

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-54406

Title: TOWARDS A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE STATE: THE EPITHET AS A PRECURSOR OF DEVIANCE IN GEORGES CONCHON'S *L'ÉTAT SAUVAGE* AND SONY LABOU TANSI'S *L'ÉTAT HONTEUX*

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision.....

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality		✓		
Clarity	✓			
Significance		✓		

Reviewer Name: Dr. ABDUL HASEEB MIR

Date: 19-10-2025

Reviewer's Comment

This paper presents an intellectually rigorous and stylistically mature semiotic analysis of the representation of the "State" in Georges Conchon's *L'État sauvage* and Sony Labou Tansi's *L'État honteux*. Its focus on the epithet as a semiotic indicator of deviance, norm, and value within colonial and postcolonial literary discourse is both original and compelling. The study is particularly relevant to francophone African literature, postcolonial studies, and the theory of signs. The manuscript demonstrates solid conceptual grounding and an impressive command of semiotic theory, but would benefit from a tighter articulation of its theoretical framework and more comparative synthesis between the two texts in the discussion. Overall, with minor revisions, it stands as a valuable contribution to literary semiotics and African postcolonial criticism.

Detailed Review Report

The manuscript titled *Towards a Semiotic Analysis of the State: The Epithet as a Precursor of Deviance in Georges Conchon's L'État sauvage and Sony Labou Tansi's L'État honteux* explores the semiotic significance of epithets qualifying the concept of the "State" in two major francophone works. The

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author's central claim—that the adjectives “savage” and “shameful” are not merely descriptive but axiological agents encoding ideological deviance—is both insightful and methodologically well anchored.

Introduction and Theoretical Grounding

The introduction effectively justifies the study's rationale by situating semiotics as an interpretive framework bridging language, ideology, and discourse. The references to theorists such as Denis Bertrand, Antoine Compagnon, and János Riesz demonstrate familiarity with canonical semiotic and comparative literature approaches. However, the paper could benefit from a brief exposition of Greimasian or Peircian semiotic models for clarity and alignment with contemporary trends in semiotics. The research problem is clearly established—the deviation of the State from normative constructs through linguistic markers—and the rationale is convincingly tied to colonial and postcolonial discourses.

Methodology and Analytical Framework

Although primarily qualitative, the methodology is implicitly systematic. The author adopts the principles of isotopy and axiological analysis to decode meaning, identifying a network of recurring signifiers across works. The comparative method is appropriate but not always evenly balanced: *L'État sauvage* receives more detailed textual analysis than *L'État honteux*. More explicit commentary on methodological limits—such as subjectivity in semantic evaluation or intertextual interpretation—would strengthen transparency.

Results and Thematic Analysis

The paper's analytical rigor is notable in its treatment of linguistic and narrative patterns. The subsections on “the epithet as precursor of deviance” and “the postposition of the epithet as consecration of deviation” are particularly rich. The close reading reveals how grammatical placement (antéposition vs. postposition) of adjectives in French contributes to ideological meaning, an observation both linguistically acute and culturally revealing. Similarly, the exploration of normative deviation, using Louis Hébert's definitions of “norme” and “écart,” provides a sound theoretical backbone. Nevertheless, the results could be organized more succinctly to spotlight emergent patterns rather than reproducing extended textual commentary.

Discussion and Comparative Insights

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The discussion is intellectually rewarding, identifying how colonial discourse in Conchon's *L'État sauvage* perpetuates racial hierarchies while Tansi's *L'État honteux* reconfigures shame through the figure of the postcolonial leader. The linkage between "deviation" and "failure of political legitimacy" is a powerful contribution. A more elaborate comparative synthesis—perhaps using a table or conceptual schema to contrast semiotic values in the two novels—would enhance accessibility. The author's analysis of figurative geography (e.g., the "square" as ontological symbol in Tansi) illustrates a deep sensitivity to visual semiotics and ideological critique.

Writing Style, Structure, and References

The manuscript is eloquent, academically precise, and demonstrates mastery of both French and English critical terminology. Citations are relevant, but reference formatting requires consistency—particularly in punctuation and italicization of book titles. Some long sections could be condensed for better readability. The language is sophisticated yet clear, with minimal grammatical issues. The conclusion effectively summarizes the study's theoretical and literary contributions, emphasizing the continuity between colonial denial and postcolonial renunciation of the State.

Overall Assessment

This paper offers an outstanding contribution to semiotic literary studies through its linguistic precision, theoretical engagement, and nuanced interpretation of ideological discourse in francophone African texts. The focus on the epithet as a marker of deviation enriches the dialogue between linguistic form and political content, aligning well with postcolonial semiotic scholarship.

Minor revisions should address:

- Integration of a brief methodological clarification (comparative parameters, selection rationale).
- Balanced analytical depth for both novels.
- Uniform formatting of references.
- Streamlining of extended quotations to maintain analytical focus.

Recommendation

Accept after minor revisions related to theoretical framing and structural refinement. The study's originality and scholarly rigor merit publication once these aspects are addressed.