

The Cautious Jealous Virtue

ANNETTE C. BAIER

the cautious jealous virtue



HUME ON JUSTICE

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Like David Hume, whose work on justice she engages here, Annette C. Baier is a consummate essayist: her spirited, witty prose captures nuances and telling examples in order to elucidate important philosophical ideas. Baier is also one of Hume's most sensitive and insightful readers. In "The Cautious Jealous Virtue", she deepens our understanding of Hume by examining what he meant by 'justice'. In Baier's account, Hume always understood justice to be closely linked to self-interest (hence his description of it in "An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals" as 'the cautious jealous virtue'), but his understanding of the virtue expanded over time, as evidenced by later works, including his "History of England". Along with justice, Baier investigates the role of the natural virtue of equity (which Hume always understood to constrain justice) in Hume's thought, arguing that Hume's view of equity can serve to balance his account of the artificial virtue of justice. "The Cautious Jealous Virtue" is an illuminating meditation that will interest not only Hume scholars but also those interested in the issues of justice and in ethics more generally.

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