

Book Summary by the Editor, "Rage and Creativity: How Feminism Sparked Psychoanalysis" (2020, IPBooks)

This anthology, with contributions by psychoanalytic thinkers, both women and men, celebrates how a feminist thought collective changed psychoanalysis to better understand women's needs and desires. It focuses on Arlene Kramer Richards' essay "Rage and Creativity: How Second-Generation Feminist Thought Collective Influenced Psychoanalysis". The ideas she sets forth are the jumping off point for the discussions that follow. By inviting the contributors to discuss her essay, she affords her discussants an opportunity to be part of a feminist collective. Each of the discussants focuses on some aspect of her thesis that resonates for them. They expand on concepts she introduces, raise questions about particular points she makes and offer their perspective on the topic. Controversy is part of the exchange between Dr. Richards and the contributors to this volume.

A number of the essays explore a facet of the authors' professional and/or personal developments, particularly in relation to feminism and the psychology of women. As one follows the discussions, one sees both a continuum and departure between the ideas of pioneer women psychoanalysts, formerly ignored by mainstream psychoanalysis, i.e. Karen Horney and Melanie Klein. As theoretical ideas by these pioneers are incorporated into contemporary psychoanalysis, the dynamic aspect of psychoanalysis is highlighted.

The adaptive aspects of rage and aggression to transform and empower, is also a theme. Some of the essays discuss how expressions of righteous anger can grow out of being ignored, unfairly restrained or abused. Others address the ways in which prejudice threatens or quashes ambition. Still others discuss how one mitigates the barriers to self-fulfillment and intellectual honesty, overcoming being invisible or capriciously excluded by the gatekeepers.

Sexism, racism and "othering" are in the conversation. A brief vignette of Dr. Margaret Morgan Lawrence, the first African American psychoanalyst, illustrates how racism and sexism converge. A discussion by an African American male psychoanalyst, elegantly illustrates, with passages from his novel, how the "liberation of white women and Black men intersect".

Sandra Buechler says in her back-cover comment about this book, "... The lively back and forth between Dr. Richards and her discussants itself demonstrates how an open exchange can foster mutual growth." The essay, discussions and narratives tell a story about how voices are shaped and what happens when those voices are expressed and heard. This collection consolidates the past, establishes our present and prepares a base for the future.

Included among the contributors are: Rosemary Balsam; Sandra Cohen; Paula Ellman, Alison Feit; William Fried; Nancy Goodman; Cordelia Schmidt-Hellerau; Dorothy Evans Holmes; Lee Jenkins; Kimberly Kleinman; Nancy Kulish; Merle Molofsky; Kerry Kelly Novick; Jack Novick; Arlene Kramer Richards; Lucille Spira; Jeffrey Stern; Judith Alpert; Selma Duckler; Les Von Losberg; Margery Quackenbush; Paul Schwaber; Herbert Stein; with a personal statement and artwork by Bracha L. Ettinger, psychoanalyst, philosopher and artist.

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