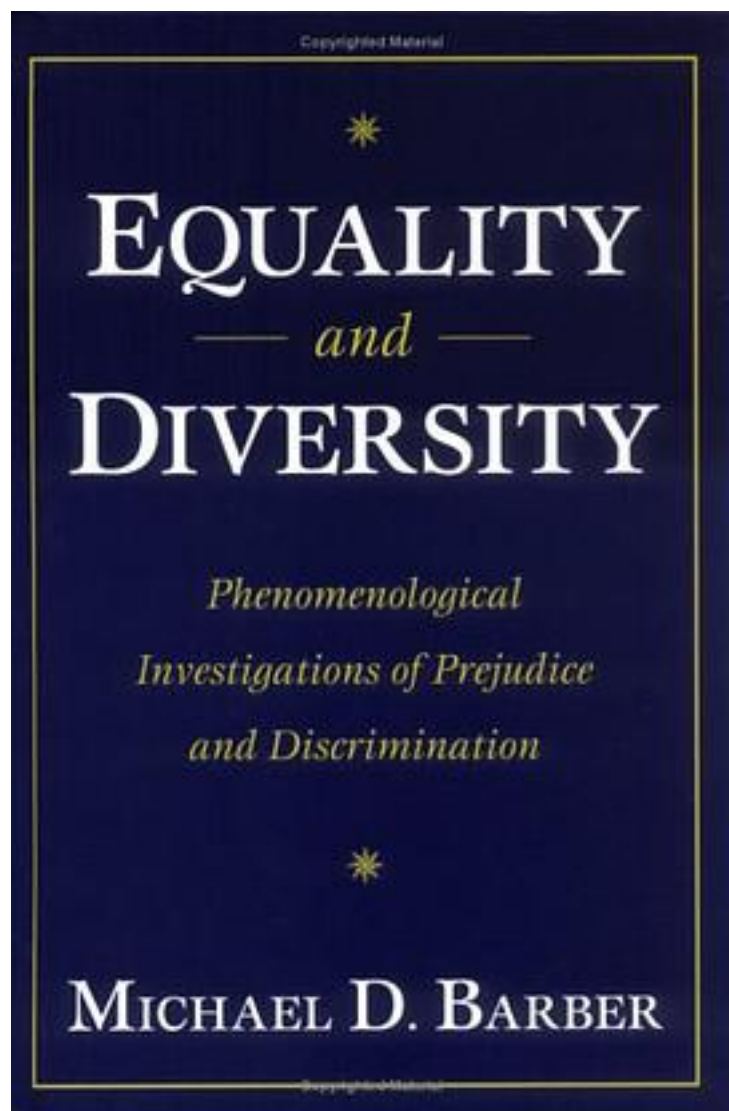


Equality and Diversity



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Examples of prejudice against Jews, women, African-Americans, and other minority groups are reported almost daily by the media. Despite educational programs to counteract prejudicial attitudes, this seemingly intractable problem remains an ongoing concern, not only in the United States but throughout the world. It is an interesting and often overlooked fact that the subject of prejudice was the focus of major works by three prominent philosophers in the phenomenological tradition, works that still offer many insights into contemporary attempts to understand this social problem: Jean-Paul Sartre's "Anti-Semite and Jew", Simone de Beauvoir's "The Second Sex", and Alfred Schutz's essay "Equality and the Meaning Structure of the Social World". Michael Barber examines this striking convergence of interests by these three philosophers and explores the significance of phenomenology for analysing prejudice as expressed in anti-Semitism, sexism, and racism. Part One first examines Edmund Husserl's highly abstract use of the term 'prejudice' and then considers how Sartre, de Beauvoir, and Schutz applied their own unique modifications of Husserl's phenomenological system to various manifestations of prejudice. In their writings, Barber uncovers a dialectic between a modernist concern for equality and a postmodernist fear of the suppression of 'alterity' - the distinctive qualities of the groups against whom prejudice is directed. In Part Two, Barber articulates a theoretical system of ethics that is innovative in reconciling the very different ethical perspectives of Karl-Otto Apel and Emmanuel Levinas. The book concludes by drawing on this unique synthesis to provide an ethical warrant for affirmative action, illuminating the unacknowledged presuppositions at play in debates over this issue.

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