

Review of *Rage and Creativity: How Feminism Sparked Psychoanalysis*  
Edited by Lucille Spira, PhD., Reviewed by Catherine Mallouh, M.D. in the June 2021 COWAP Newsletter

This lively, engaging book explores the feminist movement and its influence on psychoanalysis. Arlene Kramer Richards powerful essay, which opens the book, is its driving force. Each subsequent writer, many known for their psychoanalytic writings on women, responds to her essay. She responds to each of them giving the book its unique conversational character.

Arlene Kramer Richards writes, "Feminist rage fueled by injustice has been a spur to creativity in the analytic world (p.11)." Thus, rage and creativity are joined as important forces for change, and this becomes a dynamic reference point for the other writers. She reflects on the personal experiences that shaped her life as a woman, setting the tone of the book.

Richards vividly outlines the history of second wave feminism, discusses the major feminists of the 60s and 70s (and later) from the perspectives of gender equality and difference. She looks at feminism's effects on psychoanalytic theory and practice. She critiques psychoanalysis as it was practiced at that time, inhibiting women's development, promoting their adaptation to their assigned social and gender roles. She also sees Freud as a feminist in his support of his daughter and women psychoanalysts.

She introduces the idea of the thought collective, a development of thought that creates a shift in thinking, passes into and has influence on the larger world. She sees this as the process that led feminism to finally change psychoanalysis. The thought collective is a central idea for this book which takes shape as a feminist thought collective in its own right.

The subsequent writers extend and develop Richards ideas with their own thinking on women, gender and feminism. They discuss their own contributions to psychoanalytic theory regarding female development and psychology. Their responses range from the scholarly and academic to personal experiences and reflections, and often, a mix of the two. A number of these writers describe how they came of age during the second wave of feminism. This gives the book a sense of the lived experience and reactions to the social surround that informed their thinking and desire to change psychoanalysis. Some writers respond to the COVID pandemic, others take up racial injustice and prejudice as well as the contemporary struggles of women and a new wave of feminism in the #MeToo movement.

Richards further develops her ideas as she responds to the other contributors. I found myself keenly interested to read what she had to say at the end of each essay. She is not always in complete agreement and this makes for a lively dialogue. Her responses are thoughtful and thought provoking, and allow her to reflect further on the feminist movement and her own personal experiences.

There is a lot to learn from this book. It provides a valuable historical perspective not only on feminism but on the evolution of psychoanalytic theory about women's sexuality and development. The first challenges to Freudian views of women's development were by early female analysts. Penis envy as the bedrock for women's sexuality has been thoroughly

challenged, and revised theoretical perspectives described in these essays are more widely accepted. The emphasis in second wave feminism on the importance of women's experience of their bodies and sexuality is integral to these challenges. The deep roots of male misogyny is also explored by a number of writers including Richards.

The effect of feminism on psychoanalysis as an institution is also taken up. Women have entered the field in larger numbers, taken leadership positions and challenged patriarchal institutional norms. Women have developed psychoanalytic theory and clinical work in important and innovative ways. Many of the contributors in this book share their experiences of being in the vanguard.

The second part of the book, entitled "Narrative Voices: Feminism and Psychoanalysis," has personal essays and reflections with a psychoanalytic perspective by psychoanalysts and artists. They reflect on their personal development, experience of the women's movement and psychoanalysis. Then there is the appendix, which is also informative and interesting, and includes the Wikipedia history of the women's liberation movement and a paper by Lucille Spira and Arlene Kramer Richards on snobbery in Proust. There is no shortage of interesting material here!

This book is a wonderful and innovative contribution. It has a wide ranging and open approach, with a lot of freedom of expression. In that way, it embodies the very spirit of the feminist movement and psychoanalysis: striving for greater freedom, self-knowledge and finding one's voice. The feminist movement freed up psychoanalysis and gave women analysts a voice, compelled theory to change and put us in touch with our social context. This book inspires us to keep moving forward.

The contributors who responded to Arlene Kramer Richards essay are: Rosemary Balsam, Sandra Cohen, Paula Ellman, Alison Feit, William Fried, Nancy Goodman, Cordelia Schmidt-Hellerau, Dorothy Holmes, Lee Jenkins, Kimberly Kleinman, Nancy Kulish, Merle Molofsky, Kerry Kelly and Jack Novick, and Lucille Spira.

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