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‘1968’ and the formation of the feminist subject

Brigitte Studer

> I learned who I was through the women’s liberation movement.
>
> Sally Alexander

The idea of ‘1968’ signifies a transnational and global wave of protests, which – varying according to the particularities of the form it assumed in each state – began around the middle of the 1960s, and ended roughly a decade later.[1] However, its manifestations and its effects were to retain their resonance for many years after its conclusion. As of yet there has been no agreement on the precise nature of the events which unfolded, either in academic or in public debate, and there probably never will be.[2] Despite this impasse, ‘1968’ continues to allude to what was probably the most important social movement of the twentieth century,[3] or, according to another line of interpretation, the first global revolution.[4] But the movement was more than just the protests: it signified a fundamental critique of bourgeois-capitalist (and, in the east, communist) power relations, right down to the forms they assumed in everyday life. Put in the language of critical sociology, ‘1968’ was the expression of a generalised crisis of legitimacy of the established social authorities, the manifestation of which – in its most tumultuous phase – took on the form of a ‘great refusal’ (Herbert Marcuse); that is to say, of a withdrawal from the constraints of normality, and a rejection of the routines of everyday life.

The protagonists of 1968 aspired to invent everything anew.[5] The ruling norms, the social regulations, and the laws and established cultural practices which supported them – in other words the ‘protocols’ of power, which I would here like to call ‘prescripts’ – were rigorously scrutinised.[6] But not quite all of them, as soon became apparent. Gender relations were often left undisturbed; the movement of 1968 suffered from a practical as

well as a theoretical blindness on this topic. The established roles of 'man' and 'woman' were indeed criticised by the militants of 1968, but they were not decisively overthrown. As the American historian Sara Evans puts it: '[young people] challenged patriarchal power but not patriarchy'.[7]

The ambivalence of the left towards the traditional constructs of gender was already evident in the 1960s. By 1966, Juliet Mitchell had published her critical observations on the relationship of socialism and marxism to the 'woman question', under the title, 'Women: The Longest Revolution'.[8] Women's groups began to form at around the same time. These first emerged in Italy and the USA soon after the middle of the 1960s, and were often the result of a split from left-wing groups (communist, trotskyist, black liberation, etc), and from the civil rights movement, which from 1965 played host to the first discussions about the 'woman question'. Thus, the group D.A. CAPO (*Donne contro autoritarismo patriarcale*, or Women Against Patriarchal Authoritarianism) was founded in Milan in 1965, followed in 1967-68 by the first women's liberation groups in the USA. In Great Britain, the first spark was thrown by the 1968 women's strike for equal pay at the Ford plant in Dagenham. In 1969 the periodical *The Black Dwarf*, a publication of the new left group of the same name, first brought out an issue on the woman question, and the first women's conference took place in 1970 in Oxford. In Switzerland, it was at the beginning of 1969 that women first combined in a women's liberation movement. In other countries the 'phase of gaining consciousness and of articulation'[9] began only slightly later.[10]

1970 was the birth year of the *mouvement de libération des femmes* (women's liberation movement, or MLF) in France, though this had been preceded by a number of smaller women's groups.[11] In Austria, the first demonstration of the autonomous women's movement took place in the form of the Mother's Day Demo in 1971, and one year later the first groups were formed. In the following years, the expression 'women's liberation movement' became established as the umbrella term for the new movement. In 1970, according to Mitchell, there was a form of women's liberation movement in all liberal-democratic states, with three exceptions.[12] These exceptions, which she named in her benchmark text *Woman's Estate*, were Iceland (in her words, 'an isolated enclave of pseudo-egalitarian capitalism'),[13] Austria and Switzerland, 'in social terms probably the most traditional and hierarchic of European societies'.[14]

(Mitchell is certainly mistaken in her assertion that there was still not a single feminist group in Switzerland in 1970. In Austria, too, women's groups had already been formed, though at the time they were still formally linked to political parties.[15])

To grasp the emergence of the new women's movement in its historical context is to uncover the close yet contradictory organisational and ideological connection between the movement of 1968 as a whole and the new women's movement in particular. The latter emerged out of critical debates with the 1968 movement – or, more precisely, with the new left – though it broadly remained a part of it. In later accounts this connection is often forgotten, hidden or contested; in other cases it is simply taken for granted. In this article it is my intention to shed some light on this controversial and paradoxical relationship, and to inquire into the nature of its constitution. Though my primary interest lies in this particular aspect of the movement's genesis, in no way do I wish to cast aspersions on other accounts of the origins of the women's movement – neither on the narratives developed by the 1968 movement, nor on those subsequently formed in reaction to the latter – for I know well that the new women's movement was also the product of other traditions, not least the body of theory developed by the previous women's movement.[16] Furthermore, my arguments relate only to the early years of the new women's movement, up to the middle of the 1970s, because over time the movement was joined by new generations which partly developed another understanding of the collective identity 'feminist'. Nancy Whittier has convincingly established this development in the case of the USA, and in my opinion her conclusions are valid also for the European movement. In her investigation into the feminist movement in Columbus, Ohio between 1969 and 1979, she came to the conclusion that in the first phase the supporters were of the new left, while the activists who were first politicised inside the new women's movement in the mid 1970s were often drawing on a very different background of experience.[17]

In our period, then, many protagonists – but also many political orientations, theoretical points of reference and practical strategies – emerged in large part (though not exclusively) from the student-based new left; a left which espoused a form of libertarian socialism, drawing its theoretical support from critical theory, marxism and psychoanalysis. This poses the question as to the relative contribution these various elements made to the

genesis of the second wave of feminism of the twentieth century. What influences and similarities can be identified? Where can one find critical feminist appropriations or refinements of the political principles and practices of the radical left-wing groups which had, in the 1960s, mostly been formed in student circles? Equally, we should ask where the new women's movement broke with the new left. What novel analytical perspectives did it introduce? What new forms of political action did it develop?

While the following addresses the theoretical frameworks, cultural origins and political practices of 1968 and the new women's movement, at heart it is about something else. At the core of this article lies the formation of the 'feminist subject'. Time and again, studies of the new women's movement declare that – to take just one example here – '[a]n autonomous female subject, woman speaking in her own right, with her own voice, had […] emerged'.[18] This raises the question, however, as to how feminists learned how to free themselves from the dominant (gender) norms; indeed of how to recognise that they possessed the social and individual efficacy needed to achieve such goals in the first place. By what means were they able to free themselves from these norms, and give voice to their own interpretations of social reality and of the gender order? Drawing on the work of the American social anthropologist James Scott, we will use the category 'transcripts' to describe the dissident appropriations, interpretations and modes of speaking that these activists adopted.[19]

On the whole, transcripts of the subordinate, the repressed and of outsiders are first expressed in secret, or – in democracies – on the fringes of society. In our case this corresponds roughly to the early manifestations of counter-culture; it refers to youth cultures and the artistic *avant-garde*, but also to the writings and the early subversive activities of the new left, which had been in development since the end of the 1950s; though we should note that female transcripts remained highly marginal or were even entirely absent from this sphere. For Scott, all such expressions are conducted 'behind' the relations of power. They represent 'hidden transcripts', which constitute themselves out of a silent confrontation with 'public transcripts' – the dominant accepted discourse, the mainstream framework of interpretation – and which, through their alternative visions, encourage practical mobilisation and the foundation of a new sense of identity. Scott calls these transcripts 'infrapolitical' in cases where the form of defiance does not yet call for public or explicit resistance.

They nevertheless unmask power through their intellectual formulation of alternative systems of social relations, and through their hidden practices of critique. At the moment when these subversive transcripts are made public, they quickly set into motion a sequence of public forms of action.[20] The Parisian May of 1968 provides us with a perfect example of such a process. May was a paradigmatic 'critical moment' (Pierre Bourdieu) in which the existing system of social relations lost its aura of inevitability and everything seemed possible.[21] At such historical moments, we may sense the approaching realisation of the scripts and utopian designs of a new social order.

Social scientific research into movements has already long concerned itself with the conditions which make possible the creation and development of a social movement, of a collective mobilisation. Dieter Rucht, for example, lists the three constitutive elements of a social movement: collective political intent (to effect social change), political activism, and social interrelationality through networks, which produce a more or less intensive collective identity or 'we-feeling'.[22] But, in my opinion, the question of *how* the collective agent forms itself in the first place has yet to be fully explained. There is indeed research on how in 1968 revolt, critique and resistance came to seem not only possible but also morally apposite, as a result of particular events, processes and contexts, certain intellectual orientations or framing processes and political practices. Yet how did the abstraction 'we' emerge? From which people did it arise? How could it consolidate itself, and what meaning did it have for individual members? How did these members learn to distance themselves from and formulate their own ideas in opposition to externally determined prescripts and public transcripts, while also combating those hidden transcripts of the new left which contradicted the discourse of liberation? How did each individual undergo the formation of a new consciousness, of a critical perception of social reality, and of a commitment to the transformation of society? A satisfactory explanation cannot be found in contextual, structural, organisational or intellectual factors alone. The common experiences of the participants – which formed the distinct basis for each group, but which to begin with also shaped the movement as a whole – were the experiences of unique human subjects. If we are to offer a political history which draws on cultural studies approaches, we must also consider psychological factors: the individual identification with the goals

of the movement, the internalisation of its moral concepts and expectations, and the subjective readiness to play one's part in its advancement. In other words, we must take into account processes which are not only rational but also emotional. A historical grasp of the complex relationship between the notions of 'self' and of collective mobilisation is possible only once the individual-biographical level and indeed the self have been included in the analysis.

In view of the multiplicity of the interlinked actions and actors of the 1968 movement (including the new women's movement), as well as the diversity of the historiographical investigations, approaches and themes undertaken since that time, we cannot here provide a broad chronology of the events of these movements, nor can we offer any claim to comprehensiveness. My approach is transnational and relates to the western European (and partly the US-American) sphere, and indeed predominantly to countries with democratic parliamentary systems: Great Britain, Switzerland, Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, France and the USA. The body of resources drawn on in this study is correspondingly diverse. It ranges from contemporary documents, autobiographies and other written statements of memory through to visual materials. In these sources I search for the traces which suggest how, and in what possible forms, the emergence of feminist subjects might be discerned. Behind my approach lies the assumption that ideal-typical figures were created as a result of the transnational orientation of the phenomenon of 1968 in general and of the new women's movement in particular. The latter was, after all, sustained by intensively communicative networks and the vigorous diffusion of political ideas and practices via standard texts, monographs, periodicals, and, of course, by activists.

I begin with some remarks on various aspects of the 1968 movement as a whole, remarks which partly demonstrate similarities, or at least parallels, between the new left and the new women's movement. I also concern myself with political practices which were conducive to the participation of women. In contrast, I offer some examples which show the ambivalence of the new left (and, incidentally, of the cultural tendencies of the 1968 movement more generally) towards the women's struggle for the transformation of gender norms. I then examine the first forays of the new women's movement into autonomy

and action, paying particular attention to their efforts to form their own language, a task which was itself dependent on the development of new political practices.

The 1968 movement as contradictory locus of political socialisation

The new social movements of the 1960s were the paradoxical products of historically specific social relations and of the 'biographical availability' of a generation which was coming of age.[23] These young adults perceived the contradictions inherent in society particularly keenly; for the children of the post-war boom and of the welfare state, the constant discrepancy between expectation and reality came to appear as a multitude of broken promises. Democratic deficits, gaps in prosperity, inequalities of opportunity, racial discrimination and the inherited structures of authority – it seemed unacceptable that these should still exist after the liberation of Europe from 'national socialism' and fascism, and after decolonisation. On this macro-level there are parallels between the formation of the women's liberation movement and that of the broader movement of 1968: both were founded on unfulfilled political promises. The short period of social renewal around the end of the Second World War was soon replaced with a conservative regression, whose virulent anti-communism was complemented by its emphatic insistence on the 'traditional' role of the woman. Material well-being did indeed allow for women to slowly catch up in the spheres of training and education, though only for them to end up in the dismal suburban role of the home technology-assisted model housewife. 'The problem that has no name', described by Betty Friedan in her 1963 bestseller *The Feminine Mystique*, rapidly intensified in the following years. Many young women experienced a crisis of identity as they came to realise that marriage and motherhood held them back, in the words of Micheline Wandor in her introduction to a series of interviews with British feminists, from an active life as a 'thinking and working adult'.[24] It was not only the difficult or impossible entry into the world of paid labour which was denounced by young women. They also protested with increasing passion against the medical and religious institutions which refused to prescribe the pill and thus grant women control over their own bodies, despite the pill's commercialisation at the start of the 1960s (1960 in the USA; 1961 in Great Britain, Germany and

Switzerland; 1966 in Denmark; 1967 in France, with the Neuwirth law; and 1971 in Italy).[25]

The explosive moment '1968' was consequently also an awakening of 'the subject'. Critical theory, marxism, maoism, situationism and the writings of feminist predecessors may well have provided intellectual guidance. But the fundamental impetus came from personal experience, from dissatisfaction with the ruling relations and the conviction that they had to be overthrown. But how does a general feeling of discontent lead to critique and, in turn, to activism?

Any answer to this question must first take into account the intentions and intellectual orientations of the movement of 1968. Despite all theoretical and tactical disagreements, there was unanimous consensus that this was a struggle for the freedom of the individual – who was more than just a solitary individual in the crowd – from all forms of authority, by which it was held captive through proscriptions, norms, rules, compulsions and discourses.

The movement of 1968 did not restrict itself to the indictment of authoritarian political regimes, of the exploitation of the human being as an instrument of labour, or of the normative imperative to consume which was imposed on citizens. The body of literature on the movement of 1968 highlights time and again that, through critical theory, the marxian concept of 'alienation' was revitalised; in concrete terms, this means that, next to the macro-structures of power – in politics, the economy and the social system – the micro-structures of domination were also put into question. The usual forms of authority in one's everyday interactions with other people were uncovered and denounced: the hierarchical relations between the teacher and his students; between the lady of the house and her servants; between officer and soldier; between doctor and nurse; between the farmer and his help; and, not least, between the husband and his wife. This assault on the immediate relations of domination – the 'crise de la domination rapprochée', as the French sociologist Dominique Memmi has called it – can, in its theoretical as well as practical elements, be regarded as a historical particularity of the 1968 movement.[26] However, it is not without literary precedents. In Jean Genet's play of 1947, *Les Bonnes* (*The Maids*), the powerless domestic labourers take vengeance on their rulers through the enactment of violent fantasies. This is, so to speak, the nightmare scenario of every form of

authority: the dissolution of the 'natural' appearance of the social order – of the social illusion of legitimate structures of power, an illusion which is in reality fabricated by the hierarchical system of relations – and the end of the reliable obedience of employees, subordinates and citizens.

For the purposes of this article, we may take it for granted that '1968' was a defining moment, in which the public transcripts of the established order were revealed as social constructs. It was a time of the unveiling of hidden transcripts, which were penned by the powerless, by people who – within the institutional and private structures of authority of the late capitalist western society of the 1960s – formed some part of the subaltern: the repressed and the exploited, among them workers, immigrants, women, blacks, and the Vietnamese NLF. Their demands and their values were also adopted by a significant proportion of the educated youth of the day, who – according to Pierre Bourdieu – had become disaffected after discovering that university qualifications were no longer a guarantee of secure and meaningful employment.[27]

The activists of the time, in fact, went a step further: they were not satisfied with mere critique, but actually aimed to overthrow the power structures of the existing order. Furthermore, as had been demanded by Herbert Marcuse in his *One-Dimensional Man* of 1964, solidarity broadened to all fringe groups of society, or to 'any people at all we saw as displaced, despised, destitute or dispossessed', as the British feminist Lynne Segal puts it in her memoirs.[28] Particular attention was paid to all those who had been materially or symbolically imprisoned or interned in what were at that time known as 'disciplinary institutions': convicts, soldiers, mental health patients, school pupils, factory workers, housewives, and so on.

These were the target of the new left groups' calls to resistance, to protest, to revolt, to strike, and to engage in street warfare, and revolutionary upheaval. But in the long term the new left had no intention of representing their grievances, of pleading the case on behalf of the oppressed. Ultimately, revolutionary change could only be pushed through at the grassroots level, by the downtrodden themselves. (Even the trotskyist and maoist vanguard parties, which were mostly formed at the end of the 1960s, rejected representative theories of politics. For this reason, they placed a great deal of emphasis on the mobilisation of the downtrodden, though their efforts were only seldom successful.)

In practice, the intended transformation of the social realm had to begin with the immediate transformation of the domains of everyday life, for these were understood as spaces which were deeply entrenched in power relations. Students occupied the lecture theatres, workers (at least in France and Italy) seized the factories, and these spaces were opened to outsiders. In this way, they disturbed the symbolic 'spatial order' and consciously provoked a social and categorical cross-fertilisation which until then had been forbidden. The visual accounts of the time – photographs and films – all testify to this opening of the social sphere, for there are countless women in these images.[29] Though the fact was rarely evoked in later recollections of the protagonists, and was almost entirely ignored in media depictions, it remains evident that women were present at the student demonstrations, sit-ins, occupations and further actions, though only seldom in the roles of leader or speaker. Luisa Passerini has extensively engaged with autobiographical narratives of the 'Italian 1968', and traces the popular participation of women back to these direct, often spontaneous, non-institutional forms of politics, and in particular to their emphasis on subjectivity and the everyday.[30]

The occupation of the watch and clock factory LIP in the French Jura in 1973 became famous because the employees restarted production under their own administration. For our purposes, however, the action shows that the protest movements around 1968 had gone some way towards introducing consciously political forms of struggle, into which they sought to integrate new categories of wage earners. The traditional form of factory occupation as a barricade, which was defended by the communist trade union CGT (General Confederation of Labour), allowed only the union functionaries and trusted union members (who were, as a rule, qualified male workers) to enter the factory. In contrast, the CFDT (French Democratic Confederation of Labour) – a union which, in the early 1970s, tended towards libertarian socialism – successfully put into practice the 'open' form of occupation at LIP. This was a means of addressing the practical needs of female, young and foreign workers, who until this point had rarely been offered the opportunity to actively participate in strike actions.[31]

The movement of 1968, therefore, did not simply perpetuate the oppression of women. On the contrary, it opened up public spaces which had previously been inaccessible to women, and created new social spaces

in which they could gain a new self-confidence, and experiment with novel forms of independence.[32] These social-topographical openings had quite definite borders, however, and women only gradually became aware of these; and there was more generally, between men and women in the 1968 movement, some sort of profound misunderstanding, the contours of which only slowly became apparent. At first, women took the discourse of equality which prevailed among the activists of 1968 at face value. It transpired that they had underestimated the cultural power of the prescripts which formed the roots of an internalised gender order, an order which many of the movement's militants themselves continued to maintain. This can be seen in the example of the mini-skirt.

Pierre Bourdieu describes the body as the privileged locus of 'habitus'; individual dispositions can be traced back to a system of internalised patterns of perception and action which are common to all members of a group or class or gender.[33] Clothing, as an external mantle, cannot escape an internalised cultural significance. When Mary Quant popularised the mini-skirt in the mid 1960s, it functioned as a strong sign of social, cultural and political freedom.[34] Yet it was a fragile symbol. For one thing, the commercialisation of this article of clothing soon reduced it to the level of banality. For another, its wearer was treading a fine semiotic line between provocative self-affirmation and would-be provocative self-objectification. Such complexities may in part be illustrated by means of the following two examples. In her collective autobiography of the Italian 1968 movement, Luisa Passerini evokes the disapproving reaction of a group of women towards spokespersons who, in a very self-assured fashion, sat on a table while wearing short skirts. The message ('We have possession of our own bodies') was certainly understood, but it also irritated the other gender-comrades.[35] The British feminist Sheila Rowbotham recounts a very different (or perhaps not so very different) incident in her memoirs. The episode took place at the London School of Economics in 1968, at the founding meeting of the Revolutionary Socialist Students' Federation. Rowbotham, who was at the time teaching in a working-class area of London, wanted to speak on behalf of these schools. She writes:

> I stood on the platform, feeling like a jelly before it sets. I had never spoken to so many people before. It was a warm, sunny day and I was wearing a black and gold summer miniskirt. To my horror, as I

> walked to the mike, I was greeted by a tumultuous barrage of wolf whistles and laughter. I remained frozen for what seemed an eternity. […] I had ceased to be an individual and had become an object of derision. It was like a living nightmare.[36]

Was it the raised podium? Was it the unexpected appearance of a female speaker? The mini-skirt and the context were evidently at odds in some way. Rowbotham, in her memoirs, elaborates on a sense of unease within the new left which she only slowly began to perceive at the end of the 1960s. This unease related not only to the appearance of the female,[37] but also to the different sexual freedoms of men and women. Little by little, it brought them to recognise their oppression as females:

> My awareness of women's subordination arose from the sexual humiliation still evident in terms like 'promiscuity', 'nymphomaniac' and 'slags'. The subtle constraints I encountered when expressing certain thoughts and feelings and the implicit assumption of women's place among many men on the left niggled away at my consciousness.[38]

The cultural awakening of the 1960s and the political movement which developed from it, as well as the anti-authoritarian renewal of revolutionary theories of transformation, were partly at a loss when it came to the question of gender. For this reason, women's emancipation stumbled repeatedly against the traditional norms (prescripts) and their public enactment (public transcripts). The activists of the new left, behind their public transcripts which called for the liberation of the entirety of the oppressed, maintained the male-dominated practices and ideas – in other words, hidden transcripts – of the gender order. It took time before women could publicly give expression to their own ideas, their own hidden transcripts, and it was longer still before they could formulate their own scripts of emancipation. For while Scott's concept of hidden transcripts implies the tacit recognition of the relations of power, in practice a lengthy process had to run its course before women were able to understand the asymmetry in the gender order as socially constructed, as 'naturalised', rather than simply as given, as 'natural'.

The development of feminist consciousness

Any historical reconstruction of the beginnings of the new women's movement, or more precisely of the women's *liberation* movement (*le mouvement de libération des femmes*), will inevitably and simultaneously illustrate the dialectic of all the liberation movements of the time. At first, the intellectual roots of feminism were closely intertwined with those of the apparently purely male 1968 movement – and this holds for radical feminist as well as socialist tendencies. Who today remembers that the slogan 'the personal is political' originally came from the student movement? Even the concept of a 'liberation movement' was shared between the women's movement and other groups; it was, so to speak, the archetype of the collective subject of emancipation, no matter whether this referred to entire peoples, women or homosexuals.[39] 'Liberation was once something for which a thousand different schools of thought contended. Women's liberation saw itself as one of those schools', so writes, in retrospect, the British radical feminist and member of the *Spare Rib* collective Amanda Sebestyen.[40] 'Liberation', a key word of the time, was conceived of as both political and sexual from the very beginning. It contained myriad possibilities for utopian dreams and radical agendas which would enable the total reinvention of public and private life from the roots up, and refused to offer merely temporary deliverance from the existing structures of oppression.[41] The sexually enlightening *Little Red Schoolbook* is in this regard exemplary. It was penned by three Danish authors in 1969 and appeared as early as 1970 in German and French (in Switzerland; in France one year later). It was banned (at least temporarily) in various countries (France, Switzerland, Italy) and in other cases was allowed to appear only in censored form (Great Britain). This was due to its advice on contraception, though also its allusions to drugs and masturbation. In 1972, as a complement to this text, Belgian feminists published *The Little Red Book for Women*, which demanded the liberation of female desire and the right to abortion.

Intellectually, the new feminism borrowed from the new left and national liberation movements, and translated marxist concepts for use within its own theoretical framework. In 1969, Sheila Rowbotham adapted Gramsci's concept of hegemony for her first piece of work on women's liberation. Rowbotham also found inspiration in the works of

Frantz Fanon, Eldridge Cleaver and Stokely Carmichael, and 'Black power' supplied Rowbotham with an important language for the analysis of cultural domination. This is because, as Rowbotham later writes, this movement used marxist categories to address questions of subjectivity, and thus established a relationship between individual experience and political resistance.[42] Similarly, the New York radical feminist Shulamith Firestone cited Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels next to Simone de Beauvoir in *The Dialectic of Sex*.[43] In this book, which was published in 1970 and which quickly became one of the best-known works of the new women's movement, Firestone called for the development of an independent materialist feminism. She postulated gender struggle instead of class struggle. She made the case not only for the abolition of male privilege, but also for the abolition of the very differences between the sexes, which – so she claimed – were rooted in human reproduction. Women were to be liberated from the 'tyranny of reproductive biology', and this was to be made possible by the new technologies of reproduction.[44]

Firestone's proposed solution was not just technologistic; it ultimately remained a prisoner of biologistic thinking (and was later criticised as such). Yet it is a good example of the attempts of the early women's liberation movement to theoretically rethink female oppression via marxist categories. Indeed, the new left's renewal of marxist theory in the 1960s contributed crucial intellectual impulses as well as a general intellectual framework.[45] Two theoretical developments in particular held a direct significance for the situation of women. One was the increasing interest shown by socialist visionaries in the issue of reproduction. The other was the new strategy for transformation, which took as its basis people's everyday routine, their forms of life and social relations. However, whether women were understood to be a part of all this is unclear, for they were often not explicitly mentioned. It was this very aporia that started the new women's movement, and it was for the same reason that the women's appropriation of the new left's critical theory could only be undertaken critically. The latter point is illustrated in the trenchant formulation of the French periodical *Partisans*: 'We must no longer accept our status as a post-script of Marx or Mao Zedong.'[46]

It was not just theory which provided stimulus and served as an influence. Powerful values, norms and attitudes also had their part to play. Indeed, Luisa Passerini argues that the 1968 movement represented an

epochal shift from male to female values. In opposition to the traditional and narrowly conceived *logos*, Passerini asserts, widely undervalued psychological qualities such as affection, sentiment and imagination – in other words, qualities which had been traditionally ascribed to women – were valorised as a part of political action.[47] Yet the relation of the 1968 movement to femininity was paradoxical, as the political rehabilitation of 'feminine' qualities ran in parallel with an increasingly widespread suspicion of earlier conceptions of 'femininity' itself. According to Passerini, this was a historical trend which, on the level of the individual, expressed itself in the form of a knee-jerk refusal of that would-be classical model of femininity, 'the mother'.[48] Passerini is thus led to ask what the female model of the women of 1968 actually was. She identifies this as partly male, but also partly androgynous; it was not simply an imitation of the male model,[49] though it did begin as a critical appropriation of it. Women claimed male freedoms in public life, in the world of work and in sexuality; however, they did not always possess the necessary means to fulfil their ambitions. It soon became apparent that the sexual freedom of women was also male-dominated.[50] Women found themselves having to push against well-defined, socially normative borders. Indeed, even those who were allowed to make use of the new sexual freedoms were not free in any straightforward sense of the word; they were free only insofar as they complied with the dominant representations of the female body. Women with children, on the other hand, found themselves in the same dilemma as their mothers before them: they had to give up their careers and their political commitments for the sake of motherhood and the household. Above all, activists came to realise that the *condition féminine* – normative femininity – could not simply be escaped at their own discretion; they could not simply declare themselves to be 'liberated' as individuals. As the English writer Dinah Brooke said in a lecture to students in 1971:

> But the inescapable fact is that you're a woman. For people who don't know you and know that you are different, people in shops for instance, or men who whistle at you in the street, the one thing that they know about you is that you're a woman.[51]

We therefore see that the new women's movement was formed partly in reaction to the practices of the new left; it was founded in part as a result

of women's personal and negative experiences of these practices. These experiences, as Luisa Passerini stresses, yielded quite paradoxical effects. Insights gleaned from numerous life-historical interviews led her to the conclusion that '1968' made not one, but two distinct contributions to the emergence of the new women's movement. First, it posed the problem of women's liberation in an absolutely direct fashion (as the discrepancies between hidden and public transcripts were made evident). Second, it brought out the differences which existed between women, and this was one of the prerequisites for the process of subjectification.[52]

However, a great deal of time, organisation, reflection and many debates were required before women could find their own language for the formulation and conceptualisation of these problems. The feminism of the late 1960s and early 1970s was an immense semantic undertaking, in which 'social reality' was read anew. The writer Verena Stefan describes this process as follows: 'We talked endlessly about woman's situation within the system of patriarchy, woman as a stranger, as an outsider.'[53] In a continual process of deconstruction of the supposedly natural gender order, ever more realms of existence were submitted to feminist-critical scrutiny: the private sphere and the public, sexuality and the workplace, art as well as science. Through the lens of gender as an analytical category – or, as it was known at the time, the lens of female oppression – all social relations came to appear as male-dominated. Sexuality was now regarded as a question of power; oppression no longer referred only to the relations of production but also to the relations of reproduction. Thus, the era witnessed the continual opening of new spheres for political activism, ranging from abortion and equal pay through to violence against women. To aid activists in these struggles, the women's movement searched intensively for those traces of subversion which were hidden in everyday life, and for feminist predecessors from earlier protest and opposition movements who had been forgotten by history. From women who had been the pure objects of knowledge, feminists formed subjects who were able to acquire and construct knowledge for themselves.

Feminism, which developed at an exponential rate at the beginning of the 1970s, offered its adherents the intellectual guidance necessary to articulate the identity problems they suffered as women, and simultaneously expose the underlying social causes of these problems. But it also prepared the ground for the socialisation [*Vergesellschaftung*] of women,

providing a locus of sociability in which long-lasting personal networks were formed.[54] And, ultimately, it was a space for and a means of self-discovery.

The principle of autonomy proved essential to the achievement of these aims. 'Autonomy' was partly intended to function as a formal organisational principle of the women's liberation movement, in the sense of independence from parties and left-wing groups. It was employed as an internal means of organisation which would allow the creation of non-hierarchical and authentic relationships.[55] The Zurich women's liberation movement, for example, explicitly abstained from all varieties of formal leadership from 1972 on.[56] The principle of 'structurelessness' was founded on the conviction that every structure also signifies a hierarchy and, with that, control and power over individuals; after all, the feminists' goal was by no means a simple transfer of authority, from male to female. However, the meaning of autonomy extended beyond issues of organisation; its fundamental aim was identitary. It was meant to offer women a space in which they could discuss their problems and their political strategies 'amongst themselves' – that is to say, a space which escaped the normally dominant influence of men.[57] Autonomy became the essential *modus operandi* used to counter the patriarchal determination of 'woman', and indeed was soon recognised as a non-negotiable prerequisite for the development of a unique women's politics, for the socialist-marxist as well as the radical feminist wing of the women's liberation movement.

According to the political programme of the women's liberation movement, individual self-discovery and the self-determination of women as a social group were inseparable processes. It was one's personal sense of involvement and experience of oppression as a woman which provided the basis for activism; it was this which transformed each participant into a political subject. Certainly, feminism shared this principle – of the narrow interweaving of subjectivity and collectivity – with the 1968 movement as a whole. Yet, on occasion, in certain groups of the 1968 movement middle- or upper-class origins raised doubts as to where the commitment of the member truly lay. By contrast, this was rarely a problem in the women's movement. The life of each woman was undoubtedly unique; but discrimination was common to them all. Women did not always identify with other women, and sometimes did not even see themselves as a 'woman' at all. But, in the final analysis, they were all socially perceived

as women, and this categorisation of the individual – in the estimation of the new women's movement – always entailed a gender-specific form of discrimination.[58]

This conclusion was reached not just through the abstract acquisition of knowledge but also via the discussion of personal experiences. Social oppression was not simply to be found 'out there'; it had also been internalised. In her analysis of feminist autobiographies, the sociologist Liz Stanley claims that the self is first understood as unique when it comes into confrontation with the lives of others.[59] The insights of symbolic interactionism – that subjectivity emerges through intersubjectivity – exerted an organic and transformative influence on the Parisian movement of 1968. In May, the *prise de parole* – seizing the word or speaking out – was practised in all places and at all times. The French historian Michel de Certeau had already established and plausibly elaborated upon the question of what *le pouvoir de parler* (the power and possibility of speech) meant for the symbolic structures of power.[60] Radical feminism offered a quasi-institutionalised space for this practice in the form of consciousness-raising groups. Already in 1967, a small women's group called New York Radical Women was experimenting with the possibility of using personal experiences as political resources. In 1968 they presented a programme for 'feminist consciousness raising' at the first national women's liberation conference near Chicago. The influences behind this new 'technology of the self' (Michel Foucault) were ostensibly quite diverse. Explicit models were found in the forms of participatory democracy of the Civil Rights Movement, in the methods of the Guatemalan guerrilla, and also in the Chinese practice of 'speaking bitterness', in which impoverished peasants learned to verbally express their oppression and by this technique to come to understand it as contingent rather than 'natural'.[61] The intention was the same in the new women's movement, but was spoken of more explicitly. Mitchell writes:

> The process of transforming the hidden, individual fears of women into a shared awareness of the meaning of them as social problems, the release of anger, anxiety, the struggle of proclaiming the painful and transforming it into the political – this process is consciousness-raising.[62]

Or, in the words of a member of the Freiburg women's group, who describes the motives behind the establishment of an 'encounter group' in the following terms:

> we believed that you can only become truly politically active when you proceed from personally experienced situations of oppression, and from your own needs; we wanted to work in an organisation that did not recreate the old structures of authority; we gradually came to understand that, within the group as in our private lives, the division of the personal and the political directly contributed towards the oppression of women.[63]

These pioneers understood consciousness-raising as a process of three steps which proceeded sequentially but functioned collectively: feelings based on personal experience were to result in the analysis of women's oppression, and this analysis – thanks to the developing women's movement – was in turn to lead to political action.

The New York radical feminist Pamela Allen wrote a well-received introduction to consciousness-raising, and in this text outlined what she understood to be the four stages of the feminist group process: self-expression within a non-competitive environment; experience-sharing; the analysis of these experiences; and, finally, abstraction.[64] The procedure of group meetings was straightforward, in principle. On each occasion, the group would decide on an issue to be discussed and each participant would recount her own experiences with regard to this topic. Ideally, the female specificity of each of these experiences would then be scrutinised. Some groups structured their discussions around non-systematic introductory sessions, which were based on a list of questions developed by the New York radical feminists. In 1973, for instance, one group of the Viennese Independent Women's Campaign (AUF) posed the following questions for discussion: 'To what extent was each of us raised as a typical girl? What sexual fantasies did we have? How did we experience puberty? What wishes to change the world do we remember?'[65] There was an exponential increase in the number of women's groups which, to varying degrees, consciously formed their discussions around personal experience. Admittedly, there are no exact figures, but it is estimated that in 1976 there were between 300 and 500 such groups in West Germany alone.[66]

In all likelihood, it is no coincidence that it was in the USA that this form of self-expression was first productively put to use. One factor was the often uncritical perception of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, which was in no way specific to the United States; it was, rather, a result of the transnational circulation of ideas and practices which are evoked time and again in the academic literature. However, there were nationally specific factors which made the USA particularly receptive: for example, the forms of direct participatory democracy which had been practised during the Civil Rights Movement. A very significant role was also played by the popularisation of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, a process which took place much earlier in the USA than in Europe. The influence of psychological expertise on the American women's movement was already apparent in the work of Betty Friedan. Kate Millet, for her part, traced women's acceptance of male domination back to the stereotypical roles imparted to females via processes of socialisation,[67] and this is exemplary of the feminist theory of the time, which continually emphasised the social dimension of subjective experience. It was also indirectly, via critical theory and the new left, that psychoanalysis found its way into the women's liberation movement. Yet according to the historical account of Eli Zaretsky, psychoanalysis directly helped lay the theoretical basis for the claim that oppression has a significant impact on the self, causing psychological harm via processes of 'misrecognition'.[68] Zaretsky also argues that psychoanalysis shifted 'from a paradigm of intrapsychic autonomy to a paradigm of intersubjectivity' during the 1960s.[69] The consciousness-raising groups, however, always explicitly defended themselves against the accusation that they were practising therapy, and fervently stressed the political function of these small groups.[70] The feminist subject was to construct itself as a political subject, a subject capable of public action. It was to achieve this through the personal participation of every woman, through the collective formulation of theoretical analyses, and through the practical and discursive interaction of the group; in short, through a process of collective speech and action. Their practices rested on the conviction that the distinction between understanding the world and transforming it had been dissolved – and, as recounted in many personal records of the time, activists experienced this as a highly inspiring, indeed empowering feeling. After all, the insights they had gained through struggle were not purely intellec-

tual; they entailed a new theoretical world view, certainly, but also a new self-image. They transformed the person in her entirety, and in this way they approximate the character of a religious conversion.[71] 'I was born a second time in 1968', writes Anne-Zelensky-Tristan, one of the founders of the French MLF.[72] For many it was like an epiphany when female oppression was first put into words and analysed. In London in 1969, Juliet Mitchell ran a course on 'The Role of Women in Society' at an 'anti-university'. One of the attendees describes her memories of the event in the following terms:

> Then the bells rang and the connections were made and there was that feeling of militancy that I'd never experienced before despite involvement in various left-wing groups. I was no longer alone, but part of a movement which was primarily political but could be personal to me.[73]

The intensive focus on the question of subjectivity – as both a strategy of building the women's movement (as developed in the self-awareness groups) and as a method of building a relevant body of theory – by no means went uncontested. Socialist feminists, who – it should be noted – often did participate in consciousness-raising groups themselves, made the criticism that such meetings tended to lose their political relevance fairly quickly, and that the discussions often ended in mutual pity.[74] Indeed, there was always a tension within the women's liberation movement between the self-reflexive and activist elements.[75] Criticism came also from former participants, who condemned the 'tyranny of structurelessness'.[76] The lack of a clear structure of authority, so it was claimed, did not take into account the fact that not all individuals are equally articulate; in practice, therefore, it encouraged the development of an informal charismatic leadership.[77] In 1976, the first edition of the German feminist periodical *Die schwarze Botin* (*The Black Messenger*) formulated a radical and polemically scathing rejection of the identity-signifier 'woman'. It was argued that endless talk about what it was to be a woman represented nothing more than a retreat, a 'renunciation of a clear position of struggle'. Furthermore, not everything that 'women think, speak, write and labour' was 'suitable as a resource for the creation of a new emancipatory femininity'. The critique continued:

> [T]he desire for self-awareness and self-affirmation renders the self more obscure than ever; each woman sits there in the confidence that thoughts will simply come to her, without attempting to come up with any of her own. Newly-discovered sensibilities – a new depth of tenderness, a conscious possession of one's own body, and so on – are supposed to beget critical thought, but in practice beget only themselves.[78]

Within the women's movement, these two major criticisms were widespread: that speaking about emotions, experiences and perceptions did not necessarily yield an insightful analysis of oppression, and still less offered a means of fighting against it; and that not all women possessed the same level of cultural capital necessary for self-expression.[79] Yet these criticisms do not detract from the evident importance of consciousness-raising, a historically specific 'technology of the self' which was developed and employed for the purposes of self-creation and politicisation.

Conclusion

What conclusions can we draw from the above about the intention of the 1968 movement to reinvent (or, to put it less emphatically, to renew) the sphere of the political? What role did the new women's movement play in this task? Above all, how were the resources of subjectivity mobilised towards this end?

The history of the twentieth century is not only a history of violent excesses. It is also a history of democratisation and of the radicalisation of democracy. At the end of the Second World War, the general democratisation of political systems and of society was not just a practical goal to be accomplished; it was also a normative ideal which exerted its considerable influence within nation-states as well as internationally. As has been implied, the process of democratisation did not keep pace with economic and socio-cultural transformations, and its results remained patently inadequate in many spheres of life. The critique of these deficits articulated through the movements of 1968 led them to attempt a reform of democratic institutions. In their eyes, though, it was equally necessary to engage with all levels of 'the infrapolitical', with the concretely lived relations of power in everyday life and the often apparently banal forms taken by the

acts of communication between individuals. The mobilisation of the downtrodden was both a prerequisite for and a means of achieving these ends, and their mobilisation itself required that they become aware of their 'oppression' and fight collectively for their 'liberation'. In historical terms, the ambition of 1968 can be explained as a new interpretation of the concept of 'citizenship' and as the attempt to create a political subject capable of taking action in all spheres of the social.

Yet the project of 1968 was also marked by contradictions and theoretical blind spots. The women's movement, formed at the end of the 1960s, sought to uncover the analytical and practical aporias which haunted gender relations, and to confront the second-class status of women in left-wing theory and practice. It sharpened the critical approach adopted by the original manifestos of 1968. It radically instantiated the idea – which was already latent in the era of 1968 – that the 'personal is political', and in doing so sought to tear down the theoretical frontiers which had been constitutive of bourgeois society since the Enlightenment. But the women's movement went one step further again, in that it did not merely inquire into the structural conditions underlying the existence of the gender dichotomies of modern society, but also – through the self-awareness groups – provided a technique for its subjective transformation. One goal of the women's movement was to harness individual experiences for explicitly political purposes. Group discussions encouraged the expression of the hidden transcripts of female oppression and of the condition of woman itself. In turn, the prescripts of society – but also the new public transcripts of the 1968 movement – were exposed as patriarchal, and women acting as a collective could subsequently pen their own scripts. A second goal of the women's movement, equal in importance to the first, was the creation of a feminist subject. The collective political resources of the group were placed at the disposal of the individual member, whose self-confidence was strengthened and who was imparted with a new, positive self-image.

Historical research does not concern itself only with projects which were historically successful. The problem of the relations of power was not solved by the actions of those energised by 1968 or by the women's movement. In this sense, as Passerini writes, the secular transcendency of the movement never came to fulfilment.[80] Time and again the memoirs of feminists give voice to the resultant sense of loss. They miss the synchronicity of personal and collective development; the convergence of

biographical and political experiences; the attempt to form a synthesis between their private lives and public commitments. These feminists inhabited a realm of possibility which arises only seldom in the *longue durée*, and which compels the historian to critically engage with a decisive question, namely: What does it signify when specific cultural norms, usually hidden behind the apparently innocent system of social relations, are exposed – and therefore lose their aura of inevitability?

Translated by Gareth Price-Thomas

Notes

1. This article is based on a paper presented at the Austrian *Zeitgeschichtstage/Wiener Vorlesungen* in Vienna, 2010. A German version without footnotes has been published by Picus Verlag, Vienna. My thanks go to Kristina Schulz for her critical remarks and suggestions.
2. Until recently, two grand narratives of 1968 have dominated the field, according to the British historian Robert Gildea. One narrative asserted that the 1968 movement developed from a political into a cultural movement; the other, that it started off as a youth culture and then turned to politics, moving from hedonism to leninism. See 'Toujours La lutte', Humanities Research Projects, University of Oxford: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/research/humanities/projects/la_lutte_continue.html> Accessed 15 April 2010. However, it is questionable whether any grand narrative can do justice to the diversity of '1968'; see Gerard J DeGroot, *The Sixties Unplugged: An International History of the Decade of Myth and Madness*, Cambridge/Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008.
3. To be exact the first since 1917-18, according to the American literary scholar Kristin Ross (*May '68 and its Afterlives*, Chicago, Ill: Chicago University Press. 2002).
4. Taking this approach, the German political scientist Wolfgang Kraushaar classifies '1968' as the first global revolution (*1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur*, Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000). Gerd-Rainer Horn, by contrast, refers to it as the second since 1848 (*The Spirit of 1968. Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956–1976*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

5. This aspect is dealt with in more detail in Brigitte Studer, 'Neue politische Prinzipien und Praktiken. Transnationale Muster und lokale Aneignungen in der 68er Bewegung', in Janick Schaufelbuehl (ed.) [with Nuno Pereira and Renate Schär], *1968-1978: Ein bewegtes Jahrzehnt in der Schweiz/Une décennie mouvementée en Suisse*, Zürich, Chronos Verlag, 2009, pp37-52.
6. The inter-university Doctoral School of Gender of the Swiss universities of Bern and Freiburg, of whose board of directors I am a member, is researching the concepts 'prescripts and transcripts' (2009-2012) to determine how norms shape gender behaviour, and better understand how women and men can devise and enact original interpretations, individual appropriations, and transgressions of these norms. This is covered in more detail below.
7. Sara M Evans, 'Sons, Daughters, and Patriarchy: Gender and the 1968 Generation', *The American Historical Review*, 114, 2 (2009), pp331-347, 338.
8. Juliet Mitchell, 'Women: The Longest Revolution', *New Left Review*, No. 40, December (1966) (also published in: Juliet Mitchell, *Woman's Estate*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971, pp75-122).
9. Ilse Lenz, *Die Neue Frauenbewegung in Deutschland. Abschied vom kleinen Unterschied. Eine Quellensammlung*, Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008, p11.
10. Ibid. Ilse Lenz claims that in Germany this phase lasted from 1968 to 1975.
11. Françoise Picq, *Libération des femmes: les années-mouvement*, Paris: Ed. du Seuil, 1993.
12. Juliet Mitchell, *Woman's Estate*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971, p11.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. In Zurich there had been a local group which self-identified as a women's liberation movement since February 1969. One year earlier still, several women were already engaged in acts of political provocation (May B Broda, Elisabeth Joris, Regina Müller, 'Die alte und die neue Frauenbewegung', in Mario König et al (eds.), *Dynamisierung und Umbau. Die Schweiz in den 60er und 70er Jahren*, Zürich: Chronos, 1998, pp201-226; *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 57, (2007), p3; Kristina Schulz (ed.), *Neue Frauenbewegung in der Schweiz.*

Forschungsansätze und Forschungsperspektiven / Nouveau mouvement des femmes en Suisse: Approches et perspectives de recherche). In Austria, an autonomous group was first formed in 1972 (Brigitte Geiger, Hacker Hanna, *Donauwalzer Damenwahl. Frauenbewegte Zusammenhänge in Österreich,* Wien: Promedia, 1989).

16. These contradictory narratives about the origins of the women's movement, in the German as well as the French case, show that the 'inheritance' of the new women's movement has been the subject of a fierce struggle between different currents. On this point, see Kristina Schulz, *Der lange Atem der Provokation. Die Frauenbewegung in der Bundesrepublik und in Frankreich 1968-1976*, Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002, pp186-189.
17. Nancy Whittier, 'Political Generations, Micro-Cohorts, and the Transformation of Social Movements', *American Sociological Review*, 62, (1997), pp760-778.
18. Rosalind Delmar, 'What is Feminism?' in Juliet Mitchell, Ann Oakley (eds.), *What is Feminism?* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986, pp8-33, 25.
19. James C Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven: London, 1990.
20. James C Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, p223; Aristide R Zolberg, 'Moments of Madness', *Politics and Society*, 2 (1972), pp183–207, 206.
21. Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1984, particularly pp209-212. Also see, Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, *'Die Phantasie an die Macht': Mai 68 in Frankreich*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1995.
22. Dieter Rucht, 'Die Ereignisse von 1968 als soziale Bewegung: Methodologische Überlegungen und einige empirische Befunde', in Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey (ed.), *1968: Vom Ereignis zum Gegenstand der Geschichtswissenschaft*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998, p119.
23. On the matter of 'biographical availability', see Julie Pagis, 'La Politisation d'engagements religieux: Retour sur une matrice de l'engagement en Mai 68', *Revue Française de Science politique*, 60, 1 (2010), pp61-89.
24. Michelene Wandor (ed.), *Once a Feminist: Stories of a Generation*, London: Virago, 1990, p1.
25. Here, and in other countries, minors had particular difficulty gaining access to the pill and other contraceptive measures.
26. On this matter, see 'Mai 68 ou la crise de la domination rapprochée', in

Dominique Damamme et al (eds.), *Mai-Juin 68*, Ivry-sur-Seine: Les Editions de l'Atelier, 2008, pp35–46.

27. Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus,* Paris, Les Editions de Minuit, 1984.
28. Lynne Segal, *Making Trouble: Life and Politics*, London: Serpent's Tail, 2007, p254.
29. Susanne Maurer alludes to the near dissolution of the 'spatial order', an insight which is very apparent in the photographs and films of protests and occupied lecture theatres ('Gespaltenes Gedächtnis? – "1968 und die Frauen" in Deutschland', *L'Homme ZFG* 20, 2 (2009), pp118-128, 119).
30. Luisa Passerini, *Autoritratto di gruppo*, Giunti-Astrea: Firenze 1988. I am citing the English translation: *Autobiography of a Generation: Italy 1968*, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1996. Incidentally, the author highlights the fact that in Turin 34 per cent of the 488 arrested during 1968 were female.
31. Etienne Penissat, 'Les occupations de locaux dans les années 1960-1970: processus sociohistoriques de "réinvention" d'un mode d'action', *Genèses*, 9 (2005), p71-93.
32. Sarah Evans highlights this aspect of the American civil rights movement in *Personal politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, New York: Vintage Books, 1980, pp220-221. Belinda Davis, using the example of the Federal Republic of Germany, similarly emphasises the individuating and autonomising effects of these newly created spaces, which were neither wholly private nor entirely public in 'Civil society in a New Key? Feminist and Alternative Groups in 1960s-1970s West Germany', in Karen Hagemann, Sonya Michel, Gunilla-Friederike Budde (eds.), *Civil society and gender justice: historical and comparative perspectives*, New York: Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2008, pp208-223.
33. Pierre Bourdieu, *La domination masculine*, Paris: Seuil (Collection Liber), 1998.
34. Lou Taylor, 'Habillement, dissidence et consommation de masse en Grande-Bretagne', in Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand et al (eds.), *Les Années 68: Le temps de la contestation*, Paris: Editions Complexes - IHTP/CNRS, 2000, pp141-159.
35. Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation.*
36. Sheila Rowbotham, *Promise of a Dream: Remembering the Sixties*, London: New York, Verso, 2002, p188.

37. The freedom of the 1960s faded away in the 1970s as it became clear to the women's movement that, in a patriarchal society, signs cannot simply be made to function according to egalitarian principles. Consciously or unconsciously, feminists renounced the habit of putting their physicality on display, a habit which (as they had come to understand) was socially acceptable only when adopted by men. As a result, the female body was wrapped in long dresses, and women widely abstained from wearing make-up.
38. Sheila Rowbotham, *Promise of a Dream*, p115. Marge Piercy has formulated a rather more scathing critique of the sexual double standards of men within the left ('The Grand Coolie Damn', in Robin Morgan (ed.), *Sisterhood is Powerful*, New York: Vintage, 1970).
39. Regarding the broader significance of 'liberation', see also Jean Batou, 'Conclusion: Quand le monde s'invite en Suisse: Les années 68 au pays de Guillaume Tell', in *1968-1978: Ein bewegtes Jahrzehnt in der Schweiz / Une décennie mouvementée en Suisse*, pp297-333, 311. This direct semantic and theoretical reference to the anti-colonial liberation movements is also underlined in Andrée Lévesque, 'Militer', in Eliane Gubin, Catherine Jacques, Florence Rochefort, Brigitte Studer, Françoise Thébaud, Michelle Zancarini-Fournel (eds), *Le Siècle des féminismes*, Paris: Les Editions de l'Atelier, 2004, pp87-99, in particular 95.
40. Amanda Sebestyen, 'Introduction', in Amanda Sebestyen (ed.), *'68, '78, '88. From Women's Liberation to Feminism*, Bridport: Prism Press, 1988, px.
41. 'Introduction', *AHR Forum: The International 1968, Part II*, pp329-330, in particular p329; Julie de Dardel, *Révolution sexuelle et Mouvement de Libération des Femmes à Genève (1970-1977)*, Lausanne: Editions Antipodes, 2007 ; Stevi Jackson, Sue Scott, 'Whatever Happened to Feminist Critiques of Monogamy?', in Helen Graham et al (eds.), *The Feminist Seventies*, York: Raw Nerve Books, 2003, pp27-41. For an argument that the 1960s' sexual revolution was essentially a women's revolution see Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess, Gloria Jacobs (eds.), *Re-Making Love: The Feminization of Sex*, London: Fontana, 1987.
42. Sheila Rowbotham, *Promise of a Dream: Remembering the Sixties*, p241.
43. Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex. The Case for Feminist Revolution,* New York: William Morrow and Co, 1970.
44. It was first in the work of later radical feminists that man came to be defined as the arch-enemy. Germaine Greer (*The Female Eunuch*, London:

MacGibbon & Kee, 1970) perceived the roots of the oppression of women in man's control over female sexuality. Kate Millett (*Sexual Politics*, New York: Doubleday, 1970), for her part, developed a theory of patriarchy.

45. This is covered in detail in Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, *'Die Phantasie an die Macht': Mai 68 in Frankreich*. The issue is dealt with much more concisely in Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, 'Mai 68 in Frankreich', in Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey (ed.), *1968: Vom Ereignis zum Gegenstand der Geschichtswissenschaft*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998, pp11-34, in particular pp15-16.
46. Cited from Kristina Schulz, *Der lange Atem der Provokation. Die Frauenbewegung in der Bundesrepublik und in Frankreich 1968-1976*, Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002, p116. In the Autumn of 1970, *Partisans* published numerous texts of the American women's liberation movement, and headed this issue of the journal with the historic citation, 'Libération des femmes – année zéro'. On the making of this issue, see the following testimony: Jacqueline Feldman, 'De FMA au MLF. Un témoignage sur les débuts du mouvement de liberation des femmes', *CLIO. Histoire, femmes et sociétés* 29 (2009), pp193-203.
47. Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation*, pp31-32.
48. Elaine Showalter, in her book on the emergence of a feminist intellectual heritage, cites a participant of a consciousness-raising group: 'In particular, we talk about how we don't want to be like our mothers who, we believe, did not know what they wanted. What do we want? The specifics are not clear but the project involves taking charge of one's own life …the point of the group as we see it is to help each other bring this about: not to be a victim.' (*Inventing herself: Claiming a feminist intellectual heritage*, London: Picador, 2001, p270).
49. Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation. Italy 1968*, p33.
50. Sheila Rowbotham, *Promise of a Dream: Remembering the Sixties*, p115.
51. Dinah Brooke, 'Identity', reprinted in Micheline Wandor, *Once a Feminist: Stories of a Generation*, pp235-239, 238.
52. Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation*, p100.
53. 'Ich begann zu schreiben und zu schreiben – es war wie ein Dammbruch', in Heinz Nigg, *Wir sind wenige, aber wir sind alle. Biographien aus der 68er-Generation in der Schweiz*, Zürich: Limmat Verlag, pp336-344, 340.
54. See, for example Lynne Segal, *Making Trouble: Life and Politics*.

55. These arguments are derived from Barbara Riedmüller, 'Das Neue an der Frauenbewegung. Versuch einer Wirkungsanalyse der neuen Frauenbewegung', in Uta Gerhardt, Yvonne Schütze (eds.), *Frauensitutation. Veränderungen in den letzten zwanzig Jahren*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1988, pp15-41, p30.
56. Judith Bucher, Barbara Schmucki, *FBB: Fotogeschichte der Frauenbefreiungsbewegung Zürich*, Zürich: Limmat Verlag, 1995.
57. It was only after many fierce debates that agreement on this principle was reached. See for example the following account: 'A few men came [to the meetings of left-wing women in 1968/69] and could be said to have played a historic role. One was a ponderous and patriarchal maoist who lectured us endlessly on marxism-leninism, another was a twitchy young man who said we were like a mothers' tea-party because we kept on giggling. The next meeting we held we decided not to have men because we wanted to work things out amongst ourselves. One man came in fact to this meeting and kept saying that we must have a theoretical reason to exclude him. We said, we didn't have one but we were fed up with being told by men what we ought to think about ourselves and them. This meeting was very long and rambling. […] I don't think any of us realised we were starting a movement.' (Sheila Robotham, 'The Beginnings of Women's Liberation in Britain', in Michelene Wandor (ed.), *The Body Politics: Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement in Britain 1969-1972*, London: Stage 1, 1972, pp91-102, 95).
58. However, the category 'gender' was not regarded as the only category of difference; 'class' was almost as important, as was (in part) 'race'.
59. Liz Stanley, *The auto/biographical I: The theory and practice of feminist auto/biography*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992, p14. See also George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934.
60. Michel de Certeau, *La prise de parole et autres écrits politiques*, Paris: Seuil, 1994 (1968).
61. For this genealogy, see Juliet Mitchell, *Woman's Estate*, p62; Sarah Evans, *Personal politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, p137. Evans evokes further models in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP) of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) (published in September 1963).

62. Juliett Mitchell, *Woman's Estate*, p61.
63. 'Frauengruppe Freiburg, Kleingruppen – Erfahrungen und Regeln', in Jutta Menschik (ed.), *Grundlagentexte zur Emanzipation der Frau*, Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein Verlag, 1976, pp338-351. See also Ursula Krechel, 'Selbsterfahrung', pp340-347, in the 1977 revised edition of this book.
64. Pamela Allen, *Free Space. A Perspective on the Small Group in Women's Liberation*, New York: Times Change Press, 1970. It is interesting to note that, in the German language, this radical feminist text was published by the co-operative of socialist women of Frankfurt: 'Der Freiraum', in *Frauen gemeinsam sind stark*, Frankfurt am Main: Roter Stern, 1972, pp59-68.
65. Communications Group Report, AUF Proceedings, May 1973, cited in Brigitte Geiger, Hanna Hacker, *Donauwalzer Damenwahl*, p121.
66. Ruth Großmaß, 'Feminismus und Therapie', *beiträge zur feministischen theorie und praxis*, 17 (1986), pp7-23, 22; Brigitte Geiger, Hanna Hacker, *Donauwalzer Damenwahl*, p120.
67. See Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology*: *Political Culture in the Age of Experts*, Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995.
68. Eli Zaretsky, *Secrets of the soul: a social and cultural history of psychoanalysis*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004, p311.
69. Ibid.
70. Redstockings Manifesto of 7 July 1969: 'V. […] Consciousness-raising is not "therapy", which implies the existence of individual solutions and falsely assumes that the male-female relationship is purely personal, but the only method by which we can ensure that our program for liberation is based on the concrete realities of our lives.' *Redstockings Manifesto*: <http://www.redstockings.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=76&Itemid=59> (accessed 12 October 2010). The groups were supposed to run for only three months, and at the end of this period pose the question as to what was to be done next, and how it was to be done. The therapeutic effects of these groups were later employed in psychotherapy, and the pedagogical aspect was put to use in language classes.
71. See, for instance, the introduction to Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Ann Snitow (eds.), *The Feminist Memoir Project: Voices from Women's Liberation*, New York: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

72. Anne-Zelensky-Tristan, *Histoire de vivre: Mémoires d'une féministe*, Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 2005, p39.
73. Cited in Anna Coote, Beatrix Campbell, *Sweet Freedom: The Struggle for Women's Liberation*, London: Picador, 1982, p17.
74. See, for example, Juliet Mitchell, *Woman's Estate*, p63. The booming literature on female self-awareness formed one branch of the practice of consciousness-raising. However, while it was at first militant, it soon became predominantly commercialised. One of the first international bestsellers was the feminist autobiography of Anja Meulenbelt, *The Shame is Over*, London: Women's Press, 1980, first published in Dutch in 1976. For general information on this form of confessional narrative, see Imelda Whelehan, Maroula Joannou, 'This Book Changes Lives: The "Consciousness-Raising Novel" and Its Legacy', in: Helen Graham et al (eds.), *The Feminist Seventies*, York: Raw Nerve Books, 2003, pp125-140.
75. On this point see 'Catherine Hall', in Micheline Wandor (ed.), *Once a Feminist: Stories of a Generation*, London: Virago, 1990, pp171-182, particularly pp174-175.
76. Jo Freeman, 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness', *The Second Wave*, 2, 1, (1972); also published in *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 17, (1972-3), pp151–165, and *Ms. magazine*, July (1973), pp76-8, 86-9. A revised version of *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* is available online on Freeman's own web site: <http://www.uic.edu/orgs/cwluherstory/jofreeman/joreen/tyranny.htm> (accessed 29 November 2010).
77. See Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation,* p63.
78. 'Schleim oder Nichtschleim, das ist hier die Frage. An Stelle eines Vorwortes', *Die Schwarze Botin*, I (1976), pp4-5, republished in Ilse Lenz, *Die Neue Frauenbewegung in Deutschland: Abschied vom kleinen Unterschied. Eine Quellensammlung*, Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008, pp51-3, in particular pp51-2.
79. Ursula Krechel provides several examples of such criticisms, particularly in the second edition of her text *Standortbestimmung der Frauenbewegung: Selbsterfahrung und Fremdbestimmung: Bericht aus der Neuen Frauenbewegung*, Darmstadt und Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1983, pp43-48 (first edition 1975).
80. Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a Generation*, p132.