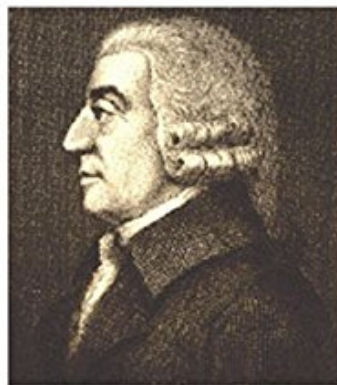


The Fable of the Bees

Bernard Mandeville

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Bernard Mandeville : The Fable of the Bees before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fable of the Bees:

23 of 23 people found the following review helpful. Unmasking Social Convention By Ian Mackechnie Mandeville does a sterling job in unmasking social convention. His fable, upon which he provides his own commentary, stripes the outer layers of social convention from the reader and examines man from the perspective of his basic selfishness. Mandeville has been criticized by many, whom he recognized, that have not even read his works. His work is still now largely neglected and unread., partly due to the quaintness of his 18th century writing style. But what a treasure awaits those who have the patience and perseverance to read this delightful work of ruthless honesty. For example, Mandeville describes marriage mainly in terms of lust, not much different from the modern evolutionary psychologists. Prostitution is defended in pragmatic terms in that it 'protects' the family! Rulers who devote more time to the outward trapping of power and neglect such things as an adequate defense or police system come in for a serving. And on and on it goes ...Mandeville is important in that the likes of Hume and Adam Smith were not only aware of his work, but influenced, in a positive way, by it. Mandeville, in terms of the development of our

understanding of morals and society, cannot be neglected. If you want to look society... and ourselves... honestly in the face, then this is the book. My advice is buy the Libery Fund 2 volume edition. 24 of 56 people found the following review helpful. Interesting. By G MI first read an extract from this in second year English in university, and thought the author had some interesting ideas. Although the blurb casts the book as part of the great age of 17th-century English satire, it's more of a straight critique of society than a sarcastic diatribe, and probably doesn't warrant comparison with say, Swift's *A Modest Proposal*. From what I can remember, the book is all about the changes taking place in society at the time, especially with the growth in the importance of commerce. Much of it concerns hypocrisy and some moral paradoxes that seem to go unnoticed. Mandeville's starting-point is to liken society to a hive, wherein the behaviour of the bees, though individually selfish, aggregates to form a kind of common good. The book was banned by the Grand Jury of Middlessex, and I suspect that much of the controversy resulted from readers mistaking description for prescription. In other words, people seem to have concluded that Mandeville was saying that this is how society ought to behave, whereas he was merely making observations. His ideas are interesting, but I can't agree with all of them. One egregious error occurs when he makes the sweeping generalisation that morality is frequently selfishly motivated, using the following argument. Most people, if they see a baby falling from a high window, will rush to try and save it, not out of the child's interests, but merely to spare themselves the pain of seeing the child injured or killed. The next obvious question never seems to enter Mandeville's mind: if people are truly selfish, how would they have developed the empathy to feel the child's pain that strongly to begin with? So: a good commentator but perhaps not a brilliant thinker. 2 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Horrible. I suspect this ebook was produced with substandard ... By will563 Horrible. I suspect this ebook was produced with substandard OCR software. It is mostly gibberish, with a few words mixed in here and there. There is another version in the Kindle store. Hopefully it is better.

This is the extended edition including* an extensive biography and bibliography of Mr. de Mandeville. *The Fable of The Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* is a book by Bernard Mandeville, consisting of the poem *The Grumbling Hive: or, Knaves turn'd Honest* and prose discussion of it. The poem was published in 1705 and the book first appeared in 1714. The poem elucidates many key principles of economic thought, including division of labor and the invisible hand, seventy years before Adam Smith (indeed, John Maynard Keynes argues Smith was probably referencing Mandeville). It also describes the paradox of thrift centuries before Keynes, and may be seen as part of the school of underconsumption. (courtesy of wikipedia.com)