



Postures of the Mind: Essays on Mind and Morals

Annette Baier

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Annette Baier develops, in these essays, a posture in philosophy of mind and in ethics that grows out of her reading of Hume and the later Wittgenstein, and that challenges several Kantian or analytic articles of faith. She questions the assumption that intellect has authority over all human feelings and traditions; that to recognize order we must recognize universal laws—descriptive or prescriptive; that the essential mental activity is representing; and that mental acts can be analyzed into discrete basic elements, combined according to storable rules of synthesis.

In the first group of essays—"Varieties of Mental Postures"—Baier evaluates the positions taken by philosophers ranging from Descartes to Dennett and Davidson. Among her topics are remembering, intending, realizing, caring, representing, changing one's mind, justifying one's actions and feelings, and having conflicting reasons for them. The second group of essays—"Varieties of Moral Postures" - explores the sort of morality we get when all of these capacities become reflective and self-corrective. Some deal with particular moral issues—our treatment of animals, our policies regarding risk to human life, our contractual obligations; others, with more general questions on the role of moral philosophers and the place of moral theory. These essays respond to the theories of Hobbes, Kant, Rawls, and MacIntyre, but Baier's most positive reaction is to David Hume; *Postures of the Mind* affirms and cultivates his version of a moral reflection that employs feeling and tradition as well as reason.

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