Part I

European theory/European movements

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1 European social movements and social theory

A richer narrative?

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Introduction

Anyone researching social movements will find themselves hearing or reading a near-identical account, often repeated word-for-word, of how the discipline came to be. It is a tale of the bad old days of collective behaviour theory, followed by the rise of resource mobilization theory, the addition of political opportunity structure, the encounter with ('European') 'new social movement' theory and the arrival of framing theory. Those who reproduce this account are usually doing one of two things: as newcomers to the field, they are affirming their right to belong by repeating its origin myths, or, as established figures, they are underlining the orthodox status of those myths.

We say *origin myths* because this is the actual function of this particular account. Original research is virtually always lacking; even where the author has read the figures cited there is no attempt at rethinking the intellectual history. The closest relatives of this kind of myth are the accounts by Tibetan Buddhist schools of the philosophical debates in India, which they understood as predecessors to their own school and as sources of intellectual status – accounts which necessarily relied upon earlier accounts within the same tradition and did so uncritically, producing canons rather than histories.

Our contention is that the form of such accounts is that of origin myth – the formulation of a textual canon and the performance of rituals marking membership of a particular group. This is so whether or not the actual content of such accounts is accurate; since they are not critical works of intellectual history but, rather, reproduce the accounts of previous scholars, their accuracy is uncertain. As far as the representation of 'European social movement theory' goes, however, the origin myth is at best a very partial and misleading account which confuses a reception history within a US subdiscipline for actual European debates.

This chapter does two things. It shows that European social theory has largely developed through engagement with movements, in ways which differ from the US experience and which are not represented by 'social movement theory' as a narrowly-bounded subfield of sociology and political science. Second, we explore one aspect of this, which in the standard origin myth is routinely represented as 'the European contribution to social movement theory', the discussion

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of new social movements. Re-placing this debate in its historical and political context, we show that the canonical account severely misrepresents this European scholarship on movements and reduces it to a soundbite which *misses the point*.

The preceding paragraph is polemical, but more in sorrow than in anger. As scholars researching contemporary European movements, we have found the conceptual tools of US movement research helpful on the micro-scale, but incapable of dealing with the macro-questions that are central to European movements (Mayer 1995). An uncritical translation of US exceptionalism (the historical weakness of the political left and labour movements) has been turned into an operating assumption of social movements as a particular 'level' of the political system. This leaves out entirely the European experience, where democratic, nationalist, labour, fascist, anti-fascist, communist and anti-communist movements have repeatedly remade and reshaped states and reorganized whole societies in their own image.

Similarly, the uncritical repetition of a reductionist account of 'European social movement theory' bears no resemblance to the social theorists and processes of movement theorising we encounter within movements and in European writing on movements. This account, regularly reproduced by monoglot writers (in a circular relationship with academic translation processes) is a travesty of the actual debates within which movements have engaged in the last five decades and of the ways in which European intellectuals have engaged with those movements. This chapter is a first attempt at rectifying some of these intercultural misrepresentations and misunderstandings.

A richer narrative

In attempting to provide a richer narrative we first return European social theory to its roots in social movements, showing how well-known figures in social and cultural thought, both classical and contemporary, have shaped and been shaped by movements in their lives, themes, and forms of reflection. Locating them as 'public intellectuals' within a movement society offers a richer understanding of their line of thought and its relevance to the study of movements.

We then use this broader perspective to rethink the category 'European social movements theory'. In place of a selective and misleading canonical account we sketch an alternative history of the complex academic and political theorising around a broader spectrum of movements. European social movement theory was a broader-based reflection upon popular agency in contemporary society, which encompasses strategic as well as cultural elements, the political as well as the economic, working-class struggles as much as others.

Without treating 'Europe' as isolated or bounded, and recognising exchanges between continental western Europe and the English-speaking world, we insist on the need to recognise intellectual context, modes of theorising and relationship to movements if we want a more realistic, and theoretically fruitful, account of European reflections on movements.

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European social theory as reflection on social movements

The foundations of European social theory are closely linked to social movements. Saint-Simon, Marx, Weber and Durkheim were all politically engaged with or against movements – as utopian socialist, movement theorist, conservative opponent and party member respectively. De Tocqueville attempted to grasp the American Revolution, while Engels struggled with the Peasant War. The Marx of the *Communist Manifesto* and the historical writings, or the Weber of the *Protestant Ethic* and the analysis of status-groups and parties, were both centrally engaged with theorising popular collective agency and its many different forms in this unstable time.

These were normal concerns for nineteenth-century European intellectuals, in a period in which 'the social question' came to life as 'the social movement' (Cox forthcoming), the plebeian challenge to a society and polity which had no place for them except as 'hands'. Movement took many forms, as did its theorisation: if von Stein's use of the phrase 'social movement' focussed on the French Revolution, this was so characteristic that those who made (Lamartine) and broke (Thiers) later revolutions had themselves written histories of the subject. Elsewhere in Europe, the struggles of German, Italian, Polish and Irish nationalism in particular were central to intellectual life in those areas and resonated internationally. The battle for democracy played a strategic role in a Europe where only a handful of states saw anything approaching full suffrage or the ending of monarchical power before the end of the First (or sometimes the Second) World War.

The late nineteenth-century European political and intellectual experience, then, saw mass popular struggles for power shape the construction of new kinds of state and society, a process which only found a provisional resting-point with the postwar construction, in western Europe, of 'organized' societies combining full formal democracy and corporatist movement involvement in decision-making – and a Cold War which threatened (and which, in Greece and Hungary, delivered) lethal violence to defend superpower control against popular movements which failed to accept their place.

Southern Europe, where dictatorships continued the fascist strategy of mass mobilization around conservative goals until the 1970s, and Eastern Europe, where states supposedly founded by popular movements actively repressed actual movements until the end of the 1980s, were shaped differently again; but in each situation (including their downfalls) social movements were central to the making and remaking of Europe. As Ken Macleod famously put it,

> Our liberties were won in wars and revolutions so terrible that we do not fear our governors: they fear us. Our children giggle and eat ice-cream in the palaces of past rulers. We snap our fingers at kings. We laugh at popes. When we have built up tyrants, we have brought them down.[1]

Unsurprisingly, twentieth-century European intellectuals continued or intensified their concern with social movements, notably in the 'European civil war'

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(Pavone 1991) between left movements and fascist counter-movements that shaped the continent in the revolutionary years of 1916–1924, the fascist surge from 1922–1942, and the European Resistance from the Spanish Civil War to 1945 – and which, in many ways, continued to underlie the postwar order in west, east and south.

The generation of engaged intellectuals which flourished from the 1890s to the 1920s – including Rosa Luxemburg, James Connolly, Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Georg Lukács, and Antonio Gramsci, among others – is testimony to this. *The Mass Strike*, *Labour and Nationality in Ireland*, *State and Revolution*, *History of the Russian Revolution*, *History and Class Consciousness* and the *Prison Notebooks* – all profoundly influential on movements far beyond their own traditions – discuss social movements in this perspective of long struggles, revolutionary transformations, or movement defeat and fascist hegemony. Such figures fused organizing practice with theorising about movements and social change in ways that were inspirational for postwar writers.[2]

Lesser, but still influential figures in this generation include Anton Pannekoek, Gustav Landauer, and Karl Mannheim. Politely forgotten today are those Catholic and fascist writers who defended the new European order, and the Stalinists who justified purges and show trials. One generation of engaged social movement theorists died in action or in exile as the processes of social-movements-become-states (nationalist, fascist or communist) turned one-time activists into state functionaries or defenders of the state against movements (Victor Serge, George Orwell).

The post-fascist rethink

The next generations of engaged theorists came of age during the intellectual Resistance against fascism (Wilkinson 1981) and developed in the shadow of Cold War anti-communism in the west and dictatorship in the east and south, brutal wars against Algerian and Vietnamese movements, and the disappointments of national independence and welfare states. E.P. Thompson captured this experience in the words of William Morris' *Dream of John Ball*:

> I pondered all these things, and how men [*sic*] fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out not to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name…
>
> (Morris 1886, ch. 4)

The brutal defeats of movements which nineteenth-century thinkers – including many conservatives – had seen as almost unstoppable; the failure of formal democracy to deliver anything resembling social equality or popular power; the once-inconceivable sight of mass popular action behind programmes to reinforce inequality, strengthen the state, impose conservative religion and expel ethnic minorities; the failure of national independence movements to deliver new

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societies; the transformation of the Russian Revolution into a monster that ate its own children; the subjugation of a once-revolutionary Europe to fascist power underpinned by mass collaboration, the destruction of movement organizations and industrialised mass murder; and the failure of postwar social democracy and state socialism to deliver either social justice or popular power: all of this changed how European intellectuals thought about social movements.

It is not that nineteenth-century intellectuals were naive; conservative intellectuals often shared left-wing, nationalist and democratic assumptions about the future, because only a fraction of pre-1848 Europe was politicised in the modern sense. The British, Irish and French experience of recent revolution and mass social movement engagement was lacking in nations where authoritarian monarchies still ruled supreme. The brief 'springtime of the peoples' was rapidly crushed, and nationalism coopted by constitutional monarchies with middle-class suffrage.

It was only in the 1880s, with new kinds of mass trade union, the Second International, suffragist agitation, and the new nationalisms, that the rest of Europe could be seen as movement societies; and only after the dust had temporarily settled from the battles for formal democracy, national independence, welfare states, socialism and fascism that an adequate balance sheet which did not simply translate polemic into theory became possible.

Intellectuals now had to grapple with four areas of reflection which shaped the subsequent relationship between social *theory* and social *movements*. The first, unsurprisingly, was a reassessment of the state and its relationship to social movements. Previously, movement-becomes-state could be imagined in many different ways, because the examples of more than temporary success were so few. Now it became clear that states made or reshaped by social movements were nevertheless very different from those movements, and had goals and outcomes of their own. Nation states need not be democratic; supposedly socialist states could kill revolutionaries; democracies could enthusiastically seize colonies. The notion of linearity of outcome was radically disrupted.

Second, the idea that some degree of progressive social change was predictable suffered a decisive defeat, whether dated to the rise of fascism out of the defeats of the revolutions of 1916–1924 or to the earlier failure of the Second International to resist the senseless violence of the First World War. The simple organization and mobilization of resources as the articulation of a long-term social trend carried no guarantees of success. Michels and the anti-war revolutionaries drew different conclusions (Barker 2001), but twentieth-century intellectuals were left with a much clearer sense of the importance of *political* choice, as opposed to simply *moral or heroic* choice, and of movements as constructed, rather than automatic.

If in the nineteenth century it was possible to combine a *progressive* historical automatism with an interest in popular agency, by the mid-twentieth century many intellectuals adopted an automatism of despair, in which modernity *inevitably* meant fascism and Stalinism, consumerism, or internalised repression. Those who remained interested in movements had to distinguish structure and

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agency more clearly, and see ordinary people as agents constrained not only by objective conditions, but also by psycho-social mechanisms of repression that made them active participants in the perpetuation of inequality, including their own.

Third, the capacity of right-wing forces to mobilize popular consent – in populism, nationalism, fascism, anti-communism, and Christian Democracy – was another decisive experience. If Marx had analysed elements of Bonapartism in 1852, still the Vatican had remained deeply hostile to democracy until its postwar acceptance of reality, while a figure like Bismarck struggled to bridge the gap between defeating the democratic elements of 1848 and harnessing its nationalist ones, moving from failed attempts to repress Social Democracy to early welfare concessions. Throughout this period the European Right slowly moved away from the goal of *excluding* popular agency from politics and towards strategies of popular mobilization around conservative identities and goals. The mass popularity of war in 1914, and the subsequent fascism, showed the possibilities of this strategy.

Last, if the possibility that popular participation in politics could be a conservative force would have made no sense in 1789, after generations of struggle for democratic rights it was surprising to discover how far popular groups could be captured by a commercial culture of passive participation, even groups which had earlier engaged in radical political movements.

The Frankfurt School's psychoanalytic explanations, French existentialism, and British cultural analysis all, in their own ways, reflected this shock. Many theorists abandoned any interest in popular movements, while others were forced to systematically reconsider their understanding. It is to this powerful learning moment that we owe the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, and of the British and French Marxist historians.

Social theory and social movements

More recent social theorists such as Herbert Marcuse, Michel Foucault, Raymond Williams, Claus Offe, the French post-structuralist feminists, Pierre Bourdieu, Ulrich Beck, and Manuel Castells were similarly shaped by, and shaped, the political movements they observed or took part in. It is curious that this essential fact is forgotten when these theorists are studied, divorcing their ideas from the political motivations and influences which shaped them. Foucault is a prime example: students are taught the technical details of the Panopticon, and the mechanism of surveillance is carefully explained, but there is no mention of his founding of the prison information group, or of his militancy in 1968 and after. Theory does not have to be taught as social history, but to ignore the role of movements in European social theory is to miss its fundamental political motivations and contexts and to misrepresent its purposes, in a provincialism of the present.

Of course, public intellectuals who combine academic work and political activism open both themselves and their work to attacks that are often politically, rather than theoretically, motivated. Sartre, Foucault, Bourdieu, Marcuse,

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de Beauvoir, and Negri are all examples of this; yet, it is strange how *timid* current academic writers are by comparison with those who actively engaged in resistance to fascism, supported the Algerian independence movement in the heart of Paris, or were sacked or imprisoned for supporting the movements of 1968 and 1977.

Simone de Beauvoir

De Beauvoir is a central example of a public intellectual who shaped, and was shaped by, social movements. Her intellectual, political and personal lives were deeply intertwined (Monteil 1997), and her contribution to social movements were manifold. She publicly engaged in prefigurative lifestyle politics, openly rejecting the dominant hetero-normativity and sexual repression and embracing relationships in line with her existential philosophy. Her refusal to marry, her open relationship with Sartre, and her affairs with other men and women were radical departures from the status quo.

Her intellectual contribution to social movements was huge, both through her writings on emancipation, oppression and collective social transformation, and through the concept of the 'appeal' and the dissemination of political ideas through art, in her metaphysical novels. Her most enduring text, only now coming into its own thanks to a much-improved translation, is *The Second Sex*, a founding text of second-wave feminism. It delineates a nuanced, philosophical and political critique of patriarchy and expresses a profound sense of injustice, but also draws clear connections between 'intimate' or 'private' practices and public policies. She develops the idea of freedom as transcendence: subjects are not determined fully by their present circumstances, as these can be transcended. She argues that the radical rejection of values that enslave us, or the embracing of values that liberate us, can only be effective if these actions are taken up collectively. Thus, freedom is only possible through collective action and through an appeal to allies in a political project for social transformation. Her phenomenological approach and focus upon the importance of the body and the embodied nature of oppression are linked to an insistence upon lived experience as the basis for theory.

De Beauvoir's work has clear relevance for social movements, and her influence on feminist theory and epistemologies, and feminist movements, thinking, and practices such as consciousness-raising, has been enormous. In her sixties, she played a key role in furthering the French women's movement, organizing meetings, writing texts, speaking publicly and lending her high profile to movement causes. As a public intellectual her political and intellectual activities were intrinsically linked, as her participation in the *Manifesto of the 343*, which she wrote, attests.

In this 1971 manifesto, 343 women declared that they had had an abortion, illegal at the time. The ensuing public scandal put abortion squarely in the public domain. It was inspired by the *Manifesto of the 141*, produced during the Algerian war of independence and signed by De Beauvoir and Sartre, which asked

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French soldiers to desert and refuse to kill Algerians. This manifesto lost many intellectuals their jobs and earned death threats for Sartre and De Beauvoir. Self-incrimination as a political act has subsequently been adopted by a number of movements, and the abortion manifesto was later taken up in Germany and elsewhere as a political tactic. De Beauvoir stands in the frontline of European theorists who have nourished and been nourished by social movements, and her legacy continues long after her death.

Herbert Marcuse

Marcuse is another such public intellectual. Although his rise to fame came much later in life than de Beauvoir's, his activism also brought death threats, hate mail, being hung in effigy, and unceremonious retirement (Katsiaficas1991).

Marcuse was also shaped by Marxism and existentialism. His work highlights many 'movement-relevant' concerns, such as the idea that transcendence relies on a transformation of the inner psyche, without which shifts in objective circumstances cannot take place or have a radical transformative outcome; the importance of art and sexuality in the fulfilment of human species-being; the critique of 'natural' ideologies as perpetuating oppression; and a radical critique of injustice as a means of encouraging collective protest and personal and social transformation through collective action. Marcuse, according to his son, always saw his ideas as best understood in the context of social change (Romano 2011).

Marcuse's work sought to make theoretical sense of National Socialist barbarism, and to create critical theory to illuminate a path to a less barbarous future. His influence on social movements has been great, especially in Germany and the US. He influenced the student movements of 1968, German activists from Rudi Dutschke (a close friend) to the RAF, Green Party co-founder Jutta Ditfurth, and, in the US, his students Angela Davis and George Katsiaficas, among others. *Eros and Civilization* (1955) and *One Dimensional Man* (1964) contributed to the counter-cultural movements of the sixties in both Europe and the US, especially anti-authoritarian student protest in Germany (Jansen 2009; Kellner 1989).

Conversely, the student movement revived interest in the Frankfurt School, and in Marcuse in particular. While Horkheimer and Adorno refused to have their earlier 'radical' works republished and distanced themselves from the movement, retreating into 'pure philosophy', Marcuse engaged with the student movement, speaking publicly and participating in political activism. He saw the student movement, anti-racist movements, and feminism as important actors in the struggle for the creation of alternatives, even if he was pessimistic about the possibilities for revolutionary transformation in advanced industrial society.

The following passage from his controversial essay 'Repressive Tolerance' illustrates the consonance of his writings with European autonomous thought and movements, and the concern with collective transcendence and historicity echoed from Touraine to Katsiaficas, and from Callinicos to Melucci:

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> Now in what sense can liberty be for the sake of truth? Liberty is self-determination, autonomy – this is almost a tautology, but a tautology which results from a whole series of synthetic judgements. It stipulates the ability to determine one's own life: to be able to determine what to do and what not to do, what to suffer and what not. But the subject of this autonomy is never the contingent, private individual as that which he actually is or happens to be; it is rather the individual as a human being who is capable of being free with the others. And the problem of making possible such a harmony between every individual liberty and the other is not that of finding a compromise between competitors, or between freedom and law, between general and individual interest, common and private welfare in an *established* society, but of *creating* the society in which man is no longer enslaved by institutions which vitiate self-determination from the beginning. In other words, freedom is still to be created even for the freest of the existing societies.
>
> (quoted in Wolff *et al*. 1969: 87; emphasis in original)

Marcuse's work has inspired generations of activists and scholars. His critique of advanced capitalist society and the possibilities of a long-term striving toward the creation of alternatives give his work a continuing resonance for contemporary progressive movements. Like de Beauvoir, his theory cannot be considered in isolation from the social movements he inspired and was inspired by:

> If philosophy is really concerned with existence, it must take responsibility for this existence and fight for truth. The philosopher must know that he or she has not only the right but also the duty to intervene in the very concrete needs of existence, because it is only thus that the existential meaning of truth can be fulfilled. Thus, at the end of every authentic concrete philosophy stands the public act.
>
> (1978: 405 [our translation])

De Beauvoir and Marcuse are only two examples of the relationship between European social theory and social movements.[3] It speaks volumes about the inward-looking character of orthodox social movement studies that, despite the proliferation of texts offering conceptual refinements of orthodoxy, there is not *one* monograph attempting to relate social movement studies to social theory more generally.

Of course, it is not only European social theorists whose work has been informed by political and social movements. Movements are the central mechanism or hope for transformation for a wide range of major theorists, not only scholars of globalization and civil society such as Castells, Giddens, Beck and Kaldor, but also Wallerstein and Harvey on modern world systems, for Butler, Fuss, Seidman and Young in their struggles to understand the possibilities for collective action for critical feminist theory, and for theorists of race and racism Hill Collins and Said. Yet not only has social theory been seen in isolation from the movements that have influenced it, the role of movements *within* those theories has itself been overlooked.

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European theories of social movements

Deconstructing the origin myth

The second part of this chapter critiques the canonical account of 'new social movement theory', which it equates with 'European social movement theory' *tout court*.[4] It proposes an alternative and more broadly-based understanding of how European theorists actually discussed new social movements in the 1970s and 1980s.

The moral of the story

The 'new social movements' episode of the myth performs three equally important ideological functions. The first is to distinguish the study of social movements from Marxism. What is inevitably repeated is that the 'new social movements' theory came *out of* Marxism (and the purported Marxist search for an agent of history), but went beyond this and is thus legitimately post-Marxist – and can be included in the subdiscipline's genealogy without threatening its academic respectability.

The second purpose is to enable a synthesis between the 'American' and the 'European', the 'strategic' and the 'identitarian', the 'political' and the 'cultural' (and so on), with the former being the dominant term and the lineage into which the latter is absorbed. As Jones notes, NATO's funding of research on social movements in this period (Diani and Eyerman 1992) symbolises the cultural prestige which US research was then acquiring, and the European search for transatlantic legitimacy.

Finally, this episode denotes the extended theory as thoroughly *academic*, as distinct from the theorisations of movement activists (Barker and Cox 2002) which are simply ignored. This is key in selecting authors to represent 'new social movement' theory (Melucci and Touraine), but equally in the formulation of convergence itself. There is once again *the* literature (to the exclusion of all others), with a canon of its own to which accredited commentators must refer and within which they must situate themselves. The movement participants themselves may not speak.

Extra ecclesia nulla salus, or, more precisely, 'if it isn't social movement studies, it isn't science'. Out go the movement theorists and Marxist scholars; but equally, there go the researchers on 'history from below', the cultural studies writers and the scholars of revolution (though the latter have more recently been offered a place within the Dynamics of Contention fold).

Inventing the 'NSM paradigm'

The 'NSM paradigm' generally claims (1) a particular sequence of empirical developments around movements, namely that the period represented a shift from movements concerned with class/labour to movements with different core

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actors and modes of organizing; (2) that Habermas, Melucci and Touraine represent a coherent 'school' of European social movement theory; and (3) that these authors are representative of European theory and research on these movements. As we will show, all of these claims are deeply problematic, and as a combined claim they are simply wrong.

Of the three theorists routinely cited as representative of the NSM paradigm, Melucci is the only one who could reasonably be argued to do what the canonical account claims for 'new social movement theory', in that he focussed extensively on what was new in the social movements emerging at the time and saw these as contrasting with the labour movements. Perhaps because of his relative influence in Anglophone social movement studies, and because Melucci's approach is taken to be particularly representative of 'new social movement' scholarship, there has been a misinterpretation of European social movement history of the 'NSM' period as being consistently 'post-Marxist' or post-labour.

It is true – and Melucci's work highlights this – that many European movements emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, such as diverse feminist and autonomous movements experimenting with consciousness raising, autonomous movement spaces, radical direct democracy as an explicit rejection of hierarchically organized movement groups, and environmental movements that were tapping into a range of influences from deep ecology, to romanticism, to anarchism. Many of these movements were indeed rejecting Leninist or social democratic approaches to politics and organizing (e.g. the Leninist critique of spontaneity, the notion of vanguards, patriarchal hierarchical and representative structures, workerist interpretations of Marxism), and instead drew post-structural, psychoanalytical, radical feminist, anarchist, deep green, anti-authoritarian, libertarian, liberal, romanticist and other sources of inspiration, not least those imported from North America, such as the Free Speech movement, the anti-Vietnam movements and the Civil rights movements (in all its forms).[5] Second-wave feminist movements rejected 'the patriarchal structure of parties, trade unions, big businesses and the mass media' (Janssen Jureit in Morgan 1984: 251). Feminist theory and feminist and womens' movement texts from this period in particular reflect the wide diversity and range of relations between movements and theory (see, for example, Birnbaum 1986; Moi 1987; Morgan 1984).

In fact, the particular theoretical salience and ideological relevance of different traditions varied greatly by national context. For example, anti-authoritarian students in West Germany initially active in the SDS (the youth wing of the Social Democratic Party) broke with the party in a move towards autonomy and in an attempt to radically renovate a democratic culture they believed was being corrupted by the legacy of a culture of obedience instilled under national socialism (Burns and van der Will 1988). In Northern Ireland, student 'revolt and reform' took on a markedly different character when Catholic university students mobilized in the civil rights movement and for republican nationalist politics. Contemporary US movements (Berkeley Free Speech, Civil Rights, and anti-Vietnam War) were influential in both cases, but in radically different directions. If in the UK the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament drew on the diverse and

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combined efforts of 'respectable and apolitical middle-class mothers … perennial protesters, Gandhian pacifists, Labour leftists, and ex-Communists' (Veldman 1994: 125), in Spain the struggles against the Lemoniz nuclear plant were deeply and almost exclusively entwined with Basque nationalist politics (Irvin 1999).

Amidst a diversity of theoretical influences and movement ideologies, the Marxist tradition was also a fertile source of new organizing approaches in this period; while new forms of labour struggle were widespread, these were not always separate from other movements and traditions, nor was there any consensus among theorists as to a break between 'old' and 'new' movements. In the UK, for example, theorists of movements have routinely observed that a plurality of issues, themes and actors has *always* characterized popular protest, and thus have sought deeper commonalities enabling new alliance possibilities.

Thus, for example, the socialist feminists Sheila Rowbotham, Hilary Wainwright and Lynne Segal (1979) argued passionately for the *rethinking* of relationships between feminists and socialists, without proclaiming the death of the latter; Rowbotham's (1973) and Wainwright's (1994) other works continue this approach (see also Rowbotham and Weeks 1977) – and, indeed, Marxist and socialist feminism remain widely taught in gender studies within British universities.

Similarly, the early Birmingham Cultural Studies school adopted a class analysis of what, according to the canon, should be the identity-oriented, expressive subcultures of style, music and deviance, drawing heavily on Gramsci in order to do so (Hall and Jefferson 1993). This history is also familiar to students of cultural studies.

Other massively influential figures such as E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams also developed important analyses along these lines. Thompson (1977, 1994) argued for a revived alliance between romantic, counter-cultural impulses and political, socialist ones. Williams, for his part, wrote that

> All significant social *movements* of the last thirty years have started outside the organised class interests and institutions [sc. trade unions and Labour Party] … they sprang from needs and perceptions which the interest-based organisations had no room or time for, or which they had simply failed to notice. This is the reality which is often misinterpreted as 'getting beyond class politics'. The local judgement on the narrowness of the major interest groups is just. But there is not one of these issues which, followed through, fails to lead us into the central systems of the industrial-capitalist mode of production and among others into its system of classes.
>
> (1985: 172–173; emphasis in original)

Thus an affirmation of the diversity of movements, past and present, was coupled with a focus on *alliance* between labour and other movements rather than the opposition supposedly central to writing on new movements. Furthermore, *these are not obscure writers*. History from below, cultural studies, socialist and

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Marxist feminism are major influences upon the humanities and social sciences in the English-speaking world, and in the UK most of all. A minimal familiarity with any of these perspectives makes it clear that the 'new social movements' episode of the origin myth is a caricature of how actual theorists framed the issue (Cox 2011).

Of course the construction of a self-referential 'literature' is necessarily a process of closure, exclusion and marginalisation – even at the cost of ignoring some of the most significant bodies of writing on movements. Yet given how familiar the perspectives mentioned above are in Anglophone academia, *some* of the writers who endlessly recycled the origin myth must have stopped to ask themselves if their account of theories of movements fitted with intellectual life *outside* their own textual tradition.

Marxist and socialist approaches also continued to play key roles in the thought of movements and theorists all over Europe, yet the canonical account tends to provide a caricaturized view of the labour movement as monolithic, hierarchical, and workerist. Italy is the west European country where this caricature is *least* credible. Since Gramsci, the PCI had focussed on building alliances between different social groups (already central in the Resistance) and had highlighted cultural struggles. Moreover, the 'long '68', lasting up until the movement of 1977, had not only seen the PCI break with Moscow, but had also seen a huge variety of grassroots Left formations (of which the autonomist tradition is the best known among Anglophones), many of which happily engaged in movements around gender, opposition to nuclear power, and resistance to NATO, (Osterweil, this volume, Chapter 2; Membretti and Mudu, this volume, Chapter 5).

Clearly, then, the period under discussion in 'NSM theory' was not only *not* a 'post-Marxist' period by any means, but also presents a caricature of labour movements that does not correspond to their actual diversity and activities. A recognition of the significant shift in many movements away from the centrality of Marxism as the only way to think about social movements should not obscure this.

The second claim involves seeing Habermas, Melucci and Touraine as representing a paradigm or school of social movement theory. This is very difficult to sustain, not only because of the great divergence of theoretical concerns within their respective works, but also because of their relative engagement or theoretical concern with social movements. While Melucci, and Touraine in particular, researched and engaged with social movements to a significant extent, the same cannot be said for Habermas.

Habermas and (West) Germany

As with most Frankfurt School authors, Jürgen Habermas – one of the figures routinely cited (not least by his student Cohen) as being responsible for the 'new social movements' paradigm – was notoriously *distant* from social movements. In Germany, his best-known contribution was to describe Rudi Dutschke's 1967

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proposal for a sit-in (in response to the police killing of Benno Ohnesorg and a ban on demonstrations) as stemming from a 'left fascism'. This is not surprising: as Schecter (1999: 33) notes, his political role has been as 'the intellectual conscience of the left wing of the German SPD' and a 'spokesperson for the institutional German left' – the very people against whom the movements of this period were directed. Consistent with this distance, his empirical research on social movements has been entirely absent, and his commentary is of a very general level; indeed, his most-cited comment on social movements (1981) is all of four pages long.

Habermas, then, does not represent German theorising on the social movements of this period. There is no shortage of such literature: a special issue of *Kursbuch* (various, 1977), the collections by Bossell (1978), Brand (1982), Schäfer (1983), and Roth and Rucht (1987) indicate the breadth and complexity of what has been written out of Anglophone accounts of 'European social movement research'.

Finally, but significantly, Habermas does not in fact do what the canonical account tells us 'European theorists' do, and does not propose new social movements as a lever of social change to replace the workers' movement. Rather, his analysis (1987) is of movements as resolutely *defensive* of the lifeworld against the encroachments of the system.

Melucci and Touraine

While there are greater overlaps between Melucci and Touraine (unsurprisingly, given that Melucci was Touraine's student) than between either of the latter and Habermas, their work is very different and cannot be taken as representing a paradigm by any means.

Alberto Melucci is, undoubtedly, the most plausible representative of the 'new social movements' paradigm as it is supposed to have been. He does contrast US and European approaches (1980), and discusses class conflicts as the root conflicts, contrasting them with emerging movements, highlighting the centrality of the body, of identity, of the personalized politics of the everyday and of the centrality of symbolic and cultural movement expressions and activities. He also forms a link between Habermas and Touraine (1989: 182), offering a point of connection between the three. Yet, if Melucci can be argued to adhere, to a greater or lesser extent, to the canonical accounts of 'NSM' theory, the same cannot be said for Touraine, whom we discuss below.

Finally the third 'claim' is that Habermas, Melucci and Touraine are representative of European social movement theory on (new) social movements. Ironically, it may be the role of the public intellectual in Europe and the intrinsic relation between movements and theory that renders less visible the role of movements per se in shaping and being shaped by the theory. Because social movements are so central to European social theory, social movement theory in itself is not readily visible in Europe as a separate field of analysis.[6] Touraine's work is a case in point. Like Marcuse and de Beauvoir, he is a public intellectual, whose

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theoretical trajectory and political and personal trajectory have been deeply intertwined, with the labour movement, May 1968, the anti-nuclear movement, Solidarnosc, Latin American movements and feminism all having a strong influence despite his desire to maintain a separation between his roles as analyst and activist.

For Touraine, the central goal of sociology should be to study social action, meaning the central conflicts at the heart of society and how social relations are produced and transformed. The purpose of his theory and of his method of sociological intervention is to support transformative social movements, and the problem of action and collective action is central to his work. The concept of historicity, the means by which people deliberately and actively make decisions on the central issues that define their lives, runs throughout his work as a motivating factor for collective action.

His sociology of action claims a central role for social movements, and indeed he sees social movements as *the* central object of study for sociology, not just one of many. While this intertwining of social theory and social movements makes sense in a European context (albeit in contested ways), it stands in contrast to the sharp demarcations of US sociology, where social movement studies has developed as a self-contained subdiscipline, itself strongly shaped by US social movements, and by developments in US sociology. Because of this (and an often monoglot scholarship), the US vision of European social movement theory is narrowed to a handful of authors.

Jean Cohen's influential (1985) text is often read as a representation of US versus European social movement theory and treated as a definitive demarcation between the approaches. Yet Cohen never set out to provide a survey of either. Her article compares two competing paradigms around a single question: what is *new* about contemporary social movements?

She delineates a strategy-oriented 'resource mobilization' versus an identity-oriented paradigm, seeking to integrate the best of each. For the former she cites a range of theorists, critiquing the resource mobilization approach, and Tilly's political process model in particular. She contrasts this with what she terms an identity-oriented paradigm, within which she places Pizzorno (pure identity model) and Touraine, arguing that a school of research had emerged around his work (with a brief mention of Melucci). Given her emphasis on Touraine, it is odd that she labeled this 'paradigm' identity-oriented, since, as she shows, identity is not as central to his work as it is to Pizzorno's and Melucci's.

Developing Cohen's critique (which was subsequently widely accepted), absent from RMT was a sense of an existential or transcendental motivation for movement activism, a search for authenticity or historicity, attention to cultural politics, and a transformation of consciousness. Also missing were culture, ideology, and emotions. Instead, movements were seen as primarily concerned with issues and goals, political opportunities, recruitment, and as rational actors making calculations about opportunities, frames, audiences, and opponents: strategic in a narrow, lobbying sense, but not in the wide sense of social transformation characteristic in Europe.[7]

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Moreover, the general tone of US social movement studies, including Cohen, is one of insufficient attention to the political, cultural, social and historical specificity within which movements unfold – naturalizing its local historical and institutional setting against the radical historicity which has characterized European movements over the last two centuries.

Cohen deploys Habermas (in an interesting move to use social theory instead of social movement theory to overcome the 'gaps' between paradigms) to provide a means of synthesis, pointing to three gaps:

> The first is between theory emerging from within social movements and social scientific theory. The second is between social scientific paradigms based on strategic and/or communicative concepts of action. The third is between macro social theory and theories of social movements.
>
> (1985: 716)

These observations deserve further exploration. Cohen is not responsible for the misinterpretation of her work, but in describing the 'identity-oriented approach' as a paradigm she lent the work of three influential theorists a coherence that is not actually present between them.

To return to the three figures conventionally identified as 'new social movements' theorists, this is an arbitrary collection of authors who were neither strikingly engaged with movements or representative of theorising about movements in this period. Nor do they hold the views officially ascribed to the 'NSM paradigm'. What, then, *did* people researching and engaged in social movements typically think, in this period? No real answer could be as simplistic as the canonical account, but we can explore some characteristic responses to the newer movements of 1965–1985.

New social movements and the New Left: a richer account

Up until the postwar period the phrase 'the social movement' meant, in effect, the agentic aspects of 'the social question': the movements of popular actors which – from the Parisian revolutions of 1848 and 1871 via mass unionisation in the 1880s and the revolutionary wave of 1916–1923 to the anti-fascist resistance – regularly reshaped European states and forced through new power relations between labour and capital (Cox forthcoming). This usage was still widespread in later 1960s discussion of 'the movement' as a unity-in-diversity comprising student activism, the New Left, opposition to the Vietnam War, civil rights, counter-culture, and, for a time, feminism and gay liberation (Barker 2012).

Two important changes in usage emerged during this period, reflecting the developing political conditions. One, up to the end of the 1960s, was the definition of a *New Left*, as opposed to the old. This took many forms (Landau 1966), but a defining feature was hostility, *within* a Left still very much defined around relationships with labour, Marxism and party-building, towards the practices of Stalinism and Social Democracy, centralised and hierarchical

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forms of organization shaped by close relationships with states, East and West. In its various forms, the New Left challenge was one of a radical, participatory or activist democracy against both bureaucratic and cadre models of political and movement organizing.

Related to this, from the late 1960s on, was the slow emergence of a sense of *movements* rather than *movement*: not of the multiplicity of popular struggles as such, which was always a practical reality facing organizers, but of the growing impossibility of a single strategic organization. This was heightened by a particularist and commodifying 'identity politics', but also by the rejection – by feminists, gay and lesbian activists, internal ethnic minorities, radical critics of industrial development, and others – of the controlling and homogenising role of 'old Left' parties (and some of the new Marxist sects).

Thus, underlying the figure of speech 'new social movements' was a wider figure of thought which stressed the multiplicity of social struggles and their changing historical character. If tightly-defined figures of speech are proper to the canon-building processes of subdisciplines within a positivist notion of science, figures of thought (enabling translation and generative contradictions) are proper to social theory and make it possible to bring *different* literatures into conversation with one another.

An adequate history of the complex theorising around these movements would be a massive undertaking, covering a huge range of academic and political contexts, and what follows will simply indicate some starting-points. We want to underline that these theories are best understood as broad-based reflections on the nature of popular agency in contemporary society. Their primary goal was not to construct a subdiscipline, and this is no doubt why they ignored their exclusion from canon-writing processes in a subdiscipline which was then, in Europe, far from the leading mode of writing about movements.

European theories of the new movements

A general indication of how European political and social theorists actually discussed the plethora of developing movements between 1965 and 1985 might proceed as follows. Firstly, theorists reflecting on this situation moved away from the idea of a central party, in possession of a correct theory, imposing itself upon social movements. Not all authors abandoned party-building per se; in this period, the proposition that a progressive party could have an active relationship to movements and contribute to social change was far more plausible than it may seem in 2012. Rather, the hostility of Old Left parties to movements outside their control, and the limited success of the attempts by New Left groupings to impose themselves, typically led to the conclusion that political organization should grow from movements, and that alliances between movements had to be earned, not imposed.

In a country like Italy the politics of *Il manifesto* and alternative radio, of social centres and neighbourhood organizing, of *autonomia* and grassroots resistance (Balestrini and Moroni 1988), routinely aimed to build alliances between

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movements; as late as the 2000s *Rifondazione Comunista* drew similar conclusions (Bertinotti 2001). The alliance-building politics of the British New Left (discussed above) pointed in the same direction, in solidarity for the miners' strike and opposition to nuclear weapons, the politics of the Greater London Council and the radical wings of Welsh and Scottish nationalism (Williams 1989). Elsewhere, the understanding of the West German Greens as a party arising out of social movements (most particularly ecology/anti-nuclear power, majority world solidarity, peace, feminism, and gay/lesbian liberation) followed similar lines (Raschke 1985).

This understanding, significant in the early years (Ebermann and Trampert 1984), formed the basis for 'red-green' debates between socialist, ecological and left nationalist parties across western Europe (Blackwell and Seabrook 1988; Goodwillie 1988; Kemp *et al.* 1992; Red–Green Study Group 1995). At an academic level the *Forschungsjournal neue soziale Bewegungen* (*New Social Movements Research Journal)*, representing a substantial body of engaged research, drew on similar processes.

A related body of social theory developed, responding to the practical political experience of the diversity and potentially centrifugal nature of social movement issues. This is what was at stake in the development of feminist politics not only in Britain, but also in Germany (e.g. Haug 2008), Italy (e.g. Federici 2004), and elsewhere.

It also underlay the rejection by Ivan Illich (1973), André Gorz (1977), and Rudolf Bahro (1984) of a state-centred productivism shared by the (Fordist) right and left alike, and subsequent attempts around 'red and green' – or, in the third world context, 'sustainable development' – to marry the two and outline a 'socialism with a human face' grounded in workplace democracy, environmental sustainability, feminism, and equitable North-South relations.

Conclusion

What is new?

Between 1965 and 1985, discussions of new movements began with New Left critiques of Stalinism and Social Democracy, representing political common sense in a period where the revolutionary force of labour movements and socialist/communist parties had declined massively under the impact of Cold War power structures, and where student rebellions, anti-war movements, feminism, urban guerrillas and new kinds of labour activism outside official structures were increasingly central to actual movement politics (Sansonetti 2002).

European reflections and debates on new social movements encompassed a range of theoretical approaches, nourished by Marxism, existentialism, anarchism, radical and direct democracy, postmodern, radical, eco, and socialist feminisms, psychoanalytic traditions, deep green ecology, new age religions, and nationalisms. Marxists outside the constraining structures of Stalinist and Social Democratic parties and unions – but routinely including the political and labour

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components supposedly excluded from the 'New Social Movements' construct – debated the meaning of the new developments. These debates were developed by the movements of 1968 (and, in Italy, 1977), by progressive regional nationalisms and municipal politics in a number of European countries (Castells 1983), and by the later development of Green and other New Left parties as well as by movements such as the anti-nuclear power movement, squatting, international solidarity, East European dissidence, and, subsequently, the anti-capitalist movement.

Flesher Fominaya's analysis (this volume, Chapter 7) of the characteristic features of autonomous or non-institutional modes of organization thus captures themes which run from the early 'New Left' through the uprisings of 1968, the 'new movements' of the 1970s and 1980s, into the anti-capitalist 'movement of movements' (another response to diversity), and on to contemporary *indignados* protests.

Yet the 'new' in 'new social movements' is continually rediscovered: thus, for example, recent work by Juris and Pleyers (2009) discusses the autonomist wing of the global justice movement in the 2000s as representing the emergence of new forms – as if this tradition was not directly linked, organizationally as well as intellectually, to movement struggles going back to the 1960s. Juris and Pleyers are not alone: 'social movement studies' textbooks also transmit a misrepresentation of history which moves the ruptures of 1968 forwards to the period just before the authors' own appearance on the scene.

Is there a European approach?

European theory is far richer than the canonical account allows, but it is also true that European social movement scholarship has not established itself as a separate field or subdiscipline as it has in the US, and this has consequences. The high profile of social movement studies as a consolidated subdiscipline in the US, coupled with the global dominance of English, means that today, in many places (including Europe), US movement theory *is* social movement theory. Of course, in the past 20 years there have been some prominent European movement theorists, but they have worked within US social movement scholarship's categories of analysis. European social theory for social movements, in the absence of an articulated *European* movement theory, is largely invisible.

European social movements are also surprisingly under-represented. One key indication of this is the paucity of academic books and readers devoted to European social movements. This invisibility is all the more strange given how central these movements have been to the major political, social, and cultural transformations in European history.

So, maybe it is time to make visible European social movements and European social movement scholarship. At the same time, in both the US and in Europe, perhaps it is time to break free of the idea that it is necessary to use *social movement theory*, as currently defined, to study movements. Social theory, itself deeply shaped by movement history, can also serve this purpose and offers

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a far richer understanding of movements: resisting the artificially separate analysis of 'politics' and 'culture', seeing different movements not in isolation but as reflecting and shaping a wider social reality, and *contextualising* and *historicising* movements.

More generally, the narrow and self-referential theoretical vision of 'social movement studies' leads to it being widely ignored by movement participants (Bevington and Dixon 2005) and by movement-linked authors (Cox and Nilsen 2007). As an approach, it is more successful at gaining institutional legitimacy than at convincing those most closely engaged with its objects of study. This is a pity; it is valuable to continue research specifically on social movement processes, but disciplinary closure mechanisms which rule out of consideration all theory from outside sources are simply misguided. This chapter is also a plea for a much more open, and theoretically substantive, approach; we hope that this book contributes to that process.

Notes

1 Posting to rec.sf.arts.fandom, 28 September 2000.
2 Presumably the fact that many of the theorists discussed in this section were Marxists and so personae non gratae within US academia contributed to their erasure from the canon.
3 Cox (2011) discusses the relationship of social movement theory to Western Marxism, while Barker *et al.* (2013) does this for Marxism more widely. While there are feminist sociologists of social movements, a reading of feminist *theory* as social movement analysis is lacking (but see Motta *et al.* 2010).
4 There are at least two preceding sources of this account: Diani's (1992) marriage of 'American' and 'European' approaches and Cohen's (1985) article, discussed below. A number of critiques of this account exist, such as those by Mayer (1995) and Jones (1993).
5 For a discussion of postmodern nomadic feminist thought emerging from Italian feminist consciousness raising, see Braidotti (1995). For debates on motherhood and the interpretation of democracy in Italian women's movements of the 1970s and 1980s, see Passerini (1994). See French feminist Irigaray (1993[1987]) for a theoretical treatment of the potential of sexual difference for social transformation. For discussion of the lively debates and complex relation between women's movements and feminist theory in France, see Moi (1987). For a discussion of ecofeminist politics and thought, see Biehl (1991). For a discussion of the importance of the romantic tradition in the development of green politics and movements in the UK, see Veldman (1994). For the multiple theoretical roots of green political thought in Europe see Dobson (2000[1990]). For a treatment of decentered autonomous counter-cultural networks since the 1960s and their enduring influence on the British social movement landscape, see McKay (1996). For a historical comparative treatment of anarchist thought and politics in Europe, see Woodcock (1962). For a discussion of the emergence of autonomous movements in Italy, Germany, Holland and Denmark, autonomous squatter critiques of Marxist-Leninist politics, as well as of workerist understandings of Marxism, see Katsiaficas (2006[1997]).
6 Yet when we founded the Council for European Studies' social movement research network we were astonished to find ourselves with 145 members within a few months. The European members argued that a key task of the network should be to increase the profile of social movement studies within Europe, and of European social movements within the wider academic world.

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7 Although it lies outside the scope of this chapter, there are alternative renderings of US social movements that have not adopted the strategic/structural approach – but these have typically been marginalised within the subfield of 'social movement theory', such as the work of Barbara Epstein, Rick Fantasia, George Katsiaficas, Nancy Naples, Peter Linebaugh, and Marcus Rediker.

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