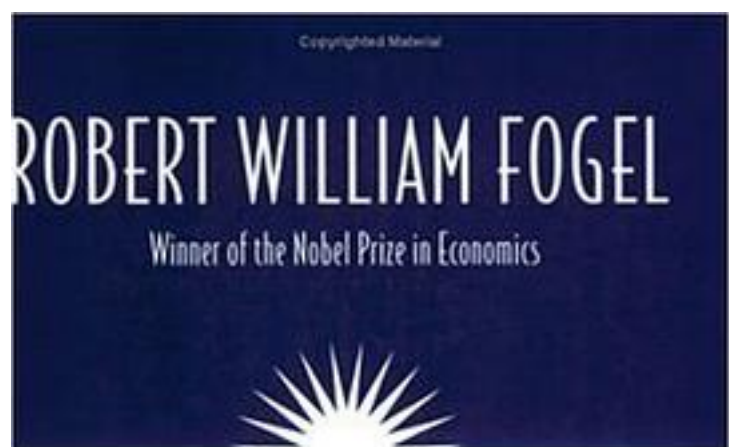


The Fourth Great Awakening and the Future of Egalitarianism



THE FOURTH GREAT AWAKENING THE FUTURE OF EGALITARIANISM

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著者:Fogel, Robert William

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Surveying the growing conservatism and religious revivalism of today's United States, Nobel Prize-winning economist Robert W. Fogel sees America in the midst of its "Fourth Great Awakening". In his long-awaited and most ambitious book since "Time on the Cross", Fogel looks to the nation's past to discover the strong link between technologically induced cycles of religiousness - or "awakenings" - in American history and attitudes towards poverty, education and social equality. The United States' "Fourth Great Awakening" is propelled by the tendency of technological advances to outpace ethical norms. The First Great Awakening, which began in 1730, laid the ideological foundation for the American Revolution. The second, starting in 1800, introduced many daring reforms, including the abolition of slavery. The Third Great Awakening, from 1890 to 1930, emphasized social injustice and launched the welfare state. America's new awakening, which began in the late 1950s, promotes a zealous new movement focused on spiritual rather than material reforms. Liberals, argues Fogel, have misunderstood the appeal of the religious right. The intractable forms of inequality today are not in the distribution of food, clothing and shelter, as they were a century ago, but in the distribution of immaterial or "spiritual" assets, which economists call "knowledge capital". Fogel's optimistic study describes 15 of these assets, vital to both economic success and the good life, and presents a new programme of egalitarian reforms based on shared values of liberals and conservatives and on the distribution of these assets. "The Fourth Great Awakening and the Future of Egalitarianism" is a major new work of intellectual history and offers nothing less than a blueprint for our future.

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