Ti-Grace Atkinson and the Legacy of Radical Feminism

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A PECULIAR PROBLEM ARISES when stories of social change—and the radical figures of those stories—persistently stay in the past tense. Much of what is known about the birth of radical feminism has been lost in archives, stunted by its out-of-print status or otherwise obscured by mainstream feminist efforts to make feminism palatable to a wider audience. As such, opportunities for intergenerational knowledge making and intermovement dialogue have been lost to many feminists who came of age after the late 1960s and early 1970s. In my ongoing work, I have sought to reestablish intergenerational links by gathering oral histories of early radical feminists.[1] This article focuses in detail on the much understudied Ti-Grace Atkinson, whose role in the early radical feminist movement has received less recognition than it should. I present parts of an interview with Atkinson examining the impact of radical feminism, its ideological and political origins, key figures in the movement, her connection to key feminist figures, and lessons feminists have both succeeded and failed to learn while building and sustaining a progressive social movement for gender justice.

I came conduct to this interview in the context of writing a book about Valerie Solanas—noted author of the SCUM *[Society for Cutting Up Men] Manifesto,* whose shooting of artist Andy Warhol in 1968 provoked deep

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fissures within the feminist movement.[2] In order to research Solanas, I interviewed several radical feminists, including Ti-Grace Atkinson, hoping to glean information about her contentious relationship with Solanas and to learn about Atkinson's role in the early years of radical feminism. Although my Atkinson interview certainly shed light on conflicts about Solanas, it also showcased Atkinson's role as a nucleus of early radical feminism, a one-woman networking powerhouse, and a subject of great interest in her own right.

Atkinson, born November 9, 1938, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, started as a writer for *Art News* in New York City. After divorcing her husband of five years in 1961, she graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1964 and joined the National Organization for Women (NOW) shortly thereafter, eventually becoming its president in 1967. In 1968, she split off from NOW dramatically and publicly when NOW decided to maintain its organizational hierarchical structure (e.g., insisting upon a president) and refused to address systemic issues surrounding abortion and sex. Shortly thereafter, she founded The Feminists, a radical feminist group that remained active from 1968 to 1973 (although Atkinson's personal involvement with the group ended in April 1970). Atkinson self-published several pamphlets and gave numerous activist speeches on college campuses and community forums in US and French cities. Most notably, Atkinson made history by arguing publicly against the Catholic Church (and being physically assaulted during a speech at Catholic University for discussing the Virgin Mary's sexuality), crusading against marriage as a form of spiritual and physical oppression, advocating political lesbianism as a response to patriarchy, and claiming that vaginal orgasm represented, as she titled a speech, a "mass hysterical survival response." She protested antiwoman policies of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, battled the New York City marriage bureau, fought to reconfigure abortion politics, publicly defended Valerie Solanas after the Andy Warhol shooting, and was recognized by the *New York Times* as feminism's "haute thinker."[3] During this time, she also forged an alliance with Simone de Beauvoir, befriending her and visiting Paris where she gave speeches on antirape and abortion organizing. She supported herself by "living on the edge" and, during her later years, finding small research fellowships and selling pieces of her archive to libraries. In the early 1970s, she was asked by Links Books to compile an assortment of her highly controversial speeches and writings into a collection called *Amazon Odyssey: The First Collection of Writings by the Political Pioneer of the Women's Movement,* which was published in 1974. The book had only one edition and is currently out of print, although it sold many copies by the standards of early radical feminist publishing; most like-minded texts rarely garnered a publisher or a broad audience.[4]

These accomplishments, impressive as they are, still do not fully convey Atkinson's role as a nucleus of radical feminism. Perhaps what is most significant is the sustained personal contact that Atkinson had with a multitude of her famous contemporaries: Florynce Kennedy, Simone de Beauvoir, Alice Paul, Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan, Valerie Solanas, Robin Morgan, Andrea Dworkin, Shulamith Firestone, Kate Millett, Roxanne Dunbar, Ellen Willis, Phyllis Chesler, Diane Arbus, Anne Koedt, and Edie Sedgwick.[5] This interview seeks to renarrate a key moment in radical feminist history, while also connecting early radical feminism to current fights for social justice. Atkinson's legacy asks us to consider how working from the margins can transform the center and how drawing from the histories of other social movements (and the histories of our own) changes the terms of the struggles we collectively face.

My conversations with Atkinson took place around her kitchen table in her Cambridge, Massachusetts, apartment over two days in February 2008. We discussed many of the women she knew during the late 1960s and early 1970s, including two in particular—Valerie Solanas and Florynce Kennedy—who stand out as having unique importance, both because they influenced radical feminism and because they, like Atkinson, remain sorely understudied and undervalued for their roles in feminist history. Both women, like Atkinson, functioned in orbits that drew in, and repelled, others; between the three of them, they set off discursive bombs in just about every corner of New York. Solanas wrote the play *Up Your Ass* (1967) and the patriarchal indictment *SCUM Manifesto* (1968). She was a regular in Andy Warhol's circles, at his well-known Factory; it appeared that Warhol fancied her as unique and idiosyncratic, for he put her in one of his films, *I, A Man,* as a "butch dyke."[6] Eventually, Solanas shot Warhol (admitting her crime to a traffic cop in Times Square), bounced around mental hospitals for many years, and resurfaced for verbal and written standoffs with feminists who sometimes saw her as their “poster child.” Flo Kennedy, after representing jazz musicians Billie Holiday and Charlie Parker, became the lead lawyer for the Black Panthers and routinely dismissed claims that one could not simultaneously fight for black rights and women’s rights. Often wearing cowboy hats and pink sunglasses, she advocated for Shirley Chisholm to become president, filed tax evasion charges against the Catholic Church with the Internal Revenue Service, organized a “mass urination” on Harvard grounds in response to its lack of women’s restrooms, wrote *Color Me Flo: My Hard Life and Good Times* (1976),[7] and later represented Solanas after she shot Warhol. Atkinson, as Kennedy’s protégé and friend, also advocated for Solanas; indeed, the shooting served as the impetus for her break from NOW. These three women’s personal histories reverberate with provocations and contradictions, giving them particular importance when examined together.

Although Solanas and Kennedy have little in common aside from the fact that their personalities provoked others to react strongly to them, they both figured centrally in the history of radical feminism. While Kennedy focused on connecting a network of activists together and building a social movement at the margins of mainstream liberation movements, Solanas rejected all claims of assimilation into any movement, insisting upon radical strategies of dissension, discord, anarchism, and violence, even at the expense of other women.

As told by Atkinson, both women still elicit conflicting responses about what “counts” as feminist and how to coherently story the radical, particularly as it relates to women. Although this interview with Atkinson does not neatly sort out these matters, the juxtaposition of their differing approaches demands consideration of several questions. How can we conceptualize successes and failures of a movement that is so dispersed and diverse? How can we prioritize goals for future action when we lack a unified narrative of radical feminism? How do social movements form, break apart, and leave legacies? These questions are undoubtedly difficult to address. Atkinson herself has claimed that, although Solanas is part of her archive, she is not part of her *feminist* archive. Such complex disagreements about tactics directly challenge the possibility of a unified narrative of radical feminism. Indeed, as this interview reveals, the history of radicalism is chained forcefully to a politics of epic disagreements, betrayals, and tragedy even while it renews and offers hope.

In order to preserve the integrity of Atkinson's words and to provide a window into parts of our lively and dynamic conversation, I have stylistically chosen to present Atkinson's constructions of Kennedy and Solanas—as well as her own analyses of her history, the history of radical feminism, and existing social problems—within the original interview format.[8] The piece starts with Atkinson's ideas about her childhood and socialization into feminism, followed by interwoven descriptions of her encounters with Kennedy and Solanas beginning in the late 1960s. I also include relevant sections where Atkinson considers the meaning of radicalism, social institutions such as marriage and sex, the pain of witnessing the tragic lives of the artists and revolutionaries she associated with, the challenges of feeling "outside of one's time," and her visions for the future of radical feminism. The tension between a desire to build community, solidarity, and dialogue, on the one hand, and the political impulse to split apart, disrupt, and fracture, on the other, figured prominently in our discussions. Kennedy's radicalism as marginalized togetherness and Solanas' violent separatism embodied the two polar ends of radicalism. Atkinson, however, inhabited both sides of this conflict. Aside from what this discussion illuminates about the late 1960s as paramount to the study of radical feminism, this interview helps us to recover pieces of feminist history that have been lost to us either through the gradual failure to reprint key radical feminist texts, the inevitability of aging, or the dismissal and fragmentation of dispossessed and marginalized voices. As such, although the conversation makes its own claims about its subjects, I emphasize the importance of ongoing intergenerational and intermovement dialogues for their potential to shape the future of radical movements.

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Breanne Fahs (BF): I'm interested to hear your background: how you came to feminism, how you came to New York, why you left the South.

Ti-Grace Atkinson (TGA): My father was a chemical engineer. I was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, because that's where Standard Oil had big corporate operations. There were five girls in my family. I was the youngest. When I was born, my father was still at Standard Oil. He later broke with them. I changed schools many, many times before I graduated from high school, so it's sort of more of a modern story in that way. It's so odd because each of us thinks that our childhood is more or less what everybody else's is, even though you know it isn't. Then you talk to your schoolmates and find that they just don't understand what you're talking about. It's very alienating.

My mother's family was from Virginia. I was named for my Grandmother, whom I adored. My father's family was from Pennsylvania. I kept the "Ti" which is Cajun, and I kept it because I knew I was going to live in the North and I did not want to forget or let anybody else forget that that was part of my heritage.

BF: Were you close with your five sisters growing up?

TGA: Three of us are really solid. I think it was probably significant that I grew up in a house of women. After my grandfather died, my grandmother lived with us and so it was all my sisters, my mother, and my grandmother. The idea that women were inferior in any way was just something I'd never heard. It gives you a little different attitude about things. Still, my mother was very traditional, like with a vengeance. Her variation was "Southern Belle." Everything would put her in a swoon. She was tough as nails, but she was, well, delicate, very unhappy, very talented, brilliant. She had gone to graduate school, and I once said, "Well, why did you bother with that?" She burst into tears. I said, "Don't tell me you thought it would make you a better mother." Later I understood that, because she was born in 1899, she came of age just when women got the vote and the idea was you could do anything, but not much had changed so you went to school thinking you could do anything but then there were no real jobs or careers.

BF: Did your parents stay together during your childhood?

TGA: Yes, as together as they ever had been. My mother was married, had a kid, divorced my father, and then remarried him some years later. Maybe we all live in a fantasy of some sort or another. Anyway, I was unhappy and I hated moving around, so I ran away from home. They had hired detectives to find me, but because my first name is so difficult, the detectives kept getting lost. Nobody would ever put it down right, thank God. So, then they found me, and my mother was furious because I had embarrassed the family, so she said, "How would you like to get married?" This was when I was only sixteen, seventeen. So I said, "To whom?" The only person I'd gone out with was a very (like, seventh!) distant cousin, so we got married and that was that. My grandmother was furious. She wouldn't come to the wedding.

BF: What do you remember about the early part of your marriage, during the beginning?

TGA: I was pretty catatonic. I was very depressed. I didn't realize it. I mean, I was just in a deep, deep depression. I didn't recognize how odd it was until, if Charley would leave for a long period, I'd jump up and I'd be racing around and running to New York. What's going on here? I have all this energy! I was resentful, and I was also trying to fit into this role. He claims that he knew I was inching toward the door when we got married, but I wasn't really conscious of that, primarily because I didn't know how I could survive. I think I have an inclination to depression, but I think that I'm able to keep it under control. I couldn't keep it under control with the marriage. I can't keep it under control if I'm really going against myself. Then it overwhelms me and becomes about survival.

My grandmother really saved me. She said, "All right Grace, that's enough of this." She said, "I've been thinking about this and you have character—you don't need him. You can survive. You are not going to necessarily live in luxury, but you can manage. So I went home and filed for divorce.

BF: So, you eventually found yourself in New York in the art world?

TGA: What happened was I was doing a BFA at the University of Pennsylvania and at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. That was a five-year program. After I got my divorce I needed to start supporting myself, so I met some people in New York on one of my visits and they said, "You should write some art criticism." They would pay for my trips to New York, and I got into writing criticism. In the summer of 1962, a sculptor friend of mine was reading *The Second Sex*. He said to me, "You've got to read this book!" So here I am: I'm a painter and living down in SoHo, going to Elaine DeKooning's for showers because I had no hot water, and I started reading *The Second Sex*.[9] I realized what turned me off about marriage was something about the structure. When my ex-husband and I went to get my divorce there wasn't "no fault" yet. My husband said, "I can get you for desertion," and I said, "You were the one who moved." Well, that's when I found out about the law—that two people become one and the law is determined by wherever the husband lives. Whoa. I lost my freedom of movement when I got married. I was trying to remember what I signed when I got married, and all I could remember was some little piece of paper with hearts or flowers or birds near the place we would sign. It's the only contract of its kind where the terms aren't listed.

Getting the divorce was not easy. The judge said, "There's no reason for this divorce here." I said, "We don't like each other." "So what does that have to do with anything?" (laughs) I said, "We have nothing in common." He said, "What, does he beat you?" I said no. "Well, you have to have some reason." I said, "Sometimes he drinks a little." "Oh, he's a drunk, okay." I knew I'd never get married again. Why do women keep getting married? (laughs) It's conceivable somebody could be happy *despite* being married, but never *because* they were married. I started reading all these books about the women's movement. This must have been 1962–1963. I had a lot of anger, and *The Second Sex* just goes on and on and on and on and on and on. It's like drip, drip, drip; you know, it really affected me. In 1965, I wrote Simone de Beauvoir. It was a long letter and was really quite radical. I knew the Church was a main enemy. I knew you've got to get rid of this, this, this, this, and we need to organize something to do it. [De] Beauvoir wrote me back. She said that all women were discriminated against, but the form it took varied so it didn't make sense to organize outside of national boundaries. She gave me Betty [Friedan]'s name and said she was pulling together this organization. I finally called Betty in 1966. I had never had any political experience. I had had political exposure, I realize now, but not in terms of doing things. I wasn't a red-diaper baby.[10] I wasn't any of these things.

I joined national NOW in the fall of 1966. There were no meetings or anything. New York NOW had its first actual meeting in February 1967. I met Flo Kennedy at that meeting. She was an entertainment lawyer and had represented Billie Holiday and Charlie Parker. The first time I saw her, I was fascinated by her. She seemed incredibly elegant and so contained. She kept putting up her hand and making suggestions that just sounded like she was from Mars to me, but the way she handled herself, the way she would propose things as a motion, the way she seemed to take it so well if it didn't pass and she just kept doing what she thought should be done—she didn't let anybody step on her. I thought, "Wow."

She and [de] Beauvoir were my two main mentors. [De] Beauvoir taught me about women, and Flo taught me about everything else. She would urge you to come here, come there, so I went to Black Power conferences. I went to New Politics [a movement of the Democratic Party supporting Eugene McCarthy and Robert F. Kennedy]. I went to hear about everything and my eyes were just bugging out. I'd never done a demonstration and Flo takes me to the Pentagon. She took me over to the Vietnam Veterans against the War and she said, "This is Ti-Grace. Now, you take care of her." So I'm arm and arm with these guys, right? They lock arms and I find myself at the steps of the Pentagon. They're attacking the actual Pentagon! Of course, we all got gassed and the rest of it, but they took care of me. That was really baptism by fire.

I once asked Flo about the comparison between the black movement and the women's movement, because she had been active for a long time, and she said, well, she was curious to see if the women's movement could learn from the black movement so that they could maybe miss one mistake that the black movement had made. I said, "What have you found?" She said, "Not missed a one!"

BF: What was she like as a person? How did she come across to you?

TGA: Flo was brilliant. The young women especially gravitated toward her. People like myself were like her children in that she was very supportive, but, boy, if you got above yourself in some way, or if you were saying, "Oh, well, that person's just so undeveloped," she just cracked down a whip and cut you down to size. I remember Betty was very abusive to me, but she wouldn't go near Flo, because Flo would say, "You racist bitch!" Flo would lay her out fast.

Flo was not typical. Everybody knew, no matter where in the world you came from, you were supposed to go to 8 East 48th Street, Apartment 3C. That was Florynce Kennedy. You'd meet everybody in the world there. Everybody had their flyers or else, once Flo got finished, she made sure you'd have a flyer, and they were all in her briefcase. Everybody who came in got everyone else's flyer. She was a one-woman coalition builder. She had two telephones, three telephone lines. She had two or three TVs going all news all the time. Everybody who walked through the door, when she heard your voice, she'd say "Oh darling, sweetheart, come in, Ti-Grace come in, whoever, Joanie,[11] come on, Oh darling, I'm so glad to *see* you." She just made you feel great, and you'd go in there and you'd look at these other people and you'd think, "What are they doing here?!" Everybody's looking at everybody else, it was great, and it was very important, very important.

When she died, we were all there, and we were glad to see each other. I remembered something, her great imagery. She did some divorce work. She was something in the courtroom because she was so brilliant but so unorthodox. Anyway, I remember she was counseling this woman who had been beaten up, and the woman said, "Well, but afterwards he's so nice to me." Well, she said, "I don't know about you. I'm sure you're right, and I'm sure he's very sweet, very nice. But this is how I see it. Do you see that bathroom over there? That toilet? Just imagine that there's this most beautiful, perfect red rose in the toilet bowl, but it's got stuffed up and everybody's been shitting in there and it's full. Now remember there's still that perfect red rose at the bottom. Now to me, nothing's worth it to go through what I would have to go through to get that rose. But maybe it's worth it to you." It was just in the way, and she had her nails done, and she had a way of expressing it so it was just artistic, it was very powerful, and so I recounted that at her memorial. It was vintage Flo.

BF: It's also interesting to think about how important words are. This image that Flo creates makes me think about this. Do words matter? Do actions matter? Is there a difference between those two? Are words a form of action? I think this comes up a lot in politics now.

TGA: Words are important for the revolution. I think you need both theory and practice. You don't know what the words mean until you see the action. If you think about it, throughout history women have been able to write, so they have this sort of mystical relationship with words and are frequently given to a lot of verbosity. It's very treacherous. People can say all kinds of the wildest things, and it doesn't mean a damn thing. There should be a relationship between what you say and how you live your life. I think it's very hard for us to believe that we're important. That said, I reject the tendency in some French feminisms and in women's studies more generally to have words take the place of action.

BF: In terms of words and action, there's also the tension between liberal feminism as "just white" and radical feminism as pushing those boundaries more, you know?

TGA: I've been talking to some black women about this. Their experience, being deeper in many ways, had a big influence, but we weren't looking for skin color, so I think you have to pay attention to how deep you're cutting. Get the issues right and then women will come, and the women you want will come, if you get it right. The problem with NOW was that they were really interested only in promoting a few women, whatever color, so it wasn't racist in intent, but in the end, it fell out that way. You also had successful women like Flo, who is going to be very conscious and she's going to bring other things to the table. It will cut wider.

BF: That's probably why the two of you were so successful together, right?

TGA: It seemed clear to me that she was brilliant and knew an awful lot of things that I didn't know. She had incredible style. In terms of how to live and how to be political, it was obvious that she was a star. She was somebody that you would want to follow around and figure out.

BF: I mean, it makes me think that now, there are fewer and fewer ways that people connect with each other, so Flo is all the more important in that light.

TGA: I think in many ways, you would look at my background and say, "Well, it was rarefied," but actually it was more like people's lives are now. It was all over the place. People keep wanting to explain you or place you, but I can see how different experiences enable you to see more. One thing about the archive I'm beginning to understand better is that, in large part, you are able to see things because of earlier experiences. You could also misperceive things, but it's hard in our culture. Everything is so screwed up, but to see things in a new way, you can't go too far wrong because it's so wrong already. As you're groping, you're feeling your way and you think you've got it. It's like peeling an onion, I always used to say.

I still think Flo was a really incredible, incredible figure, and I think about her a lot. She used to talk about the pathology of oppression. She meant the pathology of the oppressed. She developed these ideas from watching the black movement. With women it's really clear, simply because of our numbers: we have to be cooperating—there are too many of us—so we have to internalize this identity of the oppressed and we have to collaborate for sex-based oppression to work. That means that our whole identity is built to facilitate and oil the wheels of oppression. So, since it's in our interest to change things, we have to change our identities and peel these parts away. That's very painful because you think it's what keeps you safe because that's what the culture tells you. If you don't conform, you're in danger, but conformity means conforming to your oppression, and *that's* the pathology. It's a work that is never completed. Every time you think, "Wow, I didn't realize that I was doing this or that," or "Wow, that was really against my interest," you peel that away and then you say, "Wow, that's it." Then you rest a little and then there's a whole other layer.

BF: Going back to your own history with feminism, you became interested in feminism after witnessing how women were in these situations — like being pregnant and not wanting the baby — where they couldn't get out of them?

TGA: I was pretty clear that women's freedom depended on their having control over their persons. I was for repeal of all the abortion laws. You read all these horrible stories about women dying with botched abortion in backstreet alleys, mangled. Women are dying there. You realize, "Whoa." In my marriage, I had known that if I got pregnant I'd never get away, so I got the connection between reproduction and death. I started speaking out before these commissions, and they'd all be saying, "Oh, I wonder how many abortions she's had." All of this really radicalized me. It made me mad. I thought, "This is really serious," so I kept fighting within NOW that we had to come out on abortion. I said, "There are all kinds of groups coming out on abortion, and we're supposed to fight for women, and women are dying and we're not going to open our mouths? What's going on?" I really couldn't understand it.

By then NOW knew I was a loose cannon; if I really didn't understand it and if I thought it was wrong, I was going to do something about it. Nobody gave a shit about these women. This wanting/needing an abortion — this could happen to anybody, and society must hate women to put them in such a position. No birth control was fail-safe and yet everything pushed you to having sex. You *must* have sex. So you have the Sexual Revolution. You have all the complexity of the abortion movement, which is a problematic bag. Politically I think you have people who are in it for free sex, people who aren't feminist at all except insofar as they want women to not have any reservations about sexual activity, and, much less, preferences. So, this is sort of leading up to Valerie [Solanas]. People were coming to a peak of rage that was not shared by everyone. It depended on what you were working on, but this was especially true for people who worked on abortion. For myself, it was having that NOW telephone in my apartment and just hearing completely unconnected instances of how women were discriminated against.

BF: What were some of the other calls that you would get?

TGA: Oh, someone went to a bar and they were thrown out because they were there with a woman friend and you had to have a man accompany you. It was all over, all over, just all over. A businesswoman who bought a first-class ticket for the plane but they wouldn't let her sit in business or first class because only men could sit there. Trivial but constant. Women couldn't open their own bank accounts without a male signature. I mean just every place, every place, every place, every place, especially in our system where no laws are ever taken off the books, so it was just like drip, drip, drip, drip, drip. But with abortion, it was the humiliation. I felt humiliated that these women had to call a stranger, and they always had complications. They were always further along than they could admit even to themselves. They never had money. Many of the people doing the abortions were crazies. Some of the women got raped on the tables, and it was really, really, really sick, sick, sick, heavy, heavy, heavy. I mean you have to understand how women were hated.

I met radical women through abortion primarily and made these connections, even though our backgrounds were different. We were reaching across lines. We looked different; we dressed differently; we lived in a different part of New York. These were the women who seemed to be willing to think outside the box. They didn't care. None of us cared where it took us. We wanted out, we wanted this, and we were mad. I don't know exactly how others felt inside, but I know I was really, really angry, and it was unacknowledged. Even the only formal feminist organization wasn't doing anything, or finally they came out for "reform" on abortion. I said, "Don't do that. You're basing your position around the fetus, and you're leaving women vulnerable. You're leaving it wide open." But people thought, "Oh, well, we can do it on privacy. We've got all this support now and we can become more radical later." It doesn't work that way. This is your shot, and you have to take it. This is the time you've got to get it on the right ground, but they just didn't. So it's a lack of seriousness: I mean, what is it that makes a radical feminist? What is the difference between people who are satisfied with the mainstream and those who aren't? Part of it is how we see ourselves, and I guess it's normal in a sense that people simply want things fixed so that their lives are going to be better. Still, I think what I really got from *The Second Sex* was a conviction that women were a *class*, that regardless of differences, in terms of our parents' circumstances, that the nitty-gritty is the same. I was completely confused about why women wouldn't fight for other women, particularly on abortion, when they had no Catholic hang-ups. Why didn't they identify with our struggle? Would I have if I hadn't had that telephone in my home? Would I have if I hadn't grown up in a home primarily of women? I don't know. I just don't know.

I was really confused because everybody in NOW said they wanted a revolution. Everybody wanted a revolution. I didn't know anybody who didn't want a revolution, and I couldn't understand why every time it came to a particular action, we would have big fights, but we still all said we wanted the same thing. We talked about defining what we meant by "revolution." We meant very different things, very different things, and as soon as you saw that, well, ciao! I mean, we're not talking about the same thing at all. Very clarifying. It was sort of like, in many ways, radical feminism came to mean the opposite of what feminism started out as.

BF: And you left NOW because of—

TGA: It started with the abortion thing, and it went on. We kept having these awful fights, and Valerie Solanas was one of the fights. Are we or aren't we for women? What's going on? So, seeing so much violence, you kept noticing, you kept hearing things about how many women got killed. Battering was starting to come up. It was being talked about. Women were just the victims every place, and if you didn't want to be a victim, but you saw all of this, it was just overwhelming. Real, real rage. So, Valerie was sort of in another world. When I saw that this woman had shot Warhol—well, first I should tell you—I first heard of her from this woman she lived with. She said she was afraid of Valerie. This woman felt Valerie was violent toward her, and she didn't want any contact. That was all I'd heard, and I was getting a zillion calls a day, so this didn't stand out. When I heard that Valerie had shot Warhol, and she had said something like, "He had too much control of my life," the first thing I thought was "Warhol is not exactly the exemplar you'd choose for male supremacy." I knew he was asexual so it wasn't some personal relationship, and the *NY Times* presented it as if it was somehow connected with feminism. This was right after a big piece on feminism, so everybody was aware of this anger building. All I saw was she had shot Warhol, and I knew he was exploitative. Some woman had done something appropriate to the feelings we were all having. She was fighting back. That's what it felt like. The paper said when she would be in court, so I just naturally went down. I raced down, and who do I see coming up the steps in criminal court? Flo! So Flo and I by then have the same instincts and her feeling was, like any black person she saw going into the judicial system, they're going to be in trouble. They needed help. She was on her way. We were both on our way.

BF: So you never even talked to Flo before about this? You both just showed up?

TGA: Yes. That's how it was with some people. Now, Flo had a huge impact on people like myself. She just opened lots to me. Oh, I should have gone back a little bit. Betty Friedan, earlier, had told me she was going through a divorce and when I was not a threat to her yet, she would be very supportive and confiding and so on. I remember she was really in a fix because she had a place somewhere on Fire Island with her husband and they had a big fight, and she chased him down the beach with a butcher knife screaming that she was going to cut it off. Betty said lots of people saw her, and her husband was going to bring this up in the divorce proceedings and what was she going to do? I said, "Well there were witnesses, so what can you do? You've got to brazen it out. Just say, 'I'm a passionate woman, what do you want from me?'" I remembered that, and I thought it was good advice. So, when she flipped out about my supporting Valerie and about me connecting violence and feminism, I think of her chasing her husband down the beach with that knife (laughs), and she's telling me that I'm crazy. That's why it's like a Rorschach test, Valerie was. Everyone came with their own need. It didn't really have to do with who Valerie was or what was going on, it became clear to me.

I visited Valerie in prison to see what I could do to help. I gathered that she didn't have a big crowd around her—and I did know about prisons, because Flo was very involved with the Black Panthers and I shared a place with her and all of the lawyers who were representing the Panthers—so I was very affected by that. I knew you have to have money coming in from the outside; it had to be known that people cared about you on the outside. The first meeting with her, she was very clear. She recounted with great glee about shooting Warhol. It had nothing to do with feminism at all. It had to do with artist's rights. She was in a panic about being evicted from the Chelsea Hotel, but she was also schizophrenic, so her impulses weren't under the greatest control. She was under a lot of stress, too. At any rate, she signed with Maurice Girodias[12] and Olympia Press and later realized what she'd done, and of course, he didn't publish the *SCUM Manifesto* at first and she lost the rights to publish it herself. She wanted to hurt Girodias but Warhol, she said, would be great for publicity. She wasn't *that* bad a shot.

BF: What else do you remember about Valerie?

TGA: If you cared about her at all, she became really abusive. I was trying to help her and she became abusive with Flo too, and Flo just, well, she abused Flo once and Flo was done. Another lawyer in NOW made a good point. She thought the Solanas case was interesting in that almost all the cases of violence where women were involved, the victim was either a father or a lover; there was a sexual connection. But, from the newspapers, Valerie seemed to have an economic motive—this meant she must be "crazy." The fact that her actions would not fall into the usual category of a sex-related crime, but an economic one, made her crazy. While men killed each other all the time for economic reasons without being "crazy," this was, from that vantage point, a sex discrimination case on its face and had to be looked into. I thought that was really rather a cool assessment. I was coming from another place, you know, all my rage and so on and so on and so forth. Flo broke off with Valerie before I did. Flo said, "I begged her to get serious about her legal situation because there was talk of her being sent to Matteawan." Matteawan is the New York State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. It's like this snake pit.

BF: So Valerie rejected all friendships and turned on people who cared about her? Whom did she surround herself with?

TGA: Yes … Valerie had one woman who was a friend of mine, somewhat, and also a friend of hers called Wilda Holt.[13] Wilda had a horrendous history and was a very sweet woman. Wilda had been raped by her grandfather and it went to a court trial and she lost. She would come to NOW meetings and she was very polite, very sort of Southern Belle looking. You'd hear her say, "Kill him! Kill him!" whenever an instance of discrimination would be raised. (laughs) Sort of interesting. I don't know where she'd met Valerie, but she went to one of those meetings, SCUM meetings, the only person I'd ever known who had been to a SCUM meeting. Wilda would just get really abusive right back to Valerie and she said, "You have to talk to her that way," and I said, "I don't want to relate to somebody I have to be abusive to. I don't want to be like that." Valerie called me names. It's really an attempt to dominate and abuse you and she was very manipulative. Like Valerie, Wilda was filled with rage. In the early to mid-1970s, Wilda got a forty-five automatic, and she blew her head off. The police called me because I was the only other human connection they could find. She was a very, very sweet woman and a truly tragic case but drawn to Valerie through the hate thing. I guess you'd say she maintained a relationship with Valerie. I do think in some cases that the person is just in so much pain that they can't stand it, so it's wrong to resent their getting away. In Wilda's case, I was very fond of her; she was a really lovely woman and I liked her, but you didn't have laughs with Wilda. I don't know if I ever really heard her laugh.

BF: What was Valerie's relationship like with feminism?

TGA: Well, the other thing that happened that I thought was interesting was I got a call from a judge who had handled Valerie's arraignment, and she had a trunk that belonged to Valerie. Judge Anna Kross wanted me to look at the papers inside to see if the trunk should be preserved. I thought, "It's Valerie's so it should be kept for her regardless, right?" But she wanted me to look at it so I went down there to see this little trunk. It had that play in it [*Up Your Ass*]. She published some porno pieces in Cavalier or Hustler,[14] I think. It was under her name; it could have been a different spelling. There were copies of that, and there was a copy of a correspondence. She had joined the National Woman's Party; this must have been in the late 1950s, and she had written to Paul Freund[15] about the Equal Rights Amendment. She had kept that correspondence, and I remember getting chills because this is the sort of thing NOW does. It was a very girlish, polite letter asking him why he didn't support the Equal Rights Amendment, and he wrote her back this sort of liberal, but very patronizing, letter. He was this great constitutional lawyer who taught at Harvard, and he wrote that he didn't support it because it was already covered by the Fourteenth Amendment or something like that. I just looked at these things. SCUM *Manifesto* was not there. I had to go to the sleaze [Girodias] for that. I told Judge Kross, "It should be kept for her and she should be told where it is, and when she comes out she can pick it up. These are her things." I didn't know at the time about her identity connected with her work. I just thought that was pretty clear. I mean that trunk was the only thing, the only insight I had into somebody who was sort of different. She was crazy. Now, that doesn't mean she was crazy all the time, although by the time I met her she seemed to be; it was the stress she was under. Living like that, believe me, I've lived on the edge, so I know it's really hard. It's not good for the mind.

BF: Do you think that Valerie was a feminist or do you think that she should be included in feminist history as part of the movement?

TGA: No. No.

BF: Because she rejected it herself, or do you not see her fitting into that?

TGA: I think when she was a member of the National Woman's Party, that would have been different. She's part of my archive, but I don't think of her as part of my feminist archive. She was a glitch, a mistake. The fact that she keeps coming up, you could say that means we as women, as feminists, yearn for some violence, or somebody to fight back, and she looked like she was fighting back. Is there a hunger for that? Is it an expression of somehow the woman not being the victim all the time? But the feelings are mixed. The women who are attracted to her are also very much in the female role sometimes without giving it a lot of thought. It's fantasy too. It can be a kind of a flight. Certainly, she met some fantasy of mine, too. At first I was just gaga. I felt she was a martyr; my heart was all over everything, but it took me a couple of months before the ice water hit. I think a lot of people had this impulse of being moved by her story somehow, wanting to give her a chance in some way, at least hear her side, but if you've got any proximity to her, you can see the confusion. She's brilliant, but she's obsessed with herself. She doesn't seem to see herself as she really is at all, and she wants power over everything. She wants to be on top. She's a very, very tricky figure. I knew her and I don't speak with much confidence and that's a sign of somebody who knew her! So, there's a lot of, well at best, ambivalence…I mean, Valerie would sometimes expose herself in the courtroom. She undid her jeans and fiddled with her clitoris at the judge. Apparently, she did this at the SCUM meeting and was making some sort of sexual overtures to Wilda. It's an odd way to express yourself, and, because of what happened with Warhol, you weren't sure what she'd do.

Later, I kept seeing people who were interested in Valerie and who responded with a kind of excitement. I asked this one woman, "Why does she attract you?" because I realized she really wasn't interested in deep feminist questions. She said, "Well, she seems to have some panache, some style about it; you know, she shot somebody." In a way I have to say that was probably what attracted me too. I was filled with rage and I thought it was somehow appropriate to "just shoot them all!" It certainly seemed deserved, but it was a misreading of what was going on.

BF: What did you admire about Valerie?

TGA: She kept on. What else can I say?

BF: What do you feel regret about when looking back on radical feminism?

TGA: Not regret exactly. (There are very few things I could say I feel regret about.) But, for example, I was very impatient with these women who were older and who were very upset about feminism touching anything that had to do with sex. I thought, "Well, that's just silly!" I had no empathy for where they were coming from at all. I just brushed it off like it was crazy.

BF: You mean that they just didn't want to make sex part of the—?

TGA: They wanted to restrict feminism to things like taxes, education, and employment. Nothing else. Now I have a little more understanding of why they were upset or what they were fearful about in reducing feminism to the sexual. This was certainly not my intention. But they had lived most of their adult lives with people trying to negate women's situation by simply saying, "You're all cunts," and that's it. I have more understanding of them, more empathy.

What we're trying to do is really change the whole world, and it's not going to be in any one generation. Yet, you have to push hard and constantly as if you're going to see it in your lifetime. That's a big order. It would really be important if we could stand on the shoulders of people who have gone before us and not make some of the same mistakes. You can't reinvent the wheel every time. Until you clear away some of the debris of any kind—the material aspects of oppression—it's very difficult to see internalized oppression because there's so much other shit on top of it. There might be yet another layer, but there may be all sorts of other things also.

BF: What mistakes stand out to you?

TGA: From studying the last women's movement, I realized that women have gotten together to make change when everything else is on top of them, like a war or other class systems. When everything is moving and shaking, this gives us a space where we can start to see, "Oh yeah, things aren't really good with us." When those problems—slavery or whatever—seem to reach a sort of impasse (or, I wouldn't say, "resolution," but something similar), that space closes over. Then the whole weight of it seems to come down again on women. I felt strongly that we have a smallish window of time to make change in; we've got to make our most important gains fast. We have to really seize this time. I felt compelled by this so there was no time for any socializing or fun and games, none of that. We just had to keep digging and figure out what we want to do, do it, push, keep digging, and so on, because we don't have forever here. It's not the worst premise.

However, I learned a lot from Flo, a lot in retrospect. Flo always mixed the social in with the political. For example, she always had a pot of chili on the stove. She always had some sort of cake that she cut into a hundred pieces so that everybody got just a teeny bit, but there was something for everyone. There was a little reward, and she would always say, "Well, the best revenge is if we have fun. We also have to have fun. You have to fight, but you have to have a good time while you're doing it." She was very serious, but she had a lot of wit, and she always understood you can burn out. I felt so much pressure that I thought, "We don't have time for that." But I see this differently now. I see now how much has to be done, that you can't finish no matter how hard you push, no matter if you never sleep. There's too much we don't even know yet about what has to be undone, so you've got to play it so that you can last.

BF: What was it like when Flo died?

TGA: Our relationship continued until she died in 2000, and it was profound. I really loved her a lot. With all her "children" she was very critical, and I was one of her children. Sometimes you ask yourself, "Well, just how far out can I get from the time and context in which I live?" When do you just get tired and say, "I'm not living up to the standard I set. I'm tired and I know that."

I liked what I liked. I liked who I liked, who was interesting. I don't know how to explain it except if you live long enough maybe that's how it sorts out, if you are independent in your tastes and such. I liked Diane Arbus. I think I often regret that I didn't spend more time on different relationships. We have this standard, especially for women, where we expect them to water and nurture relationships more, and I don't know if I did that as much as I should have. I was interested in something somebody was doing at a given time and then years and years later it turns out "Wow." Then later I think, "Well, why didn't people say 'Wow' when they were alive?" Why does life have to be so hard for people who are different, like Valerie?

BF: I think that people will do that with radical feminism and with Valerie and with all of this stuff. It just seems like one of those things that people keep doing. I don't think it gets its fair shake, but I think that it is cyclic and that people will be sort of frantic to reconstruct the history of it and not have any way to do that. Who knows what will happen as a result of that?

TGA: Sometimes I think that it's like being an artist. The artist dies and then the work is complete and that is when the value shoots up. Diane didn't have enough money to buy photographic paper. Almost no one would buy her work. She said that people thought her photos were of freaks but she thought they were beautiful. She said, "If I'm dead, you watch, the prices will go sky high." It's true. This is a pattern with artists again and again and again. With Valerie, I don't know. With radical feminism, I feel that people are afraid of it in terms of their getting too close to the living thing in terms of its contemporary relevance.

We've been thinking about the late 1960s, asking, "Why did things die down?" A lot of it was that there were too few people carrying it. We've got to talk about it all, try to explore it. There are so many questions. I start seeing people start to get so-called radical again, and they're picking up exactly where we left off, making the same mistakes again and again. That's no good. There was a lot that we started with that was right.

You're going to have to cut across other movements. Your alliances are going to be with other people who understand that *they* need profound change. If women aren't fighting for their own freedom, they're the most conservative, backward force in society. Everybody wants to have a decent life, and to tell people, "You're going to have to face that everything that has been planned for you is terrible and you have to envision what change would be without being able to see it." That's a problem that we must cope with. It's a big one. You've got to have something to keep going. That's why I keep thinking about Flo's ideas about community and about rebuilding each other and about supporting each other in that psychological, sociological sense. We've got to do it, got to figure out how that's going to work, because otherwise you self-destruct. We're also ahistorical and we don't learn. I think it's part of being very reactionary, being ahistorical, because nobody wants you to learn.

BF: I think what you said about feeling like you're not sure how far out of the context of your time you can be is good because we're moving in a direction where, for example, people are more skeptical of marriage now, and we're not there to the point where they're really able to be fully critical of it or fully appreciate the history of it, but people are not as seduced by it. I think there's a certain shift in terms of people embracing different kinds of relationships. I don't know about sexuality. That always seems a bit stunted to me, but we'll see.

TGA: Layer after layer, that's pretty basic. Sex and love is the dynamic that keeps women's oppression going and the sex-class institutions will just keep re-creating themselves unless you get at the deeper dynamics of this thing. But I don't think—until you challenge those institutions—that probably you can know much for sure. Women loving women has to be good, right? You can see it from that perspective, but when you see the role playing, you realize, well, it doesn't seem to be the best choice for everybody.

BF: Another thing I feel is changing is this kind of increasing commodification of everything. Even leisure time is so commodified, so where's the space for pleasure outside of that? When you're re-creating these stories about New York in the sixties and seventies, I can't even imagine a world where that exists anymore, where there's a place where people run into each other and have these coalitions and are not stuck in front of the TV or stuck consuming all the time.

TGA: It was also living on the edge, which is very stressful, because you could sort of go along and then the bottom falls out when you can't keep it afloat. This is why people want something to rely on. People get jobs so that they can support themselves, but then the job becomes their life and there isn't another thing that it's for. The New York art world is a model where creativity and individuality were so accepted that you worked at something in order to support your real life, and you didn't take your day job so seriously.

BF: What shifts did you see happen to radical feminism?

TGA: There were women who later became attracted to the movement more because it was something chic and because it was so-called radical. It became more co-opted. By the mid-1970s, we were having a lot of intramovement fighting. It was a constant struggle. Probably what was called "radical feminism" by the mid-1970s really did not even resemble its origins. In most ways, later incarnations were the opposite of earlier radical feminism.

BF: In what sense?

TGA: For example, if matriarchy becomes radical feminism, you find that power dynamic again. It wasn't a challenge. It certainly wasn't a challenge to sex roles because it was sex roles with a vengeance. Motherhood is a heavily permeated sex role. God help you if you refused the tit; they'd really kill you. It seemed benevolent only if you went along; it's a real heavy power trip.

BF: Do you think there can be relationships that don't involve power? Or lessened power?

TGA: I think people can get closer to that if they're very conscious of it and if they're working at it. I do think that relationships are uneven. I used to be obsessed with my relationship with Flo. I'd make a list of all I got from her and then what I gave to her, and it always seemed to be very lopsided. It seemed like she gave everything to me, and I didn't give to her. She probably thought that I was very silly. In friendships that go on, I think it goes back and forth. In other words, I think that one person can be more needy at one time than the other and the other's more supportive, but it should even out over a period of time. I think there are times when it is uneven, but if people are conscious of it, if they have some idea about in what ways it's evened out, it's better.

I think that reciprocity is important. I think we need each other. I think life's hard. Especially in this country, I think it's hard. I find it very hard to live with Iraq, knowing what we're doing there. Some Weatherpeople have been saying, "Oh, we went too far." But was it really too far or wasn't it? What is adequate? We talk about good Germans,[16] right? They didn't do enough. Why didn't they stop things? Why aren't *we* stopping things? Just because we're aware this is terrible, is this enough? I feel like we're all good Germans here, and the atrocities are beyond mind-boggling.

I think that if you have anything really corrupt, like sexism, like the way women are treated and it's accepted, you have a poison. You have something at the core. It's going to infect everyone, and it's the foundation. You have to get all the way back into it, and you start understanding things. I understood other oppressions when I understood the oppression of women. I think that the most horrifying part is that we are at least half of the problem because if we only say "no" and just refuse, it's over! It's over! Just a few people speaking up, the whole world practically came to an end. It's amazing! It can't be all that secure.

Women's oppression has been going on so long, and it's had so many twists and turns. There are so many layers to it that there's a huge amount of work to be done. All the layers, all of the other institutions in society that we've seen that have obscured for us what's going on with women—no matter how deep we dig, we're going to have another perception, another insight, and we have to accept that we do our very best and get it as right as we can. Maybe in another ten years, if we all press on and never let up, we may see it differently. We may see that we didn't see deeply enough then. We've got to dig deeper, and you have to understand what you're dealing with.

Now, how do you keep going? That's when I turn to Flo. You've got to build in a way to keep going, and not knowing that was my mistake. I thought you just work, work, work, work, work like we're doing now. Are we just going to fall over exhausted? We have to figure out how we're going to fulfill each other and hopefully nurture each other. Nobody is going to be interested in what it takes out of us except us. We have to figure how we can make up for it somehow so that we can build in rewards. That's what Flo did. Flo would make plaques, and it was sort of silly, but I was really pleased when I got a plaque. Once she said, "Who else is going to appreciate us except us?" and she was very wise; very, very wise. I didn't get it at the time. It's like you need a different tempo or something. We can't just beat ourselves. There's just something almost battering about the ripping and ripping and ripping like we have to do. But there's also some way of restoring. We've got to be aware that this is very damaging. It's exciting, but we're ripping everything that we have known that keeps you secure. I don't believe anyone's going to find the truth, but I believe that there are things closer to the truth and things further away. We need to strive to get it right. We have to figure out some way to keep going.

NOTES

1. To date, I have interviewed Ti-Grace Atkinson, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Dana Densmore, Jacqueline Ceballos, Jane Caputi, Jeremiah Newton, Margo Feiden, Rosalyn Baxandall, Vivian Gornick, Sylvia Miles, Ultra Violet, and Mary Harron. My book about Valerie Solanas, working title *Valerie Solanas: Fragments and Forgetting,* addresses Valerie Solanas's relationship to feminism, Warhol, madness, and memory. It follows a shorter piece published in *Feminist Studies* in 2008; see Breanne Fahs, "The Radical Possibilities of Valerie Solanas," *Feminist Studies* 34, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 591–617.
2. Valerie Solanas (1936–1988) wrote the *SCUM Manifesto* (1967), a polemical indictment of patriarchy. She shot and wounded Andy Warhol on June 3, 1968, apparently

angered that he stole her manuscript *Up Your Ass*; she was also concerned about mistreatment and coercion from her publisher, Maurice Girodias. Wide debates ensued about whether this action was a *feminist* action or whether it represented acute mental illness (or both). After being released from various mental institutions (Bellevue, Elmhurst, Dunlop, and Matteawan), Solanas traveled to San Francisco and died of pneumonia while working as a prostitute and living in a welfare hotel near Union Square.

3. Martha Weinman Lear, "The Second Feminist Wave," *New York Times Magazine*, March 10, 1968.
4. Atkinson has maintained a substantial collection of her papers, correspondences, and documents from The Feminists and NOW. When she refers to her "archive," she means her extensive personal collection of documents. Her speeches appear in Ti-Grace Atkinson, *Amazon Odyssey: The First Collection of Writings by the Political Pioneer of the Women's Movement* (New York: Links Books, 1974).
5. Alice Paul (1885–1977) led the US women's suffrage movement, founded the National Woman's Party, and authored sections of the first proposed Equal Rights Amendment. Gloria Steinem (1934–), the well-known feminist journalist and activist who cofounded *Ms.*, helped represent the women's movement in the media from the 1960s to the present. Betty Friedan (1921–2006), widely considered a foundational leader of the US feminist movement, wrote *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and cofounded NOW in 1966. Florynce Kennedy (1916–2000) was a US civil rights lawyer who represented Valerie Solanas, many of the Black Panthers, and other marginalized figures of progressive social movements from the 1950s through the 1980s. She was also a prominent activist during the civil rights and women's movement struggles. Robin Morgan (1941–) edited *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement* (1970) and was a founding member of New York Radical Women and W.I.T.C.H. (Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell). Andrea Dworkin (1946–2005) wrote the radical text, *Intercourse* (1987), and lobbied against pornography by arguing that it eroticized violence against women and violated civil rights. Shulamith Firestone (1945–) figured centrally in early radical feminism and belonged to the New York Radical Women, Redstockings, and New York Radical Feminists. She is the author of *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (1970), which has been reprinted in several editions during the last forty years. Kate Millett (1934–) wrote the foundational feminist text, *Sexual Politics* (1970), and was a well-known radical feminist activist, particularly surrounding issues of women and mental health. Roxanne Dunbar (1939–), later Dunbar-Ortiz, helped to found the radical feminist group Cell 16, and wrote numerous texts on social inequalities, including her memoir, *Outlaw Woman: A Memoir of the War Years, 1960–1975* (2001). Ellen Willis (1941–2006) helped to found Redstockings and was a founding member of New York Radical Women as well as an ardent critic of the antipornography movement. Phyllis Chesler (1940–), author of *Women and Madness* (1972), was one of the first self-identified feminist psychologists and a lifelong critic of the pathologization of women in mental health settings. Diane Arbus (1923–1971) was a US photographer whose best-known work featured

marginalized people or those with atypical bodies, such as dwarfs, nudists, circus performers, and transvestites. She committed suicide in 1972, after which her work gained worldwide popularity and notoriety. Anne Koedt was involved in early radical feminism and wrote "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm" (1970), which posited that frenzies surrounding psychoanalysis led to denying the significance of the clitoral orgasm. She was a member of New York Radical Women and a founding member of New York Radical Feminists (1969). Edie Sedgwick (1943–1971) was a US artist, model, and actress—best known for appearing in Andy Warhol films. She was featured as an "It" girl in *Vogue* magazine and was a regular visitor to the Factory, Warhol's New York City studio, during the 1960s. Both Florynce Kennedy and Valerie Solanas will be discussed in more detail later in this piece.

6. Andy Warhol (1928–1987), who founded the visual art movement known as "pop art," developed a reputation for inhabiting eclectic social circles that included artists, musicians, bohemian street people, intellectuals, celebrities, idiosyncratic homeless people, and wealthy aristocrats. The Factory was Warhol's original New York City studio from 1962 until 1968, located on the fifth floor at 231 East 47th Street in midtown Manhattan (although the original building no longer exists). Misfits, artists, porn stars, drag queens, socialites, drug addicts, musicians, free thinkers, and Warhol's entourage (the "Warhol superstars") spent time there, often making mass-produced art or starring in one of Warhold's many films.
7. Florynce Kennedy, *Color Me Flo: My Hard Life and Good Times* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1976).
8. The interview content here includes a conglomeration of excerpts taken from an interview that lasted over fifteen hours and spanned 135 single-spaced pages of transcript. Many of the ideas have been abbreviated, and some of the responses have been rearranged to allow for maximum readability. Some editing has been applied to make the transcript flow more smoothly (e.g., taking out "um" and "you know"), but the content remains intact. Atkinson and I maintain ongoing dialogue about this transcript.
9. Elaine de Kooning (1918–1989) was an abstract expressionist painter and an editorial associate for *Art News* magazine. She was married to artist Willem de Kooning, whose highly influential paintings were criticized for their aggressive treatment of women and their bodies.
10. "Red-diaper baby" refers to a child of parents who belonged to the US Communist Party or who sympathized with its aims.
11. "Joanie" refers to Joan Hamilton, a friend of Florynce Kennedy and a fellow activist working for black liberation. Atkinson became friends with Hamilton in the 1970s, and they were two of the four signers of "The Crisis of Feminism" (unpublished) denouncing the cooperation of Jane Alpert (one of the original Weathermen—later called the Weather Underground) cooperation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation against the Weather Underground.
12. Maurice Girodias (1919–1990) founded Olympia Press and published controversial works including *Lolita, The Naked Lunch*, and *The Story of O.* He paid a few hundred dollars for the

rights to Valerie Solanas's work and eventually published the Olympia Press edition of the SCUM *Manifesto* following the Warhol shooting of 1968.

13. Although the name Wilda Holt (aka Wilda Chase) came up in several interviews I conducted with prominent radical feminists, little is known about her life. Her name appears in the bus rosters for the Miss America pageant protests in 1969. She authored the pornographic work, "Twigbenders" (unpublished), and later committed suicide in the early 1970s.
14. *Cavalier* magazine was launched in the United States in 1952 and featured nude photos of women along with commentaries by leading male figures who discussed masculinity and social life; *Hustler* was first published in 1974 by Larry Flynt and features hard core pornography aimed at men in the United States.
15. Founded in 1916 by Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, the National Woman's Party was a women's organization that focused on women's rights and women's suffrage, and in later years, the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment for women. The group focused its efforts in the 1950s and early 1960s on adding "sex" to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, thus solidifying the relationship between gender and race in the law. Paul Freund (1908–1992) was a law professor, primarily at Harvard Law School, and an American jurist, widely known for his writings on the US Supreme Court and the US Constitution.
16. The Weathermen, known later as the Weather Underground, began in 1969 as a radical, anti-imperialist, leftist US organization that was originally a faction of the Students for a Democratic Society. The group advocated the violent overthrow of the US government and bombed several government buildings and banks in the mid-1970s. The concept of the "good German" refers to the idea that many German citizens allowed Hitler and the Nazis to persecute the Jews and that they allowed it to happen right before their eyes without intervening. Questions about the innocence of the German people during World War II, as well as people's general complicity in acts of war, are evoked in such a term.