"In a civil libertarian's ideal world, government would treat all people as individuals, without regard to any categories into which society may place them. As a practical matter, though, even staunch civil libertarians recognize that government could not function were it barred from treating people as members of groups for some purposes. Indeed, some group-based governmental measures, such as affirmative action programs, may well enhance the individual rights and opportunities of certain people who have been disadvantaged by their societal groupings. Ruth Colker's original, insightful analysis points the way toward refining certain categorizations to make them more respectful of individual differences, while still accommodating legitimate concerns of governmental efficiency."

—Nadine Strossen
Professor of Law, New York Law School
National President of the American Civil Liberties Union

"Ruth Colker is one of the most perceptive and interesting scholars in the contemporary legal academy. Her new book, Hybrid, is an important and highly engaging contribution."

—Michael J. Perry
Howard J. Trienens Professor, Northwestern University School of Law

The United States, and the West in general, have always organized society along bipolar lines. We are either white or black, gay or straight, male or female, disabled or not.

In recent years, however, America seems increasingly aware of those who defy such easy categorization. Yet, rather than being welcomed for the challenges they offer, people "living the gap" are often stigmatized by all the communities to which they might belong. These hybrids befuddle courts because existing classifications do not fit them. Ruth Colker here argues that our bipolar classification system obscures a genuine understanding of the very nature of subordination. By rejecting conventional bipolar categories, we can broaden our understanding of sexuality, gender, race, and disability. Acknowledging that categorization is crucial and unavoidable in a world of practical problems and day-to-day conflicts, Colker shows how categories can and must be improved, for the good of all.

Critical America

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