

# 'Extimacy' (*Extimité*): From Structural Theory of Language to Affective Theory of 'Ex-Centric' Subject\*

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## Abstract

The following exposure of the RSI topological complexities, orienting all the possible (inter)subjectivity, plays on the following two pairs of polarities: external/internal and linguistic/affective (it may be added: structure and topology). Lacan introduces the third possibility of human experience: "extimacy", linking what is both excluded and intimate. The concept is the lacking link leading from structuralist approaches to language to thoroughly affective subjectivity of any speaking being. Spinoza's geometrical, highly dynamic system and his "differential calculus of affects" may account for the part that the vicissitudes of drive play in human existence as rooted in the deeply "extimate" sources.

## Introduction

The main focus of this paper is to render how different layers of language in Lacan's theory account for differing topologies of interiority/exteriority relations of affect. The RSI dimensions, in terms of which the concept of 'extimacy' (French *extimité*) will be exposed, are regarded here as different levels of the topological determinants of the human subjectivity, which always exists as intersubjectivity. Otherwise speaking, they are the three ways in which the outside/inside relationships manifest themselves linguistically and affectively. The word 'levels' doesn't denote the higher or lower 'place' this manifestation would allegedly occupy in the (inter)subjective experience of the human being. Rather, it renders the degree of externality in its relations with regard to the intimate of the subject in each of these spheres. It has to do with the quantitative difference which distinguishes each of them (however, there is an

assumption here: some growth in quantity may change the quality, and even the essence, of the thing in question). The three distinct, although interrelated (in fact, even interpenetrated by one another), structures account for the fact that in every of

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the three cases both the 'outside' and its contradiction are defined in their own (and perhaps even incomparable with the two remaining definitions) ways. However, not without an eye to a bit of intelligibility, the goal of these short remarks would be aiming at a sort of comparison of the three incomparabilities. Of course, it will be accompanied by a reluctant admittance of the unavoidable - perhaps even reductionist in some measure - privilege accorded to the chosen aspects of the triplex phenomenon of 'extimacy'<sup>2</sup>.

### ***The Methodological Difficulties***

The following exposition of the RSI topological complexities, as orienting all the possible human (inter)subjectivity, is based mainly on the following, two fundamental pairs of polarities: external/internal and linguistic/affective. The Lacanian great trinity (RSI) appears in any particular case as resulting from multiform vicissitudes of drive. As such, it constitutes the three basic, indispensable factors, generating the structured reality<sup>3</sup>. In this case affects might be understood as different manifestations of the phenomenological derivative of drive, that is, desire. The structural<sup>4</sup> generates<sup>5</sup> these or those affects, experienced by people on the daily basis. The totality of all the affects is interrelated with the set of particular, singular effects<sup>6</sup>. Here we have the necessary equivalency to the indispensable other side of the (post)structure as determining the linguistic (inter)subjectivity, so to say, its twin-like reverse. Obviously, this approach is inseparably joined with a serious methodological difficulty. There is one problem underlying such topological, obverse-reverse, two-

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<sup>2</sup> However, after having written these last three sentences I realize the total impossibility of rendering the radicalism of this idea. How to put the way the Lacanian approach functions - as it is connoted by the term 'extimacy' - into words of our common language? Perhaps the solution would be something like that which Lévinas applied in one of his latest books *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, where he attempted to show the ineffable something of his intuitions concerning the 'transcendence-in-immanence'. Namely, he just tried, literally, to 'break the links', 'resolve', in any way remaining at his disposal: somehow 'undo' the linguistic 'ties' or 'knots', disorganizing the structural order of the human thought, by deforming it to the ultimate limits of intelligibility. Or rather: he left us with only a minimal residuum of this structure, nearly balancing (in fact: very skillfully 'dancing') on the edge separating sense from nonsense, in order to manifest this 'plus-de-sense' that is conditioned by the necessary element of the nonsensical, hidden behind the common possibilities of speaking.

<sup>3</sup> Here 'reality' means that which is revealed and displayed in the framework of the analytic experience.

<sup>4</sup> Although Lacan tends to consider 'structure' and 'topology' as equivalent, however, his understanding of 'structure' is rather transgressing its traditional definition, and that's why I tried to take into regard his ambivalence by writing the most frequently '(post)structural', to remind the reader the depart from the 'classical' structuralism

<sup>5</sup> And is constantly being generated by them.

<sup>6</sup> The words 'affect' and 'effect' have much in common, not only understood in the categories of 'family resemblance', or as two similar constellations of letters and their pronouncement but also the nodal point in the signifying net.

sided<sup>7</sup> characteristics of any subjectivity as such. It consists in the impossibility of seeing the polarized aspects all at once. If you are focused on one pole within each pair of different - and differing from each other - polarities<sup>8</sup>, it's very difficult not to be partial, or at least superficial, trying to render justice to both one and the other of the two. This usually seems to result in the other (more or less involuntarily meant to be less important) remaining at least partly concealed. In the worst case, it may disappear out of sight in its totality. However, even in case of such unfortunate (for any rigorous analysis) circumstances, it's helpful to think that the underestimated 'side' is always, if only silently, included in the contradictory dyad. Actually, each of the terms is logically<sup>9</sup> present in its absence as far as absent in its presence, assuming that presence and absence mutually condition each other. They seem to function as, alternately, the indispensable foreground and background, and - as is known - both of them are necessary for any sense to be generated. As such, they are indispensable for any meaningful opposing, negating (and also affirming, etc.), contradicting operations. In this way, they can enable all the necessary differentiations to provide us with the bases that are the fundamental condition of any possible communication. This neglect or disregard of the 'eclipsed' polarity has its source in the dualism being the leading rule of the human cognition and representing what is deemed to be the 'true' reality. As Lacan jokingly notices, we must learn to count, as only this can enable us to follow his investigations, proceed in apprehending what he wants to say and - possibly - embracing our own destiny<sup>10</sup>.

### **The Main Problem**

How to pass from the (post)structural to affect is a difficulty that any viable theory of the subject must face and take into consideration. This is necessary, if it tries, firstly, to preserve the requirements of logic (also in its non-classical formulations), rigor and consistence, postulated by contemporary philosophy. Secondly, this necessity obtains if we want to stay unwaveringly faithful to the actual reality of the human (inter)subjective experience in all of its highly nuanced complexity, intricacy and, sometimes, ineffability.

Some of the crucial problems connected with certain modern approaches constitute the main 'culprits' of the omnipresent, dualistic beliefs. For example, the commonly acknowledged convictions about the rigidity of language-affect separateness, about intellect-passion isolation. What seems forgotten is the known and experienced fact of the impossibility to conceive any purely intellectual thought without its emotional 'aura'. And *vice versa*: emotions normally have its cognitive contents. This tendency

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<sup>7</sup> Even if in the Moebian sense.

<sup>8</sup> Like, for example: linguistic vs affective, structural vs topological (according to Lacan, there is an important difference between them), external vs internal, intimate vs public, objective vs subjective, immanent vs transcendent, empirical vs transcendental, etc.

<sup>9</sup> Based on the logic of language /thought/sense as operating by means of oppositions.

<sup>10</sup> The anxiety-related connotations of the word 'apprehension' are used here quite intentionally: if we knew the future happenings of our life, our fate, for the most part we probably wouldn't wish to live any longer out of horror felt as a result of this knowledge.

to reason in terms of the contradiction between the just characterized concepts is prevailing in the contemporary thought. As its core consists in clinging to the uncontested belief in the inside/outside opposition as if its terms were two extreme kinds of 'space', having nothing in common. The split between the linguistic and affective realms opens into an authentic abyss, ready to swallow every daredevil who would try to surpass it. It finds its reflection in the relevant 'turns' that appeared quite recently in the course of the history of philosophical thought and the general cultural orientation<sup>11</sup>.

Summerizing, the 'ex'/'in' dualism makes it extremely difficult to pass from the (post)structural to the affective, and join them in order to get some consistent characteristics of the subject<sup>12</sup>. The Lacanian theory calls into question these contradictory pairs of 'sides', constituting the human (inter)subjectivity. It tries to reconcile what is imaginarily separated. Its means are various examples taken from mathematical topology, especially of 'impossible' figures, like the Moebius strip, the torus, as well as other paradoxical forms, e.g., the cross-cap; the Klein-bottle, etc., denouncing the relevant oppositions as illusive and untenable in their hitherto forms.

For example, as far as the Moebius band is concerned, what we take to be its two sides somehow turns out to be only one, although no clear, distinct 'passage' is perceived. Similarly, as far as the 'two-sided' (structured as polarized in any of the above-mentioned ways) vision of human (inter)subjectivity is concerned, there are certain, special points where the exterior and the interior imperceptibly pass into each other. Applying the Lévinasian concept of the 'transcendence-in-immanence' (Lévinas, 1911), the otherness is constitutive of the sameness<sup>13</sup> (and the other way round). The same could be said about the language/structure-oriented and affect-related aspects of the human mind. We can look at them like Wittgenstein's analysis, found in the chapter *xi* of *Philosophical Investigations*, shows. What we perceive alternately as a rabbit/hare and a duck must be considered, as the author concludes, to be the two possible 'ways of seeing' of the one and the same picture (Wittgenstein, 118, p. 204). A quite similar reasoning might be applied to the idea of the human mind, as essentially relational in joining concepts. Or even better: its multi-referential characteristics enable us to see the same from two or more possible points of view<sup>14</sup>. Perhaps the described methodological difficulty might have something to do with this

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<sup>11</sup> We know how difficult it is to reconcile different linguistic and affective characteristics of the human subject, although functioning nearly seamlessly together on the daily basis. This explains the necessity of 'turns', focusing for the most part or nearly exclusively on one of these two terms of the regarded dualism (and other ones).

<sup>12</sup> Phenomenologically manifesting itself as a certain determinate stream of the indiscrete, seamless experience, unless 'punctuated' in a way proper to the process that is governed by desire.

<sup>13</sup> The dualism of transcendent/immanent or otherness/sameness is just another example that may be applied to the range of problems investigated in this paper. The Lévinasian expression 'transcendence-in-immanence' might be another way of expressing the ideas encapsulated in Lacan's neologism *extimité*.

<sup>14</sup> In the Lacanian reformulation of the above-mentioned division: structural and affective, external and internal, etc.

– sometimes difficult - ‘flip-flop’ jumping from one interpretation to the other. In order to avoid any ambiguity, we prefer stay a bit too stiff. However, at the same time we lose the possibility of gaining knowledge, or what’s more important, according to Lacan: getting closer to the truth<sup>15</sup>.

Another problem to be taken into consideration consists in the following trouble: the connotations of the word ‘structure’ evoke the static concepts, suggesting something essentially immobile, inert and inflexible. Meanwhile, the dynamic experience of affect doesn’t seem to harmonize with our common, habitual trials to describe its process-like, fluid, unstable nature by using these ‘stiff’, unrelenting terms. This problem will be undertaken in the next part, perhaps allowing for the discussion and a certain resolution of the difficulties just described. The proposed solution would perhaps seem surprising, as it implicates referring to the old, classical philosophy of Spinoza. Let’s take a closer look at his system.

### ***Return to Spinoza as a Solution***

Why should we regard the return to such an old theory, as is the Spinosian one, in the context of the Lacanian investigations, as one of the instruments which may turn out the searched-for solution. Namely, the one the consistence of which would be helpful in the dissolution of the described dualisms within the framework of a strictly systematic, unitary theory, able to form a multifaceted but non self-contradictory concept of the subject. The answer lies in the fact that the rigorous and stringent, quasi-mathematical system, based on axioms, definitions, deductions, etc., elaborated by the author of *Ethics, Demonstrated in Geometrical Order* is at the same time a highly dynamic theory of affects. It conceptualizes the affective subject and renders the energetic movement of his/her emotional experience in such a way that it can be interpreted in mathematical terms, as situated in a kind of linguistic ‘quasi-space’. As Lacan would say, any change of affect is inseparable from a certain change of the subjective configuration in the net of signifiers, that is, from the corresponding movement in the linguistic realm. This set of concepts joins neatly the (post)structuralist approach with the notion of the language-affect inseparability. It also undermines other, above-mentioned oppositions, which disappear in the universal ‘space’ that doesn’t need any ‘outside’ or ‘inside’, pierced and penetrated by the never-ending movement of *conatus*. We could even qualify this dynamic geometrical approach - using more contemporary terms - a differential theory of the affective speaking-being. In fact, it seems to constitute the only, unique example of something like a differential calculus of affects, providing us with a kind of ancestor of the strictly topological formalizations conceptualized by the later Lacan. Using Spinoza’s differential, energetic categories of the smallest possible increase and decrease enables us to formulate movements and transformations of affective energy in such a way that seems to preserve the characteristics of credibility and reliability of any viable theory. When increasing or decreasing energy that characterizes *conatus*/drive achieves a certain critical point, the change of the corresponding mathematical/linguistic sign takes place. These transformations account for the always changing, sometimes literally ‘swirling’ dynamics of human discourse and

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<sup>15</sup> Let’s repeat: we tend to lose from our sight that perhaps more than one aspect may be exactly what comes into play, that we must take into account the third, fourth, etc., factor, to be able to perceive the whole complexity of the situation.

affect in their mutual interpenetration, their milder ‘moves’ as well as more violent turbulences<sup>16</sup>. These differential concepts of the smallest possible increase and decrease might be regarded as discrete ‘elements’, a sort of ‘points’, distinguished from one another, however appearing and manifesting themselves as the basis for some presumed continuity<sup>17</sup>.. They prepare the fertile ground for the theory of the human subject that would be based on ‘extimacy’ and ‘de-centeredness’, linking structural and affective approaches into one coherent conception of (inter)subjectivity.

## ‘Referentiability’ and The Three Levels of ‘Extimacy’

As is clear now, the subject of Spinoza, since it is driven by *conatus*, desires to be and that’s why it needs more desire, which explains its ‘extimate’ nature and the necessity to reach beyond itself. However, what must be explicitly underlined, is the fact that the concept of ‘extimacy’ (*extimité*) will be exposed here in a deliberately not quite orthodox way<sup>18</sup>, as the manner of rendering the inseparability of the linguistic and affective aspects of the human subject. The logic of the concept of ‘extimacy’, which is a neologism deriving from ‘exterior’ and ‘intimacy’, seems to call into question – as has already been said - some presumptions underlying certain contemporary philosophical and psychological theories. As has been said above, by means of this seemingly vague, at first sight ‘estranged’ concept, Lacan delivers a different conceptualization of the human psyche. The result is a kind of an essentially ‘referential’, separate but dependent, non-individualistic subject. That is, whose intimate ‘center’ is continuous with what is ‘external’ and ‘peripheral’ (‘ex-centric’, ‘de-centered’) with regard to him or her. The underlying idea is that every human being, even before his or her birth<sup>19</sup>, is immersed in, and defined by, the apparently ‘outer’ – especially relational – world, becoming at last his/her own ‘inner’ realm. That’s why the main terms of this approach are concepts of ‘relationality’,

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<sup>16</sup> The full theory of affective experiences requires underlining the essential differences between them. There’s little place here for a detailed analysis, however, one remark is important: needless to say, there’s an important, not only etymological, difference between ‘emotion’ and ‘affect’. The former means a certain active movement forward (‘out of oneself’), directed to the determined ‘exterior’: as suggests Latin [*e*]movere. While the latter’s sense (Latin *affectus*), understood also in its meaning of ‘direction’) preserves a compelling association with passiveness and surrender to the unavoidable (like an *affection* – which even has ‘illness’, or ‘sickness’ as certain of its meanings) that attacks us as helpless and defenseless. Let’s notice in passing that the prefix ‘a’ often signifies powerlessness and inertness in the face of that to which we must subdue and give in (this ‘a’ doesn’t of course determine, whether the dominating factor is ‘positive’ or ‘negative’) That remains highly relative, as it may be good, helpful, supporting, or inversely: destroying and devastating for us. Incidentally, it would be interesting to explore the possible links joining the prefix ‘a’ with objects *a*, especially with an eye on some of their characteristics.

<sup>17</sup> According to Lacan, the continuity of drive would correspond to the incessant movement of the metonymic chain. The ‘rings’ of this string would tie the elements of the sequence, signifying substitutional objects of desire.

<sup>18</sup> Although, the precise Lacanian use of the term will be indicated in the text.

<sup>19</sup> Moreover, even before any idea of his or her any possible conception.

‘intersubjectivity’, or more radically: ‘referentiality’<sup>20</sup>. It denotes not only an ability but, first of all, necessity, characterized by contingency – of being a term of numerous ‘references’ to (and for) many different ‘others’. Or, otherwise speaking, a singular ‘point of reference’, to and from which invisible ‘rays’ radiate in, and from, all conceivable directions, to and from other ‘points of reference’. ‘Referentiability’ (the ability/necessity to refer) is what actually enables one to live and enacts any acting in accordance with one’s desire. It’s the earliest affective mark left on everything that happens (on the first and any following one another element of the signifying chain) and in the speaking creature it always takes the form of a linguistic sign (or of its substitute). That is why the human subject is not any pure distanced mind but a speaking-being whose existence starts at the exact moment of experiencing affect, that is, of being affected, by realizing the first originary reference. As defined by any affective event written in language (linguistic matter), he/she is unavoidably determined by his or her own incarnated, bodily status. In the measure of experiencing ever and ever bigger, more complicated ‘pieces’ of the world (that is, being affected by diversified aspects of the Other), the ‘text’ becomes ever and ever longer. Then certain sequences start to repeat themselves and ‘writing’ engages both affect and linguistic thought, which are indivisible. These are the basic assumptions of the further investigation as well as the searched premature answer that requires scrupulous analyzing of the ways it was formulated.

Let’s start this difficult enterprise from accentuating the main assumption: what we desperately need here is a ‘good enough’ metaphor. Instead of some chaotic metonymic circulation characterizing displacement, it must be able to deepen the hidden meanings that in the vertical order of substitution (condensation) may enlighten one another. The metaphoric chain could be compared to anchoring our thought to a kind of Ariadne’s thread that would show us the way out of the labyrinth of metonymic *errance* among innumerable significations. As we have just established, the best paradigmatic category would be the Spinosian figure of differential increases and decreases as the smallest energetic changes in the (inter)subjective field. This choice allows for illuminating even the slightest nuances of affective-linguistic processes, rooted in the highly ordered, systematic framework. This is especially important for grasping different transformations of the way in which the subject represents himself/herself. However, first of all, this enables us to understand these changes of the self-representation that have their origin in the internalized Other as the primary source of affection. This radical otherness which can never be assimilated totally by the sameness, which is equally transcendental as transcendent, always escaping dissolution in the immanence that tries to devour anything that differs. The ineffable otherness enacts all the multiple differentiations of the subject’s identity that are presented to the Other as the most important point of reference.

### ***Spinosian ‘Substance’ as Constitutive of (Inter)Subjectivity: Exposition and Sharing***

Before the characterization of ‘extimacy’ in its triple manifestation, let’s focus on some Spinosian contributions to understanding how Lacan defines the human subject. Although it seems obvious, it’s never superfluous to remind that Lacan remains in

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<sup>20</sup> As is obvious, we needn’t relate with, while referring to, or being referred to by, someone or something.

perfect agreement with Spinoza's first definition in the section "Definitions of the emotions" in his *Ethics*: (I) 'Desire is the very essence of man insofar as his essence is conceived as determined to any action from any given affection of itself' (Spinoza, 2002, p. 311). The next similarity has its roots in the basic logical requirements that both of the authors assumed as best summarizing the nature of the human subject. The subject is defined in terms of this or that affect. What Spinoza calls 'substance' acts or operates by means of affects, which causes the emergence of the incipient subjectivity as referenced to what appears as other. In this sense the 'substance' could be considered as a formal, logical vehicle (with no strictly defined empirical content), for which we might substitute anything, like for example, the human nervous system, or any other 'matter', being a kind of 'hardware', into which any particular (because dependent on the randomness of the particular human fate) 'software' might be 'installed'. As it was mentioned above, Spinoza underlines the contingency of the human destiny: '[...] we are in many respects at the mercy of external causes and are tossed about like the waves of the sea when driven by contrary winds, unsure of the outcome and of our fate' (Spinoza, 2002, p. 310).

Let's follow further this metaphorization. We must omit the answer to the question asking what the 'substance' is, what form and characteristics of its existence are. It's unessential for our further investigations. We must focus on what is necessary from the perspective of its every, newly born, 'inhabitant'. Does the 'substance' have any boundaries? From the point of view of its 'guests', it is infinite and unlimited, it has neither origin nor end. As far as the human entity is unaware of its possible limits, he or she can preserve to a greater or lesser degree a certain sense of security, trust and self-confidence. Even the little child has many examples of 'the otherness' (in the beginning often assimilated to 'the sameness') that he/she can refer to. They function as a kind of 'corrective experience', allowing to alleviate the anxiety, even panic, the source of which is equivalent to more or less remembered suffering, being the remnants of the primary trauma. It must be mentioned that this first trauma may constitute the described-above originary experience of a strong affect that starts the process of 'signifierness' (*'signifierness'*) that is, of linking every signifier with its signified (generation of significations). It is only in this way that it brings to life a kind of pre-subject and becomes a condition of possibility for a kind of (inter)subjective proto-space that will contain later experiences. The primary subjectivity has two universal crucial attributes: sharing and exposition: It shares the nature of all similar linguistic-affective beings, especially their vulnerability, as well as it exists as constantly exposed to anything regarded as other, for good and evil. If the process of the corrective 'healing' isn't endangered by any serious disturbance, the little human subject remains initially for some time immersed in the state of the uninterrupted primary narcissism and very rarely shows any signs of consciousness<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> As may be a bit pessimistically said, the developing psyche 'rests' after the mentioned initiatory trauma (be it, e. g., the trauma of birth, or any other 'thallassal'-like apocalypse) and reintegrates its forces to survive the next traumatic event to come. According to the 'thalassal' theory of Ferencsi, the personal history of becoming a subject reaches as far as to the pre-historical sequence of catastrophes transgressing the limits of any individual life (Ferencsi, 1968).

If this 'autistic', totally passive state<sup>22</sup> lasts long enough, the drive can begin to flow freely and try some first cathexes. The young organism starts to register what happens around with a 'fresh' eye and in a non defensive way. At first sight the 'substance' seems to be in a constant, highly dynamical movement, its surface producing multiform waves, wrinkles, turbulences and whirls. It provides its 'foundlings'- those at first totally helpless and vulnerable entities - with its overflowing energy of life. It shares itself with them its potency and resistance, which allows for the growth of the ability to differentiate and value. It is just this ability that enables them to change themselves and the world by making use of the constant, gradual intensifying and diminishing energy, resulting in the production of the first meanings. The all-embracing 'substance' is constantly circulating and especially encircling those who need it most (the most traumatized and unable to survive without help). The energy, never stopping its flow, actuates and excites partly dormant drives, sharing with 'castaways' its own dynamism. It does so trustingly exposing itself on whatever an individual does with this gift – like wasting it, squandering it or maybe...sharing it with the closest ones, with the neighbors. Otherwise speaking, becoming similarly exposed and sharing. It could be said that the 'energy' of these above mentioned movements becomes greater or smaller depending on the fact in whose 'hands' it will find the 'proper' place, where it can fully develop its dynamics. If the quantity of energy grows or diminishes to the sufficient degree, what follows is the change of value marked by the change of the sign into the opposite one ('plus' becomes 'minus' and *vice versa*), which initiates the process of 'significance'<sup>23</sup>.

In summary, the first symbols of primary affective experiences (according to Lacan, we substitute «1» for what is experienced as 'good' and «0» for 'bad') are the effects of the fact how the all-surrounding otherness refers to us (and of how we refer to it). In the beginning, the meanings of these first events of sharing and being exposed are 'borrowed' from the Other, offering them to us when we try to make sense of what happens in our life. And it is never enough to repeat and accentuate that it is at first the Other that 'estimates' the greater or smaller degree of closeness to, or remoteness from, the desired perfection, which the 'substance' strives to achieve. It is only later on that the particular subject takes over the task of evaluating which meanings tend to signal the growth connected with the desired ideal attributes and starts to ascribe values. Such is the origin of rivalry and aggressiveness that may be destructive when they reach their extreme degree. The basic difference between human beings and other living entities appears when the energy of the animal instinct, becomes structured for the human subject as 'binarized into drive' by means of symbols and the *parl'être* starts to manifest one's own desire by way of a whole gamut of affects, emotions, feelings, moods and other affective experiences.

### ***The Genesis of the Subject and the World***

The origin of the world consists in the fact that the 'substance' undergoes further and more complex structuration of the imaginary in terms of symbolizations of more and more higher order. The Other introduces law, the rules of which are supposed to be

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<sup>22</sup> However, abounding in intensive, although usually externally imperceptible transformations of the dynamics of libido.

<sup>23</sup> The result of the process is the development of particular configurations of the first pairs of signifiers.

observed. The differentiation is accompanied by condensation of signifying elements into 'meta-signifiers' until, finally, certain 'master signifiers' take the lead in the person's life. The particular 'wrinkles' on the surface of the ever-changing topology of the world, although designated by the same word, are different from one another. However, they are supposed to join into greater entities, like 'waves', thanks to the common signifier that subsumes them into more complex wholes. All of this produces (as, so to speak, its effect) the speaking subject. What we could remark here is that the beginning of the subject's existence starts at the same time when he/she recognizes (but never gets to know) the Other in the absolute otherness. This total otherness is impossible to be penetrated, although it appears to have something to do with the last trace referring to the desired, primal object. It points at the direction of this object, the one that always comes too early to be remembered by the subject - who's always too late to register its presence - and that's why it seems to be always already and forever lost. The nostalgia for the desired Other incessantly accompanies the process that consists in the fact that the rules, laws, and the whole order structured by the net of signifiers organize themselves into the world as such, and the lost object of longing recedes to the unconscious. At this precise moment the subject may easily 'forget' that he/she desires and what is the object of this desire.

If the Spinozian 'substance', in its constant energetic flow, can be interpreted as something like an ocean or river, this forgetfulness takes over at the moment when the main 'stream' (conscious thinking) starts to produce subsequent metaphoric substitutes of the desire. Then the consciousness would be equivalent with the signified, generated by the signifying elements, which constitute the unconscious, the stream's hidden 'undercurrents'. These are constantly circling around certain peculiar 'areas', which could be described, by reason of their unique character, as the points that center around themselves the deepest flows of water.

The analytical experience confirms that there are certain singular points of 'peculiarities', having absolutely particular character as their status of 'attractors' exerts great influence. Of course, what comes into play here, is that which Lacan distinguishes as 'objects *a*' by referring them to what is archaic, a kind of 'remnants' of something that was lost and doesn't seem to have any place in the present reality. The loss is all the more poignant, deep and intense that the 'cut-off' objects *a*'s status is highly unclear: it's not sure if the 'remainders' were parts of the subject or of the lost object of desire. That's one of the reasons to define their mode of being as 'extimate' *par excellence*. When we apply the above metaphor, their essential destiny is staying in the stream with their parts being partly 'cut off' and remaining outside the current, like 'castaways' thrown by the waves onto the shore, not devoid of their highly attracting, if ambiguous, character. Therefore, anyone who has become the subject of the signifier, the desiring subject, is 'extimate' throughout: what is the most precious to him/her, remains outside, deeply hidden in this outside that forms the center of the unconscious. One can only search for its substitutes in others, not knowing what exactly one is looking for, since the best word to describe it is 'lack'. The subject's most intimate interior, equivalent with the essential center of his/her being is, in fact, external: while staying in the stream, he/she is constantly attracted by what is 'out'.

What is worthy of repetition and underlining is the potent, incessant dynamism of the process, which, beginning with the initial, omnipresent, 'thalassal' chaos, through the *Language and Psychoanalysis*, 2019, 8 (2), 30-60. 39  
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first ‘differentials’ singled out, leads to delimiting the ordered ‘substance’ of the (inter)subjective world. Along with it, through the movement of its own logic, particular subjects are called into existence. Maybe, as some theorists believe, the life in this world, especially when realized in the form of genital love relationships, would be only the consolation after the loss of that ‘thalassal’, pre-apocalyptic, blissful existence. Referring to this traumatic loss, we can say that the appearing of the Spinosian ‘substance’ (however interpreted) after the trauma, might be compared to the origination of a necessary spatiotemporal matrix, the ‘place’ where the first signifying elements can appear<sup>24</sup>.

The trauma as enforcing the formation of the spatiotemporal psychical matrix would play an ambiguous role. Firstly, it leaves its traces as a way to remember the pre-traumatic, paradisiac state of being and incite the striving to achieve a partial, substitutive, thoroughly ‘extimate’ recreation of its memories. The traumatic, however repressed, is a cause of painful affects: anxiety and suffering associated with this loss, although, at the same time, it paradoxically assures protection before similar, future damages by helping the psyche to strengthen itself<sup>25</sup>. The ‘thalassa’ and the later primal traumas remain ‘coded’ as partly conditioning the awakening of the psyche of the future subject<sup>26</sup>, in-sisting not to be forgotten, which requires constant repetition.

### ***The Singularized Topology as a Source of the Individual Fate and Human Destination***

In the previous section it was said that the ‘substance’ differentiates itself into distinct, independent ‘waves’, by distinguishing out of its fluent, continuous flow some singular discrete elements, scattered but ordered. The ‘calculation’, availing itself of topologico-affective ‘differentials’, proceeds incessantly from the beginning, forming a sequence of operations that become more and more complicated. That’s how the

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<sup>24</sup> If this way of thinking makes sense, trauma is necessary for the formation of this proto-spatiotemporal matrix, enabling signifiers to appear. Without the traumatic element, the human psyche most probably wouldn’t start to function, remaining perhaps in the previous undisturbed, narcissistic state.

<sup>25</sup> As it is presented in Ferenczi’s theory of catastrophes: each catastrophe repeats the previous one and at the same time prevents its repetition in terms of affective change.

<sup>26</sup> The ‘thalassa’ and the later primal traumas remain unquestionably ‘inside’, in the mind of the survivor, in the interior of the subject’s heart. Their ‘external’ origin doesn’t deprive the phenomenon of its essential character of deeply intimate experience, the more that it never lets the individual forget them. Working it through (as it is in the more severe examples of traumatization, like nightmares, hallucinations or even fully-developed PTSD) requires the first step consisting in the necessity to allow them to come outside, leave their hiding place, then gradually learn to accept their ‘extimate’ presence in the psyche and finally try to integrate them with one’s present reality. There is also constant possibility of sublimation, which is achieved, according to Lacan, when the subject can reach for the substitute and refer to the lost intrauterine coexistence with a loved object through a genital relationship, which would be the full and authentic realization of the de-centered (inter)subjectivity in the most promising way, allowing for getting as close as possible to what was lost forever.

subject and its particular reality (the world as a specific constellation of the signified, resulting from the relation with the Other) is constituted. The distinguished net or nets of signifiers, while gaining topological characteristics, represented by all sorts of seemingly paradoxical forms of ambiguous, 'impossible' figures, may be regarded as reflecting the singular, unique destiny of the particular person. The Spinosian categories of pleasure and pain may be of use here. As the author of *Ethics* says in the above-mentioned section in the two next definitions of emotions: (II) 'Pleasure is the transition of a man from a less to a greater perfection' and (III) 'Pain is the transition of a man from a greater to a less perfection'. However, Spinoza underlines: 'pleasure is not perfection itself' but the transition to it (i.e. to perfection). The use of the term 'transition' (instead, for example, of 'state', etc.) underlines the fact that the whole business is about the dynamic, energetic operations on affects. As was mentioned above, these differential operations could – by reason of some gradual increases or decreases - bring about radical overturning of the sign and substituting it by its opposite. If such a transformation is important enough, something like a new curving of the particular, (inter)subjective topology may emerge as a result. The hitherto prevailing topological characteristics may be totally overturned, with the new curvature not resembling in anything the previous system of the specific (for a particular subject) coordinates. It is worthy of emphasizing that the Spinosian system perfectly accommodates the slightest possible changes (as little as differentials are) as well as the great, total transformations of the so-and-so curved subjective geometry.

But why do these changes occur? Because of otherness in its multiple forms and multi-leveled epiphanies. We have just outlined the Spinosian contributions to the project of joining an example of a post-structural theory of language with a dynamic, differential theory of affectivity. The result is one consistent, topological approach to the 'extimate' (inter)subjectivity and the subject of language as well as of affect (subjected to them both). Now we can investigate these reflections more deeply and – using further conceptual instruments – complete the above remarks more fully and precisely. The title concept of 'extimacy' is strictly connected with the conception of the 'ex-centricity' of the subject with regard to his or her own 'essence'. Now, the essence of any human being is just there where one thinks it is not - in the unconscious, inhabited by the Other. The essence is understood to be desire, according to Lacan, directed always towards the Other. The human essence was traditionally thought to be the most interior and hidden germ of what a human being is to become, containing his/her most important characteristics to be developed. Here, all of this intimate realm is as if turned inside out – residing in the Other, even earlier than we realize it. Until recently we were used to think about ourselves as autonomic: our inside is 'in', far or undependable from influences of others, and the outside is 'out', separated and independent. However, 'otherness', 'externality' and 'outside' seem to start to be the main organizing, actively operating principles, even when there's not yet any distinct subjectivity. There is only the mentioned kind of proto-space where the conditions are in the course of being prepared in order to constitute the unique 'place' for the future human subject, who doesn't even recognize the agent of these preparations. He/she knows nothing of the all-embracing, pantheistic 'substance', nor does he/she know of the Other who 'curves' the spatiotemporal matrix in order to make of it the environment suitable to sustain life. The more the child recognizes the Other, realizes his/her presence and internalizes it, the more these processes must implicate a sort of exclusion of not-always-so-easy-worked-out intimacy with differing, not always cooperative others. However, the cognitive

abilities develop gradually, permitting of the more advanced repression, enforced by the 'Oedipal drama', when the third member of the familial constellation comes into play. The repression proceeds by splitting off certain 'particles', 'molecules' of the life-giving 'substance', leaving the conscious mind partly emptied and substituted by that which we could call the newly formed 'interior'<sup>27</sup>. Nonetheless, the one who is ready to listen, might hear in the void the calls of longing, certain sometimes getting weaker but persistent calls filled with the desire to return to the most true, even if unattainable rejected 'center', equivalent with one's most authentic being. This sometimes leads to the construction of the newly formed subjective topology, which is particularly, sometimes even peculiarly formed, curved, folded, etc., in such a way that its unreachable 'decentered center' somehow subsists, even if unconscious and unrecognizable. Actually, it never stops operating in its 'close remoteness', supporting the subject in the process of 'coming to be'. Of course, it's possible only when the circumstances are so good enough as to prepare the subject to survive the unavoidable, gradual or sudden withdrawal of the hitherto unfailing presence of the figure of the 'carer'. The resulting singular and unique being, which has the source in the 'substance', acquires the status of the model for further 'topologizing', that is, forming new characteristics in accordance with the (pre)determined coordinates and, by the same token, the destiny of the individual person.

### ***The Structure of Language and Topology***

Since the topological matrix, perhaps being the result of a serious, deeply forgotten trauma, is ready to receive whatever appears in it and signifies something, the question is: who or what provides and juxtaposes the first signifiers? Spinoza would say: the substance is modified. And he is right, as far as he would state that the 'agent' is desire (Spinoza's *conatus*). However, if the first signifiers should be received as such (as signifying something), certain affects must precede their appearance and accompany appearing them. The reason for this is that, since what they signify must be important enough for the recipient so as to be registered as having attributed to them a certain signified, announcing pleasure or pain, usually associated with the presence or absence of the Other. The matrix constituted as the result of trauma is open to receive the meaning of what enters it. In fact, the sense of the appearing signifiers is important so much that the rules of the first syntax are constructed and remembered to make it easier for the subject to act depending on the concluded general meaning of certain situations.

The role of otherness (which, to a certain degree, becomes assimilated as what is own, however, not in its totality) is crucial for the genesis of (inter)subjectivity as 'decentered' and 'extimate'. The other subject is necessary for the flow of drive to start its circling and this often happens when there has been a certain trauma. This is because even the perceived presence of the Other may be experienced as traumatic by

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<sup>27</sup> Such as it was affectively marked, the 'writing' in the unconscious as essentially formed by its, now rejected, 'outside'. However, it doesn't stop operating from within because of the fact that the repression was so immature that the child's psyche was unable to cope with the impossible to be assimilated. Even 'filled up' with apparent emptiness, it somehow preserves the basic primary coordinates and primal reference points that may turn out useful later on.

reason only of his/her separation, of his/her enigmatic desire (*Che vuoi?*) and the constant, unanswered question of the subject: am I desired by this Other? If the response is negative, the individual is unable to survive (cases of the anaclitic depression and death) because the source of the life-energy, defined in just this way, is absent. There's no intimacy, even 'decentered', that would be indispensable to initiate the birth of the newborn's own desire.

### ***Some Affective Operations as Conceptualized by Spinoza, Interpreted According to Lacan's Approach***

The first kinds of affect are pleasure and pain (as it seems in the both theories). The inaugurating trauma, however interpreted (which may be the famous 'initial catastrophe' of birth, as Ferenczi would say it, then 'translated' into the trauma of weaning, next becoming the traumatic impact of the 'primal scene', then returning in the form of retroaction, etc.) must be forceful and overpowering enough, that is, causing great anxiety and/or excitation and/or pain for the incarnated, affective, perhaps not yet able to speak. This is necessary for the proto-subject to start functioning and retroactively 'count' experiences as affectively marked in the linguistic terms of 'good' or 'bad'<sup>28</sup>.

And as long as we are staying with Spinoza, we could say that these first emotions differentiate into further 'vacillations of spirit', as he calls them (Spinoza, 310). There's no place to go through them all but let's look at the three of them. The first is love (VI) defined as 'pleasure accompanied by the idea of an external cause' (Spinoza, 312). As Lacan describes love in the seminar *Encore*, he doesn't only think that love is the substitute for, or disguise of, the lack of sexual relationship. He wants also to say something much more important, positive and optimistic: love has really ontological meaning, it truly lets us touch the being of our loved one, behind all the 'little objects' that attract, seduce and – finally – deceive us. Our loved other is, when really loved, an authentically other Other and so our idea of him/her must be nearly totally unclear or confused – otherwise he/she would be transformed into one of the worldly objects. It seems to be possible to define love as a specific practice of what we can call by the famous name of 'mindfulness'. Our mind becomes filled out with pure 'signifierness' of this otherness, exceeding our possibilities of attributing a specified signified to it but attracting us with this unclear, indescribable 'something', characterized by some unfathomable allure and spell. This aspect of love has something in common with wonder, being the second emotion in the Spinosian theory that is worthy of being focused on, and defined by this philosopher as 'the thought of any thing on which our mind stays fixed because this particular thought has no connection with any others' (Spinoza, 312). What we need here is the specifically Lacanian correction of Spinoza: our mind doesn't function in this way. The signifiers generate so many links and chains of thoughts that our mind is constantly busy and has no opportunity to fix itself on any single idea. However, even in love we cannot have 'an idea of an external cause' in its wholeness, as there's always something in the shadow, unpredictable with regard to any good or bad – that's when love is tied

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<sup>28</sup> The interpretation of a signifier's meaning may go in a few directions: not only be exactly 'on time', but it equally often might lead to the future and, especially, the past.

with wonder. This is an important question: if the idea is nearly totally without content, representing in its signifying emptiness the eluding characteristics of the Other, whose actions may completely surprise us, is it wonder that we feel? What if we feel pleasure and attraction to this unknown? It may be said that it's only then that we meet a certain other as a true Other, whose idea 'has no connection with any others' (other ideas). According to the Lacanian interpretation, the true love always embraces wonder. That's why it is affirmed that love is one of the most singularizing emotion.

### ***Hatred and the Construction of the Linguistic/Affective Subjectivity***

Returning to Spinoza, the third emotion that is worthy of focusing on is hatred, defined by this philosopher as 'pain accompanied by the idea of an external cause'. It might seem that this definition isn't quite sufficient: pain accompanied by the awareness of an external cause of it doesn't necessarily have to be hatred. It may be equally despair, melancholia, sadness, etc. This affect may be referred to Sloterdijk's analyses of rage, which seem to describe the nature of hatred more accurately. However, among them, we find the critique, formulated by this author, who accuses Lacan's theory of confusing 'erotologic' and 'thymotic' affects in his approach to desire. As he says about the author of the alleged 'amalgamate' of *thymos* and eroticism: 'At the kernel of his project is the freebooting mixture of the Freudian death wish with Hegel's struggle for recognition' (Sloterdijk, 2010, p. 24). Nothing could be more misleading. However, the correction of this mistake demands thorough investigations. First, we must take into account what Lacan has to say about subject, precisely referring to the (Es)-Other relationship (the symbolic axis) and ego-alter ego specular relationship (the imaginary axis). The two characterize any encounter with a certain other. However, as was above said about erotologic effects, when this or that of our 'neighbors' turns out the one we fall in love with (here Lacan uses the Freudian term *Verliebtheit*), we see that the situation is completely contradictory to Sloterdijk's conceptualization. The negative idea may accompany the nascent affect when its object is unattainable or doesn't reciprocate our love. Even in this case we don't usually feel hatred or rage, rather: frustration, melancholy, even, contrary to the circumstances, hope. (After all, Lacan used to underline, that love is, on a certain level, always reciprocated). In fact, the both kinds of affects – erotologic and thymotic, are not only taken into account but also meticulously (in Lacan's obsessively detailed style) differentiated from each other, analyzed separately, and described as ruled by their own specific logical laws. In the very general terms, using the above-introduced, topological characteristics of levels of language, we might differentiate between something that could be called the symbolized, 'structural' hatred, and the pre-symbolic, imaginary equivalent of it, the source of aggressiveness (the same regards, for example, love). It is their strict and precise separation that can account for the Lacanian version of an 'ethics of singularity' – since even hatred, when situated on the symbolic level, seems to singularize its 'object' as well as love<sup>29</sup>. The source of the imaginary hatred would be our ego and its specific object – alter ego – the rival in the Hegelian struggle for life or death, the object of envy.

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<sup>29</sup> Love and hatred as being the affective effects of the dynamic movement, delimited only by the particular framework of the linguistic structure of the "one", "unique", or better: "unitary" (traits of) being of each of the two subjects.

The structural hatred is a prerogative of the subject of language, whose desire goes hand in hand with the organized chain of signifiers. In this case the two struggling individuals know that they are equal in the light of law and none of them can really annihilate the other. There's no master, no slave, because both of them are subjected to law. The content of the imaginary hatred could be – as in the mirror stage – the counterpart's 'better' coordinated, integrated body, as compared with one's own, 'dismembered' one, seeming not to form any whole at all, imperfect and clumsy. In other words, the imaginary enemy has always something that the ego doesn't have – usually one of the dual, opposite characteristics<sup>30</sup>. When the 'struggle' rooted in rivalry takes place between two adults, the stake may be power, money, control, authority, etc. The "see-saw" of desire enforces the exclusion of one term and the always risky equilibrium may be destabilized any time. Now, taking into account the two of Hegelian struggling individuals, we understand that one of them must risk one's life so as to win the mastery, in order not to die. However, these prerogatives and attributes can always change into their opposites: weakness, slavery, etc. When we feel hatred on the structural level, these feelings are more integrated and don't exclude their opposites. There is one permanent object of hatred (as is one object of love) instead of its splitting into two or more parts. Contradictory characteristics are regarded as different attributes of the one and the same object, however complex operation it would demand to undertake in order to include them into the multi-faceted, highly singularized subjectivity of the other.

It follows from what has been said so far that - on the basis of the Spinozian geometrical work and the Lacanian topological transformation of investigations of it – there is the only way of defining any singular being speaking-affective, like the human subject. It refers precisely to particular affects as manifestations of the individual's specificity and particularity. They are in turn reflected in the crucial linguistic relations that constitute the unique net of signifiers, constantly being written letter by letter and registering the course of this speaking-being's fate. Love and hatred are distinct from all the other affects because of their most singularizing character.

## **The Triple Topology of 'Extimacy'**

The above remarks refer to what can be regarded as the foundation of the affective theory of the subject, rooted in the linguistic (post)structure of the unconscious. The strictly defined concept of *extimité* could be explicated in more general as well as precise terms by referring to the Lacanian theory of the three registers. Each of them involves a sort of 'exteriority' and, as such, constitutes an indispensable aspect under which the 'extimate' may be seen. As linguistically structured, affectively manifested, and generating energetic dynamics of desire-ridden (inter)subjectivity, 'extimacy' may be defined from three points of view described below.

### ***Imaginary Exteriority***

On the Imaginary level the proper externality is the ideal ego. The primordial ego is formed on the basis of what is purely exterior to oneself. It may be, for example, the Gestaltic counterpart, being the specular image of one's or another child's body

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<sup>30</sup> In perfect agreement with the tendency of an ego-centric individual to think in dualistic terms.

(however, the ‘mirror’ needn’t be of a visual kind). The image of the unified body, enjoying self-mastery, is idealized for ever as the model, which will remain for good and evil the goal of exercising its physical powers and enhancing them. The problem is that the jubilation, the feeling of omnipotence ascribed to the idea of one’s wholeness and the triumphant attitude towards *alter ego*, are both realized by the child at the same moment when the fact of its real bodily fragmentation, which results from the initial lack of coordination. This may be accompanied by the ‘emotional aura’ of envy, rivalry, aggressiveness, especially directed at these children who’s mastery of bodily movements is greater. It leaves the subject internally splitted.

When reminded of the very important discussion of the see-saw of desire, we discover the possibility of reducing this seemingly irreducible gap. Namely, we come to realize that the ideal-ego doesn’t exist without support provided by the rudimentary ego, by means of the numerous ‘alienating identifications’ (*identification aliénante*) with what seems ideal to him/her. The idea is to try to identify with which is other; and from which from a particular subject is alienated. The see-saw of desire, when it is set into movement, separates and joins the two main position: the one is of desiring, rudimentary ego, personified in a little child, captured by the fascinating attributes of the ideal ego and all its admirable attributes. While in the second position, he child is exactly what is desired, in that omnipotence that is attributed to the ideal ago. The change has happen exclusively thanks to the change of positions of the see-saw. The see-saw seems to be an especially lucky metaphor. What was saw previously alternately, now constitutes two aspects of – the incipient subject.

It results from the above argumentation, that the price of constituting oneself as a separate whole is based on an irremediable alienation from one’s true being. Along with the symbol, and more accurately, the first substitution, an element of otherness starts to form the person’s identity. Of course, it will be further supported by subsequent identifications and next ‘layers’ of the primitive ego. It will launch the process of constructing the reality in a projective-introjective way, that is, as based on these two mechanisms. The process of acquiring knowledge (*connaissance*) proceeds, in fact, on the basis of building the un-knowledge or mis-recognition (*méconnaissance*) of the ego. What is ‘taken in’ and becomes a part of the immature ego is used to construct the ‘outside’ world by throwing out the introjected elements. At this stage, what we know of the reality is, in fact, indistinguishable from our own ego (Lacan, 1966, p. 70), and that is why the strict separation between ‘external’ and ‘internal’ domains is questionable from the start.

Before any topological ‘opening’, the affective dynamics constitutes the basis of Lacan’s repeated critique of all theories describing the human ego as autonomous and independent. Every attempt at the characterization of the human subjectivity must take as its starting point ‘an organic insufficiency of its natural reality’ (Lacan, 1966e, p. 96) This weakness, on the basis of which the ego is formed, brings along with it the resulting splitting or internal gap, understood as the ‘alienating tension’ between the ego and its image (Lacan, 1978a, p. 371) or even as ‘internal’ rivalry (Lacan, 1966d, p. 117). The outlined process, which is summarized in Rimbaud’s phrase: ‘I is an other’ (*je est un autre*) (Lacan, 1966d, p.118) and marked by the advent of a *double* (Lacan, 1966d, p. 109), constitutes the indispensable dimension of the human psychism as inherently ‘extimate’. This stadium is highly narcissistic in nature: the ‘outside’ is not yet truly ‘out’ (even if it seems to be already ‘decentered’). It’s again and again

basically the same individual as the idealized mirror image that becomes the ideal ego. This ideal is in turn projected on the first loved others, although infallibly ‘returning’ to the developing psyche, enriched with their introjected characteristics.

The affective stakes of this process are the mentioned ‘triumphant jubilation’, accompanied sometimes by aggressiveness (as different from aggression) and rivalry, described in terms of the process of alternating, switching positions between *O* and *O'* (the mentioned two positions of the see-saw). The former stands for the ‘little other’ (ego) and the latter for the ‘counterpart’ (alter ego). The movement between them, although partly described here, must be completed by means of the author’s optical schemas inserted in the text of the first volume of his seminar, as representing the real image and the virtual one

What can be already marked here is that their ‘interaction’ is the effect of the specular dialectics of the early movement of desire in its primary, narcissistic, egotical form. However, it is preserved also in all later manifestations of drive. It seems to be a dynamic, energetic movement, whose nature is useful in explaining the situations of *Verliebtheit* (the situation of rapture, when the desiring subject is captivated by all the ‘treasures’, he/she sees in another subject but doesn’t find any trace of them in himself/herself. This phenomenon takes place, when desire tends to alternately wander between the mentioned two positions, having its affective implications: love, or more precisely said (at this stage): ‘enamourment’ (*enamoration*). It is worth repeating: The ego sees the virtual image of himself as the ideal ego (or as his/has partner), feeling its ‘triumphant jubilation’ which alternately changes to self-helplessness due to the alleged inflicted harm, and when it is confronted with the idealized alter ego or another ‘little other’ tends to feel the contradictory, aggressive feeling (the most dangerous are hatred, envy, rivalry, even hatred, giving birth to revenge and possession). This is not a quiet and peaceful process but rather a difficult walk on the imagined line spread between the two dangerous abysses.

Everything changes when the Symbolic appears, with at first totally ‘outside’ regulations of law, rules of using language in agreement with the new structure imposed on the here-to-fore Imaginary (inter)subjectivity and the ‘external’ world, which, gradually substitutes (or rather: organizes) the Imaginary. It is only at this precise moment when the subject can encounter the true Other with his/her both positive and negative characteristics and treat his/her as equal in the light of law. The affective characteristics of love/hatred change accordingly. On the later stage of his reflections Lacan even coins – on the basis of constant transformations and even intermixture of the affect-related concepts – the term *hainemoration*. The concept is a result of fusing these seemingly opposite affective states into one ‘hate-loving’, preserving both the characteristics of hatred and enamourment. This fusion underlines the fact that Imaginary sort of ‘outside’, even if unquestionably formative of what is deemed to be ‘inside’, is not yet truly external and some more radical kind of exteriority must come into play with its own topological stakes. Otherwise speaking, the ego must be distinguished from the subject as rooted in the Symbolic.

### ***Symbolic Exteriority***

The subject’s constitution imposes more complicate challenges on the established ‘extimate’ origins of the ‘decentered’ being of any individual human entity. The

earlier ego-ideal becomes superego, which assimilates the moral rules of the society as unquestionable and acts in agreement with them, assuming them to be one's own, and their 'external' origin becomes forgotten. The subject acquires customs, ways of behaving and speaking, thinking, and even all the surrounding world as his/her natural home and their structured, topologically curved character remains unconscious. What comes into play seems to be in a certain way much more 'external', relative to anything that is regarded as 'intimate', although the borderline is more or less unclear. Certain parts just become more 'tamed' and 'domesticated' as belonging to a newly formed subject. It is only then that the 'one' starts to truly 'be', and only the unexpected 'breaks', 'cracks' and the fissures on the smooth surface suggest that not everything functions as it should. Therefore it must be assumed that there exists the third register, which refers to the 'outside' that is 'external' *par excellence*, and it is just in the middle of our safe, cozy 'inside' we managed to create thanks to the structure of the Other that organizes and orders everything. That means that from then on the subject exists as even more divided, staying in the three dimensions at the same time. Another subject – meaning another speaking-being – becomes to be recognized as "one-in-three" - as a similar subject but also a totally unknown unknown (and unable to get to know the Other) since we don't even know where our search should begin.

As we know, the formation of the primary ego in the mirror stadium is mediated by the big Other as the guarantor of the developing imaginary identity, for example, it is often the Other (like a parent of the child) who decides what the positioning of the mirror's angle is and what shows itself in the reflection (Lacan, 2004, p. 42). The symbolic function is though even earlier: every human being (even before the advent of the mirror stadium) appears in the world, which is already structured by symbolic meanings. Things are created by words, which 'kill' things for their part (Lacan, 1966b, p. 319) – this is how the famous 'negativity' of concepts functions. Signifiers exert their effects as well as affect us before we start to understand language, they structure our (inter)subjectivity even before our birth. In this way they prepare places in the symbolic network for people, these 'real beings, who, coming into the world, right away have the little tag which is their name, the essential symbol for what will be their lot' (Lacan, 1978d, p. 31). This all-embracing character of a symbol can't be overestimated as truly formative of subjects in their complex relationships: 'Founding speech, which envelops the subject, is everything that has constituted him, his parents, his neighbors, the whole structure of the community, and not only constituted them as symbols, but constituted him in his being.' (Lacan, 1978d, p. 30). This 'envelope' penetrates the very inside of the subject. The external (which is quite contingent), in the measure as it becomes a part of the 'extimate', is able to impassively and relentlessly distribute the playing cards to those totally unaware of whatever fate is attributed to them. The cards must be played by those who appear in the 'game' in flesh and blood. In every case of this very singularized and incomparable process, what is 'external' is 'interiorized', and what is 'internal' is 'exteriorized', of course, the dynamics of movement is twofold.

This is the origin of the subject in the full meaning of the term: the child becomes 'sub-jected' to the symbolic law at the same time when he/she acquires norms as well as the ability to respect norms and repress desire. This happens as a result of the 'paternal metaphor', whatever form it takes. Now the only *raison d'être* of law and its rules is securing the proper satisfaction of desire and adequate *jouissance*. However,  
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desire gains, even if repressed, an additional, unintended support: as originating in the unfathomable lack of the primary Other it is paradoxically sustained and consolidated in its unconscious state by the paternal interdiction (Lacan, 1966a, p. 852).

The 'extimate' character of human (inter)subjectivity is made evident by the statement that desire takes the form of the Other's desire (Lacan, 1966h, p. 814). It may be read, firstly, that we desire as the Other desires, that is, *qua* Other, in the similar way, starting from the premier Other whose ungraspable desire is interrogated. Secondly, desire appears 'in the margin where the demand separates itself from the need' (Lacan, 1966h, p. 814), that is, we desire to be desired by the Other, even when our needs expressed in demands are fully satisfied, leaving as unfulfilled that part of the demand which expresses the human longing for the Other. Thirdly, the desire belongs to the unconscious, being the site of the Other. 'Non-knowledge' (*nescience*) of desire accounts for the fundamental alienation: desire is that which we don't want (Lacan, 1966h, pp. 814-815). Therefore we speak of the thoroughly 'extimate' subject: the unconscious composed of signifying chains is what forms our decentered 'inside', originating from the 'outside', understood as the transindividual structure of signifiers. The 'in-sistence' of the signifier is correlative with the 'ex-sistence' of the subject of the unconscious (Lacan, 1966f, p.11). The subject is 'ex-centric', that is, 'decentered in relation to the individual', the latter being constantly occupied by what he/she regards as his/her true center – the conscious mind (Lacan, 1978c, p. 17).

The Other is 'the locus in which is constituted the I who is speaking with him who hears [...] the locus in which speech is constituted' (Lacan, 1981, p. 309). This undercuts the illusion of self-transparency and self-control attributed to the subject by the modern thought, epitomized in the Cartesian philosophy of Cogito (Lacan, 1978c, p. 15). It is not the conscious 'I', the thinking substance, that speaks, or rather: 'It speaks' (Lacan, 1986d, p. 244). This is another example of 'extimacy' and 'decenteredness': the subject must be regarded as different from the 'I', the latter being the linguistic entity he/she strives to identify with, The human being, in opposition to what the philosophical tradition used to state, is never a fully 'well-integrated'<sup>31</sup> entity. The affective-linguistic 'intimacy' of the 'inner' realm, overflowing with pieces of the (introjected) 'external' incessantly tries to infringe the separating barrier. There are cracks, scratches, breaks... all of them possibly able to become the most fragile and vulnerable points, which always endanger us with into a kind of 'annihilating' waterfall, capable of transforming everything into a deep chasm or ocean of chaos.

The sketched above structuralization of the supposed 'inside' by the established 'outside' has as its reverse the structuring of the surrounding 'reality' by subjective factors. The so-called 'subjectivation of the external world' (Lacan, 1986a, p. 59), results in the incessant mutual 'interpenetration'<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> This doesn't mean the total disintegration, as in a schizophrenic episode, rather: the concept of the perfect integration is a myth. Of course, a person may experience various degrees from the radical decomposition of the psyche (like in case of psychosis) to the stabile and balanced living in the more or less elaborated agreement with one's extimate nature.

<sup>32</sup> Of course, the word is not quite appropriate as it calls into mind just the dubious opposition that is questioned here.

The castration complex, as understood by Lacan, can be regarded as an unprecedented<sup>33</sup>, nodal point - in fact, the liminal moment of a particular, metanoic change of affects. As it seems, the most important part is played by the appearance of a new, more radical exteriority, which implicates breaking the interchangeable ego-alter ego amalgam, which was not until now finally separated. Ego-ideal, having internalized all the rules of law and order starts to fulfill the function of the superego. This critical event involves such affects that seem similar to those associated to the mirror stage but of essentially different nature. For example, frustration, instead of becoming the usual source of aggression, must be subordinated to strict regulation of law, in order not to avoid transforming itself into rage. It's important to differentiate also between sense of guilt and sense of shame. The former tends to appear when I broke a certain law and was punished or not but I ascribe to myself the harm I caused and feel guilty. The latter is different, for example, having done something wrong about which even no one knows, I am afraid of the denunciation not because I am afraid of the punishment but because this damage to my self-image becomes known, and even if only myself know, I feel ashamed.

The described symbolic coordinates, incorporated usually in the closest family members, don't exhaust, of course, the varieties of exteriority that in the more or less propitious conditions may feel at home with the 'intimacy' of the human psychism. Some 'one' is always some 'body' and the wisdom of language discloses that the most singularizing factor in the 'external' world is a person's body: the homonymy ('some one' and 'someone') is supported by synonymy; that every 'someone' always exists as a certain 'somebody'. As it was said above, the neighbor is that being, *vis-à-vis* whom the subject is situated - as far as his or her (inter)subjectivity is constituted firstly as a body taking position with regard to his or her 'against' or 'en face'. Then he/she becomes a partner in the conversation, playmate, or companion with whom one engages in various enterprises and adventures.

If the word 'extimate' may be considered to be a gradable adjective, the consequence of such a state of matters is that sometimes a certain degree of 'exteriority' becomes tamed and domesticated, so to say, and its impact as 'alien' is diminished or annihilated. This usually happens when the nearest 'neighboring', previously truly 'external' beings: our closest family, friends, lovers, etc., lose their signifying (first of all, signifying their otherness) traits. Then they become reduced to the signified, the all-too-known, even boring - because completely predictable - entities. This could be explained by the fact that someone becomes too close, to (apparently) familiar and stops being received at all as a 'stranger' This could occur as one of pathologies of 'extimacy', its contradiction being separateness and alienation of a particular human entity, becoming closed on oneself, as a monad, not allowing for any part of 'otherness' to penetrate one's 'inside'.

### **Real Exteriority**

The Imaginary and the Symbolic can be said to encapsulate the more or less smooth functioning of language, whose roads are constantly traversed by the subject, trying to reveal or conceal the truth of desire. The Real might be described as certain dystopic 'places of nothing', where this functioning failed – implicating a sort of 'failure' that

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<sup>33</sup> Although evoking, in a way, all the earlier traumas.

invades the structure, threatening to break it. They are absent on any linguistic map, previously non-existent, and appearing only when someone happens to leave the safety of the structured world. These are the invisible recesses, being examples of the perfect 'no-where'. One becomes lost in some chaotic 'nothingness', feeling *unheimlich*<sup>34</sup>, disoriented because suddenly devoid of the familiar world and any useful word to describe one's experience. One remains unable to find any ways to render the character of the horrifying 'phantoms' of the inexpressible ghostly appearances, usually excluded from the common reality (Real is the only realm where they can be 'disincluded'). They 'subsist' and 'insist' in certain archaic, forgotten areas, being the places of trauma and loss *par excellence*, leaving the subject led astray with no symbolic means to describe the nature of their traumatic character. Something unforeseen happens and the previously smoothly functioning elements stop their operating in a proper way. They don't even operate improperly, it is more accurate to state that something, so to speak, 'breaks the flow'. It is impossible for the subject to represent the 'event' in any understandable way, because the conventional linguistic acts are not able to accommodate the overwhelming 'totality' of this excess. That is why the Real can be defined as an extreme, thoroughly different from any known difference, 'exteriority'. Even the term 'exteriority' unjustly enforces us to join the Real with the symbolizable, were it doesn't belong. We can talk of the Real when some cracks and holes in speech appear (as Real itself is lacking nothing, even more: everything is in its place in the Real). These are 'white spots' in the linguistic meaning, the ones that can't be in no way filled. As an unwanted remainder of the symbolic structuring of the world, the Real is limited to introducing breaks or fissures into the hypothetical, primordial unity of that which is 'at first confused in the *hic and nunc* of the all in the process of becoming' (Lacan, 1966b, p. 276).

On the one hand, it is in relation to the subject of the Real that Lacan explicitly defines *extimité* as equivalent with the Thing (*la Chose*), referring to Freud's concept of *das Ding*, designating mother or her symbolical substitute. She is usually (but not necessarily) the first, primordial Other of the child, and is defined by the author as the 'intimate exteriority' (Lacan, 1986c, p. 167) or the 'excluded interior' (Lacan, 1986e, p. 122), that is, being 'at the center only in the sense that it is excluded' (Lacan, 1986b, p. 87). This 'non-object', around which the unconscious is organized, although foreign to the future subject, seems to define his or her destiny<sup>35</sup>. The impossible character of the Thing as that which is truly Real in the Lacanian sense of the term is experienced as traumatic, it is 'the object of anxiety *par excellence*' (Lacan, 1978b, p. 196). This vision of the unspeakable, even horrifying 'alien' kernel of the human psyche undermines all conceptions of the subject as separated from any would-be 'outside', to which he or she can become more or less peacefully adapted. On the other hand, it is only along with the Thing, its attracting strangeness, evoking something long forgotten, that the importance of the number "two" is emphasized and highlighted. During the 1972-73 course of his seminar, Lacan will say that it is always

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<sup>34</sup> *Unheimlich* which can be translated as 'uncanny' is associated by Lacan with anxiety (*angoisse*) so it is closest to the Real, as one of its remainders, and reminders).

<sup>35</sup> 'The Thing as *Fremde*, strange and even hostile on occasion, the first outside in any case, is that which orients around itself all the wandering of the subject' (Lacan, 1986a, p. 65).

two (*deux*) of them (*d'eux*), of two unique, particular cases of 'one'<sup>36</sup> that we should begin with (Lacan, 1975, p. 10). The pair of 'them two' (*deux d'eux*) consists not only in lying beside each other in bed (*au lit*). Not only just 'sleeping together' but also 'lying' in the sense of saying lies to each other in that which can be read, in the read (*au lit*). 'Lying beside' each other creates the newly structured space or surface which brings a different topological quality: the unprecedented character of these bonds as ontological links between man and woman. The loved Other exists 'side by side', as closest to me but unavoidably distinct from what I call 'my own'. Here it would be useful to make the 'extimate' topology of (inter)subjectivity become more sharply and radically polarized by being ordered and further differentiated by the male and female structures.

The Thing as the ineffable leftover in which the 'internal' and 'external' are paradoxically united, although irreversibly lost<sup>37</sup>, leaves as its only traces the mentioned objects little *a* (*objets petits a*). A certain 'extimate' impression seems to account for the enigma of the paradoxically magnetic but threatening character of every love object: 'inexplicably I love in you something more than you' (Lacan, 1973, p. 241). This special 'something' that just this (and no other) person 'has', emanates attraction which produces its main effect: the metonymic movement of desire which carry us with itself for good and evil. The irresistible quality of any *objet petit a* resides in the fact that it represents the lost (due to the Oedipal prohibition) *jouissance*. The lost excessive 'enjoyment' that in Freud's terms is situated 'beyond the pleasure principle'. This 'surplus *jouissance*' (*plus-de-jouir*) points to the boundary that can't be crossed, otherwise pleasure becomes pain. Paradoxically, desire having as its cause the *objet petit a*, seems to constitute a defense against crossing a certain limit of *jouissance* (Lacan, 1966h, p. 825), that is, allows to satisfy drive 'safely', only to some supportable degree. The result is the constitutively conflicted being of the human psychism and the ultimately impenetrable source of its discordant character. The more so that the 'extimate', as much 'included' as 'beyond', transcends every conceptualization in terms of the dualistic pairs: 'inside-outside', 'linguistic-affective', 'transcendent-immanent', 'otherness-sameness', etc., regarded as irreconcilable oppositions. 'Extimacy' hasn't any localizable roots in us, nor having any cause situated in the other subject, is situated somewhere 'in-between'. It seems to resume everything that 'referentiality' is about, when it reaches its fullest and most developed form. The source of this 'inner beyond', inseparable from the primordial relation – may be conceived as fulfilling an important transcendental function as the basis of the human (inter)subjectivity, its condition of possibility *par excellence*. However, as transcending any attempt at rendering it in symbolic terms, our innermost soul amounts to 'non-being' so that the 'extimate' condition is, paradoxically, the condition of the ultimate impossibility of the subject, of his/her thorough definition.

The Real, being the incoherence of the symbolic system itself, is constantly penetrated by all sorts of affects, although they are not experienced on the daily basis and escape explications or descriptions in a way that would be intelligible enough to be understood (lest the listener has personally experienced the invasion of the Real). Among the affects induced by the intrusion of the Real, we can especially enumerate

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<sup>36</sup> By not writing this noun in the plural the irreducible 'singularity' of any person seems to be even further underlined.

<sup>37</sup> We can never enjoy it enough, it always disappears too early.

the often overpowering and unexplained fascination or obsession with someone, enormous anxiety bordering on panic, even strong disgust or repulsion aroused of particular objects *a* (which is well developed in Kristeva's work on abjection). However, the unquestionable first place, as far as objects *a* are concerned, is anxiety. This anxiety is – as Lacan often used to repeat – 'not without object'. Since objects *a* are remainders of the blissful unity with the Thing, they play the part of the most genuine supporters of desire as such. What is of great importance is that anxiety is the only affect that doesn't deceive, it may even fulfill the function of something like a sort of ontological proof, as it is the only reliable source of certainty that's possible at all.

As the formula of the unconscious phantasm shows, the thoroughly 'extimate' reference is what characterizes the relationship between the 'barred subject' and *a*. For the subject's unconscious the two terms of the relationship are linked by the sign of 'diamond' between them, which signifies the relation of desire<sup>38</sup>. The relation is necessarily equivocal and ambiguous, since its terms tend to be confused with each other and their positions are interchangeable<sup>39</sup>. This concerns especially the two specifically Lacanian 'fallen objects' (added to the three, introduced earlier by Freud), which are gaze and voice, the most frequent, as it seems, objects-causes of desire (not to be confused with love objects). The scopic and auditory drives seem to belong to the primary Other as well as to the future subject, and along with the Freudian three originary drives are 'shared' by all the human beings ready to expose themselves on whatever destination awaits them. Their 'decentered' and 'extimate' characteristics determine their whole lives. Every human subject's sexual bodily parts or their derivatives (voice, gaze) are shared with the chosen Others, are being exposed, letting the basic drives circle around them, constituting the most dreamt-of sources of *jouissance*. Every object-cause of desire is one-off, unique and singular. It may be even said that the only thing that is shared by all the humans is being unrepeatable and irreplaceable, as well as their vulnerability and finitude. They may expose themselves as such, may expose their vulnerability, their one-and-only, never possible to repeat existence to different others, who don't always have good intentions<sup>40</sup>. These unique -

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<sup>38</sup> As *a* is what has fallen from the subject due to the strongly experienced affect of anxiety, we can speak of a certain ambiguous element in the mentioned matheme of the unconscious desire: the 'barred subject' and the 'fallen object' are joined (and separated) by the sign pointing to the mutuality/bilaterality of whatever relationship links them (as desire manifests itself in diverse affects, they may appear on the both sides of this 'extimate' quasi-equation).

<sup>39</sup> To offer one example: the child gazing at their parents (e. g. during their sexual act) starts to more or less unwillingly phantasize of its being gazed at by them.

<sup>40</sup>The good term introduced by Derrida (who doesn't believe in an 'angelic' version of the neighbor) seems to be 'hostipitality' (*hostipitalité*): being hospitable but not tolerating any form of hostility Derrida, 2000). This reminds us of the Lacanian 'hateloving' (*hainemoration*), although the intention of the thinker was to present the usual 'hustle and bustle' of any partner's sometimes quite stormy and turbulent interactions with his/her loved one, however the term might be applied not only to partnerships but to much broader social context. And also the third of the most influential thinkers nowadays E. Lévinas, underlines the non-angelic, egocentric, sometimes outwardly cruel relationships between neighbors, and finds a solution focusing on the reference to the 'third' *Language and Psychoanalysis*, 2019, 8 (2), 30-60.

in case of every single person – partial ‘objects’ of oral, anal, genital, scopic and auditory drives may be regarded as different sorts of isolated ‘singularities’ (as this term is understood in topology). Each of them may be regarded as delimited by a kind of ‘event horizon’, the crossing of which suddenly and unexpectedly curves the time-space of our reality in a total and unforeseen way. The passage may transfer us – like through a sort of spatiotemporal tunnel – into something like hyperspace – the multidimensional ‘space’ we have ‘forgotten’, we know and don’t know at the same time. The partial objects form the five ‘disseminated’ human ‘centers of gravity’ with relation to which we are essentially ‘decentered’ but at the same time constantly attracted to - and repelled by – their magnetic, compelling influence exerted on us. It sometimes happens that the subject we suppose to know, appears in a complete different light because of a certain, seemingly unimportant, tiny detail, having to do with one of the little *a*’s like enigmatic flash in his eyes. This feature may incite us to fall in love in this person or start to hate him/her. The affect that appears in such situations may be what was named by Freud, as mentioned before, by the term *unheimlich*. This affect could be described as connected with an impression of being estranged with regard to what was always so familiar and obvious, and now seems alien and ‘strange’, without its cozy aura of domestication. Such effective experiences might be called ‘extimate pointers’, as they point in the two contradictory directions: the habitual, common, ‘external’ perception we got used to, and the personal intimate, interior experience.

We may talk of the sequence of the three degrees of ever more radical (with every level) ‘exteriority’, constitutive of, correspondingly, the three indispensable kinds of ever deeper ‘intimacy’ of the psyche with its ‘internal’ memories belonging to some forgotten levels of the archaic past. If a sudden, unexpected break or momentary lack of coherence in the symbolic order of (unconscious) signifiers, which generate and correct our usual projections, constituting the signified as the conscious ‘knowledge’. In fact, signifiers refer always only to other signifiers (called signifieds, however it doesn’t change anything in their signifying nature) in the net of the symbolic structure. The net is spread among the mentioned ‘singularities’, supporting them in the framework of a determined topology of the ‘extimate’ (inter)subjectivity. The curving of the surface determines possibilities of affects that can be experienced by the individual as ‘decentered’ with regard to that which exactly accounts for just this experience.

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(of the ‘brothers’), then on these foundations constructs the suggested foundations of the society. These thinkers seem to have elaborated more mature notions of justice and, in general, the ethical dimension. Here we can mention also Derridian *khôra*, meaning ‘place’ (Derrida, 2016). This mysterious place is shared (shares itself) with those who need it and starts gradually to recede in the measure of its receiving by everything what is other. And so, the unique quality of this space is vanishing in order to make more space for those who most desperately need it for survival. The memory of ‘thalassa’, the traces of *conatus*-driven ‘substance’ become the living and live-giving space. Spatialisation and temporalization proceed in the measure they are needed, becoming the spatiotemporal dimension where all the humanity is immerged, exposed and sharing.

This is the outline of the transition from the (post)structural approach conceptualizing particular levels of language theory taking into account the affect-driven and 'extimate' subject in his/her 'decenteredness'. This formulation would be very difficult without taking into consideration the dynamics of energetic transformations of the economy of drive. The reference to the Spinozian approach provides us with a precise, quasi-mathematical investigation of energetic movements in terms of intensification and weakening of their strength, as their increasing or decreasing effectuates changes of values attributed to the experienced events. The result of these transformations are changes of affects that are the basic modes of the operation of the 'substance'. The affective changes are strictly connected with shifts in representing oneself by the subject in the net of signifiers. The subject is finally defined as someone who is represented by one of the signifiers, which is in turn represented to another signifier, determined by the changes of the signifying slides and slippages, which lead to the master signifiers - those representing the subject immediately to the Other. In sum, the calculus of affects is set in movement by the Other, to whom the subject is in an 'extimate', 'decentered' way continuously referring.

## Conclusion

The anti-dualistic concept of *extimité* would demand a much longer exposition of the reasons why 'extimacy' in its full (inter)subjective realization transcends the simplified dualistic pairs of the most common contradictions. Summarizing, the neologism may be understood as comprising the essential linguistic and affective characteristics of the human 'de-centered' (inter)subjectivity, translated into topological terms in the three completely different ways: the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real. Each of them implicates the particular, unique revelation of 'exteriority' as formative of what is regarded the 'intimate' sphere of any subject (and, of course, the formation is always reciprocal).

It must be remembered that the triad of the mentioned 'spheres' is, strictly speaking, the three separate levels or dimensions of language, three purely linguistic realms. However, as it turns out, they are inseparably permeated by affects. If we take, as a starting point, Spinozian 'substance', the differential operations of increasing (marked by '+') or decreasing energy (marked by '-') lead by means of further decreases and increases to changes of values. When increasing energy of a chosen affect reaches the critical point, the change of value is marked by the opposite of the previous sign. The drive (*conatus*) joins the pairs of '+' and '-' into more and more embracing sequences of linguistic signs and with every level of new symbols, the new human subject comes into being. The constitution of the origin of grammar, when accompanied by the construction of the first signifiers, when set into movement, proceeds by itself until the first syntax, affectively marked, is ready to function without help<sup>41</sup>. Then the

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<sup>41</sup> In my opinion, the Lacanian theory of the linguistic-affective subject is a bit unclear unless we discriminate different 'stages', 'processes', so to say, of the formation of the subject. I've used above, perhaps too chaotically, the three different 'verbal nouns', which could be better enlightened. The first is 'subjection' - this is, the point of departure of every living entity: being somehow 'thrown' into the world, into certain independent circumstances. The newborn is always already sub-jected: to its first Other, to the generational, to the common discourses that precede its appearance, and at last to its 'own' discourse  
*Language and Psychoanalysis*, 2019, 8 (2), 30-60. 55  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.7565/landp.v8i2.1603>

system starts to generate its own grammar, producing further rules as needed. At last the newly formed 'rings of string' appear, constituting in each particular case an inimitable constellation of Borromean knot (such that when one of the three rings, Imaginary, Symbolic, or Real falls apart, the whole knot is broken). Each knot gains their own topological traits, stemming from the whole affective-linguistic history of the subject. Every knot represents everyone as singular and unique. Later on, Lacan introduces the fourth element - 'sinthome'- reconstructed, rebuilt old symptom, now endowed with new, elaborated, unique qualities, allowing for such a way of living in which 'it stops not being written' and a person has found one's own way for achieving *jouissance*. It is the singular *sinthome*, that keeps strongly together the whole of RSI. During the sexual linguistic-affective development<sup>42 43</sup> of the young

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constituted of the sequence of unconscious signifiers. It is dependent on all the 'mirrors' it meets, then to the paternal law, at last to the Other as such, that is, groundless and hanging in the void. The second term/phase of the genesis of the subject (in the full Lacanian meaning of this word) is 'subjectivation' the individual actively takes on his/her back what was piled up on it while, as a child, it remained in a much more passive state. This is what perhaps Lacan has in his mind while he speaks of 'eating one's Dasein'. However, maybe not all of this 'repas' is nourishing, or even digestible, and then the advent of the third 'avatar' of subjectivity becomes indispensable - 'subjectivization' - assimilating what is needed and rejecting what is dangerous or useless. If 'subjectivation' means a becoming a countable individual, one of many others, the singular number as contradicted to plurality of what is similar; then 'subjectivization' means transforming all of this into truly unique and particular, not to be repeated nor substituted. The subject must be passive and active at the same time ('medial' in the sense of old Greek grammar) and it is just then that one's most own 'sinthome' is formed. The previous 'subjectivation' consists in being condemned just to one or some of many possible symptoms, where there's not much choice). While one's own extimate relationship to the 'decentered center' can be realized with the sublation of all dualisms, and the advent of the subject reaching the fullest range of his/her potential (sometimes it may be regarded as 'litter', however, litter may contain many treasures).

<sup>42</sup> There's too little place here to deepen the subject that may be very relevant to the explored topic and highly interesting in itself, the question of linguistic *jouissance* and its 'extimate' characteristics. Lacan develops the concept of 'enjoyment' (*jouis-sense*), strictly connected with the affective dimension of any linguistic material. The words as specific material groupings of sounds, provided with concrete meanings, are permeated by the peculiar energy, by a certain irreducible kind of pleasure. For example, it often happens that a certain special aspect of a word or of a group of words is associated with 'the happy atmosphere' emanating from it. Remember for example the almost ecstatic 'aura', experienced by the subject who at a certain moment hears or articulates the name of the most loved person, the warmth and joy felt in the blissful atmosphere of excitement and pleasure that surrounds and penetrates this small group of phonemes. Although the subject doesn't necessarily think of their meaning, he feels happier - he is affected by the 'extimate' in its extreme. Let's remember also about *jouissance* accompanying neologisms, word-plays, especially containing a pinch of humor.

representatives of the two sexes, each of the three enumerated *dimensions* undergoes profound restructuration. The advent of the Oedipal complex (when what was Imaginary undergoes a total ‘rewriting’ in terms of the Symbolic structure) implicates the strict, uncompromising accustoming oneself to the norms of language and law. However, as the logical consequence of the development of linguistic capabilities of the subject, the Symbolic register reveals its Realness (its non-completeness, splits and slips, its ‘hanging’ in the void, since there’s no Other of the Other). This results in loosening the stiffness of the connections in the net of signifiers, in sequences of sounds, etc. This is sometimes accompanied by the much more (than previously) individual assimilation of linguistic structures, permitting of their transformation into various neologisms, word-plays, etc. This proceeds not without reference to one’s symptomatic limitations – resulting sometimes in the transformation of what limits and disturbs into what reduces the impact of the relevant symptom on the life of the individual, and even sometimes helps to retrieve at least a part of the hidden potential of a particular human being. As was mentioned, this is called *sinthome* – which means an important linguistic-affective-behavioral change, often equipping the person with his or her own, sometimes quite expressive and vivid, however always highly individualized dialect-like language<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> The concept of *sinthome* couldn’t be omitted in the presentation of the ‘extimate’ constitution of any linguistically (post)structured subjectivity. The subject expresses his intimate world in worlds he/she has acquired from other language-speakers and assimilated as his/her own way of not only communicating with others but also externalizing what he received from the ‘outside’, while acting and realizing in action his/her singular individuality. So the concept of ‘sinthome’ is connected with the striving to work one’s own unique way of linguistically expressing oneself, based not only on one’s abilities, talents, successes, etc., but also on what hurts, on painful experiences and symptomatic ways of coping with one’s limitations. So the basis of forming a personal, particular *sinthome* is not only structural-linguistic but also affective, expressing all the perturbations that resulted in the most important transformations of one subjective’s surface of sense and its fractures and breaks (compare Deleuze’s concept of the ‘surface of sense’ in the *Logique du sens*), and *Language and Psychoanalysis*, 2019, 8 (2), 30-60. 57  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.7565/landp.v8i2.1603>

As was said above, the constitution of the Lacanian subject is an effect of the connection of the linguistic structure and its affective dimension, accompanied by various topological transformations of relationships between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, among others<sup>45</sup>. Perhaps we could say: the Imaginary may be defined as ‘pre-structure’, the Symbolic – as ‘structure’ *tout court*, and the Real would deserve to be called ‘post-structure’ (that is, what remains of the ‘structural’ when something ‘fails’ or ‘falls’ and a certain impasse breaks and stops the whole proper operating). Each of the three registers necessarily generates affects because of the ‘extimate’, ex-centric constitution of (inter)subjectivity, which is revealed more and more by Lacan in the course of the development of his thought, finally summarized in the author’s equation of ‘structure’ with ‘topology’. We can think of the notion of ‘extimacy’, as a sort of the ‘intermediary’ concept, joining the structural/linguistic conditions with the dimension of affectivity of a living being.

The mentioned elusive, vague remainders and reminders at the same time, which are the *objets petits a*, are ‘localized’ in the central part of the figure of the Borromean chain, close to the ‘point’, where the three dimensions intersect (Lacan, 10.12.1974, p.19, online). As the above considerations indicate, this ‘structure’ is far from being a harmonious synthesis, the interdependence is inseparable from tension. The later elaborations focused on this (inter)subjective knot reveal it as the ‘structure’ constantly vulnerable to dissolution unless held together by the mentioned fourth element – the *sinthome* – the essential way, ‘chosen’ by the subject, of organizing one’s being strictly in relation to one’s ‘extimate’ essence. What is important in this new presentation is that although such a formation seems to be the result of a certain compromise, nonetheless introducing the *sinthome* resists ultimately any further analysis. Although being the subject’s own, particular mode of channeling *jouissance* (otherwise speaking, realizing the ‘extimate’ possibilities in an acceptable way), its economy remains alien to him or her, it is impossible to ‘put our fingertips on’ it (Lacan, 1975b, p. 116). The sinthomatic ‘extimacy’ finally constitutes the ‘dit-mension of body’, enjoyment of speech, of the written, inseparable from *jouissance*, the source of which are the bodily piece(s), surrounded by the never-ending

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being the accepted way of repeating certain traumas. *Sinthome* appears seemingly from nowhere, as the biblical ‘Mane, Thecel, Phares’, written by an invisible hand, and constitutes the person’s most own (although surprising even for the subject himself or herself), particular way of presenting one’s transformed relatedness to the Other. This underlines the importance of the ‘flesh and blood’- *la chair et le sang* - of letters, the ‘litteral’ (in all of its senses), material ‘heart’ or ‘core’ of language, so often treated as waste matter, rubbish, instead of the indispensable vehicle of sense.

<sup>45</sup> If we tried to deepen our understanding of people’s relationship to linguistic elements, we would have to refer to nothing else than what permeates – whether we know it or not – all of our references to the world as the incarnation of language as such, and especially of our own ‘sinthomatic’ language. That would point at the ‘extimate’ curving of any trajectories of sense-giving, of sense-appearing, of sense-operating, accounting for any paradoxical (simultaneously inner and outer) unique ‘fold’, any particular ‘folding’ of every entity that we refer to or that refers to us. And that’s why nearly nothing is totally indifferent to us.

movements of drives. These singular points, where not only ‘it speaks’ but also ‘where it speaks, it enjoys’ (*là où ça parle, ça jouit*) (Lacan, 1975b, p. 104).

What is the final goal of the analysis then? Could be the enactment of a particular *sinthome* a justified reason to end the analytic process? Perhaps the proper time to terminate the analysis depends on the attitude of the analyzed person to the form of the *sinthome* and the sufficiency of its potential to reenact the ‘extimate’, long dormant sexuality? The most preferred moment of conclusion seems to be when the person is able genuinely say that the commandment: ‘love your symptom (meaning *sinthome*) as yourself’ is in his/her case fulfilled.

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