A leading theorist of the anarchist and revolutionary personalist dimensions of the counterculture of the 1960s, some twenty-five years later Murray Bookchin adopted a much more strident and combative stance towards countercultural, lifestyle-oriented anarchism in his 1995 polemic, Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm. This essay examines the rationale for Bookchin's shift from reasoned dialogue with participants in the Euro-American counterculture to polemical confrontation. In contrast to those who have charged Bookchin with theoretical inconsistency driven by cynical political opportunism, it argues that while his political thought evolved over time in response to changing historical circumstances, the later position is theoretically consistent with the earlier. However, it also maintains that Bookchin's straw man account of lifestyle anarchism in the 1990s is misguided and politically unhelpful insofar as it obscures what the earlier work helped so well to clarify: namely, the integral connections between the personal and the political aspects of libertarian revolutionary social change. It thus obscures one of the most creative and hopeful aspects of the anarchist currents in the newest social movements that emerged from the rebellions of 1968.

Keywords Bookchin, lifestyle anarchism, countercultures, revolution

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy and practice of revolutionary personalism emerged from the most radical, politicised edge of the counterculture of the 1960s, as well as from anarchist-inclined strains of pacifism, anti-racism, radical feminism and ecologism. Its defining characteristic is the recognition that the liberation of everyday life is an essential component of anti-authoritarian revolutionary change. The influential anarchist theorist Murray Bookchin articulated this point with memorable clarity in the immediate aftermath of the events of May-June 1968 in France, 'It is plain that the goal of revolutionary today must be the liberation of daily life. Any revolution that fails to achieve this goal is counter-revolution. Above all, it is we who have to be liberated, our daily lives, with all their moments, hours and days, and not universals like "History" and "Society"' (Bookchin, 2004 [1971], p. 10).

Some twenty-five years later, however, Bookchin characterised the personalist legacy of the Euro-American counterculture in much less sympathetic terms. In a brief but hugely controversial book published in 1995, Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm, he lambasted contemporary anarchists for abandoning their social revolutionary and Utopian aspirations in favour of an introspective personalism, escapist aestheticism, and chic boutique lifestyle subculture that posed no serious threat to the existing powers. In this essay I examine the rationale for this polemical criticism. Is it simply a case of what at least one critic (Black, 1997, ch. 1) has somewhat unkindly termed 'grumpy old man' syndrome, or are there deeper issues at stake that merit closer consideration?

The plan for the paper is as follows. First, I will trace the history of the anarchist counterculture in the U.S. context in which Bookchin's thinking developed, focusing particularly on the 1960s and its anarchist revolutionary personalist legacies. Second, I will elucidate Bookchin's sympathetic theorisation of the revolutionary personalism of the 1960s in influential works published shortly after the events of 1968. Third, I will sketch his apparently contrasting critique of lifestyle anarchism in his 1995 polemic. Finally, I conclude with an assessment of the
significance and merits of Bookchin's arguments based on my interpretation of the development of anarchist practice and theory since the 1960s.

My argument is that while Bookchin's differing accounts of lifestyle-oriented cultural politics in the immediate aftermath of 1968 and in the mid-1990s are indeed theoretically consistent, the later work is misguided and politically unhelpful insofar as its polemical intent and either/or theoretical premises obscure what the earlier work helped so well to clarify: namely, the integral connections between the personal and the political aspects of libertarian revolutionary social change. It thus obscures one of the most significant legacies of the anarchist revolutionary activity of 1968.

ANARCHISM AND THE AMERICAN COUNTERCULTURE

The core of anarchism is the belief that society can and should be organised without coercive authority. While anarchist ideas may be traced back thousands of years to the Taoists in ancient China, anarchism first emerged as a coherent political ideology in the late eighteenth century. It developed primarily in opposition to centralised states and industrial capitalism, and by the end of the nineteenth century was a mass revolutionary movement attracting millions of adherents worldwide.

Opposed to all forms of domination, whether in the home or the workplace or the political arena, anarchists have articulated broad cultural critiques of modern society and envisioned revolutionary alternatives embodying values very different from those that predominate in contemporary anarchist societies. Not content simply to theorise or strategise revolutionary alternatives, anarchists have also embodied the revolution in their daily lives, thus spawning an enormously creative counterculture consisting of (amongst other things) free art, free schools, free media and free love. In the United States, this anarchist counterculture reached its most developed form in two periods: from the end of the nineteenth century through the first two decades of the twentieth, and again in the 1960s.

From the 1920s to the 1950s, war, economic collapse, restrictions on immigration and political repression took their toll on the American anarchist movement. Nevertheless, libertarian book clubs, poetry circles, and anarchist periodicals served as a bridge between the vibrant anarchist countercultures of the early twentieth century and the 1960s. Of particular note during this period was the group of poets and painters that joined Kenneth Rexroth's Libertarian Circle in post-war San Francisco. A pacifist and an anarchist, Rexroth believed in a model of human development that led from personal freedom to an ethics of universal compassion by way of love. The primary forces impeding such development, he believed, were the state and capitalism, which conspired to quantify and commodify all human relationships, and so destroy the integrity of the personality. The Libertarian Circle was founded in 1946 in order to counter such cultural depersonalisation, and while it survived for only a few years its impact on the subsequent development of the American counterculture was of lasting significance. Among those heavily influenced by its ethos were the founders of the Beat movement.

One of the most distinctive features of both the Libertarian Circle and the Beat movement was their commitment to a form of countercultural 'personalist' politics inspired in large measure by
the pacifist anarchist tradition. In practice, this revolutionary personalism entailed a rejection of traditional radical political strategies involving engagement with the structures of power in favour of more personal attempts to 'live the revolution now' - in part by establishing alternative cultural institutions that ran parallel to the old world but had as little to do with it as possible. What is now commonly referred to as the sixties counterculture grew out of these experiments, as increasing numbers of Americans decided to 'drop out' of the cultural mainstream. Young people in particular turned their backs on cultural expectations of marriage, career and materialistic social climbing, and turned instead to a Beat lifestyle of voluntary poverty, sexual freedom, heightened consciousness, personal expression and communion with nature. Some rejected social commitment altogether. Others embraced a form of social commitment based on values very different from those that predominated in mainstream American society. Between 1965 and 1967, for instance, American youth flocked to the low-rent HaightAshbury district of San Francisco and developed a communitarian subculture distinguished by residential co-lectives, shops run not only for profit but for the community, street festivals, and the pooling of money, food and drugs. Much of this activity was anarchist in orientation. For example, the members of a group named 'The Diggers' in honour of the radical agrarian communards of seventeenth-century England attempted to create a moneyless economy by recycling society's surplus goods. They also practised a form of anarchic street theatre intended to satirise the alienating and exploitative institutions of mainstream American culture.

In certain respects the American counterculture of the 1960s closely resembled its early twentieth-century anarchist counterpart, even if many of its practitioners were unaware of this fact. The resemblance is particularly striking after 1967, when the counterculture grew by leaps and bounds and millions of Americans chose to live in thousands of communes based on alternative norms and values. Between 1965 and 1970, participants in the counterculture created at least twice as many rural communes as had been established in all of American history (Farrell, 1997, p. 225). In spite of their great diversity, all of the communes aimed to achieve ecological and direct, face-to-face forms of human association reminiscent of the craft Utopian visions articulated by anarchists such as Peter Kropotkin and sympathetic libertarian socialists such as William Morris at the end of the nineteenth century. In the 1960s, a similar vision of decentralised, self-governing organic community and pleasurable work was articulated by the anarcho-communist Paul Goodman, whose ideas exercised a profound influence on the American counterculture. Later, as the sixties counterculture began to wane the ideas of both Goodman and Kropotkin inspired the literary imagination of Ursula K. Le Guin, whose 1974 anarchist Utopian novel The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia stands as a lasting monument to the spirit of the American anarchist counterculture.

The countercultural politics of the 1960s has been described aptly as 'the politics of anarchism' (Farrell, 1997, p. 229). Similarly, the larger 'Movement' of which the sixties counterculture was such an integral part has been characterised appropriately as 'anarchist in its deepest impulses' (M. Goodman, 1970, p. viii). One of the many features that made it so was the distinctive way in which it linked the personal and the political. According to Nigel Young, the tradition of anarchism and libertarian or Utopian socialism was the 'only' political tradition which over the previous century had clearly expressed such an indivisible integration of personal revolt against oppression with the political strategy of dismantling coercive structures (N. Young, 1977, p. 134). While this claim is doubtless exaggerated - certain not explicitly or exclusively anarchist or
libertarian socialist forms of feminism, pacifism, ecologism and anti-imperialism all articulated comparable revolutionary linkages between the personal and the political - it does highlight usefully one of the enduringly compelling features of the anarchist tradition. Hence an important part of its appeal to those in the movement who sought to articulate and enact a new concept of revolution opposed to domination in all aspects of life, from the 'pyramid of power' in universities, workplaces and the state to hierarchical relationships in intimate life.

BOOKCHIN AND THE EVENTS OF 1968

Reflecting on these developments in the immediate aftermath of the events of 1968, Murray Bookchin - then in his late forties - had little doubt about their revolutionary implications. In a short piece published in 1970, for example, he suggested that the hippy-inspired radical collectives were 'perhaps the focal centres of revolutionary energy in the present period' and claimed that Youth Culture as a whole prefigured, however incoately, 'a joyous communist and classless society, freed of the trammels of hierarchy and domination, a society that would transcend the historic splits between town and country, individual and society, and mind and body' (Bookchin, 1970, pp. 5-60). In a similar vein, in his classic collection of essays Post-Scarcity Anarchism (1971) he lauded the counterculture of his day as a form of Utopian prefigurative politics. In the very act of refusing to live by bourgeois strictures, he suggested, those who dropped out of mainstream society were planting the seeds of a new way of life. Negation thus passed into affirmation, as the rejection of the present became the assertion of a qualitatively different future within the 'rotting guts' of capitalism itself (Bookchin, 2004 [1971], p. viii). And dropping out became a mode of dropping in to the experimental yet still highly ambiguous social relations of a potentially revolutionary Utopian space.

From Bookchin's perspective, such rebelliousness did not in and of itself constitute revolutionary action. Revolutionary action, he maintained, in a manner consistent with more strident and contentious remarks in the 1990s, entailed at least in part an organised form of politics that the counterculture alone did not and could not provide. Understood as a means to an end, however, it played an indispensable part in the revolutionary process in at least two respects.

First, at a social level, it played a decisive 'preparatory' role in creating an atmosphere of indiscipline, spontaneity, radicalism and freedom in which revolutionary changes could take place. In this regard, Bookchin suggests, it closely resembled the revolutionary Enlightenment that swept through France in the eighteenth century - a period that transformed French consciousness and opened the way for the Great Revolution of 1789. In both cases, 'the old institutions were slowly pulverized by molecular action from below long before they were toppled by mass revolutionary action' (Bookchin, 2004, p. 14). In the 1960s it was the Beat movement that created the most significant breach in the solidly middle-class values of the 1950s, a breach that was widened enormously by the illegal activities of pacifists, civil rights workers, draft resisters and hippies. Moreover, the 'merely reactive' response of rebellious American youth produced indispensable forms of libertarian and Utopian affirmation such as the right to make love without restriction, the goal of community, the disavowal of money and commodities, the belief in mutual aid, and a new respect for spontaneity.
Second, at a more personal level, the counterculture of the 1960s encouraged a libertarian lifestyle that provided the revolutionary with the psychic resources necessary to resist the subversion of the revolutionary project by authoritarian or elitist propensities assimilated in hierarchical society. As Bookchin observed in a piece originally composed in Paris in July 1968, the habits of authority and hierarchy are instilled in the individual at the very outset of life - in the family milieu of infancy, in childhood education at home and in school, and in the organisation of work, 'leisure' and everyday life (Bookchin, 2004, p. 168). If it is to avoid becoming a source of counterrevolution, the revolutionary movement must therefore be 'profoundly concerned with lifestyle' (Bookchin, 2004, p. 11). And the revolutionary must try to reflect in his or her own person the conditions of the society (s)he is trying to achieve - at least to the degree this is possible in the constraining circumstances of the here and now. Anarchist organisations, Bookchin observed elsewhere (in response to charges by Marcuse and Huey Newton that anarchists rejected revolutionary organisation in favour of individual expression), differed from socialist political parties by virtue of being social movements combining a creative revolutionary life-style with a creative revolutionary theory' (Bookchin, January 1969). Both were essential, insofar as 'life-style is related as intimately to revolution as revolution is to life-style' (Bookchin, May 1969).

Indeed, Bookchin contends, it was precisely the absence of such lifestyleinspired and embodied creativity on the part of certain orthodox Marxist revolutionaries that proved so damaging to revolutionary prospects during the Paris revolt of May-June 1968. Among the most serious obstacles to the May-June uprising in Paris were not only de Gaulle and the police, but also the hardened organisations of the left - among them the Communist Party that stifled initiatives in many factories and the Leninist and Trotskyist groups that attempted to manipulate events so as to serve their own political interests. Members of tightly disciplined, hierarchical organisations, they saw it as their task to 'discipline' the revolt, or in Bookchin's words 'to de-revolutionize it by imbuing it with the habits of obethence and authority that their organizations have assimilated from the established order' (Bookchin, 2004, p. 170). These habits manifested themselves in the forms of parliamentary manoeuvring, street caucusing, and attempts to control the revolutionary expressions of freedom created by the rebellion. By contrast, anarchic and anarchist and Situationist groups worked not for the 'seizure of power' but for its dissolution and they embodied this aim both in their non-hierarchical and participatory forms of revolutionary organisation and in the lifestyles of their members.

Bookchin elaborated on these arguments in an important article, entitled 'On Spontaneity and Organisation', that developed from a talk he read at the Telos Conference on Organisation in Buffalo, New York in November 1971. In this piece he notes how ironic it is that 'the socialist movement' of his day (he does not specify which aspects of the movement he is referring to), far from being in the 'vanguard' of social and cultural developments, lingered behind them in almost every respect - in particular, in its 'shallow' comprehension of the counterculture, its 'anaemic' interpretation of women's liberation, its 'indifference' to ecology, and its 'ignorance' even of new currents drifting through the factories. While socialist ideologues engaged in 'simplistic' class analysis and adopted strategies and tactics 'already inadequate a generation ago', millions of people from all walks of life were intuitively trying to eliminate not merely material exploitation but domination in all its forms. Hence the 'intensely personal nature of the revolution spreading through society (Bookchin, 1975, p. 1), and its concern with the seemingly mundane details of
everyday life. Hence also the 'enormous advance' (Bookchin, 1975, p. 2) scored by the countercultural movement over its socialist counterpart: namely, the development of a revolutionary personalism that sees in impersonal goals the perpetuation of domination in its most insidious unconscious forms.

In contrast to those socialists who dismissed such developments out of hand as a form of 'bourgeois individualism', the Murray Bookchin of the early 1970s drew a distinction between the atomised egotism produced by capitalism and the libertarian communist struggle for a free and joyous society in which each individual might acquire control over her or his everyday life. Viewed as an element of the latter project - he suggests, in a line of reasoning that takes him beyond the means/end dichotomies of Post-Scarcity Anarchism - the process of anti-authoritarian individuation initiated by the counterculture was itself revolutionary insofar as revolution may be understood as self-activity in its most advanced form: the individuation of the 'masses' into conscious beings who can take direct, unmediated control of society and of their own lives. It follows logically - even if Bookchin himself does not explicitly make the point because of his perfectionist conception of utopia and strictly time-bound understanding of revolution - that an anarchist revolution may be understood as an open-ended process unfolding over time rather than a watershed event dividing the domination-ridden pre-revolutionary world from the domination-free utopia of the post-revolutionary future. Moreover, as he does explicitly recognise, this process would necessarily be an organic rather a mechanical one. As such, it would affirm 'not only the rational but the joyous, the sensuous and the aesthetic side of revolution' (Bookchin, 1975, p. 5). More specifically, it would affirm and extend the counterculture's practical and wide-ranging challenges to both the unconscious and conscious legacies of domination: for example, its commitments to the autonomy of self and die right to self-realisation; the evocation of love, sensuality, and the unfettered expression of the body; the spontaneous expression of feeling; the de-alienation of relations between people; the formation of communities and communes; the free access of all to the means of life; the rejection of the plastic commodity world and its careers; the practice of mutual aid; the acquisition of skills and counter-technologies; a new reverence for life and for the balance of nature; and the replacement of the work ethic by meaningful work and the claims of pleasure.

BOOKCHIN'S CRITIQUE OF LIFESTYLE ANARCHISM IN 1995

A leading theorist of the anarchist and revolutionary personalist dimensions of the counterculture of the 1960s, some twenty-five years later Bookchin adopts a much more strident and combative tone towards countercultural, lifestyle-oriented anarchism in his 1995 polemic, Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm. The targets of his polemic - ranging from the individualist anarchism of the philosopher L. Susan Brown to the mystical writings of Hakim Bey to the primitivism of George Bradford and John Zerzan - are idiosyncratic and diverse, and it is not immediately clear why he chooses to focus on the writings of these particular individuals rather than the practice-oriented anarchist movement that none of them claim to represent. However, from Bookchin's point of view nuanced questions about authorial intent are evidently beside the point, insofar as he believes that the relatively small sample of written work that is the object of his critique is representative of a much wider, and to him enormously disturbing, trend in the post-1960s Euro-American anarchist movement. Specifically, he contends - albeit without supporting empirical evidence - that these writings both reflect and provide the intellectual
premises for a momentous shift in the movement away from social revolutionary and Utopian aspirations towards a narcissistic sub-cultural lifestyle that poses no serious threat to the powers that be.

Whereas in the late 1960s and early 1970s Bookchin welcomed the individualism, spontaneity, cultural and sexual freedom, and undisciplined libertarian lifestyle that he associated with the counterculture, in the 1990s he lambastes contemporary anarchists for exhibiting precisely these same qualities. Moreover, he places the blame for this alleged degeneration of Euro-American anarchism on those selfsame participants in the counterculture of the late 1960s whom he earlier praised for their Utopian and revolutionary cultural experimentation. Looking backwards on the 1960s from a disillusioned perspective in the 1990s, he identifies two anarchic countercultures in the earlier period, one eminently social and hence good and the other personalistic and hence bad:

For all its shortcomings, the anarchic counterculture during the early part of the hectic 1960s was often intensely political and cast expressions like desire and ecstasy in eminently social terms, often deriding the personalistic tendencies of the later Woodstock generation. The transformation of the 'youth culture,' as it was originally called, from the birth of the civil rights and peace movements to Woodstock and Altamont, with its emphasis on a purely self-indulgent form of 'pleasure,' is reflected in Dylan's devolution from 'Blowin' in the Wind' to 'SadEyed Lady of the Lowlands' (Bookchin, 1995, p. 9).

According to the elder Bookchin, individualist and collectivist forms of anarchism cannot coexist. One or the other must triumph, and he leaves no doubt about which side of the struggle he is on:

In the traditionally individualist-liberal United States and Britain, the 1990s are awash in self-styled anarchists who - their flamboyant radical rhetoric aside - are cultivating a latter-day anarcho-individualism that I will call lifestyle anarchism ... Ad hoc adventurism, personal bravura, an aversion to theory oddly akin to the antirational biases of postmodernism, celebrations of theoretical incoherence (pluralism), a basically apolitical and anti-organizational commitment to imagination, desire, and ecstasy, and an intensely self-oriented enchantment of everyday life, reflect the toU that social reaction has taken on Euro-American anarchism over the past two decades (Ibid., pp. 8-9).

As these comments make abundantly clear, Bookchin objects in particular to what he takes to be the egotistical, anti-social personalism of so many contemporary anarchists. The danger of such 'turning inward', he suggests, is that it culminates in a personalistic commitment to individual autonomy rather than a collectivist commitment to social freedom. And in so doing, it gives rise not to revolution but to reaction:

lifestyle anarchism today is finding its principal expression in spray-can graffiti, postmodernist nihilism, antirationalism, neoprimitivism, anti-technologism, neoSituationist 'cultural terrorism', mysticism, and a 'practice' of staging Foucauldian 'personal insurrections' ... More oriented toward achieving one's own 'self-realization' than achieving basic social change, this trend
among lifestyle anarchists is particularly noxious in that its 'turning inward' ... claims to be a politics (Ibid., pp. 19-20).

Against this ostensible trend in contemporary anarchism, Bookchin advocates a renewal of what he refers to as the 'social anarchist' tradition. Heir to the Enlightenment tradition with due regard to its limitations, he suggests, the social anarchist tradition celebrates the thinking human mind without denying passion, imagination, play, and art. Yet rather than reify these qualities into hazy fixed categories, as apparently lifestyle anarchists are guilty of doing, it strives to incorporate them into everyday life by means of a radically democratic transformation of the public sphere. An unapologetically revolutionary body of ideas and practice, it is, according to Bookchin, minimally committed to four central tenets: a confederation of decentralised municipalities; an unwavering opposition to statism; a belief in direct democracy; and a vision of a libertarian communist society. It is thus ineluctably aprogrammatic as well as activist social movement that joins a libertarian communist vision with a vigorous critique of capitalism.

In a brief but important companion piece published in the same 1995 AK Press edition of Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism, Bookchin elaborates on this point by holding up as a model for emulation a set of ideas and practices that he refers to as 'The Left That Was'. By this term he means not the Leninist 'Old Left' or the Maoist 'New Left', but 'an idealistic, often theoretically coherent Left that militantly emphasized its internationalism, its rationality in the treatment of reality, its democratic spirit, and its vigorous revolutionary aspirations' (Ibid., p. 66). Whatever its faults, Bookchin contends, this genuine Left was characterised by a rich generosity of spirit, a commitment to a humane world, a rare degree of political independence, a vibrant revolutionary spirit, and an unwavering opposition to capitalism. Illustrative examples include individual revolutionaries such as William Morris, Gustav Landauer, Karl Marx, Peter Kropotkin, Michael Bakunin, and Rosa Luxemburg, as well as revolutionary social movements like Spanish anarchism in the 1930s. In stark contrast, some sixty years later the Left had shrivelled to a shadow of its former self, its dissident language co-opted by those who if they have their way will transform it into a socially innocuous, narcissistic form of lifestyle-oriented posturing.

Indeed, Bookchin would claim seven years later in an online piece entitled 'The Communalist Project' that this was precisely the fate of the anarchist-dominated contemporary Left. Moreover, whereas in 1995 he still believed that anarchism itself might be rescued from the designs of the lifestyle anarchists, in 2002 he declared that 'anarchism ... represents in its authentic form a highly individualistic outlook that fosters a radically unfettered lifestyle, often as a substitute for mass action' (Bookchin, 2002). Hence the need for an international Left to 'advance courageously' beyond anarchism altogether - and in fact beyond Marxism, syndicalism, and 'vague socialist framework[s]' as well - toward Bookchin's own longstanding libertarian municipalist project, now dubbed simply Communalism.

ASSESSING THE ARGUMENTS

How might one account for these differing treatments of the cultural and political legacies of the 1960s, and 1968 in particular? One recent critic of Bookchin has contended that he completely reversed himself in his later work, and that he did so because of a combination of 'grumpy old man' syndrome and a cynical and opportunistic desire to demolish all possible alternatives to his
own onetime creed of social anarchism (Black, 1997). Against this view, I will argue that in spite of a clear shift in emphasis the later work is theoretically consistent with the earlier. However, I will also maintain that the newer and far more confrontational position Bookchin stakes out is misguided and politically unhelpful insofar as it obscures what his earlier work helped to clarify: namely, the integral connections between the personal and the political aspects of libertarian revolutionary social change.

That Bookchin's views on the ever evolving Euro-American counterculture changed over a twenty to twenty-five year period is clear. In particular, he grew much more critical of the part-anarchist-inspired personalist legacy of the late 1960s that he had earlier done so much to elucidate. Provoked by what he regarded as a destructive turning inward on the Left, Bookchin re-evaluated his earlier, generally sympathetic and co-operative engagement with countercultural personalism and developed a new theoretical position grounded in a dichotomous and politically polarising distinction between social anarchism and lifestyle anarchism. In the new account, he foregrounds the reservations about lifestyle-oriented cultural politics that he had earlier muted or expressed only infrequently in order to attempt to build bridges between the countercultural and political wings of the revolutionary movements of the late 1960s. He does so, moreover, in a markedly strident and polemical tone apt to foreclose precisely the sort of reasoned dialogue that his earlier work initiated. If in the 1960s he 'made the need for a convergence between the counterculture and the New Left the focus of most of [his] activities' (Bookchin, 1998), in the changed circumstances of the 1990s he put his earlier bridge-budding efforts behind him and turned instead to what he perceived as the then far more urgent political task of extinguishing once and for all the mortal threat to the revolutionary anarchist tradition posed by individualistic, liberal or lifestyle anarchists.

What is less clear is that there is any continuity of principle at all between the earlier work and the later. I suggest, however, that at both periods in his life Bookchin quite consistently advocated a variety of revolutionary personalism inspired by the libertarian communist tradition. In the 1960s and early 1970s, he was influenced by the simultaneously individualist and collectivist example of the counterculture and saw it as a vehicle - in tandem with more overtly political forms of revolutionary anarchism - for realising libertarian communist aims. In contrast, by the 1990s he had witnessed the eclipse of the revolutionary political movements that both sustained and were in turn sustained by the radical dynamic of the counterculture. What remained, from his perspective, consisted of little more than a rag-tag assortment of atomised lifestyles, the residual by-product of a process of cultural commodification in which radical desires were co-opted by capitalism and marketed back to would-be rebels in the form of politically innocuous lifestyle choices. Hence the tone of disillusionment that suffuses Bookchin's writing in this period, accompanied by an uncharacteristic nostalgia for 'the Left that was'. Ironically, even as he presses the case for a revival of a rationalist politics oriented towards the achievement of a rational society - and sharply distinguishes this from the 'irrationalism' of lifestyle anarchism - his own political outlook is shaped by an unmistakably lyrical recollection of the lost Left of his youth, with its libertarian schools, bookshops, presses, cafés, theatres, unions, and all the other institutional and symbolic paraphernalia of a genuinely revolutionary counterculture that nourished a wider revolutionary movement. Contra Bookchin's own intentions, this moving celebration of a complex, resilient, radically democratic, predominantly working class, implacably anti-capitalist, enveloping, and yet fundamentally open anarchist
counterculture is an important element of his later work that we may wish to rescue from the polemical critique of lifestyle anarchism in which it is articulated. It also recalls the generous and remarkably consistent revolutionary social vision that animated both his earlier and later political writings, and so calls into question the rather cynical arguments of those who point to changes in his position over time as evidence of cynical political opportunism.

Far more persuasive than the charges of either theoretical inconsistency or political opportunism is the contrary argument that Bookchin grew too rigid in his thinking, and that this theoretical rigidity blinded him to empirical evidence pointing to political conclusions very different from those which he came to regard as axiomatic. Consider, for example, the autonomous social movements that played such an influential part in European countercultural politics in the 1980s. These important but understudied social movements were prominent in Italy, Holland, Denmark, Switzerland and West Germany at a time when Bookchin was lamenting the decline of revolutionary politics and decrying the ascendancy of lifestyle-oriented individualism. Interestingly, they combined elements of both in pursuit of the aims of subverting nation-states and their representative structures of government, and replacing the existing world system with anti-systemic forms of participatory democracy meant to facilitate greater individual and community control over everyday life. At their best, as Georgy Katsiaficas points out, they accentuated the universal content of single-issue identity politics, and aided the revolutionary development from within these particularistic streams of a new concrete universalism - one produced by immanent critiques, rather than imposed from the outside. Yet Bookchin repeatedly criticised activists such as the German Autonomen for their theoretical and organisational unsophistication, fading to see that the absence of rigid ideological affiliations and organisational structures could be a political strength rather than a weakness (e.g. in terms of encouraging ideological diversity, a closer connection between theory and grassroots practice, increased flexibility and speed of action without approval from above, and greater organisational resistance to police infiltration and state repression) (Katsiaficas, 2006, pp. 3-4,187-196,250-251,286).

Bookchin's ideological preconceptions also blinded him to alternative readings of the history of the decline of the revolutionary political movements of the 1960s. Rather than inquire into the complex economic, political, and cultural reasons why these movements had faded, Bookchin heaped blame on the lifestyle-oriented individualism of the counterculture, and turned with ferocious vehemence on precisely those individuals who (whatever the limitations of their work) were attempting to keep the anarchist flame alive in a period of severe social reaction. In so doing, he at least partially lost sight of the truths that while individualism and collectivism are in constant tension with one another in anarchist thought - as indeed they are in any functioning, free society - this tension is potentially a creative and constructive one, and that were any attempt to eliminate it entirely to succeed it would mean the loss of one of the ideology's most distinctive and attractive features.

What is true of anarchism in general is also true of anarchist communism in particular. For, as numerous scholars have observed, a key attraction of anarchist communism is its emphasis on the equal and paramount value of both individualism and community, personal autonomy and social solidarity, individual freedom and responsibility to others, together with a history of theoretical argument and practical experimentation intended to demonstrate how and why a reconciliation between self and society might be approximated but never fully achieved (Sabia,
In fairness to Bookchin, he did at times recognise and acknowledge approvingly the importance attached to individual freedom and personal autonomy in the social anarchist tradition. In the late 1990s, for example, he responded to criticism of Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism by observing that social anarchists have consistently championed the cause of these values (or, as he somewhat defensively and grudgingly put the point, 'never denied the importance of gaining individual freedom and personal autonomy') - albeit while also consistently arguing that they will remain chimerical unless sweeping revolutionary changes are made that provide the social foundations for 'rounded and ethically committed individuals' (Bookchin, 1998). However, he refused to entertain the possibility that more individualistically inclined anarchists could be sympathetic to both individual freedom and responsibility to others, and instead portrayed them in entirely one-dimensional and derogatory terms.

BEYOND THE SOCIAL ANARCHISM/LIFESTYLE ANARCHISM DICHOTOMY

Contrary to what the Bookchin of Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism would have us believe, both the collectivist and the individualist tendencies of anarchism are very much alive and thriving at the dawn of the twenty-first century. The revolutionary personalist spirit of the American anarchist counterculture that he once praised lives on in the decentralised networks of the alter-globalisation movement, as well as in countless experiments in co-operative production and distribution, alternative media and art, and collective living. Some of the new countercultural forms that anarchists have helped to develop since the 1970s have been primarily oppositional, designed to impede the flows of neo-liberal state and corporate power or subvert its cultural expressions. Examples of such strategies and tactics include billboard subversion, the performance of live plays in front of surveillance cameras, hacktivism, and the creative use of transformative play to disrupt international financial meetings. Other contemporary, anarchist-inspired countercultural forms are consciously intended to prefigure or create alternatives to capitalism and the state. Examples include affinity groups, Temporary Autonomous Zones such as the carnivalesque Reclaim the Streets protests and the European Climate Camps, the co-operative movement, informal community networks like communal kitchens and gardens and neighbourhood assemblies, eco-communes, and the ever-growing network of Independent Media Centres and Social Centres.

Following the logic of Bookchin's 1995 polemic, one would have to dismiss all of these creative and hopeful and very exciting developments as instances of political reaction. Insofar as they fail to adhere to his four-point programme, or go beyond it by embracing both individual autonomy and social freedom in a way different than social anarchists have done in the past, then by definition they cannot be revolutionary and so must be rejected as a form of retrograde lifestyle anarchism. But this of course begs the question of what one means by the term 'revolution'. Must we conceive of revolution solely or even primarily in insurrectionary terms as a concentrated and decisive armed attack on the centres of political and economic power, or can we instead conceive of it in far more broadly social terms, involving most fundamentally (but by no means exclusively!) a longterm process of profound attitudinal change? And if so, wouldn't such change have to begin at the level of the individual spirit?
Far from being an example of the sort of lifestyle anarchist mysticism and solipsism decried by Bookchin, such a conception of revolution is in fact supported by some of the most politically sophisticated and historically well-informed strategic thinking of our time. In his book Powerful Peacemaking: A Strategy for a Living Revolution, for example, George Lakey proposes a developmental model of revolutionary movement that grows organically over time, with each successive stage budding on the previous one. More specifically, he identifies five core stages of what he calls a 'living revolution': cultural preparation, organisation-building, confrontation, mass economic and political noncooperation and parallel institutions. Being an eminently practical thinker, Lakey understands that only a strong and united people's organisation with a revolutionary programme can provide the new life that becomes the new society. However, he also recognises that meaningful social change is ultimately rooted in a loving transformation of the individual spirit. As he points out in the introduction to the book, 'find in this area as in so many that the feminist principle, "the personal is political", is sound' (Lakey, 1987, p. xv).

It is in this linking of the personal and the political, I believe, that we find what is most interesting in the anarchist currents in the newest social movements. Yes, one can find numerous examples of purely narcissistic and hedonistic behaviour, but one can also find countless counter-examples of radical struggles that begin at the micro level but that promise or demand much wider social transformation. Consider, for instance, the post-1968 squatters' movement in Europe, which has frequently been derided by Left-oriented critics as a juvenile and apolitical form of lifestyle anarchism. On the one hand, most squatters have openly rejected classical revolutionary projects and parties, especially when these aspired to create new state forms (Martínez López, 2007, p. 7). They have also by and large rejected a self-sacrificial form of utopianism that projected liberation from existing forms of domination onto a distant, conflict-free future. On the other hand, many squatters have also called themselves 'revolutionaries' and emphasised their commitment to ideals and Utopian projects extending beyond the places squatted - for example, solidarity with others in the local community fighting against unbridled real estate speculation in favour of decent housing and self-managed social spaces for all (Martínez López, 2007, pp. 7-8, 12). In other words, they have committed themselves to short-run utopias, specific projects of urban transformation, and especially a whole revolutionary change of their own lives.

This utopianism of the 'here and now' should not be dismissed lightly. Nor, I believe, should it be lauded uncritically. In a positive vein, it signals the rise of a strongly open-ended tendency in anarchist thinking critical of the idea of revolutionary closure - the idea, in other words, that 'after the revolution' social relations would be seamlessly and enduringly harmonised. It also reflects a pragmatic recognition that revolutionary struggles rooted in grassroots projects that address people's immediate needs and help them to confront the sources of alienation in their everyday lives are much more likely to succeed than those in which activists are expected to sacrifice themselves on the altar of a distant utopia (Gordon, 2009). More worryingly, it suggests a tendency among contemporary activists to throw out the baby of fundamental revolutionary social change (and the solidarities, political strategies, personal sacrifices, and extended Utopian temporal horizons it necessarily entails) along with the bath water of perfectionist Utopian illusions.
To this extent, there may well be a kernel of truth in Bookchin's polemical critique of contemporary anarchism after all. But the way in which he conveys his argument is both misleading and politically unhelpful. This is so not only because of its many historical inaccuracies and simplistic theoretical dichotomies, but also because it devalues and vilifies the efforts of those who - however tentatively and faltering - are attempting to build bridges between the personal and the political aspects of libertarian revolutionary social change. We are thus well advised to recall the spirit of his earlier writings, in which as a committed revolutionary theorist he attempted to engage in creative and constructive dialogue with some of the most innovative and radical countercultural social movements that contributed to the rebellions of 1968.

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