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Chapter Title	Mandeville on Pride and Animal Nature	
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Abstract	<p>Mandeville's first publication – the thesis <i>Disputatio Philosophica de Brutorum Operationibus</i> (1689) – advocated the Cartesian position that both denied feeling and sensation, let alone thought, to non-human animals and stressed the inherent distinctiveness of the conscious sensory and inferential capacities of human agents. Yet his later writings subscribed to a directly opposed Enlightenment position. His translation of La Fontaine's <i>Fables</i> drew comparisons between humans and animal throughout, and by the time of the <i>Fable of the Bees</i>, Mandeville was clearly in the camp stressing the continuity of human and non-human animal nature, a tradition following Hobbes, Montaigne and La Rochefoucauld, and later to include Helvétius, de la Mettrie and Hume. The function of pride in Mandeville's ethics is examined in terms of this debate, framed by Bayle's famous 'Rorarius' entry in his <i>Dictionary</i>. With this background in place, Mandeville's claim regarding the psychological role of pride as the 'other Recompense...[of] the vain Satisfaction of making our Species appear more exalted and remote from that of other Animals' is then discussed. It is presented as a critique of Shaftesbury's discussion in the <i>Characteristics</i> relating to the norm of fulfilling one's human nature.</p>	
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## Chapter 10 1

### Mandeville on Pride and Animal Nature 2

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**Keywords** Mandeville • Animals • Bayle • Shaftesbury • Human nature 20

#### 10.1 Introduction 21

It is well known that Mandeville's first piece of writing – the thesis *Disputatio Philosophica de Brutorum Operationibus* (1689) – endorsed Descartes's claim that non-human animals are incapable of higher consciousness, thought and reason.<sup>1</sup> It is equally well known that Mandeville's later writings seem premised upon a view of human beings as fundamentally closer in nature to non-human animals. Mandeville 26

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<sup>1</sup>Mandeville (1689).

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was not the first to suggest that the picture of human beings as higher than the animals plays a strategic role in philosophical and theological belief systems. This view would have been familiar to any reader of Montaigne (2003). I want to suggest though that the task of distinguishing oneself from non-human animals was a central theme in the *Fable of the Bees* (Mandeville 1924). I will also argue that the later development by Mandeville of the distinction between *self-love* and *self-liking* was important just because of the way in which it reinforced the former theme. These psychological mechanisms explain the prevalence of *pride* in our cognitive lives, and the latter is for Mandeville the source of our sense of self-importance compared to other animals.<sup>2</sup>

One might have questioned why pride alone should have such an influential role. A first thought is that Mandeville neglects the sense in which taking pride in one's characteristics might itself just be an instance of a more general capacity peculiar to human beings, which is that of self-conscious, critical and evaluative judgment upon their own mental states and character. It is this capacity, as Butler maintained, that ultimately *does* render us a distinct type of creature (Butler 1983). Once one allows such a distinct capacity of evaluative judgment is possible, it is not at all obvious that it functions primarily in accordance with the motivation of pride. There is no doubt that pride can on a particular occasion be the motivating factor that determines why we make the self-evaluation that we do. Nevertheless, this does not support the stronger thesis that the fundamental or central motivation for positive self-evaluations is itself that of pride. It also seems to disregard the obvious point that our prideful motivations can themselves become the object of our critical evaluations. We can make an evaluative appraisal of our own susceptibility to pride, and direct our behaviour in opposite ways as a result.

Mandeville's response, I'd suggest, is that this entire capacity to take an evaluative view upon one's desires is itself a fundamentally natural phenomenon that has its roots in the proto-evolutionary disposition of self-liking.<sup>3</sup> The primary origin of this response is the valuing of oneself and one's own interests. In this way, Mandeville seeks to re-naturalize that which seemed distinctly *non-natural* about human beings, and to reinforce his initial claims. In arguing for this claim, I'll first outline briefly the problem of the status of animals in Early Modern philosophy. Secondly, I'll consider Shaftesbury's notion of a 'higher self' as a possible target of Mandeville's attack. Thirdly, and finally, I'll outline what I take to be Mandeville's central objection.

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<sup>2</sup>For a discussion of the importance of pride in Mandeville's theory see (Heath 1998).

<sup>3</sup>A similar claim is made in (Welchman 2007).

## 10.2 The Problem of Animals

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There is a somewhat standard Early Modern narrative regarding animals that I would claim is of special relevance to this theme. I'm mentioning the following varied themes as I think they all play a role for understanding the context of Mandeville's critique in the *Fable*. It begins with Montaigne's opposition to the scholastic view of the human as possessing a peculiarly rational soul over animals' 'sensitive' souls. His reasoning went broadly along the same lines that Hume would adopt, drawing upon the observable analogies between human and animal behaviour. It is Montaigne who is the immediate target of Descartes's denial that animals have *any* higher representational capacities resembling that of humans, and that 'after the error of those who deny God . . . there is none that leads weak minds further from the straight path of virtue than that of imagining that the souls of the beasts are of the same nature as ours . . .'.<sup>4</sup>

Descartes's rhetorical grouping of atheism and immorality with the denial of a demarcation between humans and animals is notable, and it was arguably the theological implications of the Cartesian characterization of animals that interested Pierre Bayle, who in his *Dictionary* entry 'Rorarius' detailed, sometimes sardonically, the purposes that Descartes's position could be put to. One unpleasant angle concerned theodicy: infant pain and premature death could be explained as an evil that God allowed in the world on account of those infants' original sin. As such, the conceptual linking of possible pain to creatures with souls that are capable of sin is maintained. The possibility of animal pain thus presents a theological problem. One must either attribute souls to animals (and what's more, sin) in order to explain their apparent pain, or one must simply deny that the apparent pain behaviour they manifest *is* real pain behaviour. Descartes's endorsement of the latter option and his denial of pain to animals then comfortably fit a theological agenda.

As Bayle points out though, this move has the drawback of being entirely unbelievable. We simply do make true judgments based on observed behaviour when attributing such conscious capacities to other *human* beings, and as Montaigne, Hume and others point out, it is just this same kind of evidence that is at stake when observing non-human animal behaviour. The risks run in two directions. One can either just deny that the types of observed behaviour – person-recognition, inference, anticipation of events, communication, and so on – are evidence of a conscious soul, or one can accept that they are. If one accepts that they are good evidence, then the world is vastly more populated with souls than initially appeared to be the case. If one denies that they are good evidence, then the worry is that they are no longer good evidence for the existence of human souls either, and then the same reasoning could be adopted by a materialist who renders the world far less populated with souls than initially appeared to be the case.

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<sup>4</sup>Discourse on Method, Part Five in Descartes (1985, 141).

The question of just what occurs in animal consciousness was discussed at length 103  
 too, and here too we can find disturbingly *ad hoc* demarcations. For Locke for 104  
 example, judgment is “the putting *Ideas* together, or separating them from one 105  
 another in the mind”.<sup>5</sup> For Locke, all judgment is the act of seeing when two 106  
 ideas that we have acquired through sensation ‘agree’ or ‘disagree’.<sup>6</sup> The most 107  
 explicit connection between human perception and that of animals occurs in Book II, 108  
 Chapter XI of the *Essay*. Having attributed some basic memory capacity to animals 109  
 in the previous chapter, Locke now considers whether animals are capable of the 110  
 slightly higher cognitive functions of the *comparison* of ideas, the *compounding* (i.e. 111  
 the process of complex representation formation) and the *abstraction* of ideas (i.e. 112  
 the formation of concepts from non-conceptual representational input. For Locke 113  
 the function of comparison is the base cognitive capacity which allows for all the 114  
 representations of relation. In summary, Locke maintains that ‘[b]rutes compare but 115  
 imperfectly’; ‘[b]rutes compound but little’ and ‘[b]rutes abstract not’.<sup>7</sup> It is the last 116  
 of these, abstraction, that Locke focuses upon, since it is this activity that marks the 117  
 distinctness of human being’s higher cognitive capacity- it is the having of ‘general 118  
 ideas’ that ‘puts a perfect distinction betwixt man and brutes’ . 119

Locke’s theory of judgment though proved to be a different and highly influential 120  
 theory amongst the hyper-empiricist tradition of French materialism. In his *Traité* 121  
*des Sensations*, Condillac would praise Locke for his empiricist account of the 122  
 sensory origin of our ideas, but also criticizes him – Locke should have seen the 123  
 next obvious step, that ‘they [the faculties of the soul] could derive their origin 124  
 from sensation itself’.<sup>8</sup> Condillac has no doubt that [j]udgment, reflection, desires, 125  
 passions, etc. are only sensation itself which is transformed differently.<sup>9</sup> An even 126  
 more radically sensationist tract came from Helvétius, whose 1758 *de l’Esprit* 127  
 similarly argued in a reductive model of human beings’ judgment to the capacity for 128  
 sensation. Helvetius’s *de L’Esprit*, De La Mettrie’s *Machine Man* and d’Holbach’s 129  
*System of Nature* were viewed by many, (for example by both Rousseau and Kant), 130  
 as the over-exuberant nadir of the trend of opposing scholastic models of the self 131  
 with a reductive model comparable to non-human animals. 132

For Kant for example, it is the human being’s capacity for rational *judgment* 133  
 that is key. As he puts it, ‘reason raises him above the animals, and the more he 134  
 acts according to it, the more moral and at the same time freer he becomes’ (29: 135  
 900).<sup>10</sup> This latter idea, that through our reason we can become *more free* is part 136  
 of an Augustinian tradition that is retained in the Early Modern period. Crucial to 137

<sup>5</sup>Locke (1975, IV.xiv.4).

<sup>6</sup>Of course it is a more complicated question as to what Locke really thought was involved in the act of judgment – for a discussion of some of the difficulties, see (Owen 1999).

<sup>7</sup>Locke (1975, II.xi.5 ff.).

<sup>8</sup>Condillac, *Traité des Sensations*, quoted in (O’Neal 1996, 16–17).

<sup>9</sup>Condillac, *Traité des Sensations*, quoted in *ibid.*, 19.

<sup>10</sup>Kant (1997, 267, Ak. 29: 900).

this picture is Augustine's distinction between *libertas minor* and *libertas maior*.<sup>11</sup> 138  
 The former indicates the power of free choice that is available to human fallen 139  
 subjects capable of sin. The latter indicates the perfection of our power of free choice 140  
 whereby the representation of the good is so evident to the subject's consciousness 141  
 that it is constitutionally incapable of freely choosing otherwise. Peter Lombard 142  
 gives a typical expression to the position in the claim that 'a choice [*arbitrium*] 143  
 that is quite unable to sin will be the freer'.<sup>12</sup> The progression of human moral 144  
 improvement involves the aspiration to transform the human *libertas minor* into the 145  
*libertas maior* of the angels, whereby 'after the confirmation of beatitude there is 146  
 to be a free will in man by which he will not be able to sin'.<sup>13</sup> The theme was 147  
 picked up in Leibniz's *Nouveaux Essais*, where Locke's representative claims – to 148  
 Leibniz's representative's approval – that to 'be determined by reason to the best 149  
 is to be the most free'<sup>14</sup> and moreover that 'those superior beings . . . who enjoy 150  
 perfect happiness . . . are more steadily determined in their choice of good than we 151  
 and yet we have no reason to think they are . . . less free, than we are'.<sup>15</sup> Kant's later 152  
 distinction between the power of human choice and that of a pure 'holy will' clearly 153  
 echoes that of the scholastic distinction. 154

There are two familiar traditions then with regard to the relation between human 155  
 and non-human animals. On the one hand, there are more theologically inspired 156  
 accounts whereby human beings carry something of the divine in them. On this 157  
 account human beings have duties firstly to identify what aspects of their nature are 158  
 the higher ones, and secondly to conform their conduct to the standard of that higher 159  
 nature. The other tradition self-consciously attacks this position, and insists either 160  
 on the falsity of the picture of the higher self, or of the folly of aspiring to conform 161  
 one's behaviour to a picture of angelic perfection, or both. For example, Montaigne 162  
 concludes the *Essais* with an admonition: whatever one's religious beliefs, the 163  
 mimicking of some construed divine standard of moral perfection produces an 164  
 entirely opposite effect than the one initially intended. When one has the ambition 165  
 to behave as a higher being would, one is left with nothing of substance and in fact 166  
 the result, Montaigne famously claims, is a distortion of our moral behaviour: 167

They want to be besides themselves, want to escape from their humanity. That *is* madness; 168  
 instead of changing their Form into an angel's, they change it into a beast's; they crash 169  
 down instead of winding high. These humours soaring to transcendency terrify me as do 170  
 great unapproachable heights.<sup>16</sup> 171

<sup>11</sup> See for example see (De Correptione et Gratia, 12:33 in Augustine 2010, 214) and (Enchiridion, Ch. XXVIII, para. 105, in Augustine 2006, 402).

<sup>12</sup> Lombard (1981 Book 2, Distinction 25, Ch. 4 463, quoted from Pink 2011, 548).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, Part I, Q. 62, Art. 8, and Anselm's *De libertate arbitrii*, I.

<sup>14</sup> Leibniz (1997, Bk. II, Ch. XXI, 198).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* It is similarly claimed 'that God himself cannot choose what is not good; the freedom of the Almighty hinders not his being determined by what is best' (*ibid.*).

<sup>16</sup> Montaigne (2003, 1268 Bk. III, Ch. 13, "On Experience").

Montaigne's claim amounts to an ironic inversion of the theocentric paradigm: by having the correspondence of one's will with a divine standard as the proximate goal of moral improvement, one in fact undermines the very possibility of that improvement.<sup>17</sup>

More often than not though, human beings' autonomous capacity for rational evaluative *judgment* was viewed as distinctive of the higher self. Thus in Kant's famous claims in the introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, that '[o]ur age is the genuine age of criticism, to which everything must submit'<sup>18</sup> and here Kant is clear that religion is no exception. Kant's 'tribunal of reason' metaphor echoes Bayle's claim that 'Reason, speaking to us by the Axioms of natural Light, or metaphysical Truths, is the supreme Tribunal, and final Judge without Appeal of whatever's propos'd to the human Mind' (Bayle 2005, 67 First Part, Chapter 1). Yet of course the same metaphor was appealed to in d'Holbach's *System of Nature* in 1770 where he taunts believers to 'cite the Divinity himself before the tribunal of reason'.<sup>19</sup>

### 10.3 Shaftesbury's Naturalism and the Higher Self

Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* in many ways hinges on this theme of the distinction between higher and lower animals. He focuses upon the idea of the capacity for evaluative judgment upon our desires as key to that demarcation. For Shaftesbury, the distinction is supposed to be one made *within nature* and yet is still in favour of there being a special higher place for human minds. In nature there is 'a system of all animals, an animal order or economy according to which the animal affairs are regulated and disposed' (Shaftesbury 1999, 169). What it is to be a human being in

<sup>17</sup>This theme reaches a conventional climax in Kant's Critical Philosophy, where as per usual, a middle position is put forward: the idea of such a perfect being (which Kant calls 'holy wills' is entirely coherent, and can serve as some kind of indeterminate aspirational target; however, Kant's restrictions on the scope of our knowledge entails that we cannot know anything about how that perfect being reasons or what courses of action might be pursued. As such, the demand to derive practical guidance from one's own rational resources is retained.

It might be noted that frequently something akin to the same complaint is leveled from one tradition to the other. This is that the practical reactions that are involved in each conception of proper human agency are in some sense automatic. The objection to the humanist tradition is that the purely animalistic conception of human beings reduces them to purely reactive agents, unfree creatures responding to sensory stimuli in increasingly complex, but nevertheless fully determined manners. The objection to the theological tradition is that it renders human beings automata in their unquestioning deference to theologically determined moral norms. Thus we find in Bishop Butler's sermons an attempt to circumvent this worry by appeal to a fundamental capacity that is distinctive human beings to take an evaluative view upon their evidence and to form their own judgment.

<sup>18</sup>Kant (1998, Axi).

<sup>19</sup>Holbach (1889, 312, Part II, Ch. 10, "Is Atheism Compatible with Morality?").

this animal order is to be a creature who can take a view on the various desires and impulses that it otherwise shares with animals. In fact, Shaftesbury and Mandeville appear to be in agreement with the thought that the desires and interests that we hold are themselves morally neutral, and that they only receive a moral value in virtue of the intentions that lie behind them:

So that if a creature be generous, kind, constant, compassionate, yet if he cannot reflect on what he himself does or sees others do so as to take notice of what is worthy or honest and make that notice or conception of worth and honesty to be an object of his affection, he has not the character of being virtuous.<sup>20</sup>

Shaftesbury argues that the only way to realize 'divineness of a character' is with an inward turn to examine the motives behind one's judgments and that 'it is hard to imagine what honour can arise to the Deity from the praises of creatures who are unable to discern what is praiseworthy or excellent in their own kind'.<sup>21</sup> Here Shaftesbury links the theme of the self-evaluation of motivations with that of the aspiration already discussed, that of there being a duty to examine the higher aspects of one's own distinct species and to maximize those aspects in one's behaviour.

Shaftesbury even echoes Augustine's *libertas maior* tradition but unlike Augustine, Locke and Leibniz, Shaftesbury appears to think that such moral perfection is possible, and more so by virtue of cultivation and education:

A man of thorough good breeding, whatever else he be, is incapable of doing a rude or brutal action. He never deliberates in this case or considers of the matter by prudential rules of self-interest and advantage. He acts from his nature, in a manner necessarily and without reflection, and, if he did not, it were impossible for him to answer his character or be found that truly wellbred man on every occasion. It is the same with the honest man. He cannot deliberate in the case of a plain villainy.<sup>22</sup>

These elements relate to an overall Stoic theme in Shaftesbury's thought, which is that happiness and virtue align when the individual is following the essential nature of one's own self. In the *Soliloquy*, he writes:

[T]here is no expression more generally used in a way of compliment to great men and princes than that . . . 'they have acted like themselves and suitably to their own genius and character'. The compliment, it must be owned, sounds well. No one suspects it. For what person is there who in his imagination joins not something worthy and deserving with his true and native self, as often as he is referred to it and made to consider 'who he is'?<sup>23</sup>

Shaftesbury compares human beings who have lost the understanding of who their 'true and native self' to animals with birth defects, those 'animals [who] appear unnatural and monstrous when they lose all their proper instincts . . . [and who] pervert those functions or capacities bestowed by nature'. When this happens to a human being, even the effect, Shaftesbury claims, can only be misery for the person:

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<sup>20</sup>Shaftesbury (1999, 173).

<sup>21</sup>Shaftesbury (1999, 22).

<sup>22</sup>Shaftesbury (1999, 60).

<sup>23</sup>Shaftesbury (1999, 125).



How wretched must it be, therefore, for man, of all other creatures, to lose that sense and feeling which is proper to him as a man and suitable to his character and genius.<sup>24</sup>

Someone who is realizing all his first-order desires but not by attending to his second-order evaluation of them is, Shaftesbury contends, as miserable as a human being can be. Conversely, we can attribute to him the Stoic thought that someone who denies themselves their first-order desires can nevertheless be content in a higher sense, just because that self-denial is a result of his following his second-order evaluation of what 'is proper to him as a man'.

**10.4 Pride and Self-Liking**

Of course, in order to live in harmony with one's true higher self, one must first identify one's true nature. This in turn presupposes that there is a higher self with which we can identify.<sup>25</sup> Many thinkers before Mandeville had the thought that human beings differ from other animals only in degree of rational capacity and not in kind. Mandeville however was among the first to argue that our desire to think of ourselves as higher than non-rational animals was itself the covert motivating factor behind a range of seemingly different behaviours. In the *Fable of the Bees*, the very idea of virtue is provided a genealogy that has its origins not in the state of nature, or in the very idea of civil society but rather is a concept that is formed purely for the functional role of demarcating human nature from that of other animals.

As is well known, in the *Enquiry Into the Origin of Moral Virtue*, Mandeville presented an account whereby clever politicians manipulated human beings' susceptibility to flattery for the purposes of creating behaviour that was more beneficial to those in power. The trick was to convince those subjects to willingly endorse the idea that 'it was more beneficial for every Body to conquer than indulge his Appetites'.<sup>26</sup> It is surely possible to force people to abstain from some desires in order to realize a collective good, but here Mandeville is considering a different project. This is the project of bringing people around so that they themselves endorse a contradictory notion of human self-fulfilment. The notion is contradictory to the degree that it requires convincing someone that it is in that individual's own interest to ignore the satisfaction of his own other interests.

This is a trickier proposition than that of forcing them to abstain from certain desires, since it in effect requires turning those individuals into the most enthusiastic practitioners in the blocking of their own interests. As Mandeville says 'it is

<sup>24</sup>Shaftesbury (1999, 215).

<sup>25</sup>If Mandeville is maintaining a sincere Augustinian position, then he might still identify with the denial of a higher self. We are fallen creatures after all. The idea that firstly we can on our own identify the higher self and secondly that we can then again on our own realize that higher self, is the hubris that Mandeville might be opposing.

<sup>26</sup>Mandeville (1988a, 1:42).

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impossible by Force alone to make [the human being] tractable'. The goal in any case is not that of imposing a desire to resist another particular desire, but is rather more ambitious. The goal is to inculcate a desire to resist all desires. The desire that is inculcated must be flexible to the infinite varieties of desire that can be afforded us. In this way the goal is to create in human beings a disposition to be infinitely self-denying. The demand that human beings be made 'tractable' is a high demand, and so could only be done by appeal to some of the deepest features of their actual nature. The way humans are made tractable is through flattery, by pointing out that the best they could do was to be themselves and not to be a lower kind of creature than the kind that one is:

Which being done, they laid before them how unbecoming it was the Dignity of such sublime Creatures to be solicitous about gratifying those Appetites, which they had in common with the Brutes, and at the same time unmindful of those higher Qualities that gave them the pre-eminence over all visible Beings.<sup>27</sup>

The clever politicians then 'extoll'd the Excellency of our Nature above other Animals', On Mandeville's account there is raised then the feature of the shame in the idea of acting as a different kind of creature than the one that one really is. If humans do act differently, they only maintain 'the Shape of Men, differ'd from Brutes in nothing but their outward Figure' (Mandeville 1988a, 1:44). The concept of virtue itself is then explained in the *Enquiry* as defined in terms of the human/animal demarcation:

[T]hey give the Name of V I R T U E 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.<sup>28</sup>

Since animals are incapable of resisting their passions, and since human beings are so capable, it is put forward that it is not only a positive thing to resist the passions, but in fact the definitive characteristic of human beings. The clever politicians simply baptize behaviour that distinguishes humans from animals with a concept and thereby creates a notion of moral behaviour.

The advantage of this theory is that it presents an account whereby a new desire is created, the desire to resist one's desires in order to aid of becoming an authentic self. Since this latter desire is presented as the pre-eminently human one, it means that those who had the most boisterous self-belief in their own importance will now become the agents who are the most willing to deny themselves, since 'being human' has now been reconceived as a competition in self-denial. Therefore, 'the fiercest, most resolute, and best among them, [will] endure a thousand Inconveniences, and undergo as many Hardships, that they may have the pleasure of counting themselves Men . . . '.

Mandeville of course adapts this theory in the later edition of the *Fable* with his distinction between *self-love* and *self-liking*. The earlier account stressed the

<sup>27</sup>Mandeville (1988a, 1:42–43).

<sup>28</sup>Mandeville (1988a, 1:48–49).

vulnerability of human beings to their sense of pride. The later account emphasized 306  
 the natural mechanism in virtue of which this vulnerability arises. Self-liking 307  
 involves that 'that every one should have a real liking to its own Being, superior to 308  
 what they have to any other' and that 'Nature has given them an Instinct, by which 309  
 every Individual values itself above its real worth' (Mandeville 1988b, 2:130). 310

There are at least three important elements to this conception. Firstly, for 311  
 Mandeville, self-liking is as natural to human beings as self-love. Self-liking 312  
 is a biological evolutionary response that inspires a person with 'a transporting 313  
 Eagerness to overcome the Obstacles that hinder him in his great Work of Self- 314  
 Preservation'.<sup>29</sup> As such, it cannot be shaken off – it forms a bedrock disposition 315  
 for human beings, one in accordance with which they co-ordinate and manage 316  
 their other beliefs. It can no more be abandoned, Mandeville thinks, than the 317  
 simple attitude just to do the things that please us can be abandoned from our 318  
 consciousness. What's more, just like self-love, it is not exclusive to human beings. 319  
 Mandeville takes pains to make the comparison here with non-human animals. 320  
 He suggests that self-liking behaviour is ubiquitous among other animals and that 321  
 'many Creatures shew this Liking, when, for want of understanding them, we don't 322  
 perceive it: When a Cat washes her Face, and a Dog licks himself clean, they adorn 323  
 themselves as much as it is in their Power'.<sup>30</sup> 324

Secondly, it is a valuing activity just like the one identified by Shaftesbury – it 325  
 is not merely the first-order interests in our consciousnesses but the second-order 326  
 concern that we take towards those first-order interests. Thirdly, there is the fact that 327  
 self-liking is essentially *non*-rational. It is a biological trait that provides a helpful 328  
 role with regard to the demand for self-preservation. However, there is no obvious 329  
 intrinsic value to one's own interest that makes *its* satisfaction more valuable than 330  
 the satisfaction of another's. Yet we each naturally believe that it is so. Thus 331  
 Mandeville holds that it is an entirely natural phenomenon to engage in an entirely 332  
 non-rational evaluation or qualitative weighting of one set of desires against another. 333

The consequence of this picture is that human beings' are naturally well- 334  
 positioned for manipulation. They are primed to accept a belief that will explain 335  
 the priority and preeminence of their self-centered value. What's more, given 336  
 the cognitive dissonance that is experienced upon one's failure to satisfy all 337  
 of his desires, the subject has two options: either give up on the idea that 338  
 one's own interests are in fact peculiarly important, or invest in a belief system 339  
 that explains how the non-satisfaction of one set of interests can in fact be 340  
 an instance of realizing a different and more valuable interest that the subject 341  
 possesses. As such the subject is naturally disposed to engage in a re-evaluation 342  
 of which desires ought to be satisfied and which desires ought not to be satisfied 343  
 as part of one's overall account of the preservation of one's elite status as a 344  
 human being. It is for an entirely *natural* reason that human beings are willing 345

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<sup>29</sup>Mandeville (1988b, 2:176).

<sup>30</sup>Mandeville (1988b, 2:132).

to be happy with 'the vain Satisfaction of making our Species appear more exalted  
and remote from that of other animals than it really is'.<sup>31</sup>

The ironic theme – that human beings' need to deny their natural origins itself  
has a natural origin – is retained in the second volume of the *Fable*. To give just  
two examples: in the Fourth Dialogue, the origin of politeness is summarized as  
'the Management of Self-liking set forth the Excellency of our Species beyond all  
other Animals'.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, when discussing the human tendency to express anger  
through scolding and insulting others in the Sixth Dialogue, Cleomenes claims that  
the effect of insulting is twofold. On the one hand, it makes the recipient of the insult  
feel degraded; on the other hand, it makes the insulter seem self-controlled, because  
they have chosen to express their anger by merely engaging in verbal insults and not  
through unlawful violence:

Therefore where People call Names, without doing further Injury, it is a sign not only that  
they have wholesome Laws amongst them against open Force and Violence, but likewise  
that they obey and stand in awe of them; and a Man begins to be a tolerable Subject,  
and is nigh half civiliz'd, that in his Passion will take up and content himself with this  
paultry Equivalent; which never was done without great Self-denial at first: For otherwise  
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.<sup>33</sup>

Cleomenes goes on to say that since it is horses that kick and dogs that bite, there  
is a value in expressing anger verbally, which is that one distinguishes oneself from  
those animals.

## 10.5 Conclusion

On Mandeville's later account, human beings are already naturally in a position  
whereby they are willing to accept some belief system that can offer a coherent  
narrative that explains their importance to themselves. On the one hand, it must  
explain what the subject really wants to believe – namely, that one's own agency  
has a priority over that of others. On the other hand, it must explain why the non-  
satisfaction of one's own desires might have come to be thought of not as a real value  
in itself. What the human subject demands is a narrative that can justify *ex post facto*  
this default commitment to his own egotism while he himself undermines its own  
realization. As such Mandeville uses the Early Modern theme of the distinction of  
animals in a radical and imaginative way, as a crucial element in his own explanation  
of the source of the concept of virtue.

<sup>31</sup>Mandeville (1988a, 1:145).

<sup>32</sup>Mandeville (1988b, 2:175).

<sup>33</sup>Mandeville (1988b, 2:295).

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- AQ1. Please check the term “that that”.
- AQ2. Please confirm the inserted publisher location for Kant (1997).
- AQ3. Please provide publisher location for Mandeville (1689).

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