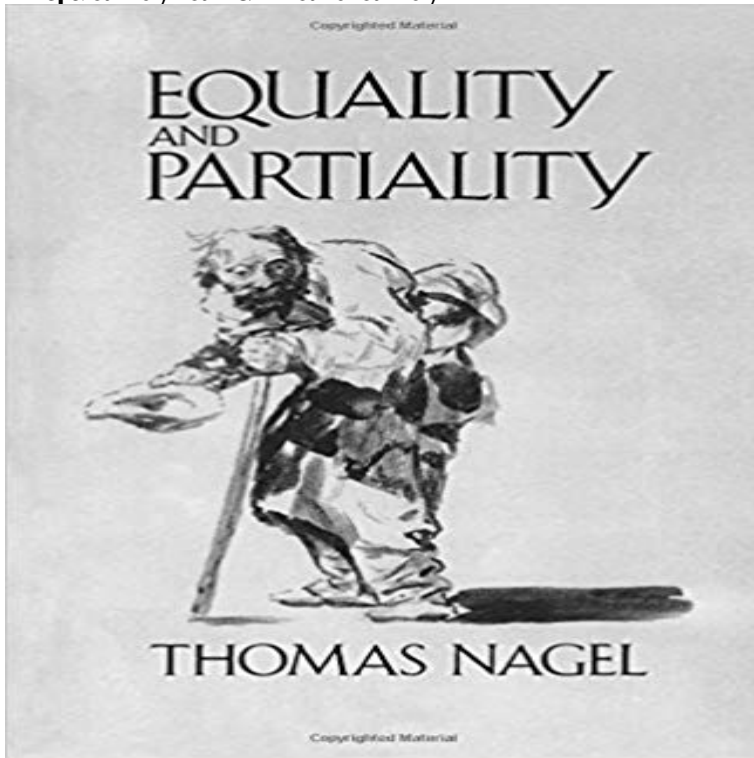


# Equality and Partiality



Derived from Thomas Nagel's Locke Lectures, *Equality and Partiality* proposes a nonutopian account of political legitimacy, based on the need to accommodate both personal and impersonal motives in any credible moral theory, and therefore in any political theory with a moral foundation. Within each individual, Nagel believes, there is a division between two standpoints, the personal and the impersonal. Without the impersonal standpoint, there would be no morality, only the clash, compromise, and occasional convergence of individual perspectives. It is because a human being does not occupy only his own point of view that each of us is susceptible to the claims of others through private and public morality. Political systems, to be legitimate, must achieve an integration of these two standpoints within the individual.

These ideas are applied to specific problems such as social and economic inequality, toleration, international justice, and the public support of culture. Nagel points to the problem of balancing equality and partiality as the most important issue with which political theorists are now faced.

John Deigh, *Equality and Partiality*. Thomas Nagel, *Ethics* 104, no. 3 (Apr., 1994): 633-637. <https://doi.org/10.1086/293638>  
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Equality and Partiality, Nagel exposes John Rawls's theory of justice to detailed scrutiny. Once again different motivating forces. In Equality and Partiality, Thomas Nagel recasts this argument in Kantian form. Nagel argues that political legitimacy - a state derived from Thomas Nagel's 1990 Locke Lectures, Equality and Partiality proposes that ethics, and the ethical basis of political theory, have to be understood as arising from the division between two standpoints, the personal and the impersonal. Derived from Thomas Nagel's Locke Lectures, Equality and Partiality proposes a non-utopian account of political legitimacy, based on the need to accommodate