

Book Review: Stupid White Man

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The world woke up to a strange new reality on November 9th, 2016. Americans had chosen a new leader – Donald John Trump as the 45th president of the United States of America. While elections – democratic or otherwise – are held in a number of countries round the world, when the country is United States, the world has to take notice. While practical and constitutional limitations of the powers of the US President exist, and are well documented, the public perception is that of a president with a *carte blanche* authority to press the nuclear button if he/she feels to inclined.

The reaction to the result was dramatic. This was in sharp contrast to the dewy-eyed response when Obama took over. From long lines at the Canadian border to the crashing of the Canadian immigration website to hordes of white supremacists running wild on the roads, we saw it all. Even in Pakistan, the press and public-at-large showed great interest and later concern at the Trump's trump up the greasy pole.

Many believe the that rise of Trump is not an isolated incident but is a continuance of a global racist movement which became prominent last

year with Brexit. Michael Moore has been a critic of American society. He is a liberal and may be seen as an antidote to the rise of “small letter KKK” in America. ‘Bowling for Columbine’ was a documentary made by Michael Moore. This documentary was nominated for the Cannes Film Festival where Michael Moore was praised when people stood for so long for him that it had never happened in the history of the Cannes film festival before. This film was shown at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival. It also won the Grand Jury Prize. Michael Moore is sort of a hero in France. One of his films which he made first, ‘Roger and Me’ is taught at the schools in French as part of their syllabus. This documentary was made in 1989. It has won many awards and it brought out the mal-practices of General Motors.

Moore is not only popular in the region of Western Europe as his popularity goes beyond these borders. One of his books in which he attacked America ‘Stupid White Men’ proved to be the best seller book not only in Europe, Britain, Australia but surprisingly in America too. It remained in the best seller spot of the New York Times for a year and it also kept the

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top spot for eight weeks. The sales of the books picked up when Michael won the Oscar for his documentary 'Bowling for Columbine'.

The book 'Stupid White Men' which was first issued on September 10, 2001, was a book by chance. The 9/11 attacks had made the book dealers skeptical about publishing the book that criticized America. The publishers Harper-Collins were really itchy about backing a book which charged George W Bush to have stolen the Presidency. The book also suggests that the money spent on Armed forces must be decreased and it also condemns every aspect of the contemporary American nation. It won the Deutscher Bücherpreis for Sachbuch in 2004. Even before the book begins, Moore quotes George Bush, "It's amazing I won. I was running against peace, prosperity, and incumbency."

Michael Moore in his book 'Stupid White Men' blames the white men for all the problems that are there in America. He says that white men instead of the black men and women are the root cause of every problem in the country. They have brought about the corruption in the corporate sector, harming the environment in every possible way they can, polluting the water that we drink with arsenic and spreading of the violence and gun culture.

On the other hand, the title and the cover of the book suggests something deeper as to what the book has in hold for the readers. This bitter attack on the US society varies from being sarcastic to sober issues. This book does not have some orthodox book like facts and figures with solid reasoning whereas it becomes aloof at places and at some it becomes quite interesting and gripping. The writers picture on the cover is not by default, it in fact suggests that Michael Moore being a white American is also a culprit for the torments of America.

One cannot but believe in Michael's honesty and integrity. He displays sympathies and concern for the ones who are deprived, misused or ill-treated and he looks down upon the usurpers. Nonetheless, the way he maneuvers his style of writing at certain places seems to be opposite of what he is trying to convey. He pays his apologies for using words that should not be used such as 'swearing words' but he uses them anyway at other places. But he does not apologize for some stereotypes, distorted and permissive expressions; for e.g; "if I find him he's a dead white guy". Such remarks are sprinkled in his book at many places. Michael Moore does not elaborate on why he calls the church to be an organization that 'oppresses' and it is not a group that hates women.

He wishes for bringing about peace in Northern Ireland which is ironic as it is a pipe dream; the only way being the Protestants to change faith and become Catholics. It is an issue of the World which he tries to solve in the limited space of his book. His problem solving is a mixture of frivolity and genuine sound reasoning.

There is also a main theory which focuses on the fact that the ones who are oppressors are solely the white men. He has also briefly touched China and Japan relations, China when ruled by Mao Tse Tung and terrifying rules of Idi Amin and Robert Mugabe indicate that cruelties, tyranny and persecution exists in every nationality.

Michael's documentaries are focused on the visual aspect. They are sharp-witted and appalling. They are also a combination of sarcasm and sobriety. It is such a blend that gels on the screen for there are several indications that demonstrate the change of tone. There is a variation in the music and the voice-over is also

changed. The amazing fact is that the message to be delivered in general is not undermined by such minor altercations.

There is a contrast in his writing which is not as desirable as the documentaries. He despises the acts of aggression in the American civilization or culture but he very lightly gives the title to one of the chapters as 'Kill Whitey'.

He sheds light on 'a day in the life of POTUS (President of the US)' in a very inconspicuous way. There is an indication that President Bush is the one who sleeps most of the time, he does near to no work and is not fond of entertainment at all. After writing this, he changes his point of view and blasts those who would depict Bush as a 'cartoon Monster'. Without a realization, Michael has himself done the same thing.

George Bush is a target for innumerable charges against him. Since the beginning when Bush got elected, which has been termed by Michael as 'stealing' the power. He is also under attack for reducing the funds and depriving the education department, health and environment protection. 'Stupid White Men' is a condemnation in reprimanding Bush and his management.

Michael not only criticizes Bush, he also criticizes the Democrats specially Bill Clinton. Michael writes, "He [Clinton] discovered that saying something was the same as doing it. If you said you were for a clean environment, that was good enough – you didn't have to do anything to make it a clean environment." It means that they also only say things without doing something to make a change they think to make.

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Michael considers Clinton to be a smooth deceiver as he portrayed a good side but his policies regarding health, welfare of the people and capital punishment leave much to be desired. While most facts discussed in the book are more than a decade old, they shed a good light on the current state the Americans are and have put the world in.

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