



Age of Fracture

Daniel T. Rodgers

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In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the ideas that most Americans lived by started to fragment. Mid-century concepts of national consensus, managed markets, gender and racial identities, citizen obligation, and historical memory became more fluid. Flexible markets pushed aside Keynesian macroeconomic structures. Racial and gender solidarity divided into multiple identities; community responsibility shrank to smaller circles. In this wide-ranging narrative, **Daniel Rodgers** shows how the collective purposes and meanings that had framed social debate became unhinged and uncertain.

Age of Fracture offers a powerful reinterpretation of the ways in which the decades surrounding the 1980s changed America. Through a contagion of visions and metaphors, on both the intellectual right and the intellectual left, earlier notions of history and society that stressed solidity, collective institutions, and social circumstances gave way to a more individualized human nature that emphasized choice, agency, performance, and desire. On a broad canvas that includes Michel Foucault, Ronald Reagan, Judith Butler, Charles Murray, Jeffrey Sachs, and many more, Rodgers explains how structures of power came to seem less important than market choice and fluid selves.

Cutting across the social and political arenas of late-twentieth-century life and thought, from economic theory and the culture wars to disputes over poverty, color-blindness, and sisterhood, Rodgers reveals how our categories of social reality have been fractured and destabilized. As we survey the intellectual wreckage of this war of ideas, we better understand the emergence of our present age of uncertainty.

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