

## BOOK REVIEWS

Andrea Branchi, *Pride, Manners, and Morals: Bernard Mandeville's Anatomy of Honour* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2021), pp. viii + 199, \$107 (hardcover). ISBN: 9789004194519.

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*Pride, Manners, and Morals* provides an overview of Bernard Mandeville's work, from a historical-philosophical perspective. Given its structure and ambitions, this monograph presents itself as an intellectual biography of the Anglo-Dutch author and physician, reread through the lens of his interest in human behavior and in the role played by customs and manners in society. The study is based on a rich and relatively up-to-date bibliography and has the value of encompassing all the texts produced by Mandeville. As Andrea Branchi states, the research aims at restoring "the question of honour to its rightful place in Mandeville's work. Honour and the dynamics of passions on which society is built are at the core of his life-long philosophical enterprise" (p. 158). The book indeed puts forward an interpretation key that allows holding together Mandeville's eclectic and controversial work. Such a reading is justified and developed through a comprehensive review of Mandeville's writings, which is enriched by references to the biographical-historical circumstances in which these texts were produced and the intellectual contexts they interacted with. However, the readers of this journal might note that by putting the emphasis on Mandeville's reflection on morals and psychology, this interpretation dilutes the significance of the author's contribution to economic thought, and grants also marginal attention to the theorization on luxury, although this subject belonged to ethics, according to the framework of early modern philosophy. Branchi claims explicitly:

the aim of the book is not to examine Mandeville's views on 'economic' matters. No one doubts that Mandeville 'discovered' the division of labour, defended luxurious consumption and, most important of all for economic historians, expressed the view that the pursuit of individual self-interest *can* be beneficial to society. Yet, Mandeville never wrote explicitly about economic issues and his arguments concerning trade, luxury and wealth are part of a wider examination, his psychological analysis of self-love. (p. 109)

This statement, which can certainly be shared with regard to the genesis of the author's philosophy, might seem, however, questionable in relation to its outcomes and developments. Adopted as a programmatic criterion, it leaves this intellectual biography lacking a substantial part of Mandeville's contribution to the thought of his time, which has nourished a rich historiography and has represented the crucial element to the fortune and reception of the author beyond England. Moreover, by identifying the leitmotif of Mandeville's thought with the study of the sense of honor, Branchi's reading seems to place the author's work within a framework of interests characteristic of the second half of the seventeenth century and thus depriving it of its more modern aspects.

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The book is divided into six chapters and a prologue that traces Mandeville's biography during his formative years, from his studies in Rotterdam and Leyden to his arrival in England and his first experiences in the literary field as a translator and poet. The first chapter ("Mandeville's Female Voices") is perhaps the most original of the volume. It focuses on an aspect still little explored by Mandevillean historiography, namely the author's criticism of female education, and of women's social and juridical subordination to men. These positions, at the basis of the definition of Mandeville as a proto-feminist recently suggested by several scholars, are reconstructed starting from the analysis of the articles written by Mandeville for the *Female Tatler* and the essay *The Virgin Unmask'd*, which appear as laboratories of the author's reflection on chastity—the feminine translation of the concept of honor. The second chapter explores another little-known facet of Mandeville's intellectual production: his participation, again through the pages of *The Female Tatler*, in the debate over the duels of honor, in which Branchi sees the manifestation of the well-known influence of the author's French sources and, in particular, of Pierre Bayle. The chapter proceeds with the analysis of the *Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions*. Chapters 3 and 4 are dedicated to *The Fable of the Bees* and the theories proposed by the author here about pride, honor, dishonor, and the political role assigned to them in the birth and preservation of society; the last part of chapter 4 returns to the identification, recognized by Mandeville, of the difference between female virtue and chastity to introduce an analysis of the *Modest Defence of Public Stews* and show how the conditions of honor imposed by society are more difficult for the female gender. Chapters 5 and 6 are devoted, respectively, to the second part of *The Fable of the Bees* and the *Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, in which Mandeville deepens his examination of the concept and term of virtue and its link, through the medium of fear, with religion.

Overall, the book proposes an interesting and argued interpretation and can be recommended as a valuable companion to Mandeville, since it offers a fairly complete overview of his production. Conversely, it is not especially suited as a tool for scholarly research (specifically historical-philosophical) on the author's work, due to frequent inaccuracies in the references. Footnotes, bibliography, and French quotations unfortunately also contain several flaws.

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Paolo Santori, *Thomas Aquinas and the Civil Economy Tradition: The Mediterranean Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 2021), pp. 174, \$128 (hardcover). ISBN: 9780367376109.

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What could inquiry into the Mediterranean spirit of Capitalism add to this debate?  
 Different authors, different traditions, different spirits of capitalism, and a story that has  
 only begun to be reconstructed.

(Santori 2021)