

Annette C. Baier

## Über Vertrauen



Geboren 1929. Professor der Philosophie an der Universität Pittsburgh. Frühere Lehrtätigkeiten an den Universitäten Carnegie-Mellon, Sydney, Auckland und Aberdeen.

Annette Baier studierte an den Universitäten Otago und Oxford. Sie veröffentlichte eine Vielzahl von Aufsätzen über "philosophy of mind", Ethik und Philosophiegeschichte, von denen einige in ihrem jüngsten Buch *Postures of the Mind* (Minneapolis: University Press, 1985; England: Methuen Press, 1986) gesammelt erschienen sind. Sie arbeitet an einem Buch über David Flume. Adresse: Department of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260, USA.

I came here hoping to finish a work in progress on David Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*, and to begin working on a monograph about trust as a central concept in a non-contractarian moral theory. The two projects are not unconnected, since Hume is a famous critic of contractarian theories of political obligation, and sees the extension and preservation of a climate of trust as the function of an important part of morality.

What I in fact did was to more or less complete a new draft of the Hume book, write a long essay on Hume's endorsement of rules for finding out what "really" causes what, compose an entry on Hume for an encyclopedia of ethics, also an entry on "Passions", write a piece about terrorism and the morality of killing, and some short reviews. I gave a lecture on terrorism at Bowling Green University, a lecture on Humean causal inference at the University of Helsinki, and on Hume on trust at Abo Academy, Finland.

About trust I read a good deal, and came to doubt that anything short of an interdisciplinary team, like the Cambridge group who worked together to produce the recent volume, *Trust*, edited by Diego Gambetta, should touch the topic. Still, if anything does come of my original plans to write more about trust, the material I have been directed to by people I met this year in Germany, through such helpful intermediaries as Wolf Lepenies, Wulf Schiefenhövel, and Christian Vogel, as well as my discussions with them and other fellows, will certainly help that work. I have been introduced to sociological, anthropological and jurisprudential lit-

erature about trust that I would not have easily found on my own. Daunting and many faceted as the topic is, it fascinates, it challenges, and it promises philosophical returns. Through my colleagues' help, I was enabled to attend a conference in May at the Werner-Reimers-Stiftung, Bad Homburg, on "Cooperation and Trust in German and American Law", a conference where lawyers and ethologists pooled insights. That experience persuaded me not just that philosophers can learn from the approaches of other disciplines to their own pet topics (I had never doubted this), but that they might even have something to contribute, especially in a multi-disciplinary group.

The conditions for working, even for working on as unlikely a topic for Berlin as David Hume, were, after the first culture shock had worn off, excellent. The superb library service, and the library's own collection of philosophical classics and the Loeb classical library, made it easy for me to consult the authors that my author, Hume, refers to. Indeed I doubt that, but for the easy availability of these books, compared with the occasional difficulty of getting hold here of the latest English commentaries on Hume, I would have had read as much as I did of Thucydides, Polybius, Plutarch, Sallust, Theophrastus, and La Bruyère, or reread Cicero, Lucretius, and Malebranche. Reading them turned out to be as valuable as the conventional wisdom on how to do history of philosophy had always claimed. (In the tradition of philosophy and Hume interpretation in which I was trained and in which I have hitherto worked, this wisdom has not been much respected.)

I was disappointed not to see much of the local Berlin philosophers, in part because the student strike at Freie Universität in the fall stopped normal activities there. But there were plenty of philosophers and philosophically inclined people around the Wissenschaftskolleg, and the comparative epistemology seminar turned all present into philosophers, sometimes to the annoyance of the professional philosophers. Many of us, whatever our field, often seemed to be competing for the honorable philosophical title of group gadfly. But there were also many good constructive conversations, in and out of seminars and colloquia. I consulted very many of my fellow-fellows on a wide variety of points, Ronald Jensen on recursive definitions, Emilio Ledô on Aristotle, Glenn Most on Theophrastus and Lucan, Wilfried Nippel and Dieter Timpe on ancient Greek and Roman historians, Peter McLaughlin on Kant, Dorothy Brandenburg on the Hume-Rousseau relationship, Christian Vogel and Wulf Schiefenhövel on human killing habits, Diane Paul on various "genetic fallacies", Ivan Nagel on Diderot, François Ewald on the influence of Lucretius on Rousseau, and on Descartes' use of legal metaphors in *The Passions of the Soul*.

I welcomed the opportunity to learn the elements of word-processing, and to take classes to improve my reading and speaking of the German language. Some of the deepest philosophical discussions of the year took place in the elite group of "advanced" learners of German. It was important to have some facility in German, not just to participate in lunchtime conversations and follow the colloquia, but to be able to enjoy some of the rich theatre life of Berlin. Concerts, museums, parks, forests, lakes, waterways, as well as the intellectual stimulus and the friendly helpful people at the Wissenschaftskolleg, all made for a good year. I shall remember with special nostalgia the dawn chorus of the birds and ducks around the Villa Walther, that called me to work each day. They are in no small measure responsible for my writing as much as I did during the year. The usual disclaimers are in order; the faults in what I wrote are all my own.