

An Immodest Demand—Quotes on Valerie Solanas and SCUM Manifesto

“Ronell describes Solanas’ style and voice as a scream – a scream that cuts through. By rejecting the patriarchal grammar, Solanas makes new spaces, or simply cracks, where we can talk about what’s really important. In her own way, Solanas shows us what a desire for change looks like and how a desire for change in one’s own life is bound up with change in other people’s lives and attitudes. Screaming is an acute call for change, and it is in this spirit that we find the value of feminist critique, in a life that both is and is not one’s own.”

(Peltonen et al 11)

“Solanas reminds us of how moral impulses and reactions like anger and despair have spurred feminist questions, critique and actions. These are concepts that in a sense provide theoretical discussions with their intelligibility, as they form the background of feminist thinking. One could say that feminist thinking is internally related to anger, despair, hope and love. This is the feminism we pledge our allegiance to, a feminism that doesn’t find its feet in this world and therefore demands change, new worlds.” (Peltonen et al 4)

“Feminist theory is sometimes described as a ‘tool box’ for analysing how different categories (for example, misogyny, homophobia and racism) ‘work’ in relation to the structures power and oppression. But feminist theory also often leaves us, or the feminist critic, there. We are left with our concepts, our theories and descriptions of power relations but also with the anger and frustration we experience in facing them. Concepts and historicising gestures do not always help us face our anger and frustration.” (Peltonen et al 7)

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