

work as a suitable foundation for a feminist ethical theory. This is not the place to debate the merits of metaphysical positions, but there is one feature of Spinoza's which makes it particularly problematic in this context, and this is of course the determinism. Spinoza himself says that "good" and "bad" are only terms that reflect the pleasure and the pain of the human organism in moving towards or away from self-actualization, and that there are no moral values separate from that. The subjectivism inherent in that claim bothers me less than the problems involved in creating any sort of ethical theory on a deterministic base. Not only am I not attracted by a deterministic metaphysics, but I regard it as a bad foundation for a comprehensive ethics. Thus, on a very general level, I again feel some reluctance to adopt Spinoza as a source of ethics.

All that said, it is true that feminists may well find Spinoza a more sympathetic figure than others in the history of philosophy. For one thing, as Tomm points out, there do not appear to be any systemic reasons why he would have to distinguish between the sexes in terms of rational or moral capacity. There is a greater sense of the interrelation and mutual dependence of people than one finds in, say, Locke or Aristotle. Thus an ethic based on

Spinoza would not involve the competitive notion of morality that so many of us find objectionable. We do not necessarily find the sort of hyperrationality of a Kant, where it does not matter what people want or whether they will be happy when one formulates a moral principle, so long as no logical inconsistency results from one's willing of that principle. It is the case that for Spinoza, emotion does play a role in ethical behaviour, although I do not think it is as extensive as Tomm does. Finally, the whole notion of morality in the *Ethics* as being concerned with how we should lead our lives as a whole, and not just with a narrow part of our lives governed by some externally imposed set of rules, is sympathetic, and is one point at least on which I have always agreed with Spinoza. However, in the end, I still find too much emphasis on the logical nature of reality in Spinoza to be able seriously to accept him as more than a minor inspiration for feminist ethics.

NOTES

1. Stuart Hampshire. *Spinoza*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1951, p. 63.
2. Nel Noddings. *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

No More

Sylvia Anne why?
 You are more than analyst's files or
 thin lines of ill-used blood
 left to rot onto icy tiles
 printed like graffiti which cries
 all the while "Live, live,"
 You both wailed those words
 into empty stoves locked bathrooms
 asylums for incurables.
 Your breath on the mirrors spews out
 hospital white yet clean like the gowns
 you wear in city cabs to sterile churches
 praying all the way "Live, live,"
 Virginia, you've walked into that river
 too often with useless tones in your pocket.

Susan Tellman
 Indiana