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Its title recalls Bret Easton Ellis's infamous book, but while Ellis's narrator was a blank slate, *African Psycho*'s protagonist is a quivering mass of lies, neuroses, and relentless internal chatter. Gregoire Nakobomayo, a petty criminal, has decided to kill his girlfriend Germaine. He's planned the crime for some time, but still, the act of murder requires a bit of psychological and logistical preparation. Luckily, he has a mentor to call on, the far more accomplished serial killer Angoualima. The fact that Angoualima is *dead* doesn't prevent Gregoire from holding lengthy conversations with him. Little by little, Gregoire interweaves Angoualima's life and criminal exploits with his own. Continuing with the plan despite a string of botched attempts, Gregoire's final shot at offing Germaine leads to an abrupt unraveling. Lauded in France for its fresh and witty style, *African Psycho*'s inventive use of language surprises and relieves the reader by injecting humor into this disturbing subject.

African Psycho Details

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From Reader Review African Psycho for online ebook

Christina says

Really disturbing, in a good way. It held a lot of promise, and kept building up momentum, and then it never really delivered. That was disappointing.

Pink says

I'm not sure what to think about this book. It was kind of crazy and had so much build up throughout, but I'm not sure it had the final climax or pay off that I was hoping for. Interesting enough to keep me engaged and wanting to try some more of Mabanckou's writing, but nothing I'll be shouting about.

Siyamthanda Skota says

- Yes, I love vulgarity. I claim it loud and clear. I love it because only it says what we are, without hideous masks we wear by nature, which turns us into mean beings, hypocrites, ceaselessly running after decency, a quality I couldn't care less about.

- Do I have to stress that I have no flowery memories from my youth other than those of the soccer games with rag-balls?

Dylan Hussey says

Equally as hilarious as it is disconcerting and far superior to it's American counterpart. (That's because Easton Ellis is a bag of bloody nails!)

Rachel Louise Atkin says

Overall I did like this book, but I also expected a lot more from it. I think in naming it after Ellis's American Psycho and having it compared to Beckett, Dostoevsky, Camus and even Salinger (who are basically all my favourite authors) meant Mabanckou's book was under a lot of pressure from me to be just as amazing.

It follows Gregoire Nakobomayo who, under the influence of a dead killer by the name of Angoualima, decides he wants to become, too, a famous killer. Like a lot of other reviewers have said, the internal monologue reminded me more of Dostoevsky and Camus's prose than Ellis's, as this novel I found was more about his internal psychosis and his growing urge to perform a horrific act that he can't physically manifest. Rather than it being a comment on society, African Psycho turns inwards to it's protagonist's head to the point where even Greg can't see past his own swelling anxiety and gradual disintegration.

It is fascinating from a psychological and existential point of view which is why it has more in common with classic existential authors - the prose was extremely reminiscent of the prose in Crime and Punishment a lot

of the time. The writing really means it secures its place with-in a canon of murderous narrator fiction such as Patrick Suskind's *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* which this also reminded me of. But at the same time it was a coming-of-age story, albeit one that goes horribly wrong, but still shows Greg's adolescent struggles. These themes put together make *African Psycho* an extremely unique but outstanding book.

On rereading or perhaps after writing an academic article on this book I believe I'll give it a higher rating, but for the time being I was slightly let down on my first read just because of its monumental comparisons to the majority of my favourite authors. I would definitely recommend it though as I know I'm going to return to this book at some point, as it is extremely entertaining (in a dark humour sort of way) and cleverly written.

Diana Simumpande says

This book was very disturbing. Think *Pinky and the Brain* but instead of an obsessive desire to take over the world, Gregoire (and his rectangular shaped head) is consumed with the desire to rape and murder. Specifically to be able to rise to the same infamy and esteem as his mentor, and idol, the incredibly vicious and very dead Angoualima. Gregoire hasn't had the best childhood and some of his experiences have made him quite an angry man as well as a misogynist. While this book is very disturbing it's also hilarious. Poor Gregorie is so far up his own arse and Angoualima's that as he stalks the streets of He-Who-Drinks-Water-Is-an-Idiot, he can't seem to successfully execute a murder.

This was my first time reading Mabanckou and I was very impressed. His writing style is brilliant and I'd love to read more from him.

Be warned this book has very graphic descriptions of rape, murder and assault, but if you can stomach all that, you'll find quite a compelling story about a rather hopeless serial killer in the making.

Ivano Porpora says

Un libro molto interessante, e Angoualima il killer morto è una sorta di personificazione della perfezione cui tendiamo, sensibile e pericolosa.

Marc says

A slim novel with a rather unique narrator--angry, frustrated, misogynistic, and delusional. Our dear Gregoire aspires to commit murder like his idol, a serial killer named Angoualima. This is as much about the struggle of conscience as it is the frustration of the individual in relation to society.

Carloesse says

Si fa leggere, anche rapidamente date le non molte pagine, e lascia qualche sorriso qua e là (divertenti i dialoghi del maldestro protagonista con il fantasma del suo idolo pluriomicida e serial-killer di cui vorrebbe emulare le gesta e la fama, e che si materializza sulla tomba ogni volta che va a rendergli omaggio e venerazione), ma ben poco di più per farsi ricordare.

BlackBookie says

This book was a slow burn, so I was expecting it to be fantastic as it progressed. The ending was so anticlimactic. I wouldn't pick it up again.

John says

For Christmas, why not a man who can murder as an act of vanity? As self-expression! The narrator of AFRICAN PSYCHO claims to share that pathology: “to kill at last, crush . . ., I was going to be somebody.” Such a lunatic yearning is familiar in fiction, a trick that goes back at least to Dostoevsky. The drama’s in the waffling: will he or won’t he? But Mabanckou (a Congolese who’s won prizes in France), discovers a fascinating new way to hang you up on those tenterhooks. His novel presents no gloomy Raskolnikov, nor the fixed sneer of Patrick Bateman, but a haunted burlesque. The narrator Gregoire may wish he were scary, but he proves good company. Raised in the streets of an African metropolis, he achieved most of his education via a mashup of comic books & a French version of Great Books. The result is a voluble palooka, likeable, whose strongest trait would be either his horniness or his loyalty to his shanty neighborhood. The place’s name is one of the cleverest of the book’s frequent onomastics: He-Who-Drinks-Water-Is-An-Idiot. But lately Gregoire’s thinking has turned from the comic to the noir. He dwells on murder & on one murderer in particular, the legendary Angoulima. The dilemma is whether the narrator can achieve some balance between his mythic yearnings & his slacker mundane. Gregoire talks a violent game, yet he can’t stop asking: “where are we going?” His Scarface delusions are belied by the comfortable home he’s made with his intended victim, the prostitute Germaine. Still, still -- on those few occasions when PSYCHO depicts actual violence, it generates a chilling verisimilitude, as powerful for its hesitations as for its blows & cries. Mabanckou’s sprightly negotiations of extremes & opposites demonstrates anew how the novel form is nothing if not flexible— a significant demonstration given the book’s provenance. The author breaks with the norm for recent novels out of Africa. Celebrated cases like BEASTS OF NO NATION or ANCESTOR STONES have been documentary at bottom; what matters most is getting the pain right. But this splendid freak show reminds us that no novelistic record of sensibility (especially an entire continent’s sensibility) can be complete without its Dionysiac yawp.

Leanne says

I identified with the main character with his macabre thoughts about people that he felt "insulted" him. I think we are all capable of having thoughts of killing someone but we draw the line at actually following through. Mabanckou take us through the thought process and preparation of a would be young serial killer in Africa. I didn't think that I would enjoy the supernatural aspect of the book (the main character's mentor is deceased and communicates with him from beyond) but it fit right in and I liked how the book ended.

Richard says

African Psycho concerns a would-be serial killer, Gregoire Nakobomayo, and the spiritual relationship he has developed with his phantom mentor, a far more accomplished serial killer, Angoualima.

The title recalls Bret Easton Ellis' infamous book but while Ellis' narrator was blank, and the book eschewed any kind of psychological exposition, accepting pure psychosis as the bottomline, Mabanckou's protagonist is all psychology and relentless internal chatter and prevarication. The act of deciding to kill, immediately exposed in the novel's first line, "I have decided to kill Germaine on December 29," puts the psychological front and center. Whatever one may say about it, killing someone requires both psychological and logistical preparedness. This aspect is iterated within the first few paragraphs, when Gregoire introduces his deceased idol, Angoualima, the phantom to whom he continually speaks about his criminal intentions. Little by little, Gregoire interweaves Angoualima's life and criminal exploits with his own. Despite his string of previously botched criminal attempts, Gregoire's final decision and failure to kill Germaine, his live-in girlfriend and a professional prostitute, leads to an abrupt unraveling.

Although the gruesome descriptions that characterize crime fiction are many, it is Mabanckou's inventive use of language that surprises and relieves the reader by injecting humor into this disturbing subject. What had been thinly veiled geographical references to the Congo region in his past fiction have taken on comedic twists in the present narrative. Two such examples of Mabanckou's playful onomastics are the name of Gregoire's shantytown, "Celui-qui-boit-de-l'eau-est-un-idiot," [He-Who-Drinks-the-Water-Is-An-Idiot] and the local road in the red-light district, "Rue-Cent-francs-seulement" [Ten-Francs-Only Road]. Such attention to the comedic appears throughout the narrative as well. This occurs, in one instance, during the report of an eyewitness to Angoualima's crime in which the reporter poses a comedic repetition of enthusiastic "Et alors?" that are followed by the witness' exclamatory repetitions, "Croyez-moi!" The narrator adds to the reader's amusement by recounting that journalism students throughout the country "dissect" this interview for its use of the technique that has been referred to as "Et alors? Croyez-moi!"

In sum, African Psycho most surprisingly engages readers through style, not gore, a remarkable feat for a narrative that takes murder as its subject and that references probably the most gruesome novel in recent American literature. Moreover, it does so with intimacy rather than the standoff-ish dispassion that characterizes novels that seek to contend with the violence engendered by the amorality and ennui of contemporary society.

Lauded in France for its fresh and witty style, African Psycho is a testament to this novelist's exceptional ability to carry over to prose a poet's talent for the crafting of words.

Damon says

Good Stuff.

Patrizia says

Da un'idea interessante - seguire il cammino di un uomo dai suoi primi crimini al salto di qualità che lo porterebbe a diventare un serial killer, seguendo le orme di un assassino leggendario - vien fuori un libro grottesco e delirante. Il protagonista, che ambisce agli onori della cronaca nera, è impacciato, ridicolo e non desta alcuna simpatia. Il finale, prevedibile, non aggiunge nulla a una storia che di giallo ha molto poco, che non coinvolge, anzi risulta noiosa e irritante.

