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Tolonen, Mikko

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Artificial →

→ Hume David

2 Mandeville, Bernard

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11 Related Topics

12 Anatomy and Philosophy in Early Modern
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18 Medicine) · Natural and Artificial · Reason and
19 Experience · Scottish Moral Philosophy ·
20 Skepticism · Sociability · Social Theories of
21 Self/Mind · Society and Sociability · Stoicism ·
22 Sydenham, Thomas · Willis, Thomas

**23 Introductory: Paradox, Scandal, and
24 Economy**

25 The Anglo-Dutch physician and philosopher,
26 Bernard Mandeville (1670–1733), owes his noto-
27 riety to *The Fable of the Bees: or Private Vices,*

Publick Benefits, a little poem published in 1705 28
and later expanded with long prose remarks 29
(1714) and other essays (1723). Mandeville 30
believed that human behavior, in its broad spec- 31
trum, could be traced back to the passions of pride 32
and vanity, their effects, and the efforts made to 33
control, hide, and gratify them. In contrast to the 34
common belief that personal virtue and civic 35
engagement are necessary to the well-being of 36
society, Mandeville scandalized his contempo- 37
raries by claiming that the prosperity of a large 38
commercial society was grounded upon the free 39
play of self-interested passions traditionally 40
denounced as vices. ✓

Over almost 30 years of intellectual activity, 42
Bernard Mandeville composed poems and female 43
dialogues, worked as a translator, wrote fables 44
and medical treatises, contributed to periodical 45
journals, produced philosophical essays and dia- 46
logues, and issued political pamphlets and tracts. 47
Yet, the shadow cast by the controversy over *The* 48
Fable of the Bees turned him in the public eye into 49
a cynical apologist of vices, as his work was 50
belittled as mere literary satire and an apology 51
for luxury and consumption. More recently, 52
because of his ideas on the unintended results of 53
cooperation among self-interested individuals, he 54
has become an ideological symbol as a forerunner 55
of economic liberalism. ✓ 56

• It started as ✓

✓
41. (Goldsmith 2001;
Monro 1975;
Schmeiter 1987;
Horn 1978)

✓
v (Hundert 1994;
Branchi 2004)

David

57 **Mandeville in the Twenty-First Century:**
58 **A Full-Size Philosopher**

59 One of the main reasons for the renewed interest
60 in Mandeville is the influence of F.A. Hayek and
61 his thoughts about spontaneous order. Although
62 there are good reasons not to think of Mandeville
63 as a libertarian, much attention has been paid to
64 the more radical elements of his thought. Only in
65 the 1970s did his scholarship enter a new era, as
66 consideration was finally given to the vastness of
67 his interests and writings. Mandeville began to
68 develop his theories in an unsystematic way, defying
69 the "public-spirit ideology" that characterized
70 early eighteenth-century political discourse. The
71 author of the fable criticized those who located the
72 natural instinct of benevolence at the core of
73 social organization. Satire and paradox represent
74 one side of Mandeville. What is more noteworthy,
75 however, is that in all his writings, he commits
76 himself to a reconstruction of human nature that
77 conforms to the criteria of an empirical and exper-
78 imental philosophy ~~and an unprejudiced anatomy~~.
79 What his contemporaries perceived as an apology
80 for vices and an empty paradoxical lampooning of
81 current values are read today as a crucial step
82 toward the eighteenth-century ideal of the "sci-
83 ence of man". ~~The science of man was an attempt~~
84 ~~to analyze passions consistently, as the mecha-~~
85 ~~nisms and the genesis of commercial society,~~
86 ~~including its historical origins and its incompati-~~
87 ~~bility with the hypocritical and unrealistic calls for~~
88 ~~virtue and public spirit.~~ Recent scholarship
89 acknowledges Mandeville's stature as an accom-
90 plished philosopher whose influence on David
91 Hume and Adam Smith, and on Scottish and
92 European Enlightenment as a whole, still remains
93 to be reconstructed in depth.

94 **Dutch Background/Early Works, Poems,**
95 ***The Virgin Unmask'd*, and *The Female***
96 ***Tatler***

97 Bernard Mandeville was born in Rotterdam, the
98 Netherlands, on November 15, 1670, to a family
99 of well-respected Dutch physicians, merchants,
100 and mid-level political officials. He studied at

the University of Leiden, a cultural environment 101
that was among the most advanced in Europe with 102
respect to Cartesianism and experimental philos- 103
ophy. He graduated in philosophy in 1689 and in 104
medicine in 1691, specializing in digestive disor- 105
ders and their influence on psychological attit- 106
tudes. The Mandeville family's involvement in 107
the so-called Costerman Riots in Rotterdam in 108
1690 is one possible reason for Bernard's emigra- 109
tion to the British Isles. 110

Mandeville worked as a physician in England 111
from 1693 onward, treating nervous disorders in 112
connection with the lively Dutch community, as a 113
translator of medical treatises and of poetry, and as 114
an author of verse. In 1705 he published a poem 115
called *The Grumbling Hive: or, Knaves Turn'd* 116
Honest, which describes a large community of 117
bees, the mechanisms of its wealth, and the disas- 118
trous decline that is triggered as a result of an 119
attempt to moralize the lives of an opulent hive. 120
Describing the mechanisms of economic well- 121
being using the vocabulary of moralists, 122
Mandeville shows - not without irony - how the 123
effective implementation of a moral reform would 124
inescapably lead to collective impoverishment. 125

Mandeville started his career as a prose writer 126
with a female identity, and in all his writings, he 127
maintained a keen interest in different aspects of 128
women in society and on the "double standard" 129
applied to women and men in many areas of life: 130
education, social and economic status, and 131
the satisfaction of sexual desire. *The Virgin* 132
Unmask'd, a series of ten dialogues between an 133
elderly maiden and her young niece, appeared in 134
1709, an exercise in the anatomy of human pas- 135
sions focusing on courtship rituals, conjugal life, 136
and the inequality of marital conditions. The 137
32 issues of the periodical *The Female Tatler* 138
"by a Society of Ladies," which Mandeville 139
wrote in 1710, turned Richard Steele's *The Tatler* 140
and his enterprise of the Reformation of Manners 141
into a polemical target. This was an opportunity 142
for Mandeville to offer, albeit in a satirical and 143
polemical manner, the first set of arguments he 144
developed in his later works about the standards of 145
female and male honor and their inequality, duel- 146
ling, the social function of pride and vanity, and a 147
naturalistic account of the origins of civil society. 148

v (Decker 1992;
Vorburg 2016)

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v is

v written
around

Fable ← in italic
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line 86: v in terms of human
passions (Castiglione 1986;
Jack 1989).

line 98: v (Robertson 2005; Tolonen 2013;
Simonazzi 2008; Branchi 2004)

148 **The Treatise (1711)**

150 Mandeville published his first and only medical
 151 work, *A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and*
 152 *Hysterick Passions*, in 1711. Apparently, it was
 153 quite well received. In 1730 he published a second
 154 edition that expanded the work in length by about
 155 a third and with a slightly changed title (*A Treatise*
 156 *of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Diseases*).
 157 The *Treatise* did not go unnoticed in the eigh-
 158 teenth century and circulated among English,
 159 Scottish, and Irish physicians. The dialogue form
 160 was not an original choice for a medical work, but
 161 it was nonetheless an original decision to address
 162 patients rather than medical colleagues.
 163 Mandeville's method was to have the patient tell
 164 his or her own life story. The relevance of
 165 reporting disease history had been realized by
 166 Thomas Sydenham, who took his inspiration
 167 from Bacon's reflections on the importance of
 168 classification and natural history. This method
 169 was supposed to be applicable to any kind of
 170 disease. It consisted of following the evolution
 171 of the various cases, comparing them, and identi-
 172 fying their common elements so as to distinguish
 173 what was peculiar to the patient from what was
 174 specific to the disease. Mandeville followed in
 175 Sydenham's footsteps who, together with the phy-
 176 sician Giorgio Baglivi, is quoted in the *Treatise* as
 177 one of his medical references.

178 Mandeville pays particular attention to the
 179 relationship between socioeconomic status and
 180 hypochondria. He claims that wealth is a pre-
 181 disposing factor because on the one hand it stim-
 182 ulates the fear of losing one's belongings and on
 183 the other hand it stimulates passions and desires
 184 that are difficult to satisfy. Fear and dissatisfaction
 185 are psychological causes of the loss of animal
 186 spirits. In this way, hypochondria is connected to
 187 passions, wishes, expectations, social conditions,
 188 the desire for social advancement, the fear of
 189 failure, and self-realization. It is a psychosomatic
 190 disease because the psychological dimension acts
 191 on the animal spirits, which are involved in diges-
 192 tion and can disturb the stomach. Mandeville,
 193 therefore, put mind and stomach in a strict relation
 194 through the mediation of animal spirits. ✓

195 Mandeville stresses the importance of psycho-
 196 logical factors in building rapport with the patient,

and he also emphasizes that the patient must play
 an active role in his or her therapy. Therapy here
 does not include the use of drugs: it only requires
 exercise, healthy food, and a sound relationship
 between physician and patient, which is predi-
 cated on listening and talking.

The Fable of the Bees (1714)

Mandeville republished his poem *The Grumbling*
Hive: or Knaves Turn'd Honest in 1714, still
 anonymously, within a more articulated work
 entitled *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices,*
Publick Benefits. It was preceded by a *Preface* and
 followed by an *Introduction, An Enquiry into the*
Origin of Moral Virtue, and 22 *Remarks* in which
 he developed the subjects dealt with in the poem.

The *Introduction* is particularly significant
 because the theory of human nature is presented
 in a synthetic but very effective form, according to
 which man is "a compound of various Passions,
 that all of them, as they are provoked and come
 uppermost, govern him by turns, whether he will
 or not" (*Fable I*, p. 39). It is an antirationalistic
 and deterministic conception, according to which
 reason can only be instrumental and the behavior
 of individuals can be explained as responses to
 stimuli that act on passions.

An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue
 describes ethics as an invention of skillful politi-
 cians who, levering pride and shame, produced
 behavioral models and harmonized self-centered
 passions that made them sociable. The origin of
 society is grounded exclusively on human pas-
 sions and their modifications, the fear of shame
 and the desire to be praised.

Mandeville published *Free Thoughts on Reli-
 gion, the Church and National Happiness* in
 1720, and then he published a second expanded
 edition in 1729. It was translated into French in
 1722 and was condemned by the *Sacred Congre-
 gation of the Index* in 1732. *Free Thoughts* deals
 with theological issues such as free will and pre-
 destination and the mysteries, rites, and ceremo-
 nies in divine worship. Above all, however,
 Mandeville analyzes the political function of the
 church and accuses the clergy of having fomented
 persecution and conflicts, favoring fanaticism and

✓ Mandeville, I

line 194: ✓ (Simonazzi 2008;
 Cook 1999; McKee 1995)

243 intolerance. The book is an invitation to pursue
244 tolerance and moderation, in which Mandeville
245 expresses the hope for a sort of civil religion
246 whereby the clergy are salaried and controlled
247 by government. He was indebted to Bayle on
248 this subject, and the numerous examples he uses
249 are almost paraphrases or translations of Pierre
250 Bayle's *Historical and Critical Dictionary*
251 published in 1697 (translated into English for the
252 first time in 1709). ✓

253 **The Fable of the Bees (1723) and Fame**

254 The 1720s marked a watershed in Mandeville's
255 philosophy. A few historical points might help to
256 explain this. First, London and the whole of
257 England were in the midst of a severe financial
258 crisis caused by the 1720 South Sea Bubble.
259 Second, in 1723 Mandeville published a second
260 edition of *The Fable of the Bees*, in which he
261 expanded on some *Remarks* and added an *Index*
262 and a couple of essays: *A Search into the Nature of*
263 *Society* and *An Essay on Charity and Charity-*
264 *Schools*. He was made to appear in front of the
265 grand jury of Middlesex when it declared *The*
266 *Fable of the Bees* (1723) a public nuisance for
267 its blasphemy and immorality. In response, he
268 published a new edition in 1724 that included
269 his reply to the grand jury, which he called *A*
270 *Vindication of the Book*. Finally, in 1725, his
271 friend and protector Lord Macclesfield was
272 found guilty of corruption in a trial that created a
273 great scandal.

274 Mandeville targeted Lord Shaftesbury for
275 criticism in *A Search into the Nature of Society*
276 ("two Systems cannot be more opposite than his
277 Lordship's and mine," p. 324). He contrasted the
278 relative conception of the *pulchrum et honestum*
279 and the idea that society was not founded on
280 sociability or virtue, but on competitive passions
281 and on the need for social recognition.

282 ✓ Nevertheless, it was the *Essay on Charity* that
283 ~~produced a scandal~~ and made *The Fable of the*
284 *Bees* one of the most hotly discussed works of
285 those years. The reason for the scandal was that
286 Mandeville accused the Charity School Move-
287 ment of hypocrisy, claiming that the schools

were used for personal advantage by those who 288
promoted them. Furthermore, the children risked 289
being damaged because the school would have 290
created expectations that could not be realized. 291
This essay is often quoted because some scholars 292
believe it contains the most explicit formulation of 293
laissez-faire. ✓ 294

In 1724 Mandeville published another provoc- 295
ative piece called *A Modest Defence of Publick* 296
Stews, in which he supports the public utility of 297
brothels and argues, on the basis of female anat- 298
omy and physiology, that chastity is an artificial 299
virtue. The following year he published *An* 300
Enquiry into the Causes of the Frequent Execu- 301
tions at Tyburn, a collection of six articles that had 302
appeared a few months earlier in the *British Jour-* 303
nal, in which he proposed a reform of capital 304
punishment. The goal of the reform was to 305
achieve greater social stability with the least num- 306
ber of convictions. 307

The Dialogues Between Horatio and Cleomenes: Fable 1729

Six years after the notorious second edition of the 310
Fable, Bernard Mandeville came out with a new 311
work entitled *The Fable of the Bees: Part II*. The 312
book is written as a dialogue between the two 313
main characters, Horatio and Cleomenes. It is 314
not the case that this work is, in fact, a straightfor- 315
ward continuation of the *Fable*: it is rather a new 316
manifestation of a more mature Mandeville who, 317
especially in this later work, made a big impact on 318
the Enlightenment by directly influencing Hume, 319
Smith, Rousseau, and many others. 320

There is a clear change in Mandeville's think- 321
ing. He started out as a polemist, but later matured 322
into an original social theorist. This could not 323
have happened without some revision of his 324
views. He developed a hypothesis explaining jus- 325
tice and politeness as decisive, artificial moral 326
institutions based on previous human conven- 327
tions. Later, he sought to detach himself from 328
Hobbism, which reduced all human actions to 329
self-love and self-preservation on the basis that 330
fear is the main element that civilizes men. 331
Mandeville's inclination in his later works was 332

v (Rosenberg 1983)

→ Fable
↑
in italic

line 277: ✓ Mandeville 1988, I,
line 283: - ✓ sapped attention

333 to nurture the passions, not to suffocate them. This
334 is the same strategy that David Hume employs in
335 his *Treatise*. The key move is to accept some
336 other-regarding affection, parental affection for
337 ~~the~~ children being the prime example. It is note-
338 worthy that Mandeville later characterized ~~the~~
339 natural affection as a pure and durable passion.
340 Without any selfish motives, parents can be said to
341 love their children. The significance of this is that
342 it facilitates discussion of fully natural virtues,
343 such as kindness toward any living creatures,
344 including animals ~~such as bears~~. What it also
345 indicates is that we cannot simply ignore
346 Mandeville by labelling his moral system utterly
347 selfish, hedonist, or egoistic.

348 Mandeville's second move was to introduce a
349 new concept: self-liking, which consists of two
350 components. First, "nature has given" men "an
351 instinct, by which every individual values itself
352 above its real worth." Second, this natural instinct
353 is aligned with "an apprehension" of the fact "that
354 we do over-value ourselves," which "makes us so
355 fond of the approbation, liking and assent of
356 others; because they strengthen and confirm us
357 in the good opinion we have of ourselves"
358 (*Fable, Part II*, p. 130). These definitions should
359 be seen in the light of the French neo-Augustinian
360 tradition and Pierre Nicole's writings in particular.

361 Being obliged to separate self-love and self-
362 liking into their own spheres, we can show how to
363 draw justice and politeness from corresponding
364 passions. Justice guards our self-love. It has a lot
365 to do with self-preservation, and it enables us to
366 cultivate our self-interest. This is the sphere of
367 life, limbs, and private property. At the same
368 time, politeness is the moral institution that
369 enables us to cultivate our self-liking. The idea is
370 that passion itself is responsible for the
371 corresponding moral institution. The geometrical
372 simplicity of this is quite striking: now the idea is
373 to cultivate the passions and not to curb them. The
374 best instance of this is politeness and the popular
375 idea in early modern Europe that one should hide
376 one's pride. We all are naturally proud, the pride
377 of others inhibits our pride, and therefore we
378 should be proud without showing it to others.
379 This creates a positive cycle of cultivating
380 self-liking by developing different ways of

pleasing others and not showing what one
actually thinks of oneself.

This is the core of the scheme promoting the
conjectural development of civil society, which is
built by developing new ways of cultivating self-
esteem. As Mandeville wrote, once laws have
been written down, everything else follows
apace. What is important here is the idea that
laws (like any other coined rule) follow a previous
convention. This is the logic of civil society, the
basis on which Hume was later to argue that
government was based on opinion. Mandeville is
famous today as a laissez-faire theorist, but his
impact lies in his understanding of the relationship
between passions and the gradual development of
structures that hold up civil society in spite of
human frailty. ✓

The Dialogues Between Horatio and Cleomenes: Honor 1732

Mandeville's last research book was the *Enquiry*
into the Origin of Honour and the Usefulness of
Christianity in War (1732), which further
develops his analysis of self-liking, its role in the
evolutionary account of human institutions, and
the way in which political power exploited ideal-
ized social models of self-promotion.

Honor as a general principle refers to the sys-
tems of unwritten values of pride and shame that
humans have developed based of self-liking. ✓
In contrast to proponents of the Deist tradition,
Mandeville stresses the impossibility of rational-
izing the true message of the gospel and reconcil-
ing it with social utility. Religion, which
originated in men's fear of an invisible cause,
has been distorted and "politically used" as a
formidable tool of social control. Virtue and
honor are of the same origin, namely, our hyper-
sensitivity to other people's judgments. Yet, in
that is it less demanding, honor has been by far
more useful to society. ✓

Polite, modern manners are simply the last
stage in the history of pride. The traditional virtues
of male and female honor, courage, and chastity
are far from being original, natural tendencies.
They are rather the result of education and

- ✓ Constructing

✓ (Tolonen 2013)

↳ Honour
↑
in italic

✓ Honour
✓ (Dickey 1990)

✓ honour
✓ (Branchi 2004-
Paltonen 2005)

✓ honour

line 358: ✓ Mandeville 1988, I,

426 socialization, an exemplary expression of an arti-
 427 ficial order growing out of a natural disposition of
 428 passions. Men fight duels not because they love
 429 virtue or justice but because they fear shame more
 430 than death. The passion of self-liking is a much
 431 stronger and more widely diffused and practiced
 432 motivation for "virtuous" behavior than any ideal
 433 of virtue itself. In distinguishing the form of hon-
 434 orable conduct that characterized the moral his-
 435 tory of postmedieval Europe, Mandeville was able
 436 to identify the new social conventions by which
 437 citizens of commercial societies could sublimate
 438 the primary demands of self-liking in materially
 439 productive and psychologically rewarding ways.

440 Mandeville's Influence

441 Bernard Mandeville made an impact on the
 442 Enlightenment and beyond. First, it should not
 443 be forgotten that his was a versatile talent. His
 444 main occupation was that of a medical doctor,
 445 who also published poetry, novels, and so on. He
 446 also translated medical works. His own main med-
 447 ical opus was still being cited in the nineteenth
 448 century. Second, Mandeville was a notorious
 449 polemist who, as a provocative and somewhat
 450 misunderstood character, was able to create a
 451 hugely influential discussion about human nature
 452 and luxury. *The Fable of the Bees* is in many ways
 453 the book of the Enlightenment. Third, Mandeville
 454 evolved in his career as a social theorist, proving
 455 to be an original thinker. His fate was such, how-
 456 ever, that his genius has not really been appreci-
 457 ated. He is often still dismissed as an author on
 458 account of his polemical side, even though David
 459 Hume and Adam Smith, for example, developed
 460 their ideas about the development of civil society
 461 precisely on his premises. Mandeville published
 462 his last work as a response to George Berkeley
 463 (*Letter to Dion*, 1732). His message was that his
 464 intellectual integrity should be taken seriously.

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✓ Christchurch,
 New Zealand,
 ✓ London

✓

[AUS] ✓ Transaction Books

line 445: ✓ literature

lines 455-6: ✓ Mandeville B. (1988) *Fable of the bees, or private vices, public benefits*. Kaye FB (ed.) 2 vols. Liberty Fund, Indianapolis

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