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Justice, Not Triumph: A Social Psychological Reading of a Poetic Cycle on the Ellalan–Dutugemunu Legend

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Abstract
This paper addresses how poetic mourning can reshape collective memory in post-conflict Sri Lanka emphasizing on a poetic cycle that revisits the Ellalan–Dutugemunu legend. Argument is such that justice is not found in conquest but in restraint, grief, and ethical remembrance. Drawing on social psychology, cultural sociology, and transitional justice, the analysis shows how dominant narratives often silence moral complexity and emotional truth. The poems do not reject cultural pride. Rather they invite a deeper form of remembrance that honors both victor and vanquished equally. Poetic symbols like the jasmine, the bowl, and the flame, the poetic cycle offers a quiet pedagogy that encourages reflection, empathy, and humility. This interdisciplinary reading suggests that poetry can serve as counter-memory, holding pride and sorrow in ethical tension. Slight improvement on existing triumphalist education and nationalist myth making view can improve inclusiveness. The paper proposes that poetics can avoid social psychological problems with a more compassionate way of remembering. In doing so, they offer not a revision of history but a restoration of its moral resonance.

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1. Introduction

The way we tell stories about the past does more than just preserve history. They influence how communities see themselves, what justice is and who belongs. For most societies, these stories become part of the national identity, providing pride and continuity. But they can also neglect the voices that do not square with the dominant reading of events. Indeed, as James Wertsch writes, the collective memory of an event is likely to take on familiar contours that emphasize certain experiences while silencing others [6].

This dynamic reflects Serge Moscovici's theory of social representations, which explains how shared beliefs and symbols shape collective understanding and identity [19]. The legend of Dutugemunu becomes not just a historical account, but a socially constructed narrative that reinforces dominant group values.

The Ellalan–Dutugemunu legend holds a central place in southern Sri Lankan historiography and often proudly taught as a legend of righteous victory and cultural restoration. But if we listen more carefully, not only to what is taught, but also to what remains untaught? The poetic cycle explored in this paper does not reject the legend. rather it approaches it with restraint and care. symbolic imagery and moral ambiguity make the poems invite readers to reflect on how victory is remembered, who is excluded, and what truths may remain hidden.

This inquiry extends beyond literary analysis. It draws on social psychology to explore how group identity and moral reasoning shape collective memory, particularly in post-conflict settings where narratives of triumph can obscure ethical complexity [4].

Cultural sociology adds another layer, showing how memory is carried through ritual, symbol, and shared emotion, often reinforcing or resisting dominant historical scripts [5]. Transitional justice studies further illuminate how societies emerging from violence must grapple with plural histories, balancing the desire for unity with the need to acknowledge suffering and dissent [8, 9]. With Peate and Maystorovich Chulio arguements, post-violence transitions require not only legal mechanisms but also cultural and emotional shifts that allow societies to confront uncomfortable truths and reimagine justice beyond punitive models [10]. Their work highlights how criminological approaches can intersect with memory studies, offering tools to understand how silence, grief, and symbolic gestures contribute to ethical repair.

The poetic cycle becomes more than a literary artifact with these perspectives considered together. It becomes a site of moral inquiry, where silence and mourning challenge the logic of conquest. The poetic cycle does not challenge dominant narratives, the poems create space for ethical reflection.This research points that justice is not found in conquest, but in qualities of mourning, restraint, and ethical remembrance of portrayal of Ellalan. Interdisciplinary approach here is on poems not only as aesthetic expressions, but as contributions to a broader conversation about how societies remember, reconcile, and cope with.

Poetry allows for ambiguity, emotional resonance, and symbolic depth where prose cannot be sustained. Poetry creates capacity in evoking silence, mourning, and moral tensions makes it unique medium for exploring counter-memory. The poetic cycle does not argue; it invites. It does not resolve; it reflects. Poetry becomes both method and message, offering a gentle space for ethical imagination. Maxine Greene reminds us, aesthetic experience can open new ways of seeing and feeling, allowing individuals to break through the taken-for-granted and imagine more humane possibilities [23]. In the context of post-conflict memory, poetry does not simply express emotion. It becomes a way of knowing, one that invites readers to dwell in ambiguity and reflect with care. This paper adopts an interdisciplinary interpretive method, combining literary close reading with social psychological and transitional justice frameworks to examine how poetic symbolism re-frames collective memory. It explores rather than hypothesizing how poetic form can illuminate collective memory and moral reasoning in post-conflict contexts

These poetic interventions also raise questions about how history is taught, remembered, and emotionally internalized, especially in educational systems that privilege pride than pluralism. The poetic cycle gathers symbols of grief and quiet dignity to re-imagine the Ellalan–Dutugemunu legend, offering not a tale of conquest, but a memory shaped by restraint and ethical reflection.

This paper does not seek to diminish cultural pride, but to deepen its ethical foundations through inclusive remembrance. By re-framing the legend through mourning and moral ambiguity, the poetic cycle invites a more compassionate way of remembering.

2. Beneath the Lion's Flag: The Silence of the Victor

The lion's flag celebrated as a symbol of southern sovereignty and pride.

in these poems it is not presented as a banner of triumph also represents a veil that conceals more than it reveals. The poetic cycle invites to think beyond the surface of victory to what remains unspoken. The lion and its silence suggest a deeper tension, a moral unease between the pride of conquest and the cost it carries.

This silence reflects more than poetic restraint. It gestures toward a psychological discomfort that arises when collective memory celebrates success but overlooks suffering. As Páez and Liu explain, societies often remember victories in ways that affirm group identity while minimizing the ethical consequences of conflict [4]. Cultural sociology helps us see how symbols like flags can reinforce dominant narratives, even as they obscure emotional truths. The poem seems to question this imbalance. It asks whether the dignity of the fallen can truly be honored if it is never named.

Rather than offering judgment, the poem opens a space for reflection. poems invite than accusing and encourage readers to consider how history is told and whose voices are missing. Means they transform the lion's flag from a symbol of dominance into a symbol of quiet reckoning. The silence of the victor becomes a mirror, asking us to look more closely at the stories we raise and those we allow to fade.

3. The Jasmine Oath: Mourning as Moral Resistance

The jasmine in this poem is not simply a flower. It becomes a symbol of mourning, of quiet remembrance, and of ethical fidelity. The oath it represents is not sworn to power or conquest, but to dignity and compassion. Through this gesture, the poem honors Ellalan's legacy not by rewriting history, but by elevating the moral weight of memory.

The jasmine represents much wider meaning than a blossom inside the poem. It reminds of an emblem of grief, of hushed remembrance, and moral loyalty. It signifies neither triumph nor dominion, but to honor and empathy. In this quiet act, the poem pays tribute to Ellalan not by reshaping the past, but by lifting the ethical gravity of remembrance.

This act of remembrance carries its own kind of resistance. It does not confront dominant narratives with force. Instead, it offers an alternative rooted in empathy. As Cordonnier and colleagues suggest, collective memory is shaped not only by what is said, but by how it is felt and carried through ritual and symbol [5]. The jasmine, in this context, becomes a vessel for grief that refuses to be silenced.

From perspective of transitional justice, such symbolic mourning can be understood as a form of moral repair. It represents acknowledge harm without demanding retribution. Rather than correcting the historical record, the poem guides readers toward emotional truth. This turns the question into quiet remembrance, which could be inclusive without confrontation and mourning can be a form of justice. If this is the case, then the focus changes from heroic action to moral presence. The symbol jasmine does not bloom in triumph. It blooms in sorrow, and in that sorrow, it offers a path toward reconciliation.

4. The Bowl and Flame: Ritual and Reconciliation

This final poem turns away from narrative and toward ritual. The bowl and flame are not just symbolic objects. They become vessels of purification and shared grief. Together suggests that healing does not come from retelling the story of conquest, but from acknowledging the emotional weight that history carries.

The imagery evokes a kind of mourning that belongs to everyone. It does not divide victor from vanquished. Instead, it gathers both into a space of reflection. As Wagoner and Brescó have noted, memory shaped through ritual can offer a

path toward reconciliation, especially when it allows for ambiguity and emotional depth [7]. Herbert Blumer's symbolic interactionism offers a helpful lens here. Blumer suggests that meaning is not fixed in symbols themselves but emerges through the way people interact with them and interpret their significance [22]. In this poem, the bowl and flame do not simply represent sorrow but shared emotional language that invite readers to participate in a quiet ritual of remembrance. The flame does not celebrate. It burns gently, inviting those who remember to do so with humility. Ritual mourning reflects an emotional climate, a shared affective atmosphere with social memory and symbolic acts [16]. The bowl and flame do not merely represent grief; they embody a collective emotional register that invites reconciliation through humility and reflection.

This poem does not seek to resolve conflict through heroic gestures. It offers something quieter. The bowl holds sorrow without judgment. The flame illuminates without spectacle. suggesting that reconciliation may start not with pride, but with the willingness to shared grieve. This way, the poem becomes a ceremony, one that honors the complexity of history and the humanity of all who lived it.

5. Justice as the Hero: Memory, Emotion, and Ethical Reorientation

Many historical and post-conflict narratives, victory is often treated as proof of moral correctness.

The Ellalan–Dutugemunu legend, what traditionally told follows this pattern. Dutugemunu's triumph is remembered as a military success and restoration of cultural and religious order for many Sri Lankans. But the poetic cycle featured here offers a quieter perspective. It suggests that justice, rather than conquest, may be the true measure of moral integrity.

Social psychology helps us understand why this shift matters. When victory is celebrated through national or religious pride, it can lead to what scholars call ingroup moral licensing. This is a process where the dominant group justifies its actions based on outcomes, rather than ethical principles [4]. In such cases, the suffering of the defeated may be overlooked, and collective memory shaped to favor the victor's story. The poems resist this tendency. They center silence, mourning, and ritual as ways of remembering that do not close the conversation but open it. Jonathan Haidt's social intuitionist model deepens this insight by showing that moral judgment is often driven by intuitive emotional responses, with reasoning serving as post-conflict justification rather than ethical deliberation [20]. In this light, the silence surrounding Dutugemunu's triumph may not reflect a lack of moral awareness, but a collective emotional discomfort that resists rational scrutiny.

In Dutugemunu's triumph, the absence of mourning may trigger a suppressed guilt even temporarily, in a form of hesitation to confront the emotional toll that accompanies conquest. The poetic cycle gently surfaces this discomfort, not through accusation, but through symbolic mourning. The quiet flame and jasmine oath become vessels for grief that have long remained unspoken, offering a path toward ethical repair.

These dynamics may also reflect what social psychologists describe as motivated reasoning and cognitive dissonance, processes by which dominant groups justify morally ambiguous actions to preserve a coherent self-image [14, 15]. Daniel Bar-Tal's work on conflict narratives shows how societies often construct collective beliefs that justify past violence while shielding themselves from moral discomfort [24]. Then these beliefs become part of a shared identity, making it harder to confront ethical ambiguity or acknowledge the suffering of others. The poetic cycle resists this closure by offering symbols of grief and restraint, inviting readers to reflect rather than rationalize. In the context of conquest, such reasoning allows historical violence to be re-framed as cultural restoration, minimizing ethical discomfort while reinforcing group pride. Rather than reinforcing these justifications, the poetic cycle invites readers to confront their emotional cost and reflect on the moral tension they conceal.

This reframing echoes James Wertsch's idea of narrative templates, which guide how societies remember by privileging certain voices and excluding others [6]. Many historical accounts rely on binary oppositions, good versus evil, victory versus defeat. The poetic cycle challenges this structure. It does not name a hero in absolute terms. Instead, it honors Ellalan's moral dignity, not as a rival, but as a figure whose presence complicates the simplicity of conquest.

The poems also reflect concerns raised by McGrattan and Hopkins about how post-conflict societies navigate memory [8]. During process of building unity, justice is sometimes set aside. Memories that diverge from the main narrative may be softened, silenced, or forgotten during reconciliation. But transitional justice reminds us of the fact of coexisting multiple truths and requirement of space for discomfort for true healing. Jayadeva Uyangoda reminds us that reconciliation is a nonlinear process that requires societies to confront uncomfortable truths and make space for dissenting memories that challenge official histories [27]. Role of this poetic cycle responses with refusing closure and presenting mourning as a form of ethical engagement. Philosopher Michel Foucault [11] introduced the idea of counter-memory to describe ways of remembering that resist official histories by bringing forward voices that have been erased or marginalized which is quite the opposite of time may solve the unsolved attitude. Unlike official memory, which often serves institutional power, counter-memory seeks to reclaim silenced experiences and reframe the past through a more ethical and inclusive lens.

In this sense, counter-memory does not aim to erase dominant narratives.

Rather holds them in allowing grief, ethical tension and dignity to coexist with pride. Poetry inherits openness to ambiguity and emotional resonance, known to have the capacity to become a vessel for remembering. Thus, poetry can hold contradictions without resolving them, allowing readers to feel the weight of history. The poetic cycle functions as counter-memory not by rewriting events, but by rebalancing their emotional and moral significance. It does not offer a new version of history. It offers a way of remembering that center's mourning, compassion, and the quiet work of ethical reflection.

The possible questions raised by the poems, who defines victory? What could be remembered, and what could not? Could justice survive the weight of flags? They are not rhetorical. They invite reflection. It is natural to ask the question whether justice could be achieved through conquest, or must it be pursued through empathy, recognition, and restraint? But poetic series transcends mere literary response. It becomes a space for moral imagination, where justice, not triumph, is the guiding light. In this way, the poetic cycle also

engages narrative identity, inviting readers to reconstruct collective memory through ethical introspection and symbolic mourning [18]. Rather than recounting events, the poems reshape how history is emotionally and morally.

Table 1: Summarizes the symbolic, emotional, and ethical contrasts explored in the poetic cycle, illustrating how the poems rebalance historical memory through gestures of mourning, humility, and moral reflection

Element	Dutugamunu (Dominant Narrative)	Ellalan (Counter-Memory)
Symbolic Imagery	Lion's flag	Jasmine, bowl, flame
Emotional Register	Pride, sovereignty	Mourning, humility
Narrative Function	Victory, restoration	Ethical reflection
Psychological Insight	Ingroup moral licensing	Moral discomfort, empathy
Justice Framing	Triumph as moral proof	Mourning as moral repair

Beyond poetic reframing, these questions also challenge the way this legend has been taught. The following section offers a literary critique of how education has shaped public memory.

This reframing of justice through poetic mourning also invites us to reconsider how such legends are taught and emotionally internalized.

6. Ethical Memory and the Curriculum: A Literary and Pedagogical Critique

The following critique is offered not to reject cultural heritage, but to enrich it with ethical depth and to enrich remembrance with ethical depth and emotional truth. This approach invites reflection on how education can honor complexity without erasing cultural pride.

6.1. Biased Education and the Ethical Shadow of Ellalan

Sri Lankan education has, for generations, framed the legend of Ellalan-Dutugemunu as a story of righteous victory. Dutugemunu's triumph lies at the core of national pride. It is very common for school textbooks, public commemorations, and historical curricula to conform to such linearity. Dutugemunu is cast as the heroic restorer of Buddhist sovereignty, with Ellalan as his noble but as an invader. While the framing may be deeply cultural, it betrays a literary bias toward triumph over grief and power over ethical complexity.

This kind of storytelling tends to simplify what is deeply nuanced. It celebrates the lion's flag without asking what lies beneath it. It teaches victory as virtue, while leaving the sorrow of the vanquished unspoken. In doing so, it reflects what James Wertsch describes as a narrative template—a structure that repeats familiar patterns, affirming group identity while leaving dissenting memory behind. The result is an education shaped more by pride than by reflection.

In this poetic approach, Ellalan does not figure as a defeated king but as a moral presence. His legacy is shaped not by conquest, but by justice, restraint, and higher dignity. The poetic cycle explored in this paper lifts Ellalan through symbols of mourning such as the jasmine, the bowl, and the flame. Each one resists the spectacle of victory and invites quiet remembrance. These images do not seek to rewrite history. They seek to rebalance it. They ask whether ethical memory can take root in sorrow and whether justice can endure beneath the weight of flags.

In giving space to Ellalan, the poems do not reject Dutugemunu. They simply refuse to let conquest be the final word. They call for a more humane education, one that teaches not only who prevailed, but who grieved. One that remembers not only what was restored, but what was lost. Such a shift would honor both kings, not as opposites, but as participants in an ethical dialogue. Within that dialogue, Ellalan's quiet dignity may yet become a lesson worth teaching.

6.2. The Limits of Pride: Nationalism and Ethical Memory

National pride, in turn, when it gets institutionalized through education and public memory, often becomes a vehicle for exclusion rather than reflection. In the Sri Lankan context, this celebration of Dutugemunu's victory has been framed not only as a historical achievement but also as moral vindication of cultural and religious dominance. Such a conflation of pride with righteousness threatens to transform nationalism into a narrative of moral closure wherein conquest is equated with justice and dissenting voices are rendered invisible.

At the same time, social psychology cautions against such conflations. Unreflected pride in one's own group promotes moral licensing. The dominant group feels justified, its action necessitated by history well before any ethical judgment. Cultural sociology, furthermore, discloses how national symbols, rituals, and commemorations shore up such narratives, becoming invested in emotional registers resistant to critique. The lion's flag operates not only as a signifier of sovereignty but also as a screen occluding the grief of defeat. As Neloufer de Mel again points out, in Sri Lanka, nationalist narratives often rely on symbolic and gendered storytelling that reinforces dominant cultural identities while silencing the voices of dissent. She explains how literature and ritual produce a coherent national self at times with an ethical cost to plural memories. This poetic cycle is at odds with such tendency; it offers symbols of mourning and restraint that invite reflection rather than affirmation.

Literature, particularly poetry, provides a counterpoint. In this poetic approach no such rejection of pride is taken, but rather it questions the ethical cost of such pride. The poetic cycle analyzed herein resists nationalist triumphalism by foregrounding mourning, humility, and ethical ambiguity. True dignity, it suggests, is to be found not in jubilation over conquest but in the ability to grieve and remember ethically and in paying homage to those whose stories have been silenced. In this manner, the poems contest not merely the pedagogical but also the symbolic machinery of nationalism and invite a more inclusive and morally attuned form of collective memory.

6.3. The Problem of Over-Heroism and Divination

In the making of nationalist legend, the elevation of historical figures into heroic or quasi-divine status is more to do with ideological ends than ethical reflection. Dutugemunu has often been presented in Sri Lankan education and public memory as not only a victorious king but even a sanctified restorer of dharma. The danger here is that this complex historical figure will be transformed into a mythic ideal wherein moral ambiguity has been erased and conquest

sacralized.

Such heroism, when divinized, may distort collective memory. Further discourages critical inquiry into historical violence by framing it as spiritually ordained or culturally necessary. Social psychology warns that when leaders are idealized beyond reproach, their actions are no longer subject to ethical scrutiny. Instead, they become templates for national pride, immune to the discomfort of dissent. Cultural sociology further underlines that rituals and commemorations often reinforce this sanctification by embedding it in emotional registers that are resistant to reinterpretation.

Sasanka Perera's work on symbolic violence and public memory shows how commemorative practices can erase complexity and sanctify conquest [28]. In contrast, the poetic cycle avoids spectacle and sanctification. It offers quiet rituals of grief that resist the machinery of over-heroism and invite ethical reflection

This paper discusses a poetic cycle that resists such tendencies. It does not refuse Dutugemunu's historical significance yet simply declines to consecrate his victory. There is no justification via the gods in the poems, no spectacle of heroism. In its place, mourning, silence, and ethical ambiguity come into view. The defeated Ellalan is not diminished. His dignity is preserved, but through restraint, modesty, and grief, rather than myth. In this manner, the poetic cycle challenges the machinery of over-heroism and divination. It invites readers to look upon historical figures not as faultless icons but as moral agents whose legacies must be remembered with compassion, in complexity, and with care.

6.4. Educational Silencing of Ellalan's Legacy

Sri Lankan education has long privileged a triumphalist narrative of the Ellalan–Dutugemunu legend, casting Dutugemunu as the heroic restorer of Buddhist sovereignty while relegating Ellalan to the margins of historical memory. Miranda Fricker's concept of epistemic injustice helps make sense of this dynamic: Educational systems that privilege dominant voices and leave out morally salient perspectives like that of Ellalan deny the status of credible knower to certain groups, diminishing their capacity to contribute to and shape public understanding [21]. Silencing in such a manner is ethical, not historical, in its implications for how students learn to value dignity, restraint, and justice. Ellalan, even though he was historically respected even by his conqueror, is rarely presented as a figure of moral dignity or cultural consequence, his restraint, justice, and legacy of governance often reduced to a footnote beneath the arc of conquest.

Conventional teaching limits students' capacity for ethical reflection. History is taught as a binary of victors and vanquished rather than as a conversation between contending moral visions. Social psychology suggests that when educational systems promote pride of the ingroup while denying the humanity of the outgroup, they facilitate exclusionary identity development and suppress plural remembering. In not offering a balanced view of Ellalan, Sri Lankan education loses the opportunity to develop empathy, humility, and historical depth. This is no renunciation of cultural pride but an invitation toward deepening it with ethical tenderness. When the legacy of Ellalan is taught with much carefulness and attention, it is more than a historical detail-it serves as a quiet lesson in humility, a reminder that dignity can endure even in the shadow of defeat.

During her work in youth sociology and education, Harini Amarasuriya underlines the way in which post-conflict Sri Lankan youth stand between their inherited nationalist narratives and their own experiences of conflict and reconciliation[29]. These artifacts if not properly addressed lead to social biasing and wrong heroism as socio-economical turbulences shape. She suggests that education is playing a powerful role in shaping how young people engage with memory, often promoting pride over pluralism, and ignoring the affective complexity of the past. This poetic cycle offers another pedagogy altogether, as it puts students into reflective practice of mourning and imagining justice beyond the binary tropes of victory and defeat.

The poetic cycle also fosters what Roccas and Brewer call social identity complexity: the ability to maintain multiple, overlapping identities without reducing them to binary oppositions [12]. In honoring both Ellalan and Dutugemunu as moral agents, poems resist reductive heroism and open up a sense of belonging qualified by nuance. Such complexity cultivates empathy, enabling educational narratives to transcend the register of pride and to come closer to ethical pluralism. Martha Nussbaum reminds us, poetry nurtures empathic imagination, which grants readers access to plural perspectives and enables moral reflection [13]. In this way, poetic mourning is not just a literary gesture but also a quiet form of reconciliation undergirded by emotional comprehension.

The poetic rise in Ellalan's restraint and justice may also evoke what moral psychologists call moral elevation, an emotional uplift inspired by witnessing virtuous behavior across group boundaries [17]. The emotional response encourages admiration and ethical reflection that challenges nationalist narratives which glorify conquest.

This paper discusses the poetic cycle that restores Ellalan's presence, but not by way of revisionism; rather, it does so through ethical remembrance. It does not rewrite the legend; it rebalances its moral weight. Using symbols of mourning and restraint, the poems invite educators to reconsider and arrange how dignity, grief, and moral ambiguity might enrich the ways in which history is taught. This is not an unrealistic goal in pedagogy, meaning that teachings are to be inclusive, honors complexity and cultivate compassion.

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7. Conclusion: Toward a Just Memory

This poetic cycle does not attempt to rewrite history. It seeks instead to rebalance its moral weight. By lifting up justice rather than triumph, mourning rather than pride, and silence rather than spectacle, the poems invite a more inclusive way of remembering. They do not erase the legend of Dutugemunu. They ask us to hold it alongside the dignity of

Ellalan and to reflect on what it means to remember with compassion.

In societies where dominant narratives, gestures often shape public memory. They remind us that sovereignty is not solely about power. But also, how we honor the past, how we listen to those who were silenced, and how we carry grief without turning away. Without listening back, we may repeat karmic mistakes. These poems do not offer closure, they offer care. This way we can avoid repeating same mistakes.

This is not a call to abandon history. It is a call to deepen it. When we remember with empathy, we make space for justice to enter. And when justice becomes the measure of memory, we begin to move toward a future that is not only unified but also humane. John Paul Lederach describes moral imagination as the ability to hold complexity, to see beyond divisions, and to envision reconciliation through empathy and creativity [25]. The poetic cycle reflects this spirit. It does not demand agreement. It invites understanding. In its quiet gestures of mourning, it opens a path toward peace that begins not with pride, but with care.

While this paper critiques dominant narratives, it does so with care. It centers mourning over victory, questions sacred symbols like the lion's flag, and examines how educational and ritual practices shape memory. Yet its tone remains gentle, its method interdisciplinary, and its purpose rooted in ethical inclusion rather than ideological confrontation. The poetic cycle does not replace one hero with another. It restores dignity to those whose stories have been overshadowed.

Poems themselves do not ask readers to pick sides. What they do is direct the reader to listen more deeply, remember more ethically and teach more compassionately. They do not offer revision of history, but a restoration of its moral resonance. In the hush between conquest and compassion, these poems do not offer answers, but a form of listening. To clarify the interdisciplinary scope of this inquiry, the following checklist summarizes the key social psychological concepts integrated throughout the manuscript.

- ☐ Collective Memory as Social Representation
- ☐ Narrative Templates (Wertsch)
- ☐ Ingroup Moral Licensing
- ☐ Moral Injury and Collective Guilt
- ☐ Emotional Transmission via Symbolic Mourning
- ☐ Post-Conflict Identity and Memory Integration
- ☐ Social Identity Complexity (Roccas & Brewer)
- ☐ Intergroup Empathy and Perspective-Taking

Fig 1: Social Psychological Foundations of Justice, Empathy, and Remembrance.

The poetic cycle also fosters what social psychologists describe as inter-group empathy and perspective-taking. Capacity building of emotional connection with those outside one's own group and to imagine their experiences with compassion. Mourning both victor and vanquished, the poems slowly invite readers to step beyond binary identities and into a shared space of ethical reflection. It is the act of poetic mourning that makes a quiet reconciliation, one that does not demand agreement, but encourages understanding. These poems do not ask for allegiance. but for listening. In the quiet flame held within the bowl of memory, we find not triumph, but tenderness. It is there that the soft light of mourning where justice begins to breathe.

These poems do not ask for allegiance. but for listening. In the quiet flame held within the bowl of memory, we find not triumph, but tenderness. It is there that the soft light of mourning where justice begins to breathe.

Ending with ethical question, can a nation remember with both pride and grief? The flame burns quietly, asking us to try.

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