

# AN EXPLORATION OF SLAVERY, COLONIALISM AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN BIYI BÁNDÉLÉ'S YORÙBÁ BOY RUNNING

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## ABSTRACT

The misconception of Africa as a continent with no civilization prior to European contact and isolated from the rest of the world is often seen in Western literature. It is seen as primitive, and slavery and colonialism were the only significant interaction between Africa and the outside world that these interactions were what ultimately brought civilization to Africa. However, findings show that Africa was civilized before the arrival of the Europeans and, the dehumanizing effects of the transatlantic slave trade led to the African Holocaust. The study also observes the manipulation of religion as a tool for colonial control, and the internalized racism within the church. This research critiques the portrayal of African leaders as complicit in their own subjugation and examines the gendered subjugation of women, juxtaposed with moments of resistance and agency. This study employs Edward Said's postcolonial theory to analyse Biyi Bándélé's *Yorùbá Boy Running* (2024), exploring the intersections of slavery, colonialism, and cultural identity in 19th-century West Africa. The novel, through the life of Àjàyí Crowther, reveals the systemic oppression and cultural erasure perpetuated by European colonial powers and their African collaborators. Methodologically, the analysis draws on Said's concepts of Orientalism and Cultural Imperialism to deconstruct the Eurocentric narratives embedded in the text, particularly the misrepresentation of African traditions and the imposition of Western ideologies. This research concludes that while the novel exposes the brutal realities of slavery and colonialism, it also underscores the resilience and agency of African individuals and communities in resisting cultural erasure. Ultimately, the study calls for a re-centring of African voices and epistemologies in postcolonial literature to challenge the enduring legacies of slavery and colonialism.

**KEYWORDS:** African Civilization, Slavery, Colonialism, Post-colonialism, Cultural Identity

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The history of African civilizations is often misunderstood or misrepresented due to a variety of factors such as slavery, colonial bias, Eurocentric narratives, and a lack of widespread knowledge about Africa's rich and diverse history. Thus, Africa is seen as a continent that had no civilizations prior to European contact and isolated from the rest of the world. It is seen as primitive, homogenous, lacked innovation, had no written history, and that slavery and colonialism were the only significant interactions between Africa and the outside world that these interactions were what ultimately brought civilization to Africa. However, Cheikh Anta Diop in his *Civilization or Barbarism* argues that African civilization was a foundational influence on world civilization. He emphasized the African origins of human culture and the need to reclaim African history from Eurocentric narratives. History shows that Africa was home to numerous advanced and sophisticated civilizations long before the arrival of Europeans. The Ancient Egypt is known as one of the world's earliest and most influential civilizations; The Kingdom of Kush is known for its pyramids and powerful rulers; The Axum Empire is known for their major trading power in the Horn of Africa; The Mali Empire is famous for its wealth, particularly under Mansa Musa; Great Zimbabwe is known for its impressive stone architecture; The Benin Kingdom's intricate bronze casting and urban planning. While oral traditions were prominent in many African societies, several civilizations had written languages, educational systems and recorded histories such as Ancient Egypt's hieroglyph, calculus, geometry etc. Ge'ez script in Ethiopia, Ajami script (Arabic script adapted for African languages), Nsibidi (a symbolic writing system used in south-eastern Nigeria and other parts of Africa). Additionally, Arab and European travellers documented African societies, providing further historical records. These civilizations made significant contributions to art, science, architecture, and governance. African societies made significant contributions to mathematics, astronomy, and medicine that is why Burghardt Du Bois in his "The Souls of Black Folk" said blacks are the seventh son of civilization gifted with a second sight.

The introduction of the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism disrupted existing African civilizations and imposed foreign systems of governance, often exploiting resources and people. Many African societies had their own forms of governance, education, and economic systems long before European colonization. Colonialism and imperialism often undermined these systems rather than "civilizing" Africa. This led Europeans to see Africa as uncivilized, barbaric and lacks sense of self-governance which are seen in works like Henry Morton Stanley's *Through The Dark Continent* (1878), Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* (1899), Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson* (1939) etc. which are considered 'great literature' in the West. This makes African writers such as Thomas Mofolo's *Chaka* (1925), Mongo Beti's *The Poor Christ of Bomba* (1956), Chinua Achebe's *Things Falls Apart* (1958),

Alex La Guma's *In the Fog of the Seasons' End* (1972), Dambudzo Marechera's *The House of Hunger* (1978) etc. used their works to correct the distortion of the African image perpetuated by the Europeans. These writers have played a crucial role in challenging and dismantling European distortions of African images, reclaiming African narratives, and asserting the dignity and complexity of African cultures and histories.

This paper focuses on the exploration of slavery, colonialism, and cultural identity in Biyi Bándélé's *Yoruba Boy Running*, specifically examining the impact of slavery and colonialism in Africa. This study adopts Edward Said's post-colonial theory. Applying Edward Said's postcolonial theory to the analysis of the text involves examining how the novel reflects and critiques the dynamics of Orientalism, cultural imperialism, and the power structures imposed by colonialism. Said's work, particularly in *Orientalism and Culture and Imperialism*, focuses on how Western powers constructed and maintained dominance over non-Western societies through cultural representations, knowledge production, and ideological control.

## 2. THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY

The transatlantic slave-trade, which forcibly displaced millions of Africans, can be analyzed through Said's lens of Othering and dehumanization. Africans were commodified and stripped of their humanity to serve the European economic interests. The Middle Passage, plantation slavery, and the systemic violence of the trade were justified through racist ideologies that positioned Africans as inferior and expendable. As a result of this, the transatlantic slave-trade led to the degradation of Africa known as the "African Holocaust". Communities wage endless wars against communities, and kidnappings skyrocketed because the business of slavery is like the crude oil business which makes the likes of Kòsókò, Ghezo, Domingo Martínez etc. millionaires overnight in *Yorùbá Boy Running*. This makes Africans to shun their moralities and humanities; rulers and/or powerful people fold their arms and watch the degradation of Africa. This aligns with post-colonial critiques such as Said who postulated that slavery and colonialism disrupted African social, economic, and political systems, leaving a legacy of trauma and exploitation.

The novel depicts the impact of slavery in Africa such as the extinction of Òşogùn – the protagonist's (Àjàyí) village by the Malians invaders, the constant plundering of Abèòkuta by King Ghezo's warriors, the invasion of Nufi etc., it also portrays the physical, emotional, and psychological trauma experienced by slaves like Àjàyí, Zanna etc., the kidnapping account of Asinwín's family though it is imaginary but it is not exclusive. There is also the story of a man who sold his land, the only thing he had to his name and then had to sell himself to raise the ransom and save his family (125). The lives of slaves' were worth nothing more than those of animals and animal's lives were considered more precious than the slaves. This can be seen when Sàrákí trades Àjàyí for a horse with Jinádù (111). Ghezo's raids on Abèòkuta serves two purposes: "the bounty of human prisoners, which would have numbered in the tens of thousands [...]. The other reason was to smother the legitimate trade that had dawned there. Legitimate trade, wherever it seemed to succeed, was bad news for an economy built on the slave trade" (166) which he does perennially. Humans are also used as gift; this can be seen during the conversation between the Queen Victoria and Àjàyí when he was talking about the constant raids in Abèòkuta and told the queen that the young girl, Sarah Forbes Bonetta that was sent to her "as a gift" at the aged of four by King Ghezo was captured by Ghezo's warriors (167). These incidents, and among other led to the African Holocaust. These kidnappings and slavery are still very much alive today, and that is why Wole Soyinka in the Introduction: *A Triumph of Resilience* of the book said the author used the book to create awareness about the resurgence of slave trades and kidnappings in Africa coast which paves the way for the 'defilement of the human essence' (13). In today's world, kidnapping and human trafficking is on the rise. This continues to raise the issue of degradation and insecurity in Africa.

The author also used his work to portray the gravity of the brutality of the institutionalization of slavery through the capture of Àjàyí and his village; the killing of his friend, Fáfunwá (Ìjímèrè), and the beheading of two other natives of Òşogùn, whom the Malians used as "an example" (53). Here, the brutal force is noted, and this reminds us of the primitive stage in human development. There is imagery of extermination (annihilation); wielding of swords, bows, and arrows etc. which are lethal acts of barbarism with the chanting, 'God is great, God is great, God is great' (53). Apparently, the warriors were messengers of the regal who then sell these slaves to the Europeans. This is why Soyinka opines that "The most ambitious enemies of humanity are the absolutist interpreters of the Divine Will, be they Sikhs, Hindus, Jews, Christians, Muslims, born-again of every religious calling" (143). What Soyinka is saying is the destructive consequences of the interpretative absolutism as the Divine Will whereas the lethal brigandage perpetrated by the invaders in Òşogùn is destruction of the Divine Will for every individual human destiny which the royal vandalizes and keeps it victim(s) in perpetual captivity; male slaves are castrated or made eunuchs to prevent them from "tainting the honour of his master's wives and daughters – and farmed into bondage" (87) while the women are forced into breeding or used as sex object.

## 3. CULTURAL HEGEMONY AND WESTERN SUPERIORITY

This study critiques the colonial ideology of Western superiority, which portrayed Africa as "barbaric" and "uncivilized." This aligns with Said's concept of Orientalism, where the West constructs the East (or Africa, in this case) as the "Other" to justify domination. In the novel, the British, through organisations like the "Society for the Extinction of the African



Slave Trade and the Civilization of Africa" (162) positioned themselves as saviours, while simultaneously exploiting African resources and labour. They also believed that "some promising Youths among the Children of Africa should be sent to England for education, who would afterward hold situations in their countries" (163). This narrative of "civilizing" Africa is a classic example of colonial hegemony, where the colonizer imposes their cultural and moral values on the colonized. The study highlights how the British distorted African history and culture, claiming that Africa lacked education and governance, despite the existence of advanced systems like the Nsibidi writing system in Igbo societies, the Great Wall of Benin, good road network, and street lights in Benin before Britain had street lights. This distortion reflects the colonial strategy of erasing indigenous knowledge to establish Western dominance. Also, in the story, Àjàyí and his son, Dandeson share the same sentiment as the Europeans when Dandeson grudgingly said to his father, "The whole country is opened to us" (136) this statement depicts a white supremacy ideology among Africans with the believe that both the British government and the church own the land and therefore, they could do or demand anything, and those who defied the authority of Her Majesty were forcefully removed like Kòsókò, which is why rulers like King Dòsùnmú signed the treaty against his will out of fear and intimidation when the acting consul, William McCoskry threatened him.

The novel highlights the economic exploitation of Africa. Colonialism replaced the slave trade with new forms of economic exploitation. The discovery of quinine allowed Europeans to penetrate Africa's interior, leading to the exploitation of African resources and labour. This aligns with post-colonial critiques of how colonialism was driven by economic interests, not altruism. The British used religion and coercion to take over African lands, as seen in the novel when King Dòsùnmú was forced to sign a treaty under threat. This reflects the economic and political motivations behind colonialism, which were masked by the rhetoric of "civilizing" Africa.

#### 4. AFRICAN LEADERS AND THEIR COMPLICITY

This research critiques the complicity of African leaders in the slave trade and colonialism, presenting a more nuanced view of African history. Said critiques the role of local elites in perpetuating colonial structures. The author describes King Kòsókò and his nephew Akintóyè as "prominent scions; the same fat-cat aristocracy to whom had accrued, thirty years before, the percentage tax payable on every transaction that took place at the barracoons on the island of Èkó where a thirteen-year-old boy from Oşogùn called Àjàyí was traded and sold"

(170). Kòsókò is portrayed as an arrogant and selfish character, he is more concerned about himself and his gains, and when he realized that Abèòkuta, the new town was trying to set itself up as a trading rival to Lagos, and that it had an open-door policy for European missionaries and those traders whose interest was in buying produce and not human beings, he encouraged King Ghezo of Dahomey to invade Abèòkuta for the purpose of getting slaves and smothering any legitimate trade there, and when Her Majesty ordered him to desist from the slave-trade business, he refused and attacked the Queen's consul to Benin, John Beecroft and as a result of this he was forced out of his palace. African leaders like King Kòsókò, Ghezo, Emirs etc. are portrayed as complicit in the slave trade and colonial exploitation. Their greed and collaboration with Europeans reflect Said's argument that colonialism often relied on the cooperation of local elites to maintain control. The novel critiques these leaders for prioritizing their own interests over the well-being of their people, contributing to the degradation of African societies.

#### 5. RELIGION AS A TOOL OF COLONIAL CONTROL

Said emphasizes the role of cultural institutions, such as religion, in maintaining colonial power. In Yorùbá Boy Running, Christianity is used as a tool to control and subjugate African societies. The novel shows how missionaries like Henry Townsend opposed the ordination of African bishops, he said; 'I have a great doubt of young black clergymen', 'They want years of experience to give stability to their characters; we would rather have them as schoolmasters and catechists'; he also said, 'Native teachers of whatever grade [...] have been received and respected by the chiefs and people only as being the agents or servants of white men. As the Negro feels a great respect for a white man, God kindly gives a great talent to the white man in trust to be used for the Negro's good. Shall we shift the responsibility? Can we do it without sin?' (212). And when he heard that Crowther had been invited to England to meet the queen, he thought it was about the matter of a black bishop which had been demanded by a powerful member of the CMS, he raised a petition against the idea of appointing a black bishop. This reflects the racist and hierarchical structures within the church. Ironically, Àjàyí never eyed the position, however, they succeeded in assassinating his name; humiliate him to resign, and he felt betrayed which eventually led to his stroke. The position allows Àjàyí to see them for what they really are, but despite that, Àjàyí is willing to forgive them and even turn the other cheeks; a colonial mentality used to brainwash Africans but Dandeson did not accept that. Àjàyí's eventual betrayal and humiliation by his white colleagues in the church highlight the "hypocrisy of colonial Christianity", which claimed to bring salvation while perpetuating racial and cultural oppression.

The religion is also used as a tool to make Africans believe that the ways of their ancestors and their beliefs in 'orisas' (deity) are bad and evil and Àjàyí was instrumental in this field. One of his work is the misinterpretation or mistranslation of Èşù as Satan which is why he sees Èşù as an evil monster "...Èşù and see it for what it really was – an evil monstrosity" (136). Àjàyí, though a linguist, could not find a suitable word for Satan because there is no such concept in Yorùbá Patheon, therefore, he equated Èşù with Satan. Èşù is not Satan, he is an 'orisa' like Ogun, Amadioha etc. as discussed in



Olásopé Oyèlárán's Èṣù and Ethics in the Yorùbá World View describes the orisa as "the most important primordial bastion of the Yorùbá people's metaphysical embodiments of organising and regulatory existential principles." This is a mouthful and more comprehensive than previous simplistic epithets like "trickster god" or "messenger god", which have been used in the past, especially in Western literature. Šóyínká refers to Èṣù as a "master dialectician" – one of the important deities in the Yorùbá religious system, notable for its role as a sort of intermediary for other higher deities. Sophie Olúwólé sees Èṣù as a policeman, a law enforcement agent who did not make rules but was often called upon to enforce them. Kólá Túbòsún sees Èṣù's "errands" in the Ifá literature and said "according to stories in Ifá literature were of different shapes, but the outcome – at least for those who crossed paths with him – could be either good or bad. But it was never just one thing, and those who worshipped it, or encountered it in a shrine or on the road, knew what propitiation was necessary to avoid its wrath or seek its warmth or direct them on another errand". Èṣù is appeased like every other deity, he protects. Sometimes, he is consulted to carry out justice against evildoers; sometimes he offers solutions to problems as seen in the novel when he suggested sending the madman (Asínwín) to Àjàyí to cure his madness due to trauma. He shows concerns for Àjàyí, and he and Asínwín can be seen as Deus ex Machina. The misconception of Èṣù by Àjàyí distorted the image of Èṣù, the same deity that helped him during his madness is whom he now referred to as an evil monster.

In the story, Àjàyí makes mockery of African belief system, and believes that the next generation would be free from the delusion and questions their 'orisas' for not protecting them against slave traders the same way they abandoned him, "If the all-powerful God was in those graven images, why didn't He stop the slave traders? Why didn't He help us?" (136). This statement is sentimental rather than logical. Also, in his epigraph in the novel, he described Christianity or church as the only religion that can save Africa from slavery when in fact, the church was complicit and part of those who benefitted from it. Church leaders like Pope Nicholas V gave his "apostolic authority" (papal bulls) to enslave Africans who are not Christians and using the Bible to justify the enslavement and brainwash the slaves to obey their masters. The church did not only authorized slave trade, they participated in it in places like Barbados. The Church of England in collaboration with United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG) owned over 400 thousand slaves and churches all over the world also bought slaves to work on their plantation. This reiterates Soyinka's opinion about the interpreters of the Divine Will, they are "ambitions enemies of humanity". Àjàyí's rejection of African belief system and his belief that Christianity is the only religion that can save Africa reflect the psychological impact of colonialism, where the colonized internalize the colonizer's values and view their own culture as inferior. This resonates with Said's argument that colonial powers used religion and education to create a class of colonized subjects who internalized Western values and rejected their own cultures.

## 6. PATRIARCHY IN AFRICAN SOCIETY

While Said's work often focuses on the ways colonial powers constructed and dominated the "Other," he also acknowledges the potential for resistance. The study critiques the subjugation and objectification of women under African patriarchal systems. Women are portrayed as sex objects and weaker vessels, reflecting the gender oppression. The novel depicts the king of Òṣogùn's exploitation of young girls. In the novel, Bísí's parents gave her to the king for his amusement, Chief Òròmbó also gave his two wives to the king to sup, he said 'Two of my own wives have had the rare privilege of supping with Kábiyèsí' (39). This aligns with post-colonial feminist critiques such as Mary Kolawole, Saheed Aliyu etc. highlight how patriarchal structures subjugate women in African societies. However, characters like the Laureate choose to protect his daughter, Ọmọ̀lẹ̀wà by running away with his family which is a form of resistance. Although, not all the women in the story were oppressed, the author portrays Aya'ba Ọyátómi, one of the king's mistresses as a formidable woman who refused to be pushed aside and not afraid to speak her mind. The author used characters like Ọyátómi and Oyíndámólá to resist patriarchal oppression, asserting their agency and self-worth. Their actions reflect a form of counter-discourse that challenges the colonial narrative of African inferiority. Ọyátómi is the only woman in Òṣogùn feared by Chief Òròmbó and the palace guards. Fámorótì, a young war chief respects her and out of respect, he accepts to marry Oyíndámólá, Ọyátómi's goddaughter. Ọyátómi is a mother and queen mother to all the girls in her compound. She protects them from men like the king and Chief Òròmbó. She is described as a small woman who 'looked harmless and unremarkable, but the graves of Òṣogùn were full of fools who had underestimated her' (39). She is courageous and challenges men who shy away from their responsibilities. She arranges the marriage between her goddaughter, Oyíndámólá and Fámorótì. She also plans to dethrone the king and install Fámorótì as their king, her decision to call for the gathering of the people to hear Fámorótì's message about the impending war without the king's authority further shows how formidable she is. This shows that despite women living in an oppressed society, women know how to navigate patriarchal mines and they are the backbone of men in the society and turn up where men failed. Though as powerful and wealthy as she is, she could not stop Òròmbó from taking Oyíndámólá to the king but it invokes the strength of a woman in Oyíndámólá who refused to be used as an object of pleasure by the king and cut off his manhood who later succumbed to his injuries. This portrays Oyíndámólá as a woman who knows her self-worth – a woman who would do anything to preserve her dignity and honour even if it will cost her her life. She was beaten severely by the palace guards and appeared bruised at the Sheikh's tent where Òròmbó plans to sell her to the Sheikh, an Arab man who buys slaves from Africa and takes them to Arab where the women are used as baby-factories or objects for pleasure. This

reflects the commodification of women under African systems and shows that Africa is not the only continent that sees the essence of woman as breeder or sex object.

During the process of negotiations between Òrombó and the Sheikh, Òrombó slapped Oyíndámólá because she annoys him and later pushed her off the cliff and died. This portrays the subjugation of women and the brutality against women. It also highlights the resilience of women who challenge patriarchal norms and assert their agency. Both Oyatómi and Oyíndámólá lent out their voices and challenge patriarchal norms and assert their agency in a male-dominated society.

Women supporting men, and men supporting women can also be seen in the novel when Oyatómi, Fámoróti and his second-in-command, Òtòlórín (Fúyé) and others went after Òrombó in an attempt to rescue Oyíndámólá before he sells her depicts the concept of men supporting women advocated by post-colonial feminists though Fámoróti could not rescue her because Òrombó had pushed her off the cliff before he got there and he lost his friend, Fúyé in the process shot by the Sheikh's guards and the rest were rounded up including Fámoróti and Oyatómi by the Sheikh to be sold as slaves.

The study does not present a single, unified narrative of African history but instead gives voice to marginalized groups, such as women, who have often been excluded from traditional historical accounts.

## 7. THE BELIEF IN THE EXISTENCE OF THREE WORLDS

In Yorùbá cosmology, there are three worlds of existence: the world of the living, the dead, and the unborn in what Soyinka refers to as a cycle of transition, and as a connection between the past, present and future. According to Soyinka, “life continues within its manifestation, the ancestral spirits, the living and the unborn” – the past is the ancestors; the present is the living, and the future is the unborn (72). This is an aspect of the Yorùbá's belief system that the author depicted in his work to portray African reality. This is observed in the description of Ìyálóde's qualities (17), and the appearance of one of Àjàyí's descendants in form of Asínwín who came from a distance future (the world of the unborn) to help him recover from his insanity (110) and this enabled Àjàyí to fulfil his destiny without disrupting his lineage. This shows that the world of the living, the dead, and the unborn is interconnected. The belief in three worlds offers a better way of understanding the world beyond the world of living, a concept that does not exist in the Western Christian worldview. This aligns with Said's call for the colonized to resist cultural imperialism and embrace our culture.

## 8. THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-NAMING IN YORÙBÁ LAND

The novel emphasizes the significance of Yorùbá names, which carry deep cultural meanings and reflect the identity and destiny of individuals. This cultural practice resists the erasure of African identity under colonialism. The names of characters like Chief Alábòsí (Òrombó), Yíósida (Rògbòdiyàn) and Fáfúnwá (Ìjímèrè) reflect their personalities and fates, illustrating the connection between naming and identity. Rògbòdiyàn (upheaval) died because of his stubbornness (53), Ìjímèrè (monkey) was shot and killed after climbing an àràbà tree like a monkey (121), Chief Alábòsí (hypocrite) is portrayed as an untrustworthy character, they all lived according their names. This shows that name goes beyond just a name; it is an identity as Mary Kolawole posits;

“Self-naming is very central to African world view. In many African cultures, naming almost assumes a sacred status. One doesn't just name a child in traditional African society. Diverse considerations such as family traits and achievements, lineal peculiarities or divine guidance determine a child's name. A stranger cannot be allowed to name the child since he does not have adequate knowledge of these paraphernalia of naming. The Yoruba believe strongly in this as an aspect of their philosophy Oruko n roni Oriki n ro eniyan – Naming affects the individuals; Encomium shapes personality (26).

This cultural practice resists the colonial erasure of African identity and affirms the value of indigenous knowledge.

## 9. THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

Said's work emphasizes the long-lasting impact of colonialism on postcolonial societies. In Yorùbá Boy Running, the legacy of colonialism is evident in the continued exploitation and degeneration of Africa. The novel depicts how the slave trade and colonialism disrupted African societies, leading to the loss of cultural practices, the erosion of moral values, and the perpetuation of violence and insecurity. The novel's critique of the resurgence of slave trades and kidnappings in contemporary Africa reflect Said's argument that the effects of colonialism continue to shape postcolonial realities.

## 10. CONCLUSION

The novel's historical accuracy and imaginative storytelling have made it a significant contribution to African literature. It not only sheds light on the life of Àjàyí Crowther but also addresses broader issues such as the legacy of slavery, the impact of colonialism, and the role of religion in shaping African identities.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Biyi Bándélé (1967–2022) was a renowned Nigerian novelist, playwright, and filmmaker. Born in Northern Nigeria, he

gained international recognition for his works, including the film adaptation of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Bándélé's writing often explored themes of identity, history, and culture, making him one of Africa's most influential artists. His final work, *Yorùbá Boy Running* is a testament to his creative genius and commitment to telling African stories. *Yorùbá Boy Running* has been praised by literary figures such as Soyinka and Adichie. Soyinka describes the novel as "a mix of the anecdotal, archival, and inquisitional," noting its ability to immerse readers in the realities of slavery and colonialism. Adichie hails Bándélé as a "true artist" and "brilliant writer."

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