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rected at precisely this link between power and biology. It is not enough to simply assert the human rights of the subject against the incursions of power. What must be critically examined is the way in which certain human subjectivities are constructed as conduits of power.

The conceptual vocabulary to analyse these new forms of power and subjectivity would not have been available to classical anarchism. However, even in this new paradigm of subjectifying power, classical anarchism's ethical and political commitment to interrogating authority, as well as its analysis of state sovereignty — which went beyond class explanations — continues to be relevant today. Postanarchism is innovative precisely because it combines what is crucial in anarchist theory, with a postsructuralist/discursive-analytic critique of essentialism. What results is an open-ended anti-authoritarian political project for the future.

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of different articulations decided contingently in the course of struggle.

New Challenges: Bio-Politics and the Subject

One of the central challenges to radical politics today would be the deformation of the nation state into a bio-political state — a deformation which, paradoxically, shows its true face. As Giorgio Agamben has shown, the logic of sovereignty beyond the law, and the logic of bio-politics, have intersected in the form of the modern state. Thus, the prerogative of the state is to regulate, monitor and police the biological health of its internal populations. As Agamben has argued, this function produces a particular kind of subjectivity — what he calls homo sacer — which is defined by the form of "bare life," or biological life stripped of its political and symbolic significance, as well as by the principle of legal murder, or murder with impunity.[19] Paradigmatic of this would be the subjectivity of the refugee, and the refugee internment camps that we see springing up everywhere. Within these camps, a new, arbitrary form of power is exerted directly on the naked life of the detainee. In other words, the body of the refugee, which has been stripped of all political and legal rights, is the point of application of sovereign bio-power. However, the refugee is merely emblematic of the bio-political status that we are all increasingly being reduced to. Indeed, this points to a new antagonism that is emerging as central to politics.[20] A postanarchist critique would be di-

[19] See Giorgio Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life. Trans., Daniel Heller- Roazen. Stanford, Ca: Stanford University Press, 1995.

[20] As Agamben argues: : "The novelty of coming politics is that it will not longer be a struggle for the conquest or control of the State, but a struggle between the State and the non-State (humanity)…"Giorgio Agamben, The Coming Community, trans., Michael Hardt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. p. 84.

ciencies in the structures of power and language, and the possibility of a radically indeterminate notion of agency emerging from this lack.

Therefore, postanarchism is not so much a coherent political program, but rather an anti- authoritarian problematic that emerges genealogically — that is, through a series of theoretical conflicts or aporias — from a poststructuralist approach to anarchism (or indeed, an anarchist approach to poststructuralism). However, postanarchism also implies a broad strategy of interrogating and contesting relations of power and hierarchy, of uncovering previously unseen sites of domination and antagonism. In this sense, postanarchism may be seen as an open- ended politico-ethical project of deconstructing authority. What distinguishes it from classical anarchism is that it is a non-essentialist politics. That is, postanarchism no longer relies on an essential identity of resistance, and is no longer anchored in the epistemologies of the Enlightenment or the ontological guarantees of humanist discourse. Rather, its ontology is constitutively open to other, and posits an empty and indeterminate radical horizon, which can include a plurality of different political struggles and identities. In other words, postanarchism is an anti-authoritarianism which resists the totalizing potential of a closed discourse or identity. This does not mean, of course, that post-anarchism has no ethical content or limits. Indeed, its politico-ethical content may even be provided by the traditional emancipative principles of freedom and equality — principles whose unconditional and irreducible nature was affirmed by the classical anarchists. However, the point is that these principles are no longer grounded in a closed identity but become "empty signifiers"[18] that are open to a number

[18] This notion of the "empty signifier"is central to Laclau's theory of hegemonic articulation. See Hegemony, op. cit. See Ernesto Laclau, "Why do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?"in The Lesser Evil and the Greater Good: The Theory and Politics of Social Diversity, ed. Jeffrey Weeks. Concord, Mass.: Rivers Oram Press, 1994. 167–178

In recent years radical politics has been faced with a number of new challenges, not least of which has been the reemergence of the aggressive, authoritarian state in its new paradigm of security and bio-politics. The 'war on terror'serves as the latest guise for the aggressive reassertion of the principle state sovereignty, beyond the traditional limits imposed on it by legal institutions or democratic polities. Coupled with this has been the hegemony of neo-liberal projects of capitalist globalization, as well as the ideological obscurantism of the so-called Third Way. The profound disillusionment in the wake of the collapse of Communist systems nearly two decades ago has resulted in a political and theoretical vacuum for the radical Left, which has generally been ineffective in countering the rise of the Far Right in Europe, as well as a more insidious 'creeping conservatism' whose dark ideological implications we are only just beginning to see unfold.

The Anarchist Moment

It is perhaps because of the disarray that the Left finds itself in today, that there has been a recent revival of interest in anarchism as a possible radical alternative to Marxism. Indeed, anarchism was always a kind of 'third way' between liberalism and Marxism, and now, with the general disenchantment felt with both 'free-market' style liberalism and centralist socialism, the appeal of, or at least interest in, anarchism is likely to increase. This revival is also due to the prominence of the broadly termed anti-globalization movement. This is a movement which contests the domination of neo-liberal globalization in all its manifestations — from corporate greed, to environmental degradation and genetically-modified foods. It is based around a broad social protest agenda which incorporates a multitude of different issues and political identities. However, what we are witnessing here is clearly a new form of radical

politics — one that is fundamentally different to both the particularized politics of identity that has generally prevailed in Western liberal societies, as well as to the old style Marxist politics of class struggle. On the one hand, the anti- globalization movement unites different identities around a common struggle; and yet this common ground is not determined in advance, or based on the priority of particular class interests, but rather is articulated in a contingent way during the struggle itself. What makes this movement radical is its unpredictability and indeterminacy — the way that unexpected links and alliances are formed between different identities and groups that would otherwise have little in common. So while this movement is universal, in the sense that it invokes a common emancipative horizon which constitutes the identities of participants, it rejects the false universality of Marxist struggles, which deny difference, and subordinate other struggles to the central role of the proletariat — or, to be more precise, to the vanguard role of the Party.

It is this refusal of centralist and hierarchical politics, this openness to a plurality of different identities and struggles, that makes the anti-globalization movement an anarchist movement. It is not anarchistic just because anarchist groups are prominent in it. What is more important is that the anti-globalization movement, without being consciously anarchist, embodies an anarchistic form of politics in its structure and organization[1] — which are decentralized, pluralistic and democratic — as well as in its inclusiveness. Just as classical anarchists like Bakunin and Kropotkin insisted, in opposition to Marxists, that the revolutionary struggle could not confined or determined by the class interests of the industrial proletariat, and must be open also to peasants, the lumpenproletariat, and

[1] See David Graeber's discussion of some of these anarchistic structures and forms of organization in "The New Anarchists,"New Left Review 13 (Jan/Feb 2002): 61–73.

— it did not recognize the hidden power relations and potential authoritarianism in the essentialist identities, and discursive and epistemological frameworks, that formed the basis of its critique of authority. The anarchist intervention in poststructural theory, on the other hand, exposed its political and ethical shortcomings, and, in particular, the ambiguities of explaining agency and resistance in the context of all-pervasive power relations.

These theoretical problems centered around the question of power, place and the outside: it was found that while classical anarchism was able to theorize, in the essential revolutionary subject, an identity or place of resistance outside the order of power, this subject was found, in the subsequent analyses, to be embroiled in the very power relations it contested; whereas poststructuralism, while it exposed precisely this complicity between the subject and power, was left without a theoretical point of departure — an outside — from which to criticize power. Thus, the theoretical quandary that I attempted to address in From Bakunin to Lacan, was that, while we have to assume that there is no essentialist outside to power — no firm ontological or epistemological ground for resistance, beyond the order of power — radical politics nevertheless needs some theoretical dimension outside power, and some notion of radical agency that was not wholly determined by power. I explored the emergence of this aporia, discovering two central 'epistemological breaks' in radical political thought. The first was found in Stirner's critique of Enlightenment humanism, which formed the theoretical basis for the poststructuralist intervention, within the anarchist tradition itself. The second was found in Lacanian theory, whose implications went beyond the conceptual limits of poststructuralism[17] — pointing to the defi-

[17] The question of whether Lacan can be seen as 'poststructuralist'or 'post- postructuralist'forms a central point of contention between thinkers like Laclau and Zizek, both of whom are heavily influenced by Lacanian theory. See Butler et al. Contingency, op. cit.

anarchist theory that must be brought to light, and whose implications must be explored. They must be freed from the epistemological conditions that, although they originally gave rise to them now restrict them. Postanarchism thus performs a salvage operation on classical anarchism, attempting to extract its central insight about the autonomy of the political, and explore its implications for contemporary radical politics.

The impetus for this postanarchist intervention came from my sense that not only was anarchist theory in nuce poststructuralist; but also that postructuralism itself was in nuce anarchist. That is to say, anarchism allowed, as I have suggested, the theorization of the autonomy of the political with its multiple sites of power and domination, as well as its multiple identities and sites of resistance (state, church, family, patriarchy, etc) beyond the economic reductionist framework of Marxism. However, as I have also argued, the implications of these theoretical innovations were restricted by the epistemological conditions of the time — essentialist ideas about subjectivity, the determinist view of history, and the rational discourses of the Enlightenment. Poststructuralism is, in turn, at least in its political orientation, fundamentally anarchist — particularly its deconstructive project of unmasking and destabilizing the authority of institutions, and contesting practices of power that are dominating and exclusionary. The problem with poststructuralism was that, while it implied a commitment to anti-authoritarian politics, it lacked not only an explicit politico-ethico content, but also an adequate account of individual agency. The central problem with Foucault, for instance, was that if the subject is constructed through the discourses and relations of powerthat dominate him, how exactly does he resist this domination? Therefore, the premise for bringing together anarchism and poststructuralism was to explore the ways in which each might highlight and address the theoretical problems in the other. For instance, the poststructuralist intervention in anarchist theory showed that anarchism had a theoretical blindspot

intellectuals déclassé, etc, so too the contemporary movement includes a broad range of struggles, identities and interests — trade unions, students, environmentalists, indigenous groups, ethnic minorities, peace activists, and so on.

As post-Marxists like Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe argue, the radical political horizon is no longer dominated by the proletariat and its struggle against capitalism. They point to a whole series of new social movements and identities — blacks, feminists, ethnic and sexual minorities — which no longer fit into the Marxist category of class struggles: "The common denominator of all of them would be their differentiation from workers' struggles, considered as 'class' struggles."[2] Class is therefore no longer the central category through which radical political subjectivity is defined. Moreover, contemporary political struggles are no longer determined by the struggle against capitalism, but rather point to new sites of domination and highlight new arenas of antagonism — racism, privatization, workplace surveillance, bureaucratization, etc. As Laclau and Mouffe argue, these new social movements have been primarily struggles against domination, rather than merely economic exploitation as the Marxist paradigm would suppose: "As for their novelty, that is conferred upon them by the fact that they call into question new forms of subordination."[3] That is to say, they are anti-authoritarian struggles — struggles that contest the lack of reciprocity in particular relations of power. Here, economic exploitation would be seen as part of the broader problematic of domination — which would include also sexual and cultural forms of subordination. In this sense, one could say that these struggles and antagonisms point to an anarchist moment in contemporary politics.

[2] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics. London: Verso, 2001. p. 159.

[3] Ibid., p. 160.

According to post-Marxists, contemporary political conditions simply can no longer be explained within the theoretical categories and paradigms central to Marxist theory. Marxism was conceptually limited by its class essentialism and economic determinism, which had the effect of reducing the political to a site that was strictly determined by the capitalist economy and the dialectical emergence of what was seen as the universal emancipative subject. That is to say, Marxism was unable to understand the political as a fully autonomous, specific and contingent field in its own right, seeing it always as a superstructural effect of class and economic structures. Thus, the analysis of politics was subordinated to the analysis of capitalism. Because of this, Marxism simply has no theoretical purchase on political struggles that are not based on class, and are no longer centered around economic issues. The catastrophic failure of the Marxist project — its culmination in the massive perpetuation and centralization of state power and authority — showed that it had neglected the importance and specificity of the political domain. By contrast, contemporary post-Marxists asserts the primacy of the political, seeing it as an autonomous field — one that, rather than being determined by class dynamics and the workings of the capitalist economy, is radically contingent and indeterminate.

What is surprising, then, is that post-Marxist theory has not recognized the crucial contribution of classical anarchism in conceptualizing a fully autonomous political field. Indeed, it is precisely this emphasis on the primacy and specificity of the political that characterizes anarchism and distinguishes it from Marxism. Anarchism offered a radical socialist critique of Marxism, exposing its theoretical blindspot on the question of state power. Unlike Marxism, which saw political power as deriving from class position, anarchists like Mikhail Bakunin insisted that the state must be seen as the main impediment to socialist revolution, and that it was oppressive no matter what form it took and or which class controlled it: "They (Marxists)

room for seeing the political as contingent and indeterminate. Moreover, the genealogical critique could also be extended to the 'natural' institutions and relations that anarchists see as being opposed to the order of political power. Because genealogy sees history as a clash of representations and an antagonism of forces, in which power relations are inevitable, this would destabilize any identity, structure or institution — even those that might exist in a post-revolutionary anarchist society.

These four problematics that are central to poststructuralism/discourse analysis, thus have fundamental implications for anarchist theory: if anarchism is to be theoretically effective today, if it is to fully engage with contemporary political struggles and identities, it must eschew the Enlightenment humanist framework in which it is articulated — with its essentialist discourses, its positivistic understanding of social relations and its dialectical view of history. Instead, it must fully assert the contingency of history, the indeterminacy of identity, and the antagonistic nature of social and political relations. In other words, anarchism must follow its insight about the autonomy of the political dimension to its logical implications — and see the political as a constitutively open field of indetermination, antagonism and contingency, without the guarantees of dialectical reconciliation and social harmony.

The Postanarchist Problematic

Postanarchism may therefore be seen as the attempt to revise anarchist theory along non- essentialist and non-dialectical lines, through the application and development of insights from poststructuralism/discourse analysis. This is in order to tease out what I see as innovative and seminal in anarchism — which is precisely the theorization of the autonomy and specificity of the political domain, and the deconstructive critique of political authority. It is these crucial aspects of

the form of institutions and legislations the forgotten past of real struggles, of masked victories or defeats, the blood that has dried on the codes of law."[14] In the institutions, laws and practices that we come to take for granted, or see as natural or inevitable, there is a condensation of violent struggles and antagonisms that have been repressed. For instance, Jacques Derrida has shown that the authority of the Law is based on a founding gesture of violence that has been disavowed. The Law must be founded on something that pre-exists it, and therefore its foundation is by definition illegal. The secret of the Law's being must therefore be some kind disavowed illegality, an original crime or act of violence that brings the body of the Law into existence and which is now is hidden in its symbolic structures.[15] In other words, social and political institutions and identities must be seen as having political — that is to say, antagonistic — rather than natural origins. These political origins have been repressed in the psychoanalytic sense — that is, they have been 'placed elsewhere' rather than eliminated entirely, and can always be re-activated once the meaning of these institutions and discourses is contested.[16] While anarchism would share this deconstructive engagement with political authority — it rejected the social contract theory of the state, for instance — it still subscribes to a dialectical view of history. Social and political development is seen as determined by the unfolding of a rational social essence and immutable natural and historical laws. The problem is that if these immutable laws determine the conditions for revolutionary struggle, then there is little

[14] Michel Foucault, "War in the Filigree of Peace: Course Summary,"trans. I. Mcleod, in Oxford Literary Review 4, no. 2 (1976): 15–19. pp. 17–18.

[15] See Jacques Derrida, 'Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority,'in Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice, ed. Drucilla Cornell et al. New York: Routledge, 1992: 3–67.

[16] See Jacob Torfing, New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek, Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.

do not know that despotism resides not so much in the form of the State but in the very principle of the State and political power."[4] In other words, domination existed in the very structure and logic of the state — it constituted an autonomous site or place of power, one that must be destroyed as the first act of revolution. Anarchists believed that Marx's neglect of this domain would have disastrous consequences for revolutionary politics — a prediction that was proven all too accurate by the Bolshevik Revolution. For anarchists, the centralized political power could not be easily overcome, and was always in danger of being reaffirmed unless addressed specifically. The theoretical innovation of anarchism therefore lay in taking the analysis of power beyond the economic reductionist paradigm of Marxism. Anarchism also pointed to other sites of authority and domination that were neglected in Marxist theory — for example, the Church, the family and patriarchal structures, the law, technology, as well as the structure and hierarchy of the Marxist revolutionary Party itself.[5] It offered new theoretical tools for the analysis of political power and, in doing so, opened up the site of the political as a specific field of revolutionary struggle and antagonism, which could no longer be subordinated to purely economic concerns.

Given anarchism's contribution to radical politics and, in particular, its theoretical proximity to current post-Marxist projects, there has been a curious silence about this revolutionary tradition on the part of contemporary radical theory. However, I would also suggest that just as contemporary theory should take account of the intervention of anarchism, anarchism itself could benefit greatly through an incorporation of contemporary theoretical perspectives, in particular those derived from discourse analysis, psychoanalysis and

[4] Mikhail Bakunin, Political Philosophy: Scientific Anarchism, ed. G. P Maximoff. London: Free Press of Glencoe. p. 221.

[5] See Murray Bookchin, Remaking Society, Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1989. p. 188.

poststructuralism. Perhaps we could say that anarchism today has been more about practice than theory, despite, of course, the interventions of a number of influential modern anarchist thinkers like Noam Chomsky, John Zerzan and Murray Bookchin.[6] I have already pointed to the anarchy in action that we see in the new social movements that characterize our political landscape. However, the very conditions that have given rise to the anarchist moment — the pluralization of struggles, subjectivities and sites of power — are also the conditions that highlight the central contradictions and limits of anarchist theory. Anarchist theory is still largely based in the paradigm of Enlightenment humanism — with its essentialist notions of the rational human subject, and its positivistic faith in science and objective historical laws. Just as Marxism was limited politically by its own categories of class and economic determinism, as well as by its dialectical view of historical development, anarchism can also be said to be limited by its epistemological anchoring in the essentialist and rationalist discourses of Enlightenment humanism.

New Paradigms of the Social: Postsructuralism and Discourse Analysis

The paradigm of Enlightenment humanism has been superseded by the paradigm of postmodernity, which can be seen a critical perspective on the discourses of modernity — an "incredulity towards metanarratives," as Jean-Francois Lyotard put it.[7] In other words, what the postmodern condition puts

[6] The last two in particular have remained resistant to poststructuralism/postmodernism. See, for instance, John Zerzan, "The Catastrophe of Postmodernism,"Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed (Fall 1991): 16–25.

[7] See Jean-Francois Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: a Report on Knowledge. Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.

nate us. This throws into doubt the notion of the autonomous, rational human subject and its status in a radical politics of emancipation. As Foucault says, "The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself."[12] This has a number of major implications for anarchism. Firstly, rather than there being a subject whose natural human essence is repressed by power — as anarchists believed — this form of subjectivity is actually an effect of power. That is to say, this subjectivity has been produced in such a way that it sees itself as having an essence that is repressed — so that its liberation is actually concomitant with its continued domination. Secondly, this discursive figure of the universal human subject that is central to anarchism, is itself a mechanism of domination that aims at the normalization of the individual and the exclusion of forms of subjectivity that do not fit in with it. This domination was unmasked by Max Stirner, who showed that the humanist figure of man was really an inverted image of God, and performed the same ideological operation of oppressing the individual and denying difference.

D) The genealogical view of history. Here the view of history as the unfolding of a fundamental law is rejected, in favor of one that emphasizes the ruptures, breaks and discontinuities in history. History is seen as a series of antagonisms and multiplicities, rather than the articulation of a universal logic, like the Hegelian dialectic, for instance. There is no "timeless and essential secret" to history, but merely, as Foucault says, the "hazardous play of dominations."[13] Foucault saw Nietzschean genealogy as a project of unmasking the conflicts and antagonisms, the "unspoken warfare" that is waged behind the veil of history. The role of the genealogist is to "awaken beneath

[12] Michel Foucault. Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. Trans. A. Sheridan. Penguin: London, 1991. p. 30.

[13] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,"in The Foucault Reader, ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon, 1984. 76–100. p. 83.

of desire. This lack in identity is also registered in the external symbolic order through which the subject is understood. The subject seeks recognition of himself through the an interaction with the structure of language; however, this structure is itself deficient, as there is an certain element — the Real — that escapes symbolization.[10] What is clear in these two approaches is that the subject can no longer be seen as a complete, whole, self- contained identity that is fixed by an essence — rather its identity is contingent and unstable. Therefore, politics can no longer be based entirely on the rational claims of stable identities, or on the revolutionary assertion of a fundamental human essence. Rather, political identities are indeterminate and contingent — and can give rise to a plurality of different and often antagonistic struggles over precisely how this identity is to be defined. This approach clearly calls into question the anarchist understanding of subjectivity, which sees it as being based on a universal human essence with rational and moral characteristics.[11]

C) The complicity of the subject in power. The status of the subject is further problematized by its involvement in relations of power and discourse. This was a problem that was explored extensively by Michel Foucault, who showed the myriad ways in which subjectivity is constructed through discursive regimes and practices of power/knowledge. Indeed, the way that we come to see ourselves as self-reflexive subjects with particular characteristics and capacities is based on our complicity in relations and practices of power that often domi-

[10] For a comprehensive discussion of the political implications of this Lacanian approach to identity, see Yannis Stavrakakis, Lacan and the Political. London: Routledge, 1999. pp 40–70.

[11] Peter Kropotkin, for instance, believed that there was an natural instinct for sociability in men, which formed the basis for ethical relations; while Bakunin argued that the subject's morality and rationality arises out of his natural development. See, respectively, Peter Kropotkin, Ethics: Origin & Development. Trans., L.S Friedland. New York: Tudor, 1947; and Bakunin, Political Philosophy, op cit., pp. 152–157.

in question is precisely the universality and absolutism of rational and moral frameworks derived from the Enlightenment. It unmasks the very ideas that we have taken for granted — our faith in science, for instance — showing their arbitrary nature, and the way they have been constructed through the violent exclusion of other discourses and perspectives. Postmodernism also questions the essentialist ideas about subjectivity and society — the conviction that there is a central and unchanging truth at the base of our identity and our social existence, a truth that can only be revealed once the irrational mystifications of religion or ideology have been discarded. Instead, postmodernism emphasizes the shifting and contingent nature of identity — the multiplicity of ways in which it can be experienced and understood. Moreover, rather than history being understood as the unfolding of a rational logic or essential truth — as in the dialectic, for instance — it is seen from the postmodern perspective as a series of haphazard accidents and contingencies, without origin or purpose. Postmodernism therefore emphasizes the instability and plurality of identity, the constructed nature of social reality, the incommensurability of difference, and the contingency of history.

There are a number of contemporary critical theoretical strategies that engage with the question of postmodernity, and that I see as having crucial implications for radical politics today. These strategies would include poststructuralism, 'discourse analysis' and post-Marxism. They derive from a variety of different fields in philosophy, political theory, cultural studies, aesthetics and psychoanalysis, yet what they broadly share is a discursive understanding of social reality. That is to say, they see social and political identities as being constructed through relations of discourse and power, and as having no intelligible meaning outside this context. Furthermore, these perspectives go beyond a structural determinist understanding of the world, pointing to the indeterminacy of the structure

itself, as well as its multiple forms of articulation. There are several key theoretical problematics that can be drawn out here, that are not only central to the contemporary political field, but also have important implications for anarchism itself.

A) The opacity of the social. The socio-political field is characterized by multiple layers of articulation, antagonism and ideological dissimulation. Rather than there being an objective social truth beyond interpretation and ideology, there is only the antagonism of conflicting articulations of the social. This derives from the Althusserian (and originally Freudian) principle of overdetermination — according to which meaning is never ultimately fixed, giving rise to a plurality of symbolic interpretations. Slavoj Zizek provides an interesting example of this discursive operation through Claude Levi-Strauss' discussion of the different perceptions of the spatial location of buildings amongst members of a Winnebago tribe. The tribe, we are told, is divided into two groups — 'those who are from above'and 'those who are from below.' An individual from each group was asked to draw the ground plan of his or her village on sand or a piece of paper. The result was a radical difference between the representations of each group. 'Those who are from above'drew the village as a series of concentric circles within circles, with a group of circles in the center and a series of satellite circles clustered around this. This would correspond with the 'conservative-corporatist' image of society held by the upper classes. 'Those who are from below'drew the village also as a circle, but one that is clearly divided by a line into two antagonistic halves — thus corresponding with the 'revolutionary-antagonistic' view held by the lower classes. Zizek comments here:

> the very splitting into the two 'relative'perceptions implies a hidden reference to a constant — not the objective, 'actual'disposition of buildings but a traumatic kernel, a fundamental antagonism

> the inhabitants of the village were unable to symbolize, to account for, to 'internalize,' to come to terms with — an imbalance in social relations that prevented the community from stabilizing itself into a harmonious whole.[8]

According to this argument, the anarchist notion of social objectivity or totality would be impossible to sustain. There is always an antagonism at the level of social representation that undermines the symbolic consistency of this totality. The different perspectives and conflicting interpretations of the social could not be seen merely resulting from an ideological distortion which prevents the subject from grasping the truth of society. The point here is that this differencein social interpretations — this incommensurable field of antagonisms — is the truth of society. In other words, the distortion here is not at the level of ideology, but at the level of social reality itself.

B) The indeterminacy of the subject. Just as the identity of social may be seen as indeterminate, so too is the identity of the subject. This derives from a number of different theoretical approaches. Poststructuralists such as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, have attempted to see subjectivity as a field of immanence and becoming that gives rise to a plurality of differences, rather than as a fixed, stable identity. The supposed unity of the subject is destabilized through the heterogeneous connections it forms with other social identities and assemblages.[9] A different approach to the question of subjectivity can be found in Lacanian psychoanalysis. Here the identity of the subject is always deficient or lacking, because of the absence of what Jacques Lacan calls object petit a — the lost object

[8] See Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Zizek, Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left. London: Verso. pp. 112–113.

[9] See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Trans. R. Hurley. New York: Viking Press, 1972. p. 58.