

The Mzungu Boy (2005) by Meja Mwangi

For readers grades 5 and up

Meja Mwangi is a Kenyan filmmaker and writer born in 1948, at the cusp of the Mau Mau Uprising. Many of his initial works focused on the Mau Mau and the struggle against colonial rule. A member of the Kikuyu ethnic group himself and a youth during the struggle for independence, Mwangi's writings on the experiences of the rebellion are semi-autobiographical.

“*The Mzungu Boy* Review” by Lori Walker

...Meja Mwangi's story chronicles the problematic friendship of two boys, one Kenyan and one British, during the 1950's Mau-Mau Revolt that challenged British Colonial rule over Kenya. Mwangi's work won the prestigious Deutscher Jugendliteraturepreis by winning the hearts and minds of both youth and adult jury members, no small accomplishment. The book combines adventure and that first unforgettable taste of freedom and power, with a powerful lesson in African history and the systemic impact of violence that accompanies colonial rule... This honest, poignant story offer readers an invaluable introduction to colonial history in Africa and the scars this history has left on its cultures and people. Meja Mwangi's book offers an opportunity to understand and discuss the roots and legacy of racism, as well as create an awareness of how the oppression that still exists in many forms impacts young people around the world...As Judi Saltman writes in the *Riverside Anthology of Children's Literature*, "The best realistic fiction for children...has always been distinguished by historical accuracy, precise observation, emotional truthfulness, strong plot, and well-rounded, sympathetic characters. And all the best stories for children, of whatever type, have one common element: they speak with a personal voice." *The Mzungu Boy* exemplifies realistic fiction at its best.

Source: <http://www.mejamwangi.com/themzunguboyreviews.html>

“*The Mzungu Boy: Writing Lively Stories Set in Colonial and Postcolonial Kenya*” by Harriet McGuire

“If your students’ knowledge of colonialism in Africa is based on viewing the 1985 Meryl Streep/Robert Redford film *Out of Africa*, consider balancing that view with a story set two generations later, *The Mzungu Boy*, by Kenyan author and filmmaker Meja Mwangi. Originally published in 1990 as *Little White Man*, *The Mzungu Boy* was released in North America in 2005 by Groundwood Books. It is winner of the 2006 Children’s Africana Book Award for Best Book for Older Readers, given by the Outreach Council of the African Studies Association...The Mzungu Boy...is an important book for young teenagers who want to understand how the colonial system impacted on the lives of rural youth in Kenya.”

Source: <http://www.mejamwangi.com/themzunguboyreview1.html>