

ABSTRACT

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Private Vices, Public Benefits: Dr Mandeville and the Body Politic

This thesis examines the relationship between Mandeville's medical and non-medical thought, to assess the relevance of the former for an understanding of the latter. By locating his medical text, A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions, within the context of an early modern discourse on the nature and treatment of melancholic and nervous disorders, three distinctive features of his medical thought and practice are identified, namely: his commitment to the physiological principles of iatromechanism; his adherence to the precepts of Hippocratic medical practice; and his use of the talking cure in the treatment of hypochondriacal disorders. Those aspects of his medical thought and practice are then taken up and explored in an analysis of his philosophical and polemical performances in The Fable of the Bees. First, it is argued that The Fable of the Bees contains a systematic and coherent theory of man and society, the key elements of which were dictated by Mandeville's reductive and physiological understanding of man as a sentient and passionate machine. It is further argued that the mechanistic and homeostatic principles which informed his model of human functioning also informed his similarly reductive account of both the evolution and the contemporary functioning of the body politic. To distinguish Mandeville's from other reductive social theories, his adherence to the methodological precepts of Hippocratic medicine and his understanding of the development of its rules of diet and regimen are invoked to explain his distinctive and evolutionary account of the social institutions which made civilization and its flourishing possible. Finally, Mandeville's contrasting polemical and rhetorical performances in Parts I and II of The Fable of the Bees are explained by reference to his understanding of the medical art of diagnosis and curing in general and his use of the talking cure in particular.

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AND THE BODY POLITIC**

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INTRODUCTION

In his Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands (1671), Sir William Temple noted that 'Strangers amongst them [the Dutch] are apt to complain of the spleen, but those of the country seldom or never'.¹ In contrast, he described England as 'the region of the spleen' for compared to the stolid and unexcitable Dutch, the English were 'unequal in their humours, inconstant in their passions, uncertain in their ends, and even in their desires'.² It is tempting to invoke Temple's diagnosis of the difference between the two national characters as the reason why Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733) left Holland, the country of his birth, for England in the early 1690s. For Mandeville, most frequently remembered as the author of The Fable of the Bees (1714), was also Dr Mandeville, M.D., Leyden, 1691, graduate of the most prestigious medical school in Europe, a specialist in the treatment of nervous and splenetic diseases, and the author of A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions (1711).

Although Mandeville achieved a considerable degree of notoriety in his own lifetime - The Fable of the Bees, with its scandalous subtitle 'Private Vices, Publick Benefits', soon became the major ethical irritant of its age - surprisingly little, apart from the barest of biographical details, is known about his career

1 The Works of Sir William Temple, 4 vols. (London, 1757), I, 169.

2 'Of Poetry', Works, III, 426.

in England.³ The historical Mandeville has therefore been defined mainly by the interests revealed in The Fable of the Bees and his other published works. Accordingly, there is Mandeville the man of letters and minor poet; Mandeville the political commentator, economist, and social projector; and above all Mandeville the controversialist in religion and ethics.⁴ In contrast, Mandeville the physician has, more often than not, been relegated by his interpreters to the status of a minor biographical footnote. Yet to do so is to ignore the fact that from his early days in the Netherlands until his death in London the study and practice of medicine was a significant focus of interest for Mandeville - it was after all the way in which he chose to make his living.

The aim of this thesis, therefore, is to rehabilitate Mandeville the physician and to assess the extent to which an exploration of his practical and theoretical interests in medicine provides a significant context for the analysis and understanding of other areas of his thought. It will seek to do so, however, by

3 What little is known about Mandeville's vital statistics and social connections has been faithfully recorded by his modern editor F.B. Kaye and subsequent research has added little to his account. For those details see his 'Life of Mandeville' in The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits, intro. and ed. F.B. Kaye, 2 vols. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924; reprinted 1957), I, xvii-xxxii.

4 The chapter headings and topical divisions of recent works on Mandeville reflect the preeminence of those portraits. See, for example, Richard I. Cook, Bernard Mandeville (New York, Twayne Publications, 1974); Thomas A. Horne, The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville: Virtue and Commerce in Early Eighteenth Century England (London, Macmillan, 1978); Hector Monro, The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975); Irwin Primer, ed., Mandeville Studies: New Explorations in the Art and Thought of Dr Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733) (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1975).

focusing specifically on the evidence provided, and the problems of interpretation posed, by the central text in the Mandevillean corpus The Fable of the Bees, for amongst all of his writings it is that text which has been the object of most interpretive scrutiny and disagreement.⁵

In its final two-part form The Fable of the Bees is both philosophical text and historical document.⁶ It is evidence on the one hand of Mandeville's efforts over a period of nearly two and a half decades to record and systematize his thinking on the nature of man and society, and on the other hand of the range of historical and polemical acts which he performed in doing so. Although in practice that distinction cannot be rigidly maintained, an emphasis on the former perspective will necessarily focus on the

5 The nature of that disagreement was the subject of Hector Monro's analysis of Mandeville's thought and writings and is nicely captured both by the title of his book and by the headings of its first and last chapters, 'The Two Mandevilles' and 'The Real Mandeville?', Monro, The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville, pp.1-24; 249-267. It is also illustrated by the range of essays contained, and interpretations advanced, in Mandeville Studies, ed. Irwin Primer. Authors who have employed more rigorously historical and contextualist strategies of enquiry have, however, had less trouble in determining the character and meaning of Mandeville's thought. See, for example, M.M. Goldsmith, Private Vices, Public Benefits: Bernard Mandeville's Social and Political Thought (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985); J.A.W. Gunn, Beyond Liberty and Property (Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983); Horne, The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville; and Isaac Kramnick, Bolingbroke and his Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press).

Hereafter, and except where my arguments are specifically indebted to it, I have attempted to keep to a minimum footnote references to the secondary literature. My general debt to that literature, both medical and non-medical, is indicated in my bibliography which for ease of reference I have divided accordingly.

6 For a history of the text's piecemeal evolution, see F.B. Kay, Fable of the Bees, I, xxxiii-xxxvii.

task of elucidating the substance and coherence of Mandeville's arguments in The Fable of the Bees; whilst an emphasis on the latter perspective will be especially sensitive both to their rhetorical form and to the ideological contexts which they addressed. However, given the logical relationship which exists between a capacity to ascribe intentions to an author and a knowledge of his empirical beliefs, reading The Fable of the Bees as a philosophical text, as evidence of Mandeville's beliefs about the nature of man and society, supplies possibilities of reading it as an historical document. Accordingly, both types of reading will be attempted in this thesis and hence its more specific aim will be to determine the extent to which both types of enquiry are assisted by a focus on the world of Mandeville's medical experience.

In order to appreciate the distinctive character of that world and to establish an appropriate context for its examination, this thesis will begin with a review and analysis of seventeenth century theories of hypochondria and hysteria, for that is the immediate background out of which Mandeville's arguments in A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions emerge.

1 MELANCHOLY'S CRUMBLING EMPIRE: MEDICAL THEORIES
OF HYPOCHONDRIA AND HYSTERIA BEFORE MANDEVILLE

When I first dabbled in this Art, the old Distemper call'd Melancholy, was exchang'd for the Vapours, and afterwards for the Hypp, and at last took up the new current Appellation of the Spleen, which it still retains, tho' a learned Doctor of the West, in a little Tract he hath written, divides the Spleen and Vapours, not only into the Hypp, the Hyppos, and the Hypocons; but subdivides these divisions into the Markambles, the Moon-palls, the Strong-fives, and the Hockogrokles.

'Of the Hypp', The Gentleman's Magazine,
November 1732.

The 'spleen', 'the hypp', and 'the vapours' were the most frequently cited of the various synonyms for hypochondria in the medical and non-medical literature of the eighteenth century. Together with their less popular derivatives they all denoted the same malady: namely, a pathological condition of morbid depression, short of madness, linked to disorders of the upper abdomen (hypo - under; chondros - cartilage) which produced distinct psychic as well as somatic disturbances in the afflicted individual. Despite a growing suspicion at the turn of the century that hypochondria was becoming a fashionable, and therefore a feigned, complaint most seventeenth and eighteenth century doctors regarded it as a real disease of mind and body, with a high, if socially restricted, incidence.

In contrast to that eighteenth century usage, the modern understanding of hypochondria is that it is a purely psychopathological condition, 'characterized by a constant concern with

one's health and a tendency to consider oneself ill'.¹ Consistent with that understanding are the conclusions reached in two recent surveys of the medical literature on hypochondriacal states and their related clinical and historical aspects. To that end one suggests that 'There is no such entity as primary hypochondriasis',² whilst in an equally rigorous vein, the other recommends that 'It would now seem best to drop altogether the terms hypochondria and hypochondriasis, but to retain hypochondriacal as a descriptive adjective'.³ Hypochondria has thus been banished from its central position in the realm of eighteenth century real disease entities to a space on the periphery of modern medical discourse where, shorn of any primary ontological status, it now functions only adjectivally. Once the universal set, hypochondria is now but a subset in the realm of nervous disorders, merely a secondary disorder occurring always as part of another syndrome. The history of that nosological devaluation and exile is an instructive one. Etymologically it can be shown that leading from the hypochondria of the eighteenth century there is an uninterrupted line of succession to the present, joining the late eighteenth century category of nervous disorders to the nineteenth century concept of neurasthenia which in turn is linked to the modern concept of neurosis.⁴ Similarly, eighteenth century

1 Esther Fischer-Homberger, 'Hypochondriasis of the Eighteenth Century - Neurosis of the Present Century', Bulletin of the History of Medicine, 46 (1972), p.396.

2 F.E. Kenyon, 'Hypochondriasis: A Survey of Some Historical, Clinical and Social Aspects', British Journal of Medicine and Psychology, 38 (1965), p.128.

3 F.E. Kenyon, 'Hypochondriacal States', British Journal of Psychiatry, 129 (1976), p.11.

4 Fischer-Homberger, op.cit., pp.391-401.

hypochondria can be traced backwards to classical concepts of melancholia to produce a completed etymological saga of Icelandic length and complexity.

Beneath that etymological history there is, however, a medical history, the material base for the terminological superstructure erected upon it.⁵ That history is constituted by changes in the terms of a basic triadic relationship of causes, symptoms, and therapies which interlock to define different medical perceptions of hypochondria at successive stages in their theoretical evolution. On that basis, changes in the perceived aetiology of hypochondria demanded new therapeutic practices and retroactively, such changes often effected revisions of the accepted semeiology and vocabulary of the disease. Seventeenth century medical theories of hypochondria occupy a pivotal position in that history. On the one hand they look back towards classical theories of melancholia and the humoral pathology which informed them, whilst on the other hand they look forward to the eighteenth century concept of nervous disorders, and their theoretical foundation in neuroanatomy and neuropathology. Typical of the former orientation is the picture of hypochondria presented by Robert Burton (1577-1640) in The Anatomy of Melancholy (1621), while representative of the latter are the theories of hypochondria and hysteria advanced by Thomas Willis (1621-1675) and Thomas Sydenham (1624-1689) in their medical writings during the period 1660-1685. A review of those theories is instructive for an

5 As will be seen, however, base and superstructure models in the history of medicine encounter the same problems of determining the primacy and direction of causation as they do in other historical contexts.

understanding of the medical background to Mandeville's A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions.

Robert Burton's The Anatomy of Melancholy has been described as 'the greatest medical treatise written by a layman'.⁶ But whether Burton's authorial intentions were primarily medical, or whether his focus on melancholy merely provided him with a suitable context around which to organize more rhetorical and less scientific concerns, is not a question at issue here.⁷ For whatever his intentions, Burton's Anatomy provides the modern reader with an authoritative survey, an encyclopaedic review rather than a distilled abridgement, of medical theories of melancholia as they existed at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Central to those theories was a humoral pathology which reflected not only the classical authority of Galen and Hippocrates but also the views of more contemporary physicians such as Timothy Bright (1551-1615), Felix Plater (1536-1614), and André du Laurens (1558-1609).

Since classical times the term melancholy had been used to describe a complex set of non-febrile mental disorders of a depressive nature. In addition to denoting a system of signs that term, however, also suggested a system of causes. Melancholy literally meant the black bile (melas - black; chole - bile) and as such it was one of the four humours - the other three were the blood, choler, and phlegm - which according to classical authority made up

6 Sir William Osler, 'Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy', Yale Review, 3 (1914), p.251.

7 See, for example, Stanley Fish's analysis and definition of The Anatomy of Melancholy as a 'self-consuming artifact', an attempt on Burton's part to discomfort and disturb his readers by drawing them into a literary black-hole. S. Fish, Self-Consuming Artifacts (Berkeley, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1972), pp.303-52.

nearly all the fluid content of the body. Those four humours constituted the theoretical basis of ancient medical practice and together with their associated primary and secondary qualities they formed part of an entire system of cosmological correlations. Faithful to that tradition, Burton outlined the relevant details of the humoral scheme in the first part of The Anatomy.⁸ There he described the primary and secondary qualities of each humour, their bodily location, and their physiological function, so that his readers would have 'the better understanding of that which is to follow'.⁹ And what followed was a detailed account of the humoral pathology of melancholia.

According to humoral theory, the health of mind and body depended upon an equilibrium of the four humours within the organism. Such an equilibrium was, however, an ideal, a norm rarely if ever attained in any individual. In practice, one of the four humours always prevailed over the others to determine individual variations in personality and temperament. But temperament was not disease. Rather, disease was the result of an unnatural preponderance of one of the four humours, and by invoking that distinction Burton distinguished the melancholic temperament from the melancholic distemper. For in the former case, melancholy was, he argued, but 'the character of Mortality'; whilst in the latter it was 'a chronick or continue disease, a settled humour ... not errant, but fixed.'¹⁰ That settled humour,

⁸ The Anatomy of Melancholy, ed. A.R. Shilleto, 3 vols. (London, J.M. Dent, 1893), I, 168-202. All subsequent references to the Anatomy will be to this edition.

⁹ Ibid., I, 168.

¹⁰ Ibid., I, 164; I, 167.

the melancholic distemper rather than the melancholic temperament, was caused by the pathological effects of black bile offending either in quantity or quality. Thus Burton observed

If natural melancholy abound in the body, which is cold and dry, so that it be more than the body is well able to bear, it must needs be distempered ... and diseased: and so the other if it be depraved, whether it arise from that other melancholy of choler adust or from blood, produceth the like effects and is ... if it comes by adustion of humours, most part hot and dry.¹¹

Natural melancholy in excess resulted from a cooling and thickening of the blood, whilst unnatural melancholy was caused by a corruption of humoral quality. That latter process was occasioned by heating or adustion, and its product was burnt choler or atrabilis. In either case, whether the cause was a change in humoral quantity or quality, the resultant distemper was chronic melancholy.

Proceeding from that twofold analysis of the immediate and internal causes of the melancholic distemper, Burton then divided the genus into three distinct species. In that respect, and whilst admitting that 'the matter is diverse and confused' and that 'Many new and old writers have spoken confusedly of it',¹² his division was entirely consistent with the Galenic tradition in which a tripartite division of melancholia was canonical. Burton could therefore assert that

The most received division is into three kinds. The first proceeds from the sole fault of the brain, and is called head melancholy: the second sympathetically proceeds from the whole body, when the whole temperature is melancholy: the third ariseth from the bowels, liver, spleen, or membrane called mesenterium, named

11 Ibid., I, 197-98.

12 Ibid., I, 199.

hypochondriacal or windy melancholy, which Laurentius subdivides into three parts, from those three members, hepatick, splenetick, meseraick.¹³

Melancholia was thus 'reduced to three kinds, by reason of their seat; head, body, and hypochondries'.¹⁴ But as most physicians argued that the brain was the part of the body principally affected, for melancholia 'being a kind of dotage, it cannot be otherwise',¹⁵ a principle of consent or sympathy was posited to explain how the brain was secondarily involved in hypochondriacal and body melancholy. 'For our body is like a clock; if one wheel be amiss, all the rest are disordered, the whole fabrick suffers.'¹⁶

Each of those three types of melancholy was in turn associated with a specific set of internal and immediate causes, defined by physiological malfunctions in the parts primarily affected. The precise mechanism involved in those functional disturbances and their relationship to the production and/or corruption of the melancholic humour within the organism is not an issue central to the subsequent argument of this chapter.¹⁷ What is relevant, however, is Burton's discussion of the remote or external causes of melancholia. In contrast to his brief and perfunctory comments on immediate causes, that discussion occupied the greater part of the first partition of The Anatomy, where it was conducted according to

13 Ibid., I. 200.

14 Ibid., I, 200.

15 Ibid., I, 194.

16 Ibid., I, 195.

17 Briefly stated, in head melancholy the brain was either too hot or too cold; in body melancholy the blood was corrupted by disorders of the liver and spleen; and in hypochondriacal melancholy inflammations or blockages in the organs of the hypochondries were at fault.

the Galenic doctrine of the six things non-natural. Briefly stated, that ill-named doctrine held that there were 'six categories of factors to which human beings were unavoidably exposed in the course of daily life and which, depending on the circumstances of their use or abuse, determined health or disease.'¹⁸ Burton's listing of the six non-naturals was entirely orthodox for in his list he identified diet; retention and evacuation; air; exercise; sleeping and waking; and perturbations of the mind, as the main adventitious and external causes of melancholia. To ennumerate the connection between each of those categories and the pathogenesis of melancholia would be, to use Burton's own description of that undertaking, 'a tedious discourse'.¹⁹ It is sufficient, therefore, merely to demonstrate that the causal link between the six non-naturals and melancholia turned upon a perceived correspondence between the qualities of the offending non-natural and the qualities of the melancholic humour. Thus diet could, for example, be a cause of melancholia if it included substances such as beef, 'a strong and hearty meat (cold in the first degree, dry in the second ...)' which bred 'gross melancholy blood',²⁰ or hot spices such as pepper, ginger, and cinnamon which 'cause hot and head melancholy'.²¹ The sixth and last category of things non-natural cannot, however, be so readily dismissed. For not only did that category, 'perturbations of the mind', bear the main explanatory burden of Burton's account of the

18 L.J. Rather, 'The Six Things Non-Natural: A Note on the Origins and Fate of a Doctrine', Clio Medica, 3 (1968), p.337.

19 Anatomy of Melancholy, I, 435.

20 Ibid., I, 249.

21 Ibid., I, 254.

external pathogenesis of melancholy, it also formed one half of a physiological psychology which had profound implications for seventeenth century theology as well as medical theory.

The question of melancholy was not an innocent one as Burton himself had observed when, at the beginning of The Anatomy, he remarked

It is a disease of the soul on which I am to treat, and as much appertaining to a Divine as to a Physician; and who knows not what an agreement there is betwixt these two professions?²²

As the seventeenth century progressed, the harmony of that agreement became increasingly strained for at stake was the question of the interaction of mind and body, the vexed problem of the relationship of the immaterial to the material, and the territorial rights of medicine and theology. Like most of his contemporaries, Burton did not doubt the efficacy of mind-body interaction for in identifying the passions as the greatest single cause of melancholia, he reminded his readers that

as the body works upon the mind, by his bad humours, troubling the spirits, sending gross fumes into the brain, and so per consequens disturbing the soul, and all the faculties of it ... with fear, sorrow, etc., which are ordinary symptoms of this disease: so on the other side, the mind most effectually works upon the body, producing by his passions and perturbations miraculous alterations, as melancholy, despair, cruel diseases, and sometimes death itself.²³

Mind and body were thus inextricably and functionally linked; but within the general explanatory scheme of humoral pathology their union was conceived in terms of a physiological psychology in which both the psychic causes and consequences of disease were ultimately

22 Ibid., I, 36.

23 Ibid., I, 288.

reducible to underlying organic and physical disorders.

That was the explanatory course which Burton followed in his analysis of the 'Passions and Perturbations of the Mind, [and] how they cause Melancholy'.²⁴ Once again the theory of humoural qualities was at the heart, both figuratively and literally, of his explanation. According to that theory, each passion, on being communicated to the heart via the imagination, altered the humoural complexion of the body by virtue of the qualities associated with it. For example, in response to the cold and dry passion of sorrow, the heart contracted, thereby denying blood and spirits to the rest of the body which was thus cooled and dried. In addition a sympathetic and reinforcing response was set up in the spleen which then sent quantities of the cold and dry humour associated with it back towards the heart. Caught in a positive feedback loop the melancholic humour became settled and the body was accordingly distempered. The passions were thereby shown to be a principal cause of melancholy. However, although all men were subject to their influence not all men were melancholically distempered. To account for that crucial distinction, Burton had to find a psychological mechanism which could explain the pathological effects of the passions in some men and their relatively benign

24 Ibid., I, 287. In that discussion, Burton adopted the traditional two-fold division of the passions into irascible and concupiscible inclinations. A division which he likened to, 'the two twists of a rope, mutually mixt one with the other, and both twining about the heart' (I, 323-24). In the former category, he included sorrow, fear, shame, envy, malice, hatred, emulation, anger and discontents; in the latter, ambition, covetousness, love of pleasure, vainglory and love of study. Preeminent were sorrow, fear, love and hate, 'the wheels of a chariot, by which we are carried in this world' (I, 297). All the passions were ultimately reducible to them.

effects in others. The rational soul was sacrosanct and therefore immune from criticism, but the faculties of the subordinate and sensitive soul were not. Burton could thus look within that realm and, focusing on its three faculties of common sense, memory, and imagination, accuse the latter. Perturbations of the mind, he claimed, were a cause of the melancholic distemper in some and not others because in the former class of men 'some one principal faculty of the mind, as imagination, or reason, is corrupted as all melancholy persons have'.²⁵ Now although the faculty of reason was thereby implicated, Burton could preserve the theological purity of his argument by showing that it was at fault only accidentally, for 'faith, opinion, discourse, ratiocination, are all accidentally depraved by the default of imagination':²⁶ essentially uncorrupted the divine emanation was thus acquitted of any material guilt in the pathogenesis of melancholy.

The corrupting effects of the passions therefore depended upon the fault of the imagination which, in misconceiving or amplifying them, set in motion the train of physical disturbances described above. But at that point in the argument the psychogenic account of melancholia revealed its physiological premises. For functional abnormalities in the imaginative faculties of some men could only result from an original and primary melancholic disposition in the bodies which contained them. On that basis Burton could finally and satisfactorily explain the differential incidence of the melancholic distemper for in some men

25 Ibid., I, 194.

26 Ibid., I, 196.

as their temperature of body, or rational soul, is better able to make resistance; so are they more or less affected. For that which is but a flea-biting to one, causeth insufferable torment to another; and which one by his singular moderation and well-composed carriage can happily overcome, a second is no whit able to sustain; but upon every small occasion of misconceived abuse, injury, grief, disgrace, loss, cross, rumour ... yields so far to passion, that his complexion is altered, his digestion hindered, his sleep gone, his spirits obscured, and his heart heavy, his hypochondries misaffected; wind, crudity, on a sudden overtake him, and he himself overcome with Melancholy.²⁷

In brief, and in recapitulation, according to the humoural basis of seventeenth century medical theory, melancholia was considered to be a disease of both mind and body: its remote and external causes were primarily psychological but its immediate and internal causes were entirely physical. However, within that reductive explanatory framework the mental symptoms of melancholia were almost indistinguishable from their causes. For given the humoural theory of qualities, an original and purely physical distemper of the body would act upon the heart - the seat of the affections - to produce those passions which were qualitatively correlated with it; in turn those passions would reinforce and amplify the original humoural distemper. Within that feedback loop symptoms mirrored causes. Burton could, therefore, after warning his readers that 'The Tower of Babel never yielded such confusion of tongues, as this Chaos of Melancholy doth variety of symptoms',²⁸ attempt to create order out of that semeiological chaos by adopting the same discursive structure in his listing of symptoms as that previously used in his adumbration of causes.

27 Ibid., I, 167.

28 Ibid., I, 456.

Accordingly, he divided the symptoms of melancholy into those affecting the body and those affecting the mind, as well as distinguishing those that were specific to the three species of head, body, and hypochondriacal melancholy and those common to the genus as a whole. In addition, he also differentiated symptoms resulting from natural melancholy in excess, and symptoms resulting from the adustion of each of the four humours, either singularly or in combination.

But given the Babelic symptomatology of melancholia, taxonomic divisions, although easily made, were difficult to sustain. Wind, for example, was the definitive symptom of hypochondriacal melancholy, but it was also 'common to all three species, and is not excluded, only that of the hypochondries is more windy than the rest'.²⁹ Similarly, in describing the variety of symptoms proceeding from 'those four humours adust, which is unnatural melancholy', Burton argued that 'there is not one cause of this melancholy, nor one humour which begets it, but divers diversely intermixt, from whence proceeds this variety of symptoms', adding, 'and those varying again as they are hot or cold'.³⁰ In many respects, therefore, Burton's taxonomic endeavours were little more than nominal; for only the first and most basic division of symptoms into those affecting the mind and those affecting the body, yielded anything like a clear and distinct semeiological picture.

Symptoms occurring in the body were directly related to both

29 Ibid., I, 471.

30 Ibid., I, 458.

the primary and secondary qualities of natural melancholy and the four varieties of humour adust. Thus Burton observed that melancholics were often 'not so pleasant to behold',³¹ because as a result of their cool and dry bodies they appeared 'lean, withered, hollow eyed ... old, wrinkled and harsh'.³² Furthermore, he continued, 'From these first qualities arise many other second, as that of colour';³³ thus in head melancholy, caused by humours made hot and dry by adustion, the complexional signs were 'ruddiness of face, high sanguine complexion, most part with a flushed red colour';³⁴ in hypochondriacal melancholy, melancholics were 'of all colours and complexions';³⁵ whilst in body melancholy, arising from an excess of natural melancholy 'they be black'.³⁶ By far the most spectacular bodily symptoms, however, were those specifically associated with hypochondriacal or windy melancholy. As the latter synonym suggests, that distemper was defined by 'sharp belchings, fulsome crudities, heat in the bowels, wind and rumbling in the guts, vehement gripings, pain in the belly and stomach'.³⁷ Whilst Burton argued that 'in this diversity of symptoms ... no physician can truly say what part is affected',³⁸ he nevertheless believed that the spleen and the liver were the organs principally at fault. For according to early seventeenth century physiology, the liver was deemed to be responsible for the formation of the humours through the process of

31 Ibid., I. 441.
 32 Ibid., I, 440.
 33 Ibid., I, 440.
 34 Ibid., I, 470.
 35 Ibid., I, 473.
 36 Ibid., I, 475.
 37 Ibid., I, 472-73.
 38 Ibid., I, 472.

sanguification, whilst the spleen's function was to absorb superfluous black bile from it and the blood. If it failed to do so, or if it failed to excrete the melancholic dregs which it had absorbed, then either it, or the liver, became gorged and swollen with black bile. Thus confined, the black bile putrified and gave off gaseous heat. Even if it stopped short of adustion such heating was the causal link between functional disorders of the hypochondries and the symptoms of flatulence; nevertheless, and as noted above, wind was also regarded as a symptom common to the other two species of melancholy.

Turning to the mental symptoms occasioned by melancholia, Burton reviewed a number of fixed and obstinate emotional dispositions, as well as a variety of delusional states bordering on madness. In the former category fear and sadness were the most grievous and common symptoms; for cold and dry in nature, those passions were the ones naturally called forth by the qualitatively equivalent melancholic humour. Moreover, as their causal basis was a humoral distemper, they were defined, in contradistinction to their ordinary counterparts, as occurring without a cause, i.e., without an objective basis in external reality. Finally, because black bile was a heavy, settled, and viscid humour, melancholic fear and sorrow were correspondingly explained as fixed and obstinate emotional traits. In addition to those primary correlations, Burton also invoked the secondary qualities of black bile to account for the definitive symptoms of fear and sorrow. Thus he reported that

Galen imputeth all to the cold that is black, and thinks that, the spirits being darkened, and the substance of the brain cloudy and dark, all the objects thereof appear

terrible, and the mind itself, by those dark, obscure gross fumes, ascending from black humours, is in continual darkness, fear and sorrow³⁹

for, he continued, just 'as children are affrighted in the dark, so are melancholy men at all times, as having the inward cause with them, and still carrying it about'.⁴⁰

Besides fear and sorrow, Burton also recognized a number of secondary emotional traits, equally fixed and occurring equally without a cause, which together defined the melancholic type as the malcontent par excellence. Suspicious and jealous, such men were

apt to mistake and amplify ... testy, peevish, and ready to snarl upon every small occasion ... Inconstant ... and yet, if once they be resolved, obstinate, hard to be reconciled Extreme passionate ... and what they desire, they do most furiously seek: anxious ever and very solicitous, distrustful and timorous, envious, malicious, profuse one while, sparing another, but most part covetous, muttering, repining, discontent, and still complaining, grudging, peevish.⁴¹

Fearful, sad and discontented, the melancholic also suffered from a number of terrible delusions which reinforced his emotional abnormalities. For as Burton noted the obscure and gross fumes which created the long dark night of melancholia also disordered the physical instruments of perception. Fumes created by humoral over-heating ascended to the brain 'as smoke out of a chimney' where 'as a black and thick Cloud covers the Sun, and intercepts his beams and light, so doth this melancholy vapour obnubilate the mind, [and] enforce it to many absurd thoughts and imaginations'.⁴² Lurking behind those dark and cloudy metaphors there

39 Ibid., I, 482.

40 Ibid., I, 483.

41 Ibid., I, 449-51.

42 Ibid., I, 474.

was, however, an explanatory silver lining which invoked the animal spirits and their role in the process of perception.

Hypothetically perceived as bordering on the immaterial, those subtle and vaporous substances were thought to be created out of the blood from whence they were 'brought up to the brain, and diffused by the nerves, to the subordinate members, giv[ing] sense and motion to them all'.⁴³ However, when subjected to the discolouring effects of smoky vapours or when directly tainted by black bile accumulating in the brain or around the heart, they lost their lucidity, thereby creating 'monstrous fictions in a thousand shapes and apparitions ... by which the brain and phantasy are troubled and eclipsed'.⁴⁴ Those delusions and disorders of the imagination were common to all three species of melancholy but given the prevailing medical style of arguing by metaphor and analogy, hypochondriacal or windy melancholy was the type most easily and dramatically identified as their cause. In that respect there was one further symptom of windy melancholy which, although discreetly submerged in the encyclopaedic detail of The Anatomy, was later to resurface and figure prominently in non-medical discussions of the distemper. That symptom referred to the amorous behaviour and perceived sexual promiscuity of flatulent melancholics. For it was believed that the hot and gaseous vapours associated with that condition, as well as rising up through the body to discolour the brain, also passed down through the body to stimulate the genital organs. Thus Burton noted, hypochondriacal melancholics 'exceed all others' in one symptom, 'and that is, they

43 Ibid., I, 170.

44 Ibid., I, 482.

are luxurious, incontinent, and prone to Venery, by reason of wind, they easily fall in love, and are generally not very particular who the woman is'.⁴⁵

Melancholic vapours were created by various processes of heating which in turn might or might not lead to humoral adustion. If they did, the semeiological results were often indistinguishable from madness, for adust humours were hot and dry in quality and they therefore produced 'more violent passions and furies'⁴⁶ than the cold and dry black bile. Of the four unnatural humours, choler adust was the most volatile; men thus afflicted were

bold and impudent, and of ... harebrain disposition, apt to quarrel and think of such things, battles, combats and their manhood; furious, impatient in discourse, stiff, irrefragable, and prodigious in their tenets.⁴⁷

Fear and sorrow thus dropped out of the symptomatological picture and with their disappearance, melancholia degenerated into madness. The precise boundary between the two distempers was, however, not easily drawn for the line which divided them was more a matter of degree than of kind. Accordingly, Burton defined madness as 'a vehement dotage, or raving without a fever, far more violent than melancholy ... troubling the patients with far greater vehemency both of body and mind'.⁴⁸ As a result, madmen lacked all powers of reason and cognition for in their distemper the senses were abolished, whereas in melancholia they were merely depraved. On that basis Burton could assert that melancholics

45 Ibid., I, 475.

46 Ibid., I, 458.

47 Ibid., I, 461.

48 Ibid., I, 160.

often had lucid intervals and were 'of profound judgment in some things, although in others they judge not well from their recklessness'.⁴⁹ In contrast, madmen enjoyed no such remission from their condition.

In the midst of Burton's sorry catalogue of physical and mental afflictions there was, however, one symptom with which the melancholic could console himself. For coexisting with the Galenic tradition of melancholia was the Aristotelian one, in which the problem of why 'learned men, famous Philosophers and Law-Givers'⁵⁰ were of a melancholic disposition had long been discussed. First revived by Marsilio Ficino in his treatise De Vita Triplici, the lineaments of that problem were subsequently and definitively etched in Durer's study of 'Melancolia' (1512).⁵¹ As a result, 'good wit' and even genius were seen as being the sole privilege of those melancholics in whom a temperate heat and dryness, arising from a slightly adust humour, had dried the brain; for as Burton explained, 'a dry light makes a wise mind; temperate heat and dryness are [its] chief causes'.⁵² Once again the boundary between genius and madness was a narrow one - indeed on the authority of Aristotle himself, it could be asserted that there was 'no excellent wit without a mixture of madness'.⁵³

Witty or not, the melancholic nevertheless wallowed in an 'Irish Sea of Misery'⁵⁴ from which there was little hope of

49 Ibid., I, 451.

50 Ibid., I, 485.

51 For a discussion of the iconography of Durer's 'Melancolia I', see Erwin Panofsky, Albrecht Durer, 2 vols. (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1943), I, 157-71.

52 Anatomy of Melancholy, I, 486.

53 Ibid., I, 485.

54 Ibid., I, 498.

recovery. He was, as we have seen, tormented by a baffling variety of mental and bodily symptoms. Between those symptoms there was, however, ultimately 'no comparison, no doubt to be made of it ... the diseases of the mind [were] far more greivous'.⁵⁵ Melancholia was therefore primarily defined as a disease of the mind but although its catalogue of mental symptoms involved disorders of the imagination, it was not an imaginary disease; its basis was undoubtedly real and organic. All men were exposed to the trials and tribulations of life but only some suffered the 'remarkable, frequent, furious and violent'⁵⁶ symptoms of the melancholic distemper proper. Those that did were likely to carry them to the grave, and they did so because of an original humoural disposition which predetermined that end.

In his discussion of therapeutics Burton could therefore offer consolation but little hope of cure. The fundamental principle of humoural pathology was that all disease resulted from an imbalance or corruption in the humoural composition of the body; humoural therapy was therefore directed towards the restoration of that balance. Guided by that principle, Burton proceeded accordingly, dividing his comments on the methods of cure into dietetical, pharmaceutical, and chirurgial. Dietetical cures dealt with the external or remote causes of melancholy and thus entailed the reformation of the six non-naturals. Once again Burton styled his comments in that respect 'a tedious discourse', and once again the sixth and last thing non-natural was preeminent in that discussion. For 'whoever he is that shall hope to cure this malady in

55 Ibid., I, 499.

56 Ibid., I, 456.

himself or any other, must first rectify these passions and perturbations in them'.⁵⁷ But that cure was more easily spoken of than effected. Like others before him, Burton could advise and give good precepts: he recommended self-control, diversionary tactics, the counsel of friends, the comforts of holy scripture, and even the reading of his own 'Consolatory Digression containing the Remedies of all manner of Discontents'.⁵⁸ Yet in doing so he was fully aware that the stubborn, organic basis of the disease yielded little to such efforts. He therefore qualified his prescription with the warning that, 'you may as well bid him that is diseased not to feel pain, as a melancholy man not to fear, not to be sad: 'tis within his blood, his brains, his whole temperature; it cannot be removed'.⁵⁹

The organic basis of melancholia therefore demanded more radical and material therapies and to that end Burton reviewed a range of pharmaceutical and surgical techniques which sought to attack the noxious humours either by healing them within, or by expelling them from, the body. Pharmaceutical cures entailed the administration of alteratives such as hot and moist borage to cleanse the blood and spleen, or purgatives such as black hellebore.⁶⁰ 'Chirurgical' remedies on the other hand subjected the unfortunate melancholic to the most advanced and exquisite techniques of bloodletting, scarification, cupping-glasses and leeching known to seventeenth century medical science. Nevertheless,

57 Ibid., II, 117.

58 Ibid., II, 145.

59 Ibid., II, 121.

60 Those two herbs were represented in the bottom corners of the frontispiece of the first edition of The Anatomy.

even when dealing with the primary and organic basis of the disease, Burton maintained a healthy degree of scepticism in his judgment of the efficacy of those remedies. At the end of his review he remarked, not without a hint of irony, that 'These in brief are the ordinary medicines which belong to the cure of melancholy, which, if they be used aright, no doubt may do much good'.⁶¹ Melancholia was thus viewed as an intractable and virtually incurable disease. At best the melancholic could hope for some amelioration of his symptoms, at worst he could expect to carry them with him to his grave.

Robert Burton's Anatomy embodied the most advanced medical views of his day concerning the aetiology, semeiology, and therapeutics of melancholia, views which nonetheless had advanced little since the times of Galen and Hippocrates. That body of medical wisdom was, however, soon to be overtaken by the theories of Thomas Willis and Thomas Sydenham in which the humoural aetiology of the disease was replaced by a nervous one. As will be seen, there was, however, no simple and binary movement from the one to the other.

Thomas Willis' Cerebri anatome, the result of nearly twenty years of investigation into the structure of the brain and nervous system, was first published in 1664. In concluding that work Willis had promised his readers further and more 'pleasant Speculations' in the form of 'a Discourse of the Soul and that other task of Pathologie' which he hoped would sweeten 'the

⁶¹ Anatomy of Melancholy, II, 302.

Asperities and hard sense' of his anatomical observations.⁶²

Over the next eight years he fulfilled that promise in three treatises, Pathologiae cerebri e nervosi generis specimen (1667); Affectionum quae dicuntur hystericae et hypochondriacae pathologia (1670); and De anima brutorum (1672), all of which dealt with the related problems of structural brain disease and mental illness. The publication of those treatises marked a turning point in the medical history of melancholia, for in them Willis combined the results of his anatomical observations with his chemical principles of health and disease to develop a theory which invoked the pathological role of the animal spirits acting within the nervous system to account for the causes and symptoms of melancholia. On the basis of that nervous aetiology, he announced, in the second part of the Soul of Brutes that 'we cannot here yield to what some Physicians affirm, that Melancholy doth arise from a Melancholick humor, somewhere primarily and of it self begotten'.⁶³ Instead he claimed that melancholia 'proceeds from the vice or fault of the Brain, and the inordination of the Animal Spirits dwelling in it'.⁶⁴

The theoretical existence of the animal spirits had long been medically recognised; indeed, as we have seen, they were invoked by Burton to explain the delusional effects of melancholic vapours. But Willis postulated a revitalised and energetic version of that

62 Cited in the editor's introduction to Thomas Willis, Two Discourses Concerning the Soul of Brutes, tr. S. Pordage (London, 1683); reprint, intro., S. Diamond (Gainesville, Florida, Scholars' Facsimiles, 1971) p.v. All subsequent references to the Soul of Brutes will be to this reprint.

63 Ibid., p.192.

64 Ibid., p.188.

concept to account for both normal and abnormal physiological functioning. Central to that account was his interpretation of man as a two-souled animal. In man, Willis argued, the subordinate or corporeal soul was the life principle; it was 'extended to the whole organical Body and vivifies, actuates, and irradiates both its several parts and humours'.⁶⁵ In turn that body soul consisted of two parts, a vital or 'flamie' soul rooted in the blood and a sensitive or 'lucid' soul rooted in the brain. Employing a series of chemical and optical analogies Willis explained their relationship and functions in the following way

the immediate subjects of the Soul, are the Vital Liquor or the Blood, Circulated by a perpetual Circulation in the Heart, Arteries, and Veins; and the Animal Liquor or Nervous Juyce, flowing gently within the Brain and its Appendixes: the Soul inhabits and graces with its presence both these Provinces; but as it cannot be wholly together at once in both, it actuates them both, as it were divided, and by its parts: For as one part living within its Blood, is of a certain fiery nature ... being inkindled like flame, and the other being diffused thorow the animal Liquor, seems as it were Light, or the rayes of Light, flowing from that Flame; which from thence being Excerpted, and manifold ways reflected and refracted, by the Brain, and Nerves, as it were by Dioptrick Glasses, are diversly figured, for the Exercises of the Animal Faculties.⁶⁶

The animal spirits were thus distilled from the blood into the brain by a process of inkindling, which according to Willis was fuelled by 'sulfereous food' from the chyle and 'nitreous air' from the lungs. Those subtle spirits constituted the essence or 'hypostasis' of the sensitive soul and as such they acted

65 Ibid., p.22.

66 Ibid., p.22.

in the innumerable series of nervous Fibres, distributed in a most wonderful order thorow the several parts of the whole Body; ... like Soldiers sent abroad, perpetually running up and down, on this side and that [to] perform the office of Sense and Motion.⁶⁷

Having thus explained the basis of normal physiological functioning, Willis could then 'deliver the formal reason and causes of Melancholy'⁶⁸ by reference either to chemical changes within the blood corrupting the economy of the animal spirits, or to primary changes in the animal spirits themselves corrupting the blood

For sometimes Melancholy beginning, and for a long time persisting, from the Animal Spirits being disturbed, and driven into a certain confusion, causes the Melancholick disposition of the Blood; and sometimes also the Blood, at first contracting this evil disposition, perverts the nature of the Spirits.⁶⁹

Once again the six non-naturals were implicated in those pathological changes; variations in the weather could, for example, alter the composition of the blood by a process of salification, thus initiating the melancholic distemper; equally, the animal spirits could spark the disease when disordered by violent passions of the mind such as 'destroying Love, vehement sadness, panick fears, envy, shame and care'.⁷⁰ In that latter respect, Willis identified two further and general

occasions, from which special Melancholy chiefly and most frequently doth arise; to wit, first, when there lyes a most heavy pressure on the mind of some present evil, or an evil just at hand, whether it be true or imaginary: or secondly, if the loss or privation of some good before obtained, or despairing of something wished for or desired, happen.⁷¹

67 Ibid., p.25.

68 Ibid., p.189.

69 Ibid., p.192.

70 Ibid., p.192.

71 Ibid., p.199.

But whatever the immediate internal or remote external cause, the pathological effects on the animal spirits were the same, namely

the liquor instilled into the Brain from the Blood ... degenerate[s] from its mild, benign and subtil nature, into an Acetous, and Corrosive, like to those liquors drawn out of Vinegar, Box, and Vitriol; and the Animal Spirits ... [which] produce all the Functions of the Senses and Motions ... [similarly] have such like Effluvia's, as fall away from those Acetous Chymical Liquors.⁷²

Working with that virulent concept of the animal spirits and with a notion of the blood corrupted by chemical changes such as salification, Willis could, in accounting for most of the traditionally recognised symptoms of melancholia, omit all references to the pathological effects of black bile. For example, the generic features of the mental symptoms of melancholia could be directly interpreted as consequences of the acetous and corrosive nature of the animal spirits. 'Melancholick persons are ever thoughtful', their minds were agitated and restless because just as 'the Spirits of Vitriol or of Vinegar or Sea Salt continually evaporate', the disordered and acetous animal spirits 'are perpetually in motion'.⁷³ Melancholics were subject to mental fixations, 'they only comprehend a few things', because the animal spirits tainted by salty deposits 'gather together on an heap thickly', and were 'not long able to flow forth'⁷⁴ from the brain. Finally, melancholics were constantly deluded, 'they falsly raise or institute their notions',⁷⁵ because the volatile and corrosive animal spirits 'observe not their former tracts and ways of their expansion, but they thickly make for themselves new and

72 Ibid., p.189.

73 Ibid., p.190.

74 Ibid., p.190.

75 Ibid., p.190.

unwonted little spaces, within the globous substance of the Brain',⁷⁶ thereby creating structural brain damage. In addition to those explanations by reference to chemical and structural changes occurring within the brain and animal spirits, Willis also invoked the diminished lucidity of the animal spirits to account for the mental symptoms of melancholia. Thus he argued that

the Animal Spirits ... when as they ought to be transparent, subtle and lucid, become in Melancholy obscure, thick, and dark, ... so that they represent the Images of things, as it were, in a character, or covered with darkness.⁷⁷

He did not, however, ascribe the traditional symptoms of fear and sorrow to that latter effect. Instead, he implicated the 'Pracordia and ... the Blood therein inkindled'.⁷⁸ Fear and sorrow were caused by the fact that

the Blood, because of the saline particles being exalted, becomes less inflamable; from whence it is neither sufficiently inkindled in the Lungs, or doth it burn with a plentiful and enough clear flame within the passages of the Heart and its vessels; but is apt to be repressed, and almost blown out with every blast of wind: Hence, when that the vital flame is so small and languishing, that it shakes and trembles at every motion, it is no wonder if that the Melancholick person is as it were with a sinking and half overthrown mind always sad and fearful.⁷⁹

Furthermore, a timid heart was unable to perform its contractions strongly enough and the symptoms of fear and sorrow were thus doubly reinforced.

Those explanations could not, however, account so easily for the bodily symptoms of melancholia, especially those associated with flatulent disturbances of the abdominal organs. For that

76 Ibid., p.191.

77 Ibid., p.189.

78 Ibid., p.191.

79 Ibid., p.191.

reason Willis reclassified hypochondriacal melancholy as a convulsive disorder and thereby separated it from the other two species of head and body melancholy. In doing so he confirmed and expressed his agreement with the 'common opinion ... that sometimes Melancholy is either primarily excited, or very much cherished from the Spleen, being evilly affected, and so from thence is called by a peculiar word, Hypochondriack'.⁸⁰ Although he referred to melancholic foulnesses being deposited in the spleen by the blood, Willis was at pains to stress that there was no 'black Bile so called, or Melancholick humour in the Spleen, unless the bloody Mass begets these humours before hand'.⁸¹ In normal health, the spleen's function, he argued, was to receive certain dregs from the blood which on being transformed into a juicy ferment, served to invigorate the blood and animal spirits. But when distempered by 'Melancholick foulnesses'⁸² originating in the blood, the spleen produced an evil rather than a healthy ferment. That ferment acted indirectly on the brain via the blood and animal spirits to produce the mental symptoms of melancholy in the manner described above, whilst functional disorders in the spleen itself created the characteristic bodily symptoms of wind and flatulence.

In addition, functional disorders of the spleen reinforced the mental symptoms of melancholy because of that organ's direct and intimate connections to the brain and nervous stock via the many minute peripheral nerves attached to it. It was, however, significant that even in the case of hypochondriacal melancholy where the

80 Ibid., p.192.

81 Ibid., p.192.

82 Ibid., p.193.

spleen was principally at fault Willis still relied either directly or indirectly on a nervous aetiology to explain its causes and symptoms. He therefore made no reference to an original mine of black bile laid up in the spleen, nor to the pathological effects of vapours rising from it: the medical history of melancholia had thus embarked upon its neurological and nervous phase.

The implications of that new departure were subsequently explored and developed by Thomas Sydenham in the second part of his Epistolary Dissertation to Dr. William Cole (1682). There, in response to his colleague's inquiries, Sydenham set out his observations on the pathogenesis of hysterical and hypochondriacal diseases. His account of those disorders confirmed the nervous aetiology previously suggested by Willis. In many ways it is surprising that it did so, for Sydenham differed fundamentally from Willis in almost every aspect of his medical and scientific thought. Willis was an iatrochemist, whilst Sydenham adhered closely, though not slavishly, to traditional humoral theories; Willis stressed the value of anatomical and microscopic investigations in the advancement of medical knowledge whilst Sydenham discounted their role entirely; and finally, Willis pursued a highly theoretical and speculative approach to medical studies, whilst Sydenham was a confirmed empiricist, a self-styled rude observer of nature. They nevertheless agreed on one thing: hypochondria and hysteria were caused by 'the Animal Spirits being not rightly disposed'.⁸³

⁸³ Thomas Sydenham, 'Epistolary Dissertation to Dr. William Cole', The Whole Works of Thomas Sydenham, tr. John Pechy (London, 1696), p.452.

Sydenham's contribution to the medical history of melancholia was, however, more than just a matter of that agreement. For in the Epistolary Dissertation, he not only demonstrated that the same explanatory principle could be utilised within the more traditional humoural framework to offer an equally plausible account of the disease, he also made explicit many of the assumptions that were only latent in Willis' account. Moreover, in an age that increasingly proclaimed its allegiance to an empirical methodology, it was his authority rather than Willis' that was more frequently invoked in the eighteenth century literature on nervous disorders. A more detailed examination of the Epistolary Dissertation is therefore in order.

Whereas Willis had merely alluded to the nosological affinity between hypochondriacal melancholy and hysteria, rejecting the uterine origin of the latter and regarding it, like the former, as a convulsive disease of the brain and nervous stock, Sydenham paradigmatically defined them as two species of the same genus. In the same way as 'an Egg is scarce more like an Egg',⁸⁴ he noted that the symptoms of hysteria in women and of hypochondria in men were virtually indistinguishable. The differences between the diseases in the two sexes was merely nominal.

There was, however, a more fundamental distinction which divided the sexes. Women, Sydenham claimed, were 'much more inclined to this Disease than Men',⁸⁵ they were more at risk, 'not because the Womb is more Faulty than any other Region of the

84 Ibid., p.440.

85 Ibid., p.441.

Body',⁸⁶ but because, in comparison to men, they were naturally endowed with a weaker and more delicate nervous constitution. Indeed, for Sydenham and his contemporaries, it was a medical commonplace that

kind Nature has bestowed on them a more delicate and fine Habit of Body, having designed them only for an easie Life; and to perform the tender Offices of Love: But she gave to Men robust Bodies, that they might be able to delve and manure the Earth, to kill wild Beasts for Food and the like.⁸⁷

In making that distinction, Sydenham not only accounted for the differential incidence of the disease between the sexes, he also identified the major premise of his explanation of its internal and efficient causes. For he argued that the 'varying Intemperies both of Body and Mind, which prevails over Hysterical and Hypochondriacal People',⁸⁸ were produced by 'a weak Constitution of the ... [animal] Spirits'.⁸⁹

Willis had compared the animal spirits to 'Soldiers sent abroad ... [to] perform the office of Sense and Motion',⁹⁰ but in Sydenham's scheme that military metaphor was considerably and aggressively extended. He argued that when weakened, the animal spirits were thrown into

a Confusion ... upon which Account, too many of them in a Croud, contrary to proportion, are hurried violently upon this or that part [of the body], causing Convulsions and Pain, when they rush upon parts endued with exquisite Sense, perverting the Functions of the Organs, both of that they thrust into, and also of that from whence they departed; both being much injured by this unequal Distribution, which is altogether contrary to the Oeconomy of Nature.⁹¹

86 Ibid., p.441.

87 Ibid., p.447.

88 Ibid., p.451.

89 Ibid., p.447.

90 Willis, Soul of Brutes, p.25.

91 Sydenham, Epistolary Dissertation, p.446-47.

Paradoxically, the weakened animal spirits had become rampant, running riot throughout the body, invading its weakest parts and doing great violence to the 'Oeconomy of Nature'. Their rallying cry or external cause was most often a 'violent perturbation of the Mind from some sudden Assault, either of Anger, or Grief, or such like Passions',⁹² and although a strong and healthy nervous constitution could withstand their siege, a weak one was soon breached. Consequently, there was no doubt in Sydenham's mind of the greater susceptibility of women to those disorders. He did admit, however, that such a disposition could be adventitiously reversed. For just as some women 'who being accustomed to labour live hardly', were 'quite free from every Assault of this Disease', there were correspondingly 'many men that live sedentary Lives, and are wont to study hard, [who] are afflicted with the same Disease'.⁹³ Sydenham thus emphatically equated hysteria in women with hypochondria in men; moreover, in relating the occurrence of both to the primary cause of a weak and delicate nervous system he provided an important focus for subsequent medical and non-medical discussions of those disorders.

Although Sydenham was Willis' fellow traveller on the medical road that led towards the redefinition of melancholia as a nervous disorder, he did not carry the same weight of theoretical baggage as his pioneering companion. Willis' pathology of the animal spirits was fully integrated with both his chemical principles and his anatomical observations. Together they constituted a theoretical edifice which enabled him to present a closely argued

92 Ibid., p.446.

93 Ibid., p.440.

and carefully articulated account of the causes and symptoms of melancholy. In contrast, Sydenham's account of the animal spirits was not so encumbered. He was a confirmed empiricist and in accordance with that orientation he denied that the 'Fabrick of the Spirits' could be viewed with anything but 'the Eye of Reason'.⁹⁴ It was enough merely to assume their existence, and having done so, he could then freely account for the protean symptomatology of hysterical and hypochondriacal diseases by invoking the riotous effects of the animal spirits on both the mind and body.

It was a mistake, Sydenham argued, to assume that the various physical symptoms of those diseases 'come from some Essential Distemper of this or that part'⁹⁵ of the body. Instead he claimed that as 'the said Confusion of Spirits is the Cause of this Disease',⁹⁶ the bodily organs and humours were only indirectly involved. For in men and women with 'a crude and lax habit of Body',⁹⁷ the disordered animal spirits were able to invade all the inward parts, but especially those 'endued with exquisite Sense' such as the spleen, kidneys and bladder, and masquerade as 'Essential Distempers' of them. In due course, however, the invaded parts would themselves become distempered, and produce the symptoms normally associated with their humoural malfunction. Although all parts of the body were thus at risk, the 'separatory Organs designed for the Reception of the Impurities of the Blood'⁹⁸ were especially vulnerable. When 'distended by the

94 Ibid., p.447.

95 Ibid., p.441.

96 Ibid., p.447.

97 Ibid., p.442.

98 Ibid., p.453.

violent Impulse of the Spirits', those organs failed to purify the blood and consequently, 'a great many Feculencies'⁹⁹ were heaped up in them. Thus confined they overheated and putrified, giving off vapours which in turn created the windy and flatulent symptoms of hypochondriacal melancholy. Sydenham could therefore observe that

it happens to all Hysterical and Hypochondriacal People, when the Disease has been long upon them, that sometimes they belch up ill Fumes ... and sometimes the wind that comes from the Stomach is sour just like Vinegar.¹⁰⁰

Those symptoms, although often mistaken for 'the Bilious Cholick or the Iliack Passion',¹⁰¹ were accordingly important indicators of the disease. But whereas Willis had restricted the term hypochondriacal melancholy to nervous complaints occasioned solely and directly by disorders of the spleen, Sydenham extended it to include distempers of all the abdominal organs, as well as other parts of the body indirectly distempered by the action of the animal spirits.

In an equally freewheeling and cavalier fashion, he invoked the anarchic role of the animal spirits to account for the mental symptoms of hysteria and hypochondria. Like Willis, Sydenham believed that the animal spirits were the material and mechanical basis of the passions. When properly constituted, they responded to external stimuli by producing appropriate and adaptive psychological responses. But when weakened and confused they produced exaggerated and unreasonable ones - the passions occurring without a cause which were the characteristic mental symptoms of melancholia. It was therefore no wonder, Sydenham argued, that in

⁹⁹ Ibid., p.453.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.444.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.470.

bodies that 'were tottering like ruin'd Houses'¹⁰² the mind would be even worse affected, for

the Strength and Constancy of Mind, as long as it is confined in the Body, much depends on the firmness of the Spirits, that are subservient to it.¹⁰³

Thus without recourse to the detailed and ingenious explanations which Willis had deployed in linking the acetous nature of the animal spirits to the mental symptoms of melancholy, Sydenham merely attributed the symptoms of 'Fear, Anger, Jealousie and Suspensions', weeping and laughing fits, inconstancy, and 'worse Passions of the mind'¹⁰⁴ to the general havoc wrought by the animal spirits. But though despairing and having little hope of their own recovery, 'Melancholy People', Sydenham insisted, were not mad, indeed unlike 'others, whose minds were never excited by such Provocations' they were often 'very prudent and judicious and much excel, for deep thought and wisdom of Speech'.¹⁰⁵ In that respect Sydenham explicitly expressed his agreement with Aristotle.

Despite those differences in explanatory detail, both Willis and Sydenham regarded a weakness in the economy of the animal spirits as the primary and efficient cause of hypochondriacal and hysterical diseases. Their therapeutic strategies were therefore directed towards the restoration of that economy. Both recognised the difficulty of treating the disease once it had become established. Willis, for example, thought that 'a fresh Melancholy may be cured sometimes by the mere discipline and institution of the

102 Ibid., p.444.

103 Ibid., p.452.

104 Ibid., p.445.

105 Ibid., p.445.

mind' but in 'a long or inveterate'¹⁰⁶ melancholy, he admitted that more radical measures were required. Sydenham similarly doubted the efficacy of counsel and appeals to self-control in those that had 'a long while been afflicted with this Disease, and ... quite conquered by it'.¹⁰⁷ In such cases he believed that 'some obstinate Decree of the most insolent Stoick would give no greater ease, than he that would prevent the Tooth-ach, by firmly resolving that he would not by any means permit his Teeth to ake'.¹⁰⁸ The origin of the disease, even though it was located in the nearly immaterial animal spirits, was organic and Willis and Sydenham sought to treat it accordingly. But if the disordered minds and tottering bodies of melancholics could not be fortified by mere counsel, they could be indirectly strengthened by the administration of chalybeate medicines which were thought to invigorate the blood and thus the animal spirits, the material bases of the passions. Whilst allowing that purgatives and bloodletting could be used as preparatives to those various steel alteratives, both Sydenham and Willis warned of their dangers, for such measures were as likely to weaken the animal spirits as strengthen them. They therefore placed their faith in the efficacy of alteratives and corroborating medicines based on iron and steel preparations, designed to 'reduce the Spirits to order, and to renew and confirm their System'.¹⁰⁹ In addition they both recommended hystericks, medicines 'which by their strong and noisom Smell recall the exorbitant and deserting Spirits to their proper

106 Willis, Soul of Brutes, p.194.

107 Sydenham, Epistolary Dissertation, p.445.

108 Ibid., p.452.

109 Ibid., p.456.

Stations'.¹¹⁰ Sydenham was, however, alone in claiming that 'nothing of all I have hitherto known, does so much comfort and strengthen the Blood and Spirits, as riding much a Horse-back every Day for a long while'.¹¹¹

In adopting that 'methodus medendi' Willis and Sydenham re-affirmed their belief in the purely physical basis of hypochondriacal and hysterical diseases. The corollary of that belief was, as we have seen, a physiological psychology which construed the passions and related mental phenomena as nothing but the physical and adaptive outcomes of the animal spirits responding within the brain and nervous system to external stimuli. Such a material and mechanical psychology was of course entirely compatible, via the razor of Cartesian dualism, with orthodox theological doctrine concerning the immortality and immateriality of the soul. Nevertheless, the devout and Puritan Sydenham and the equally pious but Anglican Willis were both mindful of the territory upon which they were encroaching. Sydenham, in his treatise on natural theology Theologia Rationalis,¹¹² had argued at length for the immortality and immateriality of the soul, and those concerns were reflected in the medical arguments of the Epistolary Dissertation. There he declared that 'the Frame of the Mind if it be lawful to call it so, is much more curious and delicate than the Structure of the Body, for it consists in the Harmony of the most excellent and almost Divine faculties'.¹¹³ And although he had

110 Ibid., p.467.

111 Ibid., p.464.

112 Reprinted in Kenneth Dewhurst, Dr Thomas Sydenham (1624-1689): His Life and Original Writings (Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1966), pp.145-59.

113 Sydenham, Epistolary Dissertation, p.452.

shown how that harmony could be disrupted by an ataxia of the animal spirits that were subservient to it; he had also argued that the animal spirits, though 'made of the finest matter', were not strictly speaking part of the immaterial soul, which accordingly remained largely beyond the reach of medical investigation.

Willis' solution to that problem was, however, more inclusive and potentially more of an affront to orthodox theology, as he himself was only too well aware. In the dedication of the Soul of Brutes, which appropriately he addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, he stated that, 'Concerning the Soul, I have enter'd upon a great and difficult thing, full of hazard; where we may equally fear the Censures of the Church, as the Schools'.¹¹⁴ In that work the intrepid Willis, following Gassendi, endowed man with two souls: a sensitive soul which he shared with brutes, and a rational soul which was his alone. Brutes, he reasoned, must have souls since in addition to possessing instinctive knowledge they showed evidence of the ability to learn by experience, as, for example, a fox learns to ensnare his prey by repeated trials of success and failure. But, he continued, that form of ratiocination was executed solely by the faculties of memory and imagination, located within the corporeal or sensitive soul, and when compared to 'the functions of the human Intellect, and the Scientifick Habits, it will hardly seem greater than the drop of a Bucket, to the Sea'.¹¹⁵ For man, he stressed, in addition to his corporeal soul, which via the faculties of memory and imagination could only grasp material relations, possessed a superior and incorporeal soul

114 Willis, Soul of Brutes, Sig.A₂v.

115 Ibid., p.39.

which was capable of reflexive and abstract thought. That 'Superior soul in Man ... moderates and governs all the faculties and Acts of the Corporeal',¹¹⁶ and just as 'there is no necessity for a King, to be in his whole Kingdom, but only in his Palace',¹¹⁷ it was not extended like the sensitive soul throughout the body, but was seated omnipotently 'in the Imagination, ... in the Middle or Marrowie part of the Brain'.¹¹⁸ Individual variations in mental capacity and mental health were not the fault of the rational soul for that possessed, 'from the beginning, and of its own Nature, a full and perfect power of understanding; which understands, not more by coming of any Habit, but is rather it self an Habit, always ready to understand'.¹¹⁹ Instead, quoting Gassendi, Willis argued that 'the acquisition and loss of an habit, stands in the Power of the Brain and Phantasie, a subject purely Corporeal',¹²⁰ and therefore a subject legitimately within the realm of medical speculation. Willis, having distinguished the corporeal and material from the divine and immaterial soul, strenuously resisted any attempt to collapse that distinction. He thought that it was a mere 'trifle of the Schools' to argue that 'the Sensitive Soul is subordinate to the Rational and is as it were swallowed up of it, as that which in Brutes is the Soul, is mere Power in Man'.¹²¹ The rational soul did not obliterate the sensitive, for immaterial and infinite, it did not perform the finite and material functions of its subordinate and corporeal

116 Ibid., p.39.

117 Ibid., p.41.

118 Ibid., p.41.

119 Ibid., p.42.

120 Ibid., p.42.

121 Ibid., p.41.

relation. At first sight Willis' two-souls doctrine appeared to be little more than a nominal redefinition of Cartesian mechanism. In fact, as his argument in the Soul of Brutes progressed he found it increasingly difficult to maintain that dualism, for he was forced, in identifying 'the Chief Members of our Psycheology or Discourse of the Soul',¹²² to assign more and more of the functions of the rational soul to the sensitive. In doing so he threw a bridge across the gap of Cartesian dualism and began to trespass, in the name of medical science, on the metaphysical terrain of the theologian.

In the course of the next century, the medical consolidation of that terrain was largely carried out on the basis of the nerve theories first proposed by Willis and Sydenham. The nervous aetiology of melancholia did not, however, replace its humoural predecessor at a stroke: there was no simple and conclusive movement from the one to the other. Rather, both coexisted for some time, in varying degrees of interpenetration, to define the major theories of melancholia which competed for explanatory preeminence at the beginning of the eighteenth century. For example, whilst some theorists followed Sydenham in locating the origins of the disease primarily in the nervous system, others followed Willis in accusing first the spleen and then the nervous system. There were yet others who, in stressing the pathological effects of agglutinous blood accumulating in the stomach, liver, and spleen, remained faithful to the humoural tradition, albeit one reinterpreted on the basis of hydraulic and mechanical principles.

¹²² Ibid., p.18.

But whether the nervous system was thought to be involved either directly, indirectly, or not at all, all three theories found it necessary to refer at some stage in their explanatory account of melancholia to the effects of disturbances in the hypochondriacal organs. It is not surprising that they did so, for such a focus was entirely consistent with a medical practice which continued to search the body for the physical locus of mental disease. In that respect, at least, the legacy of the traditional and humoural theory of hypochondriacal melancholy persisted alongside the new aetiological emphasis on the nervous system.

The implications of that new emphasis for both the medical and etymological histories of melancholia can now be summarised. As we have seen, the adoption of a nervous aetiology led to the nosological separation of hypochondriacal melancholy from the other two species recognised in the Galenic tradition. Diagnostically, that division had always been difficult to sustain, and that fact together with growing doubts about the existence of black bile, as well as the continued search for the bodily origins of mental disease, led to a situation in which the disease entity of hypochondria became dominant in the medical literature. As a result, hypochondria began to take over the symptomatological burden previously borne by the more general category of melancholia. In addition, through its newly won nosological identification with hysteria, it also acquired a new set of symptoms such as the abnormal sensory and peripheral motor phenomena associated with that feminine affliction. Some symptoms, however, dropped out of the semeiological picture, particularly those complexional signs qualitatively linked in the humoural tradition with black bile and

the various forms of melancholy adust. A new aetiology also demanded new therapeutic practices; bloodletting and purging continued to be cautiously advised but given an emphasis on the pathological effects of a weakened and disordered nervous system, the administration of iron and steel courses designed to strengthen the blood and animal spirits were increasingly recommended. Changes in the medical basis of the disease were in turn reflected at the superstructural level of terminology. Hypochondria and hysteria, together with their derivatives, the hypp, the spleen, and the vapours, thus furnished the eighteenth century with a specific vocabulary for the general class of melancholic diseases, the diseases in which Dr Mandeville specialised.

2 DR MANDEVILLE AND THE HYPOCHONDRIACK

AND HYSTERICK PASSIONS

I can scarce express what Influence the Physician's Words have upon the Patient's Life, and how much they sway the Fancy; for a Physician that has his Tongue well hung, and is Master of the Art of perswading, fastens, by the mere Force of Words, such a Vertue upon his Remedies, and raises the Faith and Hopes of the Patient to that Pitch, that sometimes he masters difficult Diseases with the silliest Remedies; which Physicians of greater Learning could not do with nobler Remedies, merely because they talk'd faintly, and with a soft dead Air.

Giorgio Baglivi, The Practice of Physick
(London, 1704), p.189.

In 1711 Mandeville published his medical text, A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions, Vulgarly Call'd the Hypo in Men and Vapours in Women; In which the Symptoms, Causes, and Cure of those Diseases are set forth after a Method intirely new. The whole interspers'd with Instructive Discourses on the Real Art of Physick it self; And Entertaining Remarks on the Modern Practice of Physicians and Apothecaries: Very useful to all, that have the Misfortune to stand in need of either. In Three Dialogues. As its complete title indicates, the Treatise is mainly a discussion of the nature and treatment of hypochondriacal and hysterical disorders. It is also, however, an important source of biographical information about its author for in the Treatise, Mandeville lightened his clinical observations with occasional comments about his professional education at Leyden and his subsequent medical practice in London. More significantly, in presenting his views on 'the Real Art of Physick' and 'the Modern Practice of Physicians and Apothecaries' he also made explicit the substantive and

methodological precepts which informed his own medical practice. It is possible, therefore, by focusing on the evidence of the Treatise to gain an insight into Mandeville's medical and scientific beliefs and in consequence to map what was an important part of his mental world in general.

In the preface to the first edition of the Treatise, Mandeville confessed that, 'In these Dialogues, I have done the same as Seneca in his Octavia, and brought myself upon the Stage; with this difference, that he kept his own Name, and I have changed mine for that of Philopirio, a Lover of Experience'.¹ Accordingly, Philopirio's autobiographical asides add details to our knowledge of Mandeville's medical activities. We learn, for example, that on leaving Holland he had 'no thought of singling out [hypochondriacal] Distempers for [his] more particular Study', for at that time, he 'was only designed for general Practice, as other Physicians are'.² By 1711, however, he had apparently taken advantage of the splenetic clientele which his adopted country offered him to make the study of those diseases his chosen province and their treatment 'the chief of [his] Practice'.³ In that respect he was not only following in his father's footsteps,⁴ but also furthering his interest in the physiology of digestion, which

1 A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions, Vulgarly call'd the Hypo in Men and Vapours in Women (London, 1711), p.xi.

2 A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Diseases, 2nd edn. enlarged, 1730; reprint of 2nd edn., intro. Stephen H. Good (Delmar, New York, Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1976), p.32. Unless otherwise stated all subsequent citations will be to this enlarged, 1730 edition of Mandeville's Treatise and will be grouped where appropriate for ease of reference.

3 Ibid., p.44.

4 Treatise (1711), p.40.

had been the subject of his medical dissertation, de Chylosi Vitiata, defended at Leyden in 1691. Indeed, he thought it worth remarking that he had 'always had a particular Eye upon', and had 'been led, as it were, by Instinct to what afterwards to [him], appear'd to be the Cause of the Hysterick and Hypochondriack ^SPassions', namely, 'Disorders ... of the Chylifications'.⁵

There were, however, other factors which contributed to Mandeville's choice of medical specialisation. As he noted in the Treatise, hypochondria was a chronic rather than an acute disease, and unlike the treatment of the latter class of medical disorders, it did not require a 'tiresome Office of being perpetually near the Bedside, to observe every Motion the Patient makes'. Such a 'miserable Confinement' was not to his liking and was, he claimed, one of the chief motives that made him apply himself, 'to a Chronick Disease, where the Attendance should be neither so constant, nor so unpleasant'.⁶ Mandeville, as his published works indicate, wore a number of other hats besides his medical one, and in order to do so, he was not prepared to imitate 'those publick-spirited People that can slave at an Employment from early in the Morning, 'till late at Night, and sacrifice every Inch of themselves to their Callings'. For on his own admission, he was 'a little selfish', and mindful of his 'own Enjoyments' in desiring to be 'employed to [his] own liking'.⁷ Eighteenth century physicians were of course more often distinguished by their presence in the coffee-house than at the bedside, nevertheless

5 Treatise (1730), p.132.

6 Ibid., p.65.

7 Ibid., pp.351-52.

Mandeville's justification of his specialisation in the treatment of hypochondriacal diseases, invoking as it did both his distaste for a constant attendance on the sick and the self-interested pursuit of his own pleasures, assumes an added significance when situated within the larger context of his discussion of 'the Real Art of Physick' and 'the Modern Practice of Physicians'.

The bias of that discussion is clearly revealed by the catalogue of medical heroes and villains which the Treatise contains: a catalogue in which the 'Divine Hippocrates', the 'learned Baglivi', and the 'practical Sydenham' confront the 'speculative Willis', the 'wrangling' Paracelsus, and the 'conceited Busie-body Galen'.⁸ Thus identified, Mandeville's heroes stood for the medical school of experience and his villains for the school of reason. In turn, those schools stood for two opposed and incompatible ways of searching after 'the Method of Curing, which is the very End of Physick'.⁹ In denigrating the members of the latter school, Mandeville did not seek to condemn reason itself, but only the use of reason divorced from experience and observation. It was axiomatic, he argued, that

We have all our Knowledge of things natural from Experience made by the Senses; and whence by reasoning consequentially human Understanding enquires into the Causes of the Effects we find; yet no body can be sure that he is in the right, 'till after he has been convinced of the Solidity of his Reasoning by the same Experience, proving and confirming the said Reasoning with matter of Fact.¹⁰

Convinced of 'the absolute Necessity of Experience',¹¹ Mandeville declared in the Treatise that 'What I am against, is, the

8 Ibid., pp.38; 42; 22; 22; 58; 15.

9 Ibid., p.32.

10 Ibid., p.vi.

11 Ibid., p.vii.

Speculative part of Physick, as it is distinct from the Practical, that teaches Men to cure all manner of Distempers in their Closets, without ever seeing a Patient'.¹² Many of those speculative physicians, he claimed, were simply motivated by avarice and laziness; they kept a set of Coffee Houses and talked and drank themselves into practice. There were others, however, who, although apparently more scrupulous, were no less dangerous. They were driven by the passion of pride rather than avarice, and pride, he argued, led them to 'abandon the solid Observation of never-erring Nature, to take up with the loose Conjectures of [their] own wandering Invention; that the World may admire the Fertility of [their] Brains'.¹³ In the hands of the latter group 'the Art of Physick', Mandeville insisted, was 'no more to be depended upon than that of Astrology'. For whilst he noted that every one of those medical astrologers pretended 'by his own System exactly to solve all Phaenomena, and to be an uncontrollable Expounder of the Mysteries of Nature', he nevertheless lamented 'How much they differ in the very Seats as well as Causes of Distempers; how notoriously they contradict one another to this Day, even in the Method of Curing, which is the very End of Physick'.¹⁴

Such men, Mandeville implied, were distempered by a methodological enthusiasm for hypotheses and 'witty Speculations'. Thus afflicted they laid claim to a diagnostic inner light which led them to substitute the 'Product of fertile Brains and luxuriant

12 Ibid., p.59-60.

13 Ibid., p.iv.

14 Ibid., pp.33; 32; 32.

Fancies' for the objective and certain knowledge which was only to be gained by 'the silent Experience of Pains-taking Practitioners'.¹⁵ The embodiment and originator of that medical form of enthusiasm, according to Mandeville, was Galen

a Man of very great Sense, and no less Pride, [who] having entertain'd the Ambition of raising himself above any of his Contemporaries, foresaw, that to exceed the most skillful of them in real Knowledge, would be a very difficult task, if not impossible, and at best a tedious work of endless Labour: He was well acquainted with the state of Physick and the Palate of his Garrulous Age, and found, that nothing would sooner or easier establish his Reputation, than his Wit: Accordingly he left the Observations to them that liked them, and fell a writing fine Language in a florid Style. He told the World that Physick was a rational Art, that they were Beetle-headed Fellows, that could not make it intelligible, and presently gives them Reasons, such as they were, for every individual thing he could think on. This took wonderfully with the People of those Days. Seeing his Reasons were so well accepted, he writ on and stuck at nothing.... This was the beginning of People's reasoning about Physick, from Speculation and Probability; and that the cause of all the Hypotheses we have had since, the best of which will be always defective and full of Error.¹⁶

To combat the false theories and speculative rationalism of Galen, Mandeville advocated a medical method based on 'downright Observation, and a world of Experience'.¹⁷ He insisted that 'Tis Observation, plain Observation, without descanting or reasoning upon it, that makes the Art; and all, who neglecting this main point have strove to embellish it with the Fruits of their Brain have but cramp't and confounded it'.¹⁸ Although Mandeville thereby aligned himself with the school of experience, he took pains to disassociate himself from the opprobrium attached to the

15 Ibid., pp.v; 60; v.

16 Ibid., pp.63-4.

17 Ibid., p.56.

18 Ibid., pp.38-9.

'odious Name' of 'Empyrick'. For, as he explained in the Treatise, that sect was accused of 'denying, that the Knowledge of natural things, and the Body itself, were any ways material to the Profession'. They were further charged with relying upon a use of experience which was 'Altogether stupid, not repeated, acquired by Chance not with Design, and entirely such as that of our Mountebanks'.¹⁹ Although conceding that the Empyricks had been slandered by their enemies, 'and chiefly Galen, the most inveterate of 'em all',²⁰ Mandeville nevertheless stressed that the experience he invoked was repeated experience, informed by 'thought or forecast in the Application'.²¹ He also claimed that a formal medical education in 'the usual Stages of Logick, natural Philosophy, Anatomy, Botany, and perhaps Chymistry', was 'necessary for all young Beginners'. However, in accordance with his empirical orientation, he stressed that such studies, 'only make up the Easie, the Pleasant, the Speculative, the Preparatory part of Physick', for he continued 'the only Useful part in regard of others', although it was 'Tedious' and 'Difficult', was the 'Practical, which is not attempted by many, [and] is only attain'd by an almost everlasting Attendance on the Sick, unwearied Patience, and judicious as well as diligent Observation'.²² Ideally, a sound medical education had therefore to combine theory and practice and accordingly Mandeville recommended a curriculum such as his own at Leyden, where 'practical Professors ... teach their Students in the Hospitals'.²³

19 Ibid., p.56.

20 Ibid., p.58.

21 Ibid., p.57.

22 Ibid., pp.34-5.

23 Ibid., p.67.

The acquisition of medical knowledge and the progress of the art therefore depended upon observation, experience, and the diligent description of 'Physical Cases and Historys to the Life'. Those precepts, however, placed great demands on the physician, for as Hippocrates had complained, 'Life is short, and the Art of great Extent'. In a similar spirit, Mandeville expressed his agreement with Baglivi's observation that, 'It is very plain that one Man's Life would not be sufficient to take notice and set forth what is to be known of one Distemper only'.²⁴ Nor, he argued, could the insights of men of 'great Genius and Sagacity'²⁵ be relied upon to advance the state of the art. Instead, such progress was rather the result of a long and anonymous process whereby

History collects the Observations that are made in great length of time, that by the help of it, one at last may be made a Man of consummate Knowledge, he being as it were the Compound or Product of all the Learning and Experience that the Men of so many Ages have from time to time have been endued with.²⁶

Thus conceptualized the progress of medical knowledge was both slow and gradual. Its advance was, however, not necessarily haphazard and random, for Mandeville believed that it was both possible and desirable to systematize the art and facilitate its progress. To that end, and again like Baglivi, he recommended that the joint observations collected by history should be distilled, in the style of Hippocrates, into 'short and distinct Conclusions by way of Aphorisms, without Art or Flourish, to serve for standing Rules in Practice'.²⁷ Moreover, he also recommended that Baglivi's

24 Ibid., pp.39; 38; 43.

25 Ibid., p.59.

26 Ibid., p.43.

27 Ibid., p.43.

project for the advancement of medicine should be put into operation forthwith. In his treatise, The Practice of Physick, (1704),²⁸ Baglivi had advocated the planned development of a medical division of labour, and following that advice, Mandeville proposed that every medical faculty should have two physicians

for every Distemper, that should study nothing else all their Life-time: One to read whatever has been writ of it, and from that collect all that might be of practical use; another to be constantly near the Patient's Bed-side, and faithfully set down every Symptom, nay every Motion he discovers.²⁹

Similarly, he proposed that once qualified, 'every Physician, that would discharge his Conscience, ought ... wholly [to] apply himself to the Study of one Distemper only'. If those proposals were adopted, then the task of making observations would, he claimed, be greatly facilitated and as a result 'Physick might soon be improved, and the Rules of it in twenty or thirty Years time brought to a great Perfection'.³⁰

In his polemic against the rationalist school of physicians, Mandeville had attributed their enthusiasm for speculation and witty hypotheses to the passion of pride, a passion which manifested itself in the desire for reputation and the appearance of learning. That passion was, however, also responsible for an equally pernicious methodological error - the desire to know the unknowable. In that respect pride had misled those 'acute Philosophers' who had refused to concede that 'it is possible,

28 This was the first English translation of De praxi medica (1696). Although Baglivi (1668-1707) was a committed iatromechanist, he nevertheless stressed the values of experience and observation in medical practice. His works enjoyed a wide diffusion during the period.

29 Treatise, pp.42-3.

30 Ibid., pp.44; 42.

Nature should have Recesses beyond the Reach of their Sagacity'. Indeed their pride had 'reckoned the injurious Assertion an Affront to human Understanding'.³¹ Mandeville, however, felt no such affront to his dignity, for he was a staunch empiricist, and fully aware of the epistemological limitations which that orientation imposed. Accordingly, he argued that a knowledge of the innermost workings of the human body was beyond the reach of medical science.

Mandeville's epistemological scepticism, and its consequences, were nowhere more evident than in his views concerning the nature and operations of the mind or the soul. There was, he insisted, no verifiable evidence, either scientific or theological, to suggest that the soul was anything but material and mortal. He admitted that man was 'a Compound of Body as well as Soul', but he regarded the doctrine that 'mere Matter cannot think' as, 'built upon the falsest Supposition in the World, viz., That what we cannot comprehend is therefore impossible'.³² Thus he asked

is it ... more easy to conceive that what is incorporeal should act upon the Body and vice versa, than it is that Omnipotence should be able in such a manner to modify and dispose Matter, that without any other Assistance it should produce Thought and Consciousness?³³

Given the fact that 'we are far from knowing all the Properties that may belong to Matter', the only reason, Mandeville argued, for supposing that the soul was immortal and immaterial was pride. In that respect, the layman was as guilty as the man of science. The former, he claimed, was mortified by the fact that his body was of 'mean Descent; [and that] the animal Functions of it have a near

31 Ibid., pp.v-vi.

32 Ibid., pp. 50; 51.

33 Ibid., p.51.

Resemblance to the same Functions in Brutes'. To distinguish himself from brutes and restore his injured pride, he had therefore 'taken up strong Resolutions to believe the Soul to be immortal.'³⁴ It was his passion of self-love, not reason, which dictated his fondness for the divine emanation. His error had, however, been compounded by the pride and pretensions of men of science. For there were too many theorists, Mandeville claimed, who, in refusing to admit that the essence of the soul was unknowable, had added to the mystery which surrounded it by vainly speculating about its true nature. The result was a splendid confusion. Scientific and medical opinion differed as to whether the soul was 'seated in some particular part of, or is diffus'd through all the Brain, the Blood, or the whole Body'.³⁵ Some theorists thought there was 'but one Soul', while others argued for 'a Plurality of Souls'. Mandeville, however, 'had no mind to engage in any Dispute about the Soul'.³⁶ Such speculation, whether medical or theological - and for Mandeville the two were unfortunately rarely separate - was futile. He insisted that the soul could only be known by experience, and thus by its effects.³⁷ Accordingly, he simply accepted the fact that 'from

34 Ibid., pp.51; 52; 53.

35 Ibid., p.155.

36 Ibid., pp.164; 165.

37 Mandeville later disingenuously claimed in the Treatise that his earlier materialist and mortalist interpretation of the soul had been nothing but 'Flights of Fancy' which were not to be mistaken for his 'real and settled Sentiments'. There he embraced the doctrine that 'mere Matter cannot think', arguing that it was 'a receiv'd Opinion, and an Axiom which [he] was neither able nor willing to refute' (Treatise, p.155). The dialogue structure of the Treatise and the voice of Misemedon allowed him to make that genuflection in the direction of immaterialism; nevertheless, his subsequent comments on the subject of mind-body interaction were entirely consistent with a materialist interpretation of the soul.

the Experience we have of our Composition, and what every moment we may feel within our selves ... that there must be an immediate Commerce between the Body and the Soul'.³⁸ And that commerce, like 'all the Operations of the Body', and 'all the Works of Nature',³⁹ was to be understood both materially and mechanistically.

Mandeville's doctrine of mechanism was, however, only a heuristic device. For although he noted that 'Men may give Reasons for the Structure of animal Bodies, and speak mechanically of the Shape as well as Motions of the Muscles, and their Antagonists, and of a great many other things that fall under our Senses', he nevertheless insisted

that when we are so wholly ignorant of the Figure and Magnitude of Parts, and as unacquainted with the Vessels that contain them, as we are of, and with, the Spirits and the Brain, it is impossible to enter into the Mechanism of them.⁴⁰

However, like Sydenham, he claimed that general inferences about the internal mechanism of mind-body interaction could justifiably be made by 'the Eye of Reason'.⁴¹ Accordingly, he argued that it was reasonable to assume that 'there must be some exquisitely small Particles, that are the Internuncii between them',⁴² the instruments of motion and sense, which for the sake of a better name could be called the animal spirits. It was, however, sheer 'Ignorance and Vanity' to attempt to formulate 'whole Systems and Hypotheses of the Mixture of Parts, that the Set or Mass of Animal

38 Treatise, p.155.

39 Ibid., pp.170; 171.

40 Ibid., p.171.

41 Ibid., p.170.

42 Ibid., p.156.

Spirits must of necessity consist of', and to go 'so far as to determine their Motions to an Angle of Incidence'. Instead, all that could be reasonably known and asserted about them was the formal proposition that 'what we call the Animal Spirits is a Composition of various Parts, that has a Tone, Crasis, and due Consistency belonging to it, no less than the Blood'.⁴³ Thus defined, the animal spirits assumed an important heuristic role in Mandeville's mechanistic understanding of human functioning and accordingly they figured prominently in his account of the aetiology of hysterical and hypochondriacal disorders. For like 'the great Sydenham', he believed that 'a great plenty of Spirits too violently agitated, and consequently a Confusion of them', was 'the internal efficient Cause of all Hysterick and Hypochondriacal Diseases'.⁴⁴

In reviewing the 'several Causes to which the Hypochondriack Passion has been believed to owe its Rise', Mandeville summarily discarded the humoural theory that hypochondria was caused by the 'Atra bilis, or Melancholy' accumulating in the spleen, merely noting that 'these Opinions are not much insisted upon'.⁴⁵ He also took issue with those moderns who, although they rejected the existence of the melancholic humour, nevertheless took refuge in the asylums of the liver and spleen to explain a disease which they did not understand. Instead, he claimed that 'by what I know from Observation, it is demonstrable to me, that the cause of Hypochondriac and Hysterick Diseases is in the Stomach'.⁴⁶ In order to

43 Ibid., pp.171; 170; 171; 170.

44 Ibid., pp.118; 119.

45 Ibid., p.90.

46 Ibid., p.94.

prove that his conclusion was not arrived at a priori by speculation and conjecture but a posteriori by observation and experience, Mandeville then marshalled the evidence which supported it.

First, he observed that from 'Anatomy we know, that abundance of Nerves end, and empty themselves in the Stomach; whose inner Coat is wholly Nervous, and yet not allow'd to have any Spontaneous Motion of its own'.⁴⁷ Secondly, he inferred that 'we are taught by daily Experience' that there is a powerful consensus between the brain and stomach, for he noted 'whatever Food is craved and long'd for after an extraordinary manner, the same, tho' absurd, and to all appearance prejudicial, is generally well digested even in those that otherwise have but a weak Concoction'.⁴⁸ Given that evidence, he then conjectured that

if the Animal Spirits, which the Stomach is continually furnish'd with through the innumerable little Nerves, that discharge themselves there, do not wholly compose (which yet nobody can disprove) the Stomachick Ferment, Menstruum, or what you please to call it, by vertue of which our Aliments are digested, they at least make a considerable, and the most essential part of it.⁴⁹

In support of which he added that it is inconceivable that 'Heat or muscular Motion, either jointly or separately should, without any Help, perform everything, that may be observed concerning Concoction in our selves'.⁵⁰ Lastly, he simply claimed that 'some of the Spirits, that help to consititute the Ferment, are of a greater Subtilty, and more refin'd than the rest that serve only for Musculary Motions, and other Actions of force'.⁵¹

47 Ibid., pp.132-33.

48 Ibid., p.133.

49 Ibid., p.134

50 Ibid., p.141.

51 Ibid., p.134.

Having claimed, not altogether convincingly, to have established by observation and experience that there is an 'extraordinary Consensus between the Brain and the Stomach', Mandeville then reasoned that, 'Whenever that Power is tired or exhausted by the Labour of the Brain, the Stomach suffers', for he declared himself to be 'very well satisfied, that the Volatilization, and greatest Efficacy of the Stomachick Ferment depends upon the Animal Spirits', and he was 'likewise convinced, that continual thinking spends abundance of those Spirits, and consequently is apt to rob the Ferment of its Due'.⁵² On that basis, he was therefore able to substantiate the assertion which he had made earlier in the Treatise, that 'the Disorders ... of the Chylifications are chiefly the Cause of the Distempers in question'.⁵³ Having done so, he then invoked those disorders, and the depletion of the animal spirits which caused them, to explain both the mental and bodily symptoms of the hypochondriac syndrome. Its characteristic symptoms of dyspepsia and flatulence were accordingly deemed to be the result of a deficiency of the animal spirits which normally served the process of digestion. And, as that deficiency was in turn thought to be caused by a hyperactive brain diverting spirits from the stomach to serve its own inordinate needs, the various mental and delusional symptoms of hypochondria were then explained by reference to the chaos created by that diversion.

The confusion of the animal spirits was thus, in Mandeville's as in Sydenham's account, the internal and efficient cause of hypochondria. Accordingly, in seeking to identify the external or

52 Ibid., pp.162; 162-63; 165; 165.

53 Ibid., p.132.

immediate causes of hypochondria, Mandeville accused any activity which occasioned that confusion by depleting the supply of the animal spirits to the stomach. Chief amongst those were excessive study - hypochondria was 'the Disease of the Learned' - and 'Immoderate Grief, Cares, Troubles and Disappointments',⁵⁴ both of which overtaxed the mind and consumed the animal spirits. Venery, however, was also a cause of hypochondria, for not only was there a commerce between thought and the stomach, but also between thought and 'The Organs of Generation'.⁵⁵ Sexual over indulgence consumed excessive quantities of the finer animal spirits and thus provoked the hypochondriac passion. Finally, invoking the distinction which he had earlier made between coarse and fine animal spirits, Mandeville claimed that lack of exercise and a poor diet also contributed to the disease. Exercise was, he argued, an aid to digestion because, in stimulating muscular motion, it consumed the coarse spirits and left the finer ones unimpaired. If, however, coarse spirits were left in the body through lack of exercise, then they would 'contract a Sourness, or some other ill Quality',⁵⁶ which in combination with a rich and heavy diet disturbed the process of digestion.

In his discussion of hysteria Mandeville claimed that the internal cause of 'the Hysterick Passion in Women' was 'the same with that of the hypochondriack Passion in Men'.⁵⁷ He did, however, note that women were far more susceptible to the disease. To explain that distinction, he cited the greater sensitivity of

54 Ibid., p.219.

55 Ibid., p.164.

56 Ibid., p.166.

57 Ibid., p.238.

their nervous systems and the fact that 'the Tone and Elasticity of Spirits in Women are weaker than they are in Men'.⁵⁸ Accordingly, he reasoned that the animal spirits in women were 'too much wasted when they are made; and ... there is no sufficient Quantity made of them'.⁵⁹ Thus women suffered more frequently from hypochondria than men, and when they did, their symptoms were more frequently manifested in the classic feminine form of convulsive and fainting fits.

Eschewing the complex drugs and medicines of both the apothecaries and other physicians, Mandeville recommended a simple diet and moderate exercise as the most effective general treatment for hypochondria. As such his therapy was directed towards correcting the hypochondriac's digestive disorders and restoring the balance and strength of his animal spirits. Mandeville claimed to possess no secret medicines, 'no grand Elixir',⁶⁰ which would effect a cure in all cases, for he insisted that he had never seen 'two hypochondriacal Cases exactly alike'.⁶¹ Nevertheless, he did claim to follow a distinctive and novel method in seeking to determine the appropriate cure in each case. To that end, he stated that 'I allow myself time to hear and weigh the Complaints of my Patients', and he continued

I take pains to be well acquainted with the manner of living of my Patients, and am more curious in examining them than there is occasion for a Man to be in any other Distemper; not only to penetrate into the Procatartick Causes, but likewise the better to consult the Circumstances as well as Idiosincrasy of every particular Person: Some have strange Aversions as to Diet; others

58 Ibid., p.247.

59 Ibid., p.239.

60 Ibid., p.345.

61 Ibid., p.343.

peculiar Antipathies against some excellent Remedies; and every wholesome Exercise suits not with all People. A third Secret is, that I am very careful in endeavouring to distinguish between the Efforts of Nature, whom I would assist, and those of the Distemper, which I am to destroy.⁶²

In order to establish that information, Mandeville engaged his patient in a dialogue which probed the specific details of his case history. The purpose of that dialogue was, however, not only diagnostic, but also therapeutic; for in addition to diet and exercise, Mandeville stressed the value of conversation itself in the treatment of hypochondria. Conversation, he believed, was particularly effective in allaying the anxiety and irrational fears of the hypochondriac, and restoring him to mental and physical health. That belief was reflected in the discursive structure of the Treatise itself, for rejecting the standard format and conventions of the medical works of his day, Mandeville set out his arguments in the form of an extended dialogue between Philopirio, the physician, and Misomedon, his patient.

Mandeville's choice of a dialogue form in the Treatise was, however, dictated both by medical and non-medical considerations. His declared intention in the Treatise was to write, 'by way of Information to Patients, that might labour under' hypochondriacal diseases and not 'to teach other Practitioners, that profess to cure them as well as my self'. With the former audience in mind, he therefore sought to avoid 'the tedious Enumeration of Signs and Causes upon the Neck of one another, as well as the frightful Heaps of different Medicines' found in other medical works and instead he sought to 'make what [he] had to say as palatable as [he] could to

62 Ibid., pp.343-44.

those, [he] had in view for [his] Readers'.⁶³ For that reason, he decided to include in the Treatise remarks that were

both serious and diverting, that might embellish, and yet not be too remote from the Subject ... And reflecting on the great Expence, the Hypochondriaci are often at, both for Fees and Medicines; thought nothing could be more reasonably pleasing to them, than to be entertain'd at the Cost of those, that to many of them have been so chargeable to no purpose.⁶⁴

In that respect, the dialogue form was an ideal and entertaining vehicle for Mandeville's wit and for his self-advertisement as a physician and man of letters. His purposes, however, were serious as well as diverting, and the dialectical and rambling structure of the dialogue not only allowed him to present his medical arguments and polemics to their best advantage, to express, for example, heterodox opinion with which he agreed but which he preferred not to place in the mouth of his fictional persona Philopirio; it also provided an ideal means of deflating the pretensions of systematic and rationalistic medicine and emphasizing the virtues of medical empiricism and scepticism.

Nevertheless in the Treatise dialogue was also an instrument of diagnosis and cure, and that use is best understood by considering in more detail the character of Misomedon, Philopirio's patient. Misomedon was 'an Hypocondriacus Confirmatus',⁶⁵ an ideal type embodying the characteristic symptoms of that protean distemper. In the preface to the Treatise, we learn that he

is a Man of Learning; who whilst he had his Health was of a gay, even Temper, and a friendly open Disposition; but having long labour'd under the Hypochondriack Passion is now much alter'd for the worse; and become peevish,

63 Ibid., pp.x; x; xi.

64 Ibid., p.xi.

65 Ibid., p.29.

fickle, censorious and mistrustful. Notwithstanding this, in fine Weather sometimes he has lucid Intervals; that last for two or three Days: In these he is very talkative, loves to converse with Men of Letters; and is often facetious. Tho' in his Discourse, he seems not to want Sense or Penetration; yet he is partial in his Censures, and unsteady in his Humour; sometimes very complaisant, at others captious; but always prone to Satyr. He is much given to ramble from one thing to another; and often to change his Opinion. When he speaks of himself, he is apt to break out in Rhetorical Flights; and seems to take Pleasure in talking of his Ailments, and relating the History of his Distemper; and what has happen'd to him. He has study'd Physick, but is no Well-Wisher to it, and bears a great Hatred to Apothecaries.⁶⁶

Misomedon's account of his own distemper occupied the greater part of the First Dialogue of the Treatise. His first-hand comments were extensive and detailed and as such they constituted a natural history of the development and external pathogenesis of the hypochondriac disease. The character of Misomedon was therefore not only an idealized portrait of the classic symptoms of the disease, but also an embodiment of the vices and social characteristics of the Augustan Age which were thought to promote it. We learn, for example, that on graduating from Oxford, he came to London, where, having inherited 'Three Hundred a Year' from his father and 'not being used to be so flush in Cash',⁶⁷ he neglected his legal studies and indulged himself in a life of vice and pleasure. As a result he soon fell into debt, but was rescued both financially and morally by marriage at the age of twenty-five. Matrimony apparently suited Misomedon, for on his own admission, he lived in ease and pleasure, enjoying to the full all

66 Ibid., pp.xii-xiii.

67 Ibid., p.3.

the blissful opportunities which that state had to offer. Although his 'necessary Expences exceeded twice [his] Income', he had no thought for the morrow, and was 'gay and contented', even when he had but 'Thirty Pounds left, [and] ow'd near Three Hundred'.⁶⁸

Once more on the brink of financial disaster he was again saved by the windfall of an inheritance, this time of 'a Thousand a Year in Land, and a good Estate in Money'. That miracle was, however, a mixed blessing, for Misomedon remarked

When I had taken Possession of, and was entirely settled in my Estate, as soon as I had leisure to reflect on the Condition I had been in, I could not look without horror on the dismal Prospect of Poverty and Want, to which I must in a very little time inevitably have been reduced, had not propitious Fortune ... so unexpectedly snatch'd me from the frightful Precipice.⁶⁹

His inheritance had, however, also included a considerable library and in search of more solid pleasures he 'became a great lover of Reading, and by degrees fell to hard Study'.⁷⁰ Soon afterwards, at the age of 37, the first symptoms of his distemper appeared. He 'began to be troubled with the Heart-burning, which in a little time became a constant Companion', he had 'flushings in [his] Face; all Day long [he] was troubled with Wind and Sour Belches'.⁷¹

His troubles however had only just begun, for by the age of 44 he was suffering from 'strong Pulsations and cruel thumpings in [his] Belly, especially on the left side ... pricking and sometimes shooting pains in [his] Bowels, in which likewise [he] often felt Tensions, Snatchings, and Convulsive pullings', and to cap it all,

68 Ibid., p.4.

69 Ibid., p.5.

70 Ibid., p.6.

71 Ibid., p.7.

both literally and figuratively, prolonged periods of constipation. At that stage of his distemper, he was tyrannized in mind as well as body, for the disease had reached his head.

Accordingly, he suffered from headaches, vertigo, and 'strange roving thoughts would slide through [his] Brain, and wild as well as ridiculous Fancies stole upon [him]'.⁷²

Misomedon had thus become a 'Hypocondriacus Confirmatus' in his mid-forties. The dialogue was, however, conducted when he was in his fifty-fifth year, and from that vantage point, he noted ruefully how, 'the long habit of my Illness had chang'd my very Humour'. Where previously he had been gay and even tempered, he had become, he bemoaned, 'full of Doubts and Fears ... grown peevish and fretful, irresolute, suspicious'; in fact, he continued, 'everything offends me, and a Trifle puts me in a Passion'.⁷³ Such was the problem which confronted Philopirio.

At the outset of their dialogue, Misomedon complained, 'I am very well assured I shall never be cured' and, setting the pattern for the rest of their conversation, Philopirio immediately replied, 'Whatever your Case may be; Sir, it is a great Misfortune, you entertain so ill an Opinion of it; but I hope, your Disease may prove less desperate than your Fears represent it'.⁷⁴ Indeed, in eliciting the details of Misomedon's case history, Philopirio proved himself to be an attentive and patient, as well as a comforting, listener. Misomedon was allowed to ramble on without interruption; indeed, he did so to such an extent that he expressed

72 Ibid., pp.22; 25-6.

73 Ibid., pp.46-7.

74 Ibid., p.1.

his fear that he would talk Philopirio 'to Death'.⁷⁵ Philopirio, however, constantly reassured him to the contrary. The following polite exchange is typical

Misomedon:

But I have tired you too much already, and am sensible, it is unpardonable to trespass so unreasonably upon any Man's good-nature, and desire him to listen to so tedious a Tale.

Philopirio:

Your Story is so diverting, that I take abundance of delight in it, and your Ingenious way of telling it, gives me a greater insight into your Distemper, than you imagine: Wherefore, let me beg of you to go on Sir; I am all Attention, and shall not interrupt you.⁷⁶

Philopirio did, however, interrupt Misomedon soon afterwards to offer his first digressionary and entertaining comments on 'the Arrogance of Physicians in general', and 'the truly Noble and Divine Art'⁷⁷ of physick. By their conclusion Misomedon has already begun to warm to his interlocutor and in expressing his delight, he unwittingly pinpointed the therapeutic strategy which informed Philopirio's discourse

You and I must be better acquainted, Philopirio; if your Medicines do me no good, I am sure your Company will: One thing above the rest I admire in you, and that's your Patience, which must be unaffected, because you can be gay in the Exercise of it. You can't imagine, how a pertinent lively Discourse, or any thing that is sprightly, revives my Spirits. I don't know what it is that makes me so, whether it be our talking together, the Serenity of the Air, or both; but I enjoy abundance of Pleasure, and this Moment, methinks, I am as well as ever I was in my Life.⁷⁸

Philopirio was thus at pains to entertain and humour his patient; he offered him encouragement and comfort, and he took time

75 Ibid., p.53.

76 Ibid., pp.19-20.

77 Ibid., pp.33; 34.

78 Ibid., pp.45-6.

to hear and weigh his complaints. His aim was to win Misomedon's confidence, to get him to preconfide in the discourse, and thus prepare him for the cure which was largely in his own hands. In that respect, Philopirio had one other trick up his sleeve, the nature of which he revealed to Misomedon at the end of the Third Dialogue. There he claimed

I am not only careful of the Idiosyncrasis, but likewise strive to fall in with the very Humours and Inclinations of my Patients: As for Example, as soon as I heard you was a Man of Learning, and lov'd Quotations from Classick Authors, I answer'd you in your own Dialect, and often strain'd myself to imitate, what in you is natural: I would not have talk'd so to a modishly ignorant Courtier, that would call it perhaps Pedantick.⁷⁹

In adopting the strategy of humouring Misomedon by the employment of a profusion of Latin tags, Philopirio was in fact following a long and established tradition in the treatment of melancholics, whereby physicians attempted to cure their patients' delusions by meeting them on their own grounds. Philopirio's use of such invention and artifice was, however, part of a larger therapeutic strategy; indeed, the task of winning Misomedon's confidence was merely a preliminary to that end.

As we have seen, earlier in the dialogue Misomedon had remarked 'how a pertinent lively Discourse, or anything that is sprightly, revives my Spirits', and as far as Philopirio was concerned, that statement was literally as well as figuratively true. For in revealing the physiological premise which informed his use of conversational therapy or the talking cure he quoted Baglivi to the effect that hypochondria

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.377.

is a Distemper ... which will not drive, as we say, but if kindly treated will lead; that is, will not be expelled by Purging, Bleeding, Sweating, or the like; but must be treated by more gentle and leisurely Methods; 'tis a Distemper of the Spirits and the Vessels which immediately convey them; and therefore those Means, by which they are more immediately affected, are the most likely to prove beneficial.⁸⁰

The immediate cause of hypochondria, according to Philopirio, was an over-active brain diverting the supply of animal spirits from the stomach, thereby causing a confusion of them. Misomedon's case history was a catalogue of the circumstances which led to that event. His passion for study, his addiction to 'Res Uxoria', and his worries about his estate had all contributed to the onset of his affliction, and in turn its symptoms had themselves become an additional and even greater source of anxiety. In seeking to alleviate, if not to cure, Misomedon's symptoms, Philopirio's therapy was directed towards restoring the 'tone and crasis' of the animal spirits and within that context conversation, especially if it was entertaining and reassuring, as well as diet and exercise, played an important role. For in soothing the mind, conversation stemmed its excessive and anxious consumption of the finer animal spirits which were required in the process of digestion, thereby relieving not only the dyspeptic, but also the mental, symptoms of the hypochondriac syndrome.

Throughout the Treatise, Mandeville in the guise of Philopirio had constantly invoked the medical ideas and authority of Baglivi. And his stress on both the role of the passions in the pathogenesis of physical diseases and the efficacy of conversation in their relief was no exception. In The Practice of Physick,

80 Ibid., p.378.

Baglivi had included a chapter entitled, 'The Cure of the Diseases of the Mind; and the Method for giving their History', and having observed, 'tis equally a Truth obvious to all Men, that a great Part of Diseases either take their Rise from, or are fed by the weight of Care that hangs upon every one's Shoulders',⁸¹ he urged all physicians to question their patients carefully about the occasional causes of their illnesses and particularly about the passions of the mind. Indeed, he added

I can scarce express what Influence the Physician's Words have upon the Patient's Life, and how much they sway the Fancy; for a Physician that has his Tongue well hung, and is Master of the Art of perswading, fastens, by the mere Force of Words, such a Vertue upon his Remedies, and raises the Faith and Hopes of the Patient to that Pitch, that sometimes he masters difficult Diseases with the silliest Remedies; which Physicians of greater Learning could not do with nobler Remedies, merely because they talk'd faintly, and with a soft dead Air.⁸²

Philopirio was undoubtedly a physician with his tongue well hung; he had been solicitous in coaxing Misomedon through the painful relation of the history of his distemper and he had been equally attentive in seeking to soothe and allay his anxieties. He did not, however, promise a complete cure, for 'As to Prognosticks', he claimed

considering the many Causes that have concurr'd to the ruining the Contexture of your Spirits, the long Duration of your Distemper, and the Violence it has been of, as is reasonably to be presum'd from the visible Alterations it has made in your very Temper and Constitution, my Sentiment is, that an entire Cure, so as never to relapse into any of the Symptoms, that are become habitual to you, is never to be expected, nor is your pristine Vigour ever to be restored; but if your Distemper be skillfully managed, and Prescriptions diligently comply'd with, your grievous Pains, the Disorders of the Fancy, and habitual Costiveness,

81 Practice of Physick, p.177.

82 Ibid., p.189.

which influences the rest, may be removed, the Return of all that is dismal in your Affliction be prevented, and your Life again be made easie and comfortable. Of this I can assure you, with as much Certainty, as Mortals can make Promises to one another.⁸³

The use of the word in curing diseases of the mind was, of course, not new even in Mandeville's day. Nevertheless, his use of therapeutic discourse was novel in one important respect, for as used by the ancients, and particularly by Galen, words formed part of the moral and not the medical order. The passions of the soul which Galen sought to relieve by the use of logos were not mental afflictions, but errors of opinion which accordingly were to be corrected by the proper ordering of reason. In fact, in the role of pedagogue rather than the role of physician, Galen had simply applied Stoic concepts to what were diseases of the soul in only a metaphorical sense. Indeed within the humoural tradition of physick, where mental disease was seen as the result of a primary physical distemper, no psychotherapy in the medical sense was possible - the physician could not engage in a dialogue with the black bile. The patient and his disease were ontologically separate and the latter was treated accordingly, with the emphasis on either altering the humour within, or expelling it from, the body.

Within Mandeville's physiological scheme there was, however, no Stoic separation of reason and passion, and therefore, no disease of the soul which was not also a disease of the body. For given his materialist, mechanistic, and reductive understanding of human functioning and behaviour, it followed that

83 Treatise., pp.221-22.

not only the Difference there is often in Constitutions and bodily Strength; but likewise good and ill Tempers, Passions of the Mind, Courage and the Want of it, Wit and Foolishness, and many other things not to be discover'd but from the Effects they have upon the Actions of Men, can be owing to, and depend upon nothing else, than the Difference in the Texture of Parts, Tone, Elasticity, or some other Quality of that wonderful Fluid, which we call the animal Spirits.⁸⁴

The mind was materially conceived and was thus amenable to cure by means of therapeutic strategies which operated on it via their effects on the animal spirits. In that respect, the use of the word was part of the medical and not the moral order. Mandeville the therapist was a physician and not a pedagogue.

Each of the major and distinctive features of Mandeville's medical thought and practice identified above, namely: his commitment to the methodological precepts of Hippocratic medicine; his mechanistic understanding of human physiological functioning; and his use of the talking cure in the treatment of hypochondriacal disorders, will be taken up and explored in more detail in my subsequent discussion of his philosophical and polemical arguments in The Fable of the Bees. That discussion will proceed by attempting to test the hypothesis that in his major non-medical work Mandeville assumed the role of state physician and that in ministering therein to the needs of the body politic, he drew upon and was guided by his experience in ministering to the body natural. The plausibility of adopting such an approach is the subject of my next chapter.

84 Ibid., pp.207-8.

3 READING THE FABLE OF THE BEES:

MANDEVILLE, MEDICINE, AND METAPHOR

Now to Discourse of the Natures of Things in Metaphors and Allegories is nothing else but to sport and trifle with empty words, because these Schems do not express the Natures of Things but only their Similitudes and Resemblances All these Theories in Philosophy which are expressed only in metaphorical Terms, are not real Truths, but meer Products of the Imagination Thus their wanton and luxurious fancies climbing up into the Bed of Reason, do not only defile it ... but instead of real conceptions and notices of Things, impregnate the mind with nothing but Ayerie ... Phantasmes.

Samuel Parker, A Free and Impartial Censure of the Platonic Philosophy
2nd edn. (Oxford, 1667), p.75.¹

At first sight, and given the distrust of analogical reasoning and metaphorical language which Mandeville professed in A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterical^k Passions,² any attempt to read The Fable of the Bees in terms of the metaphor of the body politic would seem to be a distinctly unpromising line of enquiry. Indeed the temptation to pursue such a strategy threatens merely to repeat the outrage which excited Samuel Parker in the passage cited above. It is essential, therefore, to demonstrate that there are legitimate and cogent, rather than purely hedonistic, reasons for not resisting the temptation in Mandeville's case.

Of course one response to Parker's objection is simply to notice the persistent gulf which divided methodological precept and practice in early modern scientific and political discourse and to

1 Cited in Barbara J. Shapiro, Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1983), pp.237-38.

2 See, for example, his critical comments on Willis' comparison of the human body to the operations of a still, Treatise, pp.95-105.

dismiss it accordingly.³ Mandeville, however, needs no such defence. For while he was certainly not overly fastidious about the stylistic propriety of The Fable of the Bees - on the contrary, he positively delighted in, and exploited to the full, its rhapsodic and rhetorical structure - the evidence there, as in his other non-medical works, suggests that he was neither naive nor uncritical about his own use of metaphor, and in particular the metaphor of the body politic. In explaining his use of that figure of speech Mandeville declared

I hope the Reader knows that by Society I understand a Body Politick, in which Man either subdued by Superior Force, or by Persuasion drawn from his Savage State, is become a Disciplin'd Creature, that can find his own Ends in Labouring for others, and where under one Head or other Form of Government each Member is render'd Subservient to the Whole, and all of them by cunning Management are made to Act as one.⁴

Here, as in other areas of his thought, Mandeville was simply echoing Hobbes who had similarly, though with characteristic brevity and precision, affirmed that what 'men call now a-days, a body politic, or civil society ... may be defined to be a multitude of men, united as one person, by a common power, for their common peace, defence and benefit'.⁵ The parallel with Hobbes is instructive and worth pursuing.

3 The Royal Society's seventeenth-century project for the rejection of the use of metaphorical language in the natural sciences got off to a less than happy start when its founder Thomas Sprat declared 'Who can behold, without indignation, how many mists and uncertaintyes, these specious Tropes and Figures have brought on our Knowledge?' in History of the Royal Society, eds. J.I. Cope and H.W. Jones (St. Louis, Washington University Press, 1958), p.62, cited in Shapiro, Probability and Certainty, p.236. Sprat's methodological own-goal was merely the first of many.

4 Fable of the Bees, I, 347.

5 'De Corpore Politico', The English Works of Thomas Hobbes ed. William Molesworth, 11 vols. (London, John Bohn, 1839-1845), IV, 122.

If philosophers would be scientific and avoid absurdity then, Hobbes insisted, 'the use of metaphors, tropes, and other rhetorical figures, instead of words proper'⁶ must be eschewed. Despite that warning, he nevertheless proceeded to anatomize the structure of his Leviathan state in terms of the parts of the body. Thus in

that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE, in Latin CIVITAS, which is but an artificial man ... sovereignty is an artificial soul, as giving life and motion to the whole body; the magistrates, and other officers of judicature and execution, artificial joints; reward and punishment, by which fastened to the seat of the sovereignty every joint and member is moved to perform his duty, are the nerves, that do the same in the body natural; the wealth and riches of all the particular members, are the strength; salus populi, the people's safety, its business; counsellors, by whom all things needful for it to know are suggested unto it, are the memory; equity, and laws, an artificial reason and will; concord, health; sedition, sickness; and civil war, death.⁷

Hobbes further extended that analogy in Chapter 29 of Leviathan, where he listed the infirmities of a commonwealth. Thus epilepsy was civil and religious authority equal and divided; hydrophobia the delirium of those bitten by the bug of classical democracy; pleurisy, the inflammation caused by monopolies; and so on.⁸ In that pathology of state distempers only the abomination, the siamese twin, of mixed government defied Hobbes' diagnostic skill.

In Leviathan therefore, Hobbes, although he never insisted upon the exactness of those comparisons, seemed merely to be following a tradition of political argument which stretched back to Plato's Republic. The continued and widespread use of that tradition in medieval and Renaissance political discourse owed as much to its flexibility - the metaphor of the body politic could

6 'Leviathan', English Works of Thomas Hobbes, III, 34.

7 Ibid., III, ix-x.

8 Ibid., III, 308-22.

convincingly justify either monarchical or republican forms of government - as to the opportunity which it gave writers to summarize in a single image the central tenets of their political thinking. Indeed, nowhere was the latter advantage better and more graphically illustrated than on the title-page of Leviathan itself, where Hobbes' all-powerful sovereign looms over the political landscape of the commonwealth. Yet, as in his use of the language of natural law, Hobbes employed the organic analogy only to undermine the basic epistemological assumption upon which it rested. Writing less than half a century before the publication of Leviathan, Edward Forset in his A Comparative Discourse of the Bodies Natural and Politique (1606) had argued that

The Commonweale with all her parts, orders, qualities, and requisites whatsoever, is (for better apprehension and illustration) set forth by sundry fit resemblances, as by the architecture of an house, by the swarming and cohabiting of Bees in an hive, by a Ship floating on the sea, and such like; but by none more properly than eyther by the universall masse of the whole world, (consisting of all the severall substances in that great frame by the high wisdom and might of God compact and united) or else by the body of man, being the lesser world, even the diminutive and modell of that wide extending universall.⁹

For Forset, as for other pre-modern theorists, the world was constituted by an interlocking and hierarchical system of resemblances and instructive correspondences. God's signature was to be read in both macrocosm and microcosm, and thus His wisdom in ordering the structure of the human body was to be followed in ordering the structure of civil government. Hobbes' use of the organic analogy, however, severed that connection. Instead he stressed the mechanism and artificiality of the image: the state

9 A Comparative Discourse of the Bodies Natural and Politique (London, 1606), Sig. ¶ iiii^r.

possessed no inherent order but only that which was engineered by man. Man was above all a mechanism and the state was analogously a machine. Hence in Hobbes' bleakly materialist vision, the metaphor of the body politic was shorn of its special and traditional resonance of a divinely ordained correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm.

It was in that sense then, that Mandeville was not simply referring to Hobbes' extensive use of the trope when he wrote 'Most Authors, who have writ of Government, have chose to express their Sentiments by comparing the Publick Body with the Body Natural; and Mr Hobbes, in his Leviathan, has carry'd the Allegory as far as it will go'.¹⁰ Although he hardly needed to make the glaringly obvious point that 'the Body Politick ... has no Liver nor Kidneys, no real Lungs nor Eyes in a literal Sense',¹¹ when, as in A Modest Defence of Publick Stews (1724), he did flirt with that metaphor, he, like Hobbes, reminded his readers that the use of 'Allegory [is] more proper for Rhetorick or Poetry than [for] ... serious Debates'.¹² And no doubt if he had been pressed to excuse such a lapse from methodological grace, Mandeville would have further agreed with Hobbes that compared to other abuses of speech 'metaphors ... are less dangerous because they profess their inconstancy; which the other do not'.¹³

On the twin grounds of methodological propriety and authorial consistency then, there is nothing inherently implausible nor contradictory in attempting to reconstruct Mandeville's arguments

10 A Modest Defence of Publick Stews (London, 1724; Augustan Reprint Society Publication no.162, Los Angeles, Clark Library, 1973), p.57.

11 A Letter to Dion (London, 1732; Liverpool Reprints no.10, Liverpool, University Press of Liverpool, 1954), p.40.

12 Modest Defence of Publick Stews, p.58.

13 'Leviathan', English Works of Thomas Hobbes, III, 29.

in The Fable of the Bees through an exploration of the metaphor of the body politic. Yet that commitment still looks distinctly odd when it is remembered that The Fable of the Bees is not in any immediately obvious sense a work which addresses matters of political concern. Moreover, if the parallel with Hobbes is a valid one, then, given that author's emphasis on mechanism and conscious human design in explaining the nature of social and political order, that difficulty is further compounded. For in the title of his major work Mandeville eschewed any direct reference to mechanism and artifice and invoked instead that favourite neo-classical image of social order, a hive of swarming bees - the image of a society in perfect harmony with the Great Chain of Being. A cursory reading of that text is enough, however, to dispel those reservations. In the opening lines of the Preface to the first edition of The Fable of the Bees (1714), Mandeville briefly summarized his views of man and society and the proper method for their investigation. In doing so he both established his Hobbesian credentials and gave notice of the salience in his thinking of the metaphor of the body politic

Laws and Government are to the Political Bodies of Civil Societies, what the Vital Spirits and Life it self are to the Natural Bodies of Animated Creatures; and as those that study the Anatomy of Dead Carcases may see, that the chief Organs and nicest Springs more immediately required to continue the Motion of our Machine, are not hard Bones, strong Muscles and Nerves, nor the smooth white Skin that so beautifully covers them, but small trifling Films and little Pipes that are either over-look'd, or else seem inconsiderable to Vulgar Eyes; so they that examine into the Nature of Man, abstract from Art and Education, may observe, that what renders him a Sociable Animal, consists not in his desire of Company, Good-nature, Pity, Affability, and other Graces of a fair Outside; but that his vilest and most hateful Qualities are the most necessary Accomplishments to fit him for the largest, and, according to the World, the happiest and most flourishing Societies.¹⁴

¹⁴ Fable of the Bees, I, 3-4.

Although he never laboured that opening metaphor, Mandeville nevertheless returned to it at significant and concluding points in his argument. Thus at the end of Remark Y in the expanded second edition of The Fable of the Bees (1723), where he re-affirmed the defence of luxury made in the 1714 first edition, Mandeville argued that

Philosophers, that dare extend their Thoughts beyond the narrow compass of what is immediately before them, look on the alternate Changes in the Civil Society no otherwise than they do on the risings and fallings of the Lungs; the latter of which are as much a Part of Respiration in the more perfect Animals as the first; so that the fickle Breath of never-stable Fortune is to the Body Politick, the same as floating Air is to a living Creature.

Avarice then and Prodigality are equally necessary to the Society. That in some Countries, Men are more generally lavish than in others, proceeds from the difference in Circumstances that dispose to either Vice, and arise from the Condition of the Social Body as well as the Temperament of the Natural.¹⁵

For Mandeville, therefore, nations like individuals had different temperaments and had to be treated accordingly. And thus he could similarly conclude his Essay on Charity and Charity-Schools,¹⁶ a sustained polemic against the folly of educating the poor and disturbing the natural operations of the labour market, by dismissing the counter example of Russia and 'the most commendable Quality of the present Czar of Muscovy ... his unwearied Application in raising his Subjects from their native Stupidity' on the grounds that

Sound Politicks are to the Social Body what the Art of Medicine is to the Natural, and no Physician would treat a Man in a Lethargy as if he was sick for want of Rest, or prescribe in a Dropsy what should be administered in a Diabetes. In short, Russia has too few Knowing Men, and Great Britain too many.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid., I, 250.

¹⁶ Which first appeared in the 1723 second edition of The Fable of the Bees.

¹⁷ Fable of the Bees, I, 322.

The evidence of those passages suggests, therefore, that there are plausible textual, as well as biographical, reasons for arguing that Mandeville, although doubly aware of the limits of the tradition of 'comparing the Publick Body with the Body Natural', chose nevertheless to remain and write within it. How he did so; how his use of it had both a figurative and a literal basis; how that use was informed by his own medical expertise; how it is reflected in both the form and content of The Fable of the Bees; and finally, how he out-hobbedes Hobbes by retaining the language of mechanism and the body politic, whilst undermining its newly-established foundation in artifice and conscious human design are the subjects of the next two chapters. The more immediate question of why he did so is the subject of the rest of this chapter.

In that respect, it is important to note that Mandeville's use of the metaphor of the body politic in The Fable of the Bees was not simply the result of a habit of mind. It was neither an unconscious reflex triggered by his professional bias nor merely another example of the marauding instincts of Augustan writers plundering other realms of print. It was, of course, partly that but, more significantly, it can be argued that it was also a conscious and entirely appropriate response to the eighteenth-century debate on public and private morality. It is now commonplace in Mandeville scholarship to read his arguments in The Fable of the Bees as a unique and heterodox contribution to that debate. Although different commentators have identified and emphasised different elements within it, the relevance and pervasiveness of that particular ideological context are undisputed. Thus Goldsmith has written

Wherever we look during the reigns of William and Mary, of William, or of Anne (or even of George), whether to public life or to private, to the theatre, the press, or the pulpit, we find a campaign against the moral degeneration of Britons.¹⁸

Daniel Defoe writing in 1698, however, put it somewhat differently: 'Immorality', he declared, 'is without doubt the present reigning distemper of the nation'.¹⁹ In doing so he did more than express his indignation, he put his finger on an anxiety which ultimately informed the period's neurotic obsession with morality. For irrespective of the baleful consequences of vice for men's prospects in the next world, Defoe and his contemporaries firmly believed that the wages of sin in this world were death and disease.²⁰

It was precisely that anxiety which was seized upon by a diverse cast of moral entrepreneurs - orthodox divines, Tory poets, disgruntled Whigs, and members of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners - who mounted, via press and pulpit, a symbolic crusade against the corruption of the age, thereby generating a moral panic which spawned in turn an equally diverse cast of folk devils - sabbath breakers, whores, drunkards, stock jobbers, placemen, and

18 M.M. Goldsmith, 'Public Virtue and Private Vices: Bernard Mandeville and English Political Ideologies in the Early Eighteenth Century', Eighteenth-Century Studies, 9 (1976), p.493.

19 The Poor Man's Plea (London, 1698), p.2. Cited in Dudley W.R. Bahlman, The Moral Revolution of 1688 (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1957), p.1.

20 That the tendency to describe social and political disruption in terms of bodily sickness represented an imaginative transfer of a quasi-literal rather than a symbolic kind is deftly illustrated by Pat Rogers' analysis of Defoe's parallel writings throughout the year 1720 on the South Sea Bubble and the Marseilles Plague, '"This Calamitous Year": A Journal of the Plague Year and the South Sea Bubble' in P. Rogers, Eighteenth Century Encounters (Sussex, Harvester, 1985), pp.151-67. A similar point is made by Max Byrd in his examination of Defoe's writings on London in his London Transformed (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1978), pp.8-43. Defoe was the most prolific author of his age and his writings indicate how easy it was for the Augustan mind to slip into such locutions. My argument attempts to show how that habit had an even more literal and physiological foundation.

luxurious aristocrats.²¹ In the ensuing flood of reforming and moralising literature, reference to physical disease and pollution was rampant. In itself such reference was neither remarkable nor inconsistent with a figurative rather than a literal usage. It is in the former sense that James Whiston in his tract England's State Distempers, Trac'd from their Originals: With Proper Remedies and Means to make her Vertuous and Prosperous (1704) inveighed against the practices of peculation and placemen and diagnosed 'A Consumption, that will bring [England] to death and destruction'. His indiscriminate references to 'Gangreen', 'Incestuous Copulation', 'Putrid Sores', 'Intestine Convulsions and Disorders', 'Epidemical Debauchery and the abominable Corruptions of the Magistracy infecting the People' and 'a Publick Body which is Crazie and Diseased'²² were not intended literally and served instead simply to dramatise his concern for the nation's political

21 The Augustan campaign for moral reform had begun in the reign of Charles II with the formation of religious societies to combat Popery; it had gathered momentum after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 when it was linked with movements to consolidate the political and religious establishments of that year; and it persisted well into the early decades of the eighteenth century as the uncomfortable gap between the ideal and the actual self-perception of Augustan society continued to widen. For aspects of the history of that movement see Bahlman, The Moral Revolution of 1688; and T.C. Curtis and W.A. Speck, 'The Societies for the Reformation of Manners: A Case Study In The Theory and Practice of Moral Reform', Literature and History, 3 (1976), 45-64.

The application to it of terms borrowed from modern analyses of the manufacture of deviance, although anachronistic, seems entirely appropriate. The terms 'folk devils' and 'moral panics' were originally coined by Stanley Cohen in his Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and the Rockers (London, MacGibbon and Kee 1972). For what follows Frank Pearce's 'How to be immoral and ill, pathetic and dangerous, all at the same time: mass media and the homosexual' in Stanley Cohen and Jock Young, eds., The Manufacture of News (London, Constable, 1973), pp.284-301, can also be read with profit and a sense of déjà-vu.

22 England's State Distempers (London, 1704), pp.43; 14; 15; 10; 6; 4; 16.

health. Yet the use of disease imagery in other tracts of the times was often more measured and cannot be similarly dismissed. Indeed to do so is to miss the sense in which, for the Augustan mind, disease was not a morally neutral category. It is moreover to misconstrue an outlook in which disease was not gratuitous but deserved, and in which accordingly moral sinfulness and physical illness were seen as causally linked.

The body was flesh as well as spirit, and orthodox divines could address themselves just as readily to the former as to the latter in adumbrating the mischiefs of sin. In 1698, the year in which Defoe first made his complaint, the Anglican cleric John Scott adopted that worldly and utilitarian tactic in his standard devotional text The Christian Life. According to Scott

The outward and Bodily Inconveniences which our Sins bring upon us are chiefly these Four.
First, They destroy our Health and shorten our Lives.
Secondly, They stain our Reputations -
Thirdly, They waste our Estates -
Fourthly, They disturb even our sensual Pleasures and Delights.²³

Under the first heading, and with a morbid sense of devotion to duty, Scott led his fellow Christians on a tour of 'The Slaughter-houses of Death ... to show [them] how thick they are hung about with the numerous Trophies of Lust and Intemperence'. Having displayed to suitable effect the corpses of adulterers, drunkards, gluttons and other reprobates, Scott concluded that 'there is no Vice whatsoever, but does one way or other undermine our Health and impair the Strength of Nature'.²⁴ And lest his readers doubted the literal and reductive foundations of his

²³ The Christian Life, 5 vols. (London, 1698), IV, 218-19.

²⁴ Ibid., IV, 219.

argument, Scott invoked the conventional medical wisdom of his day - the physiology of humours, passions, and animal spirits - to drive home his point

For all Viciousness consists in an Excess either of our Passions, or our Appetites: and it is plain and obvious, how destructive to our Health the wild Excesses of our Appetites are; how naturally Wantonness doth melt our Strength, consume our Spirits, and rot our Bones: how Gluttony obstructs our Breath, oppresses our Stomachs, and drowns our Bodies in unwholesome Crudities: how Drunkenness inflames our Livers, corrupts our Blood, dilutes our Brains, and converts us into walking Hospitals of Diseases. And as for the Excesses of our Passions, it is no less apparent how much they disturb and discompose our Natures: thus Anger we see fires the Spirits and inflames the Blood, and makes the Humours sharp and corroding: Thus immoderate Sorrow oppresses the Heart, dries the Bones, shrivels the Skin, and overcasts the Spirits with Clouds of Melancholy: Thus Envy swells the Hypochondries, which by drinking up the nourishment of the neighbouring Parts, makes the whole Body lean and meager: And in a word, thus excessive Fear stagnates the flowing Spirits and turns the Blood into a trembling Jelly. And such Disorders as these, when they are frequent, must needs gradually undermine the Forts of Life and hasten them into an untimely Ruin.²⁵

Scott's sorry catalogue of the evils of sin did not stop there however. Because of the intimate connection between body and soul, sin undermined mental as well as physical health. According to Scott it

dissolves our Reason into a meer sensual Sagacity, and enslaves that high-born Power to every base Passion and Appetite; and so reduces our well-formed Natures into an undistinguish'd Chaos, where Sense and Reason, Brute and Man are shuffled together in a heap of rude and undigested Ruins.²⁶

In that way individual reputations were blemished, the dignity of the entire species impugned, and God's purposes for man frustrated.

Throughout his unremitting call to a devout and holy life, Scott's focus was overwhelmingly individualistic and Christian, and

25 Ibid., IV, 219-20.

26 Ibid., IV, 236.

his tone relentlessly rigorous and mortifying. Neither emphasis was likely to appeal to a polite and unregenerate elite. Yet in the reforming literature of a more social and secular nature which did find favour with that audience, similarly reductive claims linking individual vice and disease to social and political disruption are also to be found. John Dennis' An Essay on Publick Spirit (1711) is typical of that civic genre.²⁷

In elaborating the syllogism that public spirit is love of one's country; love of one's country is love of one's countrymen; and love of one's countrymen, love of their customs and manners, Dennis homed in on foreign luxury, 'the spreading Contagion of which is the greatest Corrupter of the Publick Manners and the greatest Extinguisher of Publick Spirit'.²⁸ With that metaphor in place, he then made the standard rhetorical move of arguing that 'What the Spirit of a Man is to the Body Natural ... Publick Spirit is to the Body Politick'.²⁹ And just as 'the Body decays when the Spirit languishes' he concluded that 'a Nation, when that mighty Spirit that animates it, wholly fails, returns into the Mass of Nations'.³⁰ The message was clear and disturbing, reduced to a state of moral and political entropy England would no longer be able to make a splash in European affairs - she would no longer be able to defeat the French. To explain that national malaise,

27 John Dennis (1657-1734), dubbed 'furious' by Pope and remembered chiefly, and fittingly, by Steele as the inventor of an improved stage-thunder box had a checkered career even by Augustan standards. Staunch Whig, dramatist, England's first professional literary critic, and failed banker, Dennis was for part of his life an habitué of The Fleet. In 1724 he published his attack on The Fable of the Bees, Vice and Luxury Publick Mischiefs (London, 1724), only to elicit Mandeville's jibe that he was 'A noted Critick, who seems to hate all Books that sell', Letter to Dion, p.46.

28 An Essay upon Publick Spirit (London, 1711), p.vi.

29 Ibid., p.1.

30 Ibid., p.1.

Dennis invoked the spectre of a physically degenerate elite whose moral flabbiness disqualified them both from supplying the personnel of government and from setting the vigorous civic tone which rank and social hierarchy demanded. In doing so he grounded the figurative distemper of the body politic in the literal distempers of bodies natural. Those real disorders were, he argued, the result of a recently acquired taste for foreign luxury. French dressing - culinary and sartorial - French spirits, and even Italian opera served therefore to explain and isolate diseases which, though catching, were not indigenous to a naturally robust and healthy nation. Potentially fatal, the diseases of luxury could nevertheless be cured and England saved.

To support that argument Dennis returned to a virtuous past in which well born Englishmen enjoyed rude and bucolic health, to a time when

Their way of living in the Country, their Diet, their Air, their Oeconomy, and their rural Diversions and Exercises confirm'd their Healths, and improv'd their Estates, and supply'd them both with Strength of Body, and with Vigor of Mind. So that their Minds were serene, or their Passions moderate; their Distempers neither frequent nor violent, and their Children healthful, lively, robust and nervous.³¹

Sound in mind and body such men necessarily displayed all the cardinal social virtues, they

were at once both just, and generous, sincere, faithful, laborious; the Women modest, obedient, chaste, and diligent: Both Men and Women frugal, liberal, temperate, hospitable. Their Conversation and their Diet were like their Manners simple; their Conversation without Fraud, and their Diet without Artifice.³²

If they did quit their country seats and 'unwillingly went to Town, the Occasion was important, and the stay was short'; they

31 Ibid., pp.8-9.

32 Ibid., p.8.

maintained social hierarchy, for 'they knew how to descend with Dignity'; and, most importantly, 'their extreme Contempt for soft, luxurious, effeminate Arts'³³ promoted military virtue and thus their ability to notch up constant victories against the French.

In contrast to that muscular and edifying vision, Dennis described an Augustan elite distinguished by their 'foppish Profusion, in Eating, Drinking, Dress, and Equipage'.³⁴ Devoid of civic purpose and sunk in a sea of ennui and enervation, the elite had 'most humbly condescended to borrow from their mortal Enemies, and have valued themselves upon French Habits, French Dishes, and French Dances'.³⁵ Luxury had, therefore, deformed both the interior regions and the external surfaces of the body politic. Moreover, Dennis continued, as 'Few Constitutions and fewer Estates are sufficient to such Luxury',³⁶ aristocrats robbed the public purse and 'racked and grinded' their tenants to support their newly acquired habit. With corrupt statesmen at the helm of the nation's affairs and a peasantry reduced, like their French counterparts, to servitude, England's liberties were doubly threatened. Finally in seeking risk and sacrifice in the gaming house, rather than on the battlefield, aristocrats also undermined the social hierarchy, for

Men forget their Birth, their Rank, their Dignity, their Understanding, their Virtue, and herd and converse with mean Wretches, who are often both Fools and Knaves.

Worse still, women 'in the Fury of their Passion, loose all Government and all Decorum',³⁷ with nothing else left they wagered themselves.

33 Ibid., p.9.

34 Ibid., p.13.

35 Ibid., p.13.

36 Ibid., p.16.

37 Ibid., p.17.

Luxury, therefore, destroyed the social, and corrupted the political, fabric. For Dennis, however, its most outrageous and immediately physical consequence lay in its tendency to obliterate the most fundamental of all distinctions - the distinction of gender. Unlike the beer and roast beef of merrie England, foreign dishes and liqueurs with 'their unnatural Mixtures ... their high Aromatick Sauces [were] fierce Incendaries of the Blood and Spirits'.³⁸ Consequently in women 'they raise[d] fierce Ebullitions and violent Emotions, too rude for the delicate Texture of their Fibres'. Their bodies disordered, women were driven by irregular desires and reduced to a state of hysteria. 'Our Girls', Dennis complained, 'are ripe as soon as those of the Indies ... [and] Women are Masculine in their Desires, and Masculine in their Practices.' But if girls were distempered and 'forc'd to Prematureness by the Heat of adventitious Fire' and women were turned Amazons, a luxurious diet had precisely the opposite effect on male constitutions. Accordingly, Dennis bemoaned the fact that men had 'come to use Red and White' and were 'more soft, more languid, and more passive than Women'.³⁹ Sexual relations were unnatural and non-productive, and the body politic was in effect castrated. With more than a hint of special pleading, Dennis, as self-appointed champion of the British theatre, attributed the unmanning of the aristocracy not only to the debilitating effects of its foreign diet but also to its growing taste for Italian opera. Stretching the physiological foundations of his argument to their limits, he argued that women were wrong to support that fad

38 Ibid., p.14.

39 Ibid., p.15.

for 'the more the Men are enervated and emasculated by the Softness of the Italian Musick, the less will they care for them, and the more for one another.' Public spirit and reproductive vitality were going for a song and along with it, Dennis concluded, English liberty, which though threatened was 'yet entire'.⁴⁰

Although Dennis' arguments were a bizarre amalgam of personal prejudice⁴¹ and public concern, their denunciation of luxury nevertheless reflected many of the central assumptions and anxieties which informed the period's wider debate on public and private morality. Long associated with physical indulgence and sexual immorality, the concept of luxury had, by the turn of the eighteenth century, come to symbolise all the vices of the age.⁴² For the Augustan mind luxury was an index of moral and physical decay in the body natural and - the connection was causal and not merely contingent - of chaos and irrationality in the body politic. Luxury was also at one and the same time a theory of value and a theory of history, condemning and explaining personal and collective decline from a virtuous and vital past. Paradoxically the denunciation of luxury was both accusatory and therapeutic. For a society experiencing the dissonance of rapid and dislocating

40 Ibid., p.25.

41 Dennis' campaign against Italian opera was satirised by Steele in The Tatler. In describing a performance of Scarlatti's Pyrrhus and Dimitrius at the Haymarket opera-house, Steele noted that 'a great Critick fell into Fits in the Gallery, at seeing, not only Time and Place, but Languages and Nations confused in the most incorrigible Manner. His Spleen is so extremely moved on this Occasion, that he is going to publish a Treatise against Operas, which, he thinks, have already inclined us to Thoughts of Peace, and if tolerated, must infallibly dispirit us from carrying on the War', Tatler No.4, 16-19 April 1709.

42 For an analysis and survey of what Englishmen in the early eighteenth century knew about luxury see John Sekora, Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought, Eden to Smollett (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

changes in its social, political, and economic structures, the cry of foreign luxury named an enemy without and thus at a stroke refocused and soothed national anxiety.⁴³

Radically different in emphasis and origin, the civic virtues of Dennis and the Christian virtues of Scott could nevertheless coexist quite cheerfully, if uneasily, in the 'watered-down Whiggish republicanism' which constituted the dominant ideology of the age and the inspiration for the whole movement for the reformation of manners. Underpinning that ideology, however, and holding its disparate elements together, was a view of human nature which celebrated the dignity of the species and the ability of the individual, either in the name of civic or Christian virtue, to control his passions and tame his appetites. Furthermore, given a theory which saw the larger economy as simply household management writ large,⁴⁴ the widest possible dispersion of individual virtue was criterially linked to the preservation of national health, which everyone agreed consisted in riches at home and power abroad. Of course, within that broad consensus, prescriptions for the maintenance and restoration of national health differed.

43 The need to identify scapegoats, preferably foreign ones, is a characteristic element in the creation of moral panics. In the modern context see, for example, Jock Young's comments on the 'evil' role of foreign pushers in media explanations of drug taking in The Drugtakers and the Social Meaning of Drug Use (London, MacGibbon and Kee, 1971). In the eighteenth century context, the corollary of that finding is illustrated by the way in which xenophobic Englishmen could measure the extent of national corruption even in their language, when, for example, the Morbus Gallicus became englished as 'the Covent Garden Gout'.

44 For the view that 'economics does not exist in the seventeenth century' and that the management of the economy was conceived in terms of the 'wise administration of the household and the maintenance of the objects of administration in their rightful place' see Keith Tribe, Land Labour and Economic Discourse (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), pp.80-82 and throughout.

Clergymen like Scott called upon individuals to mortify the flesh; the Societies for the Reformation of Manners rounded-up petty miscreants and encouraged the moral regeneration of the nation's elite;⁴⁵ others, like Dennis, doubting the efficacy of either tactic, demanded the imposition of sumptuary laws;⁴⁶ only the genteel and urbane journals of opinion, The Spectator and assorted Tatlers, attempted to polish the manners of the age in a more polite and palatable fashion.⁴⁷

Mandeville's response to all that in The Fable of the Bees was devastatingly simple and direct. It was hopelessly wrong he implied - and the implication was not lost on his contemporaries - for two reasons. First, it was based upon a fundamental misunderstanding of human behaviour and the possibility of virtue. Secondly, given that faulty diagnosis, its prescriptions for the preservation of national health were at best counter-productive and

45 Convinced of the need to intervene actively in the lives of others, they paid informers to comb the streets, especially on the Sabbath, for the 'taking up of drunkards, swearers, etc. and the carrying them before magistrates', J. Woodward, A Help to a National Reformation (London 1711), p.22, cited in Horne, The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville p.2. Like Scott, their thinking stressed the connection between sin and disease but they also believed that no moral reformation was possible without the support of the elite. Curtis and Speck, 'The Societies for the Reformation of Manners', p.54.

46 'neither the Clergy, nor the Lay-Societies for the Reformation of Manners can employ the most effectual Method ... for the immediate Suppression of bare-fac'd Luxury ... That Method can only be practis'd by the joint Authority of the Queen and her great Council, that is, by the wholesome Severity of sumptuary Laws, or Publick Taxes upon Luxury', Dennis, Essay upon Publick Spirit, pp.v-vi.

47 The Spectator, for example, commented on luxury only half a dozen times between 1711 and 1714 and it did so less acrimoniously than standard Tory and Country Whig tracts on that subject, Sekora, Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought, p.80.

at worst fatal. The text of The Fable of the Bees, its philosophical and polemical arguments, may be read as Mandeville's protracted attempt to elaborate and substantiate those objections. What follows will seek to demonstrate that in doing so his medical beliefs did much of the work.

4 THE PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENTS OF THE FABLE OF THE BEES:

MANDEVILLE, MECHANISM, AND MORALS

From the vantage point of A Letter to Dion (1732), and thus with the benefit of hindsight, Mandeville could look back on his protracted performance in The Fable of the Bees and impose system and coherence on an otherwise disparate set of prose remarks, essays, and dialogues by describing it as 'a Philosophical Disquisition into the Force of the Passions, and the Nature of Society'.¹ It was not of course his intention on first putting pen to paper to elucidate such a theory. For although the second volume of The Fable of the Bees was ostensibly designed 'to illustrate and explain several Things, that were obscure and only hinted at in the First',² the earlier volume was in no sense merely a trial run, an initial attempt at clarification, for the systematic dialogues which followed it. Indeed the exuberant portrait of the vices and follies of Augustan society painted in volume one stands in marked contrast to the calmer and more measured account of the rise, control, and diversification of the passions presented in volume two. Whatever else he was doing in the course of writing The Fable of the Bees, Mandeville was not seeking simply to record and clarify his thought. What in fact he was doing is nevertheless best appreciated once an account of his 'Philosophical Disquisition into the Force of the Passions' is in

1 Letter to Dion, pp.54-5

2 Fable of the Bees, II, 7.

place. To read The Fable of the Bees as an historical document, as evidence of the range of polemical targets he was aiming at, it is necessary therefore to read it first as a philosophical text. That this can be done by drawing freely upon both of its parts and without doing too much violence to the integrity of their piecemeal composition is suggested both by the authority of Mandeville's retrospective understanding of his own performance and by the evidence of his earlier writings in The Female Tatler, which indicate that even by 1709-10 many of the ideas which after 1714 he employed to defend and elaborate the thesis 'Private Vices, Publick Benefits' had already taken shape.³ The details of Mandeville's 'Philosophical Disquisition into the Force of the Passions, and the Nature of Society' have been thoroughly examined and ably discussed in the secondary literature. The following account will in part rehearse those arguments but in doing so it will seek to demonstrate that the correspondence between them and his medical thought is more complete than has hitherto been assumed.

4.1 Understanding the Passions: Empiricism, Rationalism, and the Eye of Reason

Mandeville's evolutionary theory of society was based upon his theory of the passions. At any one point in time the passions were the foundations of physical and mental health in the body natural:

3 See M.M. Goldsmith, 'Public virtue and private vices: Bernard Mandeville and English political ideologies in the early eighteenth century', Eighteenth-Century Studies, 9 (1976), 477-510.

over time they were the cement of human sociability, the motor of social progress, and the mainsprings of national prosperity and power in the body politic. Unlike the later theories and conjectural histories of the Scottish Enlightenment, Mandeville's natural history of the passions focused on only the first and last stages of man's progress through history - on man in his savage state and man in his civilized state. In examining the role of the passions in civilized or polished society, Mandeville could, as befitted a physician, give full play to his empirical commitments and draw 'Physical Cases and Historys to the Life'.⁴ Men, even the sincere ones who believed their own propaganda were notoriously unreliable witnesses of their own behaviour and motivations and accordingly Mandeville steadfastly refused to 'judge of Mens Sentiments from their Words, where I have their Lives before me'.⁵ In his eyes there was 'no Argument so convincing as Matter of Fact' and for that reason he could, and did, dismiss the social theories and moral self-understanding of his age when 'the Solidity of them is inconsistent with our daily Experience'. In assuming that empirical and sceptical stance, he professed, although he did not always practise, the impartial role of the natural scientist. As a disinterested taxonomist of human behaviour, he claimed that man's 'Qualities whether good or bad, I shall not determine' arguing that 'To search into the real Causes of Things imports no ill Design, nor has any Tendency to do Harm' in much the same way

4 Treatise, p.39.

5 Fable of the Bees, I, 152. All future citations of this text will in this and the following chapter be grouped for ease of reference.

as 'A Man may write on Poisons and be an excellent Physician'.⁶

Unlike civilized man, savage man could not, however, be similarly subjected to the clinical gaze of the physician. In that respect the record of history was doubly unhelpful. In the first place, the writings of historians and moralists did not go back far enough; and in the second place, even where they did exist, such texts were as unreliable as the self-advertisements of 'Addresses, Epitaphs, Dedications, and above all the Preambles to Patents' which Mandeville sarcastically described as 'The most instructive Writings to understand the World, and penetrate into the Heart of Man'.⁷ But if history was uncertain and man's knowledge of it was conjectural, then for Mandeville it was no different from medicine. Accordingly, both the methodological precepts and substantive principles which applied to the proper study and understanding of the one applied to the other.

To read history accurately 'There is not' Mandeville reasoned 'a more copious nor a more faithful volume than human Nature, to those who will diligently peruse it'. Moreover, stripped of geographical and cultural contingency human nature was both uniform and invariant for Mandeville claimed 'we shall find that Human Nature since the Fall of Adam has always been the same, and that the Strength and Frailties of it have ever been conspicuous in one Part of the Globe or other, without any Regard to Ages, Climates or Religion'. Man's 'Strength and Frailties' were in part determined by the details of his physical organisation and thus historical understanding, like its medical counterpart, required the study of

6 Ibid., I, 122; I, 324; I, 41; I, 408; I, 408.

7 Ibid., II, 43.

anatomy. Yet whilst man was a creature of 'Skin, Flesh, Bones, etc that are obvious to the Eye'⁸ he was also, and more importantly, 'a compound of various Passions, that all of them, as they are provoked and come uppermost, govern him by turns, whether he will or no'. Historical understanding, therefore, also required the study of the passions. For that task, however, the unaided eye of pure empiricism was inadequate. Indeed 'the Multitude, who judge from outward Appearances' focused only on the 'Graces of a fair Outside' and were thus incapable of 'detect[ing] the Force and Disguises' of the passions and tracing 'Self-love in its darkest Recesses'. Such knowledge, Mandeville insisted, was available only to 'The curious, that are skill'd in anatomizing the invisible Part of Man'⁹ and in that sense, establishing the nature of savage man was no different from establishing the nature of civilized man. For although the latter could be directly observed and the former could not, the behaviour and nature of both was, mutatis mutandis, governed by the passions. And discerning the operations of the passions demanded not the vulgar eye of the layman or moralist but the physician's sophisticated 'Eye of Reason'.¹⁰

Unlike those practitioners who laboured under the 'odious Name' of 'Empyrick',¹¹ physicians worthy of the name needed to organise their observations within a coherent theory of man's physiological functioning. Accordingly, Mandeville could consistently, although cautiously, invoke a modern and Cartesian model of man based upon the mechanical laws of hydrostatics,

8 Ibid., II, 147; I, 229; I, 39.

9 Ibid., I, 39; I, 156; I, 4; I, 405; I, 405; I, 145.

10 Treatise, p.170.

11 Ibid., p.56.

whilst advocating a classical and Hippocratic medical method based on 'downright Observation and a World of Experience'.¹² The human body was, he declared, 'a most astonishing Master-piece of Art', it was a 'curious Machine' and he insisted that 'no Man can have a tolerable Idea of the Contrivance, the Art, and the Beauty of the Workmanship itself, even in those Things he can see, without being likewise vers'd in Geometry and Mechanicks'.¹³ Here Mandeville was at one with his mentor Baglivi. In contrast to the neo-Galenic theoretical tradition which used abstractions such as substantial forms, manifest and occult qualities, and entelechies, Baglivi approvingly listed the 'new systems of philosophy, that this fertile age has produced: I mean the Cartesian, the Democritan, the Mechanical, the Physico-Mechanical, and an infinity of other Systems'.¹⁴ Modern theory, he argued, was infinitely more certain than, and preferable to the theory of the ancients because it

is grounded upon Experiments made with diligence and repetition, and drawn from the Storehouse of Natural Philosophy: it lays down, and demonstrates the Causes and Symptoms of Diseases, not by uncertain Conjectures, but by Mathematical Truths that shine as clear as the Sun.¹⁵

In that luminous spirit, Mandeville could both conjecture that 'The Structure and Motions of the Body, may perhaps be mechanically accounted for' and assert that 'all Fluids are under the Laws of Hydrostaticks'.¹⁶ Moreover, as the evidence of his medical treatise has shown, he also and firmly believed that

12 Ibid., p.56.

13 Fable of the Bees, II, 161.

14 The Practice of Physick, (London, 1704), p.125.

15 Ibid., p.129.

16 Fable of the Bees, II, 161.

not only the Difference there is often in Constitutions and bodily Strength; but likewise good and ill Tempers, Passions of the Mind, Courage and the Want of it, Wit and Foolishness, and many other things not to be discover'd but from the Effects they have upon the Actions of Men, can be owing to, and depend upon nothing else, than the Difference in the Texture of Parts, Tone, Elasticity, or some other Quality of that wonderful Fluid, which we call the animal Spirits.¹⁷

In Mandeville's eyes, therefore, the most vital, though invisible, part of man - his passionate nature - was best seen through materialist and mechanistic theories of the animal spirits.

Constitution and not custom was king, and accordingly he reduced even the most noble of man's apparent virtues to the details of his physical organisation and the motions of his bodily fluids. Thus, for example, he argued that

what the greatest Heroe differs in from the rankest Coward, is altogether Corporeal, and depends upon the inward make of Man. What I mean is call'd Constitution; by which is understood the orderly or disorderly mixture of the Fluids in our Body: That Constitution which favours Courage, consists in the natural Strength, Elasticity and due Contexture of the Finer Spirits, and upon them wholly depends what we call Stedfastness, Resolution and Obstinacy ... That some People are very much, others very little frighten'd at things that are strange and sudden to them, is likewise altogether owing to the firmness or imbecility in the Tone of the Spirits ... The Contexture of Spirits is so weak in some, that tho' they have Pride enough, no Art can ever make them fight, or overcome their Fears; but this is a Defect in the Principle of the Fluids, as other Deformities are faults of the Solids.¹⁸

All could see that men differed in 'Faces and Stature' but only the 'Eye of Reason', suitably illuminated by theory, could discern those differences 'that [were] more remote from Sight', individual differences in temper and complexion, which ultimately 'depend[ed]

17 Treatise, pp.207-8

18 Fable of the Bees, I, 211-12.

only upon the different Frame, the inward Formation of either the Solids or the Fluids'¹⁹ of men.

Although Mandeville was firmly committed to the theories of mechanism and the hydrostatick motions of the fluids or animal spirits, he nevertheless regarded them as heuristic devices, as convenient hypotheses for understanding man's passionate nature. His use of them in no way undermined his larger commitment to the empirical method nor his scepticism about either the ultimate constituents of matter or the value of mathematical and mechanical reasoning in medicine. Like Baglivi, he believed that modern theory was superior to that of the ancients but again like Baglivi he also believed that the reverse was the case in the field of medical practice. 'The pernicious Errors that Physick groans under at this day',²⁰ Baglivi complained, were due to the error of forming rules of practice from rules of theory. Now although that distinction depended upon a certain looseness of thought, its validity for Mandeville rested upon a radical separation of 'the Easie, the Pleasant, the Speculative, the Preparatory part of Physick'²¹ from the difficult and practical part, the art of curing. Thus in his own mind he could consistently espouse the modern theory of mechanism and at the same time argue that

we can have no Help from any Part of the Mechanics, in the Discovery of things, infinitely remote from Sight, and entirely unknown as to their Shapes and Bulks. Physicians, with the rest of Mankind, are wholly ignorant of the first Principles and constituent Parts of Things, in which all the Virtues and Properties of them consist; and this, as well of the Blood and other Juices of the Body, as the Simples, and consequently all the Medicines

19 Fable of the Bees, II, 121-22.

20 The Practice of Physick, p.132.

21 Treatise, p.35.

they make use of. There is no Art that has less Certainty than theirs, and the most valuable Knowledge in it arises from Observation, and is such; as a Man of Parts and Application, who has fitted himself for that Study, can only be possess'd of, after a long and judicious Experience. But the pretence to Mathematicks, or the Usefulness of it in the Cure of Diseases, is a Cheat, and as errant a Piece of Quackery as a Stage and a Merry Andrew.²²

Both medicine and history, therefore, were uncertain and conjectural but both were the only hope for understanding man. The relevance of Mandeville's uneasy adherence to a priori theories of mechanism and to knowledge gained from observation and a long and judicious experience for accomplishing that task will emerge on further consideration of his account of the rise, control, and diversification of the passions. First, however, it is necessary to examine in more detail Mandeville's views on human nature and normal human functioning.

4.2 Beast Machines and Man Machines: Animal Life Cycles and Human History

Contrary to the theological and self-congratulatory wisdom of his day which celebrated the uniqueness of man and emphasized the fixity of species, Mandeville placed man squarely within the physical and animal world. Although 'the most perfect of Animals' man was still an animal. There was, for Mandeville, no clear-cut division between him and the higher forms of animal life, for his experience in comparative anatomy and dissection had led him to observe that

22 Fable of the Bees, II, 161-62.

in such perfect Animals as Sheep and Oxen, in whom the Heart, the Brain and Nerves differ so little from ours, and in whom the Separation of the Spirits from the Blood, the Organs of Sense, and consequently Feeling it self, are the same as they are in Human Creatures.

Nor did man enjoy any privileged place in the Great Chain of Being.

Compared to 'A single Lion [who] bears some Sway in the Creation' man was a puny and insignificant creature, only impressive 'when well join'd together ... [to] compose the strong Leviathan'.

Barely on a par with some animals in terms of his physique and lacking the dispensation of divine favour, man nevertheless shared their fate. If God, in Epicurean fashion, did not play dice with the universe it was still an indifferent and insufficient place for 'It is evident', Mandeville observed, 'that the Necessaries of Life stand not every where dish'd up before all Creatures'. Man and animal alike faced privation and to overcome it they were similarly endowed with 'Instincts that prompt them to look out for those Necessaries, and teach them how to come at them'.²³

The greatest of those instincts, and Mandeville's first and only law of nature, was 'the Love which all Creatures, that are capable of any bear to themselves'. Accordingly to that law 'no Creature is endued with any Appetite or Passion but what either directly or indirectly tends to the Preservation either of himself or his Species'. Appetites were therefore functionally adapted to needs and at the level of species their variety, as well as their strength, were similarly adapted to the details of physical organisation. The lion, for example, was a machine 'contrived, for offensive War and Conquest' and to that end 'his Fabrick, his

23 Ibid., I, 44; I, 173; I, 179; II, 176; II, 176.

Structure and his Rage [were] so justly proportion'd to one another'.²⁴ Accordingly, Mandeville could both wonder at and explain:

his massy Talons, the Size of them, and the labour'd Firmness, with which they are fix'd in, and fasten'd to that prodigious Paw; his dreadful Teeth, the Strength of his Jaws, and the Width of his Mouth equally terrible ...the Make of his Limbs, the Toughness of his Flesh and Tendons, the Solidity of his Bones, beyond that of other Animals, and the whole Frame of him, together with his never-ceasing Anger, Speed and Agility.

The instinct which set that murderous machine in motion was a hunger 'more piercing' than that possessed by other animals. For whilst the lion had predatory instincts 'those Creatures that are good Food for them; ... have likewise an Instinct that teaches them to shun, conceal themselves, and run away from those that hunt after them'. The hunger of the lion was then 'a constant Fuel to [his] Anger' which in turn buoyed him up in the pursuit of his elusive prey. His hunger was also functionally adapted - and here Mandeville was speaking with the voice of a physician especially interested in the mechanics and physiology of concoction - to 'a Ferment within him that consumes the toughest Skin and hardest Bones as well as the Flesh of all Animals without Exception'.²⁵ Materialist and functional explanations, albeit those uninformed by causal back-ups of a Darwinian kind, were thus for Mandeville the means of understanding 'The whole System of animated Beings on the Earth'²⁶ and within that system of explaining the diversity, as well as the individual nature, of species.

24 Ibid., I, 200; I, 200; II, 234; II, 233.

25 Ibid., II, 233-34; I, 203; I, 203; I, 203; I, 179.

26 Ibid., II, 247.

As a physical being with his place in nature, man was to be judged by the same rule. Thus Mandeville observed:

From the Tenderness of Man's Skin, and the great care that is required for Years together to rear him; from the Make of his Jaws, the Evenness of his Teeth, the Breadth of his Nails, and the Slightness of both, it is not probable that Nature should have design'd him for Rapine; for this Reason his Hunger is not voracious as it is in Beasts of Prey; neither is he so salacious as other Animals that are call'd so, and being besides very industrious to supply his Wants, he can have no reigning Appetite to perpetuate his Anger, and must consequently be a timorous Animal.

By nature man was not designed to be an omnivore. Neither his frame, temper, nor digestive system fitted ^{him} for that role. Indeed

Nature taught [his] Stomach to crave nothing but Vegetables ... [for his] squeammish Stomach, in which the Digestive Heat is weak and inconsiderable, won't so much as admit of the most tender Parts of [animals], unless above half of the Concoction has been perform'd by artificial Fire beforehand.

But that was true only of man in his savage state. As a civilized creature - and here Mandeville was no doubt speaking from a world of experience in ministering to the dietary indiscretions of the beau monde - his 'violent Fondness to change, and greater Eagerness after Novelties, have prompted [him] to the Destruction of Animals without Justice or Necessity, perverted [his] Nature and warp'd [his] Appetite'.²⁷ In time herbivores became omnivores: whereas animals had a life cycle, man had a history.

The internal oeconomy of the lion and its external relationship with the world of nature were both stable and unalterable. In that sense lions were no different from bees, for 'Have we any Reason to imagine', Mandeville asked, 'that the Society of Bees, that sent forth the first Swarm, made worse Wax or

27 Ibid., I, 205; I, 178-79; I, 178.

Honey than any of their Posterity have produced since?' The human hive was, however, neither stable nor unalterable. Bees had gathered and subsisted on the same honey since time out of mind, man in contrast had gone in search of ever more refined and diverse means of sustenance. Culture had thus intervened between him and his first nature and to discover why it had done so Mandeville sought 'such Qualifications as we excel all other Animals in'. It was of course obvious to all who cared to look that what distinguished man from other species was 'his superior Capacity in the Faculties of thinking and reflecting, beyond other Creatures, his being capable of learning to speak, and the Usefulness of his Hands and Fingers'.²⁸ In identifying those capacities Mandeville took care, however, to distinguish what was acquired from what was natural in man. Man's vaunted superiority in thinking and speaking well was, he argued, neither ready made nor divinely ordained; it was instead only acquired through a long and mechanical development of a potential latent within his physical and psychological organisation. Understanding the presence of reason and speech in man, therefore, depended at least in part upon understanding the facts of comparative anatomy.

Men and animals were machines but owing to the 'great Accuracy of [man's] Frame and inward Structure', the human machine was more subtle and complex, and could thus be fine-tuned. That comparative anatomical advantage was most evident, Mandeville observed, in the finer structure of the human brain and the more pliable nature of man's vocal chords, both of which possessed 'the Fitness to be

28 Ibid., II, 187; II, 181; II, 177.

moved with Facility'. In contrast, other animals were doubly disadvantaged for Mandeville conjectured not only was it 'highly probable that the principal and most necessary Parts of the Machine are less Elaborate in' them but in addition, because they matured so rapidly, their 'Organs ... grow stiff, before ours are come to half their Perfection'.²⁹ Man's capacity for reason and speech was therefore grounded in both his superior physical endowment and in 'the Slowness and long Gradation of [his] Encrease'. Nevertheless, Mandeville noted, in man even the potential for speech and thought 'vanishes, when we come to Maturity, if till then it has been neglected'. That he reasoned could be inferred from the nature of cognitive development and the effects of maternal deprivation in children. Some women, he claimed

have no Leisure to indulge themselves in the various Expressions of their Fondness for their Infants ... [and] ... This want of prattling to, and stirring up the Spirits in Babes, is often the principal Cause of an invincible Stupidity, as well as Ignorance, when they are grown up; and we often ascribe to natural Incapacity, what is altogether owing to the Neglect of this early Instruction.

The development of speech and reason, therefore, required social intercourse and the physical stimulation - via the mechanical operations of the animal spirits - of the appropriate parts of the human machine. In civilized society that was of course achieved through the medium of speech but in man's infancy that was not, indeed for Mandeville it could not have been, the case. Savages, 'that never convers'd with their own Species'³⁰ were literally the deprived and ignorant children of history. Although they possessed the physical equipment - delicate brains and sensitive

29 Ibid., II, 191; II, 182; II, 174; II, 191.

30 Ibid., II, 191; II, 182; II, 189; II, 189.

vocal chords - for reason and speech, that potential awaited stimulation and development. The relevant parts of the human machine had thus to be set, and kept, in motion and, for Mandeville, that motive power was provided by the mechanical operation of the passions in man. In that reductive and materialist sense then the passions were the anonymous parents of history and the stimulus for the long conversation of mankind and his progress through history. To understand Mandeville's account of that conversation, it is necessary to explore further his mechanistic model of normal animal and human functioning.

Within an atomistic universe uninformed by any larger or pre-ordained plan, 'Every Individual' Mandeville insisted, 'is a little World by itself, and all Creatures, as far as their Understanding and Abilities will let them, endeavour to make that Self happy'.³¹ To that end all animals were, as demonstrated above, endowed with the instinct of self-love and with basic appetites such as hunger and lust which, at the level of species, were functionally adapted to the details of their physical organisation. But within a wholly materialist, as well as atomistic, universe all animals were little more than sentient machines and their instincts and appetites also provided the fuel which set individual machines in motion and kept them ticking over in proper working order. The nature of that order was, for Mandeville, the same in both beast and human machines, for in both it depended upon, and was ultimately reducible to, the regular flow of the bodily fluids or 'the Tone, Crasis, and due Consistency'³²

31 Ibid., II, 178.

32 Treatise, p.170.

of the animal spirits. Given that reductive physiological theory, it is possible to infer the principles which, for Mandeville, engineered physical health and well-being in both man and animals alike.

The corollary of Mandeville's egoistic axiom that 'all Creatures as far as their Understanding and Abilities will let them, endeavour to make that self happy' was the rule that '... all Creatures hate and endeavour to avoid Pain'. Now for Mandeville the primary source of pain for all animals was their experience of physical privation. If, for example, either of the two basic appetites of hunger and lust were frustrated then 'the Tone, Crasis, and due Consistency' of the animal spirits would be disturbed. That disturbance would, however, initiate automatic and countervailing responses in the flow of the animal spirits which, on transmission to the heart via their impact on the circulation of the blood, would in turn produce the passionate state required to satisfy the frustrated appetite. Thus, for example, when hungry the lion became angry and his anger fuelled his pursuit of food until his hunger was assuaged. His efforts, however, obviously depleted the reserves of animal spirits in his hydraulic system but, as Mandeville noted, 'the loss of Spirits, Experience teaches us, is best repair'd by Food and Sleep'.³³ Thus the satisfaction of the lion's hunger followed by rest served not only to return the flow of his bodily fluids to an equilibrium state, it also restored the supply of animal spirits to their appropriate and vital level. The lion was thus best understood as a self regulating machine

33 Fable of the Bees, II, 178; II, 202; II, 176.

caught in a homeostatic and negative feedback loop of hunger - eating - sleeping - and hunger. With his belly full he slept and for that reason he, like other animals, had a life cycle and not a history. In contrast, man, even in his savage state, was not simply an efficient machine for processing silage. Although as an untaught animal he was largely driven by his appetites and physical needs, when they were satisfied he did not merely slump back in his hammock. What got him out of his hammock and thus out of the state of nature, and indeed what got civilized man out of bed each morning, was his instinct of self-liking.

Whereas the instinct of self-love catered for the goods of the body, the instinct of self-liking catered for the goods of the mind. The primary function of self-love was to ensure self-preservation and accordingly it was an instinct which prompted all animals to 'scrape together everything [they] wanted for Sustenance, provide against the Injuries of the Air, and do everything to make [themselves] and young Ones secure'. It was, however, only one part of the motivational structure of all animals. To guarantee its operation Mandeville reasoned that a second instinct was required. Thus he argued that 'as no Creature can love what it dislikes, it is necessary ... that every one should have a real liking to its own Being, superior to what they have to any other'. Self-liking was therefore the instinct 'by which every Individual values itself above its real Worth'. As such it functioned to buttress self-love and 'to encrease the Care in Creatures to preserve themselves'. Although it was present in all creatures, its effects were most visible in the more perfect species such as birds and horses but even here, Mandeville argued,

the details of physical endowment and environmental circumstance combined to give them 'neither Opportunity nor Temptation to shew it'.³⁴ In the animal kingdom, therefore, self-love remained the dominant instinct and fear and anger the dominant passions. Accordingly, animals were trapped in patterns of behaviour which condemned them to repeat the unchanging facts of their respective life cycles. In the social realm, however, the reverse was the case for there it was self-liking and not self-love which governed man's behaviour. In time its operations enabled him to override and control his basic passions of anger and fear to the extent that even his instinct for self-preservation could be extinguished by the act of suicide; in controlling his fear and anger, self-liking allowed man's other passions to come into play; at the same time it also provided the stimulus for the development of his distinctive capacities of reason and speech; most importantly of all, however, it promoted physical well-being in the body natural and power and prosperity in the body politic. In short, self-liking, unlike self-love, initiated patterns of behaviour which were dynamic and open-ended, rather than static and closed. Indeed for Mandeville its presence in man, and the psychic demands which it occasioned, provided the mechanism which enabled him to explain the rise, diversification, and control of the passions and thus the course of man's progress through history. The details of that natural history of the passions will be discussed below and in so doing it will be argued that, in tracing the effects of self-liking in both the individual and society at large, Mandeville discerned the

34 Ibid., II, 133; II, 129; II, 130; II, 130; II, 130.

operation of the same spontaneous and automatic principles which were responsible for determining the self-regulating operations of beast machines.

4.3 Exciting the Passions: Self-liking, Speech, and Specie

Although in all creatures self-love was buttressed by self-liking, only in man, according to Mandeville, was that instinct 'accompany'd with a Diffidence, arising from a Consciousness, or at least an Apprehension, that we do over-value ourselves'. The origins of that distinctive and unhappy consciousness were ultimately grounded in the details of man's superior physical endowment for, in contrast to other animals, the more complex organisation of his brain gave him a greater capacity for reflexive thought and thus a propensity to doubt his own worth. Nevertheless, the existence of that anxiety was, for Mandeville, a significant and vital element in the structure of human motivation. All creatures, he insisted 'are fond of their Ease to the last degree and [are] as industrious to procure it'.³⁵ In the animal kingdom that ease was achieved through the satisfaction of physical needs but in man that ease, given the psychic demands of self-liking, necessarily included the satisfaction of the mind as well as the sustenance of the body. The goal of mental ease and tranquility, therefore, lay at the centre of Mandeville's theory of human motivation and behaviour. Moreover, although he could not specify the exact mechanism of their interaction, he was nevertheless certain that the fortunes of

35 Ibid., II, 130; II, 138.

mind and body were inextricably linked. Man's overall well-being, therefore, ultimately depended upon the state of his mental health. Accordingly, the anxiety aroused by the operation of self-liking was, if unchecked, a constant threat to normal human functioning. With his physical needs - his hunger and lust - satisfied, even savage man did not merely slump back in his hammock satiated and contented, instead he nervously looked for evidence to confirm his inflated good opinion of himself. He looked around to see how others were doing and what he saw frequently exacerbated rather than allayed his anxiety. And it did so because of his capacity for envy.

Envy, Mandeville argued, was a passion 'rivetted in Human Nature', it was a compound of grief and anger and all men were subject to its effects, for he reasoned 'How a Creature possess'd of [anger] and Self-liking when he sees others enjoy what he wants, should be affected with Envy, can ... be no Mystery'. Envy, moreover, was a 'Baseness in [human] Nature', it was a 'distemper' and unconstrained its effects in man were pathological. Envy thus disturbed the quiet of man's mind for, Mandeville observed, if a man 'hates or envies with any Violence ... it would ruffle his Temper'.³⁶ The pathological effects of envy in man were, however, neither irreversible nor fatal for in the long run they were subject to the same countervailing tendencies which governed the self-regulating operations of beast machines. For although the mental anxiety which envy created in the individual disturbed the balance and flow of his bodily fluids, that disturbance tended to

36 Ibid., I, 137; II, 176; I, 134; I, 136; II, 112.

initiate, via the movements of the animal spirits and blood, additional and automatic passionate responses which served to restore both the flow of his fluids and the balance of his mind to their normal, equilibrium states.

In civilized man the exact nature of that passionate response varied according to the object of envy and to both the variety of individual social circumstance and the particular details of individual temper and bodily complexion. In savage man, 'feeding on Nuts and Acorns, and destitute of all outward Ornaments' both the objects of envy and the range of possible passionate responses were, in contrast, more limited. Once fed, savage man's self liking and thus his natural 'Desire of Superiority' could express itself only in ostentatious displays of strength and physical prowess and the envy which that naturally evoked in others could be satisfied in one of two ways. Subject to violent passions and unrestrained by either the fear of legal sanctions or the dictates of good manners, savage man could, like his modern unpolished counterpart, simply vent his anger and 'go directly and beat those [his] Envy is levell'd at, from no other Provocation than what that Passion suggests to [him]'.³⁷ Such a response would, however, ultimately be self-defeating. For although in the short run, it would initially calm his anger and restore the quiet of his mind, in the long run the anarchy and constant threat of reprisals thus created would hardly be conducive to his permanent ease and security, either physical or mental. Moreover, his good opinion of himself depended upon a thought of a thought, namely his perception

37 Ibid., II, 132; II, 132; I, 136.

of the esteem which others had for him. Thus - anticipations of the master-slave dialectic - the removal of the other would rob him of the approbation upon which his precarious self-liking depended. A more satisfactory and self-sustaining response, therefore, was to seek to outdo others, to emulate and thus psychically, rather than physically, obliterate their envied characteristics.

Although savage man delighted in displays of physical strength and prowess, lurking behind that ostentation Mandeville perceived the instinct of lust and the passions aroused by sexual envy. Once fed, savage man did not merely slump back in his hammock, instead he constantly looked for someone better with whom to share it. Sexual desire and the envy which interpersonal comparisons evoked thus initiated the first cycle of emulative behaviour. Although Mandeville's version of the Fall was thus thoroughly secularized, women in effect still bore the burden of original sin. Accordingly he argued that

Women will always prize themselves for what they see the Men admire in them: Hence it would follow, that the Women would value themselves, and envy one another for being handsome; and that the ugly and deform'd, and all those that were least favour'd by Nature, would be the first, that would fly to Art and additional Ornaments: Seeing that this made them more agreeable to the Men, it would soon be follow'd by the rest, and in a little Time they would strive to outdo one another, as much as their Circumstances would allow of; and it is possible, that a Woman with a very handsome Nose might envy her Neighbour with a much worse, for having a Ring thro' it.

Whereas for Rousseau sexual envy was the worm in the bud of civilization - the moment in the Golden Age when happy peasants dancing around a camp fire discovered their amour propre and began their irreversible slide towards alienation and corruption - for Mandeville it was the cause of civilization's flowering. Far from

corrupting man, envy perfected his nature and lifted him out of his savage state for, he claimed, once man's 'Pride has room to play, and Envy, Avarice and Ambition begin to catch hold of him, he is rous'd from his natural Innocence and Stupidity'. Envy aroused and multiplied man's desires and accordingly it was the foundation of all his subsequent material achievements, for Mandeville continued 'As his Knowledge increases, his Desires are enlarg'd, and consequently his Wants and Appetites are multiply'd'.³⁸ The diversification and pursuit of human desires led eventually to the development of commerce and industry and in time the first cycle of emulation initiated by sexual envy was replaced by an even more powerful cycle, that driven by the more intangible and diffuse desire for social esteem and status.

In civilized society, Mandeville observed, 'We all look above our selves, and, as fast as we can strive to imitate those, that some way or other are superior to us'. Civilized society was, moreover, commercial society; it was, for Mandeville, quintessentially an urban and populous place. Within it interpersonal contacts were fleeting and anonymous, accordingly appearance was everything, for Mandeville noted 'People, where they are not known, are generally honour'd according to their Clothes and other Accountments they have about them'. The desire for social esteem thus manifested itself in a great chain of competitive dressing and conspicuous consumption which stretched from 'The poorest Labourer's Wife in the Parish' to 'the Prince's great Favourites and those of the first Rank' at Court. Furthermore, to maintain

38 Ibid., II, 133; I, 206; I, 206.

its place in the status hierarchy each rank had continually to outbid its inferior to the extent that 'those of the first Rank of all, having nothing else left to outstrip some of their Inferiors, are forc'd to lay out vast Estates in pompous Equipages, magnificent Furniture, sumptuous Gardens and princely Palaces'. And for Mandeville the social and economic consequences of that emulative striving were obvious: 'it is this' he claimed 'that sets the Poor to Work, adds Spurs to Industry, and encourages the skilful Artificer to search after further Improvements'.³⁹

In the distinctive structure of human motivation it was self-liking and not merely self-love which therefore provided the fuel in the machine, the motive power without which man would have remained once fed a 'lumpish Machine ... a huge Wind-mill without a breath of Air'. The anxiety which accompanied self-liking aroused man's envy and thus multiplied his desires which because of the demands of emulative striving were potentially without limit. In man, therefore, the goal of mental ease was a dynamic rather than a static condition. Caught in a positive, rather than a negative, feedback loop automatically initiated and sustained by their passions 'Men discover[ed] a restless Endeavour to make themselves easy' and for that reason most were strangers to content or 'that calm Serenity of the Mind which Men enjoy while they think themselves happy, and rest satisfy'd with the Station they are in'. That agitated state of affairs was not for Mandeville, however, a pathological condition. On the contrary, he claimed that the psychic rewards that stemmed from the successful pursuit

39 Ibid., I, 129; I, 127; I, 129; I, 129-30; I, 130.

of self-liking, 'the inward Pleasure and Satisfaction a Man receives from the Gratification of that Passion, is a Cordial that contributes to his Health'. Indeed in a trying and indifferent world, self-liking was man's best defence against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. Against all the odds it kept men going and it kept them cheerful. Self-liking Mandeville claimed

doubles our Happiness in Prosperity, and buoys us up against the Frowns of adverse Fortune. It is the Mother of Hopes, and the End as well as the Foundation of our best Wishes: It is the strongest Armour against Despair, and as long as we can like any ways our Situation, either in regard to present Circumstances, or the Prospect before us, we take care of ourselves.⁴⁰

Self-liking therefore gave men their zest for life and accordingly it was an essential component in their normal and successful functioning.

Whereas man's appetites and physical needs 'Hunger, Thirst and Nakedness [were] the first Tyrants that force[d him] to stir', the cognitive dissonance and passions aroused by his instinct of self-liking were 'the great Patrons that promote[d] all Arts and Sciences, Trades, Handicrafts and Callings'. Self-liking therefore initiated successive cycles of emulation and was the motor of historical progress. It aroused the passions of avarice, envy, and ambition and throughout history those passions, according to Mandeville, were 'the great Task-masters' that kept 'the Members of the Society to their labour and [made] them all submit, most of them chearfully, to the Drudgery of their Station'.⁴¹ However,

40 Ibid., I, 184; II, 139; I, 242; II, 134; II, 136.

41 Ibid., I, 366.

the physical labour which the psychic demands of self-liking exacted obviously wasted the supply of animal spirits upon which the continued and normal functioning of the human machine depended. That energy had to be replaced and for Mandeville the source of its replacement lay in the second distinctive feature of human self-liking. Because man doubted his self-worth, his anxiety made him 'fond of the Approbation, Liking and Assent of others; because they strengthen and confirm us in the good Opinion we have of ourselves'. Thus in the same way as food and sleep repaired the spirits and kept animal machines in motion, the applause of other men fuelled the human machine for Mandeville claimed 'where Men exert themselves to the utmost, and take uncommon Pains, that spend and waste the Spirits, those Applauses are very reviving'.⁴²

In the state of nature even savage man, Mandeville conjectured, 'would be highly delighted with, and love every body, whom he thought to have a good Opinion of him, especially those, that by Words or Gestures should own it to his Face'. Indeed before the development of the spoken word it was body language and 'the Language of the Eyes, by the help of which the remotest Nations understand one another at first Sight, taught or untaught, in the weightiest temporal Concern that belong to the Species'.⁴³ Thus in the first cycle of emulation initiated by lust and sexual envy a nod was as good as a wink to savage man, and approving looks and gestures spurred him on in his restless desire to confirm his good opinion of himself and his physical prowess.

42 Ibid., II, 130; II, 153.

43 Ibid., II, 133-34; II, 287.

With the development of language, however, the potential for exciting man's passions and flattering his self image was further increased. Although, as his comments on maternal deprivation in children and the effects of martial and operatic music in stimulating the passions indicate,⁴⁴ Mandeville believed that sounds could operate mechanically on the animal spirits, the restorative and energising effects of speech were not the result of any simple vibrational mechanism. Instead he argued that 'The Pleasure we receive from Acclamations, is not in the Hearing; but proceeds from the Opinion we form of the Cause, that produces those Sounds, the Approbation of others'. Speech was in part the art of flattery and 'There is no Man', Mandeville claimed, 'of what Capacity or Penetration soever, that is wholly Proof against the Witchcraft of Flattery, if artfully performed and suited to his Abilities'. For that reason men were both prepared and able to sacrifice their physical ease and drive themselves almost to the point of exhaustion in order to win the approval and good words of their peers. And the quid pro quo for their efforts

the great Recompence in view, for which the most exalted Minds have with as much Alacrity sacrificed their Quiet, Health, sensual Pleasures, and every Inch of themselves, has never been any thing else but the Breath of Man, the Aerial Coin of Praise.

The rewards, and thus the motive power, of praise were not, however, unlimited. Man was a machine and Mandeville observed

In working a Machine, we ought to have Regard to the Strength of its Frame; Limited Creatures are not susceptible of infinite Delight; therefore we see, that a Pleasure protracted beyond its due Bounds becomes a Pain ... there is no Cordial so sovereign, that it may not become offensive, by being taken to excess.

44 Ibid., II, 38-9; II, 286.

For that reason, he continued

the same Acclamations that are ravishing to a Man at first, and perhaps continue to give him an unspeakable Delight for eight or nine Minutes, may become more moderately pleasing, indifferent, cloying, troublesome, and even so offensive as to create Pain, all in less than three Hours; if they were to continue so long without Intermission.

The 'Aerial Coin of Praise', and its ability to stimulate the animal spirits and motivate man, was thus subject to a spoilage criterion and for Mandeville, as for Locke, that difficulty was overcome by the invention of money.⁴⁵

In the individual, Mandeville claimed, 'the Invention of Money seems to me to be a thing more skilfully adapted to the whole Bent of our Nature, than any other of human Contrivance'; whilst in society at large, he asserted, 'it is impossible to name another, that is so absolutely necessary to the Order, Oeconomy, and the very Existence of the Civil Society'. In the body politic money set the price and regulated the flow of goods and services. Its rewards set men to work and together with the less tangible benefits of honour it promoted and encouraged arts and sciences. Like speech, therefore, it was a vital element in sustaining the long and successful conversation of mankind for, Mandeville argued, 'to procure all the Comforts of Life, and what is call'd temporal Happiness, in a large polite Nation, would be every whit as practicable without Speech, as it would be without Money, or an Equivalent to be used instead of it'. Its role in regulating the oeconomy of the body natural was, however, equally crucial. In that respect, and once again invoking the mechanical physiology of the animal spirits, Mandeville argued that

⁴⁵ Ibid., II, 154; I, 51-2; I, 54-5; II, 154; II, 154.

Lucre is the best Restorative in the World, in a literal Sense, and works upon the Spirits mechanically; for it is not only a Spur, that excites Men to labour, and makes them in love with it; but it likewise gives Relief in Weariness, and actually supports Men in all Fatigues and Difficulties.⁴⁶

Money was thus 'skilfully adapted' to the details of man's physiological organization and thus to 'the whole Bent of [his] Nature'. Indeed for Mandeville nowhere was its mechanical impact better seen than in the powerful and immediate reinforcement schedules of piecework. Thus he argued that 'A Labourer of any sort, who is paid in proportion to his Diligence, can do more work than another, who is paid by the Day or the Week, and has standing Wages'. A principle which applied equally well to the professions 'where the Reward continually accompanies the Labour, and the Fee immediately, either precedes the Service they do to others, as it is with the Lawyers, or follows it, as it is with the Physicians'.⁴⁷ Moreover, whereas flattery was 'a bewitching Engine' its effects varied according to man's place in the hierarchy of polite society; in contrast there was 'nothing ... more universally charming than Money; it suits with every Station; the high, the low, the wealthy, and the poor'. Thus in order to 'keep the Members of the Society to their labour, and make them all submit, most of them chearfully, to the Drudgery of their Station' the 'Aerial Coin of Praise'⁴⁸ had to be reinforced and supplemented by the more solid and lasting consolations of specie.

Of course from the perspective of his physical needs and the

46 Ibid., II, 353; II, 349; II, 350; II, 354-55.

47 Ibid., II, 353; II, 355; II, 355.

48 Ibid., I, 43; II, 345; I, 366; I, 55.

immediate demands of instinctual gratification, civilized man's desire to accumulate capital - either verbal or monetary - was distinctly irrational. Once fed, the lion, for example, had neither the need nor the desire to slaughter and heap up more prey: similarly man, once his physical ease and security had been provided for, had no obvious need to pursue and heap-up praise and specie. But from the perspective of his second nature and the desires occasioned by his overdeveloped and anxious sense of self-liking such behaviour was in time not only rational, it was also, given the spontaneous and self regulating principles of his physiological organization, inevitable. Mechanically aroused by envy and emulative striving as well as by physical necessity, man was driven by a 'perpetual Desire of meliorating his Condition'⁴⁹ and his summum bonum was, in contrast to other animals, predominantly a psychic rather than a physical, and a dynamic rather than a static, condition. Accordingly, the rewards of money and praise provided not only the energy which kept the human machine in motion but also the means by which the immediate demands of instinctual gratification were overridden and replaced by the more sophisticated and elusive pleasures of deferred gratification.

Although 'Man center[ed] everything in himself, and neither love[d] nor hate[d], but for his own Sake' his mental ease and happiness nevertheless depended upon his commerce with others. Society was both the context which stimulated his desires and the source - via the media of praise and specie - of their satisfaction. Yet before society was possible, and before man could learn

49 Ibid., II, 180.

to savour the joys of deferred, rather than immediate, gratification his passions had to be controlled as well as aroused. In his savage state man was governed by 'the unbridled Appetites of his untaught or ill-managed Nature'. He was swayed by 'The Demand of the predominant Passion for the Time it lasts' and thus Mandeville inferred 'In such a one, the Passions must be boisterous, and continually jostling and succeeding one another; no untaught Man could have a regular way of thinking, or pursue any one Design with Steadiness'.⁵⁰ As a result the state of nature was neither a happy nor a well ordered place for in savages

their unruly Passions and the Discords occasioned by them, would never suffer them to be happy; their mutual Contentions would be continually spoiling their Improvements, destroying their Inventions, and frustrating their Designs.

In contrast Mandeville observed amongst the highest rank of polite society

well-bred People, Persons that are well educated, [who] have learn'd to study their Ease and the Comforts of Life; to tie themselves up to Rules and Decorums for their own Advantage, and often to submit to small Inconveniences to avoid greater.⁵¹

In short, he observed men who had apparently learnt to control their passions. The passage from a discordant and anomic state of nature to the 'Rules and Decorums' of polite society was however a long one. Nevertheless, directing its course and regulating the passions in both the body natural and the body politic Mandeville discerned the operation of the same spontaneous principles which, via the demands of self-liking, were responsible for arousing man's desires and creating all the bustle in the world.

⁵⁰ Ibid., II, 178; II, 270; II, 201; II, 199.

⁵¹ Ibid., II, 267; II, 306.

4.4 Controlling the Passions: Persuasion, Politics, and Polite Society

4.41 Children and Savages: Parents and Passions

In delineating the unruly behaviour and character of savage man Mandeville had to rely on conjecture rather than direct observation. 'We have', he remarked, 'so few Examples of human Creatures, that never convers'd with their own Species, that it is hard to guess, what Man would be, entirely untaught'.⁵² Nevertheless, even in the absence of appropriate anthropological evidence, his speculations on that subject were not entirely devoid of empirical support. For given his axiomatic belief in both the innateness of the passions and their primacy in determining human behaviour, he reasoned that the character of savage or untaught man could be established by observing the behaviour and temper of children before they were socialized into 'the Rules and Decorums' of contemporary and polite society. Indeed he employed the analogy of child development to determine not only the rude and boisterous persona of man in the state of nature but also to explain key features of his subsequent development through history. Features such as the attainment of self-consciousness; the acquisition and nature of linguistic and cognitive skills; and, most importantly of all, the development of an apparent moral sense.

In observing 'the Pastimes and Recreations of young Children' Mandeville noted their 'delight in playing with Kittens and little

52 Ibid., II, 189.

Puppy Dogs'. Their pleasure in 'always lugging and pulling the poor Creatures about the House proceeds' he asserted 'from nothing else but that they can do with them what they please, and put them into what posture and shape they list'. Such domineering behaviour was he added the result of 'the love of Dominion and that usurping Temper all Mankind are born with'.⁵³ In turn that 'love of Dominion' was for Mandeville the 'never-failing consequence of the Pride, that is common to all Men' and as such he insisted it was present in both 'the Brat of a Savage' as well as 'the Son of an Emperour'.⁵⁴ Moreover, in young children their 'Desire of Superiority' naturally manifested itself in the habit of 'grasping everything to' themselves, a behavioural trait which was further exacerbated by the absence of 'reasonable Notions of Right and Wrong'. Such notions, Mandeville insisted, were acquired for he noted that 'if they were as natural, or if they affected us, as early as the Opinion, or rather the Instinct we are born with, of taking every thing to be our own, no Child would ever cry for his eldest Brother's Playthings'.⁵⁵ Children therefore possessed no innate moral sense and arguing by analogy Mandeville conjectured that savage man would similarly and 'naturally, without much Thinking in the Case, take everything to be his own, that he could lay his Hands on'.⁵⁶ Though unhappily in his infancy man's playthings in the state of nature were not toys and trinkets but the bodies of other men, their wives, their children, and their possessions in general.

53 Ibid., I, 281.

54 Ibid., II, 204.

55 Ibid., II, 223-24.

56 Ibid., II, 200.

Gripped by a domineering spirit and devoid of a moral sense, children, and by implication their savage ancestors, were naturally prey to the powerful demands of their untutored passions. For example, when angered they gave full vent to that passion by lashing out in all directions. Behaviour which for Mandeville was proof positive of man's essentially animal and naturally aggressive nature. Thus he argued that

the obvious, ready, and unstudy'd manner of venting and expressing Anger, which Nature teaches, is the same in human Creatures that it is in other Animals, and is done by fighting; as we may observe in Infants of two or three Months old, that never yet saw any Body out of Humour: For even at that Age they'll scratch, fling, and strike with their Heads as well as Arms and Legs, when any thing raises their Anger, which is easily and at most times unaccountably provok'd; often by Hunger, Pain, and other inward Ailments. That they do this by Instinct, something implanted in the Frame, the Mechanism of the Body, before any Marks of Wit or Reason are to be seen in them, I am fully persuaded; as I am likewise, that Nature teaches them the manner of fighting peculiar to their Species; and Children strike with their Arms as naturally as Horses kick, Dogs bite, and Bulls push with their Horns.

Naturally aggressive and unrestrained by the 'Rules and Decorums' of polite society the character of children, like that of savages, exhibited a 'natural Wildness' and a 'Spirit of Independancy'. Both children and savages were 'stubborn and obstinate', 'unruly' and fond 'of following their own Will'.⁵⁷ In short, both were incapable of controlling their passions and thus they were incapable of governing themselves.

In effect children at birth, and thus man in his infancy, were little more than bundles of raw feelings and passions, possessing only the most rudimentary form of self-consciousness. They were,

57 Ibid., II, 295-96; II, 280; II, 280-81.

for example, barely able to distinguish themselves from other objects in the natural world. 'All young Children' Mandeville observed 'seem to imagine, that every thing thinks and feels in the same Manner as they do themselves'. And to support his contention 'that they generally have this wrong Opinion of Things inanimate' Mandeville cited 'a common Practice' which they exhibited, namely that

whenever they labour under any Misfortune, which their own Wildness, and want of Care have drawn upon them. In all such Cases, you see them angry at and strike, a Table, a Chair, the Floor, or any thing else, that can seem to have been accessory to their hurting themselves, or the Production of any other Blunder, they have committed.⁵⁸

Moreover that 'natural Folly' was accompanied and compounded in young children and savages alike by the absence of reason and speech. For although both capacities were latent in man's physical organisation neither was to be found ready made at birth. 'Man', Mandeville insisted, 'is a rational Creature, but he is not endued with Reason when he comes into the World; nor can he afterwards put it on when he pleases, at once, as he may a Garment. Speech likewise is a Characteristick of our Species, but no Man is born with it'. Indeed Mandeville explicitly invoked and acknowledged the leading child psychologist of his day when he claimed that 'Thinking, and Reasoning justly, as Mr Lock has rightly observed, require Time and Practice'.⁵⁹

In civilized society that practice was gained in the normal course of social interaction, through children being 'brought up in Society, and hourly improv'd by conversing with others, that are wiser than themselves'. More particularly it was gained through

58 Ibid., II, 209.

59 Ibid., II, 210; II, 190; II, 190.

the 'good Discipline, and the prudent Care of Parents and Masters' to whom Mandeville argued 'Men are beholden for the greatest Part of their Improvements'. And those improvements included not only the development of reason and speech and the acquisition of self consciousness but also and crucially the ability to tame the passions and to submit to the demands of sociability. As a result children learnt to be responsible and acceptable members of polite society, for amongst their many accomplishments they gradually acquired and internalized the concept of meum and tuum. 'Let us examine' Mandeville asked

a Man's whole Life, from his Infancy to his Grave, and see, which of the two seems to be most natural to him; a Desire of Superiority, and grasping every thing to himself; or a Tendency to act according to the reasonable Notions of Right and Wrong; and we shall find, that in his early Youth the first is very conspicuous; that nothing appears of the second before he has receiv'd some Instructions, and that the latter will always have less influence upon his Actions, the more uncivilis'd he remains.⁶⁰

And what was true of man's moral development was also true of his cognitive and prudential development, for Mandeville noted 'A Man of threescore, caeteris paribus, knows better what is to be embraced or avoided in Life, than a Man of thirty'. Time and experience were thus crucial in fostering man's distinctive intellectual and social skills. Nevertheless, Mandeville insisted, 'The Foundation of all Accomplishments must be laid in our Youth' for in civilized society the family remained the primary agent of man's socialization. 'It is our Parents', he asserted

that first cure us of our natural Wildness, and break in us the Spirit of Independancy, we are all born with: It is to them we owe the first Rudiments of our Submission;

60 Ibid., II, 210; II, 341; II, 223.

and to the Honour and Deference, which Children pay to Parents, all Societies are oblig'd for the Principle of human Obedience.⁶¹

Parents were therefore responsible, either directly through instruction or indirectly through providing appropriate role models, for educating children and initiating them into approved patterns of social behaviour. Parents in effect smoothed out the roughness in the boisterous personas of their offspring and they did so by manipulating, albeit unconsciously, the very passions which they sought to control.

Amongst the various passions which jostled for preeminence in the unruly character of the untaught child, two in particular made him amenable to parental management and control - namely, the passions of love and fear. As sentient beings young children were no different from other creatures in that they all 'hate[d] and endeavour[ed] to avoid Pain'. Thus parents by caring for their offspring and removing the pain of physical privation became the objects of filial love and devotion for, as Mandeville remarked, 'Benefits beget Love in all that receive them'. On the other hand, parents were also in a position to punish and inflict pain on their children, and thus they were to be feared as well as loved.

Although diametrically opposed, both facets of parental behaviour were nevertheless entirely natural and spontaneous because, as Mandeville argued, both were grounded in the passions. Natural affection was thus the passion which prompted parents to provide for their helpless offspring; whilst anger was the passion which occasionally led them to hurt rather than nurture their children. The force of the latter passion, however, rarely dominated or

61 Ibid., II, 182; II, 341; II, 280-81.

obliterated the former for its operations were soon checked by the natural and countervailing passion of pity. As a result of that management children, Mandeville argued, naturally came, through the receipt of 'Benefits and Chastisements', to love and fear their parents and those two passions, he continued, 'together with the Esteem, which we naturally have for every thing that far excels us, will seldom fail of producing that Compound, which we call Reverence'.⁶² Reverence was thus a compound passion and as such it was the naturalistic, rather than the divinely ordained, source of parental authority, the authority which enabled parents to govern their children and tame their passions.

On that naturalistic and passionate basis the process of socialization proceeded either indirectly through children imitating the behaviour of their parents or directly through parents employing schedules of positive and negative reinforcement, designed to elicit desired patterns of behaviour in their offspring. In the former case Mandeville cited the example of young girls learning the decorums of modesty even before they were able to appreciate the rationale behind them. Thus he observed

The Lessons of it, like those of Grammar, are taught us long before we have occasion for, or understand the Usefulness of them; for this Reason Children often are ashamed, and blush out of Modesty, before the Impulse of Nature [lust] I hint at makes any Impression upon them. A Girl who is modestly educated, may, before she is two Years old, begin to observe how careful the Women, she converses with, are of covering themselves before Men; and the same Caution being inculcated to her by Precept, as well as Example, it is very probable that at Six she'll be ashamed of shewing her Leg, without knowing any Reason why such an Act is blameable, or what the Tendency of it is.

62 Ibid., II, 202; II, 202; II, 280; II, 202.

And as an example of direct parental instruction Mandeville painted the vignette of a young girl being taught to curtsy

When an aukward Girl, before she can either Speak or Go, begins after many Intreaties to make the first rude Essays of Curt'sying, the Nurse falls into an ecstasy of Praise; There's a delicate Curt'sy! O fine Miss! There's a pretty Lady! Mama! Miss can make a better Curt'sy than her Sister Molly! The same is echo'd over by the Maids, whilst Mama almost hugs the Child to pieces; only Miss Molly, who being four Years older knows how to make a very handsome curt'sy, wonders at the Perverseness of their Judgment, and swelling with Indignation, is ready to cry at the Injustice that is done her, till, being whisper'd in the Ear that it is only to please the Baby, and that she is a Woman, she grows proud at being let into the Secret, and rejoicing at the Superiority of her Understanding, repeats what has been said with large Additions, and insults over the Weakness of her Sister, whom all this while she fancies to be the only Bubble among them.⁶³

Both those examples were, for Mandeville, especially instructive for they demonstrated how, in the process of socialization, parental control via the manipulation of the child's self-love was gradually supplanted by control via the manipulation of his self-liking.

Initially 'the Benefits and Chastisements' which parents employed to shape the behaviour of their offspring succeeded by meeting the demands of self-love - the child's instinctual need for physical comfort and security. But even in infancy the more powerful and potentially unlimited demands of self-liking soon became apparent. With his physical needs secured, the child became increasingly sensitive to, and thus capable of being manipulated by, appeals to his pride and his anxious sense of self. The desire to win the approval of his significant others thus became a potent and in time an overriding determinant of his behaviour for the

63 Ibid., I, 69; I, 53.

strength and constancy of that passion enabled him to discount and suppress the more immediate and volatile passions and appetites clustering around his self-love. However, in either case, whether initially effected through the demands of self-love or subsequently and predominantly through the demands of self-liking, the process of socialization ultimately depended upon the operation of the same spontaneous and self regulating physiological principles which governed all other aspects of normal human functioning. For whilst the child's capacity to learn was latent within the details of his physical organization, that potential could only be realized once he was mechanically aroused by the physiological disturbances initiated either by the frustration of his physical appetites or the development of his psychic anxieties. Driven by the body's automatic tendency to correct such disturbances the child was in effect tutored both by his passions and by his parents. And thus slowly, but inexorably, he acquired the social and intellectual skills appropriate to his particular place in polite society. In the course of that learning process his passions were tamed, his potential for reason and speech was developed, and his willingness 'to tye [himself] up to Rules and Decorums for [his] own Advantage, and often to submit to small Inconveniences to avoid greater'⁶⁴ was consolidated.

Such an education was, however, unavailable to the children of savages. For, as Mandeville had argued, the character and talents of man in the state of nature were no different from those of untaught children in civilized society. Savage man lacked reason and foresight, he was without speech, and he was devoid of a moral

64 Ibid., II, 280; II, 306.

sense. Consequently, even though savage children naturally revered their parents and were thus amenable to their instruction and control, that potential remained largely untapped for Mandeville noted 'Parents, no better qualify'd, could teach their Children but little'. Of course, savage man 'would make his Children, as soon as they were able, assist him in getting Food, and teach them, how and where to procure it'. Similarly, Mandeville reasoned, 'Savage Children, as they got Strength, would endeavour to imitate every Action they saw their Parents do, and every Sound they heard them make'. Some learning through imitation and instruction was possible in the state of nature. Nevertheless, only the most rudimentary skills could have been acquired in that fashion for Mandeville insisted that 'all the Instructions [savage children] receiv'd would be confin'd to Things immediately necessary'. More significantly however savage man would have been unable to govern his children because he was unable to govern himself. He was instead governed by 'the unbridled Appetites of his untaught or ill-managed Nature' and such a man Mandeville argued 'who never had been taught to curb any of his Passions, would be very unfit for such a Task'.⁶⁵ Neither possessing the necessary range of knowledge and skills nor providing appropriate role models, the savage family was not, indeed for Mandeville it could not have been, the readymade agent of man's socialization nor the template for the origins of government. Thus if savage man were to break the vicious circle of his own ignorance and lack of self-control, he had to do so by his own unaided efforts. In effect he had to

65 Ibid., II, 201; II, 203; II, 203; II, 203; II, 270; II, 203.

bootstrap his way out of the state of nature. In Mandeville's account of the origins of human sociability and government that was not, however, an impossible problem. For its solution was in time guaranteed and effected by the self-regulating operations of the passions which were spontaneously aroused by the instinctual demands of self-love and self-liking in the course of mankind's conversation with itself. Children in polite society were socialized by their parents: savages in the state of nature were socialized by their passions. And while the education of the former took place in the space of a lifetime, that of the latter occupied the whole period of human prehistory. Indeed in Mandeville's account it was but the first stage in a long and continuing evolutionary process, a process which was moreover subject to many trials and errors.

4.42 Fear and Anger: Balancing the Primal Passions

Although the state of nature was for Mandeville 'a State of Simplicity, in which Man can have so few Desires, and no Appetites roving beyond the immediate Call of untaught Nature', the desires and appetites, or passions and instincts, which savage man did possess nevertheless enabled him eventually to be drawn into society and educated, both individually and collectively, to self-government. The instinct of self-love or self preservation determined man's appetites and chief amongst those was the appetite of lust which in the absence of any social restraints or niceties drove him to multiply 'his Kind much faster than can be allow'd of in any regular Society'. As a result, Mandeville, conjectured, 'If

a Wild Man and a wild Woman should meet very young, and live together for fifty Years undisturb'd, in a mild wholesome Climate, where there is plenty of Provisions, they might see a prodigious Number of Descendants'.⁶⁶ And given savage man's pride or self-liking which manifested itself in 'the Desire of Superiority' and the tendency to 'take every thing to be his own, that he could lay his Hands on' it followed, Mandeville argued, that he would naturally 'look upon his Children as his Property, and make such use of them as is most consistent with his Interest'. Of course that interest was erratic and quixotic, and as a result his children were 'miserably managed' but nevertheless they were still managed. Generated by the appetite of lust and precariously held together by a mix of pride, natural affection, anger, and pity on the part of parents, and by love, fear, and esteem on the part of children, the family in effect arose out of a primordial soup of passions and instincts. Its presence marked the first rude attempts at social life, and for that reason Mandeville accepted the view that society came into the world through private families. But given the deficiencies of that institution in its primitive form he was quick to add 'not without great Difficulty, and the Concurrence of many favourable Accidents'. In short he argued that although 'the very first Generation of the most brutish Savages, was sufficient to produce sociable Creatures ... to produce a Man fit to govern others, much more was required'.⁶⁷ For without government in the body natural, government in the body politic was impossible.

66 Ibid., II, 285; II, 201; II, 200-201.

67 Ibid., II, 200; II, 201; II, 201; II, 200; II, 231.

Nevertheless, with those basic nuclei in place the tendency towards human association initiated by the instinct of self-love was reinforced and furthered by that same instinct operating in another direction. According to Mandeville 'The Love Man has for his Ease and Security, and his perpetual Desire of meliorating his Condition, must be sufficient Motives to make him fond of Society'.

In the state of nature that fondness was most obviously and pressingly invoked by the challenges of an indifferent and harsh environment. Savage man's 'Ease and Security' were precarious and in particular they were constantly threatened, Mandeville conjectured, by the 'Danger [men] would certainly be in, from wild Beasts, considering that no uninhabited Country is without them, and the defenceless Condition, in which Men come into the World'. Faced with extinction, savage man experienced the passion of fear, the one passion powerful enough to impose some order and, ~~and~~ give direction to, his chaotic psyche. Self-love operating through fear therefore drove individual men and their families to seek safety in numbers for, Mandeville reasoned, 'The first thing that would make Man associate, would be Common Danger, which unites the greatest Enemies'.⁶⁸ But once joined together in larger aggregates and with danger no longer lurking in the bushes, men discovered an even greater threat to their 'Ease and Security', namely the danger they were in from each other.

Men became wolves to themselves because their contact with each other provided the context for both the intensification and elaboration of their passionate natures. With new objects to focus

68 Ibid., II, 180; II, 230; II, 230.

on the basic passions and appetites generated by self-love were immediately given added force; whilst in time the continued arousal and stimulation of self-liking, which the presence of other men ensured, meant that new and more complex passions were developed in the savage psyche. The diversification of man's passionate nature was nevertheless a long and gradual process, for although it required social intercourse it also required the suppression of the powerful and volatile passions generated by the instinctual demands of self-love. Thus, Mandeville argued, only when man's self-liking or 'his Pride has room to play' would other passions such as 'Envy, Avarice, and Ambition begin to catch hold of him'. That space was, however, distinctly lacking in the savage psyche. For in that chaos of raw feelings and instincts self-liking had to compete with, and was thus often crowded out by, the more pressing demands of self-love. Given the impossibility of more complex passionate responses, self-liking therefore manifested itself in a generalised and unstructured 'natural Instinct of Sovereignty', a 'love of Dominion'⁶⁹ which was in turn expressed in the desire simply to dominate other men in a blatantly physical and unsubtle fashion.

Possessing few passions other than those which were adapted to his instinct for self-preservation, savage man nevertheless pursued those that he did have with renewed vigour once his association with other men had begun. Driven both by self-love and by his 'love of Dominion', and unrestrained by either the dictates of a moral sense or the sanctions of a legal order, savage man would,

69 Ibid., I, 205-6; II, 271; I, 281.

Mandeville argued, 'have every thing he likes, without considering, whether he has any Right to it or not; and he would do everything he has a mind to do, without regard to the Consequence it would be to others'. But with other men acting in a similarly unprincipled and short-sighted fashion, it followed that men were 'often cross'd in the Pursuit'⁷⁰ of their wants and desires. And with their wants and desires thwarted savages became angry for anger, like fear, was a passion strongly aroused by, and closely adapted to, man's instinct of self-love and self-preservation. Accordingly anger was the second most important determinant of man's behaviour in the state of nature. Indeed once savage man had tamed his fear of wild animals, his anger began to fill and dominate the space in his psyche previously occupied by the former passion. For although man was by nature a timorous animal, his basic equality of power with other men, ensured that with 'no Mischief to fear but from the Person that anger'd him' his anger was able to override and get the better of his fear. Thus when in the pursuit of self-preservation his anger was provoked, as it frequently was given the mutual antagonisms and inevitable disappointments of an anarchic state of nature, savage man gave vent to that passion by fighting and endeavouring 'either to destroy, or cause Pain and Displeasures to [his] Adversaries'. His bellicose behaviour was, moreover, entirely natural and spontaneous for, as in the case of unsocialized children in polite society, it was determined by 'Instinct, something implanted in the Frame, the Mechanism of [his] Body'. As a result men replaced wild animals as 'the most hurtful

70 Ibid., I, 281; II, 270-71; I, 206.

and noxious Creature in the World' and the state of nature became a state of war.⁷¹

In its beginnings the conversation of mankind was thus a rowdy and discordant rather than a polite and harmonious affair. Nevertheless amidst that clamour certain voices rang out more clearly than others for given the presence of self-liking or 'that stanch Principle of Pride and Ambition, that all Men are born with' it was inevitable, Mandeville reasoned, that some men would 'strive for Superiority'. And, he continued, it was equally inevitable that in the ensuing struggle only the fittest would prevail. In the war of all against all, fitness was of course a function of physical prowess and accordingly Mandeville identified 'Strength, Agility and Courage' as 'the most valuable Qualifications' in that state. The distribution of those qualifications amongst savage men was however determined by random variations in individual temper and condition. Courage, for example, which was simply the ability of anger to overcome 'the whole Set of Fears Man has', no less than strength and agility, ultimately 'depended only upon the different Frame, the inward Formation of either the Solids or the Fluids'⁷² of men. And crucially in the state of nature only a few men were selected in that way. Those less favoured in the genetic lottery were as a result 'the most weak and fearful'. However, such individuals were not doomed to extinction for their fear impelled them to 'join with [those], of whom they have the best Opinion', namely those endowed with the 'valuable Qualifications' of 'Strength, Agility, and Courage'. Natural variations in the

71 Ibid., I, 206; II, 271; II, 295; I, 206.

72 Ibid., II, 266; II, 267; II, 267; I, 207; II, 122.

presence or absence, strength or weakness, of fear and anger, which were in turn determined by random variations in body type and constitution, thus initiated a process which, according to Mandeville, 'would naturally divide Multitudes into Bands and Companies, that would all have their different Leaders, and of which the strongest and most valiant would always swallow up the weakest and most fearful'.⁷³

Hence in Mandeville's speculative anthropology the consolidation of human association or 'The second Step to Society' was the result of 'the Danger Men are in from one another'. Moreover, in identifying that stage and its underlying mechanisms he stressed that the quarrels which compelled men to associate did not arise merely from disputes over scarce natural resources. On the contrary, he argued that

it is inconsistent with the Nature of human Creatures, that any Number of them should ever live together in tolerable Concord, without Laws or Government let the Soil, the Climate, and their Plenty be whatever the most luxuriant Imagination shall be pleas'd to fancy them.

The implication was clear: mechanically aroused and driven by their passions, men would quarrel even in a state of arcadian simplicity and abundance. Accordingly, Mandeville declared that 'there is not in the World a more unfit Creature for Society than Man'. Yet at the same time he insisted that 'there is no room to doubt that he is more fit for Society than any other Animal we know'.⁷⁴ That contradiction was, however, more apparent than real for although superficially at odds both statements were entirely consistent with Mandeville's general account of the nature and mechanics of human

⁷³ Ibid., II, 267.

⁷⁴ Ibid., II, 266; II, 309; I, 347; II, 177.

sociability for they merely summarised the opposite effects, and thus they were the opposite sides of the same coin, of man's passionate nature.

Rejecting those 'generous Notions' or theories which invoked man's natural benevolence and love of his species interacting with a benign and bountiful environment to explain the facts of social cohesion, Mandeville argued that 'Evil in this World, Moral as well as Natural, is the grand Principle that makes us Sociable Creatures'. And he restated that argument in less epigrammatic form when he wrote

the Sociableness of Man arises only from these Two things, viz. The multiplicity of his Desires, and the continual Opposition he meets with in his Endeavours to gratify them.

The Obstacles I speak of relate either to our own Frame, or the Globe we inhabit, I mean the Condition of it, since it has been curs'd. I have often endeavour'd to contemplate separately on the two Things I named last, but cou'd never keep them asunder; they always interfere and mix with one another; and at last make up together a frightful Chaos of Evil.

In those parallel passages 'natural evil' was synonymous with those obstacles which relate to 'the Globe we inhabit' namely the danger man was in from wild animals and the demands made upon him by a harsh and indifferent environment. 'Moral evil' was synonymous with those obstacles which relate 'to our own Frame', namely man's '... Wants, his Imperfections, and the variety of his Appetites'.⁷⁵ Now although Mandeville claimed that these two sets of social forces always operated in tandem, it was clear from his account of the transition from the first to the second stage of society that their relative importance varied over time. Thus with the reduction, if not the conquest, of natural evil men were

⁷⁵ Ibid., I, 343; I, 369; I, 344; I, 346.

increasingly confronted with the dangers posed by moral evil or the instinctual demands of their own passionate natures. And given the irresistible, and at the aggregate level the mutually antagonistic, nature of those demands, Mandeville could justifiably claim that 'there is not in the World a more unfit Creature for Society than Man'. Yet crucially for his account of the development of human sociability it was also the case that in time those very same demands impelled self-interested and aggressive men to seek, albeit haphazardly and unreflectively, ways of redressing and regulating their disturbing and anti-social effects. Hence Mandeville could with equal justification, and thus without real contradiction, claim that 'the Fitness of Man for Society, beyond other Animals, is something real'. That 'fitness' was, however, only a potential for he added 'it is hardly perceptible in Individuals, before great Numbers of them are joyn'd together, and artfully manag'd'.⁷⁶

In taking the first two steps towards society men had obviously come together in greater numbers than before and in doing so they had been managed mainly by their fear and anger. But those passions were still experienced in their raw and unmediated forms and as a result the management they effected was radically incomplete and far from 'artful'. For whilst Mandeville insisted that 'The only useful Passion ... that Man is possess'd of toward the Peace and Quiet of a Society, is his Fear, and the more you work upon it the more orderly and governable he'll be', he, like Montesquieu, knew well that a society held together by fear was not a society at all. It was instead a despotism distinguished not by

76 Ibid., I, 347; II, 188; II, 188.

the boisterous and prosperous conversation of men cooperating in a body politic but by a tranquility which was only the silence of men cowering in fear of their enemies. Similarly, Mandeville reasoned that although man 'may be subdued by superior Strength' it was 'impossible by Force alone to make him tractable, and receive the Improvements he is capable of'.⁷⁷ Thus at best force, and the fear which it evoked, made man submissive and there was, Mandeville insisted, 'a great Difference between being submissive, and being governable'. Indeed the nature of that distinction was crucial to his account of the development of human sociability and he elaborated it as follows

he who barely submits to another, only embraces what he dislikes, to shun what he dislikes more; and we may be very submissive, and be of no Use to the Person we submit to: But to be governable, implies an Endeavour to please, and a Willingness to exert ourselves in behalf of the Person that governs: But Love beginning every where at Home, no Creature can labour for others, and be easy long, whilst Self is wholly out of the Question: Therefore a Creature is then truly governable, when, reconcil'd to Submission, it has learn'd to construe his Servitude to his own Advantage; and rests satisfy'd with the Account it finds for itself, in the Labour it performs for others.

Without the development of that understanding or the ability to pursue their enlightened rather than their narrow self-interest men could neither govern themselves nor each other. Miserably managed by their fear and anger, they were still prisoners of their passions. Hence their behaviour remained erratic and volatile and they remained unable either to control 'their unruly Passions' or to avoid 'the Discords occasioned by them'. Thus although the formation of small defensive communities was a necessary condition

77 Ibid., I, 206; I, 42.

for the subsequent establishment of a body politic it was not a sufficient one. For life in those communities remained an 'unsettled and precarious affair' and thus a far cry from that regular and ordered condition in which man

is become a Disciplin'd Creature, that can find his own Ends in Labouring for others, and where under one Head or other Form of Government each Member is render'd Subservient to the Whole, and all of them by cunning Management are made to Act as one.⁷⁸

The attainment of that latter and happier social condition was however impossible without significant changes in man's psychological organization and cognitive capacity. For whilst Mandeville had on the one hand argued that 'The undoubted Basis of all Societies is Government' and on the other that fear was the ultimate basis of government, he also insisted that for man to be governable 'is a Qualification that requires Fear, and some degree of Understanding'. The possibility of government thus depended upon the expansion of man's understanding and in particular upon his readiness to 'find his own Ends in Labouring for others'.⁷⁹ In short government depended upon man's ability to recognise and his readiness to pursue his enlightened rather than his narrow self-interest. The development of that capacity however required the simultaneous transformation of the primal fear and raw anger which had determined man's behaviour in the first two stages of his social evolution. Indeed without such a transformation any increase in man's understanding or reasoning power simply made him more cunning, determined, and malign in the pursuit of his self-preservation. It 'only serve[d] to render Man incurably averse to

78 Ibid., II, 184; II, 267; II, 268; I, 347.

79 Ibid., II, 183-84; II, 184; I, 347.

Society, and more obstinately tenacious of his Savage Liberty, than any other Creature would be, that is equally necessitous'. Human understanding was thus a double-edged sword, and for it to cut in the desired direction and promote, rather than inhibit, sociability it needed to operate against a stable background of social expectations which only the institution of a legal order could guarantee. Accordingly Mandeville declared that 'Laws and Government are to the Political Bodies of Civil Societies, what the Vital Spirits and Life it self are to the Natural Bodies of Animated Creatures'. And thus 'the third and last Step to Society' in his speculative anthropology was marked by 'the Invention of Letters', for reasoning syllogistically, he argued that 'No Multitudes can live peaceably without Government; no Government can subsist without Laws; and no Laws can be effectual long, unless they are wrote down'.⁸⁰

The institution of a legal order was thus the defining, as well as the enabling, characteristic of that highest social form which Mandeville called a body politic. For he recognised that it was only 'When Laws begin to be well known, and the Execution of them is facilitated by general Approbation, [that] Multitudes may be kept in tolerable Concord among themselves'.⁸¹ And in his entirely naturalistic account of social evolution law could only, and in fact did, achieve that end by balancing and refocusing the competing passions of anger and fear which had initially created and then disturbed man's communal existence in the first two stages of his history. Before the advent of law, man's fear had

80 Ibid., II, 300; I, 3; II, 269.

81 Ibid., II, 300.

increasingly been aroused by, and focused on, the anti-social and unpredictable behaviour of his peers with whom, by definition, he enjoyed a near equality of power. And even though in that situation some men were constitutionally so timid as to allow their fear to destroy their anger, others were primed to react in exactly the opposite fashion. The advent of law, however, irreversibly tipped the balance of the passions in favour of fear, and at the same time transformed man's experience of that passion. In the first place law was backed by the coercive power of the whole body politic and as such it was beyond the prudent resistance of any one individual. Under law, therefore, anger became a passion which was no longer functionally adapted to the dictates of self-preservation. Moreover, law was both impersonal in its form and constant in its range and application, and thus its operations were neither arbitrary nor unpredictable. Hence, whilst the threat of legal sanctions ensured that fear remained an ever-present and powerful determinant of human behaviour, a constant background factor in the prudential calculations of all individuals, that fear was neither so pressing nor so hobbling as that which had previously lurked in the bushes or beyond the stockade. The institution of a legal order thus enabled man to suppress his anger and to regulate and tame his fear, a process which Mandeville described as follows

The first Care ... of all Governments is by severe Punishments to curb [man's] Anger when it does hurt, and so by increasing his Fears prevent the Mischief it might produce. When various Laws to restrain him from using Force are strictly executed, Self-Preservation must teach him to be peaceable; and as it is every body's Business to be as little disturb'd as is possible, his Fears will be continually augmented and enlarg'd as he advances in Experience, Understanding and Foresight. The Consequence

of this must be, that as the Provocations he will receive to Anger will be infinite in the civiliz'd State, so his Fears to damp it will be the same, and thus in a little time he'll be taught by his Fears to destroy his Anger, and by Art to consult in an opposite Method the same Self-Preservation for which Nature before had furnished him with Anger, as well as the rest of his Passions.⁸²

Law therefore promoted social harmony by taming man's anger and regulating his fear. In doing so it also created a space in the human psyche which allowed his other potentials and passions to flourish. No longer hobbled by fear nor buffeted by anger, man discovered the psychological freedom to refine and elaborate his brute appetites and desires. He became 'sooner sensible of Grief and Joy, and capable of entertaining either, with greater difference as to the Degrees, than they are felt in other Creatures'. Moreover, as man's desires and appetites became more elaborate, the strength and range of his passionate nature was correspondingly intensified and extended. He was 'render[ed] ... more industrious to please himself' and his self-love was 'furnishe[d] ... with a greater Variety of Shifts to exert itself on all Emergencies, than is made use of by Animals of less Capacity'. Accordingly new passions such as envy, avarice, and ambition were added to his behavioural repertoire. Finally, and most significantly of all, he discovered the ability to respond to the demands of self-love in a less immediate and more calculating fashion than had hitherto been possible. He was 'give[n] ... a Foresight, and inspire[d] ... with Hopes, of which other Creatures have little, and that only of things immediately before them'.⁸³

By taming man's anger and regulating his fear, law therefore

82 Ibid., I, 206.

83 Ibid., II, 300.

initiated an interlocking series of far reaching and self-sustaining changes in man's psychological organization and behaviour. Indeed, taken together, those changes both defined and made possible 'the Superiority of Man's Understanding beyond other Animals'. In turn, and crucially for Mandeville's account of the mechanics of social cohesion, that superiority of understanding provided a vital support, a positive feedback loop, for the maintenance and continued development of law itself. For law could not rest upon fear alone, it also depended upon opinion or the 'general Approbation' of those men who were subject to its demands. Thus a second and more stable circuit of prudential obligation was required and in a well regulated and prosperous body politic men discovered it in the expanded possibilities of their own understanding, in their enlightened rather than their narrow self-interest, which functioned as 'so many Tools, Arguments, by which Self-love reasons us into Content, and renders us patient under many Afflictions, for the sake of supplying those Wants that are most presssing'. And such a disposition was, Mandeville continued, 'of infinite use to a Man, who finds himself born in a Body Politick, and it must make him fond of Society'.⁸⁴ The development of law, the diversification and refinement of self-love, the expansion and 'superiority of Man's Understanding beyond other Animals' and the growth of the body politic were thus mutually reinforcing processes. But thus construed the effects of law were indistinguishable from its causes. For whilst law had tamed man's passion and allowed his enlightened rather than his

84 Ibid., II, 300.

narrow understanding to flourish, that understanding was in turn a vital prerequisite for the formulation and establishment of law itself. To resolve that circularity, and to bridge the obvious hiatus between the second and third stages in Mandeville's speculative anthropology an account of how, in his view, law itself first came into being is required.

4.43 The Discovery of Medical and Political Law: Managing the Regimen of Bodies Natural and Politic

In order best to provide that account it is time, however, to redeem a pledge made at the outset of this chapter. Namely the proposal to demonstrate that the correspondence between Mandeville's medical and social thought is more complete than has hitherto been assumed. The burden of my argument thus far has been to elucidate and emphasize the reductive foundations of Mandeville's social theory in a thoroughly naturalistic and rigorously mechanistic account of man's physiological functioning. But thus defined the explanatory elements of that theory remain largely indistinguishable from other similarly reductive social theories - once again the example of Hobbes is instructive - which have no obvious and immediate bases in medicine rather than in, for example, mechanics or other branches of early modern natural philosophy. Thus an emphasis on the physiological foundations of Mandeville's social theory will not in itself support the larger claim about the salience and importance of his medical thought. Nor will it serve to identify and explain those substantive differences of emphasis and conclusion which divide his from other

similarly reductive social theories. On both counts, therefore, a case still has to be made for the wider explanatory significance of Mandeville's medical experience and training. What follows will attempt to demonstrate that such a case can be, and is in fact best, made through a further analysis of his discussion of the origins, purposes, and functioning of a legal order.

For Mandeville the body politic was the artificial body within which the real bodies of men found peace and security. To construct such a framework, 'To preserve Peace and Tranquility among Multitudes of different Views, and make them all labour for one Interest' was he argued 'a great Task' and thus he ventured the opinion that 'nothing in human Affairs requires greater Knowledge, than the Art of Government'. But, more than most men, Mandeville also knew that the practice of medicine was no less demanding and no less important in the scale of human affairs. Accordingly, and at the most general level of comparison, he described government as the art which gave 'Life' to the body politic and laws as the 'Vital Spirits'⁸⁵ which ensured its healthy functioning.

However, when focusing on the specific nature and function of law within the social body Mandeville consistently employed medical metaphors of a more pointed kind which suggest that in his mind at least there was a real, and not merely a figurative, equivalence between the art of government and the art of physick. Thus in that quasi-literal and more specific comparative spirit he argued that

85 Ibid., II, 318; I, 3.

The principal Laws of all Countries have the same Tendency; and there is not one, that does not point at some Frailty, Defect, or Unfitness for Society, that Men are naturally subject to; but all of them are plainly design'd as so many Remedies, to cure and disappoint that natural Instinct of Sovereignty, which teaches Man to look upon every thing as centring in himself, and prompts him to put in a Claim to everything, he can lay his Hands on.

Similarly he wrote that

the principal Laws of all Countries are Remedies against human Frailties; I mean, that they are design'd as Antidotes, to prevent the ill Consequences of some Properties, inseparable from our Nature; which yet in themselves, without Management or Restraint, are obstructive and pernicious to Society.⁸⁶

Mandeville therefore described law variously as 'cures', 'remedies', and 'antidotes' which were directed at, and designed to restrain, certain pathological properties of human nature. Of course, those properties were only pathological features of man's behaviour when viewed from the perspective of the body politic or society as a whole. Viewed from the different perspective of the physician, of the natural rather than the social scientist, they were simply the properties which individual men happened to have; in that neutral sense they were neither vices nor distempers, nor frailties nor defects, but simply brute facts about man's physical organization and psychological behaviour. Nevertheless, at the social level those properties combined to produce 'ill Consequences' which were 'pernicious to Society' and thus law, in seeking to curb them, could reasonably be seen as a form of social medicine. Indeed in Mandeville's eyes law was no different from, and thus functionally equivalent to, the rules and maxims of diet

86 Ibid., II, 271; II, 283.

and regimen which governed and assisted the operations of the body natural. For whereas the latter were designed to maintain the health of real bodies, the rules and maxims of government enshrined in law were similarly designed to establish the regimen of the body politic and to promote 'the temporal Good of Society'.⁸⁷

In ministering to the needs of the body natural physicians prescribed medicine, whilst in ministering to the needs of the body politic lawgivers gave the law. Lawgivers were thus state physicians, and like their natural counterparts they pursued a relentlessly utilitarian goal. But although lawgivers operated at a different level of social organization, Mandeville nevertheless believed that the two arts had to be grounded in a common body of empirical knowledge. For in the same way that sound medical practice was based upon a detailed appreciation of human anatomy and physiology, 'All sound Politicks and the whole Art of governing', were he insisted 'built upon the knowledge of human Nature'. Thus the state, no less than the natural, physician had to be 'thoroughly acquainted with all the Passions and Appetites, Strength and Weaknesses of [man's] Frame'.⁸⁸ Moreover, armed with that knowledge, the state physician had to follow the same diagnostic and therapeutic strategies as the natural physician. In his medical treatise Mandeville had argued that in seeking to cure disease doctors should take care 'to distinguish between the Efforts of Nature' which must be 'assisted' and 'those of the Distemper' which must be 'destroyed'.⁸⁹ Similarly, he reasoned

87 Ibid., II, 271.

88 Ibid., II, 321; I, 208.

89 Treatise, p.344.

that in managing the regimen of the body politic

The great Business in general of a Politician is to promote, and, if he can, reward all good and useful Actions on the one hand; and on the other, to punish, or at least discourage everything that is destructive or hurtful to Society.

In short he charged the state physician or politician/lawgiver with the responsibility of discovering

first, what things will procure Happiness to the Society under their Care; secondly, what Passions and Properties there are in Man's Nature, that may either promote or obstruct this Happiness.⁹⁰

Finally, and to complete the analogy between state and natural physician, it should be remembered that for Mandeville the good doctor was the empirical and Hippocratic doctor who combined patient and unwearied observation with the application of tried and tested maxims of diet and regimen in the pursuit of the healing art. His aim and guiding precept was to assist physis in effecting a cure and thus, unlike those Galenic and interventionist practitioners who sought to subordinate physis to theory, the Hippocratic doctor was a minimalist doctor. Similarly the state physician in prescribing laws for the body politic was not to intervene too much; instead his skill lay in knowing when to employ 'dextrous Management'⁹¹ to promote what was good and to inhibit what was bad for society as a whole.

Having demonstrated and emphasized the presence of those medical analogies in Mandeville's reflections on the nature of law and the art of government, it is still possibly the case that nothing much depends on them. Their presence might, for example, reflect nothing more than a habit of mind and thus provide evidence

90 Fable of the Bees, II, 321; II, 275.

91 Ibid., I, 369.

only of the ease with which the medical practitioners could slip into such locutions when writing on non-medical topics. That this is not the case, and that Mandeville's medical thought and experience may properly be seen as a formative influence on the elaboration of his social theory, will emerge upon further consideration of his comparative analysis of the origins and development of medical and legal knowledge. For it will be argued that there the correspondence is so complete as to suggest a line of influence which, given both the chronological and general priority of medicine within Mandeville's intellectual development, runs from medical to social theory and not vice versa. Before exploring that correspondence, it is, however, instructive to reconsider how in Mandeville's view law could not, and did not originate; for that review will in turn provide a convenient point of departure for the comparative examination of his analysis of the development of medical and legal knowledge.

In focusing solely and uniquely on the role of the passions in explaining the origins of human sociability Mandeville effectively distanced himself from the dominant modes of social theorizing which were current in his day. At the beginning of the eighteenth century reflections on the nature of government and society were organized within one of three major traditions, namely the theories of patriarchalism, social contract, and civil^c humanism. Judged in the light of Mandeville's naturalistic and evolutionary scheme, patriarchal theories of government and society, as represented, for example, in the secular writings of Sir William Temple, collapsed simply by virtue of the fact that they assumed what had to be demonstrated. According to Mandeville, savages were untaught

creatures and hence strangers to 'Idea[s] of Justice, Prudence, and Wisdom'. They possessed no 'regular way of thinking' nor were they endowed with 'Notions of Right and Wrong'. Driven by instinct and brute desire they 'pursue[d] nothing with Steadiness' save 'The Demand of the Predominant Passion, for the time it lasts'. Hence savages, Mandeville insisted, 'would not be able to establish Rules for future Behaviour which they would approve of themselves for any Continuance'. Unable to govern themselves, the heads of savage families were a fortiori incapable of governing their children; they 'could give them no good Rules to walk by'.⁹² Accordingly the family, although the nucleus of society, was not the paradigm for political authority and patriarchs were not the originators of law. Similarly, given Mandeville's understanding of the behavioural traits and cognitive capacities of savage man, social contract theories either in their Hobbesian or more palatable Lockean form, fared no better. Knowledge of the natural law, whether construed as the appreciation of God's purposes for man or more secularly as the ability to follow rules of rational prudence, was simply unavailable to the savage mind and could thus be neither the basis nor the motive for contractual agreement. Mandeville's insistence that when he spoke of man he meant 'neither Jews nor Christians; but meer Man, in the State of Nature and Ignorance of the true Deity' was of course evasive but that evasion was all that was needed to challenge the ultimate coherence of the Lockean project. Nor for Mandeville was the solution of a Hobbesian contractual moment any more compelling. For man in the state of

92 Ibid, II, 191; II, 199; II, 199; II, 201; II, 204; II, 230.

nature was a creature mired in immediacy and necessity, he was incapable 'either of enlarging his Prospect of Things, or drawing Consequences from the little which he does know'.⁹³ Savage man's nose may have been constantly bloodied but he was unable to look beyond it and compute the advantages of a mutual pact of subjugation to secure his person. Moreover, if rational prudence was a scarce quality in the state of nature then genius was distinguished by its absence. Hence in Mandeville's eyes the deus ex machina figure of the heroic lawgiver belonged more properly on the classical stage and thus the dramas or foundation myths of the civic humanist tradition were precisely that and nothing more. Yet that objection to the civic humanist tradition would seem at first sight to place Mandeville's social theory squarely at odds with his medical theory. For in his discussion of the growth of medical knowledge and the development of the art of physick Mandeville had given pride of place to the works and practice of 'the Divine Hippocrates'⁹⁴ who within the pantheon of physicians was no less a lawgiver and heroic figure than were 'Solon, Lycurgus, Socrates and Plato'⁹⁵ whom Mandeville had similarly elected to the political hall of fame.

That apparent inconsistency disappears, however, when it is remembered that for Mandeville, as for eighteenth-century medical thought as a whole, the importance of the Corpus Hippocraticum was independent of any connection with Hippocrates the man. Like the ancient commentators on that collection, Mandeville was fully aware

93 Ibid., I, 40; II, 211.

94 Treatise, p.38.

95 Fable of the Bees, II, 319.

that the 60 or more texts which it contained were written by many hands over a period of at least 150, and perhaps as many as 300, years. Thus the practice of attributing any single text within the corpus to Hippocrates himself was more often than not simply the result of subsequent commentators selecting their favourite texts and labelling them accordingly. A practice which given Hippocrates' status as the most revered doctor of the classical period fuelled the addition of later anonymous texts to the corpus. In fact all the texts bar one were anonymous and neither classical nor early modern scholarship was able to establish an authorized canon. Moreover, the medical views expressed within the Corpus were diverse and often contradictory, representing, for example, not only the wisdom of the School of Cos but also that of rival groups of practitioners such as the nearby School of Cnidus. Thus on textual grounds alone Mandeville could have been in no doubt that the Corpus Hippocraticum was not the work of one man. But more significantly, and given the understanding of medical epistemology which he derived from it, nor could it have been. It was a conceptual as well as an empirical impossibility.

For what Mandeville, like his mentors Sydenham and Baglivi, admired in the Hippocratic writings was not their largely superseded accounts of anatomy and physiology but rather their strictures on medical method and their emphasis on detailed and meticulous clinical observation. And crucially that emphasis served for Mandeville to underpin a particular understanding of the art of physick which distinguished not only classical, but also his own, medical epistemology from its modern counterpart. Viewed from the twentieth century medical knowledge is defined by, and grounded

in, an ever expanding and increasingly sophisticated catalogue of facts which describe the biochemical bases of normal and abnormal human functioning. Accordingly, the specialist's knowledge is readily distinguishable from the layman's. In contrast, for Mandeville as for the ancients, medical knowledge was not defined by reference to a distinct and highly specialised body of scientific data. For medicine itself was defined as a techné, and like every other techné it implied doing. Accordingly, medical knowledge was construed as knowledge about that doing, and thus the physician's knowledge was a craftsman's knowledge, like all such knowledge simple and secure in its grasp of the subject matter. Of course that subject matter was subject to revision, for new medicaments and new techniques were to be discovered, but by and large it was a known and stable quantity. Hence in Mandeville's medical treatise, the difference between the physician Philopirio and his interlocutor the educated layman Misomedon lay not in their grasp of the facts of anatomy and physiology nor in their familiarity with competing medical theories, for in both respects Misomedon was perfectly able to hold his own with Philopirio, but rather in their skill. Misomedon had stayed in his closet and read medical treatises; there his powers of abstract reason, neither informed nor checked by practical experience, had run wild, and as a result his hypochondriacal distemper had been compounded. Philopirio in contrast had left his closet to attend patients at the bedside; and there by employing practical rather than abstract reason he refined his skills of observation and diagnostics, and acquired medical knowledge. But in developing that craft skill Philopirio was as much engaged in a dialogue with the tradition of

medicine as with his patient, for in treating the latter he relied upon and was guided by the collective observations of the past which were embodied in the rules and maxims of Hippocratic practice. And it was those rules that both defined the nature of medical knowledge and at the same time made it certain. For Mandeville declared that certainty lay in

the lasting Truth we discover in all those Rules, that once, tho' many Ages ago, were settled by repeated and judicious Experience. Most of the Diagnostick Signs and Predictions from every Symptom, which Hippocrates, Celius Aurelianus, and a few more Greeks have left us, as they are the Result of solid Observation, will continue to be faithful Guides to all that can use of them; as long as human Bodies and Nature it self remain.

But what was true of the modern physician was also true of Hippocrates himself, namely the need, given 'the Shortness of Life, in proportion to the Length of Time necessary to learn the Art', to rely on the collective medical wisdom of the past. Thus Mandeville observed

cast your Eye on the Complaint of the Divine Hippocrates; that prodigious Man, after he had lived so long, and made such an admirable use of his Time, was yet so Conscious, and so full of the Truth of it, that he had not the Power to begin his Aphorisms, the very Marrow and Quintessence of Practice, without disclosing it: Life is short, and the Art of great Extent.⁹⁶

Hence in that sense the form and content of the Corpus Hippocraticum were perfectly at one. Accordingly, 'the divine Hippocrates' was less a single man and more a symbol or metaphor for the collective medical wisdom of the ancients. That wisdom had no doubt previously been preserved in oral tradition, but once collected and written down in the Corpus Hippocraticum it gave as

96 Treatise, pp.42; 38; 38.

much certainty to the regulation of the body natural as written law to the body politic.

Thus in medicine, as in politics, there were no lawgivers. Men of 'great Genius and Sagacity' existed only in a metaphorical and not in a literal sense. Nevertheless, medical law or 'Standing Rules in Practice' had been established to make the physician's art a more certain one. And medical knowledge, knowledge about doing, had therefore been acquired not through the unique and inspired deliverances of heroic individuals relying on nothing but the unaided powers of abstract a priori reason but instead by means of an anonymous and protracted historical process which had accumulated and classified the data delivered by practical and a posteriori reason. Indeed, in Mandeville's eyes, Galen had for once got it right when he wrote

For as one Man's Life is not sufficient to find out everything so History collects the Observations that are made in great length of time, that by the help of it, one at last may be made a Man of consummate knowledge, be being as it were the Compound Product of all the Learning and Experience that the Men of so many Ages have from time to time been endued with.⁹⁷

Given Mandeville's adherence to that evolutionary epistemology in the realm of medical practice and its suggested relevance for the understanding of his views on the origins and development of a legal order, two further and related sets of questions need to be explored. First, how in that anonymous and evolutionary process were medical rules and maxims selected? How exactly did they become a known and settled quantity? Secondly, how in the production and application of those rules did individual reason

97 Ibid., pp.59; 43; 43.

function in relation to the larger historical current? What were its limitations and possibilities? What contribution did it make, and how exactly did it make it?

The process by which medical rules were selected or identified is clearly described in the Hippocratic text Tradition in Medicine which was itself an explanation of the empirical basis of medicine as practised towards the end of the fifth century BC. That text began with the simple observation that

In the first place, the science of medicine would never have been discovered nor, indeed, sought for, were there no need for it. If sick men fared just as well eating and drinking and living exactly as healthy men do, and no better on some different regimen, there would be little need for the science. But the reason why the art of medicine became necessary was because sick men did not get well on the same regimen as the healthy, any more than they do now.⁹⁸

Thus observation and experience taught men first, that some were healthy and some were sick; and secondly, that regimen, or diet and exercise, was an important factor affecting those two bodily states. Experience in effect provided a series of controlled experiments, although no single individual consciously and systematically undertook them, in which it could be observed that whilst 'sick men do not get well on the same regimen as the healthy' they fared better 'on some different regimen'. Observation and experience therefore not only provided a justification for the art of physick, in the sense that what contributed to health and sickness was alterable and thus subject to human management and control, they also specified a heuristic for that undertaking.

But if observation demonstrated that the management of diet

⁹⁸ Hippocratic Writings, ed. G.E.R. Lloyd (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1983), p.71.

was an important factor in the treatment of disease then the question arose of how that insight was to be refined and systematized in order to define rules or 'some criterion as to what constitutes a correct diet' for the sick. And for the author of Tradition in Medicine the answer to that question was to be found in an analogue with how the healthy arrived at the constituents and rules of their diet. Once again observation demonstrated that men and animals flourished on different diets, and proceeding on the assumption that at some unspecified time in the past men and animals had shared the same diet, the author conjectured

I am of the opinion that our present way of living and our present diet would not have come about if it had proved adequate for a man to eat and drink the same things as an ox or a horse and all the other animals.

Thus, he concluded, 'the modern diet is the result of many years' discovery' for he reasoned 'Such devising was necessary because, in primitive times, men often suffered terribly from their indigestible and animal-like diet, eating raw and uncooked food difficult to digest'.⁹⁹ But on that view there could have been no ready-made dietary charts to direct man's progress towards the constituents of a healthy diet; instead he was steered on that voyage of discovery solely by the pain in his stomach and the seat of his pants. His voyage was in effect a long learning process of trial and error, uninformed by foresight and design, in which many of the trials were painful and some of the errors fatal. In time, however, the repeated experience of the presence or absence of pain taught men, albeit unreflectively, how best to modify their diet

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp.75; 71-2; 72; 72.

Thus, they took wheat and wetted it, winnowed it, ground it, sifted it, and then mixed it and baked it into bread, and likewise made cakes from barley. They boiled and baked and mixed and diluted the strong raw foods with the weaker ones and subjected them to many other processes, always with a view to man's nature and his capabilities.

Moreover on the basis of that experience men were eventually able to infer and formulate broad generalisations about the nature of foods and their relationship to health and ill health. Thus they came to learn that 'if strong food was eaten the body could not digest it and thus it would bring about pain, sickness and death, whereas the body draws nourishment and thus grows and is healthy from food it is able to digest'. And the author of Tradition in Medicine concluded

What fairer and more fitting name can be given to such research and discovery than that of medicine, which was founded for the health, preservation and nourishment of man and to rid him of that diet which caused pain, sickness and death?¹⁰⁰

Of course doing what came naturally and unreflectively hardly deserved the name of a science, 'for no one can properly be called the practitioners of a science of which the facts are unknown to none and with which all are acquainted by necessity and experience'. Hence that term was more properly reserved for 'what is generally admitted to be the science of medicine, namely, discoveries concerning the sick'. Those discoveries were the responsibility of physicians and not laymen, nevertheless in making them the practitioners of the medical art had employed the same heuristic as that followed by ordinary men munching their way through history towards the optimum constituents of a healthy diet. That is, physicians operated anonymously, slowly, by

100 Ibid., p.72.

repeated trial and error, and with a minimum of foresight and design to arrive at medical rules of diet and regimen for the sick. With the benefit of hindsight the stages in that process could be speculatively reconstructed, but in doing so the tendency both to personalize and invest it with more design and system than it deserved was unavoidable. Thus the author of Tradition in Medicine conjectured that when confronted with the sick 'I imagine, they [physicians] cut down the quantity without changing the quality of the food, making the sick eat very little'. Having thus selected and altered one variable in the diet of the sick, physicians then judged the results of that treatment. But in turn that evidence demonstrated that the wrong variable had in fact been selected, for

it became clear to them that such a regimen suited and helped some of the sick but not all, and that there were some even who were in such a condition that they could not digest even a very little food, then they concluded that in some cases a more easily digested food was necessary.

Accordingly, the quality as well as the quantity of food was identified as another crucial variable in managing the diet of the sick and given that finding physicians 'invented gruel by mixing a little strong food with much water, so taking away its strength by dilution and cooking'. Furthermore, when treating 'those that could not digest even gruel' they extended that principle by 'substituting liquid nourishment'.¹⁰¹ In time, however, repeated applications of that treatment made it clear 'that gruel is not necessarily of assistance to everyone who is sick'. For some fared worse when given it, their 'fever and pains increase[d]' and on the

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 72; 73; 73; 73; 73; 73.

basis of that evidence it was possible to conclude that in certain cases gruel served 'as nourishment to the disease, but as a source of decline and sickness to the body'. Nevertheless even those exceptions proved the rule for it could still be observed that 'were dry food to be taken ... the patients would become ten times worse, than they would be on a diet of gruel, simply because of the strength of the food'. Thus whilst repeated treatment of the sick through the manipulation of their diet demonstrated that gruel was not a universal panacea it did permit the formulation of the general rule that 'the stronger foods are the most harmful to man whether he be in health or sickness'.¹⁰²

With that rule in place the physician's art became more certain if not exact. Indeed the healing art remained a difficult one for given the inevitable qualifications of context and individual circumstance such rules could not be followed blindly. Thus the author of Tradition in Medicine commented

If it were all as simple as this, that the stronger foods are harmful and the weaker good and nourishing for men both in health and sickness, the matter were an easy one. The safest course would be to keep to the weaker food.

The rule, although generally valid, had thus to be applied carefully and with due attention to the variety and complexity of individual needs and constitution. Again repeated experience demonstrated that 'if a man were to eat less than enough he would make as big a mistake as if he were to eat too much' for

Undernourishment gives rise to many troubles and, though they are different from those produced by over-eating, they are none the less severe because they are more diverse and more specific.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp.73; 73; 73-4; 74.

Thus whilst physicians 'aimed at some criterion as to what constitutes a correct diet ... [they] found neither number nor weight to determine what this is exactly'. And here, as in the formulation of the general rules which defined the broad parameters within which specific treatments were to be made, there was 'no other criterion than bodily feeling' and whether or not patients got better or worse.¹⁰³

In the realm of medical law the body was thus both legislature and final court of appeal for bodily sensations provided the evidence upon which all medical trials were ultimately judged. There were of course hard cases but whilst 'human Bodies and Nature it self remain the same',¹⁰⁴ it was nevertheless possible to formulate and apply medical laws whose initial and continuing validity were, within the limits defined by the variety of individual circumstance, certain. In that sense medical rules were, like their legal counterparts, best seen as established precedents rather than as unchanging maxims of universal applicability. Moreover as physicians gained more experience in treating the sick those rules were in time extended to cover not only the management of regimen but also the management of acute and chronic diseases, as well as the practice of surgery.

The extension of medical law into those fields was however dependent not only upon the proliferation of observations and the accumulation of data from repeated treatments of the sick but also, and more crucially, upon the ability to order and systematize those data. That ability was the basis of the art of prognosis which

103 Ibid., p.75.

104 Treatise, p.42.

within Hippocratic medicine was the epitome of the physician's skill. As explicated in the text Prognosis that skill entailed the ability to identify specific disease entities, to predict their course, and to know when and how to intervene in them on behalf of the patient. Thus defined prognosis was based on the repeated experience of observing the human body, it proceeded semeiotically by observing man's behaviour in sickness and by differentiating statements according to age, sex, and type of disease. It also evaluated external data such as the general characteristics of the seasons and the specifics of locality. Nevertheless, as the author of the Prognosis argued, it was still the case that in any single disease

the indications and signs have invariably the same force, the bad being always bad and the good good, in every year and under all climatic conditions. The truth of those described in this treatise has been proved in Libya, in Delos and in Scythia.¹⁰⁵

On that view there were no splinter medicines: instead there was a unified body of practice which identified classes of people who reacted alike and classes of disease which were of the same nature and ran the same course. The following passage selected at random from the Prognosis is typical of the nomothetic results of that unitary enterprise

In all diseases of the lungs, running at the nose and sneezing is bad, whether it existed before the illness or supervened during its course. But in other diseases which are likely to prove fatal, sneezing is beneficial. In cases of pneumonia, the production at the beginning of the illness of yellow sputum mixed with a little blood is a good indication of recovery. But when this occurs on or after the seventh day, it is less certainly good. All sputa are bad which do not relieve the pain; the worse are those which are dark in colour as stated above. The

105 Hippocratic Writings, p.185.

production of any sputum which relieves pain is rather better.¹⁰⁶

Of course the development of the prognostic art did not necessarily reflect on the part of individual physicians a conscious and disinterested quest for scientific knowledge nor simply a desire to attain a more solid and objective basis for the treatment of disease. For prognosis gave the physician who practised it a means of impressing patients and thus in the constant battle for trade it was an important form of self-advertisement. Nevertheless, even if physicians were guided by self-interested and pecuniary rather than medical motives, beneficial consequences followed for the practice of medicine itself: namely, the formulation and elaboration of an increasingly comprehensive and systematic body of knowledge which when expressed as 'short and distinct Conclusions by way of Aphorisms, without Art or Flourish ... serve[d] for Standing Rules in Practice'.¹⁰⁷

The process of discovery by which medical knowledge was gained and medical law or precedent established was thus no different from that which had originally determined the optimum constituents of a normal and healthy diet. For as the author of Tradition in Medicine argued 'What difference is there save in the appearance, and that the one is more complicated and needs more study? Indeed, one is the forerunner of the other'. Medical law was thus arrived at only after long experience and much trial and error, undertaken anonymously and without foresight and conscious design by individual physicians who were too numerous to mention. The cumulative

106 Ibid., p.177.

107 Treatise, p.43.

results of their myriad actions were however consistently and repeatedly judged by 'no other criterion than bodily feeling',¹⁰⁸ and on that basis the successful were selected and the unsuccessful rejected. Patients either fared better or worse and accordingly medical knowledge evolved and medical precedents were established.

Given the structure and mechanics of that evolutionary epistemology, the nature and role of medical reason both within the individual physician and the larger historical current can now be assessed. In the first place, medical knowledge was knowledge gained a posteriori and not a priori. It was knowledge about curing and thus construed it was practical and inductive, rather than theoretical and deductive, knowledge. Hence the reason it employed was practical and not theoretical reason. Of course the authors of the Hippocratic texts were fully aware that in the course of its development medicine had adopted a variety of a priori and speculative frameworks which had sought to offer comprehensive theories about the origins of disease and the constituents of the body. But, ignoring the biases which those frameworks necessarily introduced to the process of observation itself, most of the Hippocratic authors agreed that nothing of practical importance in the art of curing depended upon such speculations. For although the treatments they prescribed were dressed in the language of, and justified by reference to, their respective theoretical frameworks, their efficacy still had to be tested by 'the sole criterion of bodily sensation'. Such theories were therefore to be judged sceptically and pragmatically,

¹⁰⁸ Hippocratic Writings, pp.74; 75.

and it was in precisely that spirit that the author of Tradition in Medicine remarked 'I fancy the diets they prescribe are exactly the same as those we all employ, but they impute heat to one substance, cold to another, dryness to a third and wetness to a fourth'.¹⁰⁹ Hence whilst their treatments could be tested the postulates of those theories could not; for it was impossible to demonstrate experimentally how, for example, heat and cold, the air, or the four humours evoked disease. And thus when such demonstration was attempted it was through dialectic and logical argumentation and there, as far as Hippocratic medicine was concerned, was where it properly belonged.

A priori reason therefore had no place in medicine's evolutionary epistemology. Medical knowledge was knowledge about doing, it was a craftsman's knowledge and thus knowledge of a skill. As such it was both defined and limited by experience for in medicine reason had nothing to operate on except that experience. Medical knowledge and the rules distilled from it were of course reasonable in the sense that they worked. They enabled physicians to cure their patients or at least make their lot less miserable but the pragmatic and collective reason which they embodied was for all that impenetrable and unavailable to the reflections of individual critical reason. Indeed medical reason was doubly opaque and inscrutable for neither the historical process as a whole nor its operations at any one point in time, could be analysed into their elements and reduced to first principles. In the larger context the history of medicine was

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.79.

simply the record of one damned observation after another and thus the origins of medical law and the reason which it displayed lay not in any set of abstract or logical first principles but in a multitude of particular decisions each one of which had been found by trial and error to answer the recurrent and constant needs of the body natural. Thus it was only when tested and confirmed in that fashion that medical reason could be recognised and henceforward preserved in the usages and rules of Hippocratic practice.

Although the general outlines of that process could be speculatively and retrospectively grasped by individual and critical reason the result was in effect a theory about why theory was illegitimate in the production of medical knowledge. Reasons could therefore be given for not giving reasons but little more could be said, for owing to the distant and anonymous beginnings of the medical art it was impossible to recover and analyse the precise circumstances in which its knowledge was first established. Accordingly medical rules or precedents could not be rationally explicated: they contained more reason than met the eye of critical reason. Moreover, what was true of the larger and cumulative historical current was also true of medical practice at any one stage in its evolution. For if, as Mandeville himself argued, 'the Art of Physick consisted in downright Observation and a World of Experience'¹¹⁰ then the very nature of observation itself set further limits upon the operation and role of reflective and individual critical reason.

¹¹⁰ Treatise, p.56.

Mandeville's views on the nature of observation and its relationship to critical reason can be reconstructed from a number of comments which he made in his medical treatise. Taken together they not only reflect a consistent Hippocratic position, they also and more importantly establish his commitment to the evolutionary epistemology which has been described above. In the Treatise and in reply to Misomedon's objection that

I don't deny the Necessity of Observations, but you shall never persuade me, that the Multitude of Observations, (which the more they are, the greater you own is the Practitioner's Certainty) can ever hinder him from giving a Reason for what he does.¹¹¹

Mandeville, in the guise of Philopirio the Hippocratic physician, argued that

when a man has no other Reason for what he does than the Dictates arising from the Observations he has collected, it is impossible that he can give you the one without the other; that is, he can never explain his Reasons to you, unless he could likewise communicate to you that Collection of Observations, of which his Skill is the Product.

Thus reasons in medical explanation were simply observations redescribed. But crucially for Mandeville's argument the possibility of such redescription and thus the possibility of reducing observations to a set of systematic and logically coherent principles, foundered on the limitations of language itself. Thus he argued that

a curious Observer learns in time to distinguish, between things that very nearly resemble one another, have the same name, and seem to those who are less acquainted with them not to differ at all. Now if you please to consider, that there are no Words in any Language for an hundredth part of all the minute Differences in many things that yet are obvious and easily perceptible to the Skilful, you will soon find, that a Man may know a thing

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.60.

perfectly well, and at the same time not be able to tell you, why, or how he comes to know it.¹¹²

It was thus possible to have knowledge without being able to ground it in reasons which could be clearly and unequivocally enunciated. Indeed in the original Greek logos meant both word and the process, by the setting out of words, of reasoning itself. To the extent therefore that observations could not be matched by words, the process of reasoning was excluded from the practice of physick. And therein lay not only the specific craft mystery of the physician but also his reliance on 'downright Observation and a World of Experience' for, as Mandeville argued, the practical knowledge which defined that craft

is the Result of a large Collection of Observations that have been made not only of the Minutiae of things in human Bodies both in Health and Sickness, but likewise on such Changes and Differences in those Minutiae as no Language can express.

Accordingly medical reason was doubly opaque for not only were the sets of observations by which medical knowledge had first been established lost in history but even contemporary observations were themselves incapable of being rationally explicated. There were, Mandeville insisted, 'things to be taken notice of in the Eyes and Face of sick People, that cannot be express'd, and yet yield more certain Rules for Prognostication, to those that are vers'd in them'. And on that basis Philopirio's sceptical interlocutor Misomedon was forced to admit 'I confess I never heard better Reasons, to avoid giving any, in all my Life'.¹¹³

Medical knowledge was thus grounded in observation and not reason. Observation was a skill and the way in which individual

112 Ibid., pp.61; 60-61.

113 Ibid., pp.56; 61; 79; 62.

physicians acquired it necessarily mirrored the way in which it had developed in the cumulative and larger historical context. Thus observation could not be reduced by reason into its component parts and then transmitted as a ready-made package to subsequent physicians. Instead it had to be acquired through the senses and not by reasons. Thus Mandeville argued 'that human Skill, in whatever falls under the Senses, cannot be improved, much less consummated, but by Use, Experience, and Practice of long continuance'. In that sense the physician's skill was no different from the dyer's skill or the layman's ability to understand body language and the language of the eyes. And in acquiring such skills reason or critical intelligence played only a small part for Mandeville stressed 'how much stupid Observation it self, even that which is made in spite of our Teeth, nobis invitis, makes us knowing in, and acquainted with the thing we are forced to be conversant with'. And accordingly the skill or practical knowledge thus insensibly gained was often the result of 'a Constancy of Use, and a Frequency of Observations, which yet were many of them made without Reflection or Design'.¹¹⁴ Thus in the production and consolidation of medical knowledge the larger historical process was a paradigm for the individual process: in both, critical or reflective reason played an insignificant part.

Given the inscrutability of medical knowledge, the implications for contemporary practice, and the role of individual reflective reason within it, were clear. As the knowledge of any individual or generation of physicians was limited by the amount of

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp.78-9; 76; 79.

experience upon which it was based, there was a strong presumption in favour of employing the accumulated experience of the past.

Hippocratic rules and precedents therefore enjoyed a prescriptive authority. They were known by prejudice and not by reason, for no individual by taking thought could discern the infinitely complex train of experiences and decisions which they embodied.

Accordingly, the rules and precedents of Hippocratic medicine were a form of entailed property which succeeding generations of physicians could not alienate. Instead they were required to operate on that terrain and follow its paths, and thus their initiative was restricted merely to the discovery of new ways and means along those old paths. They could not, for example, employ a priori reason and blaze new theoretical trails, for such excursions in Mandeville's eyes only 'crampt and counfounded' an art solidly grounded in 'Observation, plain Observation, without descanting or reasoning upon it'.¹¹⁵ For physicians, as for Burkean conservatives, Hippocratic rules and precedents were thus the stationary policy of the kingdom of medicine. And that policy because it had been continually tested and not found wanting was both immemorial and equally up to date.

The denigration of theoretical reason did not, however, imply that there was no place for reason in the practice of physick. For although observation and experience were crucial and although Hippocratic rules and precedents were to be closely adhered to they had nevertheless to be reflected upon and critically assessed. Thus, as Mandeville himself stressed, 'thought or forecast in the

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.38.

Application of ... Experience' was required. No two cases were ever exactly alike and in using his experience the physician had to judge accordingly. If, for example, a treatment succeeded for 'a strong Man of Thirty, in a Fever of only one Days's standing' then it would be stupid to repeat that treatment either 'the Dose as well as the Medicine to a weakly Child of two Years Old, that had been in a Fever for Ten Days together'. But it would be equally stupid for the physician to wait until he 'met with another strong Patient of Thirty, agreeing in every Circumstance with the former'¹¹⁶ before repeating his previous success. Rather he had to modify that treatment to suit changed circumstances, and as in doing so he was leading with his own, as well as his patient's, chin, he had to proceed cautiously, inductively, and by trial and error. And here once again the practice of the ancients was instructive for Mandeville noted

When the Nature of a Distemper was doubtful or unknown, [they] prescrib'd some innocent Medicines, which they were well acquainted with, and according as they did either good or hurt, tho' in a small degree, they form'd a Judgment of the Method by which the Cure was to be attempted.¹¹⁷

Individual reason also had a crucial role to play in the continuing task of ordering and classifying the data of medical enquiry for without the taxonomic endeavour Mandeville argued 'that vast Stock of Observations ... without any Coherenece or Disposition of them into Classes, would make no Small Confusion in

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.57.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., pp.75-6.

an ordinary Man's Brains'.¹¹⁸ Individual reason was limited and could not carry the load borne by historical reason but it could through classificatory schemes devised a posteriori gain access to it. Similarly, the limitations of individual reason in relation to the collective reason of medical science could in part be further offset and transcended by the institution of a medical division of labour. Specialisation, both according to disease entity and within those divisions, not only advanced medical knowledge, it also made it more manageable and thus more accessible to the individual mind.

Individual or reflective reason therefore played some part in the maintenance and continuing elaboration of the Hippocratic tradition, but its role was clearly circumscribed by the nature of the tradition itself. The Hippocratic physician was a conservative physician. He was not a genius, he was a craftsman who cautiously and pragmatically followed established medical precedents. For many complaints, and particularly for the acute diseases, he could do little more than let nature take its course, keeping the patient comfortable and doing nothing to exacerbate his condition. His task was above all to observe and treat the favourable and unfavourable phenomena which arose spontaneously in every disease through the body's automaton. Thus in a double sense his skill was the happy result of following nature, which was wisdom without reflection. Indeed the spontaneous and unreflective processes which governed the operations of the body natural were themselves an analogue for the historical process through which medical

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.59.

knowledge and law had been established and become a known and settled quantity.

Mandeville's adherence to the heuristic and epistemological principles of Hippocratic medicine was not, however, restricted to that field alone. For the evolutionary epistemology which he derived from his understanding of medical practice provided him with a model for tracing the origins and development of all other arts and sciences. Thus he argued that in all fields of human endeavour 'more useful Knowledge may be acquired from unwearied Observation, judicious Experience, and arguing from Facts a posteriori, than from the haughty Attempts of entering into first Causes, and reasoning a priori'. Indeed for Mandeville it was axiomatic that 'Knowing, a priori, belongs to God only Wretched Man, on the contrary, is sure of nothing, his own Existence not excepted, but from reasoning a posteriori'. And given that axiom it necessarily followed that

the Works of Art and human Invention are all very lame and defective, and most of them pitifully mean at first: Our Knowledge is advanced by slow Degrees, and some Arts and Sciences require the Experience of many Ages, before they can be brought to any tolerable Perfection.

Perfection and progress in the arts and sciences therefore depended not upon 'the Excellency of Man's Genius, and the Depth of his Penetration' but instead upon 'length of Time, and the Experience of many Generations, all of them differing very little from one another in natural Parts and Sagacity'.¹¹⁹ In enumerating the various arts and sciences which had progressed in that fashion Mandeville included agriculture, metallurgy, navigation,

¹¹⁹ Fable of the Bees, II, 164; II, 186; II, 186-87; II, 142.

shipbuilding, textiles, astronomy, architecture, painting and language.¹²⁰ And more significantly he also included the arts of politeness and politics.

In politics, and taking the government of London as his example, Mandeville noted the vast number of

Laws, Prohibitions, Ordinances and Restrictions, that have been found absolutely necessary to hinder both private Men and Bodies corporate, in so many different Stations, first from interfering with the Publick Peace and Welfare; secondly, from openly wronging and secretly over-reaching, or any other way injuring, one another.

Indeed he found 'the Number of Clauses and Proviso's, to govern a large flourishing City well to be prodigious beyond Imagination' and he concluded that 'when well understood' they were to be construed as 'the Result of consummate Wisdom'. Nevertheless, he insisted that amongst those laws and ordinances 'there are very few, that are the Work of one Man, or of one Generation; the greatest part of them are the Product, the joynt Labour of several Ages'. And to make the equivalence with his medical and Hippocratic epistemology complete, he added that the reason or 'consummate Wisdom' embodied in those laws was

not the Offspring of a fine Understanding or intense Thinking but of sound and deliberate Judgment, acquired from long Experience in Business, and a Multiplicity of Observations. By this sort of Wisdom, and Length of Time, it may be brought about, that there shall be no greater Difficulty in governing a large City, than (pardon the Lowness of the Simile) there is in weaving of Stockings.¹²¹

Mandeville could of course have chosen medicine as his analogue but weaving suitably emphasized the ban³asic status and deflated the elevated pretensions of the political art. Moreover, weaving was a

120 Ibid., II, 144-45; II, 287.

121 Ibid., II, 321; II, 321; II, 321-22; II, 322.

craft skill based in observation and doing, and thus that particular analogy, which was a favourite of Mandeville's, properly suggested both the possibilities and limitations of individual and reflective reason in producing law and ordering the business of a body politic.

Although the arts of government and medicine employed the same heuristic and embodied the same cumulative and historical reason as all other arts and sciences, they were nevertheless distinguished by the difficulty and complexity of their context and subject matter. Yet in Mandeville's mind the real basis of their identity, and thus the thread which articulated the series of analogies already noted in his writings between the body politic and the body natural, between state and natural physician, and medical and political law, was not so much their common focus upon the facts of human nature but rather the evolutionary method and epistemology through which the understanding of those facts was attained. And if that thread was indeed a guiding one in Mandeville's speculations on the art of politics, then it remains to be demonstrated how it informs those speculations and resolves the outstanding problem of the origin of law and the establishment of a body politic.

As we have seen, medical rules or precedents arose out of long observation and repeated experience, undertaken by numerous physicians conversing with their patients and becoming conversant with the nature of their complaints. In that discovery process both the observations and the rules which they generated were organized around, directed at, and ultimately tested by the sole criterion of bodily sensation. And once discovered, medical rules

or the maxims of Hippocratic practice aided physicians in the treatment of disease. But if political laws were, as Mandeville argued, similarly and 'plainly design'd as so many Remedies, to cure and disappoint' another human defect, namely man's 'natural instinct of Sovereignty' then the process of design or discovery in the realm of politics should mirror its medical counterpart. In Mandeville's speculations on the origin of law that is indeed the case. In the first place, he noted 'every Man is born with this domineering Spirit' and then, he insisted 'we cannot be cured of it, but by our Commerce with others, and the Experience of Facts, by which we are convinc'd that we have no such Right'. Men therefore learnt to control that instinct and create legal standards of right and wrong only through interacting with each other and observing the results of their interaction. Indeed, Mandeville argued, not only was man's potential for society developed through 'mutual Commerce' but also 'a very considerable, if not the greatest Part of [that] Attribute is acquired, and comes upon Multitudes from their conversing with one another'. But if that transformation came 'upon Multitudes' and was not therefore consciously directed, how did men in effect become physicians to themselves and learn 'to cure and disappoint [their] natural Instinct of Sovereignty'?¹²² Once again the appropriate mechanism was for Mandeville provided by the spontaneous and self-regulating operations of the passions. For just as medical laws were both judged and determined by the sole criterion of bodily sensation, political laws were similarly developed, weighed,

122 Ibid., II, 271; II, 223; II, 189; II, 271.

and selected by man's physical experience of his passions.

Given the incessant and mechanical demands of self-love it was inevitably the case, Mandeville argued, that 'it is every body's Business to be as little disturb'd as is possible'. Similarly, he reasoned, 'Where a Man has everything he desires, and nothing to Vex or Disturb him, there is nothing can be added to his Happiness'. In the human machine, physical and mental health was therefore an equilibrium state, free from bodily or psychic disturbance. But before the advent of law the untrammelled individual pursuit of self-love produced 'Wars and private Quarrels' which Mandeville stressed 'at any time disturbed Mankind'.¹²³ Indeed in the resulting war of all against all he reasoned 'Man in his Anger behave[d] himself in the same manner as other Animals; disturbing in the Pursuit of Self-preservation, those they [were] angry with'. Bodily and psychic disturbance was thus a constant fact of man's social experience in his pre-legal state. But given the homeostatic tendencies of the human machine, the continued pursuit of self-love ensured that its initially disturbing and anti-social consequences were in time subject to a self-correcting effect. For in that quest, Mandeville argued, men 'discover[ed] a restless Endeavour to make themselves easy, which insensibly teaches them to avoid Mischief on all Emergencies'. Driven by the passions aroused by self-love men eventually, albeit unconsciously or 'insensibly', learnt to control them. And thus in the same way as the experience of bodily sickness led to the development of the art of physick and the establishment of medical

123 Ibid., I, 206; I, 346; II, 309.

law Mandeville argued 'To [man's] fearful Disposition and the Aversion he has to his being disturb'd are owing all the various Projects and Forms of Government'.¹²⁴

In the body politic, as in the body natural, physical sensation or disturbance was thus the sole criterion and ultimate reference point directing the evolutionary process which led to the initiation of various schemes of government and the establishment and selection of law. Men quarrelled and suffered and it was inevitable, Mandeville reasoned, that 'their Sufferings in time bring them acquainted with the Causes of their Disagreement'. That knowledge came a posteriori, it was acquired only with experience and after great length of time for whilst savages 'would not be able to establish Rules for future Behaviour' they would nevertheless 'often discover Faults in the Conduct of what was past'. And those discoveries were made not through the exercise of theoretical or prospective reason but instead as a result of observation which at least initially was 'stupid Observation' made by savages in spite of, and often as a result of losing, their teeth. Having acquired that knowledge it could then be utilised pragmatically to remove or cure the sources of human suffering, to remedy the 'Faults in the Conduct of what was past'. Thus towards the end of the second and defensive stage of man's evolution, and given the 'unsettled and precarious way Communities would live in' during that period, Mandeville reasoned that

after three or four Generations human Nature would be look'd into, and begin to be understood: Leaders would find out, that the more Strife and Discord there was amongst the People they headed, the less use they could

¹²⁴ Ibid., II, 271; II, 139; I, 348.

make of them: this would put them upon various ways of curbing Mankind; they would forbid killing and striking one another; the taking away by force the Wives, or Children of others in the same Community: they would invent Penalties, and very early find out, that no body ought to be a Judge in his own Cause; and that old Men, generally speaking, knew more than young.¹²⁵

In their quest for clientele the first state physicians, no less than their medical counterparts, acted upon self-interested motives for Mandeville argued 'the same Ambition that made a Man aspire to be a Leader, would make him likewise desirous of being obey'd in civil Matters, by the Numbers he led'. Nevertheless, in both cases the result was the same, namely the establishment of laws for regulating either the government of the body politic or the body natural, a process which in both instances was made more certain when their respective laws were collected and written down. However, in describing that process in the passage cited above Mandeville not only abridged it, he also invested it with more certainty and conscious design than it in reality embodied. Laws were made by men and thus like all 'Works of Art and human Invention' it must have been the case that they were 'all very lame and defective, and most of them pitifully mean at first'. Those deficiencies were remedied in time but only in Mandeville's evolutionary scheme after many trials and essays made in the continuing course of men's interaction with each other. All laws were designed for the same purpose, namely 'the curbing, restraining and disappointing the inordinate Passions, and hurtful Frailties of Man' but the skill which that demanded on the part of the state physician was acquired in exactly the same way as the

125 Ibid., II, 267; II, 204; II, 268; II, 268.

natural physician acquired his. Accordingly Mandeville argued

it is a great while, before [human] Nature can be rightly understood; and it is the Work of Ages to find out the true Use of the Passions, and to raise a Politician, that can make every Frailty of the Members add Strength to the whole Body, and by dextrous Management turn private Vices into publick Benefits.¹²⁶

In the realm of medicine, the modern physician was 'a Man of consummate knowledge' only because he stood on the shoulders of his predecessors; he was 'the Compound Product of all the Learning and Experience that the Men of so many Ages have from time to time been endued with'.¹²⁷ Similarly, Mandeville's wise and skilful politician was less a single individual and more the embodiment of, and the shorthand term for, the anonymous and cumulative historical process through which men in the course of their spontaneous and ultimately self-regulating interaction with each other had gained knowledge about law and the management of the body politic.

However, when Mandeville did discuss the role of real, rather than disembodied, politicians in managing the affairs and administering the law of city or nation his thought once again displayed important similarities with his beliefs about the role and conservative function of the Hippocratic physician. As we have seen the latter figure, given the insufficiency of his individual and reflective reason in relation to the collective and practical reason which he had inherited from the past, was largely restricted to following the rules and precedents of Hippocratic practice. In so doing he had worked within and contributed to an established medical division of labour, thereby developing and refining his own

¹²⁶ Ibid., II, 268; II, 186-87; II, 321; II, 319.

¹²⁷ Treatise, p.43.

skill as well as that of the craft as a whole. In treating the sick he took care to identify what was beneficial and what was harmful to health. Nevertheless, he remained aware of his limitations, and in seeking to assist the body in its natural and spontaneous battle against disease he neither intervened nor attempted too much. Construed as such the physician's task required neither great genius nor ability, but rather less elevated qualities such as unwearied observation, patience, caution and pragmatism. Taken together those qualities proscribed recourse to a priori theorizing and prescribed respect for the past and established medical precedent. And for Mandeville both the qualities which were required by the state physician and his role in ministering to the needs of the body politic were similarly defined and equally circumscribed.

The healthy operations of the social body, like that of the individual bodies which it contained, were largely governed by spontaneous and self-regulating principles. For the disturbing experience of their passions had led men unreflectively and in time to discover and select laws which removed those disturbances and promoted their happiness. Within that framework it was 'The great Business in general' of successive generations of politicians 'to promote, and ... reward all good and useful Actions on the one hand; and on the other, to punish, or at least discourage, every thing that is destructive or hurtful to Society'. But in a flourishing body politic governed by law those discoveries had to a great extent already been made. New circumstances of course arose and existing laws had to be amended accordingly, but by and large human nature had been thoroughly examined by the long-term

operations of the passions, and guarded against in existing codes of law. Politicians and magistrates were therefore required, given the insufficiency of their individual and reflective reason, to work with and follow existing legal precedents. Indeed for Mandeville their task was even more certain and circumscribed than that of the natural physician. Returning to his analogy with the craft of weaving he claimed 'I know nothing to which the Laws and establish'd Oeconomy of a well order'd City may be more justly compared, than the Knitting-frame'. And he added, whether operated by 'the greatest Artist' or 'by almost any Scoundrel after half a Year's Practice' the result was the same 'Beauty and Exactness in the Manufacture'. The quality of the product, or the efficacy of law thus depended less upon the skill of the operator or legislator and more upon 'the Happiness of the Invention, the Contrivance of the Engine'.¹²⁸ Moreover the operations of a knitting-frame, like those of a well-oiled legal machine were 'at first View ... intricate and unintelligible'. Indeed Mandeville re-emphasized and clarified that point by switching analogies and comparing the invention and maintenance of a mature legal system to that of 'Clocks, that are made to play several Tunes with great Exactness'. Thus he argued

The Study and Labour, as well as Trouble of Disappointments, which, in doing and undoing, such a Contrivance must necessarily have cost from the Beginning to the End, are not to be thought of without Astonishment: There is something analogous to this in the Government of a flourishing City, that has lasted uninterrupted for several Ages: There is no Part of the wholesome Regulations, belonging to it, even the most trifling and minute, about which great Pains and Consideration have

128 Fable of the Bees, II, 321; II, 322; II, 322; II, 322.

not been employ'd, as well as Length of Time; and if you will look into the History and Antiquity of any such City, you will find that the Changes, Repeals, Additions and Amendments, that have been made in and to the Laws and Ordinances by which it is ruled, are in Number prodigious.¹²⁹

The construction and refinement of the legal machine had thus entailed great length of time, much 'Trouble and Disappointments ... in doing and undoing' and constant fine-tuning. And although the nature of that process could be retrospectively and speculatively grasped, it nevertheless contained more reason than met the eye of critical reason. For the precise circumstances in which specific laws were first enacted were lost in antiquity and hence unavailable to the scrutiny of individual reason. Hence law and its operations could not be reduced to a set of logical first principles and succeeding generations of politicians and legislators possessed no blueprint for the machine which they were required to operate. Nevertheless, Mandeville argued, laws and ordinances

when once they are brought to as much Perfection, as Art and human Wisdom can carry them, the whole Machine may be made to play of itself with as little Skill, as is required to wind up a Clock.

The role of the individual politician or legislator was thus reduced to machine minding, it did not require great skill nor powers of ratiocination for Mandeville concluded

the Government of a large City, once put into good Order, the Magistrates only following their Noses, will continue to go right for a great while, tho' there was not a wise Man in it.¹³⁰

Moreover in Mandeville's analysis of law exactly the same principles applied to the management of whole 'States and

129 Ibid., II, 322; II, 322; II, 322-23.

130 Ibid., II, 323.

Kingdoms'. Thus in the absence of statesmen of great genius or virtue he argued that

the next best ... of all possible Means to secure and perpetuate to Nations their Establishment, and whatever they value, there is no better Method than with wise Laws to guard and entrench their Constitution, and contrive such Forms of Administration, that the Common-Weal can receive no great Detriment from the Want of Knowledge or Probity of Ministers, if any of them should prove less able or honest, than they could wish them.

The political wisdom of the nation was thus collected and distilled in its constitution which Mandeville insisted 'In all Business that belonged to the Exchequer ... does nine parts in ten'. And it was once again the case that 'the whole Oeconomy of it seems to be intricate and perplex'd to the last degree, not only to Strangers, but the greatest part of the very Officers that are employ'd in it'.¹³¹ Nevertheless, the latter were aided in the performance of their individual tasks by a political division of labour which made the wisdom enshrined in the constitution available to them. Thus, Mandeville argued, despite the limitations of individual reason it was the case that

By dividing the Employments in a great Office, and subdividing them into many parts, every Man's Business may be made so plain and certain, that, when he is a little used to it, it is hardly possible for him to make Mistakes.

In turn the development of a political division of labour had ensured that the operations of law were subject to a number of self-regulating safeguards. For in the course of their evolution constitutional rules and procedures had been tested by, and thus in effect had thoroughly examined, the excesses of human nature and selected appropriate mechanisms to curb them. And the result of

¹³¹ Ibid., II, 323; II, 335; II, 325; II, 325-26.

that scrutiny was, according to Mandeville, a constitutional structure within which 'by careful Limitations of every Man's Power, and judicious Cheques upon every Body's Trust, every Officer's Fidelity may be placed in so clear a Light, that, the Moment he forfeits it, he must be detected.'¹³²

At the level of the nation state there had of course been progress in the art of government. In seeking to cure their 'Aversion ... to ... being disturb'd' men had been mechanically and insensibly led to experiment with 'various Projects and Forms of Government'. And thus Mandeville conjectured 'Monarchy without doubt was the first. Aristocracy and Democracy were two different Methods of mending the Inconveniences of the first, and a mixture of these three an Improvement on all the rest'.¹³³ A priori or theoretical reason had, however, played no role in that discovery process for there its application was as illegitimate, and its results as unproductive, as in the realm of medicine. Thus Mandeville observed

What an infinite Variety of Speculations, what ridiculous Schemes have not been proposed amongst Men, on the Subject of Government; what Dissentions in Opinion, and what fatal Quarrels has it not been the Occasion of! And, which is the best Form of it, is a Question to this Day undecided. The Projects, good and bad, that have been stated for the Benefit, and more happy Establishment of Society, are innumerable; but how short-sighted is our Sagacity, how fallible human Judgment! What has seem'd highly advantageous to Mankind in one Age, has often been found, to be evidently detrimental by the succeeding; and even among Contemporaries, what is rever'd in one Country, is the Abomination of another.¹³⁴

Mandeville's account of the origins, development, and maintenance of law and government was thus informed throughout by

¹³² Ibid., II, 325.

¹³³ Ibid., I, 348.

¹³⁴ Ibid., II, 187.

principles which, I have argued, were first acquired in, and thus drawn from, his practice and understanding of Hippocratic medicine. Indeed, when combined with his mechanistic and homeostatic model of normal human functioning, the evolutionary epistemology which was common to both enabled him to bridge the hiatus already noted between the second and third stages in his speculative anthropology and to avoid the problem of circularity, the confusion of cause and effect, which the discovery and establishment of law had apparently entailed. At the same time that account also served to identify and remedy the deficiencies which he associated with the theories of patriarchalism, social contract, and civic humanism. Society and government were not simply modelled on, and thus read off from, pre-existing patterns of patriarchal authority; nor were they rationally determined by knowledge of the natural law or created by the inspired deliverances of heroic lawgivers. They were instead the product of a long and hesitant learning process in which ignorant and uncivilized men, governed solely and mechanically by their passions, spontaneously, although only after much trial and error, learnt to curb them. Indeed it was that discovery process, and the self-correcting and unreflective mechanism which informed it, that enabled Mandeville on the one hand to stress the artificiality of society and government, and on the other hand to invoke an image of innate order and design, a hive of swarming bees, to describe its highest expression. For whilst the regular and harmonious operations of a flourishing body politic were the result of human action they were not, according to Mandeville, the result of conscious human design.

4.44 The Discovery of Manners, Morals, and Honour:
Self-love, Self-liking, and Speech

Having reconstructed Mandeville's account of the origins and establishment of law, the remaining features of his speculative anthropology can now be examined, for he argued 'When once Men come to be govern'd by written Laws, all the rest comes on a-pace'. And for Mandeville 'all the rest' was nothing less than the process of civilization itself. That process, however, required the discovery and internalization of a set of behavioural norms over and above those embodied in, and enforced by, positive law. For although the institution of a legal order had freed man from the traumas of his savage state and created both the psychological and social space within which the civilizing process could take off, law alone could not complete civilization's drive to maturity. Before that goal could be achieved, man had to 'become a Disciplin'd Creature, that can find his own Ends in Labouring for others'¹³⁵ and that transformation awaited further discoveries in human understanding in general and in manners and morals in particular. In making them, however, men employed the same heuristic and followed the same path as that which had led to the discovery of law itself. Progress in human understanding and in manners and morals was thus again ultimately directed by the operations of the passions, although those operations were now increasingly governed by the demands of man's self-liking rather than his self-love.

¹³⁵ Ibid., II, 283; II, 347.

As the primary agent of social control, law had drawn man from his savage state by taming his anger and regulating his fear. Man's two dominant passions in the state of nature had been played off against each other, balanced, and refocused. In that process the dictates of self-love had done most of the work. Accordingly, man's socialization in the dawn of history like that of infants in polite society had been effected mainly through appeals to his instinct for self preservation and physical security. Moreover, with the establishment of law, the demands of self-love continued to be an important determinant of his behaviour. Indeed they were given added force, for law secured men in their property and their person and thus secured men discovered an added incentive to pursue their self-love with a steadiness and an application which had previously been impossible. In doing so they increased their grip on a harsh and indifferent environment and improved their condition. Whereas 'their mutual Contentions' had previously 'spoil[t] their Improvements, destroy[ed] their Inventions, and frustrat[ed] their Designs', the stable social conditions created by law allowed them to flourish. Furthermore, Mandeville argued, 'No number of Men, when once they enjoy Quiet, and no Man needs to fear his Neighbour, will be long without learning to divide and subdivide their Labour'. With the specialisation of task and the development of a division of labour, men continued to improve and diversify their productive capacity. In doing so they increased their technical understanding of how best to satisfy their physical needs. But human understanding was further augmented in the sense that men also became aware of their dependence on others. Working within a primitive division of labour men necessarily became

'useful to one another' and their dawning awareness of that fact enabled them to realise and find their 'own Ends in Labouring for others'.¹³⁶ Within the body natural that awareness helped tame the passions for it encouraged individuals to moderate the anti-social and destructive demands of self-love to the extent required by the perceived utility of their cooperative interaction with others. Men learnt to scratch rather than lacerate each other's backs, and within the body politic that discovery functioned as an additional and vital support for the maintenance and stability of the legal order itself.

In the pursuit of self-love men increased and made discoveries in both their technical and social understanding. And once again those discoveries were ultimately judged by the sole criterion of bodily sensation, they were selected according to whether or not they promoted man's physical ease and security. But, as was the case in the socialization of infants in polite society, once man's material needs were secured and the most pressing demands of his self-love were satisfied, he became increasingly susceptible to control via appeals to his self-liking. Indeed it was 'in the Management of Self-liking' that Mandeville

set forth the Excellency of [the human] Species beyond all other Animals, so conspicuous in the superlative Docility and indefatigable Industry; by which all Multitudes are capable of drawing innumerable Benefits, as well for the Ease and Comfort, as the Welfare and Safety of congregate Bodies.¹³⁷

As we have seen the psychic demands of self-liking operating in tandem with the physical demands of self-love had enabled

¹³⁶ Ibid., II, 267; II, 284; II, 284; I, 347.

¹³⁷ Ibid., II, 175.

Mandeville to explain the rise and diversification of the passions. Self-liking aroused man's passions, it made him restlessly industrious, and in the long run it engineered 'the Ease and Comfort ... of congregate Bodies'. But the operations of self-liking also enabled Mandeville to explain how men learnt to control as well as diversify their passions. For given the anxious and inflated sense of self which accompanied that instinct he reasoned that men would automatically and constantly seek solace and encouragement in the good opinion of their peers. They thus became sensitive to, and hence their behaviour could be manipulated by, that opinion. Accordingly, once the operations of self-love had identified a range of individual behaviour which smoothed the course of social interaction and promoted the good of the body politic, the performance and non-performance of those valued traits could be regulated by making them the object of public approval and disapproval. The operation of self-liking thus provided the mechanism which in time enabled men to develop and internalize codes of morals and manners. Self-liking therefore made men docile as well as industrious, it engineered 'the Welfare and Safety' as well as 'the Ease and Comfort of Congregate Bodies', but in Mandeville's speculative anthropology it could only do so once men had acquired and begun to perfect the art of language.

Language, according to Mandeville, was the art par excellence of persuasion, flattery, and dissimulation. In developing that skill, in learning how to do things with words, men, he argued, were less concerned with the sense and reference of their speech and more with its illocutionary force and perlocutionary effects. Thus in answer to the question whether speech was designed and

developed to make our thoughts known to others Mandeville replied

If by Man's speaking to be understood you mean, that when Men speak, they desire that the Purport of the Sounds they utter should be known and apprehended by others, I answer in the Affirmative: But if you mean by it, that Men speak, in order that their Thoughts may be known, and their Sentiments laid open and seen through by others, which likewise may be meant by speaking to be understood, I answer in the Negative. The first Sign or Sound that ever Man made, born of a Woman, was made in Behalf, and intended for the use of him who made it; and I am of Opinion, that the first Design of Speech was to persuade others, either to give Credit to what the speaking Person would have them believe; or else to act or suffer such Things, as he would compel them to act or suffer, if they were entirely in his Power.

Speech therefore was the art of persuasion designed to promote the interests of the speaker. Indeed in acquiring and learning to employ that art, primitive men were no different from children in civilized society, for in both, Mandeville argued, 'the first things they endeavour to express with Words are their Wants and their Will'.¹³⁸

But if speech was the art of persuasion designed to promote the interests of the speaker, it was also, and necessarily, the art of deception. For given the irreducibly selfish and brute nature of man's appetites and desires, as well as their inescapable and permanent impact on his behaviour, Mandeville reasoned

all Civil Commerce would be lost, if by Art and prudent Dissimulation we had not learn'd to hide and stifle them; and if all we think was to be laid open to others in the same manner as it is to our selves, it is impossible that endued with Speech we could be sufferable to one another.

Thus in using speech to communicate their intentions men had to learn to express and present them in more palatable and socially acceptable terms. In effect they had to redescribe, and thus

138 Ibid., II, 289; II, 289-90.

conceal, both their self-interested nature and their base and animal motives. But if language was the medium through which men deceived each other, it was for Mandeville also, and more significantly, the medium through which the species deceived itself. For although men's partial and distorted redescrptions of their motivations and behaviour were in the last analysis nothing more than useful and agreeable fictions, they were, if told often and long enough, eventually elevated to the status of fact. Thus in listening to each other's propaganda men unwittingly came to believe it, and in that fashion both the species from its infancy as well as children in polite society were, Mandeville argued, 'taught insensibly to be Hypocrites from their Cradle'.¹³⁹

Through using language men became strangers to their true selves. In time, however, the most soothing and socially useful expressions of their mutual hypocrisy were identified by the operations of self-love, enforced by the operations of self-liking and eventually fixed in codes of morality. And for Mandeville it was only when socially approved standards of right and wrong were thereby generated and internalized that the control of the passions in both the body natural and the body politic was finally established and secured. For whilst the existence of positive law and the fear of punitive sanctions had initially curbed man's passions it was still the case that it was 'impossible by Force alone to make him tractable, and receive the Improvements he is capable of'. Moreover, whilst an expanded division of labour and the associated increase of man's understanding provided an

139 Ibid., I, 349.

additional means of social control, the balance between man's enlightened and narrow self-interest remained a fragile and precarious one. Thus 'the manner after which Savage Man was broke'¹⁴⁰ was a process which ultimately awaited the development of language and refinements in the art of flattery. Indeed in Mandeville's naturalistic and evolutionary scheme, men controlled their passions not by attaching their ears to the lips of a Hobbesian sovereign, an artificial machine for cranking out^t formal definitions of right and wrong designed to repress, rather than extinguish, man's appetites and desires by making them if not unthinkable then at least illogical and imprudent, but instead by attaching their ears to each other's lips, from which the passions, although transformed, nevertheless spoke with undiluted force.

Language was therefore the medium through which men who were both proud and self-interested but also anxious and hence other-regarding developed and internalized codes of morality. In short, Mandeville argued that 'the nearer we search into human Nature, the more we shall be convinced, that the Moral Virtues are the Political Offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride'. Morality was thus artificial and conventional rather than natural and innate. Men invented right and wrong but they did not do so consciously and as a result of a priori design. Instead their discoveries in that field once again followed the same hesitant path and employed the same anonymous heuristic, as that which had determined progress in the establishment of a legal order. Thus whilst Mandeville frequently referred to the personal, active, and historically

140 Ibid., I, 42; I, 46.

specific role of 'skilful Politicians', 'Artful Moralists' and 'Lawgivers and other wise Men, that have laboured for the Establishment of Society' by framing 'the first Rudiments of Morality',¹⁴¹ the invention of moral virtue was in reality the result of an impersonal and protracted evolutionary process in which the identification, selection, and reinforcement of socially useful, and hence approved, standards of individual behaviour were ultimately determined by the spontaneous and self-regulating operations of the passions themselves.

The precise mechanics of that process, the way in which men learnt to conquer their appetites and, in the name of virtue, mind the public rather than their private interest, can be reconstructed as follows. As we have seen, men who were initially directed solely by the dictates of self-love slowly discovered in the course of their productive and social interaction with others that their self-regarding behaviour was, in its crude and unmediated form, not only counter-productive but ultimately self-defeating. Accordingly Mandeville argued that

even those who only strove to gratify their Appetites, being continually cross'd by others of the same Stamp, could not but observe, that whenever they check'd their Inclinations or but followed them with more Circumspection, they avoided a world of Troubles, and often escap'd many of the Calamities that generally attended the too eager Pursuit after Pleasure.

Standards of interpersonal behaviour which were at one and the same time individually and collectively useful were thus identified and selected a posteriori by the mechanical operations of self-love. But the internalization and continued performance of those

¹⁴¹ Ibid., I, 51; I, 47; I, 145; I, 42; I, 47.

behaviours depended upon more than their perceived public and private utility. For the individual benefits which accrued from the pursuit of enlightened self-interest were in the short term neither so immediate nor so powerful as the instinctual and countervailing demands of narrow self-love. To overcome the force of the latter, to persuade men 'to disapprove of their natural Inclinations, or prefer the good of others to their own' they first had to find 'a Reward for the Violence, which by so doing they of necessity must commit upon themselves'.¹⁴² That reward was, however, forthcoming in the passions aroused by self-liking.

Although the strength of self-liking varied amongst men, all were subject to the demands of pride and shame which were merely the opposite sides of that single and general trait. Thus arguing 'from the plain and different Effects, that in spite of our Reason are produced in us as soon as we are affected with either' Mandeville insisted that pride and shame 'are Realities in our Frame, and not imaginary Qualities'. Moreover their impact on human behaviour was irresistible and beyond rational control, for within the body natural the symptoms of pride and shame were automatically and mechanically produced by the spontaneous movements of the animal spirits and the circulation of the blood. Thus Mandeville noted

When a Man is overwhelm'd with Shame, he observes a sinking of the Spirits; the Heart feels cold and condensed, and the Blood flies from it to the Circumference of the Body; the Face glows, the Neck and Part of the Breast partake of the Fire: He is heavy as Lead; the Head is hung down, and the Eyes through a Mist of Confusion are fix'd on the Ground: No Injuries can move him; he is weary of his Being, and heartily wishes he could make himself invisible: But when, gratifying his

142 Ibid., I, 47; I, 42.

Vanity, he exults in his Pride, he discovers quite contrary Symptoms; His Spirits swell and fan the Arterial Blood; a more than ordinary Warmth strengthens and dilates the Heart; the Extremities are cool; he feels light to himself, and imagines he could tread on Air; his Head is held up, his Eyes roll'd about with Sprightliness; he rejoices at his Being, is prone to Anger, and would be glad that all the World could take notice of him.¹⁴³

Pride and shame were thus realities in man's frame but for Mandeville they were also and more significantly the 'two Passions, in which the Seeds of most Virtues are contained'. For on the one hand men found their sense of shame troublesome and on the other their sense of pride made them greedy 'after the Esteem of others'. Thus once socially useful standards of individual behaviour had been spontaneously identified by the operations of self-love, men who necessarily valued their psychic as well as their physical ease could be persuaded to adopt them by attaching their performance and non-performance to public approval and disapproval. Hence in the interest of their common good men developed the concepts of vice and virtue and added them to their social lexicon. In short they agreed

to call every thing, which, without Regard to the Publick, Man should commit to gratify any of his Appetites, VICE; if in that Action there cou'd be observed the least prospect, that it might either be injurious to any of the Society, or ever render himself less serviceable to others: And to give the Name of VIRTUE to every Performance, by which Man, contrary to the impulse of Nature, should endeavour the Benefit of others, or the Conquest of his own Passions out of a Rational Ambition of being good.¹⁴⁴

The manipulation of self-liking was thus the mechanism which engineered non-coercive methods of social control within the body politic. But it was also the mechanism which ensured the control

143 Ibid., I, 67; I, 67; I, 67-8.

144 Ibid., I, 67; I, 68; I, 48-9.

of the passions within the body natural. For the psychic rewards which men experienced in winning the esteem of their peers, 'the Raptures [they] enjoy[ed] in the Thoughts of being liked, and perhaps admired', were for Mandeville 'Equivalents that overpay the Conquest of the strongest Passions'. Self-liking therefore provided a recompense for the labour and pain of self-denial and hence the means by which individuals were able to suppress and control the instinctual demands of the passions and appetites clustering around self-love. Accordingly, he claimed that 'There is no pitch of Self-denial that a Man of Pride and Constitution cannot reach, nor any Passion so violent but he'll sacrifice it to another which is superior to it'. Of course the full development and impact of self-liking on man's behaviour had awaited the control of his primal fear and anger, but once the institution of a legal order had achieved that end, the continuing arousal and constant reinforcement of self-liking in the course of mankind's conversation with itself ensured that pride eventually and inevitably became the species' predominant and governing passion. Indeed, whilst pride was initially only a potential talent in the psychic organization of primitive man, his subsequent history dictated that 'without it the Compound he is made of would want one of the chiefest ingredients'. The presence and arousal of pride was thus essential for the regular and ordered operations of the body natural, but that passion was also essential for the healthy operations of the body politic. For given its dual role in controlling man's anti-social and exciting his productive passions Mandeville could justifiably claim that there is 'no other Quality

so beneficial to Society'.¹⁴⁵

In Mandeville's account of the origins of moral virtue, pride and not love of the species conquered all. Governed solely by their passions men learnt, albeit unconsciously and slowly, to play them off against each other. In time the operations of self-liking cancelled and contained the operations of self-love. And nowhere was that process more clearly illustrated than in Mandeville's analysis of the identification, selection, and reinforcement of valour as a moral virtue.

Within the body politic the conquest of selfishness was essential for the maintenance of stable and harmonious productive relations. But other changes on the oeconomy of man's passionate nature were also required for the continued well-being and survival of the social body. No one Mandeville insisted 'can insure Peace from without for ever',¹⁴⁶ and thus men had to learn to conquer their fear and be prepared to stand and fight, to the death if necessary, against their enemies. Fear, however, was the most entrenched and powerful of the passions centering around man's self-love. It was the passion best adapted to his instinct of self-preservation and as such its conquest required the ultimate act of self-denial. Nevertheless, that conquest was possible once men had discovered and learnt to tie themselves to the principle of valour.

The discovery and recognition of valour or artificial courage as a public virtue was, however, dependent upon the prior existence of its opposite, natural or true courage. That quality was in turn

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., I, 68; I, 214; I, 45; I, 124.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., I, 207.

a product of man's anger and the ability of that passion to overcome 'the whole set of Fears Man has'. When thus stirred, man was capable of bravura displays of blind rage and aggression, but such behaviour was a far cry from that demanded 'in War ... manag'd by Strategem, and brought into a regular Art'. For the persistence of natural courage depended upon the balance between fear and anger being constantly maintained in favour of the latter passion. Anger, however, was produced by a mechanical 'Ebullition of the Spirits' and hence it was 'a Passion of no long continuance'. Thus it was easily dissipated, especially when men 'felt the Smart of the Enemy's Blows'.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, even while it lasted it was a furious, undisciplined and hence unmanageable passion. To ensure the constant and reliable defence of the body politic, the erratic and unpredictable behaviours inspired by natural courage had therefore to be transformed and institutionalized into the permanent and disciplined traits celebrated in the name and moral virtue of valour. And that transformation depended upon the operations of self-liking and the social manipulation of man's sense of pride and shame.

Although all men were naturally susceptible to anger, the strength of that passion varied between individuals, for its intensity ultimately depended upon random variations in 'the inward make of Man ... the natural Strength, Elasticity, and due Contexture of the finer Spirits'. Some men were thus constitutionally more disposed to anger than others, and in times of external crisis and assault the natural courage which that passion inspired was

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., I, 207; I, 208; I, 208; I, 208; I, 208.

obviously crucial for the survival of the group. Indeed repeated experience of inter-group conflict slowly demonstrated that fact and once the social utility of natural anger had been thus recognised, it naturally became the object of esteem by the group as a whole. In turn the celebration of that trait as a valued social behaviour ensured that its presence and persistence within the group were gradually reinforced and consolidated. For high-spirited men who were naturally prone to anger were also especially sensitive to the demands of pride. They found the praise of other men irresistible and the rewards which accrued to their self-liking enabled them to discount the labour and pain of self-denial which their self-love felt in 'the Smart of the Enemy's Blows',¹⁴⁸ and which via the passion of fear had previously threatened to extinguish their natural anger. The strength of pride thus conquered the passions aroused by self love, it suppressed the countervailing demands of fear and encouraged men in the performance of the belligerent behaviours originally associated with anger and natural courage. In doing so, however, the operations of pride also transformed natural courage into its opposite, valour or artificial courage. For unlike anger, pride was a constant and steady passion, once engaged it served to make the behaviours to which it was attached more permanent and reliable. Hence governed increasingly by their pride rather than by anger, men discovered the ability to screw their courage to the sticking place. Their courage was no longer determined naturally by sporadic and ephemeral fits of anger but artificially by the social manipulation of their self-liking.

148 Ibid., I, 211; I, 208.

Although originally the preserve of a few randomly selected and exceptionally spirited men, once courage was severed from its naturalistic basis in anger it slowly became a more common and widely distributed trait within the body politic. Blinded by pride men lost sight of the real basis of their behaviour, they were 'not well vers'd in distinguishing the Passions' and hence they came to 'imagine that they felt [valour] heaving in their Breasts, by mistaking Pride for Courage'. Men were thus deceived by the force of pride; in effect they deceived themselves, and in time the results of their self-deception were institutionalized in the ideology of valour. They began to tell themselves that 'the generality of Men had within them a Principle of Valour distinct from Anger, or any other Passion, that made them to despise Danger and face Death it self with Intrepidity, and that they who had the most of it were the most valuable of their kind'. Once in place, however, that ideology was easily consolidated, for although only some men were prone to anger and natural courage, all men, albeit to a greater or lesser extent, were moved by the force of pride. They too wished to be counted 'as the most valuable of their kind' and for that reason Mandeville argued that 'If but one in Ten can be persuaded openly to declare, that he is possess'd of this Principle [valour], and maintain it against all Gainsayers, there will soon be half a dozen that shall assert the same'.¹⁴⁹ Hence the willingness and ability to perform public spirited acts in the name of valour became a more widely diffused trait within the body politic. Of course, the general acceptance of that ideology did

149 Ibid., I, 209; I, 209; I, 208-9; I, 209; I, 209.

not mean that all men were thus 'made equally Valiant'. Men 'differ[ed] from one another in Shape and inward Structure', they did not have 'an equal share of Pride' and thus when put to the test men of weak constitution and little pride were found wanting. Nevertheless, away from the heat of battle and undisturbed by fear their pride reasserted itself. They too wished to enjoy the good opinion of other men and to be counted amongst 'the most valuable of their kind',¹⁵⁰ hence they preached what they could not practise. Thus whilst pride made heroes of some men, it made hypocrites of others. And moreover, the hypocrisy of the latter group was further reinforced by the demands of self-love, for in lending their voice to the chorus of praise in favour of valour its members reaped the benefits of its presence in the former group.

In transforming natural courage into valour and in engineering the widest possible diffusion and veneration of that artificial trait within the body politic, the passion of pride had worked hand in hand with the passion of shame. 'Do but increase Man's Pride' Mandeville observed 'and his fear of Shame will ever be proportioned to it; for the greater Value a Man sets upon himself, the more Pains he'll take and the greater Hardships he'll undergo to avoid Shame'. Indeed those two passions were merely opposite sides of the coin of self-liking, and the psychic debits and credits which they brought to the balance sheet of man's self-esteem ensured his allegiance, both feigned and genuine, to the principle of valour. In time that allegiance was further reinforced and consolidated as refinements were made in the art of

150 Ibid., I, 211; I, 211; I, 211; I, 209.

flattery. Men learnt to 'put Feathers in their Caps', they talked of 'Publick-Spiritedness, the Love of their Country, facing an Enemy with Intrepidity, despising Death, the Bed of Honour, and such like high-sounding Words'. In battle 'all that run away [were] ... punish'd with Ignominy', whilst 'those that fought well, whether they did beat or were beaten [were] ... flatter'd and solemnly commended; [and] those that were kill'd [were], above all ... taken notice of, artfully lamented, and ... [had] extraordinary Encomiums bestowed upon them'.¹⁵¹ Men were thus induced to adhere to the principle of valour by refinements in the art of public approval and disapproval which continued to operate mechanically, and with added force, upon their sense of pride and shame.

Driven by the incessant demands of self-liking, men's adherence to the principle of valour was determined by the presence, and good opinion, of their significant others. Indeed such were the pressures towards social conformity that even in battle, Mandeville argued, 'One Man in an Army is a check upon another, and a hundred of them that single and without witness would be all Cowards, are for fear of incurring one another's Contempt made Valiant by being together'. Accordingly, men were prepared to stand and die rather than suffer the imaginary blows which shame dealt to their self-liking. Death, however, marked both the termination of all desire and the removal of an individual from the presence of his significant others. There were no psychic rewards beyond the grave. But Mandeville argued

¹⁵¹ Ibid., I, 209; I, 210; I, 211.

So silly a Creature is Man, as that, intoxicated with the Fumes of Vanity, he can feast on the thoughts of the Praises that shall be paid his Memory in future Ages with so much ecstasy, as to neglect his present Life, nay, court and covet Death if he but imagines that it will add to the Glory he had acquired before.

Thus for those men whose vanity and pride extended towards the thought of posterity's thoughts, the prospect of death was not merely a small price to pay, it was all but essential for the maintenance of their self-esteem. In such individuals the demands of self-liking completely effaced the countervailing demands of self-love. Pride thus made 'Bubbles of the Living' and although such behaviour was pathological when judged from the perspective of self-love and the continued functioning of the body natural, it was absolutely essential for the permanent defence and survival of the body politic. For whilst anger remained the basis of natural courage that trait was of limited use to the social body, as Mandeville remarked 'as long as People are Angry, all Counsel and Discipline are lost upon them, and they can never be brought to use Art or Conduct in their Battles'. Under the discipline of pride the reverse was however the case. Thus he concluded 'The Courage then which is only useful to the Body Politick, and what is generally call'd true Valour, is artificial, and consists in a Superlative Horror against Shame, by Flattery infused into Men of exalted Pride'.¹⁵²

Mandeville's analysis of the origins and development of valour as a moral virtue can, however, be generalised and read as a model for his account of the origins of morality in general. Morality was not a confidence trick foisted upon a gullible public by

152 Ibid., I, 211; I, 213-14; I, 211; I, 208; I, 210.

scheming and ambitious politicians who sought, in Machiavellian fashion, to 'reap the more Benefit from, and govern vast Numbers of them within the greater Ease and Security'. Instead, man's capacity for moral behaviour emerged slowly and spontaneously as a product of the natural operations of the passions aroused by his self-love and self-liking. In the course of their interaction with each other men's instinctual desire for self-preservation and physical comfort led them to identify a range of behaviours which promoted 'their greater Ease and Security'. But at the same time as the demands of self-love selected standards of conduct which were socially useful, those same demands, in the form of individual and immediate self-interest, undermined men's willingness and ability to conform to them. The interests of the body natural were thus in conflict with the interests of the body politic. Men, however, were also governed by the demands of self-liking. Pride and shame were 'Realities in [their] Frame' and under the mechanical influence of those two passions they were naturally driven to seek the good opinion and to avoid the censure of other men. Accordingly, pride and shame were 'the two Passions in which the Seeds of most Virtues [were] contained',¹⁵³ for the approval and disapproval which were naturally bestowed upon the performance and non-performance of socially useful behaviours induced men to stifle their immediate self-interest by providing them with a recompense for the labour and pain of self-denial which their conformity to such public-spirited actions entailed. The spontaneous operations of self-liking thus conquered the operations of self-love. But

153 Ibid., I, 47; I, 67; I, 67.

that 'happy Contrivance of playing [man's] Passions against one another' was not the work of any single individual, it was not due to 'The Power and Sagacity as well as Labour and Care of the Politician in civilizing the Society'. Nor were there any

Lawgivers and other wise Men, that [in] labour[ing] for the Establishment of Society ... thoroughly examin'd all the Strength and Frailties of our Nature, and observing that none were either so savage as not to be charm'd with Praise, or so despicable as patiently to bear Contempt, justly concluded, that Flattery must be the most powerful Argument that could be used to Human Creatures.¹⁵⁴

Instead those discoveries were made anonymously and slowly by the natural operation of the passions themselves, and thus they were made only as the result, and in the course, of men's gradual and cumulative experience of conversing with each other.

The demands of self-liking had initially induced men to conform to a number of distinct but uncoordinated behaviours which promoted the welfare of the body politic. In time, however, and with the continued operation of the passions aroused by self-liking, those valued but separate traits were gradually elaborated and elevated into comprehensive and integrated models of public-spirited behaviour. For with the development of language and refinements in the art of flattery, men became increasingly sensitive to the mechanical demands of pride and shame. They were ever anxious to soothe their nervous sense of self-liking and thus they readily deceived themselves into believing that their ability to suppress their passions and aim at the public good was in fact the product of a general and distinctively human capacity for moral behaviour and rational self-control. In that self-congratulatory

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., I, 145; I, 145; I, 42-3.

spirit men lost sight of the passionate and irrational basis of their behaviour and instead celebrated their 'Sagacity and Vastness of Understanding'. Accordingly they 'bestow'd a thousand Encomiums on the Rationality of [their] Souls, by the Help of which [they] were capable of performing the most notable Atchievements'. In doing so they gradually asserted their 'preeminence over all visible Beings' and defined the human species as

made up of lofty high-spirited Creatures, that free from sordid Selfishness, esteem'd the Improvements of the Mind to be their fairest Possessions; and setting a true value upon themselves, took no Delight but in embellishing that Part in which their Excellency consisted; such as despising whatever they had in common with irrational Creatures, opposed by the Help of Reason their most violent Inclinations; and making a continual War with themselves to promote the Peace of others, aim'd at no less than the Publick Welfare and the Conquest of their own Passion.

With that model in place, men who failed to conform to its ideals, who were 'always hunting after immediate Enjoyment ... [who] yielded without Resistance to every gross desire, and made no use of their Rational Faculties but to heighten their Sensual Pleasure' were accordingly judged to be less than human. Indeed they were labelled 'the Dross of their Kind, [who] having only the Shape of Men, differ'd from Brutes in nothing but their outward Figure'.¹⁵⁵

Unconsciously manipulated and misled by their sense of pride and shame, men invented the concept of moral virtue and made a fetish of their alleged capacity for rational self-control. Once created that idol served, however, as a further means of controlling the passions within the body natural and of

155 Ibid., I, 43; I, 43; I, 43; I, 44; I, 43; I, 43-4.

reinforcing and extending the ideology of public spiritedness within the body politic. Men of exalted pride were, for example, especially anxious to appropriate 'to themselves all the Excellences they have heard of it' and thus they were persuaded to stifle their self-interested passions and 'to endure a thousand Inconveniences, and undergo as many Hardships, that they may have the pleasure of counting themselves Men' of public spirit. Moreover, having taken 'such extraordinary Pains to master some of their natural Appetites' such men were not prepared to 'recede an Inch from the fine Notions they had receiv'd concerning the Dignity of Rational Creatures', and thus they assiduously cultivated and gave their support to the ideology of moral virtue and rational self-control. Of course not all men were able to control 'their natural Appetites' in that fashion and prefer 'the good of others to any visible Interest of their own', for they 'wanted a sufficient Stock of either Pride or Resolution to buoy them up in mortifying of what was dearest to them'. Nevertheless, even they were forced to pay lip-service to the burgeoning ideology of virtue for their self-liking ensured that they

would yet be asham'd of confessing themselves to be those despicable Wretches that ... were generally reckon'd to be so little remov'd from Brutes; and that therefore in their own Defence they would say, as others did, and hiding their own Imperfections as well as they could, cry-up Self-denial and Public-Spiritedness as much as any.¹⁵⁶

In that sense then 'the Moral Virtues' were, as Mandeville insisted, 'the Political Offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride'. However, in adopting and internalizing those values men

156 Ibid., I, 45.

were not literally duped by 'the skilful Management of wary Politicians' who had cunningly 'extoll'd the Excellency of [human] Nature above other animals' and thus at a stroke broached 'the first Rudiments of Morality'.¹⁵⁷ Instead men were persuaded by, and thus they were the victims of, their own pride and vanity. Accordingly men, in Mandeville's speculative anthropology, were distinguished from other members of the animal kingdom not by any innate and superior faculty of reason but partly, although crucially, by their nervous and inflated sense of self-liking. That instinct, and the passions of pride and shame which it aroused, had initially enabled men to control their self-interested passions. In turn its continued operations had then encouraged them to misconstrue the nature of their transformed and apparently altruistic behaviour and to elevate it into systematic codes of morality. Judged from Mandeville's entirely naturalistic perspective those codes were, however, merely symbols of man's alienation, a measure of both his self-deception and the distance he had travelled from his original and authentic animal nature.

In Mandeville's evolutionary scheme, man's capacity for moral behaviour was acquired rather than innate and morality itself was conventional rather than natural. Men invented standards of right and wrong but they did not do so consciously and with foresight and design. Instead those discoveries were made by the anonymous and spontaneous operations of the passions in the natural course of mankind's conversation with itself. Moreover, as that conversation continued, and as refinements were made in the art of language and

157 Ibid., I, 51; I, 51; I, 43; I, 47.

flattery, men discovered new and more efficient techniques of social control. In time honour replaced virtue as 'the tye of Society' and it did so because honour codes made fewer demands on, and were thus better adapted to, man's passionate nature. Unlike the principle of virtue which had required men to take 'extraordinary Pains to master some of their natural Appetities', honour, especially in its modern and degenerate form, merely required men to conceal rather than conquer their passions. For, Mandeville argued, whereas 'Virtue bids us subdue ... good breeding only requires we should hide our Appetites'. Moreover, he observed, 'Honour gives [man] large Grains of Allowance, and Virtue none'. A man of honour, for example,

must not cheat or tell a Lye; he must punctually repay what he borrows at Play, though the Creditor has nothing to shew for it; but he may drink, and swear, and owe Money to all the Tradesmen in Town, without taking notice of their dunning. A Man of Honour must be true to his Prince and Country, while he is in their Service; but if he thinks himself not well used, he may quit it, and do them all the Mischief he can. A Man of Honour must never change his Religion for Interest, but he may be as Debauch'd as he pleases, and never practise any. He must make no Attempts upon his Friends Wife, Daughter, Sister, or any body that is trusted to his Care, but he may lie with all the World besides.¹⁵⁸

Adherence to the modern code of honour therefore required a minimum of individual self-denial and what little violence a man was thereby required to commit upon himself was amply repaid by the praise of his significant others. 'Honour, in its proper and genuine Signification' was according to Mandeville 'nothing else but the good Opinion of others, which is counted more or less Substantial, the more or less Noise or Bustle there is made about

158 Ibid., I, 218; I, 45; I, 72; I, 222; I, 222-23.

the demonstration of it'. And with the continued development of language and refinements in the art of flattery that 'Noise or Bustle' had reached its highest pitch and ensured that 'the Self-denial a Man of Honour submits to in one Appetite, is immediately rewarded by the Satisfaction he receives from another, and what he abates of his Avarice, or any other Passion, is doubly repaid to his Pride'. Honour codes were thus more easily enforced than codes of moral virtue for 'all the Recompence a Man has of a virtuous Action, is the Pleasure of doing it, which most People reckon but poor Pay'.¹⁵⁹ In short, the principle of honour was better adapted to the combined demands of man's self-love and self-liking and thus in time it was automatically selected by the continued operations of those two passions.

Although Mandeville defined honour in its generic sense as 'a certain Principle of Virtue ... found in some Men that keeps 'em close to their Duty and Engagements whatever they be', he insisted that in its specifically modern and degenerate form 'Honour is not founded upon any Principle either of real Virtue or true Religion'.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, in its Gothic and authentic form honour had grown out of and had in fact been closely attached to the moral virtues, for its discovery had been occasioned by the need to tame and domesticate one of that ideology's core values, valour or artificial courage. As Mandeville argued

If we will mind what Effects Man's Bravery, without any other Qualifications to sweeten him, would have out of an Army, we shall find that it would be very pernicious to the Civil Society; for if Man could conquer all his Fears, you would hear of nothing but Rapes, Murthers and Violences of all Sorts.

159 Ibid., I, 63-4; I, 222; I, 222.

160 Ibid., I, 198; II, 124.

And for that reason he conjectured 'Politicks therefore discovered in Men a mixt-mettle Principle, which was Compound of Justice, Honesty and all the Moral Virtues join'd to Courage'. But with changed and more peaceful circumstances men who had pinned their colours to 'the Standard of Ancient Honour' gradually found its demands 'like their Armour very massy and heavy'. Their self-love dictated that 'the many Virtues about it made it very troublesome' and thus Mandeville argued

as Ages grew wiser and wiser, the Principle of Honour in the beginning of the last Century was melted over again, and brought to a new Standard; they put in the same Weight of Courage, half the Quantity of Honesty, and a very little Justice, but not a Scrap of any other Virtue, which has made it very easy and portable to what it was.

The principle of honour thus detached itself from its more austere and demanding predecessor and although men were accordingly made easier in their social obligations, Mandeville insisted that 'there would be no living without it in a large Nation' for, he continued,

it is the tye of Society, and though we are beholden to our Frailties for the chief Ingredient of it, there is no Virtue, at least that I am acquainted with, that has been half so instrumental to the civilizing of Mankind, who in great Societies would soon degenerate into cruel Villains and treacherous Slaves, were Honour to be removed from among them.¹⁶¹

In its modern and degenerate form the principle of honour was the sole preserve and property of 'People of the better sort'. Indeed 'The Excellency of [that] Principle', its persuasive charm as a positional good for members of the social elite, was precisely the fact that 'the Vulgar [were] destitute of it'.¹⁶² Men of honour, however, also distinguished themselves from the common herd

¹⁶¹ Ibid., I, 217-18; I, 218; I, 218; I, 218; I, 218-19.

¹⁶² Ibid., I, 199.

by their staunch adherence to, and studied practice of, the similarly modern and equally elitist code of civility and politeness. That code sought in effect to regulate all aspects of the presentation of the aristocratic self in everyday life, for it not only prescribed rules which were 'to be observ'd every where, in speaking, writing, and ordering Actions to be perform'd by others', it also specified an elaborate range of decorums which were to be followed in managing the social niceties of face-to-face contact amongst equals. Accordingly, the desired characteristics of 'agreeable Postures, a graceful Mien, an easy Carriage, and a genteel outward Behaviour' were all legislated for. But although the doctrine of civility or politeness was both socially restricted and of recent origin, it represented for Mandeville merely the latest and most refined stage in mankind's development of the general art or science of good manners. In its generic form that science had as its subject matter the identification and selection of socially useful and approved standards of interpersonal behaviour, for 'All the Precepts of good Manners throughout the World' he claimed 'have the same Tendency, and are no more than the various Methods of making ourselves acceptable to others, with as little Prejudice to ourselves as is possible'.¹⁶³ Thus defined, the science of good manners functioned alongside law and morality as an additional source of social control within the body politic, for in inventing and following its precepts men learnt to regulate and harmonize their informal relations with each other. Their ability to do so was, however, only acquired slowly and once again

163 Ibid., II, 141; II, 141; II, 147.

without foresight and design, for as was the case in law and morality, the identification and selection of appropriate social norms depended upon the spontaneous and mechanical operations of the passions in the protracted course of mankind's conversation with itself.

In that conversation it was inevitable, Mandeville reasoned, that every individual would, given the irresistible and anxious demands of self-liking, 'seek for Opportunities, by Gestures, Looks, and Sounds, to display the Value it has for itself, superior to what it has for others'. But in the absence of good manners, it was also inevitable that men would express their self-liking, like 'a prancing Horse, or a strutting Turkey-cock', in crude and blatant forms. Such open expressions of that passion would however be initially self-defeating, for instead of winning the esteem of other men, they merely served to antagonise them and evoke their disapproval. All men were similarly convinced of their own superiority and thus Mandeville argued they 'would all be offended at the barefac'd Pride of their Neighbours' and as a result 'all untaught Men [would] ever be hateful to one another in Conversation'. The collective solution to that social dilemma nevertheless lay in the continuing and spontaneous operations of individual self-liking. Men, he argued, were 'fond of their Ease to the last degree, and as industrious to procure it',¹⁶⁴ they were homeostatic pleasure-seeking machines, and for that reason he insisted it was impossible that 'the Disturbance and Uneasiness, that must be caused by Self-liking ... should continue long among

164 Ibid., II, 133; II, 125; II, 138; II, 138; II, 138.

rational Creatures'. For in time the self-correcting tendencies of self-liking ensured that

the repeated Experience of the Uneasiness they received from such Behaviour, would make some of them reflect on the Cause of it; which, in tract of time, would make them find out, that their own barefac'd Pride must be as offensive to others, as that of others is to themselves.

And having thus identified the cause of their unease men began to alter their behaviour accordingly. They learnt to put a more acceptable face on the outward expressions of their pride, for in doing to they simultaneously avoided the disapproval of their peers and satisfied the previously frustrated demands of their self-liking. In short, they gradually learnt to conceal 'the high Value' they had for themselves and as that deferential and naturally soothing habit spread, men ceased to be 'ever hateful in Conversation'¹⁶⁵ and became instead more tolerable to one another.

Once men had 'enter'd upon concealing their Pride' and established 'the Rudiments of good Manners' further progress in that science was determined by the continuing operations of self-liking. Men discovered that their self-liking was better served, that they could more easily win the esteem of their peers, by 'pretend[ing] that they [had] greater Value for others, than they [had] for themselves'. Accordingly terms such as 'Your Servant' and 'Ceremonies of bowing, and pulling off Hats', which Mandevile conjectured had originally functioned as genuine signs of obedience and submission to conquerors and tyrants, became common currency amongst equals. And as succeeding generations similarly made new

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., II, 139; II, 138.

discoveries in the art of flattering and pleasing each other in company, it inevitably followed, he reasoned, that the science of 'good Manners must be brought to great Perfection'.¹⁶⁶

In developing that science men had gradually learnt to moderate and conceal the blatant and offensive manifestations of their pride. But in doing so they had not simply suppressed that passion, for given its force 'it would be impossible', Mandeville insisted, 'for mortal Strength to ensure the Restraint'. Instead men had, in the course of conversing with each other, insensibly learnt 'to play the Passion against itself'. For once appropriate standards of good manners had been identified by the self-regulating operations of self-liking, man's continued ability and willingness to internalize and adopt them depended upon the further arousal and constant manipulation of his self-liking by publicly sanctioned schedules of praise and blame. Accordingly, men were flattered and persuaded by the applause of others to take 'a secret Pride in concealing the barefc'd Signs of it' and thus, Mandeville explained, 'the most proper means to make Men sollicitous in concealing the outward Appearances' of pride was 'to encourage and industriously encrease it'.¹⁶⁷ 'Instead of extinguishing' good manners therefore 'inflame[d] the Passions'. Indeed that doctrine gave men generous opportunities to indulge their pride, for it taught them to change 'the natural Home-bred Symptoms of it, for artificial Foreign ones'. Some symptoms of pride, especially those 'designedly express'd in Looks and Gestures' were invariably offensive in company, and thus they were universally proscribed by

166 Ibid., II, 150; II, 150; II, 149; II, 146.

167 Ibid., II, 125.

the rules of good manners. But other symptoms of that passion were less obviously objectionable and thus, as the rules of good manners were designed to 'make Men more happy, and their Lives more comfortable in this World',¹⁶⁸ they were construed and re-defined in a more favourable light. In the mutual interests of their self-love, as well as their pride, men were encouraged to put an 'easy Construction [on] one another's Actions' and thus rules of good manners were developed which allowed them, for example, to take delight in and distinguish themselves by

Fine Cloaths, and other Ornaments about them, the Cleanliness observed about their Persons, the Submission that is required of Servants, costly Equipages, Furniture, Buildings, Titles of Honour ... without discovering any of the Symptoms [of pride] that are forbid.

That process of re-definition was however once again a process of self-deception, for those socially approved badges of pride won the esteem, rather than the disapproval, of others only because they were 'denied to be what they are' and because in turn 'many Pretences, that they are deriv'd from other Motives may be made for them'.¹⁶⁹

Thus in controlling man's pride and regulating his informal social relations with others, the precepts of good manners achieved their purpose not only by playing that passion against itself but also by redefining its symptoms and allowing men to give full play to their pride in socially acceptable forms. Indeed Mandeville argued 'the more room Men have to vent and gratify the Passion in the warrantable ways, the more easy it is for them to stifle the

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., I, 79; II, 125; II, 126; II, 127.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., II, 127; II, 126; II, 126.

odious Part of Pride, and seem to be wholly free from it'. Moreover, the good-mannered man was required to practise little or no self-denial for, he observed, 'A Man may carefully avoid everything that in the Eye of the World is esteem'd to be the Result of Pride, without mortifying himself, or making the least Conquest of his Passion', for he continued 'he only sacrifices the insipid outward Part of his Pride, which none but silly ignorant People take delight in'. The rules of good manners were therefore exquisitely adapted both to the demands of man's self-love and his self-liking, and for that reason men could follow them and make themselves 'acceptable to others, with as little Prejudice to [themselves] as is possible' whilst at the same time 'assist[ing] one another in the Enjoyments of Life, and refining upon Pleasure'.¹⁷⁰ And of course that functional affinity between man's passionate nature and the dictates of good manners was in Mandeville's evolutionary scheme simply and inevitably the result of the long-term operations of the passions themselves.

As we have seen Mandeville had invoked the same mechanism to explain how men had developed the other forms of social control which had made civilization possible: namely, law and the coercive power of government; the enlightened self-interest of men working within a division of labour; and codes of morality and honour. Nevertheless, the clearest and most succinct description of that mechanism is to be found in the summary of how good manners came into the world: for he concluded that analysis by stating first

170 Ibid., II, 127; I, 78-9; II, 147.

that the Disturbance and Uneasiness, that must be caused by Self-liking, whatever Strugglings and unsuccessful Tryals to remedy them might precede, must necessarily produce at long run, what we call good Manners and Politeness

and then in the same spirit he reasoned that

the Alterations, that are made in the Behaviour of Men, by their being civilized: [are] all ... done without reflection, and Men by degrees, and great Length of Time, fall as it were into these Things spontaneously

for in concluding, he argued

it is incredible, how many useful Cautions, Shifts, and Strategems they will learn to practise by Experience and Imitation, from conversing together; without being aware of the natural Causes, that oblige them to act as they do viz. The Passions within, that, unknown to themselves, govern their Will and direct their Behaviour.¹⁷¹

The control of the passions in both the body natural and the body politic was thus achieved spontaneously, although gradually and only after much trial and error, by men who were mechanically and unwittingly directed by the bodily experience and self-correcting tendencies of those same passions in the long and cumulative course of their social interaction with each other. Throughout history, therefore, the passions, and more properly and reductively the physiological principles which governed their operations, had automatically ensured that 'Men have always employ'd themselves in studying and contriving Ways and Means to sooth their various Appetites, and make the best of their Infirmities'¹⁷² and thus in Mandeville's evolutionary scheme the various techniques of social control which had made civilization possible were simply and inevitably the result of those efforts.

The role and relative importance of the different passions

171 Ibid., II, 138; II, 139; II, 139.

172 Ibid., II, 128.

aroused by man's self-love and self-liking had, however, varied at different stages in that protracted and anonymous process.

Initially the competing and volatile passions evoked by self-love had been played off against each other, balanced, and ultimately tamed to produce the basic features of a legal order. In turn the establishment of law had facilitated the arousal of the passions centering on self-liking and that development had further engineered the suppression of the powerful demands of self-love via the creation of codes of morality and honour. Finally, the passions aroused by self-liking were themselves controlled by being played off against each other in the development of codes of civility and good manners.

Throughout his analysis of the civilizing process Mandeville had, in tracing the origins and development of law, morality and good manners, relied heavily on speculation or conjecture: indeed he admitted as much when he noted

When I have a Mind to dive into the Origin of any Maxim or political Invention, for the Use of Society in general, I don't trouble my Head with enquiring after the Time or Country, in which it was first heard of, nor what others have wrote or said about it; but I go directly to the Fountain Head, human Nature itself, and look for the Frailty or Defect in Man, that is remedy'd or supply'd by that Invention: When Things are very obscure, I sometimes make Use of Conjectures to find my Way.

Nevertheless, he firmly believed that his conjectures on man's transition from savage to polite society were both plausible and admissible because they were solidly grounded in the unchanging and observable facts of man's passionate nature. The behaviour of savages in the state of nature could not be observed but, as we have seen, Mandeville solved that problem, in his own mind at least, by arguing from what he believed to be the comparable

behaviour of unsocialized infants in his own society. And thus with some justification he could claim in all his speculations 'never [to] reason but from the plain Observations which every body may make on Man, the Phaenomena that appear in the lesser World'.¹⁷³ That methodological commitment was however more easily affirmed and most clearly displayed when Mandeville turned from diachronic to synchronic analysis to focus on the behaviour of his adult rather than his infant contemporaries, for in the course of that wide-ranging survey he employed his skills of observation and dissection to construct not only an elaborate taxonomy of the passions but also a systematic anatomy of their impact on human behaviour. The passions were identified and classified by their attendant and distinctive symptoms which in Mandeville's taxonomy were more or less easily recognised according to whether the passion was either a simple or a compound one and whether its impact was strong or weak. In turn the force, and thus the symptoms, of any single passion varied with differences in bodily complexion, gender, age, class and even national character; variations which were further compounded by accidents of time and circumstance. Thus, for example, a strong and easily recognised passion such as envy could not only produce different effects in different individuals at the same time but also different effects in the same individual at different times. Human behaviour was determined by the passions but given the complexity of individual and social circumstance men were not simply mechanical replicas of each other.

¹⁷³ Ibid., II, 128.

However, whether proceeding speculatively in prehistory or more certainly in his own day, Mandeville's analysis of the passions was as much focused through the 'Eye of Reason' as through the unaided eye of pure empiricism. For in both cases the observations he made were organised within, and were thus coloured by, the framework dictated by his mechanical model of normal human functioning. As we have seen, that model was itself conjectural, its postulates could neither be observed nor tested, and thus its status was that of an explanatory black box whose validity depended upon the range of phenomena it could accommodate within its dark confines. Mandeville was nevertheless convinced of its explanatory power and thus he insisted that men, whether considered in their savage or their civilized state, were to be understood as sentient machines. Both savages and well-bred people were similarly and mechanically 'influenc'd by their Passions, and natural Appetites' and for Mandeville the only, although the crucial, difference in their behaviour was that the latter had as a result of the civilizing process, learnt to control their passions and to 'gratify them in another manner'. Thus, for example, he argued that whilst 'Well-bred People behave themselves in the Choice of Diet and the taking of their Repastes, very differently from Savages; [as] they do in their Amours' the underlying passions and appetites 'Hunger and Lust [were] the same in both'.¹⁷⁴ In that sense then, the apparently rational and rule-governed behaviour of civilized men was no less determined than either the mechanical effects of fear or the involuntary motions of their digestive processes, for both

174 Ibid., II, 305.

categories of behaviour were ultimately dependent upon the operations of the passions and reductively upon the hydraulic and homeostatic motions of the animal spirits. Men, however, were ignorant of the real and passionate basis of their behaviour, for as we have seen the passions had, in engineering those rules and the various techniques of social control, systematically deceived the species and persuaded men to unite and confound 'what is acquired from what is natural'.¹⁷⁵ And the extent of that collective deception, as well as the crucial role of language in facilitating it, was deftly summarised in Mandeville's fable of the lion and the Roman merchant.

In that exemplary tale a lion that 'could not only speak several Languages, but seem'd moreover very well acquainted with Human Affairs' confronted a shipwrecked merchant who, with his life at stake, 'pleaded his Cause with abundance of good Rhetorick'. But the merchant, Mandeville continued, 'observing by the Countenance of the Beast that Flattery and fine Words made very little Impression, ... betook himself to Arguments of greater Solidity'. Of course those arguments which invoked 'the Excellency of Man's Nature and Abilities', the vaunted superiority and strength of his understanding and his possession of an immortal and rational soul, were as specious and insubstantial as the merchant's opening entreaties, and in rebutting them the lion systematically exposed not only the vanity but also the inconsistency of human self-understanding. Judged from the entirely naturalistic and unadulterated standard of the lion's animal nature and contrary to

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., II, 301.

the merchant's cherished beliefs men were portrayed as self-seeking, insincere, fickle, malicious and cruel and their history was presented as a catalogue of destruction which recognised only the reason of the strongest. The moral of the fable was clear: if lions could speak then men would understand them but they would undoubtedly dislike what they heard. Indeed at the end of the lion's discourse the defenceless merchant, with his illusions in tatters, 'fainted away'.¹⁷⁶ Thus whilst the content of the fable revealed the nature and extent of man's self-deception, its form emphasized the role of language in creating and sustaining that fiction. For the conventions of the genre allowed Mandeville to endow the lion with speech whilst ensuring that it remained impervious to 'Flattery and fine Words' and thus faithful to its pristine and authentic animal nature. In contrast man's original and passionate nature had been radically distorted and obscured once he had acquired language and begun to perfect the art of flattery, persuasion, and dissimulation. Men were governed by their passions but at the same time those same passions had, through the operations of self-liking and the medium of language, flattered and persuaded men into believing that the mainsprings of their behaviour lay elsewhere.

In retrospectively describing The Fable of the Bees as 'a Philosophical Disquisition into the Force of the Passions, and the Nature of Society',¹⁷⁷ Mandeville had undoubtedly invested that

176 Ibid., I, 176; I, 176; I, 176; I, 180.

177 Letter to Dion, pp.54-5.

disparate set of prose remarks, essays, and dialogues with more order and design than they in fact merited. Nevertheless, the reconstruction of his analysis of the rise, diversification, and control of the passions presented in this chapter has demonstrated that his various performances in The Fable of the Bees sprang from, and were thus informed by, a consistent and coherent intellectual position. For that reconstruction has been itself achieved by raiding the text and ignoring qualifications of rhetorical context and compositional history to piece together the details of Mandeville's background argument. And to the extent that that argument has been shown to be a coherent and systematic one then the substantive claim has been established and the interpretive strategy vindicated. Moreover, and as we have seen, that argument owed much to Mandeville's formative experience and training as a physician. Indeed it has been repeatedly stressed that as a physician versed in anatomy and physiology Mandeville could more than most men 'approve of, and admire the Curious Machine' and wonder at that 'most astonishing Master piece of Art', the human body. But it has been further argued that as a social theorist and unlike most Augustan moralists 'pretty well vers'd in the Defects of Mankind', he could also examine the political body of 'a large, rich and warlike Nation' such as England and similarly enthuse 'over the wonderful Power of Political Wisdom by the help of which so beautiful a Machine is rais'd from the most contemptible Branches'.¹⁷⁸ Mandeville was, however, a physician before he was a social theorist and it was in the reductive sense of the former

178 Ibid., II, 161; I, 5; I, 6.

that he claimed 'I always was of Opinion, that in knowing the world, was comprehended the understanding of ones Self' for that understanding required 'the Study of Anatomy and the inward Government of our Bodies'.¹⁷⁹ Understanding the body politic therefore depended upon understanding the body natural and it has been argued that for Mandeville it did so because the mechanistic and physiological principles which governed the self-regulating operations of the passions in human bodies were in turn the real and reductive foundations of 'the wonderful Power of Political Wisdom' which had similarly engineered the health and long-term order of social bodies. It was in that sense then that Mandeville was not simply speaking figuratively when he declared on the very first page of The Fable of the Bees that 'Laws and Government are to the Political Bodies of Civil Societies, what the Vital Spirits and Life it self are to the Natural Bodies of Animated Creatures'.¹⁸⁰ In his mind at least, identical principles were at work in both the natural and social realms.

Mandeville's social theory was thus systematically grounded in a reductive theory of man's physiological functioning but this chapter has also demonstrated that many of the novel and heterodox features of that theory were similarly indebted to his medical thought. For in that respect his general and distinctive analysis of the origins, development and continuing operations of society and government, as well as his more specific analysis of the various techniques of social control which had made civilization

¹⁷⁹ The Virgin Unmask'd (London, 1709), p.123.

¹⁸⁰ Fable of the Bees, I, 3.

possible, have been shown to have their intellectual origins in the evolutionary epistemology which he derived from his study and practice of Hippocratic medicine.

It remains to be seen, however, whether the nature and detail of Mandeville's medical thought can also be invoked to illuminate the polemical arguments and rhetoric of The Fable of the Bees, and that is the subject of the next chapter.

5 THE POLEMICAL ARGUMENTS OF THE FABLE OF THE BEES:

RHETORICAL STRATEGIES FOR STATE SPLENETICS

AND SOCIABLE ENTHUSIASTS

Having read The Fable of the Bees as a philosophical text, as evidence of Mandeville's empirical beliefs about man and the nature of society, this chapter will seek to read The Fable of the Bees as an historical document, as evidence of the range of polemical acts which Mandeville performed in writing it. To that end the philosophical argument presented in the previous chapter will be reconsidered in its original and context-dependent form. Accordingly close attention will be paid to the explanatory significance of Mandeville's rhetoric which thus far I have systematically ignored.

At the outset it can of course be argued that the diversity, as well as the specific detail, of Mandeville's various literary and rhetorical performances in The Fable of the Bees were simply a function of his ad hoc and sporadic attempts over a period of nearly three decades to develop and refine his thought in opposition to the prevailing orthodoxy of his day. But although that explanation undoubtedly captures one of Mandeville's motives, as distinct from his intentions, in writing and expanding The Fable of the Bees, it cannot in itself adequately account for, indeed it systematically under-explains, the distinctive nature of his performances in that text. It cannot, for example, convincingly explain the contrast between the rhapsodic structure of Part I and the ordered dialogues of Part II of The Fable of the Bees; nor can

it fully account for the corresponding shift in tone from burlesque and biting satire to more polite and elevated prose; nor for that matter can it adequately explain the final emergence of Shaftesbury's social system as the major object of Mandeville's polemical concern. To regard those textual differences of form, style, and focus as problematic, as worthy of interpretive scrutiny, is not, however, to engage merely in an exercise of literary detective work, for this chapter will seek to demonstrate that in order to establish the meaning of The Fable of the Bees - and thus to determine Mandeville's intentions as distinct from his motives in writing it - the form as well as the substance of his arguments must be examined and explained. With that aim in mind, and given the logical relationship between the capacity to ascribe intentions to an author and a knowledge of both his empirical beliefs and the prevailing conventions governing the treatment of the issues with which he was concerned, the point of the previous two chapters should now be apparent. For having established the salience of Mandeville's medical experience and practice for understanding his empirical beliefs about the nature of man and society, and having demonstrated the plausibility of locating The Fable of the Bees within a discourse on public and private morality which frequently invoked - in both a figurative and a literal sense - the metaphor of the body politic; it is now possible to test the hypothesis that in his major non-medical work Mandeville assumed the role of state physician and that in ministering therein to the needs of the body politic, he drew upon and was guided by his experience in ministering to the body natural. In short, this chapter will seek to demonstrate that the related questions of what

Mandeville must have meant by what he said in The Fable of the Bees and why he chose to say it in the way that he did can be answered by invoking not only his specific beliefs about medical method and normal human functioning but also the details of his specialization in the treatment of hypochondriac and nervous diseases.

As we have seen, the conventional wisdom of Mandeville's day regarded the health and vitality of both the body politic and the real bodies contained within it as being dependent upon the promotion and widest possible social dispersion of individual virtue, whether construed in its polite and civic, or its austere and Christian, form. Mandeville's response to that orthodox diagnosis and prescription, originally presented in The Grumbling Hive (1705) and refined and elaborated in subsequent additions to that nucleus, remained essentially the same. The gist of his response was summarised in The Fable of the Bees' paradoxical sub-title, 'Private Vices, Publick Benefits' which as he explained in the preface to the 1714 edition of the text was designed to

shew the Impossibility of enjoying all the most elegant Comforts of Life that are to be met with in an industrious, wealthy and powerful Nation, and at the same time be bless'd with all the Virtue and Innocence that can be wish'd for in a Golden Age; from thence to expose the Unreasonableness and Folly of those, that desirous of being an opulent and flourishing People, and wonderfully greedy after all the Benefits they can receive as such, are yet always murmuring at and exclaiming against those Vices and Inconveniences, that from the Beginning of the World to this present Day, have been inseparable from all Kingdoms and States that ever were fam'd for Strength, Riches, and Politeness, at the same time.¹

In defending that thesis and at the same time exposing the contradictory behaviour of those amongst his contemporaries who revelled in the delights of worldly prosperity whilst railing at

¹ Fable of the Bees, I, 6-7.

the stubborn and widespread prevalence of vice, Mandeville offered his readers an alternative analysis of the normal operations of the body natural and the body politic. The details of that two-part analysis of the mainsprings of contemporary human behaviour and the mechanics of national health will be reviewed below and then the meaning which Mandeville intended it to convey will be explored by examining the ways in which he chose to say it.

5.1 Anatomizing the Passions: Public and Private Behaviour in Augustan Society

In opposition to the dominant ideology of his day which celebrated both the distinctiveness and dignity of the human species Mandeville, as we have seen, viewed man as forming an integral part of the natural world. Although the most perfectly constituted of animals, man on that view was still an animal. Possessing neither an immaterial nor an immortal soul his vaunted superiority over other species was simply the result of the details of his physical organization which in the course of his evolution had interacted with the insufficiency of nature to differentiate him from other members of the animal kingdom. But if men and animals alike were construed as sentient machines driven by their respective appetites and passions, then for Mandeville the proper understanding of human behaviour, whether considered speculatively over the whole period of human history or empirically at merely the most recent stage in that evolutionary process, required attention to the motive power which set and kept the human machine in motion. Accordingly when in Part I of The Fable of the Bees he turned from pure to applied

science, to anatomize the behaviour of his contemporaries, Mandeville never departed from the axiom that man was 'a compound of various Passions, that all of them, as they are provoked and come uppermost, govern him by turns, whether he will or no'.² Of course all men, even those who rejoiced in their assumed and celebrated capacity for rational self-control, were aware of the countervailing demands of the passions. They knew as well as Mandeville that 'the seeds of every Passion are innate to us and no body comes into the World without them'. But for all that, their understanding of the passionate bases of human behaviour was, according to Mandeville, radically incomplete. Their 'want of Understanding Nature and the force of [the] Passions' arose, he argued, from two fatal and related errors. In the first place, their knowledge of the passions was confined to their most immediate and obvious effects. Thus Mandeville conceded, 'When the Passions show themselves in their full Strength, they are known by every body'. Indeed he argued that it required neither great sensitivity nor insight to realize that

When a Man in Power gives a great Place to one that did him a small kindness in his Youth, we call it Gratitude: When a Woman howls and wrings her Hands at the loss of her Child, the prevalent Passion is Grief; and the Uneasiness we feel at the sight of great Misfortunes, as a Man's breaking his Legs or dashing his Brains out, is everywhere call'd Pity.³

Nevertheless he insisted that 'the gentle strokes, the slight touches of the Passions, are generally overlook'd or mistaken'. Similarly, he reasoned that whilst the passions may 'be discover'd by every Body whilst they are distinct, and a single one employs

² Ibid., I, p.39.

³ Ibid., I, 281; I, 75; I, 82; I, 82-3.

the whole Man' the generality of men were incapable of tracing 'every Motive of those Actions that are the Result of a mixture of Passions'. Thus, for example, he declared that in compound passions such as envy 'The Symptoms ... are as various, and as hard to describe, as those of the Plague; at some time it appears in one Shape, at others in another quite different'.⁴ Variations in both the strength and complexity of the passions thus escaped the vulgar eye and defeated the everyday understanding of the layman. But in the second place, not only were the majority of men ignorant of the variety and subtle strength of the passions, they were also blithely unaware of their role in determining human behaviour for they persisted in regarding self-love as only a minor light rather than the pole star in the structure of human motivation. In contrast, Mandeville, equipped with his physiological and mechanistic model of human functioning and employing the penetrating and relentless gaze of the Hippocratic physician, congratulated himself on his rude and determined ability to 'undress Nature and pry into her deepest Recesses' and to describe 'the Nature and Symptoms of human Passions, detect their Force and Disguises; and trace Self-love in its darkest Recesses'. Unlike most men who refused to 'give themselves leisure, and ... take the right Method of examining themselves as they should do' he therefore counted himself as one of 'The curious, that are skill'd in anatomizing the invisible Part of Man'⁵ and it was precisely that endeavour which articulated one half of his contemporary performances in Part I of The Fable of the Bees.

4 Ibid., I, 83; I, 84; I, 136.

5 Ibid., I, 42; I, 405; I, 84; I, 145.

As that inquiry proceeded and took shape, Mandeville effectively sampled all areas of Augustan life to produce a systematic taxonomy of man's passionate behaviour which emphasized the prevalence of fraud and deceit in human affairs. Men were examined in their productive, social, and moral relations with each other and in each sphere their behaviour was, when judged by their own criteria of honesty, moral authenticity, and virtue, found wanting. When, for example, he focused on the economy and examined the actual, rather than the professed, practice of self-interested men engaged in market relations with each other he was led to conclude that in any society 'Where Trade is considerable Fraud will intrude'. Indeed the logic and nature of bartering and exchange in commercial society obliged individuals to be dishonest for he noted that

the Smallness of the Seller's Advantage being the greatest persuasive to the Buyer, Tradesmen are generally forc'd to tell Lies in their own Defence, and invent a thousand improbable Stories, rather than discover what they really get by their Commodities.⁶

Similarly, he pointed to 'the innumerable Artifices, by which Buyers and Sellers outwit one another, that are daily allowed of and practised amongst the fairest of Dealers' and thus he challenged his readers to 'shew me the Tradesman that has always discover'd the Defects of his Goods to those that cheapen'd them' whilst asking

where will you find one that has not at one time or other industriously conceal'd them, to the detriment of the Buyer? Where is the Merchant that has never against his Conscience extoll'd his Wares beyond their Worth, to make them go off the better?⁷

6 Ibid., I, 185; I, 80-81.

7 Ibid., I, 61.

Such behaviour did not of course breach the norms of commercial propriety but it did, as Mandeville's tale of Decio and Alcander and what passed for fair dealing on the London commodity market further demonstrated, contravene the golden rule of 'Do unto others as you would be done by'. When judged by that criterion dishonest behaviour was not, therefore, the sole preserve of an underworld of 'Sharpers, Parasites, Pimps, Players,/Pick-pockets, Coiners, Quacks, [and] Sooth-sayers'; for whilst Mandeville conceded that such characters were deservedly 'call'd Knaves', he insisted that 'bar the Name,/The grave Industrious were the same'.⁸ Indeed by employing 'the Word Knave ... in its full Latitude, [to] comprehend every Body that is not sincerely honest' he observed that 'All Trades and Places know some Cheat,/No Calling was without Deceit'. And if he had thereby paid 'a very indifferent Compliment to all the Trading Part of the People',⁹ the professions fared no better in his analysis. Physicians and lawyers were, he argued, as much driven by self-interest and greed as other men; they were more concerned with filling their pockets than with the disinterested administration of either physick or justice and thus the professions, for all their hallowed and respected place in the hierarchy of Augustan occupations, were revealed to be equally riddled with fraud and sharp practice.

In anatomizing the economy and dissecting the nexus of activities and exchanges within it, Mandeville had therefore emphasized the fact that all men, and not just 'the Lazy that care for no manner of working, and the Fickle that hate to be confin'd

8 Ibid., I, 19.

9 Ibid., I, 61; I, 20; I, 61.

to any Thing' nor merely 'Those of the most abandon'd Principles of all', sought to turn a penny by 'turning the Vices and Frailties of others to [their] own Advantage'.¹⁰ Economic behaviour was thus duplicitous behaviour and in examining the motives which shaped its character Mandeville had discerned and exposed the force of self-love and the irrepressible demands of the acquisitive passions clustering around it.

Dissimulation and deceit were therefore behavioural traits especially demanded by self-love and the logic of bargaining and trade but those qualities were not, according to Mandeville, confined to that sphere of human endeavour alone. For when he turned from the economy to examine men's supposedly public spirited and expressive, rather than their self-interested and instrumental, activities he identified a range of behaviours which were equally duplicitous and fraudulent. Indeed as his analysis of the ages 'Enthusiastick Passion for Charity-Schools' sought to demonstrate, the crying-up of public spirit was in reality nothing more than the special pleading of the passions. For he argued that both the initial establishment and rapid growth of that movement were inspired neither by a sincere concern for the spiritual welfare of the poor nor by a desire to promote the public good, but instead by a welter of self-interested and vicious motives. At the national level charity schools were, he argued, a pawn in a power struggle waged between church factions. Their 'chief Promoters' were 'Party-men that are Zealous for their Cause, either Episcopacy or Presbytery', whilst at the grassroots and parish level, the lesser lights but nevertheless the mainstay of the movement were meddling

¹⁰ Ibid., I, 60.

and middle class zealots who lobbied and organized for the formation of charitable societies in their respective localities. In doing so those 'diminutive Patriots' were, Mandeville argued, typically motivated by pride, envy and self-interest. Mortified by envy and the fact that 'in the Vestry, where Men of Substance and long standing, or else your pert litigious or opinionated Bawlers, that have obtained the Title of Notable Men, commonly bear the Sway',¹¹ they espoused the cause of charity schools as an appropriate and anxious means of self-advertisement and social advancement. Having 'first broach'd the pious Thought', they could then congratulate themselves and 'place no small Merit in being the first Cause of so much Talk and Bustle'; at the same time taking care 'to play the Hypocrite, well knowing that to be flagitious or noted for Enormities is inconsistent with the Zeal which they pretend to for Works of Supererogation and excessive Piety'. With such self-interested schemes off and rolling, other men soon flocked to join them but once again their motives were far from disinterested. 'Two sorts of People', Mandeville argued,

come in voluntarily, stanch Churchmen, who have good Reasons for it in Petto, and your sly Sinners that look upon it as meritorious, and hope that it will expiate their Guilt, and Satan be Nonsuited by it at a small Expencc. Some come into it to save their Credit, others to retrieve it, according as they have either lost or are afraid of losing it: others again do it Prudentially to increase their Trade and get Acquaintance, and many would own to you, if they dared to be sincere and speak the Truth, that they would never have been concern'd in it, but to be better known in the Parish. Men of Sense that see the folly of it and have no body to fear, are persuaded into it not to be thought singular or to run Counter to all the World; even those who are resolute at first in denying it, it is ten to one but at last they are teaz'd and importun'd into a Compliance.¹²

¹¹ Ibid., I, 268; I, 277; I, 279; I, 277.

¹² Ibid., I, 278; I, 279; I, 279.

Finally, and to complete his analysis of the social psychology of charity school activism, Mandeville examined the motives of the typically middle class and self-appointed governors of the schools themselves. And lurking behind their public-spirited rhetoric he once again detected the full play of the passions as well as a whiff of payola. Thus he argued

If you should ask these Worthy Rulers, why they take upon them so much Trouble to the detriment of their own Affairs and loss of Time, either singly or the whole body of them, they would all unanimously answer, that it is the Regard they have for Religion and the Church, and the Pleasure they take in Contributing to the Good, and Eternal Welfare of so many Poor Innocents that in all Probability would run into Perdition in these wicked Times of Scoffers and Freethinkers. They have no thought of Interest, even those, who deal in and provide these Children with what they want, have not the least design of getting by what they sell for their use, and tho' in everything else their Avarice and Greediness after Lucre be glaringly conspicuous, in this Affair they are wholly divested from Selfishness, and have no Worldly ends. One Motive above all, which is none of the least with the most of them, is to be carefully conceal'd, I mean the Satisfaction there is in Ordering and Directing¹³

To his own satisfaction at least Mandeville had therefore demonstrated that 'Those who can examine Nature will always find that what these People most pretend to is the least, and what they utterly deny their greatest Motive', a rule which, as his analysis of the rest of the charity school movement had shown, implicated not only the managers but everyone involved, whether directly or indirectly, in that popular enthusiasm. Moreover, as a general principle of human behaviour that rule could also be employed to expose the fraudulent motives of those who were engaged in the ages' other great project for moral reform and social improvement, the Societies for the Reformation of Manners. Thus in his brief case history of an eminent and public-spirited distiller,

¹³ Ibid., I, 280.

Mandeville exploited that pun to dim the 'bright Example' of a man who had become 'as industrious in spreading Loyalty, and the Reformation of Manners throughout every cranny of the wide populous Town, as once he was in filling it with Spirits'. Adding with due irony that

it was impossible to give a fuller Evidence of Self-denial in a grateful Mind, than to see him at the expence of his Quiet and hazard of his Life and Limbs, be always harassing, and even for Trifles persecuting that very Class of Men to whom he owes his Fortune, from no other Motive than his Aversion to Idleness, and great Concern for Religion and the Publick Welfare.¹⁴

By implication the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, no less than their counterparts for the establishment of charity schools, were revealed as playgrounds for parvenus and fronts for the laundering of their passions.

Mandeville's exposure of the fraud and cant of public spirit was not, however, restricted to the pretensions of the middle sort of men. Those who had long arrived, men of established rank and fortune were, he argued, also guilty, both individually and collectively, of a similar deceit in their professed concern for the public good. Leisured and wealthy aristocrats might seek to justify their conspicuous consumption by invoking no other motive than their selfless desire 'to set the Poor at Work, to encourage Trade, and by employing many, to promote the Welfare of [their] Country'. But, Mandeville insisted, the real and passionate bases of their indulgence were pride, vanity, and the love of luxury. And to demonstrate that 'Self-Love and Emulation' and not 'Zeal to serve their Neighbours and promote the Publick Good' were the mainsprings of their behaviour he simply pointed to the fact that

14 Ibid., I, 281; I, 93; I, 93.

when not running up credit or defaulting on their debts 'Gentlemen, even of the greatest Wealth and highest Quality' as well as 'the most virtuous Ladies' were as penny-pinching as 'the most necessitous Jilts in Town'¹⁵ when paying with ready money.

Similarly he also argued that it was pride and self-love, rather than a disinterested and proper concern for the dignity and status of their office, which encouraged public figures to indulge in conspicuous displays of pomp and splendour. 'It is evident', he claimed, 'that this awing of the Multitude by a distinguish'd manner of living, is only a Cloke and Pretence, under which great Men would shelter their Vanity, and indulge every Appetite about them without Reproach'. And by the same token he noted that

The Pride of Great and Polite Men is no where more conspicuous than in the Debates about Ceremony and Precedency, where they have an Opportunity of giving their Vices the Appearance of Virtues, and can make the World believe that it is their Care, their Tenderness for the Dignity of their Office, or the Honour of their Masters, what is the Result of their own personal Pride and Vanity. This is most manifest in all Negotiations of Ambassadors and Plenipotentiaries, and must be known by all that observe what is transacted at publick Treaties.¹⁶

In probing the classless rhetoric of public spiritedness Mandeville had demonstrated that behind its widespread and 'Specious Cloke of Sociableness and ... Concern for the Publick Good' the passions and appetites were once again vigorously at work. Moreover, whilst fraud and deceit were characteristic features of Augustan behaviour in the public sphere they were no less evident in more intimate realms of manners and morality. The rules of politeness and good breeding were, for example, quintessentially rules of dissimulation for in subscribing to them

15 Ibid., I, 125; I, 133; I, 134.

16 Ibid., I, 165; I, 80.

'a Man', Mandeville argued, 'need not conquer his Passions, it is sufficient that he conceals them. Virtue bids us subdue, but good Breeding only requires we should hide our Appetites'. And the sham and duplicity which the demands of politeness entailed ranged from the 'Comedy of Manners' and 'Modish Deceit'¹⁷ of picking the worst apple at table to the equally risible and absurd courtship rituals of the beau monde on heat. In the former case, 'The Man of Manners' Mandeville observed

picks not the best but rather takes the worst out of the Dish, and gets of every thing, unless it be forc'd upon him, always the most indifferent Share. By this Civility the Best remains for others, which being a Compliment to all that are present, every Body is pleas'd with it: The more they love themselves, the more they are forc'd to approve of his Behaviour, and Gratitude stepping in, they are oblig'd almost whether they will or not, to think favourably of him. After this manner it is that the well-bred Man insinuates himself in the esteem of all the Companies he comes in, and if he gets nothing else by it, the Pleasure he receives in reflecting on the Applause which he knows is secretly given him, is to a Proud Man more than an Equivalent for his former Self-denial, and over-pays to Self-love with Interest, the loss it sustain'd in his Complaisance to others.¹⁸

Of course all the actors in that 'Comedy of Manners' were at heart aware of the deception which it entailed but in the interest of complaisance or their mutual pleasure, they sustained the illusion of civility by playing the game of not playing a game. Moreover, as Mandeville's other example of polite behaviour revealed, a similar illusion was sustained and an equally fraudulent strategy was employed in the more pressing business of managing sexual relations within high society. 'If a Man', he observed,

should tell a Woman, that he could like no body so well to propagate his Species upon, as her self, and that he found a violent Desire that Moment to go about it, and accordingly offer'd to lay hold of her for that purpose;

17 Ibid., I, 235; I, 72; I, 79; I, 78.

18 Ibid., I, 78.

the Consequence would be, that he would be call'd a Brute, the Woman would run away, and himself never be admitted in any civil Company.

Thus, he continued, to achieve his end the gentleman becomes a wolf in polite clothing and

behaves himself quite otherwise; he first addresses the Lady's Father, and demonstrates his Ability splendidly to maintain his Daughter; upon this he is admitted into her Company, where, by Flattery, Submission, Presents, and Assiduity, he endeavours to procure her Liking to his Person, which if he can compass, the Lady in a little while resigns her self to him before Witnesses in a most solemn manner; at Night they go to Bed together, where the most reserv'd Virgin very tamely suffers him to do what he pleases, and the upshot is, that he obtains what he wanted without having ever ask'd for it.¹⁹

Although manners in the bed chamber were thus just as artificial as those at table, the behaviour which they sanctioned were, to their adherents at least, less obviously fraudulent. For relations between the sexes were negotiated within a context which was in part defined and regulated by the ideology of love. And that ideology was, Mandeville argued, 'the Effect as well as happy Disguise of that Passion that prompts us to labour for the Preservation of our Species'.²⁰

Love was merely the acceptable face of lust and as such, Mandeville argued, it was a collective illusion which preserved 'the Peace and Happiness of the Civil Society'. In constructing and maintaining that illusion men had been unconsciously manipulated by their pride and shame and they had therefore learnt 'if not [to] subdue, at least ... to conceal and disguise [their] darling Passion, Lust'. Accordingly, within the rules of polite conversation lust became 'a Secret, never to be talk'd of in Publick' and although it remained an appetite 'most necessary for

19 Ibid., I, 72-3.

20 Ibid., I, 142.

the Continuance of Mankind' it was labelled 'odious and the proper Epithets commonly join'd to' it were 'Filthy and Abominable'.²¹ Indeed so thorough was that process of self-deception that lust was 'stifled in well-bred People, and almost concealed from themselves', consequently Mandeville observed many 'scarce know it when [they] meet with it in [their] Breasts'. But lust masquerading as love was a many splendoured thing and it therefore manifested itself in a variety of disguises and duplicitous endeavours. Some men, especially those 'pale-faced weakly People of cold and phlegmatick Constitutions' subscribed to Platonic notions of love and in sincerely believing that they were 'actually in Love without feeling any Carnal Desires'²² they fooled only themselves. Other men, however, professed their adherence to the Platonic doctrine with fraudulent and lascivious intent, they deceived the opposite sex rather than themselves and being 'hale and robust of bilious Temperament and a sanguine Complexion' their 'Pretences to those refined Notions [were] only upheld by Art and Dissimulation'.²³ Feigned appeals to love were, moreover, also an important weapon in the armoury of 'Deceit and vile Stratagems of Women' for on the matrimonial battlefield 'few of them', Mandeville argued, 'scruple to employ the most tender Minutes of Wedlock to promote a sordid Interest'. And with mock outrage and due attention to salacious detail, he outlined the precise nature and occasion of their deceit, insisting that

she is worse than Whore, who impiously prophanes and prostitutes the Sacred Rites of Love to Vile Ignoble Ends; that first excites to Passion and invites to Joys with seeming Ardour, then racks our Fondness for no other

21 Ibid., I, 143; I, 145; I, 143.

22 Ibid., I, 146; I, 145; I, 144.

23 Ibid., I, 144.

purpose than to extort a Gift, while full of Guile in Counterfeited Transports she watches for the Moment when Men can least deny.²⁴

Within high society the most intimate of personal relations, as well as the more general and polished practice of good manners, were thus shown to be riddled with fraud and deceit. But so too, according to Mandeville, was the behaviour of those who appealed to more austere and rigorous codes of virtue. For in examining the lives of the priesthood, whether of Rome or the reformed churches, he once again exposed the fraud which filled the gap between the received theory and actual practice of human behaviour. Thus in leading his readers on a racey tour of religious houses, he demonstrated that behind their closed doors the passions and appetites were again merrily at play. He found nuns who were 'not all Virgins that pass for such' and friars and monks who were guilty of 'Calumny, Envy and Ill-nature in the highest degree, or else Gluttony, Drunkenness, and Impurities of a more execrable kind than Adultery it self'. 'And as for the Mendicant Orders', he continued, 'they differ in nothing but their Habits from other sturdy Beggars, who deceive People with a pitiful Tone and an outward Shew of Misery, and as soon as they are out of sight, lay by their Cant, indulge their Appetites, and enjoy one another'.²⁵ Nor did the married clergy of the established church, for all their particular professions of piety, ascetism and virtuous self-denial, fare any better in Mandeville's analysis, for he asked

what Credit must we give them, when they pretend that they conform themselves to the World, not because they take delight in the several Decencies, Conveniences, and

24 Ibid., I, 228; I, 227; I, 227-8.

25 Ibid., I, 154.

Ornaments of it, but only to preserve their Function from Contempt, in order to be more useful to others? Have we not reason to believe, that what they say is full of Hypocrisy and Falsehood, and that Concupiscence is not the only Appetite they want to gratify; that the haughty Airs and quick Sense of Injuries, the curious Elegance in Dress, and Niceness of Palate, to be observ'd in most of them that are able to shew them, are the Results of Pride and Luxury in them as they are in other People, and that the Clergy are not possess'd of more intrinsick Virtue than any other Profession?²⁶

And if amongst them there was a rare individual that 'resolving to subdue his Appetites in good earnest, refuses all the Offers of Ease and Luxury that can be made to him, and embracing a voluntary Poverty with Chearfulness, rejects whatever may gratify the Senses' then Mandeville insisted his self-denial was not due to genuine virtue or 'the greatness of his Soul' but rather to his 'obstinate Vanity, which will do as well'. Indeed 'in acting [that] Part' Mandeville argued he was 'actually sacrific[ing] all his Passions to his Pride'.²⁷

In surveying Augustan society and anatomizing the contemporary operations of the passions within it, Mandeville has thus constructed a taxonomy of human behaviour which was in effect a taxonomy of fraud and deceit. There were, however, no clear-cut divisions within that taxonomy. Instead there was merely a continuum of duplicitous behaviours which ranged from acts of outright criminality and pure cheating at one end to the cant and hypocrisy of good manners and moral virtue at the other. In turn, that continuum also implied that there was no clear-cut division between what was licit and illicit, and what was normal and deviant: for within it traders became sharpers; lawyers became

26 Ibid., I, 161.

27 Ibid., I, 157.

pickpockets; doctors became confidence tricksters; gentlemen became wolves; wives became whores; and priests became humbugs.

Mandeville had therefore made all his contemporaries 'either Fools or Impostors' explicitly agreeing with Montaigne that

Some impose on the World, and would be thought to believe what they really don't: but much the greater number impose upon themselves, not considering nor thoroughly apprehending what it is to believe.²⁸

5.2 Managing the Passions: the Principles and Practice of 'Sound Politicks' in Augustan Society

Although Mandeville had argued, albeit in a deliberately provocative fashion, that Augustan man was a creature of his passions, that undertaking was but part of a larger polemical project which sought to demonstrate that the passions were not only the major determinants of human behaviour but also the mainsprings of national power and prosperity. Indeed in one sense the former undertaking was subservient to the latter. For the contemporary state anatomist, no less than his historical and anonymous counterpart had, Mandeville implied, to be 'thoroughly acquainted with all the Passions and Appetites, Strength and Weaknesses of [man's] Frame'.²⁹ Understanding the regular and robust operations of the Augustan body politic therefore depended upon the prior and proper understanding of the real bodies contained within it. And for Mandeville that knowledge necessarily defined the related and practical task of its management as the art of the possible; an art

28 Ibid., I, 167.

29 Ibid., I, 208.

whose limits were doubly circumscribed both by the accumulated political wisdom and inheritance of the past and by the enduring facts of human nature and the force of the passions within it.

In contributing to the contemporary debate on the well-being of the Augustan body politic, Mandeville readily accepted the definition of national health which found favour with the majority of his contemporaries. Few would have disagreed with his assertion that 'the true Interest of the Country' comprised 'the Ease and Welfare of the Subject' at home and the 'Wealth, Strength [and] Honour' of the nation abroad. His prescription for securing that interest was, however, a more difficult pill for his contemporaries to swallow. For as an antidote to those popular nostrums which, in one form or another, identified virtue as the preservative and vice as the scourge of national well-being, Mandeville reasoned that 'Would you render a Society of Men strong and powerful, you must touch their Passions'. On that view it was covetousness, pride, envy, emulation, vanity, avarice, in short vice or all the 'most hateful Qualities' of man which made 'an opulent, powerful and what we call a flourishing Kingdom'. Mandeville had of course anticipated and summarised that thesis in The Fable of the Bees subtitle 'Private Vices, Publick Benefits' but he had also admitted as much when, in less paradoxical fashion, he declared

it is my Sense that no Society can be rais'd into such a rich and mighty Kingdom, or so rais'd, subsist in their Wealth and Power for any considerable Time, without the Vices of Man.³⁰

And in openly stressing the public utility of vice he had, rhetorically at least, expected 'a full-mouth'd Cry against me;

30 Ibid., I, 234; I, 184; I, 228; I, 229.

What! has God never punish'd and destroy'd great Nations for their Sins?'. Nevertheless, as far as he was concerned the only sins which threatened to afflict the temporal welfare of the Augustan body politic were those administrative sins of omission and commission which resulted from the 'bad Politicks, Neglects, or Mismanagements of the Rulers'.³¹ How those errors were to be avoided, and by implication what were the essentials of sound politics, therefore constituted the second set of questions which exercised Mandeville's mind in Part I of The Fable of the Bees for there, and in the series of prose remarks and essays which he appended to his doggerel verse The Grumbling Hive, he repeatedly and consistently sought to demonstrate how the passions contributed to the public good and how they were to be managed or 'touched' in securing that objective.

'Trade is the Principal', Mandeville argued 'but not the only Requisite to aggrandize a Nation: there are other Things to be taken care of besides'. Elaborating those 'other Things' or the subordinate maxims of state politics was not, however, the major object of his concern in The Fable of the Bees. Nevertheless, in so far as the promotion of trade, and thus the health of the body politic, depended upon the maintenance of a stable and effective legal order, Mandeville did discuss in some detail the principles which should govern the administration of justice. It was essential, he argued, that 'The Meum et Tuum ... be secur'd, Crimes punish'd, and all other Laws concerning the Administration of Justice, wisely contriv'd and strictly executed'.³² In observing

31 Ibid., I, 117.

32 Ibid., I, 116.

that maxim the contemporary politician was of course guided and assisted by the collective wisdom of his predecessors which had been distilled and preserved in established law and precedent. Accordingly, and as we have seen, his task was for Mandeville neither more taxing nor more complex than the business of machine minding. Nevertheless, in a world inhabited by rogues and knaves, by 'abandon'd Profligates'³³ as well as honest men, crime was a persistent and ineradicable sore within the body politic and as such it remained a constant challenge to the politician's skill. In that respect at least the supervision of the legal machine demanded eternal vigilance; and in particular it demanded the ability to appreciate the folly, and guard against the danger, of those who sought to eradicate crime by floating high-minded and grandiose schemes for the education and moralization of society at large. That ability depended however upon the prior understanding and correct analysis of the individual and social causes of crime and it was with the larger intention of prescribing effective principles for the contemporary administration of criminal justice that Mandeville undertook just such an analysis in his Essay on Charity, and Charity-Schools.

To demolish the theory that crime was caused by poverty, ignorance and 'the want of Reading and Writing', Mandeville simply pointed to his ages' outstanding example of white-collar crime, the South Sea Bubble, observing that

The Year seventeen hundred and twenty has been as
prolifick in deep Villany, and remarkable for selfish
Crimes and premeditated Mischief, as can be pick'd out of
any Century whatever; not committed by Poor Ignorant

33 Ibid., I, 275.

Rogues that could neither Read nor Write, but the better sort of People as to Wealth and Education, that most of them were great Masters in Arithmetick, and lived in Reputation and Splendor³⁴

The real causes of crime therefore lay elsewhere and to discover them Mandeville adopted both the method and language of the natural physician. Thus in seeking the primary or 'what Physicians call the Procatartic Cause' of crime, he determined to 'examine into the Lives, and narrowly inspect the Conversations and Actions of ordinary Rogues and our common Felons'.³⁵ But if crime was a social disease then its aetiology, like that of natural diseases, had to be understood genetically by tracing its origins and subsequent development within the afflicted social body. Accordingly, Mandeville began his examination of the process of criminal socialization by stressing the crucial influence of the early, and especially the home, environment on individual behaviour. 'It is Precept and the Example of Parents' he argued 'and those they Eat, Drink and Converse with, that have an Influence upon the Minds of Children'. Thus poverty as such was not a primary cause of crime, for he continued, 'The honest pains-taking People, be they never so poor, if they have any Notion of Goodness and Decency themselves, will keep their Children in awe, and never suffer them to rake about the Streets, and lie out a-nights'. Such parents would, moreover, inculcate appropriate values of diligence and probity and thus prepare their children for useful and honest endeavour, for Mandeville reasoned 'Those who will work themselves, and have any command over their Children, will make them do something or other

34 Ibid., I, 275; I, 276.

35 Ibid., I, 275.

that turns to Profit as soon as they are able, be it never so little'. In contrast, 'Reprobate Parents that take ill Courses and are regardless of their Children won't have a mannerly civiliz'd Offspring'.³⁶ Indeed the role models which they provided encouraged 'an Habit of Sloth and Idleness and strong Aversion to Labour and Assiduity, which', Mandeville insisted, 'all young People will contract that are not brought up to downright Working, or at least kept employ'd most Days in the Week, and the greatest part of the Day'. With time on their hands such children soon fell into 'bad Company'³⁷ and became members of street-corner society from whence they began their criminal careers. Once launched on that career however it was but a short step, as well as an inevitable slide, from petty theft to grand larceny, for 'Success in small Crimes seldom fails of ushering in greater, and he that picks Pockets with Impunity at twelve, is likely to be a House-breaker at sixteen, and a thorough-paced Villain long before he is twenty'.³⁸ Moreover, having graduated as fully-fledged members of the underworld, individuals were confirmed and reinforced in their anti-social behaviour by the mores and norms of the criminal fraternity. There was honour amongst thieves 'as well as People of better Professions' and thus Mandeville explained 'in daring Enterprizes, the Resolution of a Robber may be as much supported by his Pride, as that of an honest Soldier, who fights for his Country'. According to Mandeville therefore, criminals were made and not born. Indeed his was a sub-cultural, and not a

36 Ibid., I, 270.

37 Ibid., I, 274.

38 Ibid., I, 271.

kinds-of-people, theory of delinquency and crime, for he argued that 'Rogues have the same Passions to gratify as other Men'³⁹ and whether those passions were channelled into legal or illegal activities depended primarily upon the facts of individual upbringing and the details of social context. Despite his reductive emphasis on the mechanical and physiological bases of human behaviour Mandeville was not an eighteenth-century Lombroso.

There were, however, other factors to be considered in understanding the genesis and social pathology of crime. And amongst those contributory causes or 'strong Temptations that conspire to draw in the ~~the~~ Necessitous who want Principle and Education' Mandeville cited the literal temptations offered by the 'Abundance of Families [that] are very remiss in looking after the Safety of their Houses'. ''Tis Opportunity makes the Thief' he argued and thus 'Carelessness and Neglect in fastning Doors and Windows' as well as penny-pinching in domestic security served to increase the 'abundance of thefts and Robberies [that] are daily committed in and about the City'. In addition, criminals were further encouraged to lawlessness by the cover which the geography of urban society provided for their activities. Thus Mandeville observed

one of the greatest Inconveniences of such vast overgrown Cities as London or Paris, [is] that they harbour Rogues and Villains as Granaries do Vermin; they afford a perpetual Shelter to the worst of People, and are places of Safety to Thousands of Criminals, who daily commit Thefts and Burglaries, and yet by often changing their places of Abode, may conceal themselves for many Years, and will perhaps for ever escape the Hands of Justice, unless by chance they are apprehended in a Fact.⁴⁰

39 Ibid., I, 275.

40 Ibid., I, 274; I, 274; I, 274; I, 271; I, 272.

Moreover, even if some criminals were caught in the act and delivered into 'the Hands of Justice' their easy passage through the courts was unlikely to act as a deterrent to other wrongdoers. In the first place, Mandeville noted, it was difficult to make cases stick, the rules of evidence were weighted in favour of the criminal and prosecutors often preferred an easy life to the rigorous pursuit of justice. Secondly, experienced and hardened criminals were adept at playing the system. They were

subtle cunning Fellows, that are well vers'd in the Method of Trials, and acquainted with every Quirk in the Law that can be of Use to them, that overlook not the smallest Flaw in an Indictment, and know how to make an Advantage of the least slip of an Evidence in every thing else, that can serve their turn to bring them off.⁴¹

Finally, and most significantly of all, both judges and juries frequently allowed their hearts to rule their heads; they were too often 'touched with Compassion' and 'not easily reconcil'd with taking away of another Man's Life, tho' he has deserved the Gallows'. And that Mandeville argued was not only 'the reason that Thousands escape that deserve to be capitally Punished' but also and 'likewise the cause that there are so many Offenders, who boldly venture in hopes, that if they are taken they shall have the same good Fortune of getting off'.⁴²

Having identified both the procatartic and secondary causes of crime Mandeville could then prescribe appropriate principles for its containment, if not its eradication. Indeed many of the 'Evils [that] contribute to the Misfortune of being pester'd with Pilferers, Thieves, and Robbers' were he argued unavoidable, and

⁴¹ Ibid., I, 272; I, 272-73.

⁴² Ibid., I, 272.

thus 'all Countries ever were and ever will be'⁴³ afflicted with them. In the absence of a known cure, prevention was the only option available to both layman and state physician alike. Accordingly, Mandeville's message to the former was clear: stop grumbling, lock your doors at night, secure your valuables and if you can't keep away from Tyburn keep your hand on your pocket-book. His advice to the latter was equally pragmatic and similarly based upon an unillusioned grasp of both the talents and psychology of the criminal fraternity. In the first place, the politician had to realise that crime was not caused by 'Ignorance, Stupidity and Dastardness', in fact, the reverse was the case for, Mandeville noted, 'To be Stupid and Ignorant is seldom the Character of a Thief'. Thus attempts to combat crime by fighting ignorance simply missed the point that 'the blame ought rather to be laid on the excessive Cunning and Subtlety, and too much Knowledge in general, which the worst of Miscreants and the Scum of the Nation are possessed of'.⁴⁴ Educational reform was not the answer. Nor for that matter was moral reform: criminals were not dastardly or lacking in moral fibre, their moral code was however incommensurable with that of the larger society and thus attempts to inculcate normal values of honesty and probity were bound to fall on amused, if not deaf, ears. But if the facts of criminal socialization could not be undone then nor could the early experience of the home environment. The idle and delinquent offspring of 'Reprobate Parents' could be dragged off the streets and corralled in charity schools but those institutions by further

43 Ibid., I, 274.

44 Ibid., I, 275; I, 272; I, 275.

encouraging idleness rather than hard toil and concentrating adolescents in bad company only became nurseries and academies of crime. In fact their hidden curriculum ensured that it was their unhappy and unintended consequence to exacerbate the very problem they sought to alleviate.

Thus the politician had to reject those schemes and seek more effective and less counter-productive methods of crime prevention by relying on a hard-headed understanding of human nature in general and the criminal personality in particular. Thieves had the same passions as other men and thus their anti-social behaviour was best controlled by invoking their fear. Accordingly, Mandeville argued 'Men of abandon'd Principles must be aw'd by rugged Officers, strong Prisons, watchful Jailors, the Hangman and the Gallows'. Deterrence was the only effective method of containing crime and the politician had therefore to ensure that the penal code was suitably harsh and severe. But criminals were not fools; as much, if not more, than other men they were guided by rational prudence and thus retribution had to be certain as well as severe. For Mandeville observed, 'if Men did imagine and were fully persuaded, that as surely as they committed a Fact that deserved Hanging, so surely they would be Hanged, Executions would be very rare, and the most desperate Felon would almost as soon hang himself as he would break open a House'. And it was in ensuring the certainty as well as the severity of punishment that the distinctive qualities of the politician or state physician emerged. For unlike other men, he had in pursuing the public good to suppress his own passions, and in particular his sense of compassion and pity. In that respect, he was no different from

natural physicians or surgeons who 'in the Cure of dangerous Wounds and Fractures, the Extirpations of Limbs, and other dreadful operations, are often compell'd to put their Patients to extraordinary Torments'⁴⁵ and who as a result became hardened and inured in doing what was necessary for their good. Similarly, the state physician could not afford to be squeamish in promoting the health of the social body. At the same time, however, he also had to recognise that the interest of the whole was not necessarily identical with the interests of the individuals it contained. Thus Mandeville argued, although 'It is a mighty Saying, that it is better that five hundred Guilty People should escape, than that one innocent Person should suffer' that maxim was he insisted 'very false in regard to the Temporal Welfare of the Society'. It was of course, he added, 'a terrible thing [that] a Man should be put to Death for a Crime he is not guilty of'. Nevertheless the politician had in the interests of the public at large to condone such evils. His willingness to do so was, however, dependent upon his ability to arrive at a detached, dispassionate, and pragmatic understanding of the operations of the social body as a whole, to see that when viewed from that larger and more complex perspective good could flow from evil. The strict and unwavering imposition of the death penalty would cause some injustice, some unfortunate individuals would inevitably suffer. Nevertheless it was still the case that

it would be a vast Advantage to a Nation, not only as to the securing of every one's Property and the Peace of the Society in general, but it would likewise save the Lives

45 Ibid., I, 164; I, 272; I, 174-75.

of Hundreds, if not Thousands, of Necessitous Wretches, that are daily hanged for Trifles, and who would never have attempted any thing against the Law, or at least not have ventured on Capital Crimes, if the hopes of getting off, should they be taken, had not been one of the Motives that animated their Resolution.⁴⁶

But if the state physician had to be severe and resolute in executing the law and its offenders in some areas of the criminal code, he had to be more flexible and tolerant in others. 'The Passions of some People', Mandeville observed, 'are too violent to be curb'd by any Law or Precept; and it is Wisdom in all Governments to bear with lesser Inconveniences to prevent greater'. Politics was the art of the possible and it therefore had to work with the passions and not against them. The acquisitive and anti-social passions of common criminals could be controlled by playing them off against their fear, but the more pervasive and powerful passion of lust was not so easily managed. The most obvious and serious criminal manifestations of that passion were rape and prostitution, and in seeking to contain the former it was necessary for the politician, Mandeville argued, to choose the lesser of two evils and tolerate the latter. Drabs could of course be hounded and driven off the streets but that strategy, the one most favoured by the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, would, he reasoned, not only increase the incidence of rape, it would also have the further and unintended consequence of undermining the virtue of other women and of slackening the moral tone of society as a whole. Thus he observed

If Courtezans and Strumpets were to be prosecuted with as much Rigour as some silly People would have it, what Locks or Bars would be sufficient to preserve the Honour

46 Ibid., I, 273.

of our Wives and Daughters? For 'tis not only that the Women in general would meet with far greater Temptations, and the Attempts to ensnare the Innocence of Virgins would seem more excusable even to the sober part of Mankind than they do now: But some Men would grow outrageous, and Ravishing would become a common Crime.⁴⁷

It was therefore necessary to turn a blind eye to prostitution and adopt the practice of 'the Wise rulers' of Amsterdam by tolerating 'an uncertain number of Houses, in which Women are hired as publicly as Horses at a Livery-Stable'. But if it was politic for the state to pimp to the lust of the voluptuous then it was also prudent for it to pander to the sensitivities of the fastidious. For that reason, Mandeville noted, the magistrates of Amsterdam publicly condemned what they privately condoned. Accordingly, and 'notwithstanding the good Rules and strict Discipline that are observ'd in these Markets of Love , the Schout and his officers [were] always vexing, mulcting, and upon the least Complaint removing the miserable Keepers of them'. And in that fashion they not only 'preserve[d] themselves in the good Opinion of the weaker sort of People, who imagine that the Government is always endeavouring, tho' unable, to suppress what it actually tolerates',⁴⁸ they also obtained the funds to support a larger constabulary than would have otherwise been possible, and which when not occupied in raiding the red-light district could be put to good use in other spheres of crime prevention.

Prostitution was a social and medical evil, as a physician Mandeville was in no doubt about that. Nevertheless, it was the lesser of two evils and if properly understood and managed, good could be made to come of it. Once again the politician had to

47 Ibid., I, 95; I, 95-6.

48 Ibid., I, 96; I, 96; I, 97-8; I, 98.

appreciate that fact and see that 'the best of Virtues want the Assistance of the worst of Vices' and once again he had to be prepared to place the interests of the whole above the interests of the individual and see the 'Necessity of sacrificing one part of Womankind to preserve the other, and prevent a Filthiness of a more heinous Nature'.⁴⁹

The scattered details of Mandeville's comments on the administration of justice in Part I of The Fable of the Bees had largely been inspired by, and were thus focused on, the social problems which most vexed his contemporaries. In rejecting the proposals for their eradication which were then in vogue he had, however, identified principles of political management and developed themes of social analysis which had an application beyond the sphere of criminal justice. How those principles and themes informed his discussion of trade, the 'Principal ... Requisite to aggrandize a Nation'⁵⁰ will be examined below.

Writing in 1695 the political economist Charles D'avenant had claimed in his Essay on Ways and Means that

Trade, as it is now become the strength of the kingdom, by the supply it breeds of seamen, so it is the living fountain from whence we draw all our nourishment; it disperses that blood and spirits through all the members, by which the body politick subsists.

The price of land, value of rents, and our commodities and manufactures rise and fall, as it goes well or ill with our foreign trade.⁵¹

Neither Mandeville nor the majority of his contemporaries would have disputed either the aptness of D'avenant's metaphor or the

49 Ibid., I, 100.

50 Ibid., I, 116.

51 The Political and Commercial Works, 5 vols. (London, 1771), I, 16, cited in Keith Tribe, Land, Labour and Economic Discourse (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p.88.

crucial role which he ascribed to foreign trade in the nation's affairs. From the mercantilist standpoint of Augustan political economy trade was indeed the life-blood of the body politic, and it was generally agreed that the enlargement of that circulation produced a wealthier, and hence more powerful state. As Mandeville himself remarked

would you ... render [a Society of Men] an opulent, knowing and polite Nation, teach 'em Commerce with Foreign Countries, and if possible get into the Sea, which to compass spare no Labour nor Industry, and let no Difficulty deter you from it: Then promote Navigation, cherish the Merchant, and encourage Trade in every Branch of it; this will bring Riches, and where they are, Arts and Sciences will soon follow, and by the Help of what I have named and good Management, it is that Politicians can make a People potent, renown'd and flourishing.⁵²

Moreover, although he also emphasized the need to promote agriculture and manufacturing in the list of injunctions, or maxims of state, which preceded that focus on international trade, the possibility of doing so was he believed ultimately dependent upon, and thus inextricably linked to, the success of the latter enterprise. It was at that point in the argument, however, that Mandeville and his contemporaries parted company. For whilst, he observed, there were 'many who will allow that among the sinful Nations of the Times, Pride and Luxury are the great Promoters of Trade' it was the case, he continued, that 'they refuse to own the Necessity there is, that in a more virtuous Age (such a one as should be free from Pride) Trade would in a great Measure decay'. Indeed they thought 'it impious to imagine, that Humility, Temperance, and other Virtues should debar People from the Enjoyment of those Comforts of Life, which are not denied to the most wicked Nations'. Accordingly they concluded that 'without

52 Fable of the Bees, I, 184-85.

Pride or Luxury, the same Things might be eat, wore, and consumed; the same Number of Handicrafts and Artificers employ'd, and a Nation be every way as flourishing as where those Vices are the most predominant'.⁵³ Mandeville in contrast insisted that consumption in a commercial and trading society necessarily depended upon the passions and hence the vicious qualities which men disowned and pretended to be ashamed of. Vice, trade, and national prosperity were not contingently but causally connected, and in his eyes the proper understanding and management of the health of the English body politic depended upon the appreciation of that fact.

Mandeville had originally outlined the causal connection between vice and the promotion of trade when, in The Grumbling Hive, he claimed that luxury

Employ'd a Million of the Poor,
And odious Pride a Million more:
Envy it self, and Vanity,
Were Ministers of Industry;
Their darling Folly, Fickleness,
In Diet, Furniture and Dress,
That strange ridic'lous Vice, was made
The very Wheel that turn'd the Trade.⁵⁴

And in his subsequent additions to, and commentary on, those lines, he supplied both the history and psychology of consumer behaviour which supported that thesis. As we have seen, 'Hunger, Thirst and Nakedness' were, he argued, 'the Tyrants'⁵⁵ which had originally aroused man and forced him into productive endeavour. Moved solely by physical necessity, the savage psyche had accordingly been dominated by the passions and appetites occasioned by self-love or

53 Ibid., I, 124; I, 124; I, 125; I, 125.

54 Ibid., I, 25.

55 Ibid., I, 366.

the instinct for self-preservation. Of course any attempt to move from that observation to a fixed and objective criterion of physical or subsistence needs was for Mandeville bound to be frustrated by the relativity of historical and cultural context. Nevertheless, even though the relevant standard was a shifting one, it was still the case that when compared to his savage ancestors civilized man had undoubtedly improved his lot and freed himself from the more immediate and pressing demands of self-love. No longer enslaved by those passions his behaviour was in contrast dominated by self-liking or the nervous desire for social approval and esteem. The passage from the state of nature to civilized society had therefore been marked by a radical shift in the structure of human motivation; self-liking had replaced self-love as the major determinant of man's behaviour, psychic needs had become more demanding than physical needs, and in the realm of material life the result was, Mandeville argued, a corresponding and inevitable shift from subsistence to conspicuous consumption.

In their anxious and incessant quest for public approval men could seek the recognition of their peers through a variety of endeavours but in an increasingly complex and anonymous urban society where appearance was everything Augustan man could most easily measure himself and others by what he and they consumed. Beyond the historically determined limits required to keep the body, if not the psyche, together goods and services were therefore valued for the status which they conferred on those who possessed and employed them. And significantly for Mandeville's analysis of commercial society, that latter pattern of consumption was, in contrast to the former, potentially without limit. Driven by

self-liking and the anxious thought that in a society where everybody was somebody nobody was anybody, men sought, according to their rank, either to outbid or emulate each other in their displays of conspicuous consumption. Thus, for example, to preserve their place at the head of the status hierarchy and gratify their self-esteem, the elite were driven by pride and vanity to discover ever more refined and exotic forms of self-indulgence. In contrast and lower down the social scale, envy was the passion which encouraged emulative striving. The force of that passion was, however, nicely adjusted to the 'Nearness or Remoteness'⁵⁶ of the envied object. Accordingly individuals were neither discouraged nor disheartened by the distance which separated them from those at the top. Instead their ambitions were firmly fixed on their immediate superiors, and in turn that focus produced a ratchet effect which kept the cycle of emulation constantly and ever upwardly in motion. Emulative striving was not, however, an open competition; for in an age of conspicuous, rather than mass, consumption the vast majority of men, the labouring poor, were still driven by physical necessity and in effect they remained in an economic and psychic state of nature.

Pride, vanity, and envy were thus the mainsprings of consumer behaviour and as such, Mandeville argued, they were also and necessarily the mainsprings of power and prosperity within the Augustan body politic. In fact the robust and expanding circulation of trade upon which economic health depended could, he reasoned, only be sustained by the constant excitement and

⁵⁶ Ibid., I, 135-36.

multiplication of consumer desires. Without emulative striving and the fickle and faddish character of consumer demands which it occasioned, trade, he argued, would 'suffer in every Branch' and on that basis he concluded that 'for the Support of Trade there can be nothing equivalent to Pride'.⁵⁷ The wise administration and successful management of the national economy depended therefore upon a clear and unillusioned grasp of that fact. Nevertheless that knowledge, a knowledge of the passionate bases of consumer motivation, was only one part of the larger understanding which was required to promote the optimum regimen of the English body politic. The details and distinctive nature of that understanding are, however, best explored through a further analysis of Mandeville's discussion of luxury, for it was in response to the Augustan debate on that problem that he was led, at various points in Part I of The Fable of the Bees, to define more precisely the specific role and tasks of the state physician.

Conspicuous consumption was luxury consumption and in defending its role in promoting national well-being Mandeville had to refute his age's alternative and orthodox theory of national health which identified luxury as a spreading contagion within the body politic. According to that theory, and as we have already seen in the writings of Dennis and Scott, luxury was conventionally diagnosed, both literally and figuratively, as a distemper which brought in its train a complex and pernicious syndrome of personal and public ills. At the most reductive and literal level of understanding, luxury was accused of destroying both the physical

57 Ibid., I, 133; I, 126.

and mental well-being of those who were addicted to its pleasures. Bodies, it was argued, were wrecked and weakened by over-indulgence and minds were frustrated and dispirited by the frantic pursuit of insatiable desires. In turn, and as men became increasingly debauched and devoted to the pursuit of la dolce vita to the exclusion of their civic duties, luxury was further charged with sapping the martial and public spirit of the larger social body. Moreover, and more pragmatically, luxury was also accused of destroying the economic circulation of the body politic, for it was argued that the consumption of foreign luxury goods inevitably upset the balance of trade and drained bullion from the nation's coffers. Finally, and at the most general and figurative level of understanding, luxury was for many Augustans the disease which symbolised and explained all the perceived ills of their age; it was symptomatic not only of the decay of cherished and traditional values but also of a world run mad, of a social system uncontrollably set on a course of endless frustration and ultimate self-destruction. In short, luxury was to be avoided like the plague. Mandeville, however, rejected each element in that gloomy diagnosis and in doing so he once again employed the same distinctive and detached skills of political analysis, or state physick, which had informed his thoughts on the administration of justice.

If luxury was both a private and a public distemper, then, as was the case in any other disease, its treatment had to proceed from a knowledge of, and thus the ability to identify, its symptoms. But according to Mandeville that was no easy task for he claimed that 'If every thing is to be Luxury (as in strictness it ought) that is not immediately necessary to make Man subsist as he

is a living Creature, there is nothing else to be found in the World, no not even among the naked Savages'. And if luxury was a difficult phenomenon to isolate and pin down globally, then that problem was further compounded within the civilized world where in stratified societies what was merely 'Decency and Conveniency' for some was excess and extravagance for others, or as Mandeville wryly put it 'when they pray for their daily Bread, the Bishop includes several things in that Petition which the Sexton does not think on'. Beyond the absolute minimum demanded by subsistence needs, a criterion which was itself inherently unstable and disputable, all consumption could thus be defined as luxurious and although Mandeville conceded that his definition was 'too rigorous', he nevertheless insisted that 'if we are to abate one Inch of this Severity, I am afraid we shan't know where to stop'.⁵⁸ On that view, therefore, either everyone or no one was a suitable case for treatment and to the extent that luxury's critics were unable to be more specific in defining its symptoms, they ran the risk either of treating the sick and healthy alike or of worrying about a disease which did not exist.

To avoid endless definitional disputes and thus to avoid being trapped in a cycle of contradiction rather than argument, Mandeville was, however, willing to grant that some patterns of consumption could be regarded as excessive and hence luxurious. And, as the case history of Misomedon in the Treatise had demonstrated, he was fully aware of the damaging and debilitating consequences of such excess. Nevertheless, what was the province

58 Ibid., I, 107; I, 108; I, 108; I, 107.

and proper concern of the natural physician was not, he argued, the concern of the state physician. If, for example, luxury did produce 'Lavishness and Drunkenness' then what was a personal disaster for some was in turn a blessing for the public. Thus, Mandeville observed

the Merchant, that sends Corn or Cloth into Foreign Parts to purchase Wines and Brandies, encourages the Growth or Manufactory of his own Country; he is a Benefactor to Navigation, increases the Customs, and is many ways beneficial to the Publick.

Nor were the multiplier effects of the vice of drunkenness restricted merely to promoting the circulation and infrastructure of trade, for Mandeville continued,

if none were to drink Wine but such only as stand in need of it, nor any Body more than his Health requir'd, that Multitude of Wine-Merchants, Vintners, Coopers, etc. that make such a considerable Shew in this flourishing City, would be in a miserable Condition.⁵⁹

Personal plagues and afflictions did not, therefore, manifest themselves as illls and distempers within the body politic. In fact, Mandeville insisted, the very opposite was the case.

Individuals such as

the sensual Courtier that sets no Limits to his Luxury; the Fickle Strumpet that invents new Fashions every Week; the haughty Dutchess that in Equipage, Entertainments, and all her Behaviour would imitate a Princess; the profuse Rake and lavish Heir, that scatter about their Money without Wit or Judgment, buy everything they see and either destroy or give it away the next Day⁶⁰

might all, according to their fancy, put their mental and bodily health at risk but in doing so they became, Mandeville argued, 'the Prey and proper Food of a full grown Leviathan'. Far from damaging the health of the body politic, their slavish addiction to luxury

59 Ibid., I, 85.

60 Ibid., I, 355.

consumption was instead the support of a robust economic circulation and hence their diseased bodies were the nutrients of the larger social body. Accordingly, and with appropriate rhetorical flourish, Mandeville argued

such is the calamitous Condition of Human Affairs that we stand in need of the Plagues and Monsters I named to have all the Variety of Labour perform'd, which the Skill of Men is capable of inventing in order to procure an honest Livelihood to the vast Multitudes of working poor, that are required to make a large Society: And it is folly to imagine that Great and Wealthy Nations can subsist, and be at once Powerful and Polite without.⁶¹

And he might also have added that not only were such individuals 'the greatest Friend to the Society', they were also 'the greatest Friend' and 'the Prey and proper Food' of the natural physician.

In ministering to the needs of the body politic, the state physician had therefore to identify and apply criteria which were appropriate to his distinctive and public scale of concern. As Mandeville remarked in another context 'when we pronounce Actions good or evil, we only regard the Hurt or Benefit the Society receives from them, and not the Person who commits them'.

Individual bodies might not be able to withstand the stresses and strains which luxury and over-indulgence occasioned, but the social body could. Hence the problems of the former were not the concern of the state physician; they were best left to his natural counterpart. And it was in precisely that detached and utilitarian spirit that Mandeville claimed that 'the Prodigal is a Blessing to the whole Society, and injures no body but himself'. However, the ability to appreciate that fundamental distinction between managing the health of individual bodies and managing the health of the

⁶¹ Ibid., I, 355; I, 355-56.

social body depended, Mandeville argued, upon the prior ability to 'see further than one Link' in, and thus to comprehend, the complex Chain of Causes'⁶² which sustained the operations of the larger unit. But once that understanding was in place the state physician could then adopt the resolute and detached attitude which the execution of his task required. On that basis he could, for example, appreciate that the principles which applied to the prudent management of the individual household were inapplicable to the successful management of the whole. Accordingly, it was a 'gross Error', Mandeville insisted, to believe that 'the means of thriving and whatever conduces to the Welfare and real Happiness of private Families must have the same effect upon the whole Society'. Thus, for example, although it was certainly the duty of wives to 'act and behave themselves as a sober Wise Man could wish them' and 'lay out no Money but what their Husbands know and freely allowed of', it was the case that within the economy at large the extravagance and financial fecklessness of female luxury was 'a vast Article in Trade'. Far from being a political plague, Mandeville reasoned 'the Loss of it would be a greater Calamity to such a Nation as ours, than it is possible to conceive any other, a raging Pestilence not excepted'.⁶³

In defending the utility of luxury consumption Mandeville had thus severed the criterial and reductive link between individual and public health. It was a fallacy, he insisted, to imagine that what promoted the bodily health of individuals or the economic health of the individual household necessarily promoted the health

62 Ibid., I, 244; I, 103; I, 91; I, 91.

63 Ibid., I, 354-55; I, 225; I, 226; I, 226; I, 226.

of the larger social body. That argument was, however, based upon a worst case scenario, for in making it Mandeville had uncritically accepted the assumption that luxury inevitably destroyed the physical and mental health of its devotees. And whilst he certainly did not deny that some individuals were thus afflicted, he was not prepared to generalise from that fact and indict the system of luxury consumption as a whole. For if luxury did, as its critics insisted, enervate all who were addicted to its pleasures, then in the long run, and as that habit spread to other social classes, the economic advantages which flowed from it could only be construed as short-term and not long-term public benefits. It would still have been the case that the body politic was set on an irreversible course of self-inflicted ruin.

With that counter-argument in mind, Mandeville therefore engaged luxury's critics on their own ground and dealt directly with the charge that its delights were prejudicial to individual health. In the first place, there was no difference, he noted, between the debilitating effects of luxury and non-luxury consumption. Taken in excess the effects of domestic 'Stale-Beer or Malt Spirits' were just as damaging as over-indulgence in foreign 'Burgundy, Champaign or Tockay' and thus he argued that 'The cheapest and most slovenly way of indulging our Passions, does as much Mischief to a Man's Constitution, as the most elegant and expensive'.⁶⁴ Accordingly there was nothing intrinsically pernicious in foreign luxury goods themselves: instead what was important was the manner in which they were consumed. And in that respect the elite, Mandeville observed, tended to be more

64 Ibid., I, 118; I, 118; I, 118-19.

fastidious and mindful of their health than their social inferiors. 'The refin'd Pleasures of Men of Sense are' he claimed 'seldom injurious to their Constitution, and there are many great Epicures that will refuse to eat or drink more than their Heads or Stomachs can bear'. In fact, he continued, the extravagance

and the Errors of the most viciously luxurious, don't so much consist in the frequent Repetitions of their Lewdness, and their Eating and Drinking too much, (which are the Things which would most enervate them) as they do in the operose Contrivances, the Profuseness and Nicety they are serv'd with, and the vast Expense they are at in their Tables and Amours.

Similarly, he also stressed the fact that amongst the elite 'The greatest Excesses of Luxury are shewn in Buildings, Furniture, Equipages and Clothes'.⁶⁵ And, he implied, the adornment and cosmetic decoration of the outer surfaces of the body natural were, no more than ostentatious and exotic displays at table, unlikely to damage its interior regions.

The dietary good sense and generalised restraint of the elite were not, however, the result of heroic self-denial on the part of its individual members. All men, Mandeville argued, experienced the same passions and appetites, lust and greed were, for example, felt as keenly by the beau monde as by other men. Nevertheless, those appetites could be and in fact were kept in check amongst the elite by the demands of honour. 'Where good Sense is fashionable, and a genteel Behaviour is in esteem', Mandeville observed, 'Gluttony and Drunkenness can be no reigning Vices'. The countervailing force of pride or the desire to appear well in the eyes of their significant others, therefore enabled and encouraged members of the elite to stifle and control their gross passions and

⁶⁵ Ibid., I, 119.

appetites. And in that respect what Mandeville wrote of the restraint of the officer classes applied equally to the beau monde in general, for in both their aim was not

a Beastly, but a Splendid way of Living, and the Wishes of the most Luxurious in their several degrees of Quality, are to appear handsomely, and excel each other in Finery of Equipage, Politeness of Entertainments, and the Reputation of a judicious Fancy in every thing about them.⁶⁶

The modern code of honour, therefore, contained a set of norms and decorums which, in checking the potentially damaging effects of luxury consumption, ensured that the system as a whole did not run to excess and was instead maintained in a healthy state of self-regulating equilibrium and balance.

Luxury did not enervate and weaken the nation's elite. Nor, therefore, did it disbar them from military service. But again for the sake of argument Mandeville conceded 'let us once suppose that the Ease and Pleasures the Grandees and the rich People of every great Nation live in, render them unfit to endure Hardships, and undergo the Toils of War'. However, even if it were true that concession was not an argument against luxury itself, for as he continued 'The Hardships and Fatigues of War that are personally suffer'd, fall upon them that bear the Brunt of every Thing, the meanest Indigent Part of the Nation, the working slaving People'. And such individuals, those who were strangers to luxury and inured to hard labour and rustic toil, would 'always be strong and hardy enough in a Campaign or two to make good Soldiers'. Within the body of the military, luxury was therefore only a potential danger and a 'Mischief ... to be fear'd' amongst the officer classes but

⁶⁶ Ibid., I, 121-22; I, 122.

even there 'such dismal Apprehensions' were, Mandeville insisted, unfounded.⁶⁷ At the very highest level of command 'Strong Sinews and supple Joints' were 'trifling Advantages' in comparison to the leadership and tactical skills which were required to direct an army in the field. And as the acquisition of those skills was 'the Work of Time and Application', it also followed that generals were 'most commonly Men of great Age' in whom he concluded 'it would be ridiculous to expect a hale Constitution and Agility of Limbs'. Indeed so long as 'their Heads be but Active and well furnished'⁶⁸ gout-ridden commanders could be trundled into battle on litters or in coaches from whence they could manoeuvre their troops and do untold damage to the enemy. Luxury did not, therefore, threaten the head of the military corps nor did it incapacitate the subordinate ranks in the chain of command. For there the military code of honour not only kept luxury in check, it also supplied the place of muscular and Spartan virtue. Pride and the shame of being dishonoured enabled 'puny young Striplings ... tenderly Educated, nice in their Dress, and curious in their Diet' as well as 'embroider'd Beaux with fine lac'd Shirts and powder'd Wigs' and even 'wild Rakes, who had actually impaired their Health, and broke their Constitutions with Excesses of Wine and Women' to stand firm and perform valiantly in the face of the enemy. And thus Mandeville insisted

Robustness is the least Thing requir'd in an Officer, and if sometimes Strength is of use, a firm Resolution of Mind, which the Hopes of Preferment, Emulation, and the Love of Glory inspire them with, will at a Push supply the Place of bodily Force.⁶⁹

67 Ibid., I, 119; I, 119; I, 120; I, 120; I, 122.

68 Ibid., I, 120.

69 Ibid., I, 122; I, 122; I, 122-23; I, 123.

Despite popular belief to the contrary, neither the health of society in general nor the vigour of the military corps in particular were threatened by luxury. In fact, Mandeville argued, the 'frightful Notions' and 'dismal Apprehensions of Luxury's enervating and effeminating People' were not so much the symptoms of a real distemper within the body politic, they were instead the symptoms of a public imagination too easily misled and disordered by the dangers of associative thinking. It was certainly the case, he reasoned, that historical accounts 'of the Luxury of Persia, Egypt, and other Countries where it has been a reigning Vice, and that were effeminated and enervated by it' had a salutary effect on youthful imaginations which were too weak to be governed by reason, and which therefore needed fear as their keeper. But it was irrational to generalise from those cautionary tales and expect luxury to have the same dreadful consequences in every society. Whatever one might have imagined to be true of Persia and Egypt, experience and acquaintance with the world demonstrated that those fears were unfounded. Men of course continued to have the same passions and appetites and accordingly some continued to over indulge and dissipate themselves but those symptoms did not in themselves indicate the presence of a deeper and more prevalent malaise within Augustan society as a whole. Indeed in a city like London, it was simply not the case, he implied, that

one Third of the People [were] sick a-bed with Surfeits; another laid up with the Gout, or crippled by a more ignominious Distemper; and the rest, that could go without leading, walk along the Streets in Petticoats.⁷⁰

70 Ibid., I, 117; I, 122; I, 118; I, 118.

But if the fear that luxury destroyed the physical vitality of the body politic was unfounded then so too, according to Mandeville, was the 'receiv'd Notion, that Luxury is as destructive to the Wealth of the whole Body Politic, as it is to that of every individual Person who is guilty of it '. On the contrary, 'with a wise Administration all People may' he argued 'swim in as much Foreign Luxury as their Product can purchase, without being impoverish'd by it'. It therefore followed that the consumption of foreign luxury goods did not in itself disrupt the balance of trade and empty the nation's coffers. In fact if the economic health of the body politic did suffer as a result of its trading relations with other countries, then that was not to be 'put to the Account of Luxury' but rather 'to Male-administration, and ... the Fault of bad Politicks'. Indeed Mandeville insisted that so long as 'Imports are never allow'd to be superior to the Exports, no Nation can ever be impoverish'd by Foreign Luxury'.⁷¹ Accordingly, it was the responsibility of the state physician to 'keep a watchful Eye over the Balance of Trade in general, and never suffer that all the Foreign Commodities together, that are imported in one Year, shall exceed in Value what of their own Growth or Manufacture is in the same exported to others'. Moreover, in pursuing that objective he was at liberty to 'turn and divert the Course of Trade' whenever and wherever necessary by employing 'dextrous Management, laying heavy Impositions on some Goods, or totally prohibiting them, and lowering the Duties on others'. But whilst it was thus necessary to intervene in and regulate the spontaneous flow of international

71 Ibid., I, 108; I, 123; I, 115; I, 116.

trade, it was rarely, if ever, necessary to impose sumptuary laws or 'the trifling Regulations of Lavishness and Frugality'. For although Mandeville conceded that such remedies were called for in desperate times, 'after great Calamities of War, Pestilence, or Famine, when Work has stood still, and the Labour of the Poor been interrupted', he insisted that 'to introduce them into an opulent Kingdom is the wrong way to consult the Interest of it'.⁷²

Reduced to essentials Mandeville's economic theory was thoroughly mercantilist, but although he was committed to that doctrine's superordinate goal of maintaining a favourable balance of trade, his conception of that balance was not the bullionist dream of a one-way flow of British goods in return for foreign gold and silver. For in the long run the pursuit of that limited objective would be self-defeating. Instead the politician or state physician had to appreciate that the stability and viability of the domestic economy depended upon the reciprocal exchange of goods and services between trading partners. 'Buying is Bartering', Mandeville insisted, and for that reason

no Nation can buy Goods of others that has none of her own to purchase them with We know that we could not continue long to purchase the Goods of other Nations, if they would not take our Manufactures in Payment for them; and why should we judge otherwise of other Nations?⁷³

It was therefore a mistake always to insist upon payment in specie rather than payment in kind for British goods sent abroad. Nor did it make economic sense to compute and pursue the desired balance between imports and exports on a country-by-country basis: instead, it was only necessary to ensure that a balance was achieved

72 Ibid., I, 116; I, 116; I, 197; I, 251.

73 Ibid., I, 111.

aggregatively over the nation's trading account as a whole. And he concluded, so long as a people were able to 'raise the Fund of their own that is to purchase it'⁷⁴ then no amount of luxury consumption could weaken the economic sinews of the body politic. In fact the consumption of foreign luxury goods was essential for the continuing augmentation of that fund for he reasoned that if Britain were to cut back on its consumption of foreign goods then its trading partners would be similarly forced to reduce their consumption of British exports, with obvious and damaging consequences for domestic manufacturing and industry. And crucially, and unlike those political economists who were dazzled by the gold and silver of Spain and Portugal, Mandeville insisted that it was in terms of the expansion and overall vitality of the domestic economy, and not simply by measuring the volume of its money supply, that national wealth was to be calculated.

The maintenance of a favourable balance of trade was thus the single most important objective in managing the economic regimen of the body politic. But in Mandeville's prescription for the attainment of national health that task was closely connected to the state physician's second major area of concern, the management of 'the multitude of Working Poor'. For instead of whingeing about the cut-throat nature of international trade, and 'sitting still and damning and sinking our Neighbours for beating us at our own Weapons' Mandeville declared that 'the Noble and Manly way of encountering the Rivals of our Trade, and by dint of Merit out-doing them at Foreign Markets' was to undersell their goods by promoting

74 Ibid., I, 116.

a cheap and plentiful supply of domestic labour. Thus in keeping with the mercantilist principles of his day, he insisted 'that in a free Nation where slaves are not allow'd of, the surest Wealth consists in a Multitude of laborious Poor'.⁷⁵ Indeed within the body politic, the poor were, he argued, the 'Basis that supports all'; upon their labour depended all 'the Comforts of Life', and 'no great Nation' he concluded 'can be happy without vast Numbers of them'. Accordingly, it was the responsibility of 'a Wise Legislature' to 'cultivate the Breed of them with all imaginable Care, and provide against their Scarcity'. But in doing so, and in order to ensure that the required 'Proportion of the Society' was not 'spoil'd, the poor had to be insulated from luxury. For although Mandeville believed that a robust economic circulation depended upon the maintenance of a flourishing system of luxury consumption, he nevertheless insisted that luxury had to be confined within a relatively restricted consuming elite. In fact, it was impossible to imagine

that a Society can long subsist, and suffer many of its Members to live in Idleness, and enjoy all the Ease and Pleasure they can invent, without having at the same time great Multitudes of People that to make good this Defect will condescend to be quite the reverse, and by use and patience inure their Bodies to work for others and themselves besides.⁷⁶

Thus to preserve the health of the body politic the poor had to be kept constantly, cheaply, and cheerfully at work. And in Mandeville's scheme of state physick the attainment of those objectives depended not only upon a thorough understanding of the passions, and hence the motivational psychology of the labouring

75 Ibid., I, 249; I, 317; I, 317; I, 287.

76 Ibid, I, 249; I, 301; I, 287; I, 287; I, 302; I, 286.

classes, but also upon the state physicians's readiness to pursue a policy which dispassionately recognised the necessity of, but resolutely did not seek to alter, their unenviable lot within the systems of production and distribution.

Like all men, the poor, Mandeville argued, had 'nothing to stir them up to be serviceable but their Wants' but unlike those men who lived above the level of subsistence and who, even when their basic needs were satisfied, could be prompted to further effort by the passions of 'Pride or Avarice' the poor were, he observed, 'seldom powerfully influenc'd by either'. Instead their wants were firmly focused on the goods of the body rather than on the goods of the mind. And whilst the latter were potentially without limit and thus a constant spur to individual industry, the former were not: in fact, once they were satisfied the labour which they induced could no longer be guaranteed. Thus to keep the poor perpetually at work 'it was Prudence' Mandeville reasoned 'to relieve their Wants, but Folly to cure them'. Indeed to elicit rather than extinguish that desired behaviour, the state physician had to administer what was in effect a Skinnerian programme of behavioural control whose reinforcement schedules neither encouraged the labouring classes to ease and pleasure nor condemned them to forced labour and privation. Or as Mandeville aptly and less anachronistically put it, the poor 'as they ought to be kept from starving, so they should receive nothing worth saving'.⁷⁷

It therefore followed that it was both sound psychological and economic policy to ensure that 'the quantity of circulating Coin in

77 Ibid., I, 194; I, 194; I, 194; I, 248; I, 193.

a Country ought always to be proportion'd to the number of Hands that are employ'd'. In fact, the example of Spain, Europe's conduit for American gold and silver, demonstrated the folly of ignoring that maxim; for awash with specie she had, Mandeville noted, 'from a rich, acute, diligent and laborious, become a slow, idle, proud and beggarly People.' Moreover, it was also necessary to ensure that the wages of labourers were similarly proportioned to the price of provisions and that for the sake of international competitiveness both were as cheap as possible. Thus just as the state physician had to provide against the scarcity of the poor themselves by controlling and manipulating their acquisitive passions, he had at the same time to 'prevent the Scarcity of Provision it self' by 'encourag[ing] Agriculture and Fishery in all their Branches'. In managing the poor the carrot was therefore preferable to the stick but given the primitive and inelastic nature of their passions, and hence their motivations, the carrot had to be neither too remote nor too nourishing. For it was inevitably the case, Mandeville argued, that

The only thing that can render the labouring Man industrious, is a moderate quantity of Money; for as too little will, according as his Temper is, either dispirit or make him Desperate, so too much will make him Insolent and Lazy.⁷⁸

If the economic interest of the body politic demanded that the poor should be kept cheaply and constantly at work, then the interest of political stability further demanded that they should be kept cheerfully and contentedly at work. And to achieve that objective it was essential, Mandeville argued, to ensure 'that the

78 Ibid., I, 193; I, 196; I, 287; I, 197; I, 194.

Knowledge of the Working Poor should be confin'd within the Verge of their Occupations, and never extended (as to things visible) beyond what relates to their Calling'. Indeed as far as the poor were concerned ignorance, Mandeville insisted, was bliss; for he reasoned that 'by bringing them up in Ignorance you may inure them to real Hardships without being ever sensible themselves that they are such'. Thus so long as the labouring classes remained unaware of the existence of alternative and better possibilities, they would willingly embrace, rather than grudgingly accept, their lot within the systems of production and distribution. In fact, far from regarding their unremitting toil as 'being a Burthen and an Imposition on them' they would, Mandeville continued, look upon it 'as a Blessing, which in their Addresses to Heaven they pray for'. On the other hand, however, he warned that

The more a Shepherd, a Plowman or any other Peasant knows of the World, and the things that are Foreign to his Labour and Employment, the less fit he'll be to go through the Fatigues and Hardships of it with Chearfulness and Content.⁷⁹

For knowledge led to the expansion and diversification of desires, in time it brought a taste for the positional goods and forbidden fruits of the tree of luxury and for those thus afflicted, it inevitably entailed a fall from a psychic state of grace. But as we have seen, Mandeville had argued that in an economy where there was an 'Abundance of hard and dirty Labour ... to be done, and coarse Living ... to be complied with',⁸⁰ the diffusion of such tastes amongst the population at large was bound to be self-defeating, for not only would it encourage idleness and bring the

⁷⁹ Ibid., I, 288; I, 317; I, 358; I, 288.

⁸⁰ Ibid., I, 311.

system of production to a halt, it would given that failure also generate widespread consumer frustration. In turn that frustration would inevitably lead to individual disappointment and discontent for reason was the slave and not the master of the passions, and once aroused the goods of the mind could not, even in the face of enforced economic austerity and retrenchment, simply be repressed or extinguished by Stoic feats of self-denial and rational self-control. Thus to guarantee both the happiness and the labour of the poor such desires had to be strangled at birth. It was therefore a kindness to them, as well as a prudent maxim of state politics, to bring them up in ignorance. In effect, it was the state physicians' responsibility to suppress their passions and ensure that the poor remained in a psychic state of nature.

In prescribing that severe and apparently heartless policy for promoting the welfare of the labouring classes Mandeville could therefore claim that what he 'urge[d] could be no Injury or the least diminution of Happiness to the Poor'. For given his understanding of the psychology of desire, it followed that happiness or contentment could not be objectively measured according to some fixed and invariable physical criterion of goods consumed or lifestyle enjoyed. Instead, like Hobbes, Mandeville defined felicity as a relative and psychic phenomenon which depended simply upon the desires an individual happened to have and his self-assessed prospects of realising them. Thus whilst the prospect of hard labour and a coarse diet might be seen as an intolerable hardship and a genuine source of unhappiness for those reared in ease and luxury, Mandeville insisted that they 'neither seem nor are such to those who have been brought up to 'em, and know no

better'. Moreover, given the unsophisticated nature, and the relative ease with which the desires of the poor could be satisfied there was not, he continued, 'a more contented People among us, than those who work the hardest and are the least acquainted with the Pomp and Delicacies of the World'. For it followed that

the greater a Man's Knowledge and Experience is in the World, the more exquisite the Delicacy of his Taste, and the more consummate Judge he is of things in general, certainly the more difficult it will be to please him.⁸¹

However, if the children of the poor were to be indiscriminately dragged from field and plough, instructed in the three 'R's', and given ideas and ambitions above their station then that would be, despite appearances to the contrary, a cruel and inhuman policy. For given the structure of the Augustan labour market and its limited opportunities for occupational mobility, it would still be their lot as adults 'to remain and end their Days in a Laborious, Tiresome and Painful Station of Life' and whilst

Hard Labour and the coarsest Diet are a proper Punishment to several kinds of Malefactors, ... to impose either on those that have not been used and brought up to both is the greatest Cruelty, when there is no Crime you can charge them with.

Thus in recommending that the children of the poor should be reared and kept in ignorance Mandeville could justifiably assert that 'I would not be thought Cruel, and am well assured if I know anything of myself, that I abhor Inhumanity'⁸² for, as we have seen, he was in effect arguing that in order best to promote their long term interest and happiness, it was necessary to be cruel to be kind.

Within Mandeville's mercantilist scheme of political economy,

81 Ibid., I, 316; I, 311; I, 311; I, 314.

82 Ibid., I, 288; I, 288-89; I, 310.

it therefore followed that the state physician had to adopt a similarly hard-headed and resolute attitude in managing the supply of domestic labour and supervising the welfare of the poor, for he insisted that 'to be compassionate to excess where Reason forbids it, and the general Interest of the Society requires steadiness of Thought and Resolution, is an unpardonable Weakness'. Thus, unlike other men, the state physician could not afford either to indulge or be swayed by the countervailing demands of his own passions for, as was the case in the administration of criminal justice, he had once again to suppress his natural sense of pity and do what was necessary to promote the interest of the body politic; even if that entailed the apparent sacrifice of the part to the whole. Such strength of character was, however, bound to offend popular sensibilities for, as Mandeville noted, it was the very antithesis of the 'unreasonable Vein of Petty Reverence for the Poor, that runs through most Multitudes, and more particularly in this Nation, and arises from a mixture of Pity, Folly and Superstition'.⁸³ In fact, he argued, it was precisely such a mish-mash of misplaced sentimentality and faulty economic reasoning which informed the policies of the charity school movement. For in seeking to unite religious zeal with utilitarian purpose, it was but one of the avowed aims of those policies to prepare the children of the poor for employment in various handicrafts, trades, and services by combining biblical instruction with the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic. But within the labour market at large, and given the free play of supply and demand, Mandeville argued

83 Ibid., I, 310; I, 311.

that 'This Proportion as to Numbers in every Trade finds it self, and is never better kept than when no body meddles or interferes with it'. Accordingly, he objected that the placement policies of the charity school movement were not only 'an impertinent intermeddling with what few of these Governors know any thing of,' they were also, and crucially, 'destructive to the Harmony of a Nation'. Indeed he insisted that not only did those policies damage what they sought to promote, namely the economic health of the body politic, it was also their unintended consequence to exacerbate the very problems which they were designed to alleviate; for in disturbing the natural operations of the labour market they merely created a self-perpetuating and positive feedback loop between overstocked trades and overstocked charity schools. Paradoxically charity schools were a 'perpetual Nursery for Charity-Schools'.⁸⁴

Thus, whilst it was the state physician's responsibility to discourage 'Idleness with Art and Steadiness' and to extract the labour of the poor 'with Discretion and Humanity', that responsibility did not extend to interfering with ~~of~~ other areas of the domestic labour supply. If, however, it did transpire that 'all Trades and Handicrafts are overstock'd' then, Mandeville argued, that was 'a certain sign' that there was 'a Fault in the Management of the Whole'. In short, it indicated a basic failure to provide for the abundance and cheapness of provisions; to keep wages as low as possible; and to ensure that 'the Bulk of the Nation, ... should every where consist of Labouring Poor, that are unacquainted with

84 Ibid., I, 299-300; I, 299; I, 300.

every thing but their Work'.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, in discharging his responsibilities the state physician was occasionally at liberty, and prudentially if not strictly obliged, to intervene in and interrupt the largely spontaneous operations of the labour market. For, Mandeville continued, it was 'the Business of the Publick' not only to provide work for idle hands but also 'to supply the Defects of the Society'. And in an economy largely driven and regulated by the passions clustering around self-love, those 'Defects' were, he explained, the inevitable and natural consequence of a pervasive and short-sighted concern for individual and immediate self-interest at the expense of a far-sighted and disinterested concern for the long term and continuing welfare of the body politic as a whole. Indeed, Mandeville lamented the fact that amongst his contemporaries 'every body is for turning the Penny and short Bargains' and that 'People will fix all their Cares, Concern and Application on the Time present, without regard of what is to come after them, or hardly ever thinking beyond the next Generation'. It was therefore necessary to minister to that particular 'Disorder of the Society' and its attendant 'Symptoms'. But in order to do so the state physician had once again to transcend the limitations of his own passionate nature, for unlike the generality of men whose 'Heads run upon the uncertainty of things, and the vicissitudes of human Affairs' and whose thinking and actions were tugged hither and thither by the demands of self-love and by the fads of intellectual fashion, he could neither indulge his own passions and adopt an attitude of 'The Devil take

85 Ibid., I, 317; I, 299; I, 300-1; I, 302.

the hindmost',⁸⁶ nor take passive refuge in a fatalistic and near pagan belief in the inscrutable powers of fortuna. Instead, he had to display resolution and foresight and actively seek a remedy for the ills or 'National Failings' caused by the unregulated operations of the passions in other men. In effect he had to find an antidote which could 'fix or at least help to settle the volatile Genius and fickle Spirit of the Kingdom' and, Mandeville argued, 'as Example is of greater efficacy than Precept' that was best achieved by initiating and underwriting exemplary public projects that 'must be the Work of Ages as well as vast Labour' for, in addition to soaking up the surplus labour of the unemployed poor, such schemes would remind his short-sighted and self-interested contemporaries 'that we are not born for our selves only'.⁸⁷

Throughout his discussion of the system of luxury consumption Mandeville had, as we have seen, hedged his defence of its public utility with various 'Cautions' and 'Proviso's' which served to define the limits within which he wished to confine it. Indeed on the basis of that analysis, he insisted that 'it is manifest that I could never have imagined, that Luxury was to be made general through every part of a Kingdom'. For although he agreed with luxury's critics that its extension to all social classes would have been a national disaster, he nevertheless believed that it was both desirable and possible to restrict it to a wealthy and urban consuming elite. When properly managed, luxury was not therefore a spreading contagion which threatened the economic health of the body politic. Nor, as we have seen, was it a plague which

86 Ibid., I, 321; I, 320; I, 320; I, 321; I, 320.

87 Ibid., I, 321.

necessarily threatened the physical health of those who were addicted to its pleasures. Moreover, although Mandeville had, in dissecting the passionate basis of luxury consumption, described pride as 'odious' and envy as a 'Distemper' and a 'Baseness in our Nature'⁸⁸ he had in fact adopted those popular epithets, and hence the normative judgements of his contemporaries, only to add bite to his polemic. It was of course the case that both those passions, and in particular envy, could in extremis have pathological effects on the afflicted individual; nevertheless a sprinkling of pride and a spice of envy were essential for normal human functioning and happiness. For they were in turn essential components of self-liking, and as Mandeville later remarked 'the inward Pleasure and Satisfaction a Man receives from the Gratification of that Passion, is a Cordial that contributes to his Health'.⁸⁹ Thus the Augustan economy for all its dependence on the apparently vicious qualities and passions of mankind was not, in Mandeville's eyes, a joyless economy; for even if men were mechanically driven by the false consciousness of a desire for social recognition and other intangible goods of the mind, their interaction with similarly motivated actors guaranteed the partial satisfaction rather than the total frustration of those desires. There were as far as Mandeville could see no social limits to growth, there were undoubtedly disappointments but they were merely and inescapably part of the urban and modern condition. In the countryside, and in comparison to the bitter and discontented wranglings of educated scholars and learned divines, there may have

88 Ibid., I, 248; I, 249; I, 25; I, 136; I, 134.

89 Ibid., II, 134.

been 'more Union and Neighbourly Love, less Wickedness and Attachment to the World', and accordingly peasants in their dull simplicity may have enjoyed 'more Content of Mind, more Innocence, Sincerity and other good Qualities that conduce to the Publick Peace and real Felicity';⁹⁰ but those virtuous qualities were purchased only at the price of unremitting labour, terminal boredom and the absence of all the social virtues.

The passions of pride, vanity, and envy which clustered around self-liking were thus instrumental in producing individual happiness and pleasure. Of course the attainment of complete felicity was a Sisyphean task for the goods of the mind were without limit and the demands of emulative striving were relentless. Nevertheless even the most restless and dedicated followers of fashion must, Mandeville implied, be considered happy. For the judgement that they were not could only be made by embracing a Stoic theory of self-denial and a philosophical psychology which insisted

that there can be no true Felicity in what depends on Things perishable; that Peace within is the greatest Blessing, and no Conquest like that of our Passions; that Knowledge, Temperance, Fortitude, Humility, and other Embellishments of the Mind are the most valuable Acquisitions; that no Man can be happy but he that is good; and that the Virtuous are only capable of enjoying real Pleasures.⁹¹

But that doctrine was totally at odds with Mandeville's theory of the passions and his understanding of the limits of normal human behaviour. Like their original Epicurean critics he believed that what the 'Stoicks asserted of themselves' and prescribed for others 'exceeded all human Force and Possibility', their precepts actually made life impossible and despite the fact that they had become the

90 Ibid., I, 308.

91 Ibid., I, 151.

official ideology of 'not only the Divines and Moralists of every Nation, but likewise all that are rich and powerful', Mandeville refused to accept them. Accordingly, he also refused 'to call things Pleasures which Men say are best'. Instead he reserved that label for 'such as they seem to be most pleased with'; for given the nature and force of the passions it was both empirically, and more importantly, normatively the case that 'the real Pleasures of all Men in Nature are worldly and sensual'.⁹² Thus in indulging their passions and playing their part in keeping the cycle of emulative striving and conspicuous consumption in motion, men, despite their rhetoric and worries to the contrary, were only doing what came naturally and happily. There was excess and there were disappointments but the system as a whole was not in Mandeville's eyes pathologically set on an inevitable course of material self-destruction and psychic frustration.

Having equated real pleasures with the things that men 'seem to be most pleased with' and not with the things they 'say are best', Mandeville could on that basis summarily dismiss the arguments of his contemporaries who sought to expose the vices and condemn the luxury of their own times by extolling not only the virtue but also the national greatness and wealth of ancient Sparta. For whilst he agreed that Sparta had undoubtedly and justifiably enjoyed 'the Glory of being a Warlike People enured to Toils and Hardships' that reputation was, he insisted, only made possible by the rigours of a rigidly disciplined social structure and by an austere and unremittingly harsh civilization. '[T]here

92 Ibid., I, 151; I, 166; I, 151; I, 151; I, 166.

never was', he argued, 'a Nation whose Greatness was more empty than theirs' and thus he concluded that 'the only thing they could be proud of, was, that they enjoy'd nothing'.⁹³ Despite their rhetoric he was therefore convinced that if subjected to similar conditions 'Englishmen would hardly have envy'd them their Greatness'. They would not be prepared to be 'debarred from all the Comforts of Life' for, unlike the Spartans, their pleasures - the things that 'Men want now-a-days'⁹⁴ - were worldly and sensual. A life spent in praise and pursuit of private poverty and public affluence was thus as far as Mandeville was concerned a totally unrealistic and inappropriate role model for the Augustan body politic.

But if the example of Sparta was both historically and geographically far enough away to be almost a matter of academic dispute in the debate over the relative merits and demerits of luxury consumption, the more proximate and pressing example of the Dutch Republic was not. Indeed those who vigorously denied the public utility of vice frequently invoked it as a persuasive example of the causal connection between frugality and national grandeur and thus as a more realistic model for the conduct of English economic affairs. Once again, however, Mandeville was unimpressed by their arguments. Instead he sought to demonstrate that not only was the country of his birth one of the rare examples where virtue and self-interest coincided but also that its reputation for frugality and the rejection of luxury concealed a reality which was more subtle and complex and thus easily

93 Ibid., I, 151; I, 246; I, 245.

94 Ibid., I, 246-47; I, 246; I, 247.

misconstrued by the casual and foreign observer. To support the former contention Mandeville pointed to the particular and peculiar circumstances of Dutch geography and history; national frugality was, he argued, a function of national necessity dictated initially by past battles against Spain and continued by the never-ending battle against the sea. Given those circumstances it was in the interest of the Dutch 'to be frugal and spend little': indeed their 'Continuance under the same Difficulties for above Fourscore Years' had made their belt-tightening 'Customary and Habitual to them'. Nevertheless that apparent aversion to conspicuous consumption was not, Mandeville insisted, the result of any general and principled stand against vice and luxury, for he argued that as the interests of the Dutch changed then so did their behaviour and patterns of consumption. Look closely and you will discover, he observed, that

in Holland the People are only sparing in such things as are daily wanted, and soon consumed; in what is lasting they are quite otherwise: In Pictures and Marble they are profuse; in their Buildings and Gardens they are extravagant to Folly. In other Countries you may meet with stately Courts and Palaces of great Extent that belong to Princes, which nobody can expect in a Commonwealth, where so much Equality is observ'd as there is in this; but in all Europe you shall find no private Buildings so sumptuously Magnificent, as a great many of the Merchants and other Gentlemen's Houses are in Amsterdam, and some other great Cities of that small Province; and the generality of those that build there, lay out a greater proportion of their Estates on the Houses they dwell in than any People upon the earth.⁹⁵

Moreover, those Englishmen who cited the authority of Sir William Temple's Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands to support their belief in the reality of Dutch frugality were, Mandeville continued, deceiving themselves and

⁹⁵ Ibid., I, 187; I, 186; I, 186; I, 188-89.

others for he inferred that those observations had in fact been made in the calamitous years 1671-'72 when the Dutch, faced with the combined forces of England and France, had been forced to be more than usually frugal. Since then, and with national crisis once again behind them, Mandeville could however report that 'a great Alteration has been made among the better sort of People in their Equipages, Entertainments, and whole manner of living'. And if further and final evidence of the general priority of Dutch interest over Calvinistic virtue was required then that was provided by the pragmatic but morally dubious policies which they employed to keep the ships of the Dutch East India Company afloat. Accordingly, Mandeville described how as soon as one fleet of seamen were paid off they were positively 'encourag'd to spend their Money with all Profuseness imaginable ... [and to] squander [it] away in Wine, Women and Musick'. The upshot, and hence the pragmatic genius, of that policy was not only was money made to circulate, 'the greatest Part of [which] is soon drawn back into the publick Treasure', but also a continuous supply of hardened and experienced hands was guaranteed for the East India fleet. For having spent all their time and money ashore in one short and reckless debauch, those 'Lords of six Weeks'⁹⁶ had, at the end of their revels, no option but to sign on for yet another prolonged and arduous tour abroad.

Thus, contrary to the ill-informed opinion of his adopted countrymen, Mandeville insisted that the vitality of the Dutch economy did not depend upon capital accumulation achieved through

96 Ibid., I, 189; I, 190; I, 191; I, 191.

principled habits of frugality and thrift. Instead, he attributed 'their present Grandeur' to more pragmatic and worldly factors, such as

their Political Wisdom in postponing every thing to Merchandize and Navigation, the unlimited Liberty of Conscience that is enjoy'd among them, and the unwearied Application with which they have always made use of the most effectual means to encourage and increase Trade in general.

By exploiting their geographical position and making the best of a challenging environment, the Dutch had made a virtue out of necessity and become carriers to Europe and the world. But whilst their attention to, and genius for, trade was worthy of imitation, there were, apart from the principle of religious toleration, few other reasons why the Dutch, Mandeville argued, should 'be a Pattern to others'. Indeed, to apply a similar regimen to the English body politic would be to ignore the specific needs and complexion of its economic constitution for he claimed that 'the Interests and Political Reason of the two Nations as to the private Oeconomy of either, are very different'.⁹⁷ More particularly, he insisted that it would be economic folly to adopt Dutch habits of frugality and thrift, for whilst their circumstances demanded them, English circumstances did not. There was thus no universal and invariable causal link between the practice of frugality and the attainment of national economic health and accordingly the example of the Dutch did not constitute a fatal case against the English system of luxury consumption.

In his point by point refutation of the arguments against luxury, as well as in his discussion of the administration of

⁹⁷ Ibid., I, 185; I, 187; I, 187.

justice, Mandeville had outlined not only the knowledge but also the distinctive attitudes and skills which defined his understanding of the art and practice of 'Sound Politicks'.⁹⁸ As I have sought to demonstrate, that knowledge was both essentially and reductively knowledge of the passions. More specifically, it was a knowledge of how their natural and unimpeded operations in individual bodies combined at the aggregate level to promote and at times harm the well-being of the larger social body; for, although many of the healthy operations of the latter were spontaneous and self-regulating they were not, according to Mandeville, entirely so. It therefore followed that in ministering to the needs of the body politic the state physician had to work both with and against the passions: he had to identify those which could be allowed to flourish and those which could not; in short, he had to know when, where, and how best to intervene in their natural and spontaneous operations.

Moreover, in deploying that knowledge he also had to draw upon techniques of social analysis which further defined the practice of his art and at the same time distinguished his knowledge and skill from that of the layman. In particular, he had to 'extend [his] Thoughts beyond the narrow compass of what [was] immediately before [him]' and adopt a detached and integrated view of the operations of the social body, for it was only on that basis that he could discern the underlying harmony and utility of its apparently discordant and harmful elements. In that spirit he had, for example, to 'look upon Avarice and Prodigality in the Society' in

98 Ibid., I, 322.

the same way as the natural physician viewed

two contrary Poisons in Physick, of which it is certain that the noxious Qualities being by mutual Mischief corrected in both, they may assist each other, and often make a good Medicine between them.⁹⁹

Similarly, and given the narrow definition of national health dictated by the principles of mercantilist economics, he had to appreciate that the interests of the social body were not always identical with those of the individuals it contained. It was his task, however, to promote the former and not the latter. Moreover, given that responsibility he then had to adopt a calm and pragmatic attitude to a range of phenomena which to the vulgar eye appeared to be moral and physical evils distempering the health of the body politic. He had, for example, to see that within the economy at large every unit of consumption was equally valuable: the outfitting of a highwayman's moll, no less than the dressing of a lady of quality, kept the wheels of industry turning. Similarly even the social evils of crime, the physical and personal ills occasioned by the consumption of gin and tobacco, and the misfortunes attendant upon natural and national disasters could all be seen to have their consolations; for they too had multiplier effects which augmented trade and promoted a healthy and robust economic circulation. Unlike other men who were dismayed and horrified by such phenomena, the state physician had therefore to regard them as vital and not pathological signs: he had to appreciate that within a complex and interdependent economic system what was a misfortune for some was invariably a godsend for others. In that sense his understanding of the mechanical and self-balancing

⁹⁹ Ibid., I, 250; I, 106.

operations of the social body was no different from the physician's understanding of the natural body, for he had to 'look on the alternate Changes in the Civil Society' in the same way as the latter viewed 'the risings and fallings of the Lungs; the latter of which are as much a Part of Respiration in the more perfect Animals as the first'.¹⁰⁰

In managing the regimen of the body politic the state physician also had to display resolute personal, as well as distinctive intellectual, skills, for he had to do whatever was necessary to promote its overall health. In fact like his natural counterpart he frequently had to sacrifice the part to the whole. It was, for example, in the public interest that the poor should be kept in a state of unremitting toil and ignorance; that 'one part of Womankind' should be sacrificed 'to preserve the other'; and that the occasional innocent man should suffer lest the guilty go free. Accordingly, he could not afford to be deflected in the performance of his duties by his natural sense of pity. Nor could he be swayed by the immediate and short-term demands of his own passions; he had instead to take the long view and treat that particular 'Disorder of the Society' and its 'Symptoms' by taking appropriate and exemplary action. Finally, and most importantly of all, he had to be conversant with the specific needs and circumstances of his patient. Amongst nations 'the Condition of the Social Body' was no less varied than 'the Temperament of the Natural'.¹⁰¹ England was not Holland, she was certainly not Sparta and she had to be treated accordingly.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., I, 250.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., I, 100; I, 320; I, 250.

Mandeville's discussion of the art and practice of 'Sound Politicks' was not, nor was it intended to be, a systematic one. Instead, it had evolved piecemeal at various stages in the composition of Part I of The Fable of the Bees as he had responded, and returned, to aspects of the Augustan debate on luxury and other issues of pressing social concern. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the nature and details of his ad hoc responses in that text were informed by a coherent view of political management, the elements of which were already in place before he put pen to paper. In fact it can be further argued that all the essentials of that position were originally anticipated and distilled in The Fable of the Bees' subtitle 'Private Vices, Publick Benefits'. For that paradox may be read not merely, and as Mandeville was later to remark in A Letter to Dion, as a carefully baited hook for prospective purchasers of his book, but also as an important maxim of state physick, expressed in aphoristic and Hippocratic style and as such designed to serve as a standing rule in practice for the state physician in his task of managing the regimen of the Augustan body politic. But, as Mandeville had further remarked in his reply to Berkeley, 'the Words Private Vices, Publick Benefits, make not a complete Sentence according to Grammar ... there is at least a Verb, if not a great deal more wanting to make the Sense Perfect'.¹⁰² Accordingly, he had explicitly made good that deficiency in one of his last additions to Part I of The Fable of the Bees when he expanded that maxim to read 'Private Vices by the dextrous Management of a skilful Politician may be turned into

102 Letter to Dion, p.36.

Publick Benefits'.¹⁰³ Once again, however, that qualification as well as the 'great deal more wanting to make the Sense Perfect' had been implied as early as the 1714 edition of the text; for there Mandeville had on more than one occasion listed his subordinate maxims of state physick and in doing so he had not only drawn attention to the role of the politician or state physician in securing national health, he had also specified how the passions were to be 'touched' or managed in the pursuit of that objective.¹⁰⁴

When Mandeville claimed that 'Sound Politicks are to the Social Body what the Art of Medicine is to the Natural',¹⁰⁵ he was not therefore simply dipping into a well-worn and vacuous figure of speech for, as I have sought to demonstrate, there was in his mind an important and literal equivalence between the two arts. Moreover, it can be argued that that equivalence dictated not only the specific detail of his analysis and elaboration of the art of political management or state physick, but also the strategy which had articulated his various performances to that effect. For in contributing to the contemporary debate on the health of the Augustan body politic, Mandeville had in fact adopted and followed closely the diagnostic and therapeutic rules of practice which he had advocated in his medical writings. In the Treatise he had, for example, drawn attention to the fact that 'I allow myself time to hear and weigh the Complaints of my Patients'.¹⁰⁶ Similarly in The Fable of the Bees he had examined and canvassed at some length

103 Fable of the Bees, I, 369.

104 Ibid., I, 116-17; I, 183-84; I, 197.

105 Ibid., I, 322.

106 Treatise, p.343.

the specific complaints which his contemporaries had made about the prevalence of vice and the incidence of luxury. Moreover, in the same way as he had claimed in the Treatise to

take pains to be well acquainted with the manner of living of my Patients, and [to be] more curious in examining them than there is occasion for a Man to be in any other Distemper; not only to penetrate into the Procatartick Causes, but likewise the better to consult the Circumstances as well as Idiosincrasy of every particular Person¹⁰⁷

he had in The Fable of the Bees been equally diligent and searching in anatomizing the passionate behaviour of his contemporaries and exposing the gap between their profession and practice of virtue. Having completed that wide-ranging survey, and having established that the passions were not only the natural determinants of human behaviour but also the mainsprings of worldly power and prosperity, he could however conclude that his contemporaries' principled and vehement denunciation of vice, and hence their rejection of the very means of attaining the national health which they valued so highly, was no different from the behaviour of his hypochondriacal patients. Amongst the latter he noted 'Some have strange Aversions as to Diet; others peculiar Antipathies against some excellent Remedies; and every wholesome Exercise suits not with all People'.¹⁰⁸ If therefore the Augustan body politic was distempered then it was not afflicted by vice but instead by grumbling about vice. However in the guise of state physician the object of Mandeville's concern in Part I of The Fable of the Bees was not, as it was in his medical treatise, the health and delusional states of individual bodies but rather the health of the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.344.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.344.

social body. In seeking to promote the latter he could nevertheless follow the therapeutic method which in his medical treatise he had recommended for the former: namely, the need to be 'very careful in endeavouring to distinguish between the Efforts of Nature, whom I would assist, and those of the Distemper, which I am to destroy'.¹⁰⁹ Accordingly he had, throughout Part I of The Fable of the Bees, repeatedly stressed both the naturalness and social utility of the vices or passions of mankind. In that respect his understanding of the vitality of the English constitution was no different from Montesquieu's, who had similarly observed

All the passions are free there - hatred, envy, jealousy, the ardor to enrich and distinguish oneself, appear in all their fullness; and if it were otherwise the state would be like a man laid low by sickness, who lacks passions because he has no strength.¹¹⁰

Within the Augustan body politic the passions were therefore synonymous with the 'Efforts of Nature' and in managing its health they had accordingly to be 'assisted' and not 'destroyed'. Indeed as a natural physician, and like his mentor Sydenham, Mandeville knew well that 'It [was] vain to oppose the motives or tendency of nature'.¹¹¹ Moreover, and again like Sydenham, he also knew that the 'Medicine of nature [was] more refined than the medicine of philosophy'.¹¹² The majority of his contemporaries persisted, however, in their philosophical but deluded beliefs about the

109 Ibid., p.344.

110 The Spirit of the Laws, XIX, 27. Cited in Nannerl O. Keohane, Philosophy and the State in France (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1980), p.415.

111 The Entire Works of Dr. Thomas Sydenham, ed. J. Swan (London, 1753), p.212.

112 The Works of Thomas Sydenham, ed. R.G. Latham, 2 vols. (London, 1848), II, 22.

dignity of human nature and the primacy of reason within it. Accordingly, when they had dipped into the inviting and significant pool of meaning provided by the metaphor of the body politic to voice their concern about the health of Augustan society they had emerged with a prescription for its attainment which was as faulty as the view of human nature upon which it was based. In rejecting that prescription Mandeville did not, however, reject the metaphor within which it was frequently conveyed for he too had found the analogy between the operations of the body natural and the body politic an instructive one. Nevertheless most of what he wrote about the practice of 'Sound Politicks' in Part I of The Fable of the Bees served to remind his readers that the valid use of that trope depended upon getting the first half of the analogy right, for there he had argued that it was the passions and not reason which controlled the normal and healthy operations of both the body natural and the body politic.

5.3 Provoking the Passions: Mandeville and the Rhetoric of Virtue

Thus far my aim in undertaking the reading of The Fable of the Bees elaborated above has been to establish that the majority of Mandeville's performances in Part I of that text addressed, and were organised around two distinct but related polemical concerns: namely, his desire to impress upon his contemporaries that, contrary to their professed beliefs, the passions were the sole determinants of their behaviour and the mainsprings of their national power and prosperity. In doing so I have further sought

to demonstrate how his medical thought informed his arguments to that effect. More specifically I have claimed that they were shaped not only by the physiological and mechanistic model of normal human functioning, explicitly adumbrated in the previous chapter and assumed throughout this, but also and equally distinctively by principles and attitudes which were directly inspired by his beliefs about the medical art and practice of diagnosis and curing. My aim throughout has therefore been to demonstrate that in Part I of The Fable of the Bees Mandeville adopted the role of state physician and that in ministering therein to the needs of the Augustan body politic he consistently drew upon his experience in ministering to the body natural.

If that reading is valid then the question of Mandeville's meaning in Part I of The Fable of the Bees and the related question of his beliefs about both the possibility and desirability of virtue would seem to be clear. For on my reading, and given its explanatory focus on Mandeville's reductive and mechanistic understanding of the body natural, the attainment of virtue in either its austere and rigorous or its polite and civic form becomes an impossibility. Moreover, even if its attainment had been physiologically possible then given Mandeville's similarly reductive understanding of the robust and healthy operations of the body politic, it would not have been desirable. From the perspective of the natural, as well as the state, physician it can therefore be argued that Mandeville had a clinical objection to virtue. Hence when, for example, he claimed in The Fable of the Bees never to have 'imagin'd, that Man could not be virtuous as well in a rich and mighty Kingdom, as in the most pitiful

Commonwealth' or when he asserted 'If I have shewn the way to worldly Greatness, I have always without Hesitation preferr'd the Road that leads to Virtue' he is on my reading simply not to be believed. The plausibility of that reading is certainly confirmed by Mandeville's contemporary critics who, although they agreed on little else, were unanimous in regarding those statements and his related claim that The Fable of the Bees was 'a Book of severe and exalted Morality'¹¹³ as plainly disingenuous. Moreover, it would further seem to be confirmed by the fact that in seeking to refute Mandeville many of them took pains to impugn not only the mechanistic model of human functioning which they perceived to be the basis of his system but also the scientific status, and hence the authority, of his anatomy of the passions and his analysis of man's material and animal nature.

George Blewitt, for example, whose arguments with Mandeville focused mainly on his economic thought, nevertheless managed to achieve both of those objectives at once by focusing on Mandeville's 'Talent at Definitions' and comparing it to the practice of 'a learned Writer not altogether unlike him'. Accordingly Blewitt had great fun exposing, in a dialogue with that 'learned Writer', his tautologous and inconsistent definitions of 'wit' and 'thinking' which he implied were grounded in a nonsensical theory of the animal spirits. Having done so he then concluded the dialogue by observing

your Definitions look more like an Account of some Machine, than of the Faculties of a human Soul. Machine, Sir, why what d'ye take Men to be? Meer Machines, take

¹¹³ Fable of the Bees, I, 229; I, 231; I, 404-05.

my Word for it; and those not of the cleverest sort either. There are several Brutes of a much nobler Make, as a judicious Friend of mine has proved in a Dialogue between a Merchant and a Lyon, particularly by one Argument, that he may challenge all haughty Moralists, and other Advocates for the Dignity of their sublime Species to answer.

The two definitions of wit and thinking which had been previously reviewed could of course, and as Blewitt triumphantly revealed, 'be seen in p.164, and 129, and 130 of a Treatise of the Hypochondriack Passions by B. de Mandeville, M.D.'.114

The more rigorous and devout William Law was not content, however, merely to ridicule the physiological and mechanistic basis of Mandeville's theory. The soul had to be brought back in and defended not only against those 'weak Heads' that 'imagine, that we are nothing else but Body' but also and more specifically against Mandeville's 'chief Design' which according to Law was 'to shew, that all our Tempers and Passions are mere Mechanism and Constitution, founded only in the Temper and Tone of our bodily Spirits'. Thus in rebutting what he perceived to be Mandeville's thoroughly materialist and mortalist doctrines, Law insisted that man was not schooled to virtue by the reductive facts of his bodily organization. Virtue and religion were not 'the causal blind Effect of Custom, Education, Temper and Complexion'. Instead they were the result of the divine and rational soul which God had expressly given to man for that purpose. Moreover, in making that gift the divinity had, according to Law, taken care to ensure that his endowment was entirely consistent with what was the state of the

114 An Enquiry whether a General Practice of Virtue Tends to the Wealth or Poverty, Benefit or Disadvantage of a People? (London, 1725), pp.54; 55-6; 56.

art in eighteenth century physiological theory. Thus he claimed

It has pleas'd God in the Formation of Man, so to unite this rational Nature to a Body of Flesh and Blood, that they shall generally act together; and that the Soul shall as well be influenc'd by bodily Instincts, and Motions of the Blood and Spirits, as by its own Thoughts and Reflections.

Thus, a delightful Thought conceiv'd ever so secretly in the Mind, shall at its first Conception, have the Blood and Spirits join in the Pleasure.

So that every right Judgment of the Mind, every proper Aversion or regular Love, has as much the Concurrence of the Blood and Spirits, as if they were the only Agents.¹¹⁵

Religious doctrine supported physiological theory and as far as Law was concerned Mandeville was just plain wrong in arguing that the latter undermined the former. Accordingly he concluded

The Soul being thus united to the Body, no Act of the Man is less reasonable, or virtuous because it has the Concurrence of the Blood and Spirits. For this was the Intendment of the Union, that a Creature of such a Form, should exert its Instincts and Passions in conformity to Reason.

For all his serious and detailed attention to the physiological aspects of Mandeville's theory of human behaviour Law, like most of his fellow critics of The Fable of the Bees, could not resist descending to name calling in rebutting it. His parting shot was however more restrained than most

You [Mandeville] tell them [your readers] that you are a mere Animal govern'd by Appetites over which you have no Power; that is, you describe your self as a Machine that would look well in a Bridle, and then pretend to talk of God, and Providence, and Religion, and Morality, and to pierce into the inmost nature of Things and Actions, with as much Ease, as if you was some superior Form, that was made up of pure Wisdom and Intelligence.¹¹⁶

Finally, Francis Hutcheson whose sublime and Shaftesburian system of ethics displayed none of Law's rigorist concerns took a

¹¹⁵ Remarks upon a Late Book, entituled the Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices Publick Benefits (London, 1724), pp.34; 45; 40; 34.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp.35; 71.

similar though more ironic tack in questioning Mandeville's claims to scientific authority. Quoting liberally from The Fable of the Bees he asked in rhetorical fashion 'Who will not stand in awe of that author' who, he continued, 'has observed so much above the short-sighted vulgar', who

has seen the "chief organs and nicest springs of our machine" which are yet but "trifling films, and little pipes, not such gross strong things as nerves, bone or skin!" Nay, he has no doubt seen "the very strength, elasticity, and due contexture of spirits which constitute the fear of shame, and anger, or courage", and also all the other qualities of spirits which constitute the other passions.

It was a rare theory, he implied, whose foundations lay in the existence of the invisible and hence the unknowable. Nor, and not surprisingly according to Hutcheson, were the deliverances of that theory any less ridiculous. Thus with a similar devotion to textual citation, he examined Mandeville's 'love [of] making a very dispensatory of [the] passions',¹¹⁷ thereby exposing the many errors of tautologous and contradictory definition into which Mandeville's passion for the passions had led him. Like Blewitt, however, Hutcheson also invoked Mandeville's specialisation in the treatment of hypochondriacal disorders to add a touch of ad hominem spice to his home satire. In discussing both the personal and social evils of luxury and over indulgence Hutcheson argued that the prescription private vices, public benefits was no less confused and irrational than its real equivalent 'private quackery, public virtue'. And to illustrate his point 'in the manner of that notable author' he recounted the following hypochondriacal case history

¹¹⁷ Reflections on Laughter and Remarks on the Fable of the Bees (Glasgow, 1750), pp. 70; 69; 78.

Suppose his Decio, or Alcander or Jack, surfeited with beef, falls into some light distemper, and in hopes of attendance at low rates, sends for a neighbouring quack the quack imagines no danger, but makes the patient believe it; he talks much in the usual cant of bilious temperaments and sanguine complexions, of the sinking of spirits, and the heart's feeling cold and condensed, and heavy as lead, of mists and confusions about his eyes; he promises, after some previous preparations, which the quack finds necessary to prolong the disorder, by some powerful medicines, to swell his spirits, restore them to their strength, elasticity, and due contexture, that they may fan the arterial blood again, and make him so light that he may tread upon air.

The upshot of which was that the patient grew worse and sought instead 'an honest parson who instructs him in true principles of virtue'. With his constitution repaired by the physick of the soul he 'overcomes both the drugs and the disease ... recovers ... [and] becomes a man of integrity and religion'.¹¹⁸ Of course the anonymous author of the abusive Letter to Lord C had made much the same point when he complained 'The best Physician in the World did never labour more to purge the Natural Body of bad Qualities, than this Bumble-Bee has done to purge the Body Politick of good ones',¹¹⁹ but Hutcheson had done so more specifically and tellingly, and his message was clear: so much for Dr Mandeville and his theory and practice of state physick.

I have thus sought to substantiate my claim that Mandeville had a clinical objection to Augustan theories of virtue by invoking the authority of his critics and by focusing not only on their objections to his mechanistic and physiological model of normal human functioning but also on their complaints that The Fable of the Bees was pseudo-science and political quackery posing as authoritative utterance and authentic practice. Accordingly I have

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp.61; 60; 60; 61; 61.

¹¹⁹ Fable of the Bees, I, 397.

argued that statements in the text which challenge that view are simply not to be believed, that when he made them Mandeville had his tongue firmly in cheek. There are, however, two problems entailed by that reading and my attempt to support it solely through an explanatory focus on Mandeville's naturalistic and reductive beliefs about man and society. In the first place, it is just possible that Mandeville could have believed that all human behaviour was best explained by a mechanistic and deterministic model of the passions; that the practice of virtue required extraordinary and near super-human feats of self-denial; and that national power and prosperity depended upon the full play of the passions or vices of mankind. Yet at the same time he could still have held the view that the latter was not worth having at the price and that virtue was therefore both desirable and possible under some other set of social circumstances. On that view The Fable of the Bees must be read as a satirical indictment of a corrupt and unregenerate society and consequently Mandeville's philosophical disquisition into the force of the passions and the nature of man and society becomes a subversive genealogy in the manner of Rousseau, although one that is unrelieved even by the latter's not overly optimistic assessment of the prospects for individual and social redemption. Accordingly The Fable of the Bees joins Swift's Modest Proposal and Burke's A Vindication of Natural Society as but one more example of eighteenth century irony misread and both Mandeville's critics and myself become the victims of his rhetoric. There is the glimmer of an interpretive gap in the text which cannot simply be closed by insisting that Mandeville was arguing with his tongue in cheek. To support that claim and

close that gap it is therefore necessary to determine exactly what his tongue was doing there and more particularly to identify at whom it was pointing.

In turn that observation raises the second problem entailed by my reading of The Fable of the Bees for although I have made the occasional genuflection in the direction of Mandeville's rhetoric, as in, for example, my analysis of his taxonomy of dissimulation and deceit, my arguments have thus far systematically ignored the presence and force of the various rhetorical devices which distinguish his literary performances in that text. Whatever else it was, The Fable of the Bees was neither simply an academic discourse on the art of state physick nor merely a dispassionate analysis of the mechanical bases of human behaviour. Indeed, although I have argued that the physician's gaze determined the substance of Mandeville's systematic arguments in that text, the calm and measured voice which that interpretation suggests is distinctly absent in its surface rhetoric and hence in its polemical arguments. Any reading of that text which claims to be a plausible one must, however, address and be able to explain the presence of that rhetoric and hence the point of those arguments.

In the light of those two problems my attempt to read The Fable of the Bees and to recover Mandeville's meaning through a focus on the world of his medical beliefs and experience would seem to have reached an interpretive dead-end. Simply reading and re-reading The Fable of the Bees from that perspective as it stands cannot close the interpretive gap in the text nor for that matter can it account for the distinctive character of the rhetorical devices which Mandeville employed in writing it. To recover his meaning, to

establish the point as well as the sense of what he was saying, it is therefore necessary to move from text to context: it is necessary to establish Mandeville's attitude to, and hence the nature of his intervention in, the Augustan debate on public and private morality, the context discussed in chapter three above and the context towards which The Fable of the Bees and its rhetoric undoubtedly point. In attempting to do so I shall briefly explore some features of his Dutch background, for although Mandeville was a physician it is also important to remember that he was a Dutch physician.

By the time he came to write The Fable of the Bees Mandeville had lived in England long enough to have become expert in its language and thoroughly conversant with the peculiarities of its political and social constitution. It was not, however, his culture and he could therefore view it with the detachment and insight which his Dutch origins gave him. Holland may not have provided an appropriate pattern for the management of the Augustan economy, but it does provide an appropriate context for the investigation of Mandeville's understanding of, and hence his response to, the behaviour of his adopted countrymen. In invoking that context it is customary to cite the supposed stranglehold which Calvinism exerted over Dutch life in the seventeenth century and to hypothesize Mandeville's adoption, either sincere or feigned, of its severe and rigorist values to explain his use and reductio ad absurdum of a similarly rigorist ethical standard in The Fable of the Bees. Whilst I neither dispute the relevance of that focus nor the validity of its conclusions, recent scholarship has suggested that the reality of Dutch culture in the seventeenth

century and hence the place of Calvinist values within it was more complex than has hitherto been assumed. In what follows I therefore propose to summarise the findings of that research and develop a more specific hypothesis concerning the nature of Mandeville's intentions in Part I of The Fable of the Bees.

In a number of articles, and more recently in a book-length survey, Simon Schama has argued that the way to grasp the distinctiveness of the Dutch mentalité in the seventeenth century is to appreciate the problems which a rising tide of materialism created for its self-imposed and sincerely Calvinist critique.¹²⁰ In responding to their 'ordeal of temptation' the Dutch, he claims, managed to establish a modus vivendi which balanced appetite and restraint and which accordingly enabled them to cohabit both worlds, the sacred and the profane, without apparent hypocrisy or undue anxiety. The details of Schama's arguments as well as the massive and impressive evidence upon which they are based cannot be adequately summarised here. I do, however, wish to present their conclusions and suggest that they provide a particularly illuminating insight into what Mandeville was doing in writing the first part of The Fable of the Bees. In short, Schama has claimed that the Dutch conscience collective in the seventeenth century was characterised by 'the simultaneous operation of two apparently divergent value systems' one explicitly catering for the Seven

120 Simon Schama, 'The Unruly Realm: Appetite and Restraint in Seventeenth Century Holland', Daedalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 108 (1979), 103-23; 'Wives and Wantons: Versions of Womanhood in Seventeenth Century Dutch Art', Oxford Art Journal, 3 (1980), 5-13; The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age (London, Collins, 1987).

Deadly Sins, the other for the demands of the Decalogue. But, and this is the crux of his argument, 'far from [those] opposing norms guaranteeing a permanent condition of cultural schizophrenia, or else perpetuating forms of civil war, they functioned together within a single, spacious, over-arching community'. Hence he concludes that 'for the majority of Dutch men and women, these conflicting beliefs existed in a kind of complementary symbiosis; assisting them to be effective in the world of material power (on which their very survival depended) without at the same time believing themselves to have forfeited salvation by so doing'. Consequently 'neither zealots nor Erastians had an absolute say in determining the pattern of Dutch life'.¹²¹ Holland was not Geneva.

The English, however, were neither so secure nor so contented in their pleasures. Unlike the Dutch, and as the Augustan debate on public and private morality bears witness, they had not learnt, in their own minds at least, to come to terms with the facts of changed and changing circumstances. If, as J.G.A. Pocock has argued, the new economic and political circumstances ushered in by the Financial Revolution of the 1690s had made virtue impossible, they had not made it any the less desirable.¹²² In fact the opposite was the case, for as the age's nervous gap between its ideal and actual self-perception widened, the crying-up of virtue and public spirit was merely redoubled to join forces with long-established and more militant polemics against the evils of

¹²¹ Schama 'The Unruly Realm', Daedalus, 1979, pp.113; 113; 114; 115.

¹²² See J.G.A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1975), pp.423-505.

self-interest and the wages of sin. Whilst the Dutch could contentedly have their cake and eat it, the English could not. Instead they were afflicted with a moral panic which reflected and in turn fuelled their nervous and divided sensibilities.

Part I of The Fable of the Bees was Mandeville's response and contribution to that moral panic. It was in part the response of a physician but it was also the response of a Dutch physician who had shown himself to be thoroughly familiar with the felicitous ambiguities of his own culture. Indeed his references to the Dutch body politic in Part I of The Fable of the Bees - his analysis of the principles which informed its 'unofficial' toleration of brothels and the upkeep of the merchant marine, as well as his comments on the luxury which quietly lurked behind its facade of frugality and its commitment to the principles of toleration - demonstrated his understanding of its ability and readiness to make versatile and pragmatic accommodations between the competing demands of worldly and pious values. His adopted country had however singularly failed to work out the compromise achieved by the Dutch. Instead, and as the clamour aroused by the debate on public and private morality indicates, it clung to the belief that a choice was to be made, and that the choice had to be in favour of virtue. Mandeville, viewing that anxiety through Dutch eyes, knew otherwise. Moreover, his observations of the behaviour of his adopted countrymen as well as his theory of the passions and his doctrine of real pleasure also told him that they had in reality embraced the goods of the world, and having done so they were not about to give them up. It is my thesis therefore that Mandeville's satire in Part I of The Fable of the Bees, which was interwoven

with and supported by a philosophical account of the passionate bases of individual and social functioning, was expressly designed to exploit and exacerbate that dilemma. On that reading he was neither recommending virtue nor advocating vice, nor in any genuine sense was he seeking to admonish or entice. Instead his aim was simply to impale his readers on the horns of their self-imposed moral dilemma.

Such a reading of Mandeville's intentions must ultimately remain a speculative one. Nevertheless it does have the virtue of closing the interpretive gap identified above and of explaining the distinctive nature of his rhetorical and literary performances in Part I of The Fable of the Bees. Indeed its ability to do so may be adduced as evidence in support of it. For example, on my reading the point of Mandeville's frequent recourse to paradoxical assertion and illustration throughout that text becomes clear. The pervasive presence of that device is, for example, evidence not of a perverse habit of mind, a temperamental and stylistic tic on Mandeville's part, but instead of his self-conscious and deliberate attempts to discomfort his audience by creating a series of unresolved, and unresolvable, tensions in their minds. As such, that strategy can first be identified in the stark opposition between the prosperous but vicious, and the virtuous but impoverished, hive of the doggerel poem which formed The Fable of the Bees' nucleus; it was repeated, dramatically captured and further emphasized in the text's infamous subtitle; and it was continued and sustained in the prose remarks which were ostensibly designed to illustrate and expand the moral of The Grumbling Hive. In that dissonant spirit Mandeville could, for example, not only

assert the paradox 'Private Vices, Publick Benefits' he could also plague his readers with a number of similarly disturbing thoughts: 'Avarice ... is the slave to Prodigality'; 'Chastity may be supported by Incontinence, and the best of Virtues want the Assistance of the worst of Vices'; 'Virtue is made Friends with Vice' and so on. That in fact it was his intention to disturb and exacerbate the anxiety of his readers is further suggested by the example of his discussion of the supposed compatibility between the demands of religion and honour, for there and having led his readers down a carefully laid trail of paradoxes demonstrating their real incompatibility, he concluded 'How to reconcile them must be left to wiser heads than mine'.¹²³

Mandeville could however further discomfort his readers by employing the closely related device of arguing from unintended consequences, a device designed to expose the incoherence of their various projects for moral reform. Hounding prostitutes off the streets would only put virtuous women at risk and make matters worse; charity schools would become academies of crime and exacerbate one of the problems they were intended to solve; and molly-coddling the poor would only aggravate the social and political problems which their numbers posed.

Nevertheless, Mandeville's most effective tactic for demonstrating the incoherence of Augustan attempts to reconcile the demands of virtue and worldly success was to adopt, and rigidly adhere to, a rigorist and deontological standard of ethics which stressed the moral priority of motivation over consequences. On that basis, and

¹²³ Fable of the Bees, I, 101; I, 100; I, 85; I, 221-22.

as my analysis of his taxonomy of dissimulation and deceit has sought to demonstrate, he could employ the self-professed ethical standards of his contemporaries to show that behind their declarations of public spirit and morality lay the cant and hypocrisy induced by self-love. At the same time, however, he could also demonstrate that if such virtuous behaviour were possible it would, when judged by a utilitarian criterion of the public interest, result in national disaster. And he did so with great gusto and in a deliberately provocative fashion. Having impaled his readers on the horns of their own dilemma he made sure that they squirmed and wriggled on them. Thus his use of low imagery, bawdy examples and burlesque, was designed to deflate pretensions about the dignity of human nature; indeed his thesis that 'the Moral Virtues are the Political Offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride' was not a very flattering one. Moreover, he could add an air of scientific certainty and hence triumph to his arguments by parading, and taunting his readers with, his skill 'in anatomizing the invisible Part of Man' and 'trac[ing] Self-love in its darkest Recesses'.¹²⁴

Accordingly when Mandeville does stand up for virtue in Part I of The Fable of the Bees to advocate both its possibility and desirability, his statements to that effect can be seen neither as evidence of his genuine beliefs nor as attempts to dodge the wrath of orthodox opinion but instead as a set of landmines deliberately planted in the moral no-man's land of The Fable of the Bees which were designed to explode the uneasy compromises which existed in

¹²⁴ Ibid., I, 51; I, 145; I, 405.

the minds of his readers between the realms of virtue and worldly success. Hence on my reading the interpretive gap in The Fable of the Bees is a deliberate one and there was more design behind Mandeville's self-described 'Rhapsody void of Order or Method' than he was prepared to admit.¹²⁵

Once again the evidence of Mandeville's critics lends support to that reading for they were frequently offended as much by his style and tone as by what he said in The Fable of the Bees. John Dennis, for example, complained that The Fable of the Bees was indeed 'a very wretched Rhapsody, weak and false, and absurd in its reasoning; aukward, and crabbed, and low in its Wit; in its Humour contemptibly low, and in its Language often barbarous'.¹²⁶ Similarly Alexander Innes in the preface which he added to his pirated version of John Campbell's Enquiry into the Original of Moral Virtue was incensed that Mandeville 'could not forbear giving [Virtue] the worst of Language; and calling Her by all the most opprobrious Names you could think of; a Chimera, a Common Prostitute, made up of Pride, Flattery, Lust, Anger, Fear, and many other hateful Ingredients'.¹²⁷ Even Lord Hervey, who amongst all of Mandeville's critics came the nearest to having a good word for him, objected to 'the Tenor, Scope, and Drift'¹²⁸ of his performances in The Fable of the Bees. Francis Hutcheson however was in no doubt about the strategy which lay behind Mandeville's rhetoric. He recognised that

125 Ibid., I, 405.

126 Vice and Luxury Publick Mischiefs (London, 1724), p.xvii.

127 Enquiry into the Original of Moral Virtue (London, 1728), p.iii.

128 Some Remarks on the Minute Philosopher (London, 1732), p.47.

The main strength of the impregnable writer consists in intricate contradictions and inconsistencies; with some manifest absurdities boldly asserted, against which no man can produce an argument, any more than to prove that twice three are not ten.

Accordingly, he declared 'I do not intend any answer to that book; but rather hereafter to show it to be unanswerable, notwithstanding the zealous attempts of some of the clergy'.¹²⁹ Indeed on my reading the prospect of rigorist and hot-headed priests tying themselves in knots trying to resolve his paradoxes was precisely one of the effects which Mandeville intended.

Despite its specific origins as a continuation of the attack on the theories of Sir Richard Steele which Mandeville had first begun in The Female Tatler, Part I of The Fable of the Bees was in its completed form nothing if not an equal opportunity polemic. For as that text evolved Mandeville had focused on and ridiculed all the anxieties and pretensions of his age. Hence orthodox and austere theories of Christian virtue; civic humanist values whether in their Catonian or Ciceronian form; the polite and genteel theories of Addison, Steele, and Shaftesbury; the activities of those who lobbied for the reformation of manners or the establishment of charity schools; as well as those who railed against the evils of money and luxury were all subjected to his satiric gaze and the sharp edge of his tongue.

In fact from the perspective of the state physician Mandeville could, as has been suggested above, view the activities and beliefs of all those participants in the Augustan debate on public and private morality as being no different from the irrational

¹²⁹ Reflections on Laughter and Remarks on the Fable of the Bees, pp.73; 41.

behaviour and splenetic symptoms of his hypochondriacal patients. Like Misomedon, the bees of The Grumbling Hive had, according to Mandeville, turned waspish: they too were peevish, fickle, censorious and always finding fault with others. Moreover their obsession with virtue similarly mirrored the nature of Misomedon's irrational symptoms. Their murmurings about the prevalence of vice and their desire for a return to a more virtuous age showed a 'want of Sense' and, as was eventually the case in the history of Misomedon's distemper, that delusion had gone completely to their heads. Indeed Mandeville insisted that their belief that virtue promoted worldly success was 'a vain EUTOPIA seated in the Brain',¹³⁰ it was the figment of a hypochondriacal imagination. In that sense Part I of The Fable of the Bees, no less than A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions was a work written against the spleen: it was Dr Mandeville's response to a neurotic and flatulent age in which discontented and nervous Englishmen railed against vice whilst enjoying otherwise healthy lives of ease and luxury. But whilst their vehement gripings and splenetic rumblings were a pain in the bowels of the body politic they presented no real danger to its health for the boisterous and productive passions clustering around self-love were too firmly entrenched in human nature to be quelled by their complaints or rooted out by their related and various schemes for moral reform. Accordingly there was no need for Mandeville in the role of state physician to pursue the therapeutic strategy which as a natural physician he had employed in his medical treatise. Part I of The

130 Fable of the Bees, I, 27; I, 36.

Fable of the Bees was not, nor was it intended to be, a therapy for his age's neurotic obsession with virtue; it was not a careful and reasoned attempt to calm and cure the anxieties of his contemporaries through the systematic pursuit of self-knowledge and personal enlightenment; nor was it a radical therapy designed to eradicate vice. Instead it was a deliberate attempt to exploit and exacerbate those anxieties and neuroses and hence satire and ridicule were the appropriate and chosen rhetorical strategies.

5.4 Soothing the Passions: Mandeville and the Rhetoric of Sociable Enthusiasm

Mandeville, however, had a very different objective and hence he employed a very different rhetorical strategy in the second volume of The Fable of the Bees. In contrast to Part I, Part II of The Fable of the Bees displayed less of the satiric bite of its predecessor, its tone was superficially at least more elevated and less provocative, and instead of employing a series of prose remarks and essays it presented its arguments in dialogue form. According to Mandeville, its purpose was 'to illustrate and explain several Things, that were obscure and only hinted at in the First'.¹³¹ Indeed whilst both the content and form of Part I of The Fable of the Bees may be seen as the product of Mandeville's piecemeal and protracted attempts to respond from a consistent intellectual position to the immediate concerns and issues which were spawned by his age's gloomy obsession with vice and virtue,

131 Ibid., II, 7.

Part II of The Fable of the Bees may in contrast be seen as his attempt to expand, refine and bring to the fore that position in a more systematic and less oblique fashion. His chosen method of doing so was to focus on the ethical and social system of Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury.

Mandeville's concern with Shaftesbury's ideas had originally been demonstrated in the essay A Search into the Nature of Society which he had added to the second, 1723 edition of The Fable of the Bees, as well as in the new prose Remark T and expanded prose Remarks C and G of that edition. As Mandeville had himself observed, 'two Systems cannot be more opposite than his Lordship's and mine'.¹³² Whereas, for example, Shaftesbury's Platonic and Stoic vision of an organic and vital universe had led him to stress and trust in the natural order and harmony of a benign and bountiful universe, Mandeville's mechanistic vision stressed both the insufficiency of nature and the presence of evil, both natural and moral, in the world. Whereas Shaftesbury had argued that man was naturally social and altruistic, Mandeville had argued the reverse. Whereas for Shaftesbury man's ideas of right and wrong were fixed and innate, for Mandeville they were relative and artificial. Whereas Shaftesbury had stressed the natural harmony between self and public interest and hence the lack of any need for an imposed and artificial political order, Mandeville had again argued the opposite. Finally, whereas Shaftesbury had elaborated a psychology of the moral sense which equated self-interest with the public interest and therefore saw no division between duty and

¹³² Ibid., I, 324.

inclination, Mandeville had insisted upon a definition of morality which required individual self-denial and the conquest of the passions for the attainment of virtue properly construed.

Shaftesbury's ideas therefore provided Mandeville with a perfect foil for the elaboration of his own theory of man and society.

However, the reason for that focus, as well as the specific rhetorical form which it took, in Part II of The Fable of the Bees emerges even more clearly upon a consideration of two further and related features of Shaftesbury's ethical system.¹³³

Central to Shaftesbury's theory of the moral sense was the concept of enthusiasm, the rapturous state of inspiration which was experienced in the mind when it glimpsed the true state of beauty and harmony lurking behind the shadowy reality and shifting appearances of the external world. The individual in a rush of delightful intuition, apprehended the great and the awesome in the cosmos and at one and the same time was lifted up, transformed and made by that vision: a vision in which the harmony latent in his own soul was bodied forth and connected to the harmony of the whole. As in Plato's metaphysic to see that order, to glimpse

133 The following account of Shaftesbury's ethical theory is drawn from and specifically indebted to: John Andrew Bernstein, 'Shaftesbury's Identification of the Good with the Beautiful', Eighteenth-Century Studies, 10 (1977), 304-25; Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of the Enlightenment (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1951); Stanley Grean, Shaftesbury's Philosophy of Religion and Ethics: A Study in Enthusiasm (Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 1967); Lawrence Klein, 'The Third Earl of Shaftesbury and the Progress of Politeness', Eighteenth-Century Studies, 18 (1985), 186-214; M.L. Myers, The Soul of Modern Economic Man (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1983); Martin Price, To the Palace of Wisdom (Carbondale and Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press, 1964); Pat Rogers, 'Shaftesbury and the Aesthetics of Rhapsody', British Journal of Aesthetics, 12 (1972), 244-57.

one's connections with the energy and vital spirit which diffused and united plastic nature, was to love it: one could not see it and then choose to reject it. Enthusiasm was thus both the love of nature's beauty and order and the grounds of one's moral commitment to it. It was the means by which the love of oneself, family, friends, country and cosmos were joined in a hierarchy of expanding and mutually sustaining correspondences. As such it was an ecstasy of reason but not against reason for the moral sense moved men to virtue through the aesthetic appreciation that the beautiful, the good, and the true were all one.

In seeking to communicate that inspirational vision, Shaftesbury necessarily used inspirational prose. Indeed his writings in the Characteristics¹³⁴ were as much rhetorical as philosophical for he believed that men had to be moved to virtue not by appealing to reason but instead by appealing to their innate and aesthetic sense of beauty, worth, and rightfulness. Thus, for example, in the third dialogue of The Moralists, A Philosophical Rhapsody, he penned a lyrical hymn to nature which sought to convey his personal and subjective convictions by means of impassioned, gushing, and staccato prose which in its disordered and rhapsodic form was indistinguishable from a philosophical speaking in tongues. His deeper purpose in doing so was, however, to reject the strict conventions of Augustan discursive prose and hence to undermine the mechanical world view to which it corresponded. But that concern was evident not only in those heightened passages of

134 Shaftesbury's major work of moral philosophy Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times was first published in 1711. It was widely read and influential throughout the eighteenth century.

The Moralists which apostrophized nature but throughout all his writings in the Characteristics, for in that text Shaftesbury employed a loose-knit and polite manner of writing which was specifically designed to demonstrate and emphasize the exemplary role of conversation in developing a moral sense and acquiring virtue.

For Shaftesbury men were naturally sociable and clubbable and hence conversation was not only the means of acquiring virtue, it was also an expression and embodiment of the social virtues. The medium was in fact the message. In stressing that means of moral instruction, Shaftesbury sought not only to externalize the internal colloquy which he had conducted with himself but also to wrest moral philosophy from the hands of pedants and divines and to appeal directly to the tastes and sensibilities of a cultivated, learned, and polite elite. For Shaftesbury moral philosophy therefore had to be polite, and politeness had to be philosophical. Thus in the Characteristics he wrote in an easy, agreeable and conversational style appropriate to a polite audience and frequently drew upon examples from their familiar world of amusements, dress and equipage to pursue and achieve his didactic purpose. Accordingly, he came to be identified as the official philosopher of an aristocratic elite for whom the acquisition of a moral sense was synonymous with the acquisition of an aesthetic sense. And in that respect he also came to be identified by his critics as the defender of the cosmetic and shallow gentlemanly virtues, for in their eyes his was a theory in which the attainment of virtue entailed no more moral striving nor more effort than was required in learning to appreciate the merits of a work of art.

Whereas religion would suffice for the vulgar, true virtue was for Shaftesbury the preserve of an elite who could love and appreciate it by nature and learning.

Given that brief summary of the intimate connection between the form and content of Shaftesbury's ethical theory, the reason for Mandeville's substantive focus on it in Part II of The Fable of the Bees, as well as the distinctive rhetorical strategy which he employed there can now be appreciated more clearly. In the first place it is important to note that Mandeville had earlier attacked the arguments of the Characteristics by attacking Shaftesbury's character. In his essay A Search into the Nature of Society, he had claimed that Shaftesbury had been fitted both by birth and education to play a part in national affairs, but whilst he had talked eloquently of the social virtues and public spirit Shaftesbury had, Mandeville sneered, singularly failed to practise what he preached. Instead of discharging his public duties he had in times of national crisis retired to his philosophical closet. Behind Mandeville's ad hominem attack there was, however, a physiological and psychological back-up which explained not only the nature of Shaftesbury's hypocritical character but also the nature of his refined speculations in the Characteristics. Shaftesbury's withdrawal from public life was, Mandeville argued, the result of his 'Indolent Temper and Unactive Spirit'. Constitutionally indisposed to action and temperamentally disinclined to indulge more sensual appetites and passions, Shaftesbury had accordingly sought other means of gratifying his self-love. Moved by less boisterous and robust passions he had turned his back on the world and looked in upon himself to justify

and flatter his indolence by developing the drone-like theory of the 'boasted middle way, and the calm Virtues recommended in the Characteristicks'.¹³⁵ But as the original title of The Moralists had indicated Shaftesbury was also a self-confessed 'Sociable Enthusiast',¹³⁶ and Mandeville invoked that term in its usual and derogatory sense of passionate fanaticism to suggest that Shaftesbury's ideas were the figment of a delicate, highly-strung and disordered imagination. Shaftesbury was, he observed, 'a very polite Writer; [who] has display'd a copious Imagination, and a fine Turn of thinking, in courtly Language and nervous Expression'. 'His Notions' he conceded 'are a high Compliment to Human-Kind, and capable by the help of a little Enthusiasm of Inspiring us with the most Noble Sentiments concerning the Dignity of our exalted Nature'. Nevertheless they were, he insisted, 'as romantick and chimerical' as they were 'beautiful and amiable'. Unsullied by contact with the external and empirical world, they were in fact as groundless as Galen's medical hypotheses; indeed in that respect Shaftesbury could be seen as the Galen of the moral sciences for he too had derived his self-serving ideas not from observation and experience but from his metaphysical imagination and in his closet. And it was not surprising Mandeville remarked how 'a Man that deals in Metaphysicks may easily throw himself into an Enthusiasm'.¹³⁷ In sum the moral and social theory of the Characteristicks, the product of Shaftesbury's enthusiastic and metaphysical conversation with himself, was for Mandeville not only

135 Fable of the Bees, I, 332; I, 333.

136 A first version of The Moralists, entitled The Sociable Enthusiast: A Philosophical Adventure was completed in 1705.

137 Fable of the Bees, II, 356; I, 324; II, 357; I, 332.

the height of individual self-love and personal vanity but also the apotheosis of human flattery and mankind's moral narcissism.

Accordingly the externalization of Shaftesbury's internal colloquy in the polite conversation and refined manners of the beau monde was, Mandeville argued, evidence neither of man's innate and virtuous sociability nor of 'his natural Propensity to Friendship and love of Company'. Instead it was evidence of a very different and less elevated set of traits, and his analysis of those traits in the essay A Search into the Nature of Society further clarifies both his focus on Shaftesbury and the rhetorical strategy which he later employed in Part II of The Fable of the Bees. As was the case in Shaftesbury's dialogue with himself, conversation amongst the elite was, he argued, a sustained exercise in mutual self-congratulation and the pursuit of pleasure. The aim of conversation was not debate and the forensic discovery of truth but complaisance or the art of pleasing and being pleased in company. Polite conversation therefore functioned as a means of satisfying the demands of aristocratic self-liking. Amongst its devotees 'The greatest Pleasure aimed at by every one' Mandeville observed 'is to have the Satisfaction of Pleasing others'. Nevertheless, whilst tripping over their tongues in their haste to give way to each other, for 'there can be no contest between any but who shall yield first to the others he differs from', all the participants were in reality, he contended, 'in hopes that what they value themselves upon will at one time or other become the Theme of the Discourse, and give an inward Satisfaction to them'.¹³⁸ Hence the preferred and

¹³⁸ Ibid., I, 343; I, 339-40; I, 339; I, 342.

prescribed topics of polite conversation were the trappings and trinkets, the badges of status which defined the lifestyle of the elite.

Moreover, in the interest of complaisance more serious and searching topics were to be studiously avoided for as Mandeville later remarked 'every thing ought to be banish'd from Conversation, that can have the least Tendency of making others uneasy'. Accordingly not only the content but also the style of polite conversation was similarly legislated for; hence there were strict conventions governing the tone and strength of voice, the use of offensive words and rhetoric, and the need above all to agree to disagree. As such polite conversation was an insipid, artificial and undemanding exercise for its aim was simply to give pleasure. Indeed in that sense it functioned as an effective anodyne against the languor induced by aristocratic ennui, for Mandeville noted it was a trivial and appropriate diversion for people of taste and idle minds who 'justly prefer it to being alone, when they knew not how to spend their time'.¹³⁹

However, polite conversation was 'instructive' as well as 'diverting to a Man of Sense' and it therefore performed the more important function of aristocratic socialization and self-polishing: it instructed its adherents in the rules and decorums of honour and good manners. Nevertheless, according to Mandeville, its most crucial function was to serve as a means of legitimising the indulgence of self-love and in that respect it further served as a therapy for soothing the nervous gap which existed between the outward appearance and profession of virtue and the internal and

¹³⁹ Ibid., II, 11; II, 340.

felt presence of vice and more sensual appetites amongst the beau monde. Thus in consolidating the analysis of polite conversation which he had earlier sketched in A Search into the Nature of Society Mandeville claimed in the Preface to Part II of The Fable of the Bees that

In the very Politeness of Conversation, the Complacency, with which fashionable People are continually soothing each other's Frailties, and in almost every part of a Gentleman's Behaviour, he thought, there was a Disagreement between the outward Appearances, and what is felt within, that was clashing with Uprightness and Sincerity.¹⁴⁰

Polite conversation was therefore a means of soothing and putting an acceptable face on the indulgence of the passions. But as such that self-imposed therapy also prevented the attainment of self-knowledge: a knowledge of how the passions were the mainsprings of human behaviour and hence the real and reductive bases of human sociability.

Mandeville's specific focus on Shaftesbury's ethical and social system in Part II of The Fable of the Bees was not therefore simply a function of the fact that Shaftesbury's ideas were the antithesis of his own; it was also and more significantly a function of the fact that those ideas epitomised mankind's long and flattering conversation with itself. Indeed that historical process of self-deception had reached its most recent and highest pitch in the enthusiastic deliverances of Shaftesbury's internal colloquy and in that dialogue's subsequent externalization in the polite conversation and refined manners of the aristocratic code of honour. It was therefore entirely appropriate that in seeking to

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., I, 339; II, 17.

elaborate his own theory of the passionate bases of human behaviour and sociability Mandeville should do so in contradistinction to the Shaftesburian system. It was however even more appropriate that in refuting Shaftesbury he should adopt the therapeutic strategy which he had earlier employed to cure Misomedon's delusions in A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions. For as a physician who had read Baglivi, Mandeville knew that 'In distempers, where the imagination is chiefly affected, men, without any other remedies, may often reason themselves into health'.¹⁴¹

Accordingly, his arguments in Part II of The Fable of the Bees were presented in the form of six dialogues, and instead of Philopirio and his patient Misomedon the interlocutors were two wealthy and and leisured members of the beau monde, Cleomenes and Horatio.

Cleomenes, Mandeville's spokesman, was a professed though moderate and reasonable Christian, he was well versed in the study of anatomy and natural philosophy and he was particularly adept at self-examination for 'he had study'd human Nature, and the Knowledge of himself, with great Application'. In fact, having read and been converted by the arguments of The Fable of the Bees he was, notwithstanding his Christian principles, under no illusion about the force of his own pride and the sensual nature of his attachment to the pleasures of the world. In contrast, Horatio was a Deist and distrustful of all forms of priestcraft. However, like his friend Cleomenes, and unlike 'most people of Quality', he was no intellectual slouch for he too was well read, though more in the

¹⁴¹ Free Thoughts on Religion, the Church and National Happiness, 2nd edn. (London, 1729; reprinted Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt, Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1969), p.376.

classics than in natural philosophy. Horatio was moreover 'a Man of Strict Honour, and of Justice': in fact he was a self-confessed enthusiast for the complaisant charms of the Shaftesburian system for as he was later to declare 'Lord Shaftsbury is my favourite Author' and in reading him he too had tasted and learnt to 'take Delight in Enthusiasm'.¹⁴² Horatio was therefore both the personification and defender, although for a member of the beau monde an unusually able and intellectual one, of Shaftesbury's system of honour, politeness, and virtuous sociability.

In their ensuing six dialogues Cleomenes' immediate aim was to persuade Horatio to read The Fable of the Bees in order to achieve his larger objective of exploding the enthusiastic delusions of the Shaftesburian system. In effect, his task was to persuade Horatio to undergo the rigorous process of self-examination which the elaboration and understanding of the Mandevillean system required. As such that task was, however, no different from, nor less daunting, than that which had confronted Philopirio in ministering to Misomedon's hypochondriacal delusions. For as a result of his long and stubborn illness and trying experiences at the hands of other physicians, Misomedon had initially been suspicious of Philopirio's intentions and his proposed course of treatment. Accordingly, he had been gently coaxed by therapeutic conversation into undergoing the beneficial but painful experience of catharsis which the recounting and self-examination of his own case history entailed. Similarly, Horatio as a result of his aristocratic socialization was suspicious of Cleomenes' intentions, for

142 Fable of the Bees, II, 16; II, 16; II, 16; II, 107.

Cleomenes was a supporter of The Fable of the Bees and as Horatio complained that was a book which 'makes a Jest of all Politeness and Good Manners'. Indeed as a man 'of strict Honour', he insisted that 'I cannot endure to hear that ridicul'd, and the least Attempt of it chafes my Blood'.¹⁴³ Therapeutic conversation was therefore the appropriate remedy for overcoming his resistance to the pursuit of self-knowledge and curing his deluded beliefs about the virtuous reality of honour and politeness. Accordingly, in Part II of The Fable of the Bees Cleomenes assumed the role of the Mandevillean physician and Horatio the role of his patient.

Conversation was the appropriate therapeutic and rhetorical strategy for combatting enthusiasm and curing disorders of the imagination. However, conversation was also the prescribed and preferred method of instruction for a polite audience. And in that latter respect the conventions which dictated its subject matter and style necessarily set limits on its use and efficacy as a diagnostic aid to self-knowledge. The aim of polite conversation was complaisance and that was the very opposite of the pain and difficulty which rigorous self-examination entailed. Self-examination was 'a severe Task to do ... faithfully' and when in fact Cleomenes did eventually persuade Horatio to attempt it, the latter reported that 'I tried it three times since I saw you last, till it put me into a Sweat, and then I was forced to leave off' for as he further complained 'I can't endure to see so much of my own Nakedness'. Indeed self-examination interrupted the complaisant cycle of flattery and the rewards to self-liking

¹⁴³ Ibid., II, 108; II, 57.

sustained by polite conversation and the reading of Shaftesbury's Characteristics. Accordingly, when Horatio did condescend to read The Fable of the Bees, to judge its argument at first, rather than second hand, he objected that

It has ⁱⁿdimish'd the Pleasure I had in reading a much better Book. Lord Shaftsbury is my favourite Author: I can take Delight in Enthusiasm; but the Charms of it cease as soon as I am told what it is I enjoy.¹⁴⁴

Similarly the stylistic conventions of polite conversation proscribed recourse to overt didacticism, to a hectoring and triumphant tone and to the use of 'immodest Ribaldry, Libertine Wit, and detestable Satyr'. In fact, the reported use of those rhetorical devices in The Fable of the Bees was the main reason why Horatio had refused to read it. He 'hated Satyr ... and having been told likewise, that martial Courage, and Honour itself, were ridicul'd in that Book, he was very much exasperated against the Author and his whole Scheme'. In order, therefore, to overcome Horatio's resistance to the Mandevill^oian system and to talk him out of his enthusiastic adherence to Shaftesbury's polite ethics, Cleomenes had to operate within the accepted conventions of polite discourse. Accordingly he disingenuously claimed to 'have a strong Aversion to Satyr, and [to] detest it every whit as much as you [Horatio] do'. Similarly he also took pains to reject the triumphant tone which had been evident in The Fable of the Bees for in his dialogue with Horatio he insisted that 'I aim at no Victory, all I wish for is to do you Service, in undeceiving you'.¹⁴⁵ In that sense the use of dialogue in Part II of The Fable of the Bees was determined not only by Mandeville's expository and therapeutic

144 Ibid., II, 73; II, 107; II, 108; II, 107.

145 Ibid., II, 40; II, 20; II, 43; II, 96.

intent but also by the need to meet the demands of his polite readership. However, whilst those demands and the conventions which they prescribed inhibited the pursuit of self-knowledge and proscribed the use of biting satire and ridicule, they could nevertheless be manipulated and exploited to achieve those ends.

Hence in the same way as Philopirio had won Misomedon's confidence and prepared him for the cure which was largely in his own hands by imitating his love of Latin tags, Mandeville, in the guise of Cleomenes, exploited the conventions of polite discourse and good manners to overcome Horatio's, and his reader's, resistance to the pursuit of self-knowledge and the appreciation of the merits of the Mandevillean system. Significantly, the beginning of the first dialogue between Horatio and Cleomenes was marked by a breakdown in their normally polite and good natured relationship. A distinctly huffy Horatio confessed that he had been avoiding Cleomenes so as not to rob him of the 'Opportunity for Speculation' on 'the Scheme of Deformity' which The Fable of the Bees represented. Having delivered a tirade against the book and Cleomenes' bewitchment by it, Horatio, however, felt uneasy and apologized for having flouted the rules of polite conversation. 'You know this is not my usual Language; I hate to say harsh things'. In response, Cleomenes professed his apostasy from The Fable of the Bees and his conversion to the arguments of the Characteristics. He declared 'There is no greater Stickler for the Social Virtues than my self, and I much question whether there is any of Lord Shaftsbury's Admirers that will go my Lengths!'¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., II, 30; II, 31; II, 31.

As such his sarcasm was apparent and his conversion patently disingenuous. Horatio was not fooled by the ruse but was nevertheless drawn into a discussion on the polite and approved aristocratic topics of painting and opera.

In their ensuing discussion the relative merits of Dutch and Italian art were canvassed and the realism of the former contrasted with the artificial but seductive charms of the latter. As was the case with opera, Italian art was portrayed as a manifestation of the sublime in which 'the good Manners and Complaisance of the Painter', expressed through the selective embellishment of nature, were identified as a means of stimulating the aesthetic and enthusiastic imaginations of men of taste and honour, and of filling their 'noble Minds with worthy and suitable Ideas of their own Dignity, that will seldom fail of spurring them on to Virtue and Heroick Actions'. Having thus covertly undermined the epistemological foundations of Shaftesbury's aesthetic theory of virtue by demonstrating its incompatibility with verisimilitude and the accurate portrayal of the real world, Cleomenes then continued in that empirical vein and proceeded 'To judge of Mens Actions by the lovely System of Lord Shaftesbury, in a Manner diametrically opposite to that of the Fable of the Bees'.¹⁴⁷ In fact, so strained were his labours in defence of Shaftesbury that Horatio was forced to adopt a Mandevillean position in refuting the easy construction which Cleomenes had placed on the self-serving behaviour of, amongst others, chief ministers, physicians, lawyers and the clergy. He was in effect self-convicted of his mistaken

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., II, 35; II, 36; II, 43.

belief in the truth of the Shaftesburian system.

Although he 'had taken a Resolution never to engage with [Cleomenes] on [that] Topic' he had nevertheless been persuaded to do so by his commitment to the rules of good manners and politeness for as he announced 'I hate to be thought uncivil; it was mere Complaisance drew me in'. He had therefore endeavoured to please Cleomenes, but in turn he too had been pleased by their discussion and was willing to continue it, for as he informed Cleomenes at the end of their dialogue 'You make me laugh. There is a good deal in what you say; and I am persuaded, all is not Gold that glisters. Would you add any more?' Horatio had thus discovered that the pursuit of truth could be pleasurable as well as polite. Cleomenes for his part had also operated within the rules of civility and good manners. He had eschewed the extravagant language and triumphant tone of The Fable of the Bees but in doing so he had merely redoubled its satirical effect. Indeed his use of irony, sarcasm and parody had all served to hoist Shaftesbury by his own rhetorical petard for in the Characteristics Shaftesbury had argued to the effect that 'Joke and Banter [were] the best and surest Touchstone to prove the Worth of Things'.¹⁴⁸

Although Horatio had been self-convicted of error in his initial discussion with Cleomenes he had not been self-convinced of the folly of Shaftesbury's scheme. Nevertheless, his eventual conversion was assured for he had begun the process of self-examination which the appreciation of the truth of the Mandevillean system required. That conversion was, however, to be effected by

148 Ibid., II, 56; II, 61; II, 53.

the same method which had originally drawn him into conversation with Cleomenes. Thus, for example, when Cleomenes, no longer a stickler for the social virtues, straightforwardly announced his intention to paint an idealized portrait of 'a complete Gentleman' in order to demonstrate how his apparent virtues could be reduced to the effects of pride and self-liking, Horatio declared that the result was 'an admirable Character and pleases me exceedingly'. But he also complained that the design which inspired the portrait was 'barbarous', an instance of 'taking great Pains to shew ones Skill in doing Mischief'. Seeing that his intentions 'would be unpleasant to Horatio',¹⁴⁹ Cleomenes accordingly insisted on going no further. It was not his intention, he continued, to instruct Horatio but rather to appeal to his judgement. He was mistaken in believing that Horatio had been prepared to examine himself in the light of the Mandevilllean scheme and, in the interests of civility and friendship, he therefore proposed to drop the subject forthwith. Indeed he insisted

I expect no Pleasure from any Triumph, and I know nothing, that would vex me more, than the Thoughts of disobliging you. Pray let us do in this as we do in another matter of Importance, never touch upon it: Friends in Prudence should avoid all Subjects in which they are known essentially to differ. Believe me, Horatio, if it was in my Power to divert or give you any Pleasure, I would grudge no Pains to compass that End: But to make you uneasy, is a thing that I shall never be knowingly guilty of, and I beg a thousand Pardons for having said so much both Yesterday and To-day.

Horatio was however both suitably humbled and soothed by Cleomenes' good-mannered and complaisant concession. He declared 'I am ashamed of my Weakness and your Civility' and in turn insisted 'It

149 Ibid., II, 63; II, 72; II, 72; II, 72.

is I that have offended, and it is I that ought to ask Pardon for the ill Manners I have been guilty of'. Self-examination and the pursuit of truth were, he implied, difficult tasks for a man thoroughly imbued in the principles of honour and virtuous sociability. Nevertheless, he asked Cleomenes to 'bear with [his] Infirmities' and announced 'If I am in an Error I shall be glad to be undeceiv'd. Pray inform me, and say what you will, I promise you to keep my Temper, and, I beg of you speak your Mind with Freedom'.¹⁵⁰

From that point in the dialogue Horatio's position as an outraged opponent of the Mandevillean, and an enthusiastic supporter of the Shaftesburian, system was gradually transformed and eventually reversed. Under the care and management of Cleomenes he was persuaded, although it was ill manners to ask him to do so, to undergo the process of self-examination upon which the cure of his enthusiastic delusions about honour and virtuous sociability depended. When he found that task a trying and painful one, Cleomenes coaxed him through his difficulties asking him to 'use' himself 'by Degrees to think abstractly',¹⁵¹ even recommending The Fable of the Bees as a self-help manual in that endeavour. At the same time, Cleomenes continued to disclaim an authoritative role in effecting Horatio's cure, insisting that it lay in the pursuit and attainment of self-knowledge and thus in Horatio's own hands. Moreover, as their discussion continued to probe and dissect the passionate bases of honour and good manners, Horatio found Cleomenes' arguments increasingly diverting and

150 Ibid., II, 73; II, 73; II, 74; II, 74.

151 Ibid., II, 107-8.

entertaining. Thus he eventually overcame his anxieties and learnt to enjoy the rewards of introspection and the pleasures of conjectural thinking. Accordingly, whilst the form of their conversation remained polite, it dealt not with the approved and superficial themes of aristocratic discourse - themes such as dress, furniture, and equipage - but with more searching and conjectural concerns, such as the origins of politeness itself, the economy of the brain, and the mechanical basis of human behaviour. In turn, as Horatio took a more committed part in those enquiries, his role changed from that of ill-tempered antagonist to that of good-natured facilitator. He asked questions for information's sake, summarised and generally helped the argument along; he also occasionally assumed Cleomenes' role as Mandeville's real spokesman. Finally, having been self-convinced and self-cured of his enthusiastic devotion to the 'affectionate Scheme' of the Characteristics, he listened with increasing pleasure and conviction as Cleomenes proceeded to outline the stages of Mandeville's speculative anthropology in their last three dialogues. Indeed at their conclusion he informed Cleomenes

I am your Convert, and shall henceforth look upon the Fable of the Bees very differently from what I did; for tho' in the Characteristicks the Language and the Diction are better, the System of Man's sociableness is more lovely and more plausible, and Things are set off with more Art and Learning; yet in the other there is certainly more Truth, and Nature is more faithfully copied in it, almost every where.¹⁵²

In Part II of The Fable of the Bees, as in A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions, Mandeville's use of dialogue was as much determined by the literary and rhetorical advantages

152 Ibid., II, 260; II, 356.

~~rhetorical advantages~~ which that device offered him as by the therapeutic principles of his talking cure. Nevertheless that therapeutic concern was as much in evidence in Part II of The Fable of the Bees as it was in his medical text. In employing that remedy to treat Horatio's disordered imagination, Mandeville had again shown himself to be a physician with his tongue well hung. He had also displayed a similar talent in Part I of The Fable of the Bees but there, and in the role of state rather than personal physician, he had pursued a different objective and wielded his tongue to achieve a very different and less soothing effect.

CONCLUSION

My aim in this thesis has been to assess the extent to which a focus on Mandeville's medical thought and experience provides a significant context for the understanding of his non-medical thought. Through a close reading of The Fable of the Bees, both as a philosophical text and as an historical document, I have argued that his disparate and unsystematic performances in that text were nevertheless informed by a coherent theory of man and society, the reductive elements of which sprang from his commitment to the physiological theories and principles of iatromechanism. Accordingly, I have sought to demonstrate how the mechanistic and homeostatic principles which informed his conjectural model of human physiological functioning led him to emphasize both the primacy and self-regulating character of the passions in explaining not only the evolving but also the enduring facts of human nature and behaviour. In turn, I have further sought to demonstrate how the physiological principles which shaped his understanding of man as a sentient and passionate machine similarly shaped his understanding and analysis of both the evolution and the contemporary functioning of the body politic.

Although my emphasis on Mandeville's commitment to the theory and principles of iatromechanism sits uneasily with his equally firm commitment to the methodological precepts of empiricism, it is nevertheless consistent with the distinction which he himself made

between the theoretical study of medicine and the practical art of curing. Indeed I have invoked that distinction to account for those features of his social theory which serve to differentiate it from other and similarly reductive theories of man and society, such as Hobbes'. Thus I have argued that the evolutionary epistemology which Mandeville derived from his understanding of Hippocratic medical practice and the development of its rules of diet and regimen was the inspiration for his evolutionary account of the development of the social institutions which made civilization and its flourishing possible. More specifically, I have argued that when combined with the details of his mechanistic model of the passions, that epistemology provided him with a heuristic for explaining how the various forms of coercive and non-coercive social control which regulated the operations of the body politic were discovered, and how in turn those discoveries were the result of human action but not of conscious human design.

In attempting to read The Fable of the Bees as an historical document, as evidence of Mandeville's polemical rather than philosophical performances in that text, I have similarly sought to demonstrate how his different objectives in Parts I and II of The Fable of the Bees are illuminated when viewed from the contrasting perspectives of state and natural physician. Thus I have argued that his analysis in Part I of The Fable of the Bees of the contemporary and healthy operations of the Augustan body politic - his account of how the passions contributed to, and how they were to be managed in securing, national power and prosperity - was again closely informed by his understanding of the medical art of

diagnosis and curing. Similarly, I have also invoked the specific details of his specialization in the treatment of hypochondriacal disorders, as well as the facts of his Dutch background, to offer an explanation of the contrasting rhetorical strategies which he employed in Parts I and II of The Fable of the Bees.

Throughout this thesis I have doggedly insisted on the relevance of Mandeville's medical thought and experience for understanding both the philosophical and polemical arguments of The Fable of the Bees. Having done so, however, I also wish to insist that that perspective should be seen as an adjunct to, rather than an attempt to subvert, those studies which have stressed the salience in his thinking of other intellectual traditions: traditions such as the psychological theories of French Jansenism; the philosophical precepts of British empiricism and Continental scepticism; and the economic principles of mercantilist political economy. Nevertheless, an emphasis on the relevance of Mandeville's medical thought does have the virtue of serving to illustrate the distinctive and characteristic ways in which he drew upon and exploited those traditions in The Fable of the Bees.

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