



Child of All Nations (Buru Quartet)

By Pramoedya Ananta Toer

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In **Child of All Nations**, the reader is immediately swept up by a story that is profoundly feminist, devastatingly anticolonialist—and full of heartbreak, suspense, love, and fury. Pramoedya immerses the reader in a world that is astonishing in its vividness: the cultural whirlpool that was the Dutch East Indies of the 1890s. A story of awakening, it follows Minke, the main character of **This Earth of Mankind**, as he struggles to overcome the injustice all around him. Pramoedya's full literary genius is evident in the brilliant characters that populate this world: Minke's fragile Mixed-Race wife; a young Chinese revolutionary; an embattled Javanese peasant and his impoverished family; the French painter Jean Marais, to name just a few.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

The imperialistic injustices of the 19th century have become the firmly institutionalized injustices of the 20th century in many countries, as evidenced by the fact that Pramoedya wrote this novel while imprisoned in Indonesia because he was considered a subversive writer. The work, the second volume of a quartet called the "Buru Trilogy," speaks convincingly for itself. The balanced and enchanted life of natives in the Dutch East Indies of the 1890s is disrupted as they are set against one another and destroyed by the Dutch. As Minke, the main character of *This Earth of Mankind* (LJ 10/1/93), struggles to reclaim a dignified identity amid the confusion, we can feel the universal plight of the oppressed anywhere, whether caused by governments, terrorists, or technology. If this seems a bold claim for a novel, it is because *Child* is the kind of work that upholds the drastically important tradition of literature's attempt to create empathy. A moving work and a valuable cultural artifact. Recommended for general collections.

- Brian Geary, West Seneca, N.Y.

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From Booklist

Toer delivers the second volume of his Buru Trilogy with devastating effect. Continuing with the characters of *This Earth of Mankind* (1991), the story focuses on Minke, a young, European-schooled Javanese writer--an "educated native"--fighting for his rights in the Dutch East Indies at the turn of the century. Minke is in the process of recovering from the death of his wife, who was murdered by Dutch colonials, and trying to assert his voice and the voices of his people. Everywhere he turns, the colonial forces and the all-powerful sugar companies build walls against his words. He struggles over which language to write in and which plights to address--there are so many languages, so many castes, and so many problems. In the end, Minke and his beloved mother-in-law are still trapped within their society but have gained a greater understanding of the possibilities of independence and stronger voices with which to shout. Ironically, this novel--and all of Toer's work--is banned in his native Malaysia. David Cline

From Kirkus Reviews

The second (*This Earth of Mankind*, 1991) in a quartet continues the often bittersweet story of the growing anticolonial movement in the Dutch-ruled Indonesia of the 1890's. As before, the novel is first told in oral form in a prison camp in 1973--a process that may be responsible for the uneven quality of the work, which veers from pedestrian passages on capitalism, colonialism, and local events to stunning vignettes of men and women destroyed by the pervasive Dutch presence. Minke, the narrator, picks up where he left off. His young wife, Annelies Mellema--daughter of a wealthy Dutch settler and a native concubine--has been sent to live in Holland--according to the terms of her father's will--and her marriage declared invalid. Then a grief-stricken Annelies dies, and back home Minke and mother-in-law Mama try to make new lives for themselves. Sometime journalist Minke plans to be a doctor, but friends like Jean Marais, a French artist, and Kommer, a mixed-blood--the Dutch, as they did in South Africa, specialized in racial classifications--advise him to write in Javanese, not Dutch, and to get to know the country people. Which he does in a desultory way: He learns how Dutch sugar planters stole land from the peasants; how a young woman deliberately infected herself with smallpox so that her Dutch master would die; and how the Mellema fortune itself is tainted. And in a series of set pieces--culminating in the stinging rebuke of colonialism that he and Mama deliver to the Mellema heir who's come from Holland to claim his inheritance--Minke begins to fight at last. A grand concept--as well as a searing indictment of an often cruel and malevolent regime--but Toer's agenda is more political treatise than a window into the human heart. -- Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Candice Sharkey:

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to try and do! A lot of people spent their sparetime with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they accomplishing activity like watching television, planning to beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your own personal free time/ holiday? Can be reading a book is usually option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of publication that you should read. If you want to try out look for book, may be the publication untitled Child of All Nations (Buru Quartet) can be great book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

Howard Benedict:

Do you have something that that suits you such as book? The guide lovers usually prefer to decide on book like comic, small story and the biggest some may be novel. Now, why not trying Child of All Nations (Buru Quartet) that give your pleasure preference will be satisfied simply by reading this book. Reading behavior all over the world can be said as the method for people to know world a great deal better then how they react towards the world. It can't be stated constantly that reading routine only for the geeky man or woman but for all of you who wants to end up being success person. So , for all of you who want to start looking at as your good habit, you could pick Child of All Nations (Buru Quartet) become your own starter.

Jerry Rivera:

In this time globalization it is important to someone to receive information. The information will make professionals understand the condition of the world. The health of the world makes the information quicker to share. You can find a lot of sources to get information example: internet, newspapers, book, and soon. You can see that now, a lot of publisher that print many kinds of book. Typically the book that recommended for your requirements is Child of All Nations (Buru Quartet) this book consist a lot of the information in the condition of this world now. This particular book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The dialect styles that writer make usage of to explain it is easy to understand. Often the writer made some exploration when he makes this book. That is why this book ideal all of you.

Valerie Herrera:

Beside that Child of All Nations (Buru Quartet) in your phone, it could give you a way to get more close to the new knowledge or info. The information and the knowledge you will got here is fresh from oven so don't end up being worry if you feel like an old people live in narrow small town. It is good thing to have Child of All Nations (Buru Quartet) because this book offers to you personally readable information. Do you sometimes have book but you would not get what it's facts concerning. Oh come on, that will not end up to happen if you have this in your hand. The Enjoyable blend here cannot be questionable, like treasuring beautiful island. Use you still want to miss that? Find this book as well as read it from right now!

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