

and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts, 1990) calls “hidden transcripts”: oppositional practices that are concealed or disguised. Incarcerated people face enormous penalties for overt defiance or rebellion, and volunteers may be barred from prisons for causing trouble. In this context, a yogic study group led by incarcerated women can be a “revolutionary experiment.” The group, described to prison administrators as “address[ing] personal character defects” (246), over time becomes a space to foster solidarity and discuss yoga as a tool for political transformation. The chapter describing this evolution continues the experiment: it is collectively authored by Godrej, who facilitated the group, and two of the group’s leaders, Reighlen Jordan and Maitra (both pseudonyms).

*Freedom Inside?* effectively uses storytelling and everyday language to reach out to a general audience. In particular, Godrej hopes to reach “the very individuals and communities that teach and practice yoga or meditation inside prisons” (p. 18). The book urges prison volunteers and organizations to address the injustices of mass incarceration and adapt their pedagogy to the specific environment of the prison. That may mean incorporating social justice issues in meditation instruction or asking consent before touching a student during yoga practice. As one respondent put it, “Your idea [as a volunteer]—that you can bring healing without acknowledging and healing the *political* damage that has been done to [incarcerated] people—is doing more damage. You’re not seeing them. That’s a form of erasure” (p. 125).

*Freedom Inside?* also contains valuable insights about qualitative research design. Throughout the book, Godrej combines ethnographic research with critical reflections on her observations and methods. She describes the arduous process of gaining approval to attend a prison mindfulness class as a participant-observer, for instance, and critiques IRB protocols as so restrictive and deferential to the rules of the prison system that they limit the dissemination of critical views on incarceration. The book also models creative ways to circumvent the strict limitations on research with incarcerated people.

The book’s appeal to a general audience comes at some cost to its theoretical depth, however. Although Godrej ultimately argues against binary oppositions between compliance and resistance, they frame large sections of the book, such as chapter 5, “‘Rescued by Prison’ or ‘Drinking the Kool-Aid?’: Practicing while Incarcerated,” and chapter 8, “‘Making Them Better Human Beings’ or ‘Stirring the Pot?’ Interviews with Volunteers.” Political theorists may also wish for a deeper theorization of the book’s core concepts. Individual responsibility, for instance, is rightly critiqued as a ploy to justify mass incarceration, but Godrej leaves unexplored what role it might play in nonpunitive responses to harm. Here, the efforts of abolitionist authors such as Mariama Kaba and

Mimi Kim to rethink the meaning of accountability and justice could be illuminating.

But theorists are not the primary audience for *Freedom Inside?* which will be valuable to anyone seeking an empirically grounded, critical account of the contemporary US prison system and the volunteers who are directly involved with it. A powerful example of politically engaged scholarship, *Freedom Inside?* urges us all to think harder about what we can do to dismantle mass incarceration.

**Mandeville’s Fable: Pride, Hypocrisy, and Sociability.** By

Robin Douglass. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023.

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Robin Douglass’s book is an attempt to take “[Bernard] Mandeville’s philosophical credentials seriously” (p. 220). He does this by carefully examining, reconstructing, and, when necessary, fleshing out the arguments Mandeville developed over the course of his tenure as the *enfant terrible*—the “Man-devil”—of eighteenth-century English letters. It may come as a surprise that such an endeavor is needed, given the burgeoning literature on Mandeville and the long-lived notoriety of the notion of “private vices, public benefits,” the subtitle appended to his masterwork, *The Fable of the Bees*. It is surprising, too, because Mandeville’s contemporaries took him seriously: David Hume listed him among those “who have begun to put the science of man on a new footing” (*Treatise*, 1739, introduction). Yet interpreters tend to examine Mandeville in one of two contexts: as an important if somewhat eccentric figure in the development of modern understandings of commercial society or as an important if somewhat eccentric interlocutor for weightier figures in modern moral and political theory—Hume, Adam Smith, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau chief among them. As Douglass points out, however, Mandeville has comparatively little to say about political economy or things economic more generally (p. 223), and the insights into moral and social arrangements on offer in his mature work—the expanded edition of the first *Fable* (1723), the *Fable’s* second volume (1729), and the *Fable’s* “third” volume, 1732’s *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*—are sufficiently rich to warrant and repay close examination.

In *Mandeville’s Fable*, Douglass offers “a sympathetic interpretation and qualified defence” (p. 3) of Mandeville’s moral and social theory. In so doing, this book joins a modest list of those that successfully treat Mandeville in this way, including Hector Monro’s *The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville* (1975) and, of course, the essays and apparatus affixed by F. B. Kaye to the Liberty Fund edition of the *Fable*.

*Mandeville’s Fable* is divided into two parts. The first, “Moral Psychology,” begins by examining Mandeville’s

views on pride and its relation to “self-love” and “self-liking,” his term for our relentless need for the esteem of others. Douglass describes Mandeville’s moral psychology as “pride-centered” (p. 3) but by no means reducible to pride alone; he thus pushes back against both modern interpreters who overemphasize the late turn to “self-liking” and eighteenth-century critics who accused Mandeville of reducing all human behavior to self-love. The most well-known of these critics is Smith, who argues, contra Mandeville, that we are capable of acting from love of virtue and not merely from love of praise. Douglass’s approach allows Mandeville to respond that, although it may be *possible* for the truly virtuous to act from love of virtue alone, the opposite nonetheless remains far more common (pp. 51–52). A naturalistic moral psychology requires something sturdier than the behavior of the rare and virtuous few to explain complex social systems, and Mandeville’s seems well suited for the task.

Chapter 2 contains the claim that will perhaps prove most controversial for specialists: that Mandeville consistently and earnestly held that pride was a “vice” (p. 58). Despite the fact that Mandeville emphasizes the role of pride in the development of civil society, he consistently describes it as a vice and counts it among our frailties. Pride is both *bad* and *necessary*, the low stuff on which finer things are built. Douglass cuts a path between these views by noting that pride, like all passions, can be indulged in excessively and that Mandeville—following Hobbes most notably—wonders that displays of prideful excess have a “propensity to antagonise” (p. 90). As Douglass discusses in the subsequent chapter on sociability, the dangers of pride are made all the more obvious when we consider what great pains we take to hide its presence. His analysis here is commendably clear and careful, but some doubts remain. Mandeville does describe pride as a vice, but he also finds it “incredible” in “how many strange and widely different Miracles” it can perform, and he considers pride, when “artfully rouze[d]” (Mandeville, *Fable II*, pp. 64, 78) as fundamental to the education of gentlemen. More than this, Douglass seems to rescue Mandeville at the cost of some of his potency as a theorist of paradox. The fecundity of pride—its “miraculous” power—and the more general ambivalence with which Mandeville treats virtue and vice seem here to dissipate.

Part II, “Historical Narratives,” examines the several speculative histories Mandeville developed over the course of his later writing. They are indeed “several”: as Douglass explains, Mandeville develops separate and distinct histories of political authority, politeness, virtue, early modern European notions of honor, and even language. Mandeville’s interpreters sometimes run these accounts together; the concepts themselves are similar, and Mandeville wants to attribute their development to similar features of human nature, such as pride or self-regard. Douglass’s contributions here are likewise several. These two chapters carefully untangle these accounts and identify the ways they evolve

(or fail to evolve) over the course of Mandeville’s writing. They are for this reason very useful treatments of Mandeville’s “historical turn” (p. 150) that occupies so much of his late work. In sharply distinguishing the *Fable II* account of the origin of political authority from the earlier *Fable I* treatment of virtue, Douglass recenters what he calls “*the* most important passion” in Mandeville’s account of the origin of society: our “desire of superiority,” our “instinct of sovereignty” (p. 137). This instinct plays a curious and dynamic role in the movement from families to disjointed bands and finally to something like society: it both generates the unruliness that calls out for government and simultaneously provides the motive according to which potential leaders and sovereigns might strive to order and discipline an unruly people. The instinct of sovereignty, in other words, creates both the demand for and the supply of government. These insights bear on whether Mandeville locates the origins of civilization in an enterprising caste of cunning lawgivers and moralists—what Douglass calls the “conspiratorial” view (p. 138)—or in bottom-up processes of trial and error (the “evolutionary” account) that have long endeared Mandeville to theorists of “spontaneous order.” Douglass’s Mandeville has it both ways: order is not designed “*ex nihilo*,” but it nevertheless results from “certain individuals trying...to formulate rules” for governing others (p. 177).

This is a work of serious scholarship. Douglass writes with exceptional clarity and reconstructs arguments with precision and great care. The secondary literature on Mandeville and adjacent subjects appears in full. Of particular interest to specialists is Douglass’s facility with Mandeville’s critics—not just Francis Hutcheson, Hume, and Smith but also lesser-known respondents to the *Fable* like William Temple, Richard Fiddes, and William Law. Mandeville gives very few explicit indications of which critics and texts he took seriously, but *Mandeville’s Fable* gives us a better sense of the development of his ideas in exchange with his contemporaries. For specialists and nonspecialists alike, Douglass provides a clear and compelling account of Mandeville’s moral and social thought, one that establishes its subject as a serious thinker whose provocative and “unsettling” (p. xi) ideas retain today their power to provoke and unsettle.

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Michael J. Shapiro’s book *Aesthetics of Equality* is another rewarding contribution to an ever-growing and exciting body of work in political theory that takes culture, and the many forms and scenes of culture, seriously. At this point, we may in fact call it a veritable tradition, one whose early