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**WHAT CAN AN EGOIST SAY AGAINST AN EGOIST?
ON ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL'S CRITICISMS OF BERNARD MANDEVILLE**

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ABSTRACT

Like Bernard Mandeville, Archibald Campbell develops a profoundly egoistic conception of human psychology. However, Campbell attacks numerous points in Mandeville's moral philosophy, in particular Mandeville's treatment of self-love, the desire for esteem, and human nature in general as corrupt. He also criticises Mandeville's corresponding insistence on self-denial and his rigorist conception of luxury. Campbell himself is subsequently attacked by Scottish orthodox Calvinists - not for his egoism, but for his optimism regarding postlapsarian human nature and self-love. This episode demonstrates that the debates on egoism in Mandeville should be seen in the context of the debates on postlapsarian human nature.

WHAT CAN AN EGOIST SAY AGAINST AN EGOIST?
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PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON EGOISM

There are good reasons to discuss the topic of egoism (in some sense), both in analyses of Bernard Mandeville's writings and in analyses of the reactions they provoked. Neither Mandeville nor his critics use the term 'egoism', of course, but debates on egoism (in some sense) were undeniably crucial to early eighteenth-century moral philosophy.¹ In this essay, I will focus on the psychological context and use the notion of egoism in the broad and uncontroversial sense that marks those desires as 'egoistic' or self-interested where the agent wants to procure some kind of good for herself, for example pleasure, self-preservation, power, reputation or glory. Such desires should be conceptually distinguished from desires that ultimately aim at procuring such goods for others (for example the altruistic desire to help another person, for her sake, or to promote the glory of God, for His sake), or at fulfilling one's duty. Psychological or motivational egoism, then, is the general descriptive theory according to which all our desires are ultimately egoistic, which comes close to what Hume famously termed the 'selfish hypothesis' (Hume [1751] 1998 :92).²

We have quite strong reasons to think of Mandeville as a psychological egoist. Consider some frequently quoted passages from the *Fable of the Bees*, firstly: 'All untaught Animals are only solicitous of pleasing themselves, and naturally follow the bent of their own

Inclinations, without considering the good or harm that from their being pleased will accrue to others.’ (Mandeville [1714/1723] 1988: 41) Man is, of course, an animal that shares this fundamental psychological make-up with all other animals, albeit with a slightly more complicated structure than, say, sheep. Then: ‘But be we Savages or Politicians, it is impossible that Man, mere fallen Man, should act with any other View but to please himself while he has the Use of his Organs, and the greatest Extravagancy either of Love or Despair can have no other Centre.’ (Mandeville [1714/1723] 1988: 348) These and many similar statements encourage the view that Mandeville sees us as fundamentally driven by self-interest, and on this basis, one can classify him as an egoist regarding human psychology.

A considerable number of contemporary reactions to Mandeville concern this very aspect in his philosophy. To take the example of Francis Hutcheson: in his *Remarks upon the Fable of the Bees* (first published in the *Dublin Journal* in 1725), Hutcheson argues for the reality of what he calls ‘kind affections’ (Hutcheson 1750: 53), that is benevolence, against the claim he ascribes to the Epicureans that we are only motivated by self-love or the desire for private good. Similarly, even if this is not stated explicitly, it can be understood that Mandeville is amongst those authors who are the focus of Hutcheson’s many elaborate arguments in the *Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) and in the *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (1728) – arguments in favour of the reality of benevolence or the desire to promote the public good and against the egoistic theory that self-love or the desire for the private good is the only motive for human actions.³ For Hutcheson, the rejection of this latter position, the selfish hypothesis, is important because he thinks that the doctrine is not only false but also dangerous. Benevolence is virtue, and if there were no benevolent desires, there would be no virtue. As a matter of fact, we are naturally motivated by benevolence, but if we adhere to the false psychological theory that we are only motivated by self-interest, then we will not cultivate the virtuous principle of benevolence in

ourselves. Thus, for Hutcheson, the psychological and the moral dimension are closely connected.⁴

Facing the predominant tendency in the Scottish Enlightenment to reject the selfish hypothesis, one might be tempted to think that the egoist element in Mandeville's philosophy was particularly provocative to his Scottish contemporaries. In my essay, however, I want to emphasise the importance of other issues, the crucial roles of which we do not fully grasp if we focus our attention on Mandeville's psychological egoism. If describing Mandeville as a psychological egoist is quite correct, it does not *ipso facto* result in an adequate view of Mandeville's position, and of what really mattered to his Scottish critics. I shall highlight some other important points by discussing Archibald Campbell's rarely studied attack on Mandeville and the subsequent attack on Campbell by the Committee for Purity of Doctrine of the Church of Scotland.⁵ This episode reveals a series of distinct themes that were most relevant for the beginning of the Scottish Enlightenment. In doing this, I shall not really try to critically assess Campbell's arguments but rather show how looking at the context of Campbell's criticisms of Mandeville enriches our understanding of the Scottish reactions to Mandeville.

SOME IMPORTANT THEMES IN MANDEVILLE

To some extent, the focus on motivational egoism in Mandeville and in the reactions to his philosophy reveals an important theme in early eighteenth-century moral philosophy. However, there are other crucial themes to be kept in mind when dealing with Mandeville, and Campbell's case is most interesting for demonstrating this. Campbell states on the title page of his *Enquiry into the Original of Moral Virtue* (published in a plagiarised version by Alexander Innes in 1728 and by Campbell himself in 1733) that he wants to defend moral virtue against

the author of the *Fable of the Bees* – quite a standard announcement for many eighteenth-century philosophers dealing with Mandeville. But how does he structure this defence of virtue, and what are the points in Mandeville’s philosophy he picks as his targets? If one focuses too narrowly on the theme of egoism, it may come as a surprise that throughout his *Enquiry*, Campbell insists on a moral psychology that is most thoroughly egoistic. He claims that ‘from the first Moment of our Existence, there immediately ariseth a very active and commanding Principle, I mean *Self-love*, or Self-preservation, according to the Influence of which, we necessarily delight in *Pleasure*, and seek and pursue after it; but hate *Pain*, and avoid and flee from it.’ (Campbell 1733: 260f). Campbell’s account of self-love slightly varies between a hedonistic principle and a principle for self-preservation, but we can safely say that Campbell is as much of an egoist regarding motivation like Mandeville. He denies the reality of benevolence and analyses all apparently disinterested passions and affections in terms of self-love. This concerns benevolence in general, as well as pity, love, friendship, parental affections etc. in particular.⁶ We might suspect that like Mandeville, Campbell is vulnerable to the criticism made by Hutcheson, that within such a psychological framework, there is no room for genuine virtue, which is disinterested. Indeed, if Hutcheson’s criticisms make us concentrate solely on egoism, then the question of what an egoist could possibly say against an egoist may seem pointless. However, Campbell’s reaction to Mandeville contains many (more or less convincing) attacks on the notorious author of *The Fable*, which rely often on very similar ideas to those we also find in Hutcheson and other philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment.

Returning again to Mandeville, we should point out that (i) motivational egoism (which is a properly psychological claim but interpreted by Hutcheson and others as engendering some sort of moral anti-realism) is far from being the only frequently criticised feature of Mandeville’s philosophy. To mention just a few other lines of attack, which are often connected: many of Mandeville’s critics focus on his epigrammatic statements, most

importantly the notoriously ambiguous phrase (ii) ‘the Moral Virtues are the Political Offspring which Flattery begot upon Pride’ (Mandeville [1714/1723] 1988: 51). This is often interpreted as a denial of the reality of moral distinctions, that is as some version of moral anti-realism or relativism.⁷ The subtitle of *The Fable*, then, (iii) ‘Private Vices, Publick Benefits’, is often uncharitably interpreted as a recommendation of vice.⁸ Next, Mandeville is often attacked for (iv) his conceptions of moral virtue (in the singular, as opposed to the social virtues) and vice, in particular in connection with the claim that moral virtue requires self-denial in the sense of a voluntary frustration of our passions, and in connection with the related claim that virtue is, in some sense, against our nature.⁹ (v) Another point of attack is Mandeville’s treatment of certain social virtues (in the plural, as opposed to moral virtue), in particular his approach to politeness and honour. According to Mandeville, these are based on flattery, arbitrary rules invented by politicians, the manipulation of the passions, and the psychologically fundamental passion of self-liking or pride. However, they have no rooting in a genuine moral cultivation of character or in the good effects of civilisation on morality. Furthermore, there is (vi) Mandeville’s treatment of human nature as, in some sense, unsociable yet tricked into society by the manipulation of the passions.

Much more could and should be said about each of these themes in Mandeville’s writings, about the question of which positions Mandeville seriously endorsed, and about the question of whether the subsequent reactions to him are based on valid interpretations of his often notoriously ambiguous statements. However, this is not the goal of the present essay. Rather, I shall now explore how the notorious author of *The Fable* is used by Campbell in ways that allow him to put forward a series of claims considered in turn very controversial by Scottish orthodox Calvinists. Campbell attacks Mandeville on most of the points above, however not on point (i), which according to some commentators would have been the most important and provocative aspect of Mandeville’s moral philosophy.

CAMPBELL'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY AND MANDEVILLE

I have mentioned that Campbell sticks to the claim that self-love is the only motive for all human actions and that we can therefore classify him as a motivational egoist, like Mandeville. However, focussing too narrowly on this classification distracts attention from most important differences between Mandeville and Campbell. This objection one might also make to Hutcheson's heavy emphasis on the distinction between those authors who admit only the reality of self-love (the Epicureans and their followers, as well as the Augustinians) and those who in addition admit the reality of benevolence (the Stoics and their followers). So what could Campbell possibly say against Mandeville, and how could he try to escape Hutcheson's criticism that any philosophical system which does not assume the reality of disinterested benevolence does not allow for the reality of genuinely virtuous actions? In the following paragraphs, and with an interest in exploring how Campbell uses Mandeville, I shall sketch out some of the main principles of Campbell's moral philosophy, discuss their implicit relation with Mandeville's, and then focus on a particularly interesting example of Campbell's explicit attacks on Mandeville's position, concerning vice and luxury. A brief discussion of the subsequent attacks on Campbell by the Committee for the Purity of Doctrine shall reveal some features of the properly Scottish context of Campbell's reaction against Mandeville.

Campbell adheres to motivational egoism and is quite obsessed with suggesting analyses of all disinterested affections and passions in terms of self-interested ones, especially in the passages where he attacks Hutcheson. Nonetheless, we should note several important differences from Mandeville's egoistic psychology, some of which remain implicit and some of which Campbell himself makes explicit. First and foremost, Campbell relies on a very different conception of self-love than Mandeville. Mandeville's moral philosophy attributes a crucial

role to what he later terms ‘self-liking’ (Mandeville [1729] 1988: 129ff.), which is, roughly, the French Augustinians’ *amour-propre* – a morally problematic form of excessive pride, engendering competition, flattery, self-deception, overvaluation of oneself and the like.¹⁰ By contrast, and at the very beginning of his *Enquiry*, Campbell quotes Aristotle’s discussion of the two forms of *philautia* (in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII) in order ‘to prevent any Prejudices that may arise from introducing *Self-love* as a laudable Principle, in the Business of moral Virtue’ (Campbell 1733: 5). This passage foreshadows his arguments against Hutcheson that not benevolence but self-love, in the form of the desire for esteem, motivates morally virtuous actions. Most frequently, Campbell treats self-love as a morally neutral desire for pleasure and as ‘an essential Ingredient in the inmost Nature of all Beings whatsoever’ (Campbell 1733: 258). He opposes this view to those who have ‘taken up with such narrow and contracted Notions of Self-love or Interest, that, according to what they understand by it, it is indeed the most odious and pernicious Principle that can well be imagined.’ (Campbell 1733: 260).

This difference between Mandeville’s and Campbell’s approach to self-love has an important impact on the corollaries of their egoistic theories of human psychology. The point is most nicely captured in Hume’s *Appendix II* to the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*: Hume distinguishes a morally neutral version of the selfish hypothesis that uses a great deal of ‘philosophical chymistry’ to resolve apparently disinterested passions into self-love, but which is perfectly compatible with a moral life (Hume names the Epicureans, Hobbes, and Locke, and might think of Campbell as well), from a second, pernicious version of the selfish system that *in addition* ascribes to us the vicious intention to disguise and deceive others about the real nature of our depraved dispositions (most probably Hume thinks of the Augustinians and Mandeville) (Hume [1751] 1998: 90-2). This distinction by Hume may reflect Campbell’s

grounds for distinguishing his much more positive egoistic conception of human psychology from the pessimistic one he finds in Mandeville.

Next, Campbell may be a motivational egoist, but he argues explicitly against Hobbes, and implicitly against Mandeville, that there is some sort of natural sociability that is grounded neither on fear, nor on a selfish desire for the advantages of society, nor on the manipulation of our passions by Mandeville's politicians and moralists. Rather, we have a natural desire to associate with other members of our species, whom we also have a natural tendency to love. Quoting the Stoics extensively, Campbell frequently describes these tendencies with expressions such as 'natural affections', 'social dispositions', 'social appetite' and 'good-liking' (e.g. Campbell 1733: 56-76). These expressions may remind us of Shaftesbury's language in particular. Trying to avoid tensions with his egoistic psychology, Campbell assumes that there is an underlying egoistic mechanism. In a nutshell, we have the natural desire to associate with others because they resemble us and because we love ourselves in them. Campbell summarises his idea in the margins: 'So that one's Propension to Society takes its Rise from *Self-love*, from seeing our Image, or ourselves, in others.' (Campbell 1733: 309) Against what Hobbes and Mandeville might suggest, Campbell seems to think that we have a natural tendency to see others as loveable companions rather than as dangerous opponents in a competition for limited goods.¹¹

Regarding moral motivation, Campbell claims that the natural motive of self-love, 'as it exerts it self in the Desire of universal unlimited *Esteem*', motivates us to morally virtuous actions, that is to gratify others' self-love (Campbell 1733: 257f., see also Maurer 2012: 20). Campbell does not deny the reality of virtuous actions and rejects Hutcheson's objection to all varieties of motivational egoism that there is no room for virtue without disinterestedness. At this point, we should highlight again a crucial difference from Mandeville. The passion of self-liking or excessive pride is in the very centre of Mandeville's account of human psychology,

and in this context, the desire for esteem is treated as vanity. For Campbell, however, one *can* merit well-grounded praise or esteem (as opposed to mere vanity or popular applause), and one does so by gratifying the self-love of other rational agents. Against Mandeville, Campbell insists that typically, the desire for esteem is not pride in the negative, competitive sense, which is ‘contrary to the social appetite’ and which aims at flattery, or vain-glory (Campbell 1733: 88f., 180f.). Furthermore, against Hobbes’ famous treatment of the question in *De Cive*, Campbell conceives esteem not as a good that is essentially comparative and thus necessarily engenders competition¹² but rather as a good that is mutually exchanged in a community instituted by providence: it is natural for us to do each other good, because we naturally seek esteem, and it is natural to esteem others for the good they have done to us.

A similar emphasis on a distinction between the desire for justified esteem and mere vanity is also found in Adam Smith’s discussion of Mandeville in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Smith argues against Mandeville

that the desire of doing what is honourable and noble, of rendering ourselves the proper objects of esteem and approbation, cannot with any propriety be called vanity. Even the love of well-grounded fame and reputation, the desire of acquiring esteem by what is really estimable, does not deserve that name. (Smith [1759] 2002: 365 - *TMS* VII.II.IV.8)

Love of (true) glory, the latter, may be less noble than love of virtue, the former, but it is not to be confused with mere love of vanity, which is Mandeville’s mistake, according to Smith.

For Campbell, what motivates us to morally virtuous actions is self-love in the form of the desire for esteem. What actually renders the action morally virtuous is the fact that it gratifies the self-love of ‘all those other intelligent Beings, to whom [the agent] is naturally associated’ (Campbell 1733: 257). We see that Campbell shifts attention from the action’s motives to its consequences. In contrast to Mandeville, self-denial is made no requirement for virtue, and in contrast to Hutcheson, benevolent intentions play no role in the production of a virtuous action. Albeit from the egoist’s stance, Campbell can still claim that virtue is in an

important sense ‘in our nature’: by insisting that the desire for esteem is a natural motive for morally virtuous actions, he suggests firstly an optimistic view of human nature as having a natural tendency to virtue and secondly an optimistic view of (at least some forms of) self-love as a motive for genuine morality. He differs from Hutcheson on the second point, but he joins him on the first – and opposes Mandeville, for whom virtue requires self-denial and for whom self-love in the variety of corrupt self-liking dominates human psychology. Furthermore, Campbell makes room for self-cultivation within a thoroughly egoistic psychology – a point that Mandeville (arguably) would not accept, since self-denial, which is required by genuine moral virtue (as opposed to the mere social virtues) is either extremely rare or even impossible.¹³

Given that Campbell declares the gratification of the self-love of others to determine the moral value of one’s actions, it becomes furthermore obvious that Campbell is not an *ethical* egoist – he does not claim that the fact that a virtuous action ultimately gratifies the agent’s own self-love is what makes it a virtuous action. Yet, in this providentially ordered world, the gratification of the self-love of others naturally engenders the gratification of the agent’s own self-love, thanks to the fact that the beneficiary will esteem the agent for gratifying her (the beneficiary’s) self-love.¹⁴ Having sketched out the principles of Campbell’s moral philosophy and their relation to Mandeville’s, I turn next to his discussion of luxury and fashion.

CAMPBELL ON VICE, LUXURY, FASHIONABLE CLOTHING AND VIRTUE

In the third *Treatise* of the 1733 edition of the *Enquiry* (which was the second *Treatise* in the plagiarised 1728 edition by Alexander Innes) Campbell focuses on a theme inspired by *The*

Fable's notorious subtitle 'Private Vices, Publick Benefits', announcing that he will demonstrate 'That *Moral Virtue* promotes *Trade*, and aggrandizes a *Nation*.' (Campbell 1733, 469) The chapter contains lengthy quotations from the first volume of the *Fable of the Bees* and a series of attacks by Campbell on Mandeville's accounts of moral virtue and vice, of their respective relation to economic prosperity, of luxury, and of self-denial.¹⁵ On several occasions Campbell uses his attacks on Mandeville to put forward views regarding the moral status of human nature that were highly controversial in early eighteenth-century Calvinist Scotland.

Almost at the beginning of the *Treatise*, having drawn attention to Mandeville's statement that 'Religion is one Thing, and Trade is another', Campbell discusses Mandeville's definition of luxury in *Remark L*. Mandeville had defined luxury as 'every Thing...that is not immediately necessary to make Man subsist, as he is a living Creature' (Campbell 1733: 473, quoting Mandeville [1714/1723] 1988: 107). Campbell rephrases that Mandeville concedes that this is a rigorous definition, 'But, says he, if we are to abate one Inch of this Severity, I am afraid we shan't know where to stop.' (Campbell 1733: 474, quoting Mandeville [1714/1723] 1988: 107) It was based on this definition that Mandeville produced examples for his claim that certain vices, in particular pride and luxury, would under certain circumstances produce beneficial effects for society, most importantly employment for the poor (Mandeville [1714/1723] 1988: 107ff.). In *Remark M*, Mandeville discusses one particular example of luxury, namely the purchase and wearing of fashionable clothing, which he ties to the passion of pride: we desire ornaments in the form of fashion to gratify our vanity and ultimately because we attempt to display our superiority over others (Mandeville [1714/1723] 1988: 127f.).

In his reaction, Campbell firstly attacks Mandeville's definition of luxury as far too rigorous – 'we may very well abate a good many Inches of this Severity' (Campbell 1733: 474). Not even Mandeville claims that it is luxury to pursue those things that are necessary for

our subsistence. Accordingly, our being determined by the principle of self-preservation cannot count as luxury (Campbell 1733: 475ff.). Appealing to our intuitions, Campbell then claims that even Mandeville, ‘upon second Thoughts’, must concede that not ‘every Thing is *Luxury*, that is not absolutely necessary to keep a Man alive’ (Campbell 1733: 477). As examples, Campbell discusses the pleasures of sexuality, the pleasures of thought and reflection, and the pleasures arising from experiencing the beauties of nature – for example landscapes, colours, flowers, and perfumes. A man opening his eyes cannot but ‘enjoy numberless other pleasing Perceptions, besides what he has from those Things that are immediately necessary to make one subsist, as he is a living Creature.’ (Campbell 1733: 481) These enjoyments are in no way vicious or luxurious, and the beneficent Deity would never lay a prohibition upon them (Campbell 1733: 479).

Campbell then discusses the question of whether we are guilty of vicious luxury when we form things we find in nature into something new, for example when we craft textiles from products based on plants and animals. The answer is negative, since we only ‘imply our own Art and Labour’ for the production of further enjoyments, using again the powers and faculties God has given us (Campbell 1733: 482). Campbell writes:

I hope, there is no Guilt in exerting my natural Powers, and making Use of my own Labour, Skill, and Industry, in procuring for myself those Pleasures which I have a natural Taste to enjoy, or in applying Things to those Purposes, to which, not sinful Man, but the Deity himself has so well adapted them. (Campbell, 1733: 483)

Campbell’s underlying point can be summarised as follows: We have been created by a benevolent God, who gave us a series of faculties to enjoy innocent pleasures prepared more or less directly by that same God. Enjoying these pleasures cannot be vicious luxury, even if they are not immediately necessary for self-preservation. Whether this is convincing or not, Campbell appears to strongly rely on a teleological account of human nature, similar to those of Hutcheson and Butler, for whom human nature is designed by God and equipped with natural

tendencies to virtue. And even if the subject of luxury would offer plenty of opportunities to speak about postlapsarian corruption, Campbell does not address this subject, choosing instead a very positive outlook.

Campbell then reacts to Mandeville's discussion in *Remark M* of fashionable clothing as one particular dimension of luxury:

To set this Matter in a fair Light, I shall here briefly remark, that our Clothes are then judged to be ornamental, when, besides their answering the two first Ends which our Author mentions [hide our nakedness and protect against the influence of weather, C.M.], they serve likewise to entertain our Minds with pleasing or beautiful Ideas; and derive the like delightful Perceptions to those that are about us, so as to make our Appearance among our own Species the more agreeable. And since *Providence* has prepared Variety of Pleasures, which (if you will forgive the Expression) we may always carry about us on our *Backs*, not only for our own, but for other Peoples Entertainment; where is the Excess of stupid Vanity in our wearing those Ornaments, or in our shewing ourselves under such agreeable Perceptions? I don't think that I discover any boundless Pride, or that I overvalue myself excessively, and as much underrate other People, when I only make use of those Gratifications, which the *Author* of Nature has provided for my Entertainment, which he has given me Taste to enjoy, and Skill to improve, and whereby I make myself more agreeable to the rest of my Species. (Campbell 1733: 487)

Campbell's discussion of fashion is set in the wider anthropological and theological context indicated above: if we derive pleasure from clothing that in addition to hiding nakedness and providing shelter has ornamental aspects, then this is in no way morally problematic. On the contrary, it is in accordance with the intentions of the author of nature, who gave us a faculty to derive pleasure beyond mere subsistence. Wearing fashionable clothes is thus far from being a sign of boundless pride, vanity, or over-valuation of oneself – Campbell rejects the competitive aspect Mandeville attributes to fashion. And some pages below Campbell comes to the following more general conclusion against Mandeville:

I conclude, That the *Author* of Nature having so settled the Constitution of Things, that it is impossible for us not to perceive numberless other Satisfactions, besides those that arise from such Objects as are absolutely necessary to keep us alive; we may all cheerfully indulge to ourselves those Gratifications, without the least Degree of *Vice* or *Luxury*; and having our Breasts warmed with a grateful Sense of his unbounded Goodness, joyfully adore that beneficent Being, who has poured out so much Gladness

all over the visible Creation, and given us the Skill and Power, above other Animals, to apply so many delightful Objects to our Entertainment. (Campbell 1733: 493)

In the context of his attack on Mandeville, Campbell puts forward a very positive view of those activities Mandeville would label 'luxury' – he goes as far as encouraging the view that many of these can be seen as a form of veneration for God.

Campbell also sets limits to our pursuit of pleasing enjoyments, beyond which it turns into vicious luxury. In the previous *Treatises*, Campbell already emphasised that the moral value of an action is determined by its impact on the self-love of others. In the context of luxury, he uses this criterion to draw the line between the innocent gratification of one's self-love and vicious luxury by stating that

every Pursuit, every Pleasure that carries us beyond the *Self-love* or Interest of those Beings to whom we are associated, or that inspires us with any Affection, or determines us to any Action that is contrary to their Good or Happiness, is *Luxury*. (Campbell 1733: 495)

Luxury in the vicious sense is problematic from the moral point of view since it renders the gratification of others' self-love more difficult or impossible or since it causes them pain.¹⁶ As long as this is not the case, however, we may innocently indulge in our desire for pleasures of different sorts, including many classified as luxury by Mandeville. On the basis of these definitions and arguments, Campbell asserts that moral virtue, not vice, makes a nation stronger, since the desire for esteem incites us to trade (Campbell 1733: 523).¹⁷

Following his discussion of luxury, Campbell attacks more generally Mandeville's conception of moral virtue as requiring self-denial. He does not address the question of whether Mandeville is serious in his rigorism, which is not so surprising when we keep in mind the general insistence on self-denial in orthodox Calvinism. For Mandeville, according to Campbell, 'Virtue consists wholly in *Self-denial*; by which he understands Peoples *combating* themselves, and undergoing all imaginable Austerities, even refusing what one should think

absolutely necessary to keep them alive.’ (Campbell 1733: 525) Mandeville’s ‘Sort of Virtue is a mean, starving, idle, dreaming Thing, that reduces People to a State of stupid Innocence and slothful Ease’ (Campbell 1733: 527). Campbell opposes this with his own view of virtue, which does not insist on self-denial but asserts, on the contrary, the controversial point that ‘*Virtue* leaves every Man in the full Possession of all his natural Desires and Appetites, to be indulg’d and gratified within the Limits of the *Self-love* of those intelligent Beings among whom we are mixed.’ (Campbell 1733: 534) Most examples brought into play by Mandeville are, in the eyes of Campbell, innocent economic activities that give no offence to others’ self-love, and thus should be morally rehabilitated.

All in all, Campbell puts forward a very optimistic view of human nature and its fundamental principles of action – self-love in particular. This is clearly reflected in his discussion of luxury and fashionable clothing. Providence has equipped mankind with faculties the gratification of which is morally innocent when kept within the limits of the self-love of others. Most importantly, Campbell objects to Mandeville’s ambiguous position that moral virtue does not require self-denial and that providence wants us to have communication and commerce with each other. Campbell’s teleological conception of human nature as designed by God shares many features with Hutcheson’s, despite their disagreement about the psychological question of egoism. The crucial message in both is that there are natural desires the gratification of which is perfectly compatible with morality – there is no necessity to ‘deny’ them. For both Campbell and Hutcheson, virtue is in some important sense part of our nature, and following our nature means living a virtuous life. Of course, there are aberrations by excess of natural principles, but this does not mean that our nature itself is corrupt. All this is in stark contrast to the Calvinist emphasis on postlapsarian corruption, as the Committee for the Purity of Doctrine’s reaction demonstrates.

CAMPBELL AND THE COMMITTEE FOR PURITY OF DOCTRINE

From the point of view of many Scottish Enlightenment philosophers, Campbell's position, especially his moral psychology, may seem unusual and a bit awkward. Most of them reject the plain version of the selfish hypothesis defended by Campbell and instead insist on the reality of social principles such as benevolence and sympathy. From a conservatively orthodox Calvinist *theological* point of view, however, Campbell's position was more than awkward: it was potentially heretical. During the very period when the Moderates in the Church of Scotland were about to gain power, and the conservatively orthodox Calvinists were in secession, Campbell was attacked by the Kirk's Committee for the Purity of Doctrine in an episode that lasted from 1735 until 1737.¹⁸ In 1735, the members of the Committee confronted Campbell with a list of potentially heretical statements in his writings, each charge supported with references to the Westminster Confession, the Catechisms, and the Scriptures.¹⁹ It is noteworthy that as far as the theme of self-love is concerned, they do not attack Campbell's motivational egoism but instead focus on his account of moral motivation and on the claim that the criterion for the morality of an action lies in the gratification of the self-love of other rational agents, not in the will of God. Self-love is a sin forbidden in the first Commandment (Campbell 1735: 6), and it must not be presented in the positive light Campbell chose.

They then quote and attack Campbell's mentioned claim that 'Virtue leaves every Man in the full Possession of all his natural Desires and Appetites, to be indulged within the Limits of the Self-love of others; And there is neither Vice nor Luxury in desiring whatever may make our Life easy and comfortable.' (Campbell 1735: 10, reformulating Campbell 1733: 534) Remember that this claim is presented by Campbell as an attack on Mandeville, and that it

is alongside Hutcheson's views in its rejection of the obligation to self-denial. The Committee makes the following objection to Campbell's claim:

The first Part of this Position seems not to hold in the present State of corrupt Nature, and gives too great Countenance to Uncleaness and Bestiality: And the latter Part seems to allow Men too unbounded Liberty in seeking after the Things of Life, against the 8th and the 10th Commandments, as explained in our Catechisms; as also, appears against *Jer. xlv. 5. Mat. vi. 19. John vi. 27. I John ii. 15.* And as to both, thereby not the Will of God in his Law, but the Self-love of others, is made the Rule and Bounds of our natural Desires and Appetites. (Campbell 1735: 10)

Campbell's views about virtue cannot be valid in the present state of corruption, where we are 'utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all Good, and wholly inclined to all Evil' (*The Confession of Faith* 1728: 52f. - VI, iv). It is quite striking that in the Committee's discussion of Campbell's moral philosophy, motivational egoism is not really an issue. Rather, the issue is the fundamental Calvinist point about postlapsarian corruption and total inability to perform morally virtuous actions without the never-merited influence of divine grace. This is confirmed by the further development of the Campbell episode. In a second charge in 1736, Campbell's position is attacked as '*too high* on the Side of Self-love (particularly by his asserting it to be the *sole Principle, Standard and Motive* of all religious Actions)' (Campbell 1736: iv). In a very peculiar way, then, it would seem that many of Mandeville's claims and his (ambiguous) treatment of motivational egoism as a sign of moral corruption must have seemed more in line with Calvinist orthodoxy than Campbell.

Campbell's reaction to the charges in the 1735 *Remarks* is quite provocative. Campbell insists on his view that postlapsarian human nature is inclined to virtue due to the natural desire for esteem and ultimately due to providence. When defending his claim that 'Virtue leaves every Man in the full Possession of all his natural Desires and Appetites' against the Committee, he again attacks Mandeville's conception of virtue as requiring self-denial, 'entire Abstinence from all pleasing Enjoyments', and 'severe Exercise of all Sorts of Austerities that can be mortifying and afflicting to human Nature'. This is a 'most ridiculous

Account of Moral Virtue’, and an ‘extravagant Opinion’ (Campbell 1735: 86). He then directs his attack at the Committee:

May I not have Leave to ask these three Reverend Members, What is it that seems not to hold in the present State of corrupt Nature? Does not Virtue leave every Man in the full Possession of all his natural Desires and Appetites, the Workmanship of God, and essential Ingredients to our Constitution? No Doubt their Philosophy will agree to it: And if we are left in the full Possession of all our natural Desires and Appetites, does it not hold, that we may lawfully indulge and gratify every one of ‘em? Neither, I suppose, will this be controverted. But the Question is, How must these natural Appetites be gratified? We must not suffer them to lash out into Excesses, but keep them within due Bounds. I have affirmed, That we may virtuously indulge them within the Limits of the Self-love of those intelligent Beings to whom we are associated, or in a Consistency with the Self-love of God and our own Species. (Campbell 1735: 87f.)

In the vein of his attack on Mandeville, Campbell rejects the conservatively orthodox Calvinist view of complete postlapsarian corruption. Campbell furthermore puts forward the view that even after the Fall, reflection and consciousness are the rules by which ‘a Man can judge what particular Appetites are natural to his own Species’ (Campbell 1735: 90) – a point which again strongly reminds us of the positions of his contemporaries Butler and Hutcheson. Campbell thus explicitly defends human nature against both Mandeville *and* the Committee – his criticisms are bound together.²⁰

CONCLUSION

It is not the goal of the present essay to assess whether Campbell’s position, his attacks on Mandeville, or his defence against the Committee are really convincing. Rather, it seeks to draw attention to some important themes in this peculiar reaction by a Scottish philosopher to Mandeville – themes that appear most clearly in Campbell’s treatment of Mandeville and in the subsequent reaction to Campbell by the Committee for Purity of Doctrine. First and foremost, Campbell makes a series of objections to the motivational egoism of Mandeville from within

one of the most thoroughly egoistic psychological frameworks in eighteenth-century moral philosophy. Campbell criticises Mandeville's treatment of self-love and of the desire for esteem as too pessimistic and as conflating them with vanity, pride and similar vices. Campbell's rehabilitation of self-love is most significant, given the conservatively orthodox Calvinist background against which Campbell writes in early eighteenth-century Scotland, a background which is fundamentally opposed to such ideas. Combined with the conception of human nature as equipped with natural virtuous tendencies and with the assumption that there is a benevolent and provident God, Campbell's position reminds us of Hutcheson's and Butler's emphasis on the good nature of our psychological principles. Accordingly, Campbell also rejects Mandeville's claim that virtue requires self-denial: if human nature in general, and self-love in particular, are naturally good, then we have to 'follow' this nature and cultivate its principles. This claim is in stark contrast with the Calvinist emphasis on postlapsarian corruption. By subsuming the desire for esteem under these good principles and by attributing to it a crucial function in his moral philosophy, Campbell rejects Mandeville's emphasis on the importance of vanity in human nature.

Campbell seems to have good grounds for claiming that his motivational egoism and Mandeville's are very different, and this point is reflected by Campbell's reaction at the end of the episode with the Committee for Purity of Doctrine: the motivational egoist Campbell objects to Mandeville *and* the Committee alike that they have far too negative views of human nature. Indeed, Campbell may have been well aware of certain overlaps between Mandeville's position and the Committee's and may therefore sometimes have used Mandeville as a straw-man to criticise indirectly the conservatively orthodox Calvinism of some of his Scottish contemporaries. Furthermore, the fact that Campbell was then attacked by the Committee for Purity of Doctrine for his positive views of postlapsarian human nature and self-love, and not for his motivational egoism, draws attention to an important background for the reception of

Mandeville in Scotland. Before and during the beginning of the Scottish Enlightenment, theologians and philosophers like John Simson, Hutcheson, and Campbell were starting to press more positive views of human nature that stood in contradiction to the Calvinist teaching of postlapsarian corruption and total depravity. Being aware of the trials for heresy their teacher Simson underwent in 1717 and 1727, attacking Mandeville may have seemed to Campbell and Hutcheson a comparatively safe way of putting forward their more positive views of human nature. If this assumption is correct, then this also points to the importance of understanding Hutcheson's rejection of motivational egoism as an aspect of the more fundamental goal of the moral rehabilitation of human nature against conservatively orthodox Calvinism.²¹ This is not to deny that the concept of egoism is important for the debates in moral philosophy of the period and in particular for understanding Mandeville and some of the reactions he provoked. However, our reading of the egoist Campbell attacking the egoist Mandeville, and of the subsequent reactions by the Committee to Campbell, shows the importance of keeping in mind the underlying struggle concerning postlapsarian corruption.²²

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Notes

1 See also Maurer (2009) and Maurer (2013).

2 There are other theories of egoism, most importantly ethical egoism, which is a theory about the nature of the good, and rational egoism, which is a theory about the nature of rationality. See e.g. the discussion in Shaver (2010).

3 There are just few explicit mentions of Mandeville in these central works of Hutcheson's, and it is noteworthy that they concern Mandeville's accounts of sociability and of the origin of virtue, and not motivational egoism.

4 See also Maurer (2012) 22.

5 Most recently, Skoczylas (2008) and Sagar (2013) have analysed aspects of Campbell's approach to luxury in the context of his reaction to Mandeville. Maurer (*forthcoming*) discusses aspects of Campbell's episode with the Committee.

6 See also Maurer (2012) 17.

7 Mandeville's phrase is obviously misleading, given that in the entire rest of his works he draws a clear distinction between the social virtues (in the plural) on the one hand, and moral virtue (in the singular) on the other hand. Moral virtue, which he often identifies with religion, requires self-denial, i.e. the frustration of one's passions, yet the social virtues (most importantly politeness and honour) are built upon the very passion of self-liking. Nowhere else can Mandeville be interpreted as suggesting that moral virtue (singular) is grounded on pride or self-liking.

8 Again, the subtitle is extremely ambiguous and invites to a great variety of interpretations, as Hutcheson already notes in his *Remarks* (Hutcheson 1750: 41f). At the end of the *Fable*'s first volume, Mandeville himself gives a slightly more qualified formula of the 'seeming Paradox, the Substance of which is advanced in the Title Page; that Private Vices by the dextrous Management of a skilful Politician may be turned into Publick Benefits.' (Mandeville [1714/1723] 1988: 369). See also the discussion in Scott-Taggart (1966).

9 It is apposite to recall the contrast with the Stoic claim that virtue is (in some sense) to 'follow our nature', or to 'live according to our nature'. This claim is revived in many different versions in the 17th and 18th centuries, for example in Hutcheson's and Butler's moral philosophies. Also, it is crucial to keep in mind that the Stoic claim that it is in our power to cultivate virtue was considered heretic by certain strands of Calvinism, which also insist on self-denial. Both Hutcheson and Campbell had trouble with theological committees because of this point: See e.g. Moore (2013) on Hutcheson and Maurer (*forthcoming*) on Campbell.

10 For a more detailed discussion, see e.g. (Maurer 2009: 132-43).

11 I am currently completing a more detailed analysis of Campbell's account of sociability.

12 See Hobbes [1642] (1998) 24 on (vain) glory and honour: 'glorying, like honour, is nothing if everybody has it, since it consists in comparison and preeminence'.

13 On this point, see also Maurer (2012) 21.

14 Campbell clarifies this point in his defence against the attacks of the Committee for Purity of Doctrine in Campbell (1736) 47f. Cf. Maurer (*forthcoming*).

15 See also Skoczylas (2008) 90ff. and Sagar (2013), in particular Section 3. To some extent, my analysis overlaps with Sagar's, but my focus is more specifically on Campbell's use of Mandeville, on the subsequent attack by the Committee, and on Campbell's defence.

16 It is noteworthy that Mandeville's discussion of fashionable clothing is based on the assumption that it necessarily causes offence to others' self-liking or pride. Campbell does not really address this idea, but simply relies on the idea of a providentially ordered universe where envy, jealousy and similar passions appear only as excesses of natural principles.

17 See the discussion in Sagar (2013), 798-801.

18 I explore this episode in greater detail in Maurer (*forthcoming*). Moore (2013), which focuses on Hutcheson's problems with Reformed Orthodoxy in 1738-9, allows to see interesting parallels between the cases of Campbell and Simson.

19 The Committee's list of problematic statements in Campbell's writings is reprinted in *Remarks upon Some Passages In Books Publish'd by Mr. Archibald Campbell* from 1735, which includes Campbell's own defence.

20 For the further development of the episode between Campbell and the Committee, see Maurer (*forthcoming*).

21 Gill (2006) demonstrates the importance of what he terms the 'Human Nature Question' for the period's moral philosophy. Gill does not discuss the minor figure Campbell, yet in my view, the example of Campbell supports Gill's general thesis. However, it also puts the role of egoism and Hutcheson's rejection of the selfish hypothesis in a more nuanced perspective.

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