

The False Philanthropy Charade

Someone's head must have rolled at the Aspen Institute when Anand Giridharadas' book came out. Giridharadas didn't miss a rung as he climbed the American establishment's social ladder: born in Shaker Heights, schooled at Sidwell Friends, the University of Michigan, and Harvard, employed at McKinsey, the *International Herald Tribune*, and *The New York Times*, and mic'd up on MSNBC. Imagine the shock when this janissary of globaloney turned on his handlers, fat-cat cosmopolites seeking personal vindication and moral absolution.

[Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World](#) dispels rampant misperceptions about the wealthy's charitable crusades. Rather than just stop pushing addictive opioids, the Sackler family of Purdue Pharma fame has showered its blood money on museums, hospitals, and universities to secure secular indulgences. Social pathologies preoccupy the powerful, whose limitless resources empower their ambition. More importantly, they strive to "do well while doing good," since every Wharton MBA knows market solutions trump all others. With their PowerPoint slides and Patagonia vests, millionaire Mother Teresas misappropriate the skills they perfected at Goldman Sachs and Google to keep the powerless out of their plutocratic ambit of prestigious schools, lucrative jobs, and doorman buildings. Simply put, the author's "MarketWorld" rubric explains how "the ascendant power elite" pretend to "change the world while also profiting from the status quo."

Here's how it's done: Raise some capital from your rich

friends. Portray taxi drivers as thugs and their unions as cartels. Next, explain how your startup, let's call it "Oober," empowers unemployed car owners to become their own bosses, free from the regulatory burden that actually protected the little guy. Watch your VC investment balloon into the billions while the drivers beg for health care. Preach about disruption and innovation as boons to consumers, pay lobbyists to fend off the belligerent serfs, and donate a building to your alma mater. Don't worry; unwitting taxpayers will foot the kidney dialysis sessions your "independent contractors" have to miss work for. Then it's wheels up for Aspen to brag to your moneyed peers about how well you're doing, even if you aren't doing any good.

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