

Therapeutic History and the Enduring Memories of Violence in Algeria and Morocco

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This article examines the experience of transitional justice and its relation to collective memory of authoritarian repression in Morocco (1965-1992) and the Civil War in Algeria (1991-2002). It confronts and compares to the two states' therapeutic historical discourse produced to heal the national community after these periods of violence and its impact on the countries' historians, journalists, filmmakers, and novelists from 2004 to 2017. The article argues that Algeria and Morocco's rigorous definition of the "victim" during these two episodes (the imprisoned and disappeared) excluded the way communities suffered during this period and, as

a result, has delayed healing, forgiveness, and national reconciliation. This article highlights the limits of two overpoliticized processes of transitional justice in the Maghreb and their limited conception of what it meant to "come to terms with the past." However, it finds optimism in the ongoing efforts by new historiography and cultural actors to confront the lasting traumatic aftermaths outside of official definitions and on their own terms.

Keywords: Maghreb, Collective Memory, Therapeutic History, Transitional justice, Authoritarianism

Obstacles to political democratization in Algeria and Morocco, when considered in longer time frames, should include the countries' violent pasts and their continued legacies. Two significant episodes of political violence have caused a breakdown of a national consensus in contemporary history: in Morocco, the "Years of Lead" (*sanawāt al-raṣāṣ*) from 1965 to the 1990s, and in Algeria, the Civil War, also known as the "dark decade", from 1991 to 2002. During these two periods, the state carried out systematic and violent repression against opposition forces—military putschists and leftists in Morocco, and Islamists in Algeria. The respective security apparatuses "disappeared" opponents and systematically tortured or unlawfully detained those accused or suspected of unlawful acts. Ordinary Algerians and Moroccans lived through these periods under fear and silence.

Both countries have since addressed these violent episodes through processes of transitional justice. From 2004 to 2005, Morocco's Truth and Justice Commission (*Instance Équité et Réconciliation*, henceforth IER) was tasked with determining if and how the state was responsible for violent acts from 1955 to 1999, and with proposing adequate remedies. In 2005, Algerians voted overwhelmingly in favor

of a referendum on a “Civilian Concord,” which offered amnesty for Islamist insurgents in exchange for their peaceful surrender. These experiences were launched during two delicate political transitions of power and helped craft a consensus among the political elite and the Army by restoring the state’s legitimacy.¹

The political elite produced a new historical narrative of these periods to heal the population’s wounds by replacing a narrative of repressed memories, silence, and resentment with one of forgiveness and “moving on.” They took inspiration from other experiences in the Global South, including the South African experience, by creating a national theatrical stage to formally recognize the past, offer a symbolic commemoration of victimhood, and allow the community to overcome their pain (Lanegran 116, 119). While it is conventional to assess their democratizing impact, for which the verdict is pessimistic (Vairel 230; Joffé 223, 225), this article considers social and cultural responses to this historical discourse and its impact on trauma and national reconciliation.

The production of a “therapeutic history” after violence represents an essential means to rebuild a divided community. For Jill Salberg, “the human need for a

narrative that makes sense” is put under strain after trauma because trauma complicates “the easy flow from experience, to thought then to word” (Salberg and Grand 246), forcing individuals to fragment or deny their memories. Therapeutic history offers a remedy after past perpetrators have accepted responsibility for past crimes, by offering public apologies and restitutions, and telling the history of past violence (Hamber and Wilson 144-45; Barkan 323; Tileaga 350; Moon 72). In addition, it refers to the centrality of historical myths for nation-building (Smith 6). Within Middle East studies, increasing attention is devoted to the politics of memory between the state and civil society, academia, journalism, and the cultural sphere. In Turkey, Duygu Gül Kaya addresses the politics of memory around the 1915 Armenian Genocide and how Armenians, Alevis, and Kurds have sought a rewriting of the Kemalist-driven narrative of Turkish history and the AKP government’s resistance (Gül Kaya 682).

With a similar focus on the politics of memory in the aftermath of transitional justice experiences in the Maghreb, I explore how the states’ recognition of past violence has impacted collective traumas among Algerians and Moroccans. This article argues that the two “therapeutic

histories” centered on a specific conception of victimhood that failed to grasp how collective communities have suffered during those two periods. The authorities claimed that the symbolic process of transitional justice and official recognition were enough to put an end to claims of collective trauma. This has been politically convenient but extremely limited. A small category of victims have been vindicated and rehabilitated, namely the Algerian Islamist fighters, and Moroccan leftists and military putschists. Meanwhile, other stories of suffering during this period have been relegated, while these members continue to struggle to remember, share their stories, and grieve publicly.

In the past years, several historical and cultural productions have tackled the lasting manifestations of collective trauma. They are distinctive for their efforts to make sense of the past’s impact on the present, rather than merely depicting life and violence during these two periods. Their authors hope to portray collective stories and experiences that could ultimately enrich the national narrative. Despite this initial pessimistic assessment regarding therapeutic history’s limited ability to confront collective trauma, these cultural productions offer a way to address its limits by enriching the storytelling and reaching

out to broader audiences. Additionally, they can help transform Algerian and Moroccan political cultures by promoting notions of forgiveness, pluralism, and state accountability.

This article will read and discuss a sample of influential and representative works of memory in relation to the state-led therapeutic historical discourse. I will assess the historiographical outcomes of the creation of archives in Morocco following the IER recommendations, with Leila Kilani's 2008 documentary *Nos Lieux Interdits* (engl. Our Forbidden Places) and Fatna El Bouih's prison testimony as counterpoints. Finally, I will review the amnesty's negative impact on Algerian historiography before bringing in new forms of writing and rapport to memory, namely Adlene Meddi's novel 1994. In both cases, these works will be read with regard to their social impact from individuals to the broader national community.

Therapeutic History, Collective Trauma and the Nation

To assess Algeria's Civilian Concord and Morocco's Truth Commission, especially their historical narrative's ability to replace trauma and amnesia with a healthier relationship to the past, we dive at heart of the symbolic "pact" between state and popu-

lations, struck during the anti-colonial struggle against France.² The states' violence against their populations broke this bond, and the therapeutic historical discourse was meant to mend this relationship, mostly by reiterating its terms and dismissing the episode of violence as an abnormal event. I argue that neither gave sufficient space to the cathartic expression of painful remembrance nor did they encourage new histories based on collective experiences of the violence.

The Moroccan transitional justice was launched alongside regime political openings after three decades of Hassan II's rule, which had been characterized by repressive state policies and economic inequality. The historically persecuted socialist party was welcomed back into the political system, and the King launched a range of liberalizing measures that included a commitment to human rights protection and the "cleaning-up" of the country's nepotistic political system (Sweet 22-5). Hassan II also ordered the release of political prisoners and publicly acknowledged the existence of secret prisons such as Tazmamart, which he had persistently denied before, before affirming it was a "page that has been turned" (Miller 202-4).

These measures, merely a reconfiguration of power, grew in scope when Hassan II passed away in 1999. His son Muhammad VI came to power to continue this dynamic. Moroccan civil society pressured the state to launch a transitional justice based on truth-seeking about the Years of Lead. In 1999, Moroccan human rights activists and former political prisoners established the *Forum Vérité et Justice* (engl. Forum for Truth and Justice, henceforth FVJ), which organized sit-ins in strategic locations (Vairel 231-2). The new king's advisors began working with the FVJ leadership, including former political prisoner Driss Benzekri, to establish the IER in 2003.

The IER's work helped the monarchy refurbish its image as a reformist and benevolent actor, especially after its prior legacy of violence. The IER carried out its truth-seeking task earnestly: Benzekri's team traveled across the country interviewing Moroccans who had submitted claims and amassed an important collection of oral testimonies. Unfortunately, it suffered from pre-fixed limits. Only two heavily edited public sessions of testimonies were eventually aired on television, and no state actors were named or accused. While the final report recognized the state's systematic political use of violent methods (IER Report), the authorities were keen to close

this affair quickly, and the question of criminal responsibility and legal redress was not pursued. Instead, the IER recommended reparations and the investigation of disappeared Moroccans, and it called for the creation a national archive compiling administrative documentation and former victims testimonies (around 16,000 files) (Mohsen-Finan 332).

To understand its historiographical impact, we must consider how the Moroccan transitional justice process was limited by clear political considerations. It was designed for “restructuring the exercise of state power in Morocco” and promoting a new type of elite. The monarchy’s involvement in human rights violations and repair also limited its effectiveness (Vairel 230). In fact, the IER’s work was actively advertised as evidence of the monarchy’s reformed and reformist qualities (Mohsen-Finan 327). Unsurprisingly, the country’s post-IER official historiography continues to portray it as the country’s central actor and the main agent of change, while occulting the popular experiences of violence during the Years of Lead. In 2011, the esteemed historian Mohamed Kably edited *Histoire du Maroc: Réactualisation et Synthèse* (engl. History of Morocco: Update and Synthesis). Rather than usher in a new historiographical content and a social his-

torical focus integrating oral testimonies, the volume’s chapter on the post-independence period merely discussed the struggle between the monarchy and the nationalist movement, with the addition of the political repression against the left, the army, and leftist movements (Kably 664-9). Victims outside of these groups are totally ignored, showing the process’s glaring limitations and limited outcome.

Algeria’s nationalist historical myth was founded on the union between its population and leadership during the anti-colonial struggle, and it was severely undermined by the Civil War massacres. Initially, the Algerian leadership pursued national forgiveness primarily to end the fighting. Abdelaziz Bouteflika campaigned during the 1999 presidential elections on a platform of amnesty for insurgents who laid down their weapons, building on secret contacts with their leaders (Joffé 215-6; Ruedy 258-70). To justify pardoning Algerians guilty of civilian massacres, Bouteflika’s carefully crafted narrative affirmed that the principle of *rahma* (engl. clemency, mercy) was a key component of Algerian culture and society (Joffé 215; Martinez 245-50). He toured the country extensively and told his audience that the Algerian nation was forgiving and willing to consent to sacrifices for the higher goal.

Bouteflika spoke passionately and was embraced as the savior figure that would heal the nation, justifying his actions repeatedly “*bi-`ismi l-cha`b*” (In the people’s name) (Bouteflika “Projet de Charte pour la Paix et la Réconciliation Nationale”). However, the 1999 Law only targeted individuals who had “stop[ped] these criminal activities” and wished to “be reintegrated in society” (art.1) but had not committed heinous crimes.³ Thus, the state drew a path toward national forgiveness by choosing peace and oblivion over accountability.

In the second stage, after Bouteflika’s 2005 re-election, Algerians sanctioned a referendum on the Charter for National Reconciliation that enshrined the principles of amnesty and banned religious political parties. The Charter also dealt with the state’s responsibility for violence and continued to sideline civilian suffering from its narrative. The Charter’s last provision celebrated the security forces efforts to “safeguard the nation” and their “patriotism” and banned any investigation or litigation against them for “the actions they carried out to protect people and goods, to safeguard the Nation and the institutions of the Algerian Republic,” equating it with efforts to “dishonor those serving agents or tarnish Algeria’s image” (Art.

44-6). In return, the state granted financial reparations for victims of state repression, including to families of the disappeared, which exonerated the state from further responsibility (Art. 37-8).

Algeria was accused of “burying secrets under the rug” by human rights organizations for abandoning accountability and transparency (Mundy 152; HRW; Bustos 119-21). Major questions remained unanswered over the army’s role during village massacres in 1996-97, questions fueled by military whistleblowers encapsulated in the slogan “Qui-Tue?” (engl. Who Kills?). The Charter also silenced a narrative of national suffering and expected families to reiterate their trust toward the state and move on.

Despite these limitations, the 2005 amnesty helped install peace, reintegrate Islamist fighters, and reduce the army’s omnipotence. In both countries, therapeutic history was a means to restore national unity rather than to directly address responsibility over past violence. The politics of memory left Algerians and Moroccans unable to express their own painful memories after 2005 and without enough common basis for communities to move on. The next section explores the aftermath of Morocco’s truth commission

and Algeria’s civilian concord from the public’s perspective, and their responses to these limitations.

Morocco: The Incomplete Archive

The IER amassed a rich archive of testimonies and documentation and created a hopeful expectation for a constructive relationship to the past. Leila Kilani’s 2008 documentary *Nos Lieux Interdits* was produced in collaboration with the IER and represents a fascinating resource that reflects on the work of memory, but it also depicts the “failure” of the archival project (Pierre-Bouthier 12). Subsequent events have confirmed Kilani’s early pessimism. The documentary contains several crucial moments for the overall process and fleshes out the range of postures four Moroccan families have adopted in reaction to the disappearance or loss of a family member. From their intimate living rooms, they spoke openly. Several former prisoners in the documentary adamantly defend the need to achieve symbolic closure and recognition of their ordeal, which is consistent with the principles of the Moroccan prison literature as a “narrative of resistance” (Slyomovics 85; El Guabli 170; Moukhliis 354-55). Overall, however, the majority express the pervasiveness of silence, resignation, and fear. Often times, relatives are even opposed to learning

about the missing person’s fate and reopening old wounds.

The documentary shifts our perspective by capturing the process by which painful memories are exhumed and, in turn, how “ordinary Moroccans” have carried with them this heavy past. One case shows a young woman engaging her grandmother, Roqia, about the disappearance of her grandfather, Said, a trade union activist, around the May 1st protests, probably in 1972 or 1973. Instead of answers, all they have is an old picture of the group of activists. The intergenerational conversation at first goes nowhere, and the younger woman is frustrated by Roqia’s incomplete and reluctant answers. Badgered by the granddaughter’s desire for precise details (dates, names, places), Roqia retreats behind excuses of ignorance, probably rehearsed over the years as a defense mechanism: “I am uneducated”, “I do not know these things,” and “your grandfather wouldn’t tell me.” Later in the documentary, Roqia and her daughter eventually meet an IER investigator who commits to helping them find the truth about Said. Another family member, talking to Said’s old friends, learned that he was part of a secret leftist cell. When asked to confirm this, Roqia acts as if she did not hear. The question is repeated a few times until she

concedes: "I knew... but what could I say? They knew each other and why they were getting arrested, exiled and killed, it was because of that." The main characters finally reconcile themselves with the truth and a consistent narrative.

The generational element drives the excavation of memory by involving family members with their own search for truth, around them and with the IER institutions. The grandmother is made to reflect beyond the defensive excuses she erected and the impact of her husband's disappearance (loss of income, fear of retribution, etc.). The new story of this period is more accurate, including the grandfather's involvement in an underground leftist cell, which explains his disappearance.⁴ The work of recollection is slow and uncertain, but it has set a useful dynamic in motion. Additionally, these testimonies look beyond the usual victim, Said, and shed light on Roqia, traditionally neglected by the "prison literature" genre.

A decade later, the country's historiography has failed to live up to its initial promise. Instead of a rich, plural, and socially-inclusive account of the Years of Lead, as Kably's synthesis volume showed, academic historians have failed to produce a new research agenda (despite the establishment of a Center for "Present Time" in Rabat's Muhammad V University).

The most encouraging historiographical developments since the IER have come from outside academic circles, according to Sonja Hegasy. A younger generation of emboldened journalists and historians building on the new archival "apparatus" have been writing in an intermediary genre (Hegasy 87). This includes the historical magazine *Zamane*, established in late 2010 in French and 2013 in Arabic, which has frequently published front-page articles on various aspects of the Years of Lead: on Hassan II, former Interior Minister Driss Basri, the military putsches, and the Moroccan opposition. For Hegasy, this publication represents a "transformative memory" made possible by the IER archives and broader institutional machinery (Hegasy 102). However, there are reasons to caution against her optimism. *Zamane's* creation owed more to the Moroccan public's pent-up curiosity about this taboo past rather than a sustained historiographical interest, as its declining sales and quality of content attest.

Another range of criticism has been addressed by the former leftist militant and prisoner Fatna El Bouih and the anthropologist Susan Slyomovics regarding the operability of the Moroccan archives. Slyomovics dampened this enthusiasm over the "promises of a human

rights archive" by following the journey of former political prisoner Fatna El Bouih (1977-82), who testified to the IER. Later, she asked to look at her file, but faced considerable administrative hurdles to access the archive, in which one must already know about content's existence, rather than discovering new content through archival research (by definition, the purpose of an archive) (Slyomovics 27-34). El Bouih was disappointed to find her file did not contain any description of her activities as a young militant (the cause of her arrest) (Barrada Interview with Fatna El Bouih). In order to complete the archive's flawed file, she wrote her own account in *Une femme nommée Rachid* (engl. *A Woman Called Rachid*).

El Bouih's trajectory shows how the therapeutic journey yielded the greatest results when she went beyond the IER archives. She has since emerged as an important public actor. In a recent interview on 2M's influential show *Mais Encore*, she went over her trajectory from her arrest, prison life, and reintegration. El Bouih was arrested in 1978 as a 20-year-old for her involvement with the leftist group 23 Mars and spent 5 years in the infamous Moulay Derb Cherif prison in Casablanca. She explained how only a few women were imprisoned at the time which caused dis-

comfort for the male prison guards, who referred to her as “Rachid 35” rather than Fatna. She reminisces about the eight strong women who never divulged any information, even if it meant staying in prison, as opposed to their male counterparts. Her narrative of female resilience and subversion of the male-dominated repressive apparatus is absent from the more established Moroccan prison literature, which often depicts personal obliteration under torture.

El Bouih is a success story of reintegration and has established several civil society initiatives to help other former women prisoners in their transition. In the absence of more inclusive mechanisms or historiographies, unconventional prisoners are left out of the official narrative, the IER’s provisions, or the state’s institutional machinery. El Bouih’s case shows that the process of transforming archives into a new narrative remains dependent on carriers of memory themselves. A decade after its initial promise, the Commission’s results have been limited. The process is hampered by a rigid definition of past victims (military putschists and leftist militants) who spent years in jails and recovered their human existence thanks to the IER process (and the monarchy’s enlightened intervention), excluding from the

narrative those victims who have helped themselves. The Moroccan archive remains incomplete, and history’s therapeutic role is underwhelming for the wider community.

Algeria: Social Remembering Out of Amnesia

Since the 2005 Reconciliation Charter, Algeria has maintained peace. Algerians, however, have lived under a latent sense of social fragmentation and continued distrust for the authorities. Evidence suggests that the collective memory of the dark decade enhanced these social feelings.

Civil society objected to Bouteflika’s “civilian concord” for pursuing amnesty for Islamists and shielding the army from scrutiny while denying civilian suffering. Several associations of the families of victims, including *Djazairouna* through its founder Cherifa Kheddar, and the *Collectif des Familles de Disparu(e)s en Algérie* and its spokesperson Nassera Dutour, were very vocal and active in the initial years (Joffé 219-220). Dutour lost her 21-year-old son, who was “kidnapped on January 30 1997 by the police,” not knowing, ten years later, whether to want him alive in a prison or dead and at peace so she can mourn (Dutour 144-5). Algerians with questions like hers were

met with state refusal and urged to “forgive” for the nation’s sake (Dutour 146).

Despite the weakness and decay of Algerian NGOs (Liverani 47), Nassera Dutour gives voice to a silent majority within Algerian society. For the anthropologist Abderrahman Moussaoui, the wider problem lies with the disconnect between state’s conception of repentance and victimhood, and different groups’ collective memories. Moussaoui argues that the memory of the Civil War is “fragmented into various sides each claiming the status of victim”: the Islamists following their stolen election in 1991, and the political authorities who accuse unruly youth of failing to appreciate their sacrifices for independence, while the civilian population resent “terrorists” and the authorities for failing to protect them from massacres (Moussaoui 36). For Moussaoui, to “consolidate memories” would amount to “defining a new consensus [...] a consistent commemorative project and rebuild social ties” (Moussaoui 38, 61).

Due to a prevailing inertia in the country, Moussaoui’s call for a new historical narrative is unlikely to materialize. The Algerian ruling political class continues to embrace the historical myth of the Algerian war of independence and the memory of the glorious martyrs of 1954 to establish the

regime's legitimacy, unbothered by the fact that youth already rebelled against this paradigm during the Algiers riots of October 1988 (Evans, 102). In 2012, Algeria celebrated the 50th anniversary of its independence by doubling down on its historiographical importance as the founding and continual collective myth (Branche and Djerbal 162). Unfortunately, Algerian historians have failed to challenge the myth and offer revisionist and plural histories (Djerbal Personal Interview). There is little appetite to challenge the many taboos around the nineties, especially considering continued terrorism in the Algerian peripheries, such as the Ain Amenas attack (January 2013), or a fear over unleashing "monsters [from] the cupboard" (Mundy 145-50).

Talking and writing about the dark decade in Algeria still represents a significant red line, and society continues to struggle to live with its legacies. In July 2017, the French publication *Le Monde Diplomatique* published a harrowing article on Algeria "twenty years after the massacres" which was banned in the country. The journalist Pierre Daum traveled to the towns that suffered attacks and massacres during the Civil War. He spoke with Algerians who lost friends and family members, and his conversations were met

with a wall of silence, anger, or despair. Daum noted the increased religiosity among Algerians, even those whose family members were killed by Islamists. The urban and secular Algerians lament that "the Islamists lost the war but won the minds," and that religion here plays the role of a powerful, addictive "pain-killing drug," convenient for the authorities as it saves them the effort of a genuine collective therapy. Meanwhile, the imperatives of the present, made more difficult by soaring costs of living, youth unemployment, and political uncertainty continue to relegate the past to oblivion (Martinez and Rasmus 1-15).

Faced with the calcified politics of memory in Algeria, novelists and filmmakers have explored new forms to remember the dark decade. This new wave of production has emerged after the 2005 law and differs from its predecessors who viewed the Civil War as an abnormal and alien moment in the country's history, such as Merzak Allouache's movie *Bab el-Oued City* (1994), or the novels of Assia Djebar or Maïssa Bey, who, for Meryem Belkaid, wrote as a "refusal of denial, amnesia and falsification" (Belkaid 132). These fascinating productions still consider the Civil War as an abnormal event and write as a means to return to the "ordinary Algeria". Instead,

the following generation, who matured during the Civil War, possess a different memory.

Adlene Meddi provides a telling example in his novel 1994. Meddi, a journalist for *al-Watan*, wrote this book partly from his experience and interviews, and his novel has benefitted from important coverage and interest. It depicts the war and daily terrorism from the vantage point of four teenagers in East Algiers, in the run-up to their decision to form a secret commando unit to track and kill both Islamists and the police they accuse of terrorizing society.

The novel contains insightful descriptions of life around the regular attacks and manages to recreate an atmosphere where anyone is at risk of being mistaken for a guilty part by the security apparatus, the "srabess" (in spoken Algerian, from the French "service") who perform their security mission with impunity.

What sets this novel apart is its rapport toward the past: it is about the act of overcoming amnesia. Ten years later, two of the four friends, Amin and Sidali, look back at this period to understand how their present-day difficulties stem from events that took place in 1994. Their painful memories are layered and pushed down, only to unravel and drive them to the brink. Amin, the main protagonist,

breaks down when his military father passes away. His repressed feelings gush to the surface and send him into a violent spiral and psychological internment. Sidali, who languished in exile since 1994, returns to save his friends and reconnect with the past that led him to escape to France.

By describing the incidence of the past on the present, this novel uniquely resonates with Algerian readers. Meddi called it a “restitution of an atmosphere” rather than a factual account of events (Hamrouche, Interview with Adlene Meddi). The four teenagers were meant as “a metaphor for my generation [...] which I have felt was a wasted one in the process of production of Algeria”. Due to the destruction around them, when this generation was constructing themselves, they become “ill-adapted to life” (Hamrouche, Interview with Adlene Meddi). The novel envisages a positive resolution when Sidali finishes retelling the story of the murder and reaches an epiphany about the feelings of resentment from his generation’s Algerians. They blamed their parents, the “nationalist heros,” whose guiltless enjoyment during the sixties and seventies led to the events of the Civil War “without thinking about their children who would grow in their apocalypse” (Meddi 303-4, 315). Sidali, vis-

iting his victim’s grave from 1994, then breaks down in tears.

Cultural actors like Adlene Meddi can observe society and mobilize creative forms to show Algerian society in its struggles with unaddressed trauma. Compared to other productions on the Civil War, this novel explores the source of Algerian collective trauma, and envisages a resolution by portraying how individuals restore continuity and achieve personal closure. In sum, cultural productions have the potential to address the shortcomings of the official history, not only by offering a complementary testimony, but by revisiting the past and processing these memories. Unfortunately, Meddi’s novels and other cultural productions would need to branch out from their usual audiences, namely urban and secular Algerians, by being integrated into the state’s official history.

Conclusion

This article sought to answer the question of what happens to collective trauma after limited transitional justice experiences. Producing a historical discourse that merely acknowledges past violence has been insufficient to help Algerians and Moroccans achieve closure and national reconciliation. Each country adopted a specific and restrictive definition of the

victims who would benefit from reparations in Morocco or amnesty in Algeria, which obscured the collective suffering of communities during these two periods. A common national narrative cannot account for every citizen’s experience, but it must at least provide enough of a common narrative to allow individuals to reconcile themselves with the past they remember and send a powerful signal for an inclusive community.

Faced with the historical discourse’s limits, historians and cultural actors in both societies have been stifled by the contours of official historical narratives or official amnesia. They have occasionally experimented with hybrid forms, as was the case with the Moroccan *Zamane* magazine. However, the most successful efforts to excavate collective memory came from writers and filmmakers who could truly subvert the borders and content of official history, as Fatna El Bouih and Adlene Meddi’s works attest. In Algeria and Morocco, these examples foreshadow a growing desire for the acknowledgement of their experience as part of the country’s historical narrative, more than judicial punishment or financial compensation.

The key to “breaking the cycle of hatred” after political violence becomes possible

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when victims forego their claim to retribution (Minow 17). The Algerian and Moroccan decision-makers assumed that victims would forget and move on for the nation, yet the failure to integrate a more inclusive conception of trauma and memory has hollowed the two attempts for national reconciliation, which is symptomatic of how authoritarian regimes deal with their societies. Thinking ahead to current conflicts in the Arab world, including Libya, Syria, and Egypt, the North African transitional justice experience should give us pause (Fisher and Stewart 4; Sriram 6). Any serious and viable path toward post-conflict reconciliation should recognize that unaddressed or poorly constructed dominant historical narratives that are inconsistent with collective memories of this violence jeopardize national reconciliation. Therapeutic history, therefore, will only work if it is generous enough to be attached to most people's stories.

Notes

¹ Mohammed VI replaced his father Hassan II in 1999, and Abdelaziz Bouteflika was elected President during the Civil War with the powerful military's approval.

² The Algerian armed struggle lasted from 1954 to 1962 (McDougall 195) and the Moroccan campaign lasted from 1944 to 1956 (Miller 151-56).

³ "People who have committed or participated in crimes leading to death, collective massacres, explosive attacks in public spaces, and rape; article 7.

⁴ Presumably had ties to the armed insurrections of 1972-73 against the Moroccan regime, see Mehdi Bennouna's work.

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