Beginning in the 1970s, as second-wave North American feminism began to gain momentum and terrorism “at home” simultaneously became a prominent political and cultural concern for the United States, feminism and terrorism began to present in the cultural imaginary as isomorphic practices. I argued in Chapter Three that, in the first instance, feminism and terrorism were perceived as causally related. That is, feminism was constructed within dominant discourse as responsible for increased numbers of women participating in clandestine activities directed at overthrowing the state. However, perhaps more importantly, white urban terrorist groups were constructed as being dominated by women as both organizers and protagonists of the terrorist drama. In this context, feminism came to be thought as culpable for (white urban) terrorism per se in the United States.

What is often referred to as second-wave feminism comprised a spectrum of groups with widely divergent understandings of the problem of women’s subordination and an equally divergent set of strategies for effecting cultural and political change. However, in the earlier phase of second-wave feminist activism, a small number of women’s groups, those we have come to label “radical feminists,” came to dominate the political scene of feminism. Ellen Willis writes that the radical feminist “movement took shape in 1968 and ended, for all practical purposes, five years later”—a period coinciding with the peak of home-grown US “urban terrorism” carried out by various left-wing groups.
I argued in Chapter Four that terrorism, as a tactical practice, signifies within the Western imagination as the apocalyptic end to modernity. This chapter argues that the crosswiring of radical feminism with terrorism that began in the late 1960s/early 1970s in the United States was made possible by terrorists’ and feminists’ shared articulation of an apocalyptic outlook culminating in a call to arms—its effect of envisioning the radical transformation of a society based on linear time. I exemplify this argument via an analysis of Valerie Solanas’ *SCUM Manifesto*—a text that literalizes the idea of feminism as terrorism—in order to critique the gendering of Western modernity.

**Valerie Solanas: Radical Feminist Zeitgeist**

As the New Right has struggled to make sense, however inadequately, of the events of September 11, 2001 and their aftermath, these self-proclaimed moral watchdogs of US culture have breathed new life into the discourse that crosswires feminism with terrorism. As in the 1970s, for the New Right, feminism, once again, is responsible for the terrible affliction of terrorism. Feminism, as their language and imagery would suggest, is itself terrorist.

We will recall from Chapter Three that in a 1992 fundraising newsletter, Reverend Pat Robertson described feminism as “a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians.” Phyllis Schlafly has warned that feminists not only “want to kill everything masculine” but also that “you can’t negotiate with the feminists because you will lose. *They will slit your throat.*”

It could be said that these constructions are at odds with the status accorded present day feminism in US dominant culture, where feminist principles now circulate widely in the popular domain, albeit in different forms, to varying degrees of acceptance, and often ambiguously or contradictorily. Feminist principles, that is, have a certain degree of cultural currency and legitimacy and, as such, feminists and their demands are not ultimately all that unreasonable.

The paranoid fear of feminism, as a catalyst of terrorism, articulated by the New Right is however contextualized (though not excused) if we juxtapose Robertson’s comments with the words for which Valerie Solanas, founder and sole member of the feminist terrorist organization known as SCUM—the Society for Cutting Up Men—is most notorious. Solanas is remembered for shooting Andy Warhol in 1968 and, in the shadow of her spectacular debut into infamy, what is often overlooked is that she authored one of the most angrily outspoken texts of US radical feminism. The *SCUM Manifesto*,