

## THE RISE OF THE CREATIVE CLASS THE FLIGHT OF THE CREATIVE CLASS

---

by Dr. Richard Florida

2002, Basic Books, 325 pages  
2005, HarperCollins, 311 pages

*"If America continues to make it harder for some of the world's most talented students and workers to come here, they'll go to other countries eager to tap into their creative capabilities—as will American citizens fed up with what they view as an increasingly repressive environment."* — Dr. Richard Florida, *The Flight of the Creative Class*

From this quote you can see immediately the sort of society Dr. Florida wants. Me, too. What's puzzling is he doesn't explicitly attach his shiny new cart of creativity to the thoroughbred of peace and political liberty.

In particular, you'd expect him to lambaste the Neocon Usurpers for launching expensive wars for isolated benefit of the Carlyle Group. Is he pulling his punches so Rush Bimbaugh won't accuse him of Bush-bashing? In general, why doesn't Florida boldly oppose the bonecrushing machinery of government per se?

That's my 900-pound-gorilla reservation about *The Creative* books. Otherwise, they provide a nice boost to the kinds of people we want to cultivate in society... or even want *to be*. It appears many in public office, more semi-comatose Democrats than fully rabid Republicans, are interested in developing and retaining creative communities.

*But are they willing to do what it takes?*

The more political power they wield the less willing they are.

*Rise* shows that what Dr. Florida calls the three Ts of creative-class communities—Talent, Technology, and Tolerance—occur rarely. And when they do, it's more from the tolerance angle. Austin, San Francisco, Seattle, Burlington (VT), Boston, the highest American cities on the creative-class list, achieve their vaunted status by spontaneous order. When governments catch up to what's going on and want to push people around, it's too late.

Tolerance is also another word for freedom. We can easily argue that liberty is fundamentally what the creative havenots *have not*. Talent and technology gravitate toward communities naturally when political leaders see their mission as preserving a natural order based on civil liberties.

They accomplish that mission mainly by removing government obstacles and keeping the infrastructure efficient.

*Government never furthered any enterprise but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way.* — Thoreau

Libertarians need no writer from the halls of the Carnegie Mellon Institute to tell us this dear Hamlet. But it's nice that in *Rise* Dr. Florida makes such a good statistical case for what creativity is, where it lives, and how we can nurture it. He also makes us aware that we, too, are paid-up members of the CC.

*Flight* is about politicians not getting the point of *Rise*.

As a result, we're witnessing a Brain Drain[1] in reverse. Creative people are increasingly leaving the United States for places like New Zealand, Ireland, even to some former Soviet-bloc countries. Dr. Florida documents what is happening and offers reasonable solutions. Three stars.

###

Have you noticed that when a LARGE idea that is simple—say hemp legalization or Dr. Florida's creativity prescriptions—and would clearly solve a BIG problem, it runs into the "Because we Just Can't" syndrome? Some poobah declares society (i.e. the special-interest juggernaut s/he's riding) isn't ready for the change. Then the media stops talking about it, citizens stay uninformed, and we keep taking the tyranny of the status quo up the ol' wazoo.

Aren't you tired of that? We Can and We Will (be free)!

[1] The Brain Drain was a period in the 1960s when salaries for professional people were so much higher in the United States that doctors, lawyers, engineers, and scientists emigrated from the suffocation in Europe where socialism was being tried and found wanting.