



Brahim El Guabli.- *Moroccan Other-Archives: History and Citizenship after State Violence* (New York: Fordhan University Press, 2023), 288 p.

Brahim El Guabli's monograph *Moroccan Other-Archives: History and Citizenship after State Violence* is an audacious attempt to rewrite and undo post-independence Morocco's history with its various silences and elisions because influential scholars kept an "astounding distance" from such issues. The book culls from cultural production of the Years of Lead in post-independence Morocco during the reign of King Hassan II (1956-1998). These four decades were characterized by a traumatic history of enforced disappearance, repression, loss, silence, and arbitrary detention. El Guabli deploys loss as a conceptual framework to think about the historiographical implications of the forceful cultural resurgence of nationalist figures, Sahrawi nationalists, communists, Liberation Army leaders, Amazigh activists, Communist Jews, *inter alia*. During this roughly four-decade period, these targeted groups, who were regarded by the regime as a source of challenge and threat, underwent all aspects of torture and violence: some "disappeared" and lost; some were assassinated; some were imprisoned for decades; others were simply executed.

These Years of Lead, which have great impact on people, space, and culture, would be later regarded by Amnesty International as a dark chapter in the post-independence Moroccan history because of their violations of human rights. The enthronement of Mohammed VI in 1999 began with a process of reconciliation and truth to determine victims' and survivors' financial reparations by the establishment of Equity and Reconciliation Commission (ERC), *Hay'at al-inṣāf wa-al-muṣālaḥa*, in 2004, the purpose of which was to contribute to the "construction of a state based on the rule of law, and to spread the values and culture of citizenship and human rights" (4) so that these violations will not happen again. By doing so, the ERC aimed at strengthening, national unity, reinforcing national identity and enshrining cultural pluralism. According to El Guabli, absence and disappearance are two principal themes and denominators that tied Imazighens, Jews and political prisoners in post-independence Morocco. In this context, as one of the children of the Years of Lead, whose main feature is a stark scarcity or complete non-existence of documentation, and by unsilencing these three categories, El Guabli cogently proposes a new historiography of Morocco, which is deeply rooted in what he names "other-archive."

Morocco witnessed two *coups d'état*, one in 1971 and the other in 1972, which led to the creation of Tazmamart, the eponymous notorious prison camp as the quintessence of human rights violations during the Years of Lead. Of forcibly disappeared prisoners, only twenty-eight survived in the secret prison; these survivors and victim-actors created a dynamic testimonial prison literature albeit the state tried to erase them and denied their existence. For El Guabli, the other-archives take different forms: they could be "texts, artifacts, alphabets, embodied experiences, toponymies, and inherited memories" (1). Documenting, commenting on, and recording in accessible forms the acts of those in power that formed the core of the collective traumas, Moroccan cultural producers have instituted an other-archive which contests both silence and hegemony; they "articulate

individual and collective traumas and democratize access to multiple histories of the Moroccan nation” (15).

Entitled “(Re)Invented Tradition and the Performance of Amazigh Other-Archives in Public Life,” the first chapter highlights an Amazigh-centric other-archive of Amazigh citizenship. This chapter brings into sharper focus state historiographical and archival silence of Amazigh identity for almost fifty years between 1956 and 2001, exploring how *al-Jam ‘iyya al-Maghribiyya li- al-Baḥṭh wa- al-Tabādul al-Thaqāfi* (*Moroccan Association for Research and Cultural Exchange*), AMREC) resisted these silences and repressions. Besides, Brahim Akhiyyat, AMREC’s founder and president, has coined the phrase *al-nahḍa al- amāzighiyya* (Amazigh renaissance) to “describe the multidimensional ‘deep cultural revolution’ that led to the revival of Amazigh language and culture” (29). MACM’s drawn-out journey toward the rehabilitation of Morocco’s Amazigh identity culminated in King Mohammed VI’s establishment of the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture (RIAC) in 2001. Amazigh activists as members of RIAC have done their best to destabilize these silences, and their efforts crowned in the standardization of Tifinagh alphabet script and the ubiquity of its use in the public sphere along with Arabic and French as a device to re-Amazighize Morocco’s history. The addition of Tifinagh has created a “visual dissonance” in the Moroccan public space, reflecting the “impoverishing impact the repression of Amazigh language and culture has had on Moroccan society” (54).

In addition to the Amazigh other-archive, chapter two and three depict Jewish-Muslim Morocco which is characterized by both loss and absence as the Years of Lead witnessed the emigration of Moroccan Jews. Chapter two delves into what El Guabli dubs mnemonic literature (*al- kitāba al- dākhirātiyya*), as both a medium of remembering, reimagining and other-archiving the post-colonial Jewish past in Morocco. “Mnemonic literature,” El Guabli confirms, comes to light out of an urgent need to broach on what he calls “the forbidden zone.” This type of literature “draws on memory,” and “addresses loss and creates conditions for the recovery of insufficiently documented pasts and [...] account[s] for severed relationships” (64). A variety of novels written in Arabic and French by Muslim novelists cull from inherited memories to reimagine Morocco with its Jews. These novels fictionalize microhistories of place and space of Jewish Morocco such as bars, cafés, neighborhoods, and the mellah or the Jewish quarters, as sites and loci of Judeo-Muslim coexistence and memory formation.

Chapter three, entitled “Jewish Intimacy and the History of a Lost Citizenship,” continues to probe into the mnemonic literature with a focus on the representations of Jewish-Muslim solidarity, intimacy and a history of a lost community-based citizenship through a series of novels. This type of intimacy between Muslims and Jews grew intermittent and discontinuous; the establishment of Israel in 1948 pushed more than 200,000 Moroccan Jews to emigrate to Israel between 1956 and 1967. El Guabli demonstrates that although the one-time intimates, both Jews and Muslims, are “separated by decades of spatial and temporal distance,” the producers of mnemonic literature “belatedly recuperate, revive, and inscribe into fictionalized histories of the nation that would have been created had Jews not been let go” (93).

The third category whom El Guabli accentuates their archive is political prisoners who underwent all aspects of torture as well as forcible disappearance during the Years of Lead. The author deploys testimonial prison literature about Tazmamart’s eponymous jail to theorize how *scandalous*, *embodied*, and *fictionalized* other-archives have arisen

from the disappearance of fifty-eight soldiers to this prison in 1973. The writings about Tazmamart are divided into three main other-archives. Coinciding with the official denial of Tazmamart's existence between 1973 and 1990, the *scandalous* other-archives, which were written in French and which were created by a group of Paris-based human rights activists and journalists, aimed to globally debunk and stigmatize the Moroccan state of its violation of human rights and political prisoners' enforced disappearance. The second analytical prong El Guabli develops is the *embodied* other-archives which witnessed efflorescence between 1999 and 2014. During this period, survivors wrote their memoirs and testimonial accounts of their survival of enforced disappearance. The last category of Tazmamart other-archives is the *fictionalized* other-archive, which refers to the "literary appropriation and reimagination of both scandalous and embodied other- archives" in both Moroccan and foreign languages and by both Moroccan and foreign authors (133).

The proliferation of other-archives have prompted Moroccan cultural producers and academic historians to (re)write Morocco's postcolonial history. Moroccan academic historians deploy the concept of *tārīkh al-zaman al-rāhin* (history of the Temps Present) to bring new ways of reading Moroccan history in an attempt to reflect on and challenge current historiographical production and probe into methodological questions related to the writing of a history immersed in trauma, testimony, and memory.

Moroccan Other-Archives has tackled the ways in which Morocco's post-colonial history has been reclaimed and written by Moroccan cultural producers despite the lack of an official archive until 2011. The book accentuates the thesis how Moroccan cultural production has become an other-archive. It also re-imagines both archives and the nation in post-independence Morocco. Moroccan cultural creators, by producing other-archives, have managed to bring to sharper focus the losses, repressions, tortures the state violence wreaked upon society during the Years of Lead. Loss has triggered cultural creators and producers to re-claim their historiographical agency and give the voice to the silenced. El Guabli's *Moroccan Other-Archives* will be a spur for specialists and cultural producers in the nation's politics, culture, literature and history, and for civic engagement and historiographical agency.

Lahoucine Aammari,
Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University,
Dhar El Mahraz, Fez, Morocco