



The Lights of Pointe-Noire

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Author : Alain Mabanckou

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From Reader Review The Lights of Pointe-Noire for online ebook

Seyi Onabanjo says

Slightly more formal, even stilted writing than usual but helps place the more joyful, uninhibited "Tomorrow I'll be 20" into context. Still awesome..I forgot my copy on a flight and will be going to purchase another ASAP AND will read again soonest. Enjoy...

Wathingira Gituro says

3.5/5 stars)

After 25 or so years away from home, Mabanckou returns to Pointe-Noire. To the memories and scenes that have formed the backdrop of many of his novels. To his family who he hasn't seen in that whole time. To confront the fact that when his mother died, he didn't come home. He wasn't there to bury her. The book, in some places takes the form of a journal entry, recording events as if they almost played out real time. It is raw in some places.

It is clear that Mabanckou is wrestling with whatever feelings haunt him from his mothers death. In a sense, the book is his public form of mourning. It almost feels but not quite like the book is his comeuppance. But not quite.

Despite the fact that Mabanckou processes a lot of memories and emotions and thoughts, he is guarded throughout. We don't really get to know his true feelings about the death. And how he reconciles himself to it all. And that is what had me fascinated with this book. His thoughts are between the lines. Carefully protected from us. Sharing everything else except that - that he keeps private to himself.

If you have read "Tomorrow I will be Twenty", a lot about this book will be familiar (as the former was a fictionalized account of his childhood. And we also learn about the inspiration for some of the characters and events in Black Moses.

I didn't realise this book was a memoir when I picked it up... which is just as well as I am not a big fan of memoirs/autobiographies. I can be really picky when it comes to those. Thankfully this book did the genre justice. It is not ground-breaking but it is very interesting nonetheless. Mabanckou's writing is effortless as ever.

Recommended for those who like memoirs.

Arsenic says

C'est le 1er livre que je lis de cet auteur et c'est dommage car il y a plein de références à ses précédents ouvrages. Celui-ci est très bibliographique, il revient à Ponte-Noire de nombreuses années après avoir quitté le Congo et parcourt la ville où plein de souvenirs lui reviennent. Chaque chapitre a pour thème un personnage ou un lieu et finit par une photo ce qui ancre le livre dans la réalité.

Il y a beaucoup de nostalgie et de tendresse quand l'auteur se remémore son enfance et sa famille même s'il

est maintenant déconnecté d'eux puisqu'il vit loin et ne les a pas revus depuis longtemps. J'ai trouvé ça touchant et sympathique avec plein de personnages haut en couleur.

Tonderai says

'The Lights of Pointe-Noire' is a fascinating memoir of Mabanckou's journey back to his home country of the Republic of Congo after 25 years living abroad in France and America. Mabanckou is vulnerable as he retells the often tragic story of his family's history and present, which reflects the turbulence the Congo has gone through. Despite this, there is a strong sense of Congolese culture and identity which I enjoyed learning more about, particularly how spirituality and animism is interwoven into their everyday existence. As a reader I felt as though I was taking the journey with the writer, which I don't usually experience when reading non-fiction.

I would love to read more from Mabanckou and other writers from this region. Highly recommend this book!

David Smith says

Good slice of life from the "Going home is rarely easy" file. Alain Mabanckou is a Congolese treasure. Lumières de Pointe-Noire provides enough graphic description to take you there without leaving home. I could almost smell the prawns at Chez Gaspard.

Marie says

Republic of Congo

"I couldn't bear to look at myself in the mirror, for fear I would find there the reflection of my ingratitude towards the woman who must be patiently waiting for me, in her coffin, surrounded by members of the family, all of them, disgusted at my absence."

"I would never see my mother again."

"She took a fistful of earth, scattered it in the air, which meant, in our tradition, that she swore she had told me the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth; you couldn't mess around with this custom, it had been used by our tribe since the dawn of time."

"It's the whites who take people off to the country where the sun never rises."

"When we leave this life we leave whatever we owned on earth, why get into a fight over it now?"

"You must never show your face to the hospital."

"He launched into the kind of speech you hear from people who have lived so long in Europe, they now accept the image of the black continent projected by the media."

"They drink from a small glass, but it's their own. Your glass is big, but it's not yours, and each time you

want to drink from it, you have to ask permission. And alas, that permission is never granted."

"Our castle doesn't just belong to one family like it does in the white people's land, it belongs to all the villagers."

"I know you live in a country where money is everything, but believe me, it's not the only thing that matters in the world."

"You should never look sad in a photograph, you don't know who might look at it in ten years time, or twenty, or thirty, or forty, or fifty!"

"Oil equals power! Where there's a war, there's oil. Why don't countries fight over water?"

"The sea tastes salty from the tears of our ancestors, who wept as they made their cursed passage during the slave trade."

Humera says

A great find for DRC.

The author's personal story as the backdrop to the novel makes it engaging and very relatable.

Gail says

I liked the book a lot, but can rate it only 4 1/2 stars. Sometimes it was hard to understand, but I learned a lot about this town in the Congo and the people who live there. I read an advance reading copy, so that might have been the reason for my confusion.

Mar In' says

Ayant raté de peu l'opportunité de me rendre au Congo pour voir un ami qui a fait ses études en France, ce livre a trouvé une résonance toute particulière en moi, m'ouvrant les portes d'un pays que je ne connaissais pas !

Paul Armand says

Comme toujours, Alain Mabanckou est magistral sur ce livre.

Neha says

Maybe because I can read french with ease, this didn't feel as engaging. Throughout the book I kept thinking how it would be more engaging to read the original french version of this book, and I might do that in the

future. The English version reads very detached and not involved as a semi autobiographical piece of literature would feel like. towards the end of the book, zealously is translated/ written as jealousy in the book, which is clearly incorrect. However, it is a good read for Pointe Noire, republic of Congo and I'd love to read more about this country, and city.

Anna Stroud says

The Lights of Pointe-Noire is a book I will read again and again. I suspect as I get older, my response to it will change, as with most books. It did leave me feeling profound sadness. I ached at the subtle depiction, almost like a shadow thread throughout the story, of the author alone in his hotel room, agonising over a home that's no longer his, pouring his thoughts into a school exercise book, bringing up images of the past and trying to fit them into the shape of the present. Walking through the streets of his youth, knowing that now he is just a visitor there.

By God, this book is beautiful.

Complete review on Review on a Train: <http://bit.ly/1Vs25TO>

Kamran Sehgal says

Too short to stay in the mind long after reading. Small vignettes of life in Pointe Noir are interspersed with the author recounting his relationship, sometimes estranged, with his family. All in all I found the topic quite interesting but the brevity of the work gives one the feeling of a lack of substance.

Ndeye Sene says

###I found brilliant###

The pictures after every chapter. Lovely! Each chapter is actually devoted either to a family member or to a place. I really appreciate the pictures at the end to illustrate the person or the point that was discussed previously.

###What to expect###

After his long absence from Congo, the author found that nothing has really changed, except for the people themselves. He revisited old places such as his former primary school, a former cinema he used to attend, his defunct mother's house ... At every stop along the author's pilgrimage, we are acquainted with the author memories of the place and of course its actual state. His memories of Congo are truly dear to him and after a long time spent outside his country, I really appreciate the fact that his tone was not condescending. You actually get the sense that he loves this place and will always. The author also mentioned several time his awkward relation with his mother. She died several years after he left for France. Unfortunately, due to money constraint and other undisclosed reason, he could not attend her funeral. His mother sounded like a warrior to me. She survived being abandoned while she was pregnant, bought her own house and was doing business in those years. A great achievement! I recommend you this great memoir. The Africa I read about here, I love very much. Indeed, people are poor, but they are happy.

###Read here###: <http://booksundertheneemtree.com/2015...>

Karen Ashmore says

Memoir of man who returns to his childhood home in the Congo after 25 years living in Paris. Learned a lot about Congolese culture and traditions through his stories about his family and encounters he had.
