 243-45), but the passage from one stage to the other is, according to Hartmann, always and only a *transition from actual to actual* (Hartmann 2013, 29; 246).

If this is true, however, it means that, just as the reduction of the «multiplicity of possibilities» (Hartmann 2013, 248) is a «matter of interpretation and not of real process» (Hartmann 2013, 252), so is the annulment of the first indifference. In other words, in the same way that it is not possible, given the narrowness of the actual, to conceive of its enlargement and its successive shrinking to use and consume the possible, one must at least admit, in an attempt to resolve the aporia raised from the positioning of contingency in the intermodal table (Hartmann 2013, 95; 99; 225-29), that it is not even possible that intermodal laws are valid up to a certain point but then stop relying on one another to use and consume the contingent. In fact, at what point in time would intermodal laws cancel out? And how should we consider this cancellation? As a gradual transition or a clear alternative? And, in this second case, how would the intermodal laws return to being after bathing in nothing? Besides, what would expel contingency from the edge of the sphere? And what, on the contrary, would repel it and cause it to convert into necessity? What is it, in short, that decides the side of actuality? And what is the cause of the decision of the absolute positive mode?

11. The radial possibility

Our thesis is that the invalidation of the first indifference within the boundaries and its restoration consequent to passing beyond them, cannot be, under penalty of the admission of the pervasiveness of the contingency even within the real, a gradual or continuous process. To put it in another way, contingency and necessity are not two degrees or species of the common kind of actuality. The sense of the first indifference, and of its cancellation, is not guarded by analogy and, on the other hand, its special character confirms it: contingency and necessity do not have the same relationship to actuality, as actuality and nonactuality have with possibility or as impossibility and possibility have with nonactuality. By establishing an asymmetry, «the ontological principle of contingency» (Hartmann 2013, 96-7) prevents one from thinking about contingency and necessity as two equivalent alternatives between which actuality makes, at some privileged point of time, a choice. Nor is it, strictly speaking, a choice. The first indifference, unlike the others, stays at the turn of the line separating the absolute modes from the relational ones only in one of the two cases of the alternatives: that of necessity. In the other, says Hartmann, the first indifference only comes up to the line because contingency is not taken into account by the Law of Division of Real possibility. Then, the first indifference is concretely positioned at the turn of the line separating the real from the unreal (Hartmann 2013, 106-08). But how should we consider this line? Is it an ontological or epistemic boundary? Is it a real or an ideal line?

One thing is for sure: the encounter with contingency that lies behind necessity and with the pure actuality to which this contingency is relative (Hartmann 2013, 91-2; 229) is completed in an act that decides the actuality or nonactuality of the boundaries of the sphere. But in what sense? And why is this decision aesthetic? Our thesis is that partial possibility, when it is not autonomous but subordinate

(Hartmann 2013, 231-242), behaves like a real widespread possible, i.e. radial but not, as is the aesthetic, «multi-radial» (Hartmann 2013, 281). At the borders of the sphere of reality, it is true, the proper sense of the possible real vanishes, and yet the psychoanalytical bet, but perhaps also the Hartmanian one, is that once it has been produced it continues to exert its action. In other words, the conditions fulfilled are actual and continue to be actual because the process is the continuous possibilization (*Realmöglichkeit*) of a single possibility (*Möglichkeit*) which is also its real actuality (*Realwirkung*). And the actuality of castration (“die Wirklichkeit der Kastration”, writes Freud commenting on the Wolfman case – Freud 2003) is precisely the actuality of this only possible real. The indifference of the possibility, in fact, is not annulled by returning to the indeterminacy of the disjunctive possibility (Hartmann 2013, 52-3), but by elevating it to the full determinedness of a possibility that is only positive or negative. And this full determination, once achieved, never completely disappears (what has once become actual can never be made nonactual).

So, if contingency, as Hartmann recalls, makes a decision only if there is no necessity, nothing forbids us from hypothesizing that, beside the real possibility, not even the real necessity ever fades completely and that, as a consequence of this, contingency never decides, not even on the borders. Real possibility and, with it, real necessity, attracts actuality like a magnet back within the sphere and, as anticipated, this intake entails a neutralization of the borders. Nevertheless, as the boundaries define the realm of contingency, entry into the real can only take place by a neutralization of the latter...

12. The exhaustion of contingency

Making the actual nonactual after having made the contingent actual means making the contingent nonactual after it has been exhausted. And this exhaustion or, rather, determination of contingency, is obtained by a free act as the residue of the recomposed balance of the sphere: *a rejection of the rejection of contingency*. Between the fifth and the sixth moment, in other words, the first indifference is cancelled but, to assume that it is cancelled driven by necessity, it's to assume that it is not cancelled by chance. To make the contingent actual then, means to make the alternative between contingency and necessity nonactual, and the annulment of this indifference is, immediately, the annulment of that indifference of the contingent towards possibility and necessity. The latter, while failing together with the first, does not depend on making the contingent actual but, as the sixth moment indicates, from making the actual nonactual, or, more precisely, from *making the alternative between actuality and nonactuality nonactual*.

The aesthetic object in the Lacanian sense, namely the lost cause found on the ground as the any-object-whatever of the drive, is then the waste of the twofold and unified cancellation of these indifferences and, as such, it does not coincide with the aesthetic object of the unfettered pure possibility that is hostile to the real and its heavy necessity (Hartmann 2013, 278-281). Here, the dismissal from the actual has a return in the actual because, unlike aesthetic creation and contemplation, according to Hartmann, *the real actual is the aim and not the means*. To the absence of the need to make the merely possible really possible typical of the aesthetic sphere, here is opposed the really possible as the engine for making the contingent really actual by making the alternative between actuality and nonactuality really nonactual. *Contingency*, in short, *is the means, not the aim*: the opportunity, not yet to make the unreal appear in the real, but rather to root the actual in the possible-necessary.

If, in fact, possibility and necessity connect the actual to its antecedents and its consequences (Hartmann 2013, 203; 208), what connects the actual to real possibility and real necessity? With Hartmann we should honestly answer: contingency. And yet, psychoanalysis suggests another hypothesis: couldn't what connects the actual to the real possible and the real necessary be instead precisely that freedom which, according to Hartmann, is given only «from stratum to stratum» (Hartmann 2013, 224) and that is always the freedom of the superior from the lower (Hartmann 2013, 223) even when the “first” is the actual and the “second” the necessary? Between the actual and the

necessary, in other words, there is no contingency but freedom: a form of determination which, while working to leave nothing to chance, subordinates partial possibility to a simultaneous complex of conditions (Hartmann 2013, 254-55) by preventing the actuality, both now and later, from choosing which side it is on.

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