

Comment on Jordan Flaherty's *No More Heroes*

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While I had been critical of the way various "foundations" were manipulating other people's money, no other books had shown me the underlying problem as clearly as this one. I suspect that there are many people who are uncomfortable with the content of the book as it challenges the comfort and status quo even of many progressives, esp. with those with "privileges". But until we are ready to accept such a challenge, we will not be able to change the tide.

I think that the following four paragraphs from the book summarize the author's point very well:

"The savior mentality means that you want to help others but are not open to guidance from those you want to help. Saviors fundamentally believe they are better than the people they are rescuing. Saviors want to support the struggle of communities that are not their own, but they believe they must remain in charge. The saviors always wants to lead, never to follow. When the people they have chosen to rescue tell them they are not helping, they think those people are mistaken. It is almost taken as evidence that they need more help.

"The savior mentality is not about individual failings. It is the logical result of a racist, colonialist, capitalist, heteropatriachal system setting us against each other. And being a savior is not a fixed identity. Under the struggle to survive within capitalism, most of us are forced into decisions that contradict our ideals. Many people are involved in liberation movements in their free time while their day job is at a charity or other nonprofit that does not challenge the status quo. We can be a savior one day and an ally the next.

"The savior mentality always looks for solutions by working within our current system, because deeper change might push us out of the picture. This focus on quick fixes is also partly a product of an outrage-oriented media. We pay attention to an issue for one day, and we want to hear that someone will be fired or arrested. If that happens, we move on.

"Saviors adopt trendy labels such as social entrepreneur or change agent. They preach the religion of kinder capitalism, the idea that you can get rich while also helping others, that the pursuit of profit, described with buzzwords like engagement, innovation, and sharing economy, will improve everyone's lives through efficiency. However, I stand with nineteenth-century novelist Honoré de Balzac, who wrote that behind every fortune is a concealed crime. I don't believe you can get rich while doing good--wealth and justice are mutually exclusive. The more

wealth exists in the world, the less justice."

The author carefully explores several topics relevant to his point.

Although the majority of people initially supported the War on Terror without really understanding the underlying issues, I think many have realized the reality by now. This topic is touched upon at various points.

The majority of people still do not seem to understand what is really behind the War on Drugs. But more and more materials are showing up to expose the current issues and the source of the problem. This topic is also visited, but not in detail. But I had learned a lot from *Chasing the Scream* by Johann Hari, *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts* by Gabor Maté, and *The Globalization of Addiction* by Bruce Alexander.

The book details more about the education issues after Hurricane Katrina, especially in connection to the problem with Teach for America, and War on Sex Trafficking. These are two areas I was not really aware of until reading this book.

The author singles out the saviorism mentality underlying all of these topics and discusses a more fruitful approach. I recommend this book highly. By the way, the book begins with a very appropriate forward by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, the author of *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, which is highly recommended as well.