

Mccann, let the great
world spin



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The novel by McCann, 'Let the Great World Spin', portrays a in hope and despair, but the dis fence-sits on the border line between romantic humanitarian optimism and the world of real politics. The book, was written and published in 2009, when the World Trade Centre incident no more simply came to the brave effort of a city and its people to cope in the face of great human agony. Instead, the incident, when looked back in 2009, inevitably is stained by the blood of millions in Afghanistan and Iraq. The politics of war is not even a noticeable presence in the novel, except momentarily.

In the opening lines of the novel itself, there is a blunt reference to the twin tower attack, and the first view of the novelist's fictional world that the reader gets, is the people in the New York city streets, watching upwards, tilting their heads, which has a premonition-like resemblance to the images that were flashed on television, years later, when the twin towers fell. Corrigan's blind faith is the ideology that sets the tone of the novel. So it becomes easy for one of the protagonists (Corrigan's brother) to say that "he never rejected the world" (McCann, 20). Such a conforming posture before the vices and miseries of the world is also in conformity with the way, America handled the 'war on terrorism'. The hope expressed in the novel had no connection with the realities of the people of Afghanistan or Iraq. What happened in the twin tower incident was repeated by America a million times in these countries, which took away the moral right of the nation to preach hope and peace. And in the novel, whenever the war is mentioned, the propagator of the war is explicitly absent, as if war was a natural disaster. This is why the novelist, in almost all his sentences, makes war the grammatical 'subject', and not the object of action by another subject. For <https://assignbuster.com/mccann-let-the-great-world-spin/>

example, one of the narrators is heard to say, “ the war kicked in, and she got all messed up in it” (McCann, 49).

When one of the protagonists says, “ this was not the America that I expected”, he was referring to the dark ghettos of South Bronx, but by placing, Corrigan, the Christ look alike, in those ghettos, a virtual kind of solution is offered by the novel (McCann, 32). Throughout the book, one is reminded that though reaching out to the victims is a good deed, preventing victimization is far more difficult a task, of which every one wants to shed responsibility. The puritan approach of the novelist is evident from the characterization of Corrigan who never falls for a prostitute, but is attracted to a nurse. Here again, the politics of charity and the difference between sympathy and real involvement gets revealed.

When one of the hookers who uses Corrigan’s toilet says that “ we love him like nicotine”, the contradiction in the characterization of Corrigan becomes more evident. The famous words of Karl Marx that religion is opium, comes to mind, which totally contrasts the sustaining glorification of Corrigan inside the novel. It is silence, that represents the ambience created by Corrigan always, as is observed by his brother (McCann, 20, 31, 52, 53). This silence fits into the ideological schema of the novel in a perfect way. The silent areas of the narrative is pregnant with the untold political realities of the “ war on terrorism” as well as the poverty depicted in the novel amidst the prosperity that is America.

Works Cited

McCann, Colum, Let The Great World Spin, New York: Random House, 2009.