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# BEYOND the RULE BOOK

## Moral Issues *and* Dilemmas *in the* Practice *of* Psychotherapy



**Ellyn Kaschak**  
**Marcia Hill**

*e d i t o r s*

# Beyond the Rule Book: Moral Issues and Dilemmas in the Practice of Psychotherapy

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Ellyn Kaschak, PhD  
Marcia Hill, EdD  
Editors

*Beyond the Rule Book: Moral Issues and Dilemmas in the Practice of Psychotherapy* has been co-published simultaneously as *Women & Therapy*, Volume 22, Number 2 1999.



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*Ellyn Kaschak*  
*Marcia Hill*  
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*Pre-publication  
REVIEWS,  
COMMENTARIES,  
EVALUATIONS . . .*

**“T**he authors in this important and timely book tackle the difficult task of working through . . . conflicts, sharing their moral struggles and real life solutions in working with diverse populations and in a variety of clinical settings. . . .”

**Carolyn C. Larsen, PhD**  
*Senior Counsellor Emeritus,  
University of Calgary  
Partner in private practice  
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in Therapy: Feminist Perspectives*

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***Beyond the Rule Book: Moral Issues and Dilemmas in the Practice of Psychotherapy***, edited by Ellyn Kaschak, PhD, and Marcia Hill, EdD (Vol. 22, No. 2, 1999). *"The authors in this important and timely book tackle the difficult task of working through . . . conflicts, sharing their moral struggles and real life solutions in working with diverse populations and in a variety of clinical settings. . . . Will provide psychotherapists with a thought-provoking source for the stimulating and essential discussion of our own and our profession's moral bases."* (Carolyn C. Larsen, PhD, Senior Counsellor Emeritus, University of Calgary, Partner in private practice, Alberta Psychological Resources Ltd., Calgary, and Co-editor, *Ethical Decision Making in Therapy: Feminist Perspectives*)

***Assault on the Soul: Women in the Former Yugoslavia***, edited by Sara Sharratt, PhD, and Ellyn Kaschak, PhD (Vol. 22, No. 1, 1999). *Explores the applications and intersections of feminist therapy, activism and jurisprudence with women and children in the former Yugoslavia.*

***Learning from Our Mistakes: Difficulties and Failures in Feminist Therapy***, edited by Marcia Hill, EdD, and Esther D. Rothblum, PhD (Vol. 21, No. 3, 1998). *"A courageous and fundamental step in evolving a well-grounded body of theory and of investigating the assumptions that unexamined, lead us to error."* (Teresa Bernardez, MD, Training and Supervising Analyst, The Michigan Psychoanalytic Council)

***Feminist Therapy as a Political Act***, edited by Marcia Hill, EdD (Vol. 21, No. 2, 1998). *"A real contribution to the field. . . . A valuable tool for feminist therapists and those who want to learn about feminist therapy."* (Florence L. Denmark, PhD, Robert S. Pace Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Chair, Psychology Department, Pace University, New York, New York)

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***Children's Rights, Therapists' Responsibilities: Feminist Commentaries***, edited by Gail Anderson, MA, and Marcia Hill, EdD (Vol. 20, No. 2, 1997). *"Addresses specific practice dimensions that will help therapists organize and resolve conflicts about working with children, adolescents, and their families in therapy."* (Feminist Bookstore News)

***More than a Mirror: How Clients Influence Therapists' Lives***, edited by Marcia Hill, EdD (Vol. 20, No. 1, 1997). *"Courageous, insightful, and deeply moving. These pages reveal the scrupulous self-examination*

and self-reflection of conscientious therapists at their best. *AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO FEMINIST THERAPY LITERATURE AND A BOOK WORTH READING BY THERAPISTS AND CLIENTS ALIKE.*" (Rachel Josefowitz Siegal, MSW, retired feminist therapy practitioner; Co-Editor, *Women Changing Therapy; Jewish Women in Therapy*; and *Celebrating the Lives of Jewish Women: Patterns in a Feminist Sampler*)

***Sexualities***, edited by Marny Hall, PhD, LCSW (Vol. 19, No. 4, 1997). "Explores the diverse and multifaceted nature of female sexuality, covering topics including sadomasochism in the therapy room, sexual exploitation in cults, and genderbending in cyberspace." (*Feminist Bookstore News*)

***Couples Therapy: Feminist Perspectives***, edited by Marcia Hill, EdD, and Esther D. Rothblum, PhD (Vol. 19, No. 3, 1996). Addresses some of the inadequacies, omissions, and assumptions in traditional couples' therapy to help you face the issues of race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation in helping couples today.

***A Feminist Clinician's Guide to the Memory Debate***, edited by Susan Contratto, PhD, and M. Janice Gutfreund, PhD (Vol. 19, No. 1, 1996). "Unites diverse scholars, clinicians, and activists in an insightful and useful examination of the issues related to recovered memories." (*Feminist Bookstore News*)

***Classism and Feminist Therapy: Counting Costs***, edited by Marcia Hill, EdD, and Esther D. Rothblum, PhD (Vol. 18, No. 3/4, 1996). "EDUCATES, CHALLENGES, AND QUESTIONS THE INFLUENCE OF CLASSISM ON THE CLINICAL PRACTICE OF PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH WOMEN." (Kathleen P. Gates, MA, Certified Professional Counselor, Center for Psychological Health, Superior, Wisconsin)

***Lesbian Therapists and Their Therapy: From Both Sides of the Couch***, edited by Nancy D. Davis, MD, Ellen Cole, PhD, and Esther D. Rothblum, PhD (Vol. 18, No. 2, 1996). "Highlights the power and boundary issues of psychotherapy from perspectives that many readers may have neither considered nor experienced in their own professional lives." (*Psychiatric Services*)

***Feminist Foremothers in Women's Studies, Psychology, and Mental Health***, edited by Phyllis Chesler, PhD, Esther D. Rothblum, PhD, and Ellen Cole, PhD (Vol. 17, No. 1/2/3/4, 1995). "A must for feminist scholars and teachers . . . These women's personal experiences are poignant and powerful." (*Women's Studies International Forum*)

***Women's Spirituality, Women's Lives***, edited by Judith Ochshorn, PhD, and Ellen Cole, PhD (Vol. 16, No. 2/3, 1995). "A delightful and complex book on spirituality and sacredness in women's lives." (Joan Clingan, MA, Spiritual Psychology, Graduate Advisor, Prescott College Master of Arts Program)

***Psychopharmacology from a Feminist Perspective***, edited by Jean A. Hamilton, MD, Margaret Jensvold, MD, Esther D. Rothblum, PhD, and Ellen Cole, PhD (Vol. 16, No. 1, 1995). "Challenges readers to increase their sensitivity and awareness of the role of sex and gender in response to and acceptance of pharmacological therapy." (*American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*)

***Wilderness Therapy for Women: The Power of Adventure***, edited by Ellen Cole, PhD, Esther D. Rothblum, PhD, and Eve Erdman, MEd, MLS (Vol. 15, No. 3/4, 1994). "There's an undeniable excitement in these pages about the thrilling satisfaction of meeting challenges in the physical world, the world outside our cities that is unfamiliar, uneasy territory for many women. If you're interested at all in the subject, this book is well worth your time." (*Psychology of Women Quarterly*)

***Bringing Ethics Alive: Feminist Ethics in Psychotherapy Practice***, edited by Nanette K. Gartrell, MD (Vol. 15, No. 1, 1994). "Examines the theoretical and practical issues of ethics in feminist therapies. From the responsibilities of training programs to include social issues ranging from racism to sexism to practice ethics, this outlines real questions and concerns." (*Midwest Book Review*)

***Women with Disabilities: Found Voices***, edited by Mary Willmuth, PhD, and Lillian Holcomb, PhD (Vol. 14, No. 3/4, 1994). "These powerful chapters often jolt the anti-disability consciousness and force readers to contend with the ways in which disability has been constructed, disguised, and rendered disgusting by much of society." (*Academic Library Book Review*)

***Faces of Women and Aging***, edited by Nancy D. Davis, MD, Ellen Cole, PhD, and Esther D. Rothblum, PhD (Vol. 14, No. 1/2, 1993). "This uplifting, helpful book is of great value not only for aging

women, but also for women of all ages who are interested in taking active control of their own lives." (New Mature Woman)

**Refugee Women and Their Mental Health: Shattered Societies, Shattered Lives**, edited by Ellen Cole, PhD, Oliva M. Espin, PhD, and Esther D. Rothblum, PhD (Vol. 13, No. 1/2/3, 1992). "The ideas presented are rich and the perspectives varied, and the book is an important contribution to understanding refugee women in a global context." (Contemporary Psychology)

**Women, Girls and Psychotherapy: Reframing Resistance**, edited by Carol Gilligan, PhD, Annie Rogers, PhD, and Deborah Tolman, EdD (Vol. 11, No. 3/4, 1991). "Of use to educators, psychotherapists, and parents—in short, to any person who is directly involved with girls at adolescence." (Harvard Educational Review)

**Professional Training for Feminist Therapists: Personal Memoirs**, edited by Esther D. Rothblum, PhD, and Ellen Cole, PhD (Vol. 11, No. 1, 1991). "Exciting, interesting, and filled with the angst and the energies that directed these women to develop an entirely different approach to counseling." (Science Books & Films)

**Jewish Women in Therapy: Seen But Not Heard**, edited by Rachel Josefowitz Siegel, MSW, and Ellen Cole, PhD (Vol. 10, No. 4, 1991). "A varied collection of prose and poetry, first-person stories, and accessible theoretical pieces that can help Jews and non-Jews, women and men, therapists and patients, and general readers to grapple with questions of Jewish women's identities and diversity." (Canadian Psychology)

**Women's Mental Health in Africa**, edited by Esther D. Rothblum, PhD, and Ellen Cole, PhD (Vol. 10, No. 3, 1990). "A valuable contribution and will be of particular interest to scholars in women's studies, mental health, and cross-cultural psychology." (Contemporary Psychology)

**Motherhood: A Feminist Perspective**, edited by Jane Price Knowles, MD, and Ellen Cole, PhD (Vol. 10, No. 1/2, 1990). "Provides some enlightening perspectives. . . . It is worth the time of both male and female readers." (Contemporary Psychology)

**Diversity and Complexity in Feminist Therapy**, edited by Laura Brown, PhD, ABPP, and Maria P. P. Root, PhD (Vol. 9, No. 1/2, 1990). "A most convincing discussion and illustration of the importance of adopting a multicultural perspective for theory building in feminist therapy. . . . THIS BOOK IS A MUST FOR THERAPISTS and should be included on psychology of women syllabi." (Association for Women in Psychology Newsletter)

**Fat Oppression and Psychotherapy**, edited by Laura S. Brown, PhD, and Esther D. Rothblum, PhD (Vol. 8, No. 3, 1990). "Challenges many traditional beliefs about being fat . . . A refreshing new perspective for approaching and thinking about issues related to weight." (Association for Women in Psychology Newsletter)

**Lesbianism: Affirming Nontraditional Roles**, edited by Esther D. Rothblum, PhD, and Ellen Cole, PhD (Vol. 8, No. 1/2, 1989). "Touches on many of the most significant issues brought before therapists today." (Newsletter of the Association of Gay & Lesbian Psychiatrists)

**Women and Sex Therapy: Closing the Circle of Sexual Knowledge**, edited by Ellen Cole, PhD, and Esther D. Rothblum, PhD (Vol. 7, No. 2/3, 1989). "ADDS IMMEASURABLY TO THE FEMINIST THERAPY LITERATURE THAT DISPELS MALE PARADIGMS OF PATHOLOGY WITH REGARD TO WOMEN." (Journal of Sex Education & Therapy)

**The Politics of Race and Gender in Therapy**, edited by Lenora Fulani, PhD (Vol. 6, No. 4, 1988). *Women of color examine newer therapies that encourage them to develop their historical identity.*

**Treating Women's Fear of Failure**, edited by Esther D. Rothblum, PhD, and Ellen Cole, PhD (Vol. 6, No. 3, 1988). "SHOULD BE RECOMMENDED READING FOR ALL MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, SOCIAL WORKERS, EDUCATORS, AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELORS WHO WORK WITH WOMEN." (The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry)

**Women, Power, and Therapy: Issues for Women**, edited by Marjorie Braude, MD (Vol. 6, No. 1/2, 1987). "RAISE[S] THERAPISTS' CONSCIOUSNESS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSIDERING GENDER-BASED POWER IN THERAPY. . . welcome contribution." (Australian Journal of Psychology)

*Dynamics of Feminist Therapy*, edited by Doris Howard (Vol. 5, No. 2/3, 1987). "A comprehensive treatment of an important and vexing subject." (*Australian Journal of Sex, Marriage and Family*)

*A Woman's Recovery from the Trauma of War: Twelve Responses from Feminist Therapists and Activists*, edited by Esther D. Rothblum, PhD, and Ellen Cole, PhD (Vol. 5, No. 1, 1986). "A MILESTONE. In it, twelve women pay very close attention to a woman who has been deeply wounded by war." (*The World*)

*Women and Mental Health: New Directions for Change*, edited by Carol T. Mowbray, PhD, Susan Lanir, MA, and Marilyn Hulce, MSW, ACSW (Vol. 3, No. 3/4, 1985). "The overview of sex differences in disorders is clear and sensitive, as is the review of sexual exploitation of clients by therapists. . . . MANDATORY READING FOR ALL THERAPISTS WHO WORK WITH WOMEN." (*British Journal of Medical Psychology and The British Psychological Society*)

*Women Changing Therapy: New Assessments, Values, and Strategies in Feminist Therapy*, edited by Joan Hamerman Robbins and Rachel Josefowitz Siegel, MSW (Vol. 2, No. 2/3, 1983). "An excellent collection to use in teaching therapists that reflection and resolution in treatment do not simply lead to adaptation, but to an active inner process of judging." (*News for Women in Psychiatry*)

*Current Feminist Issues in Psychotherapy*, edited by The New England Association for Women in Psychology (Vol. 1, No. 3, 1983). Addresses depression, displaced homemakers, sibling incest, and body image from a feminist perspective.



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## ABOUT THE EDITORS

**Ellyn Kaschak, PhD**, is Professor of Psychology at San Jose State University in San Jose, California. She is author of *Engendered Lives: A New Psychology of Women's Experience*, as well as numerous articles and chapters on feminist psychology and psychotherapy. She has had thirty years of experience practicing psychotherapy, is past Chair of the Feminist Therapy Institute and of the APA Committee on Women and is Fellow of Division 35, the Psychology of Women, Division 12, Clinical Psychology, Division 45, Ethnic Minority Issues and Division 50, International Psychology, of the American Psychological Association. She is co-editor of the journal *Women & Therapy*.

**Marcia Hill, EdD**, is a psychologist who has spent over 25 years practicing psychotherapy. She is co-editor of the journal *Women & Therapy* and a member and past Chair of the Feminist Therapy Institute. In addition to therapy, Dr. Hill does occasional teaching, writing, and consulting in the areas of feminist therapy theory and practice. The Editor of *More than a Mirror: How Clients Influence Therapists' Lives* (1997) and *Feminist Therapy as a Political Act* (1998), she has co-edited five other Haworth books: *Classism and Feminist Therapy: Counting Costs* (1996); *Couples Therapy: Feminist Perspectives* (1996); *Children's Rights, Therapists' Responsibilities: Feminist Commentaries* (1997); *Breaking the Rules: Women in Prison and Feminist Therapy* (1998) and *Learning from Our Mistakes: Difficulties and Failures in Feminist Therapy* (1999). She is currently in private practice in Montpelier, Vermont.

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## Beyond the Rule Book

No human relationship can exist outside a moral framework, whether that framework is considered to derive from the individual or collective human conscience or soul. Morality is as much an essential aspect of the human arrangement as is speaking or seeing. With perception itself comes evaluation.

The psychotherapeutic relationship is no exception. Psychotherapy is as much a morality play as it is art or science. It is not just about changing behavior, altering cognitions, witnessing trauma, discharging anxiety, resolving emotional conflicts. It is all these things and more. Each system and each practitioner of that approach represents that she or he understands something about how to live a better, freer, more fulfilling life. Ultimately this is what the therapist is selling and what the client is buying. Indeed psychotherapy itself is a process of helping people discover how they should or can live (Real, 1997).

In the beginning, all therapies are applied philosophy, applied epistemology. I would assert that most therapists choose to practice at least partially based on the appeal of grappling on a daily basis with the complex issues raised by the demands of human existence, certainly to help clients do so in better ways. The daily practice of psychotherapy is one route to living the examined life. At least this was so before it became the reimbursed life.

In feminist therapy, each life is more than just examined. There is a commitment to work against injustice, to work for social, as well as personal, change. And feminist therapy is nothing if not judgmental. I mean this, of course, in the broadest and the best sense. I mean the willingness to take a stand when one needs to be taken, to speak out

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