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Review of *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World*. Anand Giridharadas

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consistent themes pertaining the experiences of bereaved men. Ending chapters examine the dynamics that emerged during the group process and the hard-earned "wisdom" each member carried with him as a result of participating in the group.

In summary, the book is an interwoven tapestry of theories, clinical debates, client experiences and group development, and offers an integrative presentation of effective ways for supporting grieving men. It will be of great value to mental health professionals and all those who want to learn more about supporting grieving men.

Anao Zhang
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Anand Giridharadas, *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World*. Knopf (2018), 288 pages, \$26.95 (hardcover).

Welcome into the world of big money philanthropy! This is a world in which representatives of foundations heavily funded by corporations and the top 400 families debark from private jets and limousines to gather at luxurious conference facilities for the purpose of coordinating their ideas for how to make the world a better place. Anand Giridharadas, as a Henry Crown Fellow of the Aspen Institute, knows that world from the inside and has enjoyed all of the benefits—income, invitations, travel, grants, connections, class privileges—that this world has to offer. It is the kind of life about which we academics, pecking away in our little offices or grading one more pile of term papers, can only dream. Were one of us to call out, in effect, that these emperors have no clothes, it would be easily dismissed as the echo of *ressentiment* arising from the toiling classes. But this book is a cry from a privileged insider—thus all the more unexpected, and likewise all the more credible.

The thesis of Giridharadas's book can probably be deduced from the subtitle. Many of the wealthy denizens of what Giridharadas calls "MarketWorld" may be genuinely motivated on some level to do well by the world, and have created and sponsored networks of charities, foundations, programs, think tanks and relief efforts with all good intentions, but in doing

so they adhere to an all but explicit axiom never to seriously challenge or question the economic status quo. The underlying assumption of this world is that of the neoliberal utopia of free markets and free trade, backed by strong legal enforcement of property law. There is no moral evil in scoring big, making lots and lots and lots of money, so long as it is done within this framework. After that wealth has been ensured, those with conscience who want to do so can engage in philanthropic work to "give back" to others and help to ameliorate world troubles. What you may not do, what is considered out of bounds, impolite and bad form, is to raise questions about how the money is made, nor make direct connections between the way that money is made, or the resulting extremes of inequality in the world, and the very problems the charitable and philanthropic wing of MarketWorld is aiming to ameliorate.

Making this connection is what Giridharadas did, in a presentation made in 2015 at the Aspen Institute. Looking out over the audience, Giridharadas was overcome by the inescapable recognition that so much of the good work these wealthy philanthropists were engaged in was made necessary by the very products and financial shenanigans that built their wealth in the first place, and even then would be better ameliorated were these people and the interests they represented simply to pay their workers well and pay their actual share of taxes, rather than find all sorts of ways (such as setting up philanthropic foundations) to shield themselves and their wealth from these taxes. This book is a longer-form argument based on that original Aspen Institute presentation of 2015.

Another recurring theme in this book is the extent to which the MarketWorld philosophy has become endemic in society as a whole (and, we might add, in the world of social work and social welfare in particular). It is essentially this concept that underlies the current approach of solving social problems through "public/private partnerships." This is not to say that such public/private partnership ventures are always wrong, though it is not hard to guess which side of such ventures is generally supplying the capital and which side is generally reaping the profits. But it is to say that we need to view such proposals with a much more critical eye. While the stated ideology speaks of Win/Win, the actual facts on the ground are closer to Winners Take All. Perhaps now that the world has seen New York City

and Washington D.C., both with starving public sectors, hand over a reputed \$1.5 billion in tax expenditures to Amazon, one of the richest corporations in the world, the inherent logic of such public/private ventures will be more transparent. In the meantime, the inherent logic of MarketWorld continues to be both seductive and corrupting.

The heart of Giridharadas' book is a series of life stories and snapshots of a selected group of people who exist within the MarketWorld milieu—from entrepreneurs and financiers to the TED-talkers and PopTechers who butter them up and sing their praises. A good example from our own neighborhood of academia is Amy Cuddy, who as a Harvard social psychologist studies issues of workplace discrimination, and the effects of prejudice and social power. But when invited to present on the MarketWorld conference circle, she eschewed those unsettling problems and spoke instead on how women's body language might be part of why they find climbing the corporate ladder to be more difficult than it need be—that by striking regular "power" poses when they interact, women gain more sense of self-confidence and might well find this works to eliminate executive prejudices against them. This is not to say that what Prof. Cuddy said here is wrong—no doubt women striking regular power poses might have all kinds of positive outcomes. But it is to say that of all the work Prof. Cuddy has done that seriously addresses problems in the workplace, that she chose (or was specifically invited) to speak on power poses does illustrate how strong the temptation is to pull one's punches and neglect to address directly the concepts and ideas that challenge the validity of the neoliberal corporate milieu. Each chapter of the book presents the dilemmas of another person from the inside.

While I do highly recommend this book, and see it as part of a growing body of works beginning to question the commonplaces of neoliberal and Silicon Valley corporate charity and philanthropy, I have reservations about Giridharadas' proposed solutions. He comes down heavily on the side of government policies and regulations as the solution to social problems in general, and as the only force capable of reigning in the forces of neoliberal corporate capitalism, which feed the elite charade of changing the world. In the first place, while I am no cheerleader for corporate capitalism, the fact remains that on the things we mostly measure as outcomes to describe advancement toward a

"better world" (rising incomes and education levels, increases in public health and decreases in starvation and infant mortality) neoliberal corporate capitalism has proven to be as effective as any system we have seen. It is easy to see why people get behind this ideology and push it, even those who have not been among the super fabulous "winners" of the current system. The real problems arise mainly as societies rise up the social hierarchy of needs, as Maslow predicted. For meeting those basic survival and lower-end needs, the current system is arguably the best we have seen yet. It is at the higher end of the hierarchy that the current system of rising inequality threatens the internal sense of well-being and we come to realize that a strictly materialist notion of a "better world" does not adequately address human needs (and probably could not if it tried). To what extent, then, is it realistic to expect government policies and programs to do so (though I do support more egalitarian efforts)? In the second place, governments themselves respond mainly to the desires of the super fabulous winners of our system, and a book outlining stories of the ambiguities and cooptation of young idealists who get into government to change the world could easily serve as a companion volume to this book.

This is not to say we can give in to cynicism, or even some sort of Muggeridgian world-weariness. It is to say, however, that a lot more thought and consideration is needed than provided in this book to arrive at proposals for solutions. Perhaps we should have a conference aimed at producing such ideas. Perhaps establish a ThinkTank with a newsletter and a journal. Yeah, that's the ticket. Now, where might we turn for start up funding for those endeavors?

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