

DINESH D'SOUZA

THE
VIRTUE
OF FINDING VALUES
IN AN AGE OF
TECHNO-AFFLUENCE
PROSPERITY

THE FREE PRESS New York • London • Toronto • Sydney • Singapore



THE FREE PRESS

A Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc.
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

Copyright © 2000 by Dinesh D'Souza
All rights reserved,
including the right of reproduction
in whole or in part in any form.

THE FREE PRESS and colophon are trademarks
of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

The excerpt from *Wired* on pages 161–63 is used with permission.

Manufactured in the United States of America

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
D'Souza, Dinesh, date.

The virtue of prosperity : finding values in an age of techno-affluence / Dinesh D'Souza.
p. cm.

1. Wealth—Moral and ethical aspects—United States. 2. Success—Moral and ethical
aspects—United States. 3. Values—United States. I. Title.

HC110.W4 D78 2000
174'.4—dc21
00-062313

ISBN 0-684-86814-8

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book would not have been possible without the valuable help of Bruce and Valerie Schooley. Bruce is actually the person who suggested the idea for the book, and he has been involved with it every step of the way. My wife, Dixie, has been a vital source of ideas and suggestions, and has patiently supported me in my labors. My daughter, Danielle, proved to be both an inspiration and, as the reader will discover, an occasional source of research material. My research assistants, Aaron Solomon and Todd Ostroske, were also indispensable. I am very grateful to the American Enterprise Institute for the freedom to pursue projects like this one. Chris DeMuth, president of AEI, is not only the ideal boss but also a very helpful reader. I am pleased to acknowledge the John Olin Foundation, which has provided me with research support over the years. My agent, Rafe Sagalyn, was even more involved than usual in shaping the concept of this book. My editor, Liz Maguire, provided constant encouragement and helpful criticism. While I cannot list all the people I interviewed or whose advice I solicited, I especially wish to thank Larry Arnn and the Claremont Institute, Karlyn Bowman, Robert and LaDorna Eichenberg, David Gerson, Tom Henriksen, Rich Karlgaard, Marvin Kosters, Larry Lindsey, Adam Meyerson, Jim and Mary Nierman, Jim Piereson, John Raisian, Spencer Reiss, Ron Robinson and the Young America's Foundation, and Scott Walter.

In memory of my father,

Allan D'Souza

1933–2000

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: GEEK CHIC: Anthropologist in a Strange Landxi
CHAPTER ONE: A WORLD WITHOUT LIMITS What's New About the New Economy	1
CHAPTER TWO: THE GATHERING STORM Mass Affluence and Its Discontents	28
CHAPTER THREE: CREATED UNEQUAL Merit and the Ones Left Behind	62
CHAPTER FOUR: THE LOTTERY OF SUCCESS Who Wins, Who Loses	84
CHAPTER FIVE: EYE OF THE NEEDLE The Moral Critique of Prosperity	110
CHAPTER SIX: THE WORLD WE HAVE LOST Goodbye Nature, Family, and Community?	135
CHAPTER SEVEN: A FUTURE THAT WORKS Why Techno-Capitalism Prevailed	161
CHAPTER EIGHT: THE CONQUEST OF HUMAN NATURE Technology and the Remaking of Humanity	188
CHAPTER NINE: THE SEDUCTION The Quest for the Posthuman	208
CHAPTER TEN: THE GIFT The Things That Matter the Most	229
NOTES	255
INDEX	270

Long is the way and hard,
That out of hell leads up to light.

— Milton, *Paradise Lost*

INTRODUCTION

GEEK CHIC

Anthropologist in a Strange Land

You can observe a lot by watching.

—Yogi Berra

To see the new world that is being born, you don't have to go to Silicon Valley. You can see it in Austin, Texas; Boise, Idaho; Boston, Massachusetts; Salt Lake City, Utah; Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina; Reston, Virginia; Champaign, Illinois; or any of the other high-tech cities that dot the map of the United States. You can also find it in Montreal, Canada; Cambridge, England; Dublin, Ireland; Tel Aviv, Israel; Melbourne, Australia; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Taipei, Taiwan; or Bangalore, India. Actually, you don't have to go anywhere. Just turn on your computer and get onto the Internet, that global brain detached from human bodies and powered by hundreds of millions of silicon transistors.

I am in Silicon Valley, however, which is the nerve center of the computer and telecommunications revolution transforming the world economy. Home to an estimated 250,000 millionaires, Silicon Valley has been described as the only place in the world not trying to figure out how to be Silicon Valley. Here, on Sand Hill Road, sit lordly venture capitalists willing to bet millions of dollars on new ideas that promise to wipe out old industries. Here are semiconductor companies that convert sand and oxygen, two of the most abundant materials on earth, into silicon chips, making possible e-mail, e-commerce, e-everything.