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How irritating it is to encounter such a blatant reluctance to come to terms with contemporary, post-leftist anarchy!

> *The rationalist discourse of Enlightenment political philosophy can only hope to address the rational faculties.*

This statement — the only point at which I refer to eighteenth century rationalism in my essay — apparently constitutes a "diatribe against the Enlightenment". This strikes me as a bizarre notion. But even if I did want to critique the Enlightenment I can't do so because it seems that all such critiques are inevitably "reactionary, fascist and elitist". Critique — let alone repudiation — of the Enlightenment apparently aligns one with Hitler! Why is it not possible to mount a critique of rationalism from an anarchist perspective? Why are critiques of the Enlightenment *necessarily* reactionary? Why is the Enlightenment such a sacred cow?

> *Enlightenment thinkers used the concept of 'reason' to undermine the absolutist state and to re-affirm the crucial importance of human agency...*

But in the name of what cause? Not an anarchist project, but — wittingly or not — bourgeois liberalism (Rousseau, for example: an advocate of limited parliamentary democracy). It might be well to remember the words of one of Rousseau's contemporaries, and someone whose perspective informs and closely resembles anarchism. Blake wrote:

> Mock on, mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau!
> Mock on, mock on — Tis all in vain!
> You throw the sand against the wind,
> And the wind blows it back again.

Blake recognised such "Enlightenment thinkers" not as liberatory figures but as apologists for power (e.g. concerning Rousseau, "you acquit & flatter the Alexanders & Caesers, the Louises & Fredericks", *Jerusalem*, ch. 3).

Brian avers that "anarchists of the past … rejected all forms of power" and were not merely anti-statists, but then asserts that

> *The hidden and ubiquitous nature of power under contemporary capitalism … is what characterizes modern* state *power.*

The latter statement explains the former. Classical anarchism (and I include its latter-day proponents, such as Brian, here) traces all forms of power to the State, but only recognise and reject those forms of power which it generates. But there are forms of power which are not the product of the State: there are forms of power which *precede* the State (e.g. hierarchy, the domination of nature, division of labour) and forms of power which *exist independently* of the State (e.g. speciesism, sexism), although they may be reinforced by it.

Further, the exposure (and eradication) of forms of power is an exponential process and therefore past anarchists cannot have opposed *all* forms of power, but merely those forms which they recognised — and, necessarily, those which existed at the time: new

forms of power such as anti-Semitism, sexism and anthropocentrism in the texts of some past anarchists suggests their failure to identify such practices as forms of power. And it strikes me that intoning the lirany of talismanic terms such as "sociality" or "the life-works, mutual aid, voluntary associations" does not guarantee that power is somehow magically absent in the kind of relations these terms denote. Power can be present, for example, in practices of mutual aid as well as in voluntary associations. "Social life" is not somehow exempt from the operations of power and cannot be set over and against Capital and the State. Society is, in Zerzan's concise definition, a (*Future Primitive*, p. 160)

> *totalizing racket, advancing at the expense of the individual, nature and human solidarity.*

The contemporary anarchist struggle against the totality — against all forms of power, as they exponentially come into focus — must therefore include a struggle against society. Power in contemporary society is, as Brian admits, ubiquitous, and (of course) some forms are visible and some "hidden", some are macroscopic and some are microscopic. But all need to be eradicated. Society is a huge assemblage of power relations and, in the contemporary world, thoroughly integrated with Capital and the State. And these power relations *are*, to a large degree, abstract. So rather than "expand[ing] our sociality", anarchists might be better advised to begin dismantling the totality, not in the name of ideology, but (as I said in my essay) in order

> *to create our own lives free of the controls exercised by power, authority and order.*