

Exploring the Psychology of Obedience and Ideological Routinization in David Rabe's *Sticks and Bones*

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Abstract

By analyzing the familial household as a place of ideological routinization and inner colonization, this study investigates the relationship between social psychology and post-colonial theory in David Rabe's *Sticks and Bones*. Through the development of the psychology of obedience using Frantz Fanon's theories on colonial alienation, the study argues that the family's interest in routine is a self-justifying mechanism to mask the shock of the Vietnam War. In this context, David stands in for a decolonized mind that challenges the dogmatic beliefs of his family. He has been irritated by the American presumption of transparency and the cloudy reality of war; therefore, David tries to highlight this discrepancy as much as he can. Consequently, the family's claim for obedience is reframed as an imperialist one, in which the parents must either pacify or disregard David to maintain their intelligent authority. Based on Fanon's theories of systemic violence and psychological suppression, the study displays how routinization acts as a kind of emotional blindness that turns the American Dream into an instrument of violence against returning soldiers. The analysis comes to conclusion that David's aided suicide, the play's sad climax, is the best example of colonial violence because it demonstrates how domesticity prioritizes upholding of a tidy, submissive narrative over the distinctive human qualities.

Keywords: (Cultural Crisis, David Rapp, Frantz Fanon).

استكشاف سيكولوجية الطاعة والروتنة الأيديولوجية في مسرحية ديفيد راب (عصي وعظام)

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الملخص

من خلال تحليل الاسرة بوصفها بيئة لإعادة انتاج الروتين الأيديولوجي والاستعمار الداخلي، تهدف هذه الدراسة الى البحث في العلاقة بين علم النفس الاجتماعي ونظرية ما بعد الاستعمار في مسرحية (عصي وعظام) لديفيد راب. ومن خلال تطوير مفهوم الطاعة بالاعتماد على نظرية (فرانز فانون) حول الاغتراب الاستعماري، تجادل هذه الدراسة بان ميل الاسرة الى الروتين يشكل الية تبرير ذاتي يهدف الى إخفاء صدمة الحرب في فيتنام. في هذا السياق، مثل ديفيد عقلية متحررة من الاستعمار من خلال تحدي المعتقدات الجامدة لعائلته. فقد أصيب بالضيق من افتراض الشفافية الأميركية والواقع المظلم للحرب، ولذلك يسعى ديفيد الى تسليط الضوء على هذا التناقض قدر الإمكان. وبالتالي، يعاد صياغة مطالب الاسرة على انها مطالب امبريالية، حيث يجد الوالدين نفسيهما مضطرين اما الى تهدئة (ديفيد) او تجاهله للحفاظ على سلطتهما الفكرية. وبالاستناد الى نظريات (فانون) حول العنف البنوي والقمع النفسي، تظهر هذه الدراسة كيف يعمل الروتين كشكل من اشكال الجهل العاطفي الذي يحول الحلم الأميركي الى أداة عنف ضد الجنود العائدين من الحرب. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن انتحار (ديفيد) المُساعد، وهو الذروة المأساوية في المسرحية، يُعدّ أبرز تجلٍ للعنف الاستعماري، لأنه يكشف كيف تعطي الحياة الأسرية الأولوية للحفاظ على سرديّة نظيفة وخاضعة، على حساب الخصائص الإنسانية الفريدة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: (الأزمة الثقافية، ديفيد راب، فرانز فانون).

1-Introduction

The Vietnam War 1955-1975 left deep cultural and psychological scars on both American and Vietnam societies, showing the painful experiences of surviving soldiers and reflecting the dynamics of post-war family. Amid the nation which

was grappling with political, social, and moral accountability, David Rabe (1940-), an American soldier and a Vietnam war veteran, has depicted such social and political tension in his *Sticks and Bones* (1972). In this play, the protagonist David was a returning soldier from the battlefield, has experienced a contradictory miserable life divided between the dark realities and the middle-class, ideal, American family. This contrast highlights the unbridged gap caused by war within both domestic life and individual's agency. Through weird exaggeration and dark comedy, Rabe shows how social expectations and military indoctrination merge together to produce a lasting trauma, psychological and emotional dysfunction, and a deep sense of alienation.

Concerning the term, literature review, the recent studies, the play has been investigated as a complex critique of American myths regarding war, family, and masculinity. Mehmed Eđirgen (2022) asserts in his article "Hegemonic Masculinity in David Rabe's the Vietnam Plays" that Rabe deconstructs the false image of American idealized family found in twentieth-century. Through the parody of the famous sitcom of *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, the play reveals the stark contrast between gender roles and the moral ignorance in a society that hides repression under the guise of domestic and social harmony (pp.66-68). This moral blindness, both literally and symbolically, reflects how social myths represented by rigid masculinity negatively affect individual identity and familial bonds, especially for those returning veterans like David. Similarly, Sarah Attia (2024), in her "Politics Cast Shades on Private Lives in David Rabe and David Hare's Works" takes the political and the psychological sides of the play in exploring the aftermath of Vietnam war, elaborating on how individuals' lives are infiltrated by social ideology. Attia's study reveals the emotional disconnection and the incapability of dealing with trauma in American middle-class family, which, as a result, causes

alienation for veterans like David who experience psychological fragmentation, social rejection, and familial misunderstanding (pp. 2972–73). Furthermore, Deniz Aras (2021) reviewed the play in her article, “The Endless Wound: Reconstruction of Identity under Conflict in *Sticks and Bones*” as a meditation of identity reformation under the pressure of social and political conflicts. In this article, Aras sheds light on the social and psychological wounds caused by war, showing how trauma, denial, and communication failure withing the family reflect the broader social inability to realize and deal with suffering (pp. 11–18). These various studies present the play as a significant work that both reflects and challenges the common narrative of masculinity, myths, and heroism, while confronting the implied violence that underlines the American identity formation.

While the previous studies offer profound insights into postwar alienation and trauma, yet they largely treat trauma as psychological aftermath and thus stop at a certain analytical point, rather than examining it as the product of an institutional process. Addressing this gap, the current study is intended to highlight how the postwar home is used as both a tool for normalization and a location of internal colonization. Accordingly, David, the blind soldier who returns, is moved away from military cruelty and finds a new, intolerable form of familial discipline. This study contends that throughout *Sticks and Bones*, Rabe depicts the psychological and cultural crises of post-Vietnam American War, illustrating how the imposed obedience through military indoctrination distorts familial ties and personal identity. This phenomenon has been clarified through Fanon’s theory of psychological oppression. In doing so, the study is addressing the subsequent questions: How does ideological routinization and rigid indoctrination affect the mental health of soldiers in *Sticks and Bones*? And in what way Fanon's ideas

can help understand the psychological and social crises the characters in *Sticks and Bones* are encountering?

2-Theoretical Framework

This study applies the Fanonian lens to read Rabe's *Sticks and Bones*, focusing on concepts found in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* like psychological, social, and political concepts. Fanon provides a conceptual language to rethink about military training as an approach of mental and psychological colonization, through processes like psychic posture, internalizing dominant, and mimicry. This process can be viewed as Fanon (1967) mentions in *Black Skin, White Masks*:

Unable to confront all these demands, the white man shirks his responsibility. I have a phrase for this: the racial allocation of guilt. We said earlier that some incidents had surprised us. Every time there was a rebellion, the military authorities sent only the colored soldiers to the front line. It is the 'peoples of color' who annihilated the attempts at liberation by other 'peoples of color,' proof that there were no grounds for universalizing the process... where clashes break out on all sides, where lies and demagoguery are the sole masters. In some circumstances, we must recall, the socius is more important than the individual. (p.75)

Here, Fanon reflects on colonial authority and how it avoids moral responsibility while manipulating and controlling racial and social hierarchies. He explains how the colonizer addresses violence and guilt to the colonized 'the racial allocation of guilt'. This asserts how military indoctrination echoes psychological crisis as soldiers internalize the colonizer's mentality by being trained and forced to follow orders blindly.

The limitation of this analogy must be known by acknowledging that Fanon's concepts stem from the historical incidences of colonialism, in which the colonized is influenced by imposing domination and racist structures. While

systemized violence and domination are centralized in postwar militarism, it carries numerous narratives, social structures, and political intentions. Thus, the methodological translation of Fanonian reading is a means of having a comprehensible comparison rather than exploring distinct history. The soldier's experiences in U.S. differs from that of the colonized ones who were occupied by European armies. Yet, such comparison is significant in showing similar patterns; psychological reshaping, displacement, and internalized violence. Therefore, the Fanonian reading helps to realize how the self is dismantled through military indoctrination and perpetuated violent system. Instead of being an individual case, the Fanonian framework situates the soldier within a holistic violent structure of production and reproduction of consciousness: dehumanizing training, psychological domination, normalized cruelty, and unquestionable obedience.

The soldier returns home as an individual whose inner mentality has been influenced and shaped by institutional violence, that kind of violence causes a sense of non-belonging to home (Fanon, 2004, pp.250-53). His disability to reintegrate with his family atmosphere or to represent himself as a traditional masculine figure among the family reflects his lack of corresponding with civilian atmosphere. This will be seen as a psychological reaction to the imitation of militarism as a tough man, and a counter-imitation as a civilian person, a disturbing mix of obedience and colonizing force co-exist at the same time (Fanon, 1967, pp. 124-26). This study focuses on David to show how militarism affects and shapes the desire and speech pattern of veterans, transforming their trauma into personal abnormality, which is found in Fanon's ideas of colonial psychic economies (Fanon,2004, p.270).

Additionally, the framework follows Fanon's critical ideas to confirm how people interact with their culture as a way of expression and logical reflection. Individuals, families, and wider communities will be studied as reflections of domesticities of the colonizer's mentality. Their ordinary satisfaction, convincing justifications, and the insensitivity to the right and wrong symbolize the colonist mentality which Fanon points at (Fanon, 2004, p.300). Methodologically, the study examines some related dialogues as textual analysis, the stage directions and conversations that verify how Rabe's techniques of grotesque elements, dramatic exaggeration, and rhetorical language highlight Fanon's notions of violence reproduction, split subjectivity, and internalization of aggression.

3-Analysis: Exploring the Psychology of Obedience and Ideological Routinization in David Rabe's *Sticks and Bones*

David Rabe, the voice of marginalized and oppressed people, appeared in the American theater as a representative of those shattered individuals who return with institutional violence and psychological burden within themselves. After the outbreak of Vietnam War, Rabe affirms in his plays the lives of veterans whose wounds disclose the psychological rupture and isolation as a cost of national mythology. His works do not only portray the experiences of soldiers as a source of sacrifice or heroism, but also exclude the comforting allusion of patriotism and show how the identities of fractured soldiers are shaped due to the firm and merciless training and indoctrination. In such way, Rabe transforms Fanon's notions about colonized people into dramatic works, divulging how they absorb violence, how they internalize their sense of self splits and fractures, and how it is impossible for them to totally reintegrate in their own societies after what they have experienced with war. By focusing on David, the protagonist, Rabe creates a dramatic atmosphere portraying the hardships of soldiers not only as individual

problems, but as a part of holistic and general social affairs, reflecting how those soldiers are mentally reshaped by military authority. Following this, David is portrayed as the protagonist standing in for an oppressed person who has experienced the anguish and terror of wartime brutality. His broken speech, silence, and physical isolation disclose the perpetuated influences of military training and higher authority, which is considered as psychological torture and physical exploitation.

David, in *Sticks and Bones* is portrayed as a person with a consciousness created by repeated exposure to structural violence. His return to familial life exposes his mental disjunction. Fanon argues that the colonial and racist systems do not only influence the body, but also recreate the awareness of the self, which in terms, changes the awareness of desire and negatively affects the language as a means of normal self-expression and communication. Similarly, routinization functions as a full pedagogy that trains soldiers to see the world through the logic of violence, the instrumentalization of other races, maintaining total obedience to social hierarchy, and disconnecting emotional bonds. At that time, they take these mental patterns back to the civilian life. Rabe expresses this inner transformation through David's silence, his miscomprehending of familial rhythm, and his incapability of corresponding to their domestic lifestyle. He further elaborates on the central inner conflict caused by the stark contrast between the previous and current lifestyle the veteran experiences. This is clearly found through the heated discussions and clash between David and his family, particularly in the way they react to his beloved Vietnamese girl, Zung (Sorour, p. 10). With close reading, David's struggle in articulating his thoughts is found not merely as a personal problem, but as a rooted and deeper one.

Craig Werner (1980), in his article "Primal Screams and Nonsense Rhymes: David Rabe's *Revolt*" provides an insightful analysis of Rabe's *Sticks and Bones* highlighting his exploration of social collapse and alienation in American society after Vietnam War. According to Werner, Rabe successfully portrays the characters' difficulties in articulating the contradiction of their experiences through a language that focuses only on suppressing anxieties rather than healing them(p.529). This is clearly seen in David's speech when he challenges Ozzie about violent acts: "Did you do it? Had you anything to do with it?" / 'What?' / 'That egg.' / 'I can't see.' / 'I think you did. I feel like you did it.'" (Rabe, 2023, p.199), a dialogue that underlines how suspicious and stressful their communication is. Werner elaborates on the metaphor of falling in Rabe's plays to symbolize David's sense of miscommunication and entrapment among his own family, seen as "a coffin", regardless the attempts to decorate it otherwise: "It's a coffin. You made it big so you wouldn't know, but that's what it is, a coffin, and not all the curtains and pictures and lamps in the world can change it" (p.192). Even main characters tend to make up stories or vainly fabricate facts to delude themselves in their miserable reality, this is obviously found in Harriet's suggestion to find David "some nice girl" as an attempt to normalize his broken sense of self (188). Werner concludes that Rabe leaves audiences with a vision of "living (though, significantly, also dying) Ishmael," highlighting the difficulty of bridging detached individual perspectives and shared social existence.

Fanon's ideas lead to understand David's speech in a distinctive way. His delayed responding and fragmented memories confirm how difficult for him to realize or have a sense of self. Fanon stresses the significance of language in creating and controlling individuals, emphasizing that the oppressed people maintain the oppressor's language while abandoning an authentic version of self-

expressing. David's hesitant answers are clearly viewed in his speeches, "I have so much to tell you, to show you" (p. 206), which reveals the difficulty in expressing war experiences and the need for nurturing in an indifferent familial environment. The phrase "so much" symbolizes an overwhelming experience that goes beyond his linguistic capability of David himself; "to tell you" assumes sentimentalization, highlighting the family's importance to be either supportive or oppressive; and "to show you" tells that words alone are not sufficient for him, because trauma needs a physical presence to be expressed. Fanon explains that language shapes human consciousness which proves the psychological and physical split. David applies the dominant oppressor's language to communicate, but it fails to express his inner feelings and needs. His commanding language with Father Donald exhibits the oppressive attitude in communicating with others:

FATHER DONALD: No, no, I mean, you swung it in the air, you— hit me.

DAVID: Yes.

FATHER DONALD: No, no, you don't understand, you—

DAVID: I was trying to hit you, Father. (FATHER DONALD stares, taking this in.)

FATHER DONALD: What?

DAVID: I didn't send for you.

FATHER DONALD: I know, I know, your poor mother—your poor mother

DAVID: I don't want you here, Father; get out!

FATHER DONALD: David!

DAVID: Get out, I'm sick of you. (p.185)

Here, David deliberately attempts to physically harm Father Donald in order to dismiss him out of his room. His commanding and impolite language asserts his aggressive tendencies toward those who pretend to care for him. In this context, this act approves the main incarnation of Fanon's internal colonization. Similarly, a deep feeling of self-estrangement and misunderstanding is sensed in David's interaction with his family, as his oppressive familial atmosphere increases his

alienation and detachment (Sorour, 2022, pp.4-6). Commands, euphemisms, symbolic language, and expression commonly used in military diminish intimacy and leave him aloof and isolated, making him living in an actual alienation. His tendency toward Zung goes against his family's traditions, since they consider her as a threat to their superior normalcy, escalating his sense of self split and dehumanization (Sorour, 2022, pp.10-11). For David, military influences go beyond language, in which his body highlights the harmful marks of intensified training given by military systems. Such physical destructive training reforms emotional and mental responses, directs postures, shapes reflexes, and consequently changes his self-perception. David's shocked reactions to touch and noise reveal his lack of real communication with his family. His family is unable to realize his destabilized physical and psychological defects to the extent they consider these deficiencies as eccentricities. Instead, the family tends to expose shallow expressions, traditional gender norms, and jokes, which are the main practices that deepen David's sense of isolation and self-split.

While Fanon considers the concept of self as being connected to the ideological and political powers, Rabe revives this within the realm of family dynamics. David self-estrangement is not a personal case but a generalized lingering outcome of psychological oppression of military institution. Therefore, the play portrays the consequences of military indoctrination as a process of colonizing not only "others" but also familial life. The returning veterans come back home as both colonized or colonizer, transferring the violent logic of military while bearing their own psychological and physical costs. Thus, David's shattered-self becomes as a biography, narrating his unspeakable horrific experiences and representing the burden of a modern man. In this regard and through communication, the individual's collapse is seen as a result of the institutional

imposition. Fanon's stress on the importance of language in forming identities helps to understand David's silence and stammers as he struggles to cope with cultural systems. The military language operates moral issues into commands and euphemisms, while domestic life aligns with emotional expressions, deep details, and expressive metaphors. Rabe intensifies this communicative difference through David's speech when he fails to maintain a clear and understandable communication with his family. In a confrontational scene, David expresses his anguish through his fractured speech with Father Donald, as the latter tells him, "You say that sarcastically— 'Do you? I didn't know that.' As if to imply you're so complicated I couldn't ever understand you when I already have" (p.186). This highlights the deep miscommunication David's struggles in maintaining his comprehension through language because of his inner turmoil.

Additionally, Father Donald's insight that "there's a relevancy much larger than the credit most gives. We're growing—and our insights, when we have them, are twofold" (p. 180). This act unfolds a deep reflection about the complexity David might go through. In this sense, he is caught between psychological framing and spiritual meaning, each finds its way to be expressed, but they are often not enough by their own. David's struggle is not only to find his own words but to find a way of making use of his language in expressing his inner pain and finding a bridge with others. Clearly, it is seen when Father Donald says "It's only into a valley of ruin that you are trying to lock yourself. You can only die there, David. Accept me" (p. 187). This mirrors the essence of language and its importance in carrying isolation and risk in itself. Rabe demonstrates the veterans' agony as a crisis of self-expression and miscommunication, as Father Donald says "knowledge is knowledge and I must accept what is proven fact whether that fact come from science or philosophy or whatever" (p.187). Despite all means of communications,

the language to accentuate these facts still painfully elusive and deeply complicated.

In the entitled review, "War and the Soul", Larry Dossey (2006) asserts that war causes a lasting psychological-wound and identity disorder on soldiers, making reintegration in normal life difficult by disrupting their psychological state at the deepest level. This resonates with David's experience, since he returns home carrying the burden of his invisible wounds that disturb his sense of belonging and identity. The article affirms how war traumatizes soldiers and often leads to perpetual PTSD, and even suicide. This goes alongside with David, since his inner struggles alienate him from his family that deprive him of intimate communication. Moreover, his family is unable and unwilling to realize the intense impact of his war experience. Instead of following the process of healing through understanding emotional and psychological consequences of war, the family increases the soldier's scar through fragile attention.

Speaking of PTSD, R. Dutta (2025) explains in his article "War and Its Implications Described in the Vietnamese Literature" that the infliction of Vietnam war was not only upon the soldiers who experienced the war themselves, but it was also a long-lasting psychological trauma on their families and their society. Dutta argues that Vietnam post-war literature captures the implications of this war, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and psychological fracture, showing that war's traumatic consequences go beyond individual affairs and spread through families and the whole society (p.87). In David's case, a similar traumatic struggle is clearly found in his interaction with his family, in which he struggles to articulate his inner turmoil while his family creates an indifferent attitude caused by their inability to understand his anxiety. Rabe portrays how bodily physical

damages are evidences of institutional discipline, reflecting Fanon's idea that repeated and oppressive training shaped sensitivity, posture, and movement. David's bodily gestures, stiffness and awkward responses are visible traumatic consequences. The semiotic failure of his family stems from their inability to understand these signs, which intensifies his sense of alienation. As Alvarez Shipko & N. Noviello (1983) point out, language often fails to convey exceeding pain, and since people are not aware of such expressions, victim suffers in an invisible way. Thus, misunderstanding and miscommunication in *Sticks and Bones* for David's suffering deepens his sense of estrangement and isolation from emotional and domestic belongingness (p.124).

In examining the complexities of Vietnam War, Stephen Peter Rosen (1982), in his article "Vietnam and the American Theory of Limited War" elucidates how the American government applies limited war, limiting military actions by political control. This, when applied on the play, deepens our understanding of David's condition since the disconnection between political aims and military experience cause confusion and mental disorder for him, because he found himself stuck between unresolved national conflict over the legitimacy of war and his sense of alienation. Accordingly, Rosen's perspective of limited war strategy parallels with the play's critique of social disconnection and trauma, showing how political failure leads to social and psychological crisis (pp.83-113). Recognizing pain becomes a semiotic problem when the body carries the archive of military training. In this regard, families misunderstand trauma and embodied signs without appropriate language, considering them as eccentricities, which reinforces the veteran's social invisibilities and suffering. Shipko believes that available vocabularies are often undermined by pain through detaching injured soldiers from social communication (Shipko & Noviello, 2006). In the play, David's difficulty in

establishing fruitful communication is seen as social failure. As Fanon points out that oppressive narratives normalize disruptive realities through familial myths and patriotic sacrifice, and neutralize suffering are considered as psychological disturbance. Rabe exposes this denial through critical sense, showing how over-normalization hides institutional violence.

In this play, recovery functions as a social elimination, in which trauma rarely identifies itself clearly, instead it shows itself through symptoms. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (1992) emphasize the necessity of having a good listener as a way of recognizing personal testimony (p.76). Yet, David finds nothing but refusal in his family, making his testimony be like mockery or silence and detaching him from familial memory. Fanon's perspective asserts that David's suffering is socially made, which requires structural reform and acknowledgement. By rejecting moral binaries, David realizes how institutional domination appears in familial life, necessitating a collective understanding rather than individual one. Rabe portrays home as a microcosm of political world, where living rooms represent ideological routines, national myths, and military training are exposed through the family speech and actions. This familial setting uncovers how public violent practices influence private life even after the war ends. Rabe challenges 1950s televisual cheerful through dark comedy, exposing the widening gulf between patriotic slogans and family's real life. Therefore, laughing becomes a kind of defense and a means for people to ignore pain, while the play criticizes this rejection of confronting trauma and realizing violence.

Rabe's play calls not only for individual's therapy, but also for collective awareness and response. It delivers an urgent call to listen to personal testimony, recognizing individual pain, and realizing institutional accountability. As Felman

and Laub explain that public discourse must include individual's testimony in order to bring real change instead of the policy of silencing(p.78). Rabe also argues that the need to understand traumatized people, their silence, postures, and responses, through new cultural pedagogy. Drawing of Fanon's and Shipko's perspectives, this semiotic awareness helps to make trauma as civic and social responsibility, and openly recognize institutional violence rather than treating it privately as pathology. Since theatre is a means of understanding or producing knowledge, *Sticks and Bones* urges the audience to realize that they are not only spectators, but eye witnesses who can interfere to help and make change. They are invited not to accept happy endings or comfortability, but to bear the ethical responsibility to listen to personal testimony and painful truths. This kind of attention has public importance as theater becomes a place where people realize and learn how to respond to trauma with openness and reciprocal understanding. Such lessons must not be considered as mere aesthetic practices, but as a real institutional and social change. Additionally, treatment for veterans should not be only medical, however, cultural and social suffering must also be taken into consideration. Politics should let them express themselves and share their stories and avoid making their pain as patriotic propaganda. The way military language shape identities must be included in education to increase awareness of violence and its consequences.

Rabe subverts the typical role of family as safe and private place by presenting it as a sample of wider social influence in processing national mythologies and reforming individual identities. The mother-centered structure plays the role of the "domestic colonizer" by enforcing obedience and teaching conformity. This mentality goes beyond familiar patriotic slogans of sacrifice and heroism, revealing a deeper sense of internalized obedience and mental control. The cruel fact that David is trying to express is also rejected by his family, which

leads him to careless humor when self-expression is needed. This dissonance reflects the family's attitude in refusing his fractured personality after war while trying to restore his pre-war identity by imposing domestic normalcy on him and erasing his difference to preserve familial order. That act itself reproduces psychological domination by widening the gap between David and his family and reinforcing his sense of self-split and denial (Sertel, 2024, p. 16).

According to D. McDonald, "Ozzie and Harriet" (the American family sitcom), act as a screen of idealism, by representing fake image that hides the terrible truth of Vietnam War(p.25; Sertel,2024,p.16). This sitcom converts real violence into harmless and normal narrative, which helps to justify political purposes of war and manipulate returning injured soldiers to fit into their native environment which matches their reality. Therefore, David's family cannot accept his trauma because it threatens their idealistic comfortability and their ideological fortification. It is as Raymond Williams says that "the family becomes like small society where many concepts are fighting, and only those with which maintain violence would survive" (Williams,1961,p.359). Fanon's critical framework also reads David struggle as a process of cultural and psychological internalization forced by oppression. His physical dysfunction and violent acts are not only a representation of pathology but also articulations of colonial mimicry and military internalization which are enforced by military and society, systems that aggrandize ultimate conformity and suppress self-questioning and feelings. Healing the symptoms of colonization, as Fanon describes, requires more than political or social change, it needs linguistic and institutional rebuilding. Broken veterans must first be healed through emotional family work; finding space to express pain and rethinking about traditional gender roles. Such reform must also extend to social affairs by admitting the system's failure, reducing militarization, and increasing

awareness about violence instead of celebrating it. Without these reforms, families will repeat the same cycle of violence causing more trauma and pain for soldiers like David (Fanon,2004; Bulhan,2023, pp. 90-92).

The play provides a conceptual framework for how reparation and reform can be done on several levels. For individuals, it suggests practices of recovering for veterans through patient and compassionate treatment, by giving them a space to express themselves, accepting their moody state, and employing family efforts to help them restore their sense of self. Yet, personal healing only is not sufficient. Social narrative of normalizing violence as heroic stories must be changed, as the same for demilitarization and reducing institutional violence. Families who live in such dominant society keep repeat the endless cycle of suffering and trauma by militarizing their sons. Therefore, the play reflects an intimate story about personal suffering and a severe criticism of social and political systems that legitimize suffering and violence. In that concern, Rabe believes that reform is not limited to political issues, but moral ones with urgency (Bulhan,2023, p. 94; Fanon,2004; Rabe,2023).

Conclusion

The study asserts that Rabe's *Sticks and Bones* reflects the cultural and psychological crises of military indoctrination which destroy both individual and social life. By exploring it through Fanon's ideas of mimicry, the broken self, and internalized domination, the play exposes the protagonist's sense of detachment, linguistic incapability, and inner reflections not as personal symptoms, but as true consequences of institutionalized authority. Through close reading, this study explains how Rabe portrays familial atmosphere as a microcosm of a whole society in which family causes inner damage, identities are formed and controlled by

national myths and daily rituals. The play introduces military indoctrination as an endless cycle controlling both the soldiers and their families. The soldiers absorb violence, and families support institutions which create that violence to reinforce brutality and normalizes it.

Additionally, this study connects Fanon's criticism of institutional violence to David's private life, depicting how dramatic techniques like exaggeration and dark comedy make institutional violence invisible. As a result, the play echoes Fanon's ideas of cultural struggles as experiences performed on stage, asserting how theater is sufficiently capable of revealing institutional violence. Also, the study focuses on society and institutions as main sources of individuals' trauma, extending the scope from personal to public sphere. Practically, this concludes that healing demands small and large endeavors combined. In individual case, this healing includes careful listening, following new methods of expressing agony, and adjusting domesticities to match this healing. And in a social case, it requires cultural demilitarization, modifying military training, serving with narrative-care for veteran whether injured or not, and giving more space for personal testimony to be heard seriously rather than just empathizing with it. Culture, politics, and media can help society understand and reduce trauma not as a personal vulnerability but as a real experience. Thus, efficient healing must encompass family, media, and pedagogical intervention. By following Fanonian decolonization to the subsequent of American-Vietnam war, this study remains suggestive but not fitting perfectly. Since it is centered on performance and textual analysis, any evidence regarding actual violent exercises or institutions is still relative. Yet, such claims can further be proved by more textual analysis and empirical researches in this regard, such as veterans' testimonies or studies about reintegration programs. For future studies, combining practical research with literary theory could go beyond examining

Fanonian ideas. It may uncover how such ideas will be reconsidered and adjusted when applied to real situation.

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