



ISSN NO. 2320-5407

International Journal of Advanced Research

**Publisher's Name: Jana Publication and Research
LLP**

www.journalijar.com

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: **IJAR-58181**

Title: LA RESTITUTION DES BIENS CULTURELS AFRICAINS DANS LA PIECE INCINERES DE JEROME TOSSAVI ET D ALOUGBINE DINE.

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision.....

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

Reviewer Name: Faheem Abdul Muneeb

Reviewer Report

The manuscript presents a thoughtful and well-structured examination of the theatrical adaptation of *Incinérés* by Alougbine Dine from Jérôme Tossavi's original dramatic text. By focusing on the notion of *vision de mise en scène*, the study seeks to explain how theatrical direction transforms the dramatic text while preserving and amplifying its central ideological message concerning the voluntary return of looted African cultural heritage. The paper combines dramaturgical analysis with theatrical semiotics and performance studies to demonstrate that the director's artistic interventions are not arbitrary deviations but meaningful reinterpretations that reinforce the political and symbolic significance of the original play. The topic is timely and academically relevant, particularly in the context of ongoing international debates regarding the restitution of African cultural property and postcolonial memory. The article also contributes to Francophone African theatre studies by examining a contemporary production that has received comparatively limited scholarly attention. The manuscript is generally well organized, the argument progresses logically, and the conclusions are consistent with the objectives stated in the introduction.

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Overall, the paper makes a worthwhile contribution to theatre and performance studies. Nevertheless, several aspects of the manuscript could be strengthened to improve its analytical depth, methodological transparency, and readability before publication.

Major Comments

Strengthen the conceptual contribution of "vision de mise en scène"

One of the principal strengths of this manuscript is the introduction and application of the concept of *vision de mise en scène*. However, the originality of this concept deserves stronger theoretical positioning. The discussion currently explains the concept primarily through descriptive exposition before applying it to the case study.

The author should clarify more explicitly whether this concept represents a new analytical framework or an extension of existing theories in theatre studies. A more direct comparison with established approaches to staging, adaptation theory, performance analysis, or theatrical semiotics would better demonstrate the scholarly contribution of the proposed framework.

Improve methodological transparency

The methodology generally appears appropriate for the objectives of the study, combining dramaturgical analysis, theatrical semiotics, observation of performances, and video documentation. Nevertheless, greater methodological transparency would improve the credibility of the findings.

The manuscript acknowledges that one of the co-authors is also the playwright whose work is being analyzed. Although the authors mention adopting participant observation while attempting to minimize bias, additional discussion of how interpretive subjectivity was controlled would strengthen the methodological rigor of the study.

Similarly, the criteria used to identify and evaluate the similarities and divergences between the dramatic text and the stage production could be described more systematically.

Reduce excessive theoretical description

The first section provides an extensive discussion of different forms of theatrical staging and the evolution of stage directions. While this background is useful, certain portions become overly descriptive and delay the transition to the actual case study.

Some of the theoretical explanations may be condensed so that greater emphasis can be placed on the original analysis of *Incinérés*. A more concise theoretical section would improve the overall balance of the manuscript.

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Deepen the analytical discussion

Much of the paper carefully identifies differences between the dramatic text and the theatrical production. However, several sections remain primarily descriptive.

The manuscript would benefit from deeper critical interpretation by explaining why particular staging decisions produce specific ideological or symbolic effects. For example, discussions of scenography, actor movement, music, and the transformation of cultural objects into theatrical actants could engage more extensively with broader debates in performance theory and symbolic representation.

This additional interpretation would further strengthen the originality of the article.

Expand engagement with recent scholarship

Although the bibliography includes important references from theatre studies and dramaturgical analysis, engagement with recent international literature on cultural restitution, decolonial performance, museum studies, heritage politics, and postcolonial theatre remains relatively limited.

Including a broader range of recent scholarship would better situate the study within current academic discussions and further demonstrate its international relevance.

Minor Comments

Improve transitions between sections

Certain transitions between theoretical discussion and textual analysis appear somewhat abrupt. Additional introductory or concluding sentences at the beginning and end of major sections would improve the overall flow of the manuscript.

Reduce repetition

Some arguments regarding the voluntary return of cultural heritage and the symbolic role of theatrical objects are repeated in multiple sections. Eliminating repetitive explanations would improve conciseness without affecting the central argument.

Clarify certain analytical terminology

Several specialized concepts from theatrical semiotics and dramaturgical analysis are introduced without sufficient explanation for readers who may not specialize in theatre studies.

Providing brief definitions when such concepts first appear would improve accessibility for a broader interdisciplinary audience.

Improve language and stylistic consistency

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The manuscript is generally well written. Nevertheless, careful proofreading is recommended to correct occasional grammatical inconsistencies, punctuation issues, spacing irregularities, and minor typographical errors. A final language edit would further improve readability.

Strengthen the conclusion

The conclusion successfully summarizes the principal findings but could also discuss the broader implications of the study.

A brief reflection on how this analytical framework might be applied to other theatrical adaptations dealing with colonial memory, heritage restitution, or African performance traditions would increase the broader scholarly significance of the article.

Strengths of the Manuscript

The manuscript possesses several notable strengths that make it suitable for publication after minor revision.

First, it addresses a highly relevant contemporary issue by connecting theatrical performance with debates surrounding the restitution of African cultural heritage. The subject matter is both academically significant and socially timely.

Second, the study presents a coherent analytical framework that combines dramaturgical analysis, theatrical semiotics, performance studies, and scenographic interpretation. The interdisciplinary approach enriches the overall discussion.

Third, the comparison between the dramatic text and its theatrical realization is detailed and carefully organized. The analysis demonstrates a close familiarity with both the written play and the staged production.

Fourth, the manuscript effectively illustrates how theatrical adaptation can reinforce rather than merely reproduce a playwright's original intentions. The argument that the stage production transforms restitution into a symbolic voluntary return is consistently developed throughout the paper.

Finally, the conclusions logically follow from the evidence presented and contribute meaningfully to discussions on theatre, cultural memory, and postcolonial artistic expression.

Recommendation

The manuscript presents a valuable contribution to theatre studies, performance analysis, and postcolonial cultural scholarship. The research question is clearly defined, the analytical approach is appropriate, and the conclusions are well supported by the evidence presented.

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The revisions suggested above primarily concern conceptual clarification, methodological transparency, stronger engagement with recent scholarship, and improvements in presentation rather than substantial changes to the research itself.

Accordingly, I recommend **acceptance after minor revisions**. With these improvements, the manuscript will provide an even stronger contribution to the literature on African theatre, theatrical adaptation, and the representation of cultural restitution in contemporary performance.