

Mandevillian Prescriptions: “The Planter’s Charity,” The Passions, and the Suffering Body

[Prescrições Mandevillianas: “The Planter’s Charity”, As Paixões e o Corpo Sofredor]

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Abstract: In “Mandevillian Prescriptions: ‘The Planter’s Charity, the Passions, and the Suffering Body,” I argue that Mandeville explores emotions specific to an emergent capitalist economy. Mandeville attacks the sentimental and religious belief that virtuous behavior will lead to reward from God and the marketplace. Yet, while Mandeville rejects sentimentalism, he displays a keen awareness of suffering. As a physician and a philosopher, he understands the relief of suffers as part of the goal. For some people, Mandeville observes, the emergent commercial economy has replaced one kind of suffering (physical exertion) for another (melancholy). Yet for others, it brings relentless physical torment. For this reason, I suggest that the poem “The Planter’s Charity,” a poem about the hypocrisy of Christianizing the enslaved, is Mandevillian, if not actually written by Mandeville. His *Treatise of Hypochondria and the Hysterical Passions* explores the emotional cost of a system that creates so much melancholy and the role of the physician in attempting to alleviate it. Interest in the suffering body runs from “The Planter’s Charity,” *The Fable of the Bees*,” and *The Treatise*.

Keywords: Mandeville. The Planter’s Charity. Commercial Society. Passions.

Resumo: Neste ensaio, argumento que Mandeville explora emoções específicas de uma economia capitalista emergente. Mandeville ataca a crença sentimental e religiosa de que o comportamento virtuoso levará à recompensa de Deus e do mercado. No entanto, embora Mandeville rejeite o sentimentalismo, ele exibe uma aguda consciência do sofrimento. Como médico e filósofo, entende o alívio dos sofrimentos como parte do objetivo. Para algumas pessoas, observa Mandeville, a economia comercial emergente substituiu um tipo de sofrimento (esforço físico) por outro (melancolia). No entanto, para outros, traz um tormento físico implacável. Por essa razão, sugiro que o poema “The Planter’s Charity”, um poema sobre a hipocrisia de cristianizar os escravizados, é mandevilliano, se não realmente escrito por Mandeville. Seu *Tratado de hipocondria e paixões histéricas* explora o custo emocional de um sistema que cria tanta melancolia e o papel do médico na tentativa de aliviá-la. O interesse pelo corpo sofredor vem do poema “The Planter’s Charity”, de *A fábula das abelhas* e do *Tratado*.

Palavras-chave: Mandeville. The Planter’s Charity. Sociedade Comercial. Paixões.

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Bernard Mandeville's 1723 *Fable of the Bees* sparked one of the eighteenth century's biggest literary and philosophical scandals for its attacks on England's post-Restoration reform movement and emerging forms of sentimentalism. In the coming decades, sentimental values would shape the mid-century novel, theater, and philosophy. While sentimentalists focused on victims and the harsher reformers focused on perpetrators, both movements represented themselves as working toward a more virtuous society that would foster peace and prosperity. Mandeville disagreed that this is what they were doing. *The Fable* satirized, for example, the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, vigilantes who opposed swearing, prostitution, and working on Sunday as undermining their stated goals of greater prosperity through virtuous behavior.¹ Mandeville also challenged the value of charity schools and efforts to reform – or simply remove – sex workers, contending that sex work should be legal and regulated by the government for the health and safety of all concerned.² Advocates for sentimentalism and reform faced many kinds of resistance, but Mandeville's writing attracted particular attention, earning extended rebuttals from Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith, as well as a host of other outraged and indignant readers.³ Mandeville raised so many hackles, I will suggest, in part because of his literary style, which appeals to emotion as much as it does to reason. In very different ways, Mandeville's writing and sentimental literature are both effective through strong emotional impact. In novels and on stage, sentimentalism plumbs the emotions, but often without placing its affecting scenarios in an analytical framework. Sentimental writing can bring communities together by fostering sympathy, but it can also, as Lynn Festa argues, consolidate divisions by policing the boundaries of difference, a function particularly relevant in an age when imperialism and the slave trade brought more Britons in contact with people unlike themselves.⁴ In sentimental literature, the reader or the viewer pities the sufferer, entering into but then exiting from their misery when the curtain falls or the last page is turned. Through the distance between their positions and the temporary nature of the encounter, pity consolidates rather than dissolves difference. Mandeville, by contrast, proposes an often-ironic analytical framework that he complicates with highly charged, emotionally evocative

¹On this and other reform movements, see Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution*. Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²Phil-Porney [Bernard Mandeville], *A Modest Defence of Publick Stews* (London, 1724). On Mandeville and the reformers, see my *Infamous Commerce: Prostitution in Eighteenth-Century British Literature and Culture*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006, chapter 2.

³On this "incendiary" history, see Danielle Allen, "Burning *The Fable of the Bees*: The Incendiary Authority of Nature." In *The Moral Authority of Nature*, ed. Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal (University of Chicago Press, 2003), 74-78.

⁴Lynn M. Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Britain and France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 4-6.

language and scenarios. His explosive examples often work in tension with his apparent argument, sometimes in darkly comic ways. But in spite of the apparent callousness and amorality of this style, much of Mandeville's writing addresses and takes account of human suffering through this technique.

In this essay, I will look at how three of Mandeville's works explore suffering in a non-sentimental or even anti-sentimental way: *The Fable of the Bees*, *Treatise of Hypochondria and the Hysterical Passions*, and a poem called "The Planter's Charity," often attributed to Mandeville. Sentimentalism's most profound stamp on Anglo-American history may have been its influence on the late eighteenth-century abolitionist movement.⁵ "The Planter's Charity" (1704) makes a Mandevillian argument against a certain kind of plantation reform; in doing so, it points to some of the limits of sentimentalizing captivity and enslavement. "The Planter's Charity" appeared under the authorship of "B.M" and responds to a sermon by Anthony Hill proclaiming that Christianizing enslaved people, while liberating their souls, does not free their bodies. In *Amazing Grace: An Anthology of Poems about Slavery, 1660-1810*, James G. Basker notes that this poem has been repeatedly attributed to Mandeville, although scholars remain unsure of its authorship.⁶ While Basker includes the poem in his excellent anthology, it has nevertheless received minimal attention by Mandeville scholars, perhaps because of the uncertainty of its authorship. There are good reasons, as I will suggest, to imagine from internal evidence that Mandeville wrote this poem, and so I have included it in this discussion. "The Planter's Charity," *The Fable of the Bees*, and Mandeville's medical writing, all vehemently reject sentimentalism and reformist ideals; nevertheless, in their own way they hold the relief of human suffering as one of their goals. Despite Mandeville's relentless attacks on the proposed moral grounding of many arguments made during his time, he nevertheless represents some practices as disturbing because they lead to excessive misery. "The Planter's Charity" expresses Mandevillian suspicion of Christian reformers by implying their indifference to suffering. While the contemporaries that he criticizes make their case based on a version of justice, sympathy, or virtue, Mandeville returns to misery and the suffering body. If sentimentalism creates distance through pity, Mandeville insists on the commonality of embodiment.

⁵See, for example, Brycchan Carey, *British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility: Writing, Sentiment, and Slavery, 1760-1807*. Palgrave Studies in the Enlightenment, Romanticism and Cultures of Print (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

⁶James G. Basker, ed. *Amazing Grace: An Anthology of Poems About Slavery, 1660-1810* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 42.

“The Planter’s Charity”

Mandeville’s dates and career suggest the plausibility of attributing “The Planter’s Charity” to his pen. Before publishing “The Grumbling Hive” (1705), which would become the foundation for *The Fable of the Bees*, Mandeville had worked as a translator and published several poems, including “The Pamphleteers” in 1703, a satiric poem attacking the proliferation of anti-William publications. “The Pamphleteers” appeared without attribution. “Typhon: or the Wars between the Gods and Giants: A Burlesque Poem in Imitation of the Comical Cons. Scarron,” published in 1704, appeared with the initials “B.M.,” as did “The Planter’s Charity.” “The Planter’s Charity” responds to a sermon by Anthony Hill entitled “Afer Baptizatus, or the Negro Turn’d Christian” published in 1701/2. Anthony Hill served as the chaplain to the first Duke of Richmond and Lennox, one of the illegitimate children of Charles II and the Duchess of Portsmouth. Raised as a Catholic, the Duke fought on behalf of Louis XIV before returning to England, committing to the Anglican Church, and making his peace with William III.⁷ Hill, then, served a Duke whose loyalties were inconsistent, but whose politics appear generally at odds with Mandeville’s Whig commitments. The Duke’s father, Charles II, chartered the Royal African Company and benefited from its profits. Profits from the slave trade were thus embedded in the Duke’s inheritance, which may have motivated his chaplain to limit any critique of slavery.

“The Planter’s Charity” is more densely ironic than Mandeville’s later writing and even bitter in its tone. But as Mikko Tolonen has shown, scholarship has tended to overlook the way that Mandeville’s writing and thinking evolved over his lifetime, especially in response to criticism.⁸ In addition to the initials “B.M.” on the original publication, the alignment of the poem’s dating with Mandeville’s early career, and the Mandevillian attack on hypocrisy, the most robust consistency between this poem and *The Fable of the Bees* is the satire on Christian reformers. “The Planter’s Charity” does not just attack hypocritical Christians; it also attacks slavery itself, but from a non-sentimental or even anti-sentimental perspective. Nor does the poet posit a foundation of human rights that would be violated by enslavement. It does, however, like *The*

⁷Timothy J. McCann, “Lennox, Charles, first duke of Richmond, first duke of Lennox, and duke of Aubigny in the French nobility (1672–1723), landowner.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 23 Sep. 2004; Accessed 19 Feb. 2022.

⁸Mikko Tolonen, *Mandeville and Hume: Anatomists of Civil Society* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2013). Tolonen, for example, rejects the assumption that what F.B. Kaye identifies as “part 2” of the *Fable* is in fact, in some ways, a rethinking rather than an elaboration.

Fable of the Bees (as we will see) and in spite of Mandeville's reputation for thinking outside of all moral frameworks ("Man-devil"), assume a fundamental human aversion to cruelty. Both *The Fable* and "The Planter's Charity" characterize Christian reform as a strategy for alienating people from this natural repugnance.

In his sermon, Anthony Hill argues, on the authority of the Bible, that an enslaved African who converts to Christianity cannot on that basis claim their freedom. Enslavers, then, should feel free to convert their captives without fear of losing the profits from their labor. Through layers of irony, "The Planter's Charity" suggests that Hill's position is self-serving. The planters

... need not preach to Princes, nor reveal
Religious Truths with Apostolick Zeal
To Persecutors, or at Bloods expence,
Draw Savage Nations from their Ignorance.
The Task is easier, than to propagate
The Holy Gospel at so dear a rate;
Spread but the Name of Christ, where without pains
Or hazard you may act like Sovereigns.⁹

The poem ironically celebrates how Hill's declaration allows planters an easy way to appease their consciences and think of themselves as Christians. Planters may now revel in their virtue without losing profits, for they have saved the souls of the people held in captivity.

While "The Planter's Charity" mocks the desire of planters to think of themselves as good Christians while at the same time exploiting enslaved Africans, it is worth noting that Anthony Hill's sermon is also critical of slavery and that Hill sees himself as an advocate for the enslaved. The first half of the sermon argues for the benefits of Christianity and the wretchedness of heathen existence. Given the benefits, true Christians would never withhold Christianity from anyone, for "the Condition of the Heathen was very lamentable: They had in a great measure sinn'd away the Dignity of their Nature, and sunk themsel-

⁹B.M., *The Planter's Charity* (London, 1704), 4. Future references are to this edition and cited in the text.

ves below the level of Humanity."¹⁰ Furthermore, "[t]he Apostle tells us they were *past feeling*, and the Distinctions between Good and Evil in a manner worn out: The Light of Nature was eclipsed" (5). Heathens excuse their bad behavior through their gods: "They had a *Mercury*, a *Jupiter*, or a *Mars* always at hand, to keep Vice and Knavery in countenance" (6). A genuine Christian is inherently free, for true religion "is a Rescue not from the Burdens of *Egypt*, from the Chains of a Galley, or the Usage of an *Inquisition*; but *from the worm that never dieth*, from the Wrath of God, from the Flames of Hell, and Woe unspeakable" (16). Christians, however, still have to obey God, so Christianity also provides an incentive for good behavior.

In the second half of the sermon, Hill turns to the question that "The Planter's Charity" takes up. Hill chastises planters who fail to convert their enslaved workers, for "What makes some of our *Planters* pretend the *Negro's* have no *Souls*, barr them from Instruction, and persecute the Clergy that endeavour their Conversion?" (28). Twice, Hill cites Morgan Godwyn's *The Negro's Advocate* to support his point that humans of all races have souls.¹¹ Planters who profit by driving slaves while withholding eternal life from them are not acting in a way consistent with Christianity and leaving their own souls vulnerable. Nevertheless, Hill also insists that conversion does not necessarily free the slave. He demonstrates that the Bible does not disapprove of slavery and does not identify enslaving as sinful. He recalls for readers the particular story of Onesimus, an enslaved man who wanted to follow Paul to learn more deeply about religion. Paul, however, did not accept Onesimus and sent him back to his master because he would not interfere with the master/slave relationship.¹² Christianizing remains Hill's priority. Hill excoriates planters who take advantage of the bodies of the enslaved without caring about their souls: "Those that feed thus upon the Souls of Men," he insists, "are the worst sort of Cannibals" (43). It is un-Christian to treat people this way: "What can be more remote from

¹⁰Anthony Hill, *Afer baptizatus: Or, The Negro turn'd Christian. Being a short and plain discourse, shewing I. The necessity of instructing and baptizing slaves in English plantations. II. The folly of that vulgar opinion, that slaves do cease to be slaves when once baptized. Delivered (most of it) in a sermon preach'd at Stratford-le-Bow in Middlesex, March the 15th 170 1/2. By Anthony Hill, lecturer there, and chaplain to His Grace the Duke of Richmond*. London: Printed for Charles Broome, at the Gunin Ludgate-street; and Edward Evett, at the Green Dragon in St. Paul's Church-yard, MDCCII. [1702]. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (accessed April 12, 2022), 4. Future references are to this edition and cited in the text.

¹¹Morgan Godwyn, *The Negro's & Indians Advocate, Suing for their Admission to the Church, Or, A Persuasive to the Instructing and Baptizing of the Negro's and Indians in our Plantations Shewing that as the Compliance Therewith can Prejudice no Mans just Interest, so the Wilful Neglecting and Opposing of it, is no Less than a Manifest Apostacy from the Christian Faith: To which is Added, a Brief Account of Religion in Virginia* (London, 1680). Morgan Godwyn similarly argued for the incompatibility of slavery and Christianity, and argues that baptism does not free an enslaved person. According to David Brion Davis, in 1664 the colony of Maryland "enacted laws stating that baptism did not free a slave." *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966), 210.

¹²Godwyn also uses the story of Onesimus to suggest that baptism does not require freedom.

Good-nature, than to thrive thus upon the Misery of Others? Are not these poor Negro's of the same Common Nature with our selves?" (43). Yet, in spite of Hill's insistence that conversion does not demand freedom, he also explains to his readers that it would be *even more* righteous to free any new converts because human beings are all of the same blood: "it wou'd be a more noble Charity (if Circumstances permit) to treat them like the Children of *Adam*, and return them their Original Liberty" (45).

The sermon thus tries to thread a needle between anti-slavery morality and the financial interests of the planters, and this instability is what "The Planter's Charity" satirizes. Hill insists on the fundamental equality of enslaved Africans with their British captors. He clearly recognizes that the enslavers are behaving in exploitative, non-Christian ways; they have become, bracingly, "cannibals" and perhaps also heathens themselves for neglecting the souls of their fellow human beings. Hill even argues, as noted, that it would be more virtuous to return these captives to the natural freedom that all humans share. Despite these statements, however, Hill will not follow the argument to the logical conclusion of the inherent immorality of holding enslaved people in the first place. It is into this gap that "B.M." launches his attack.

In a 1921 bibliographical essay, F.B. Kaye lists "The Planter's Charity" as a doubtful work of Mandeville's, although he calls the authorship "somewhat more probable than improbable."¹³ When Kaye was writing, the poem had been attributed to Mandeville on the strength of its being signed "B.M.," its repetition of Mandevillian themes, and its Mandevillian irony. There is no doubt that Mandeville was aware of slavery as an issue and as a practice. As Kaye points out, Mandeville argues in his *Executions at Tyburn* that criminals might more usefully be exchanged for English men captured into Ottoman slavery rather than hanged. Thus, the criminals would become slaves, but they would live and be well guarded.¹⁴ The English captives would return and avoid conversion to Islam. In Part II of *The Fable*, Mandeville takes note of the burgeoning of the African slave trade in the context of a discussion about civilization.¹⁵ One of the earliest explanatory notes to *The Fable* uses the example of the sale of West

¹³F. B. Kaye, "The Writings of Bernard Mandeville: A Bibliographical Survey," *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 20. 4 (1921): 419-67; 447.

¹⁴Bernard Mandeville, *An enquiry into the causes of the frequent executions at Tyburn: and A Proposal for some Regulations concerning Felons in Prison, and the good Effects to be Expected from them. To which is Added, A Discourse on Transportation, and a Method to render that Punishment more Effectual* (London, 1725), 48-55.

¹⁵Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees, or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, ed. F. B. Kaye. 2 vols. (Oxford, 1924; Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1988), 2:201.

Indian sugar to demonstrate the ubiquity of knavery.¹⁶ Consistent with Mandeville's writing about slavery elsewhere, "The Planter's Charity" does not anticipate abolitionist arguments against slavery grounded in sympathy. Instead, it is an ironic celebration of the ability to convert the enslaved to Christianity without respecting the right to freedom that Hill acknowledges. The poem's author notes that before Hill's great declaration, English planters would have to be embarrassed in front of Turks, who encouraged their Christian slaves to convert to Islam to win their freedom, and the French, who welcome dissenting Protestants back into the fold when they agree to become Catholics. Now, however, the English can join these noble practices with little cost to themselves.

The problem with slavery that emerges in "The Planter's Charity" is dehumanization and abject suffering with (ironically noted) the continued exclusion from heaven:

You that Oppress the Captive *African*,
Abuse the Black, and Barbarously treat Man
Like Beast, in spite of his great Attribute,
Which only can distinguish him from Brute,
Reason, the lawful Claim to Human-kind;
As if you thought God's image was confin'd,
To *European White*! Why should your Slave,
Feel your Unrighteousness beyond the Grave?
Lay on the Burden, till you break his Back,
And let him labour till his Sinews crack,
Draw out the Marrow from the aking Bone,
Feed on his Flesh, but let his Soul alone.¹⁷

The poem insists that "Negroes have a Soul" (6), "A Rational, an Everlasting one" (6), and the poem, for a few lines, seems to be headed toward making the case of spiritual equality as its central point. The author's irony is subtle as the poet moves instead to celebrate the new theological interpretation by Hill, assuring the planters that "You'll have no loss, by *Baptism* they may be/ Made free from Sin, but not from Slavery" (7). Thus, planters retain the capacity to

¹⁶Remark B, 1:61-63.

¹⁷"Planter's Charity," 3.

feed on the flesh of the enslaved with the full assurance their souls will live on eternally. The narrator excoriates the hypocrisy of the planter, "robbing Christ to feed his Luxury" (7). While it is difficult to read through the layers of irony, the poet seems to be adopting a stance of transparently fake Christian outrage over the failure to care for the souls of the enslaved in the face of the economic loss that such care would entail. The "Learned Hill," however, has solved this problem by assuring all Planters that yes, they may enslave fellow Christians, so go ahead and baptize the people you hold in captivity. "The Planter's Charity" thus mocks the original sermon as striving to alleviate the hypocritical Christian conscience without losing the benefits of exploited labor. This is precisely the kind of thing that Mandeville attacks in the *Fable*: its force lies in its frustration with the refusal to take full account of the moral cost of early capitalism.¹⁸

In Mandeville, vice it is often terrible for the individual, who does not benefit from excessive consumption, but good for society overall. Yet perhaps in Mandeville, cruelty and suffering are another story. Both Hill and "B.M" criticize slavery. Hill, however, while suggesting that the most virtuous choice would be to free the enslaved – to return them to their original freedom granted by God to all human beings – builds in a moral loophole through which planters can care for the eternal souls of their slaves without liberating their bodies. "The Planter's Charity," by contrast, offers stark images of human suffering under enslavement: the planter, as noted, lays on "the Burden, till you break his Back,/ And let him labour till his Sinews crack,/ Draw out the Marrow from the aking Bone,/ Feed on his Flesh, but let his Soul alone" (3). The poem, with irony, repeats the morally evasive claim of eighteenth-century enslavers that they have merely inherited or purchase people who were already enslaved: "They are my Portion by my Father's Will,/I found'em Slaves, and so I'll keep 'em still" (6). Like Hill's sermon, "The Planter's Charity" describes slavery as a form of cannibalism, although it does so with more disturbing imagery. The poem accuses Hill of offering a false ethical escape from this position. Hill fills his readers with pity for the enslaved and offers them a way to feel virtuous even while enslaving, as long as they generously offer the salvation of religion.

Both Hill and "B.M.," then, note the cruelty of slavery, but the author of "The Planter's Charity" satirizes Hill for lifting the moral onus from planters

¹⁸I am influenced here by E.J. Hundert's important interpretation of Mandeville's writing in *The Enlightenment's Fable: Bernard Mandeville and the Discovery of Society. Ideas in Context*. (Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

by Christianizing slaves while at the same time filling their coffers through the suffering of fellow humans. The attack on Christian hypocrisy is familiar in Mandeville's work. Less obvious, however, is the way resistance to suffering appears throughout Mandeville's writing as well. In the *Treatise of Hypochondria and the Hysterical Passions*, to which I will later turn, the Mandeville-like figure, the doctor Philopirio, has as his goal the alleviation of suffering. Philopirio condemns other doctors for their profiteering and has the relief of the patient as his aim. Despite the benefits to the economy of passions traditionally claimed by Christians as a vice, the author and the physician tries to alleviate the physical and emotional burdens of modern commercial society. Satire is one strategy to this end; medical practice another. I will return to Mandeville's medical writing in the context of suffering. First, I will look briefly at how Mandeville addresses misery in *The Fable of the Bees* (1714). These similarities will not prove Mandeville's authorship of "The Planter's Charity," but it strengthens this case by demonstrating a strong thematic consistency and similar literary style of making a troubling argument supported by disturbing details that further destabilize the argument.

Suffering in Fable of the Bees

Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* depicts modernity as exchanging one form of suffering for another. The first form entails physical pain and deprivation; the second is emotional pain. By rejecting the more popular moral framework and describing such depictions as evasive, Mandeville's *Fable* suggests that gaining access to the desired physical pleasure in a modern commercial society inevitably brings emotional distress. This accumulation of misery produces the kind of melancholy that he addressed in his medical writing. One example to which Mandeville often returns is the problem of access to sexual pleasure, which has become more complicated in commercial modernity. In Remark C of the *Fable*, Mandeville observes that

If a Man 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 violence Desire that Moment to go about it, and accordingly offer'd to lay hold of her for that purpose; the Consequence would be, that he would be call'd a Brute (*Fable* 1:72).

Yet if this same man goes through socially-approved channels—addresses the lady's father, procures her liking with flattery and submission—he will be able “sate and fatigue himself with Joy and Ecstacies of Pleasure” after marriage (*Fable* 1:73). The man has not acted out of virtue, as moralists and sentimentalists might suggest; instead, he has found another route to the same satisfaction. He has not conquered his passions but only concealed them. The process also demands that he strategically flatter and submit to the father and the lady. For women, the cost is higher. In the same Remark, Mandeville argues that a woman who murders her child would not necessarily be a bad mother to another child. While all mothers “naturally love their Children,” the competing passion of shame could overwhelm a woman who gave birth out of wedlock into murdering her child (*Fable* 1:75). Thus “common Whores . . . hardly ever destroy their Children” because they no longer fear shame (*Fable* 1:75). But the woman who kills her illegitimate child could become a loving mother to a child she bears after marriage.

While Mandeville's interlocutors focused on whether or not such extreme claims were correct views of human nature or divine law, we should also notice how both narratives offer examples of not just unorthodox moral interpretations, but scenes of human unhappiness and emotional suffering. In the first, the man must behave in unpleasantly obsequious ways to manipulate both the lady and her father with a single focus on his own sexual pleasure. He needs to disguise his true motives, and at the same time mislead the father and the girl. While he achieves his goal, the resulting encounter is not presented as particularly appealing. With this marriage, the man “has the Liberty of valuing himself upon the Fury of his unbridled Passion”; he “wallows in Lust and strains every Faculty to be abandonedly voluptuous” (*Fable* 1:74). There are many ways that Mandeville could have described this encounter, and his particular rendering suggests that the constant demand to repress desire has resulted in the loss of agency. Somewhere along the way, there has been the exchange of the potential for genuine pleasure for violent compulsion. Here and elsewhere, Mandeville's explicit argument (modern urban males need to go through many channels and perform acts of hypocrisy to get sexual access to respectable ladies) appears in tension with the imagery, the example, and the language. This literary technique is apparent even more forcefully in the second example, in which Mandeville argues that humans act based on competing passions. This in itself may not be disturbing, but the prospect of a woman feeling like she has no better choice than to murder her own child to fulfill the need to avoid shame is particularly horrendous, especially given that Mandeville believes “All

Mothers naturally love their Children.” The example suggests that the power of shame is so intense that it overwhelms the aversion to killing another person, killing a child, and killing one’s offspring. Mandeville heightens the drama by describing the murders as being committed “in the most execrable manner,” a detail extraneous to the argument (*Fable*1: 75). Alternatives might have included abandonment or quiet neglect, or a different kind of example that had a woman choosing between buying food for her children or buying a new dress to avoid the shame of appearing in an old one. Instead, Mandeville’s examples offer scenes of compulsive, mechanical sex and brutal child murder to prevent shame, a mighty social force in Mandeville’s accounting that carries with it a tide of misery. Mandeville thus shocks his readers by inventing scenarios in which his logic is persuasive, but the texture of the example points to a social world that produces considerable misery. He tends to let these two effects of his writing – the logic and the suffering – stand without comment. His writing thus draws its power from a strategy opposite to sentimental writing, which plumbs the emotions without placing the persuasively affective scenario in an analytical framework. Instead, Mandeville offers an analytical framework that he complicates with emotional language.

Mandeville believes that humans have a natural aversion to witnessing the suffering of others, although he continually subjects his readers to such scenes. Or perhaps we should say: *because* Mandeville knows that humans have a natural aversion to witnessing the suffering of others, he strategically subjects his readers to this experience, albeit in their imagination. In “An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue,” Mandeville insists that there “is no Merit in saving an Innocent Babe ready to drop into the Fire: The Action is neither good nor bad, and what Benefit soever the Infant received, we only obliged our selves, for to have seen it fall, and not strove to hinder it, would have caused a Pain, which Self-preservation compell’d us to prevent” (*Fable*1: 56). Mandeville insists that the rescuer earns no virtue credit for their efforts, but the passage demonstrates that humans naturally are pained by the suffering of others by using this extreme example. Pity is a passion as natural as pride, anger, or fear; it is, however, “the most gentle and the least mischievous” of our weaknesses (*Fable*1: 56). Mandeville’s “Essay on Charity and Charity-Schools” offers an extended scenario intended to demonstrate, in part through the experience of reading the example, the natural aversion in humans to the suffering of others. Here we are asked to imagine that we are locked up in a room with a window that looks out into a yard where we see a toddler being torn apart by a sow:

The defenceless Posture of tender Limbs first trampled on, then tore asunder; to see the filthy Snout digging in the yet living Entrails, suck up the smoking Blood, and now and then to hear the Crackling of the Bones, and the cruel Animal with savage Pleasure grunt o'er the horrid Banquet (*Fable*1: 255).

This vivid example of witnessing suffering demonstrates the existence of pity as a passion experienced by everyone, from paragons of morality to housebreakers and murders. Elsewhere Mandeville points to the risk of losing the capacity to pity. English law, he argues, bars surgeons from serving on juries deciding on life or death cases, for their continual exposure to misery might erode their compassion, thus suggesting the importance to Mandeville of the natural human aversion to the suffering of others.¹⁹ Mandeville relies on the ability of his readers to transfer this visceral pity for hideous violence to the more socialized pity we might feel in thinking about the woman who kills her bastard. Slave drivers, by contrast, have unnaturally become inured to the suffering of others and seek only to fulfill the letter of Christian law by converting their captives.

In "The Grumbling Hive," Mandeville similarly relies on the posited human aversion to the suffering of others. While some of the bees grow rich, others "were damn'd to Scythes and Spades,/And all those hard laborious Trades;/ Where willing Wretches daily sweat,/ And wear out Strength and Limbs to eat" (*Fable*1: 19). Soldiers have their arms and legs blown off. In the church, "holy Drudges" starve while others indulge "their Ease, with all the Graces/ Of Health and Plenty in their Faces" (*Fable*1: 21). The sword of Justice checks "but the Desp'rate and the Poor," who are hanged for crimes "But to secure the Rich, and Great" (*Fable*1: 23-24). Mandeville concludes that in spite of this injustice, and that "every Part was full of Vice,/ Yet the whole Mass a Paradise" (*Fable*1: 24). While in Mandeville's view these glimmers of pity may shrink before the stronger passions of greed, they nevertheless linger. Mandeville confronts the reader, who is presumably not desperate and not having their legs blown off, with the suffering of those who supply their comfort even as he appears to defend the overall system.

¹⁹*Fable*, 1: 175. Mandeville further wonders why this rule does not extend to butchers. According to Kaye, Mandeville was in error about the reason for the law excusing surgeons, but it nevertheless shows the importance of pity in his thinking. I am grateful to the editor of this volume, Bruno Simões, for pointing me to this passage.

While some bees, like the soldiers and laborers, are subject to physical suffering, others endure emotional pain. One of the worst forms of emotional suffering for Mandeville is the envy that drives commercial modernity. The passion itself is unpleasant, but it is compounded by shame over feeling it. Envy is “that Baseness in our Nature, which makes us grieve and pine at what we conceive to be a Happiness in others” (*Fable1*: 134). Members of the “rude and unpolish’d Multitude” rail at their “Betters” and complain, revealing their continual state of envy. This passion is so strong that if they were not restrained by law, they would attack the privileged classes. More sophisticated people can better conceal their envy but suffer from it no less, with writers and artists especially afflicted. While the poor openly display their envy of the rich, those higher up the scale have to manage their envy of others and the profound shame attached to this envy. We envy and despise those with more money, but if we happen to improve our financial status to equal them, or if those same rich people fall in their fortunes, we can befriend them. While “Men of true good Sense Envy less than others,” everyone feels this sting. Between envy and shame, much of daily life in commercial modernity is strangled by negative feelings.

Envy and shame generate suffering. The only alternative that Mandeville imagines, however, is worse. Living in civil society produces greater comfort than living in what Mandeville calls the “savage” stage.²⁰ The social world of humans, Mandeville explains in “An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue,” cannot be held together by force. Mandeville thus imagines that the original “Law-givers and other Wise Men” came up with more imaginative ways to manipulate populations. These men observed that “none were either so savage as not to be charm’d with Praise, or so despicable as patiently to bear Contempt,” creating a system of social rewards for people who control their passions. Further, these “Law-givers and other wise Men” divided society into classes. These same men defined as abject as those “always hunting after immediate Enjoyment” and exalting those “free from sordid Selfishness.” Thus, people in civil society learned to behave socially out of self-interest: those who followed social rules “avoided a world of Troubles” (*Fable1*: 42, 44, 47). It is sociability itself and not luxury (as other eighteenth-century philosophers ar-

²⁰Mandeville elaborates more in volume 2 on the “savage” and social states. On the tensions between the “savage” state and the social state, see Tony C. Brown, “How Savages Came into the World (Bernard Mandeville),” *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 59, no. 4 (2018): 471–91. Although Mandeville does not explicitly identify this civil state as commercial modernity, I am here in agreement with E. J. Hundert that Mandeville “introduced into the heart of European social understanding a series of arguments designed to sustain the radically unsettling conclusion that the moral identities of his contemporaries had been permanently altered by a previously unacknowledged historical transformation” (14).

gue) that produces the emotional suffering observed in *The Fable of the Bees*. Yet this pain is inseparable from prosperity: when the bees in the poem attempt to rid themselves of their emotional conflicts by embracing what they understand as virtue, their economy collapses.²¹ Even more precarious is the posited pre-social world – the state of nature that Mandeville and many other eighteenth-century philosophers take as their conjectural starting point. Paradoxically for Mandeville, "no Species of Animals is, without the Curb of Government, less capable of agreeing long together in Multitudes than that of Man" (*Fable*1:41), hinting at a Hobbesian world of violence. Yet, "no Creature besides himself can ever be made sociable" (*Fable*1: 41). As painful as the social state becomes, with its demand that inhabitants repress their desires, endure constant envy, and live in fear of shame, it offers greater security and physical comfort than the alternative of the state of nature or the virtuous community. *The Fable of the Bees* provides the story of tiny creatures who can no longer endure the emotional conflict of profiting from the misery of others. *The Fable* thus exposes what the slave-drivers in "The Planter's Charity" disavow.

Mandeville the Physician

Between *The Grumbling Hive* and the fully developed Fable, Mandeville published his *Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions* (1711, 1715, 1730). This work has attracted less attention in Mandeville studies but can shed light on the author's interest in suffering. *The Treatise* essentially attempts to explain and seek ways to mitigate the melancholy produced by commercial modernity, as described in *The Fable of the Bees*. Putting *The Treatise* together with *The Fable* suggests that for Mandeville, morally neutral because somatic desires, which are designated as vices by reformers, form the necessary foundation for "wise politicians" to organize the modern commercial society. At the same time, however, and with different somatic consequences, the resulting society leaves those who inhabit it in a constant state of anxiety and depression, leading to digestive disorders. (Digestive disorders were Mandeville's specialty as a physician.²²) While *The Treatise* explores many debates about medical the-

²¹What happens in this post-capitalist world in Mandeville is not clear. They are a smaller society and vulnerable to invasion. They are left with a much smaller hive and yet stand their ground valiantly against invading foes, finally retreating to a "hollow Tree/ Blest with Content and Honesty" (75). Tony Brown describes this destiny as "statelessness." "How Savages Came into the World," 474.

²²On Mandeville's medical practice, see Phillip Hilton, *Bitter Honey: Recuperating the Medical and Scientific Context of Bernard Mandeville* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 93-97.

ory and practice, the ultimate goal is to suggest ways to alleviate one particular kind of suffering. This medical treatise works less through the explosive examples in *The Fable* and “The Planter’s Charity”; here, Mandeville digs deeper into the body’s response to the conflicts of modernity explored in the other two texts.

The Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions is organized around three dialogues. In the first, a man named Misomedon, who has come to hate the medical profession, visits a doctor named Philopirio, the “lover of experience.” Later we meet Misomedon’s wife, and we hear second hand about the problems experienced by his daughter. Misomedon has come to Philopirio because he is experiencing debilitating digestive disorders. As Philip Hilton suggests, Philopirio, as an expert in digestive disorders, is a figure for Mandeville himself, and *The Treatise* provides Mandeville with the opportunity to explore different medical philosophies by using the dialogue form (HILTON, 64). *The Treatise* opens with Misomedon telling his life story to Philopirio, including his ailments and the various cures he has attempted. Misomedon’s wife makes an appearance and discusses her own physical complaints, which are addressed by Philopirio. Philopirio also suggests a cure for the daughter, who, like her mother, suffers from hysteria. Later, *The Treatise* returns to Misomedon’s complaint, which Philopirio addresses and resolves in detail. A long middle section explores different philosophical controversies around the practice of medicine. That Philopirio spends so much time on one individual patient is remarked on in the text and this structure is part of the effect of *The Treatise*. Through close attention and the analysis of one patient, Philopirio models a version of medical practice that holds the cure of suffering, as opposed to the profitable exploitation of the patient, as a professional goal. There is no trace of sentimentalism or the seeking of virtue-credit, but instead the assertion of a proper medical practice that takes the mitigation of poor mental and physical health as its goal. Lest this sound utterly inconsistent with Mandeville’s Hobbesian view of human nature, Philopirio admits that he enjoys spending more time with fewer patients, showing that the physician’s enjoyment dovetails with effective medical practice.

Misomedon has two problems, which Philopirio will show are linked: digestive disorders and emotional distress in the form of anxiety and depression. Before his illness, Misomedon “feared nothing,” but now “I am grown peevish and fretful, irresolute, suspicious, ever thing offends me, and a Trifle puts me in a Passion . . . I can excruciate my self for all manner of Evils, past, present,

and to come. . . . I [am] oppress'd with tormenting Thought . . . till I sweat again, and am sometimes frighten'd into such an Agony, as if all the Calamities that could have been . . . were in reality come upon me."²³ He is filled with anxiety and has frequent nightmares of being drowned or robbed (25). As Philopirio will later explain, "The generality of hypochondriack and hysterick People have at all times, either dismal and confus'd Dreams, or else such as they can but seldom and faintly remember" (234). The wife is experiencing a similar emotional upheaval: "Sometimes my Spirits are oppress'd of a sudden with an unaccountable sadness, and I feel a great weight at my Heart; at the height of this anxiety I am often seiz'd with such terrible Fits of Crying, as if I was to be dissolv'd in Tears, by which yet I am generally reliev'd" (267). During these fits she is unable to eat and vomits frequently. The cure for the daughter, who suffers similarly, is the simplest of the three. Philopirio recommends for the daughter horseback riding followed by frequent massage by her nurse. As Philip Hilton points out, Mandeville's readers would have recognized both practices as calls to stimulate the daughter's genitals to bring her to orgasm (HILTON, 169). Misomedon wonders, "might not Marriage be as effectual as all of these Exercises?" (307). "Yes," answers Philopirio, "but I never prescribe an uncertain Remedy, that may prove worse than the Disease" (307). Hilton, citing Ilza Veith, notes that this is "the first recorded instance in medical literature of a doctor being skeptical of the need to use marriage as the solution to female problems."²⁴ If the goal is to alleviate suffering rather than fitting girls into an accepted ideological structure, then Philopirio's answer (assuming that sexual satisfaction is the cure) is consistent. The approach is not sentimental, as Philopirio makes no effort to put himself in the girl's place or try to internalize her feelings. Instead, he (rightly or not) analyses her pain in terms of his medical understanding of the young female body and seeks the solution that will lead to her relief without moral judgment.

Philip Hilton argues that *The Treatise* points to its author's profound cynicism about the medical profession, but there is evidence that physicians aim to relieve the suffering of their patients (HILTON, 70-86). Indeed, Philopirio and Misomedon both find much to criticize, but Philopirio's suggestions to Misomedon and his family are directed to mitigating their misery. Philopirio suggests that other physicians cause more pain because they base their practice

²³A *Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions*. Second Edition: Corrected and Enlarged by the Author (London 1730), 46-47. Future references are to this edition and cited in the text.

²⁴Hilton, 168; quoting Ilza Veith, *Hysteria: The History of a Disease* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 154.

on theory rather than observation. Most of the fundamental principles of medicine have been established already by the ancients, particularly Hippocrates: "they are the Result of solid Observation, will continue to be faithful Guides to all that can make use of them, as long as human Bodies and Nature it self remain" (42). Among the moderns, "the learned *Baglivi*" has insights as well based on observation and practice (42).²⁵ Too many physicians, however, rely on medical theory rather than observation; to demonstrate this point, *The Treatise* cites prescriptions of various medicines that don't necessarily help. An extreme example of irrelevant expertise can be found in the popularity of learning calculus, a trend prompted by the celebrity of Isaac Newton. The fashion for mathematical solutions to medical problems has led to the popularity of a medical chart that recommends the dose of medicines based on the patient's weight. Philopirio contends that Newtonian mathematics has nothing to do with curing people but that physicians are now all learning math for the same reason that a clergyman friend of his took dancing lessons. The clergyman didn't actually want to learn how to dance, but he believed that his ability to move fashionably would make him more acceptable to the elite (178). Philopirio argues that dosing is not related to weight because different people respond to medications in different ways, and so the physician needs to understand the individual patient. Interestingly, *Misomedon* compares the medical chart to recent books on botany. The books focus on exact descriptions of different plants, but they say nothing about their medicinal qualities (197). *Misomedon* is thus puzzled by the purpose of these books. All of these examples resist the fragmentation, professionalization, and specialization that Mandeville sees taking place in medicine. Rather than trying to create systems (that are, according to the interlocutors, profitable), physicians help patients by getting to know them individually. So while Philopirio expresses cynicism (most physicians are in it for the money and make their patients worse), the text nevertheless holds the genuine relief of the patient, rather than the fame of the physician, as the goal.

As mentioned, Mandeville's philosophy of medical practice is modeled by Philopirio's attention to the details of his patient's life story, which leads to the diagnosis. *Misomedon* came into his inheritance at 21, which proved a mixed blessing. He left school and spent the next three years traveling, running up debts. He then married, which helped pay off his debts. He was passionate about his wife, and all day "we study'd nothing, but how to please and divert

²⁵On the influence of Giorgio Baglivi on Mandeville, see Hilton, 49-61. The English translation of his book *The Practice of Physick* (London, 1704) became an important medical text in the eighteenth century.

one another" (3-4). His wife loved clothes; he loved eating; they both loved each other. He never completed his study of the law, for which he had been destined. Just when he had frittered away the entirety of his fortune and then some, he received another inheritance. He turned away from physical pleasures and indulged his literary interests. At 37, after enjoying years of good health, he developed digestive problems, beginning with heartburn and getting worse. This inspired him to embark on numerous visits to medical professionals, but the only elixir that helped him briefly was claret with spices. He became filled with anxiety and started reading medical books searching for relief. He becomes persuaded that he suffered from a venereal disease, but given his passionately monogamous relationship, he knew that this can't be the case (49). In this state of melancholy and distress he found Philopirio.

"Looking back on the Passages of your Life," Philopirio diagnoses, "you'll easily find out your self the Procatartick Causes of your Distemper. The Irregularities of your Youth having led the Way by shaking the Frame of your Constitution" (208), especially in marrying young. People don't sufficiently recognize, Philopirio argues, that married pleasures are just as exhausting as illicit ones. "The next thing that has exhausted and spoil'd the Tone of your Spirits, was the Labour of the Brain in that five or six Years hard Study," the doctor concludes (212). The cures, such as bleeding and pharmaceuticals prescribed by other physicians, have caused the rest of his maladies. Philopirio offers a detailed account of the internal mechanisms that cause all of Misomedon's disorders, but the main point is that Misomedon's physical and emotional disorders are bound up with each other and that he would feel a lot better if he took fewer pharmaceuticals prescribed by other physicians, stopped reading medical books, and got more exercise. Reading about disease, according to Philopirio, is one of the leading causes of hypochondria.

While Misomedon is an extreme example of one who suffers from anxiety and depression, for Philopirio (and I suspect for Mandeville) commercial modernity makes everyone sick. Those fortunate enough to escape the drudgery of labor face emotional and digestive disorders: "whether a Man has an Estate to live upon, is a Merchant, an Artists, or follows any other Trade or Employment that allows a Sedentary Life, so he but over-charges his Head with Business, and keeps the rest of his Body unactive," which leads to the low energy, melancholy, and heartburn. "Immoderate Grief, Cares, Troubles and Disappointments" often cause diseases (219). Mandeville thus advocates for a holistic view of the body and mind, resisting the Enlightenment tendency, as exemplified in the

new science of botany, toward fragmentation. Like Robinson Crusoe's father, who warns his son against the emotional cost of ambition and greed (although Robinson doesn't listen), Philopirio explains the psychological discomfort that prosperity brings: "the keeping not only of Riches, but even moderate Possessions, is always attended with Care. Those that enjoy 'em are most at leisure to reflect, besides that their Wishes and Desires being larger, themselves are more likely to be offended at a great man Passages of Life, than People of lower Fortunes, who have seldom higher Ends, than what they are continually employed about, the getting of their daily Bread" (119-220). While it has never been true that the poor, as Philopirio claims, are so focused on meeting their daily needs that "Vexations of the Mind have not so great an Influence over them" (220), the *Treatise* proposes, in ways that align with *The Fable of the Bees*, that commercial modernity is generating new kinds of emotional, and thus physical, forms of suffering, beginning with envy and status competition. Philopirio argues that Misomedon's problems stemmed from vexations and poor lifestyle choices enabled by his large and early inheritance.

Philopirio's ultimate goal is to alleviate Misomedon's suffering, which his analysis promises to do by the end of the *Treatise* by persuading the patient to stop wasting his money on quacks who prescribe unhelpful cures and to make some changes in his lifestyle. Philopirio notes that he could have been making more money by taking on fewer patients and spending less time with them, but he understands that no two cases are the same. Spending more time with each patient leads to better outcomes. Philopirio models the advice he gives to Misomedon by acknowledging that he practices this way because it is more enjoyable and less stressful. Finally, *The Treatise* itself is part of the cure. Philip Hilton insightfully suggests that *The Treatise* literalizes the metaphor of the satirist as a physician: in *The Treatise*, "the doctor and his patient establish that the latter's hypochondriac condition was induced by the effect of mental effort inspired by an interest in matters medical: the texts Misomedon used in his medical studies proving contagious." *The Treatise* could have the same effect of inducing imaginary symptoms as a medical text itself. As Hilton points out, Robert Burton warned his readers to skip part of his book if they were vulnerable to melancholy themselves (HILTON, 104-106). The satirist also has a role in the alleviation of suffering. Pierre Bayle, who Mandeville admired, suggests in his *Dictionary Historical and Critical* that satire functions as a prophylactic to the detrimental effects of serious study (HILTON, 104-106). Philip Hilton suggests that Mandeville includes levity in his *Treatise* to prevent "the potential for derangement inherent in all books." (HILTON, 107). Thus Mandeville at-

tempts to protect the reader from the emotional dangers of his medical treatise. None of this brings Mandeville any closer to the sentimentalists of this age; it suggests, however, that while Mandeville looks unsparingly at the unhappiness around him, he aspires through his writing and his medical practice to find ways to manage it.

Philopirio's recommended cure – that Misomedon and his family get more exercise and indulge less – might sound like it departs from the *Fable*, which condemns reformers who condemn indulgences, for the wise physician here wants the unhappy couple to moderate their consumption. But for Mandeville, I think the critical difference is that restraint is generally good for the individual state of mind, but *others* benefit from those who overindulge. In *The Fable*, Mandeville observes how businesses that sell indulgent products support the economy but at the same time can damage consumers; he calls gin, for example, "liquid poison" (*Fable* 1: 90). Nevertheless, Mandeville insists that cheap gin gives the poor the same opportunities for the pleasure of drunkenness as expensive wines offer to the rich. He does not moralize about the consumption of gin, but at the same time recognizes its threat to health. For Mandeville, medical practice has been deformed by doctors competing with each other for supremacy rather than focusing on patient well-being: Galen aimed to raise "himself above any of his Contemporaries"; others for the same reason promote cures and publish tomes without ever seeing "the Inside of a human body" (*Treatise*, 64). As we learn in the *Fable*, doctors put their own profit over saving lives. The private vices that have public benefits are desires disapproved of by reformers and that also in many cases damage the desiring subject, but those vices tend to include personal indulgences rather deliberate cruelty or needless violence.

Civil society is crucial to the human satisfaction of desire, as there are few luxuries or pleasures in the state of nature, but it exacts a high emotional and physical cost. This theme runs through *The Fable*, *The Treatise*, and "The Planter's Charity." In each of these texts, the author explores an intolerable, or barely tolerable, form of human suffering. The satirist and the physician do not possess the cure. They may, however, have some recommendations for change.

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