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Women and Values: Readings in Recent Feminist Philosophy, 3rd edition,
Marilyn Pearsall, ed. Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth, 1999, x + 421, 0-534-53469-4.

Thirty-six essays are collected in this edition of *Women and Values* (the second edition [1993] included 37), thirteen of which are new. An introductory essay opens the book, Pearsall's "Toward a Feminist Transvaluation of Value Theory," which is only slightly different from its 2nd edition version. This is followed, as in the 2nd edition, by eight sections of readings in which every piece is written by a woman. Each section begins with its own editorial introduction to the essays of that section. The sections are: "Feminist Theory and Practice" (Flax, Lugones and Spelman, Hooks); "Women's Nature and Women's Values" (Whitbeck, Holmstrom, Ferguson, Cixous); "Social Philosophy" (Firestone, Card, Ruddick, Donchin, Jaggar, Bell); "Political Philosophy" (Bunch, Frye, Bartky, Collins, Calhoun); "Philosophy of Law" (P. Williams, Dworkin, Longino, MacKinnon); "Philosophy of Religion" (Daly, Christ, D. Williams); "Philosophy of Art" (Kaplan, Deveraux, Case); and "Feminist Ethics" (Warren, Addelson, Sherwin, Gilligan, Noddings, Tronto, Hoagland, Irigaray). No "Further Readings" section is included. The "Study Questions" appended to each essay in the 2nd edition have been eliminated. Pearsall does not explain in the 3rd edition's preface why this was done.¹

Pearsall seems to have narrowed the book's intended use. In the 2nd edition preface, she told her colleagues that the book was "meant to be a text that is useful for philosophy classes," that one use would be in an "introductory-level philosophy course." The book was also "meant to be a flexible and useful introductory text for philosophy and women's studies courses" (vii). But if the book is "introductory," "flexible," and intended for philosophy courses, why are there (in both editions) no liberal or moderate feminist pieces critical of the stronger versions of feminism that are abundantly included? Students in introductory philosophy courses, even introductions to feminist philosophy, need to be acquainted with criticisms; otherwise feminism becomes an unexamined prejudice. In the 3rd edition, the pretensions of the book to be an *introductory philosophy* text are gone. This "flexible teaching instrument," even though basically the same book, is now intended as a "single textbook for semester-length courses in feminist philosophy" (x). But *Women and Values* fails to be that, given its lack of depth on most of the issues covered and the continued absence of critical pieces.

Why did Pearsall include these 36 essays? In "Toward a Feminist Transvaluation of Value Theory" in the 2nd edition, Pearsall wrote:

"To better display the profound transvaluation of value inquiry wrought by contemporary feminists, I have selected essays bearing on each of the traditional male value-domains. In these readings, feminist theorists of many persuasions present their values and voice their own felt concerns. The only restriction I imposed in selecting the readings is that these thinkers must speak from a feminist point of view, that is, from a stance that recognizes the oppression of women in a male-dominated society. There is, however, ample room in this general perspective to allow for interesting and important debates among women." (xiv)

Pearsall made three changes in this passage for the 3rd edition: (1) she moved it from near the end of the essay to the second paragraph; (2) she replaced "oppression" with "subordination" (does this make her selection criterion different? more or less inclusive?); and (3) she changed "among women" at the end to "among women thinkers." (The implication is that not every woman is a "thinker.")

The passage is troubling. Pearsall begins by referring to the work of "feminist theorists," but she ends with "women (thinkers)." Which is it? "Feminist" and "woman" are not the same, especially given her definition of "feminist point of view." This confusion occurs elsewhere in the book; Pearsall never grapples with a problem about which feminist philosophers have had interesting things to say. (The contrast between the book's title and subtitle already exhibits the problem.) Pearsall says that the "only restriction" was that a writer "recognizes the oppression [subordination] of women in a male-dominated society." If so, why is there not at least one essay in the book by a male feminist? Men can and do speak from a perspective that recognizes and opposes the oppression/subordination of women. Sandra Harding, for example, admits J. S. Mill, Frederick Engels, and some contemporaries into the favored ranks.² Oddly, but consistently, Pearsall never mentions in the historical portions of her introductory essay Engels' writings on the situation of women in capitalism or, believe it or not, Mill's *Subjection of Women*; she dashes through the First Wave of feminism with Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* (a treatise not even close to Mill's in quality) and the Seneca Falls *Declaration* (2). By including only women writers in this anthology, will Pearsall give students the idea that only women are feminists? That the real battle is between women and men? Or that supporting women or feminism means carving out this separatist space among undergraduate textbooks? In the preface, Pearsall makes her second criterion explicit: the book "draw[s] solely upon the rich intellectual produce of women thinkers" (x). "Rich" is inaccurate, as the lack of diversity among the readings shows. There is a noticeable lack of debate over most of the topics covered, either among feminist philosophers or women thinkers.

In her introduction to the "Feminist Ethics" section, Pearsall again conflates "feminist" and "women":

"In the last set of writings, feminist thinking is brought to bear on the central question of feminist ethical theory: Is there a women's morality? And, if so, what are its main features? In other words, what is a feminist ethics? As the selections show, it is a woman-centered analysis that presupposes the centrality, normality, and value of women's experience and women's culture."³ (315)

The question "What is a feminist ethics?" is *not* "in other words" the question "Is there a women's morality?" A much better discussion of feminist ethics, one sensitive to this issue, is an encyclopedia essay by Alison M. Jaggar.⁴ One piece in the 3rd edition speaks to a similar question, Joan Tronto's "Women and Caring," whose project is to contrast *feminine* care and *feminist* care (393). On Tronto's account, only the feminist conception of care recognizes "the need to restructure broader social and political institutions if caring for others is to be made a more central part of the everyday lives of everyone," while a feminine notion of care accepts "traditional gender divisions" (400). Apparently, feminist care is feminine care plus feminist politics. As a foil to Tronto, Susan Mendus's searching feminist piece on care would have been advantageously included.⁵ But Mendus might be too critical of the reliance of feminism on care for Pearsall's taste.

In the 2nd edition's "Toward a Feminist Transvaluation of Value Theory," Pearsall offered an argument about the nature of feminist ethics:

". . . feminist ethics will have certain features. First, it will be highly *personal*; it will draw on the shared experiences of women's everyday lives. Second, it will have an *emancipatory* promise, for it is founded on a liberationist philosophy with postmodernist reservations. . . . Thus it follows that feminist ethics will be highly *critical* of traditional ethics." (xiv)

In the 3rd edition, this passage becomes:

". . . feminist ethics will have certain features. First, it will be highly *relevant*; it will draw on the shared experiences of women's everyday lives. Second, it will have an *emancipatory* promise, for it is founded on a liberationist philosophy with postmodernist reservations. . . . Third, feminist value theory will reflect the *multiplicity* of discourses that constitute the notion of woman/women as subjects. . . . Thus, it follows that feminist ethics will be highly *critical* of traditional ethics." (5-6)

I don't understand either "personal" or "relevant" as shorthand for drawing on women's shared experiences; nor do I understand why "personal" was changed to "relevant." I wish Pearsall had explained. In the 3rd edition, Pearsall adds the "multiplicity" of discourses to her argument, but she does not acknowledge the tension between women's having *shared* experiences and the *multiplicity* of discourses (and of women's lives), an issue that feminist philosophers have addressed. Nor does this book display the "multiplicity" of discourses of which

Pearsall speaks. Further, Pearsall's argument ("it follows") is weak. It does not follow from the fact that feminist ethics is personal/relevant, emancipatory, and reflects multiplicity that it is "highly" critical of traditional ethics, unless the latter is understood in an unfairly narrow way. For traditional ethics could be (or has been) characterized by all three features--just add women and stir. The main contender for a feminist ethics, some version of an ethics of care, is not "highly" critical of traditional ethics. Whenever I read in the ethics of care area, I sense the Christian, Kantian, and Marxist themes that heavily pervade it. This is no "transvaluation of value."

The book's lack of diversity and debate is most obvious in the philosophy of law section. The 2nd edition included essays by Rosemarie Tong on sexual harassment, Helen Longino on pornography, and Susan Griffin and Catharine MacKinnon on rape. In the 3rd edition, there is an essay by Patricia Williams on only-god-knows-what,⁶ Andrea Dworkin on harassment, rape, and pornography; once again Longino's essay on pornography; and the same MacKinnon essay on rape. This conglomeration does not represent philosophy of law or women's studies; it is a brief handbook about nasty male sexuality and its female victims.

Why was Tong's essay, a careful piece on the law of sexual harassment, cut? If by now it is outdated, why not replace it by something more recent by Lynne Henderson, Anita Superson, or Robin West? These writers should have been included anyway, in order that feminist philosophy of law not be left in the hands of the polemicists Dworkin and MacKinnon. This section thus utterly fails to exhibit the truly innovative things being done within the philosophy of law by feminists. Why retain Longino's old essay (1980)? This piece was originally published in a politically motivated feminist antipornography collection, not a refereed journal. Pearsall says she replaced, in the 3rd edition, older pieces with recent 1990s essays (ix). If so, why not new pieces on pornography? She could have included a recent feminist critique of pornography *and* a feminist defense, of which there are plenty. Pearsall refused to take the opportunity to display the richness, development, and increasing sophistication of feminist thought about pornography. The book does women's studies an injustice.

Pearsall doesn't seem to know what Longino is up to. In the introduction to the Philosophy of Law section, she writes:

"Helen Longino argues for the antipornography position on the grounds that pornography, unlike erotica, is women-degrading. That is, it portrays women as sexually objectified, and it depicts disrespect for women as sexual beings. Thus, Longino defends the use of censorship. She contends that pornography itself is a form of violence against women since it supports the devaluation of women as a sex class." (2nd edn., 176; 3rd edn., 208, but change "since" to "because")

Her reading of Longino is wildly inaccurate; maybe Pearsall's head is so full of slogans about pornography that she attributes them to Longino by reflex. Longino

never talks about pornography as portraying women as "sexually objectified." Pearsall's "thus" implies that Longino's argument for censorship turns on the sexually degrading nature of pornography. It does not. Longino never says that pornography "itself" is "a form of violence." She does claim that it *causes* violence against women. And the reasoning that Pearsall claims to find in Longino ("since") is not in Longino's essay. Longino's argument is that pornography does not deserve First Amendment protection because it "condones crimes against women" (239) and is "libelous" and "defamatory," telling lies about women as a class (235, 236).

The subsection on abortion in the "Feminist Ethics" section also illustrates the book's lack of diversity. Cut from this section is the liberal feminist (and famous) abortion essay by Judith Jarvis Thomson; it might be old (1971), but it is a classic. All we get is Kathryn Addelson's not altogether sympathetic reading of Thomson in "Moral Revolution." Because she cut Thomson from this section of the book, Pearsall's introduction to the abortion set of readings in the 3rd edition, in which the elimination of Thomson's name is the only change, is incoherent and ahistorical (contrast the 2nd edition [300] and the 3rd [314]). Pearsall's reason for cutting Thomson's paper cannot be that it was old, for she kept other old essays: Whitbeck (1973), Warren on abortion (1973), and Firestone (1970).

Women and Values is a book for a course that indoctrinates students into a version of radical, uncompromising feminism. For those who prefer a more balanced and intellectually honest collection, I recommend Alison Jaggar's *Living with Contradictions: Controversies in Feminist Social Ethics* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1994).

Notes

1. Another change: in the 3rd edition's preface, Pearsall writes that the book "embraces a wide variety of feminist perspectives with particular regard to the intersections of race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality as well as gender" (ix). In the 2nd edition, there was no mention of "ethnicity." Does this mean that the 3rd edition pays more attention to ethnicity than the 2nd? If we count the contributions written by women of color (hispanic/black/asian), the book went from including four of these "feminist perspectives" (1, 2, 1) to four (1, 3, 0), not an advance and arguably a retreat. Gone is Trinh Minh-ha's fine essay from the 2nd edition on what it means to be a writer, a woman writer, an ethnic writer. Strangely, Minh-ha's essay is listed twice in the preface to the 3rd edition as still being included (x).

2. *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), 109; *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 278-79.

3. Examine the passage as it appeared in the 2nd edition:

"In other words, what is a feminist ethics? According to Hester Eisenstein, and as the selections show, it is 'a woman-centered analysis that presupposes the centrality, normality, and value of women's experience and women's culture.' "
(300)

Here the finishing thought is attributed to Eisenstein, but there is no indication from where the quote came. (I searched the 2nd edition and found nothing.) In the 3rd edition, Pearsall dropped the quotation marks but kept the words--apparently a lazy bit of plagiarism.

4. "Feminist Ethics," in *Encyclopedia of Ethics*, ed. Lawrence Becker and Charlotte Becker (New York: Garland, 1992), 361-370.

5. "Different Voices, Still Lives: Problems in the Ethics of Care," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 10:1 (1993): 17-27.

6. Williams is a professor of law, but her contribution is chatty. "There are moments in my life when I feel as though a part of me is missing" (215). Nice observation, which would have been applauded by Freud. In her introductory essay to this section, Pearsall writes about Williams's paper: "She demonstrates [!] that there is a complexity of messages in our subjectivity" (207).

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