

New products as well as technologies are coming up all around us and daily. Regardless of whether you are at home or at work, on city streets or in the general society, the march of progress looks to be unstoppable. Also, together with it, economic productivity in the US and much of the West has ascended.

However, what's even this whole progress for, if the majority of the people can't enjoy it? Technological innovation allows us to be more productive, and you might assume that it would form a better life for everyone—however, so far so good, only the wealthy are gaining the benefits. All across the globe, normal people feel that the odds are stacked against them. They are actually correct—top billionaires' fortunes are now increasing twice as fast as every other person meager earnings. The top 10% of individuals own 90% of the whole planet's riches.

You might be thinking about what has gone wrong. Nevertheless, we're as well surrounded by advocates of change. Corporations support ethical trade and green investing. Thought leaders host panels on worldwide justice. Philanthropists flaunt their kindness in "giving back." Could this whole discussion of making the world turn into a better place be a sham?

In this book chapter, you'll discover how the influential language of transforming the world is a scam to maintain the status quo. You'll learn the means that the ideologies they support allow them to maintain their power. You'll also get to realize how the actual denial of that power lets them to remain in charge— and to keep on gaining the benefits of global capitalism, while the remaining of the globe is left behind with fragments.

Chapter 1 - Business elites have redefined social progress to fit their own personal interests.

Just like the majority of young adults growing into adults in the wake of the worldwide financial crash, Hilary Cohen, a recent philosophy graduate was going through some hard choices about her future. She understood that she wanted to make a change. She only wasn't certain of how she could do that. Should she work for a non-profit organization? Train as a rabbi? Or would

she need to learn how to reason like an entrepreneur to make the universe a better place for everybody? That was the manner she was leaning.

Also, she wasn't the only one among her generation.

Nobody who's been around in the past few decades can fail to see the increasing inequality in the whole universe, and especially in the US. As a matter of fact, Google searches for "inequality" increased by two folds among Americans in the four years between the years 2010 and 2014 in Cohen's graduation

In that same year, Thomas Piketty who is the author of surprise bestseller *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* – co-authored a study that brought the stark contrasts clearly into view. His study discovered that if college graduates such as Hilary Cohen got to the top 10% of earners, she'd be earning double as much as she would've in 1980. Conversely, for the bottom half of earners, the average income increase was only \$200 in total.

In this setting of polarizing wealth, economic as well as social inequalities were getting more and more clear to young people such as Cohen. The wish to do something about them was increasing, and Cohen as well as her peers were more and more convinced that making a difference entailed joining the business field and training in its approaches. Then, she chose to join a top management consultancy. By doing that, she'd be able to make use of capitalism's tools to fix social issues.

Without being aware of it, Cohen had absorbed the dominant ideology about how to transform the world – refer to as neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is founded on a belief in the free market. The idea is that if you leave people to chase their personal aims in the free market and curtail regulation and statist intervention, individuals will be the happiest and wealthiest. Supporters of neoliberalism believe that it's the huge companies that transform the world for the better, by making use of their business understanding in social issues such as poverty.

However, this belief comes with a huge risk. If you put rich elites in control, difficult questions about inequality as well as power are going to be ignored. Nevertheless, the powerful don't want to surrender their power. Also, that's precisely what they would need to do if resources were to be allocated in a fairer manner.

Chapter 2 - The win-win maxim of the elites enables them to look like they're improving the world while they are essentially benefitting from inequality.

If you occur to be an extremely effective person, you might be accustomed to reasoning in terms of win-win. It's the easy principle that in all circumstances, there's a result that's valuable for every side. The idea became popular from the famous book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

Win-win might be an excellent maxim for personal effectiveness; however, when elites use it to the bigger world, it gets more difficult.

In the authority of the powerful, they believe that everybody can be a winner every time appear to signify that what's good for the people that are already winners is good for every other person as well. In this manner, even social change can be totally easy and not need any sacrifices. Businesses profit, everybody's lives get better...it's win-win, right?

Sadly, it doesn't usually work like that.

For instance, you might assume that it's a good thing to look for a technological solution to promote productivity. Justin Rosenstein, who is a Silicon Valley star and coinventor of Facebook's "Like" button, believed just that. His natural impulse was to increase productivity by founding a tech company—a company that produced collaboration software. The idea was that everybody can gain from improved efficiency, maybe in government, non-profit work, or healthcare.

However, this type of thinking fails to see the underlying injustice. As a matter of fact, in the US, productivity has already increased greatly in the past few decades – however, just a few people have gained from this growth. For the majority of the people, wages have deteriorated. According to a report that was done by the Economic Policy Institute, in the decades between

1973 and 2014, the regular worker in the US got 70% more productive; however, the median wage rise was below 10%.

It's not as if start-up founders such as Rosenstein essentially have bad aims. They're attempting to do good, nevertheless—however, it's their win-win assumptions that made them go astray.

The difficult reality might be that it's not really possible for corporations to make the world a better place while concurrently benefitting huge profits. To actually make things better for the majority of the people, we'd have to examine how to redistribute the profits from the whole productivity in a more equal manner.

Chapter 3 - The powerful deny their power, and this assists them to remain in charge.

What do you think the future holds? A lot of prosperous business founders assert that we're moving to a future where everybody will be an entrepreneur, where technology will indefinitely extend our lives, and where online videos will substitute text communication. These may seem like possible predictions of things to happen.

However, dig deeper, and you might notice the reason why a person would decide to give emphasis on one future scenario over others. More often than not, the answer is that there's a thing to benefit.

It's an excellent ploy to use—choose an idea that'll serve as an advantage for your business, and change it into a humble-sounding prediction of things to happen. It's a means to push for the future you wish while making it seem as if nobody has any option.

Consider the asserting about everybody turning into entrepreneurs. It's a handy circumstance for business tycoons since they can make use of it to justify taking privileges away from employees. Nevertheless, they're all entrepreneurs working for themselves. They don't require a pension or health care.

Presenting a specific future scenario as unavoidable is only one of the means that business elites use to act as if they do not have power. Also, they like to act as rebels against the establishment. However, it only conceals the actual power they possess and the manner they use it to take advantage of those that are truly powerless.

Consider Uber, for instance. A venture capitalist financing the company might refer to the company as bold fighters against monopolies and corruption. Shervin Pishevar, the investor who has a financial stake in the company, lately commended Uber for standing up to “taxi cartels.”

Also, if you examine a court case brought against Uber for its improper treatment of its drivers, the powerlessness is precisely the defense that they made use of. Uber alleged to be only a technology company, connecting drivers and passengers together. In this manner, they could surrender any responsibility for gains and fair pay.

However, the judge wasn't having any of it. To be certain, the drivers were not like traditional employees whose time was regulated by the factory; however, Judge Chen indicated that the company still had huge power over them. For instance, it provides them comprehensive guidelines on how to act and sacks them for little breaches of the rules.

The denial of its power was what enabled the company to gain from exploitation; however, its real power over its drivers was really vast to go unnoticed

Chapter 4 - Elites depend on thought leaders to maintain their power and to maintain the status quo.

When last did you read a work of political philosophy during your free time? If you can't say it's been lately, you're not the only one. What about watching a TED talk on YouTube?

Nowadays, the majority of us obtain our information from famous online sources in bite-size pieces. All thanks to digital media, different types of complicated ideas are now more extensively accessible than ever before.

That signifies that it is very easy than ever before to make oneself heard. The issue is, it's usually not complicated, critical ideas that are conveyed. Instead, there has been a current spread of glib, reassuring messages asserting that things are okay just the way as they are. Previously, we had public intellectuals asking difficult questions about the manner society functions; now there are the thought leaders.

Who is this person, the thought leader? Well, he's precisely the type of optimist and a real believer that the business world has to tell a heartwarming narrative about the manner they do things. Thought leaders don't ask questions regarding the root origins of an issue. They take a closer look at superficial solutions that don't meddle with the manner things are.

Consider the issue of gender inequality. It's difficult to deny that men still possess the majority of the power in this world – for instance, most boardrooms are still mainly male. However, what can be done about this issue?

Researchers as well as feminists who use their working lives studying that actual question have a tendency to devise hard and challenging solutions. They involve individuals in positions of power having to become aware of their benefit and being ready to surrender it.

However, the second-most famous TED talk of all time talks about the question of gender inequality at work and devises with an easy answer. Researcher Amy Cuddy showed the solution as an immediate fix that women could use to enhance their confidence: which is striking a Wonder Woman power pose. In case you're thinking, that's hands-on-hips, feet shoulder-length apart.

Also, just like that, the issue of discrimination could be fixed. Women have the chance to feel powerful. Men don't need to surrender power. This type of positive, easy answer is an excellent illustration of what makes concepts attractive to the elites who'd rather surrender their power –however, want to appear as if they care. At first glance, things seem great; however, the complex origins of the problem stay untouched. Which is just how the elites like it!

In this manner, thought leaders such as Cuddy assist the elite to maintain things as they are – while proclaiming to work for a better world.

Chapter 5 - When a business approaches problem-solving dominate, social issues are disregarded.

Say you're doing an interview for a dream job. You've used weeks getting ready for the interview, you're wearing your best duds, and you've been able to keep your voice from shaking. Then the interviewer asks you a question like, "What number of ping-pong balls would fit into a Boeing 747?"

A top management consultancy known as McKinsey has a tendency to ask its interviewees these kinds of questions to know if they can show a certain pattern of problem-solving. It entails breaking an issue down into small pieces and connecting them in a logical manner. Afterward, you make an educated guess at an answer, look for the data to back it up, and present it convincingly. There you go, you have a ready-made template for dealing with any difficulty you might encounter as a management consultant. However, can this method work for issues outside of the business field?

McKinsey has become extremely successful by concentrating on this kind of problem-solving style, and this has made other companies ardent to follow this approach. However, the technique overlooks the difficulty of people's lives and the damage it might be doing to the people that are affected.

We can notice this in the famous drive to optimization. That entails organizing each aspect of your business to maximize efficiency and revenue. Optimization has made it possible for companies such as Starbucks much more productive and, as well, profitable. However, as it optimized its scheduling of workers and minimized its wage bill, the transformations brought about pandemonium into the lives of people. The reason is that, with shifts planned at the last minute depending on business needs, the employees were no longer aware of the number of hours they'd be working every week. That entailed that they couldn't plan things such as bill payments and needed to regularly arrange child-care on short notice.

Also, that is not everything. Things seem even shadier when business approaches are utilized to deal with global social problems. The reason is that this method sees everything from the perspective of people with power. It entails that their own duty in creating the issue tends to be disregarded.

Consider the challenge of worldwide poverty. Businesses like to promote business answers. For instance, TechnoServe asserts to create wealth by connecting people to markets and information. However, by doing that, they pass over the real roots of poverty, such as unfair labor circumstances and low wages. Concentrating on those would need businesses to examine how they maximize their own profits at the expense of workers. Who wants to do that?

Chapter 6 - People that are rich cleverly make use of philanthropy to conceal the injustice at the source of their wealth.

If you've ever gone to a popular museum in a city such as Paris, London, or New York, you might have seen yourself in the Sackler Wing. A lot of establishments across the globe have one, all thanks to the charitable donations from a family known as the Sacklers.

They're one of the wealthiest families in the US, popular for their generous giving. However, is their philanthropy actually that generous?

You might be thinking about what the issue could likely be. Nevertheless, we approve that charity is something that is good, right?

Well, it's not usually really direct. In the situation of the Sackler family, their donations to museums add up to millions. However, how did they acquire those millions in the first instance?

The answer boils down to a powerful small pill known as OxyContin. A strong painkiller produced by the Sacklers' pharmaceutical company Purdue and aggressively marketed to doctors, it got them their \$14 billion wealth.

However, it also brought about some extreme social issues that demonstrate a troubling tension between large-scale generosity and social justice. As a matter of fact, the issues were really widespread that the catastrophe they've caused is now referred to as a national opioid epidemic in the US, accountable for thousands of deaths each year.

Something about the pill is that it's extremely addictive and very easy to abuse. Users can become high on par with heroin. Due to that, it has turned into a common street drug. Also, deaths as a result of opioid overdoses have increased; in the 15 years after its extensive use, they quadrupled.

Furthermore, this development was not exactly unanticipated. In the beginning, some health officials detected an increase in deaths caused by OxyContin's active ingredient and raised the alarm. They pushed for regulations that would make it more difficult for addicts to have access to the drug.

However, Purdue resisted each step of the way. Also, it downplayed issues about the drug's addictiveness and carried on with its promotional campaigns. Eventually, a court saw its schemes to be deceitful and the company had to pay a fine of \$635 million.

You might think that justice prevailed; however, this was only a little dent in the family's wealth. Also, the museum wings are still present there. The establishments gaining from the donations are in no rush to dig deep after their roots.

It's as though giving generously – and clearly – became a way for elites to buy legitimacy and evade criticism.

Chapter 7 - The universe is separated between elites who benefit from global capitalism and those who are not getting its benefits.

In the year 2016, in September, global movers and shakers assembled for the Clinton Global Initiative, a conference for socially conscious elites that Bill Clinton had been planning for over a decade. A question was on the mind of everybody: What is the reason why all of them hate us?

The “they” in question were normal individuals, and the “us” were the wealthy and powerful elites.

The rage could be obviously felt all across the globe. Donald Trump was getting support in the US. People had voted to leave the European Union in Britain. In other European nations such as Hungary, right-wing parties were being chosen into government. Individuals were responding against the free, borderless, technocratic, free-market vision of the globe supported by the elites. Also, their rage was driving them to the other direction— toward nationalistic, xenophobic, populist extremes.

As a matter of fact, the rage, as well as frustration, had been piling up for years; however, the elites were only waking up to its realities. Also, what they were noticing is the world going toward a new type of division.

This division is no just between the wealthy and the poor anymore, just like in the olden days. Now it boils down to globalists versus anti-globalists. The globalists are the mobile and the powerful that stay in a world without borders and gain the advantages of technological and economic progress. They feel more connected to other people that are similar to them all across the world than to their neighbors in the other part of town.

Also, on the other part, there are those neighbors. They are the huge majority of people with powerful connections to their community as well as the place they live. They are the individuals who’ve watched their salaries deteriorate for several decades, their health deteriorates, and the education of their children suffers. They feel more and more displeased of the absence of concern to their struggles.

They feel that the world that surrounds them has transformed while they were really busy struggling to make a living. Also, they’re refusing rule by worldwide elites who put revenue before any other thing, particularly before the needs of their societies.

The impression that what is good for the elites is also good for the normal individuals being dismissed by the multitudes. The question is if the plutocrats will ever be willing to surrender something.

Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World by Anand Giridharadas Book Review

Global business elites have deceived us into thinking that only their tools and strategies can make the world become a better place. The wealthy and powerful assert to fight for social justice; however, as a matter of fact, their deceptions and tactics allow them to maintain things as they are. Aided by thought leaders supporting rhetoric of change, those with power do anything within their reach to hold on to it while convincing other people – and themselves – that they are making life better for everyone.

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