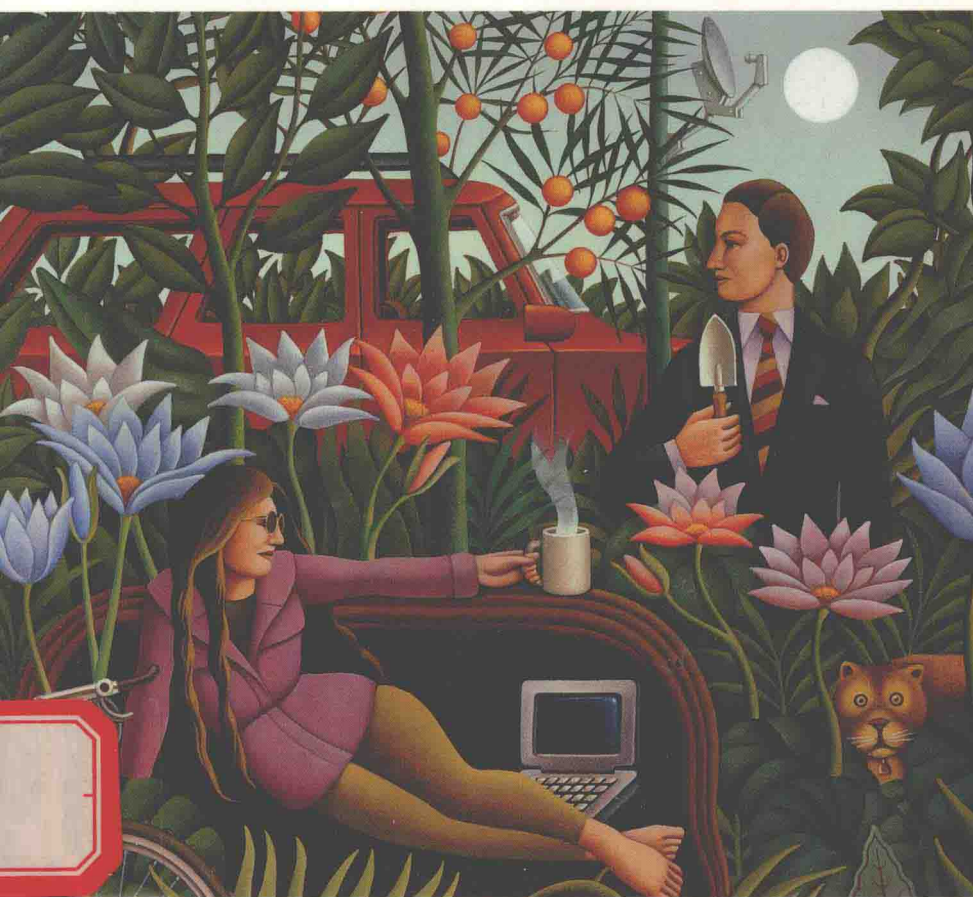


THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

BOBOS* IN PARADISE

THE NEW UPPER CLASS AND HOW THEY GOT THERE

DAVID BROOKS



"DELECTABLE . . . A TARTLY AMUSING, ALL TOO ACCURATE
GUIDE TO THE NEW ESTABLISHMENT."

—JANET MASLIN, *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

* BOURGEOIS BOHEMIANS

in Paradise

*The New Upper Class
and How They Got There*

David Brooks

TO JANE



TOUCHSTONE
Rockefeller Center
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

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"An absolute sparkler of a book, which should establish David Brooks—not that he needs establishing—as *the* smart, fun-to-read social critic of his generation."

—Christopher Buckley

"In his briskly written, clever *Bobos in Paradise*, David Brooks astutely describes a new-ish American elite. . . . An enormously accomplished and perceptive reporter."

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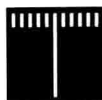
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A Touchstone Book

Published by SIMON & SCHUSTER

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Introduction

THIS BOOK started with a series of observations. After four and a half years abroad, I returned to the United States with fresh eyes and was confronted by a series of peculiar juxtapositions. WASPy upscale suburbs were suddenly dotted with arty coffeehouses where people drank little European coffees and listened to alternative music. Meanwhile, the bohemian downtown neighborhoods were packed with multimillion-dollar lofts and those upscale gardening stores where you can buy a faux-authentic trowel for \$35.99. Suddenly massive corporations like Microsoft and the Gap were on the scene, citing Gandhi and Jack Kerouac in their advertisements. And the status rules seemed to be turned upside down. Hip lawyers were wearing those teeny tiny steel-framed glasses because now it was apparently more prestigious to look like Franz Kafka than Paul Newman.

The thing that struck me as oddest was the way the

old categories no longer made sense. Throughout the twentieth century it's been pretty easy to distinguish between the bourgeois world of capitalism and the bohemian counterculture. The bourgeoisie were the square, practical ones. They defended tradition and middle-class morality. They worked for corporations, lived in suburbs, and went to church. Meanwhile, the bohemians were the free spirits who flouted convention. They were the artists and the intellectuals—the hippies and the Beats. In the old schema the bohemians championed the values of the radical 1960s and the bourgeois were the enterprising yuppies of the 1980s.

But I returned to an America in which the bohemian and the bourgeois were all mixed up. It was now impossible to tell an espresso-sipping artist from a cappuccino-gulping banker. And this wasn't just a matter of fashion accessories. I found that if you investigated people's attitudes toward sex, morality, leisure time, and work, it was getting harder and harder to separate the antiestablishment renegade from the pro-establishment company man. Most people, at least among the college-educated set, seemed to have rebel attitudes and social-climbing attitudes all scrambled together. Defying expectations and maybe logic, people seemed to have combined the countercultural sixties and the achieving eighties into one social ethos.

After a lot of further reporting and reading, it became clear that what I was observing is a cultural consequence of the information age. In this era ideas and knowledge are at least as vital to economic success as natural resources and finance capital. The intangible world of information merges with the material world of money, and new phrases that combine the two, such as "intellectual capital" and "the culture industry," come into vogue. So the people who thrive in this period are the ones who can turn ideas and emotions into products. These are highly edu-

cated folk who have one foot in the bohemian world of creativity and another foot in the bourgeois realm of ambition and worldly success. The members of the new information age elite are bourgeois bohemians. Or, to take the first two letters of each word, they are Bobos.

These Bobos define our age. They are the new establishment. Their hybrid culture is the atmosphere we all breathe. Their status codes now govern social life. Their moral codes give structure to our personal lives. When I use the word *establishment*, it sounds sinister and elitist. Let me say first, I'm a member of this class, as, I suspect, are most readers of this book. We're not so bad. All societies have elites, and our educated elite is a lot more enlightened than some of the older elites, which were based on blood or wealth or military valor. Wherever we educated elites settle, we make life more interesting, diverse, and edifying.

This book is a description of the ideology, manners, and morals of this elite. I start with the superficial things and work my way to the more profound. After a chapter tracing the origins of the affluent educated class, I describe its shopping habits, its business culture, its intellectual, social, and spiritual life. Finally, I try to figure out where the Bobo elite is headed. Where will we turn our attention next? Throughout the book I often go back to the world and ideas of the mid-1950s. That's because the fifties were the final decade of the industrial age, and the contrast between the upscale culture of that time and the upscale culture of today is stark and illuminating. Furthermore, I found that many of the books that really helped me understand the current educated class were written between 1955 and 1965, when the explosion in college enrollments, so crucial to many of these trends, was just beginning. Books like *The Organization Man*, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, *The Affluent Society*, *The Status Seekers*, and *The Protestant Establishment* were the