

**Agonistic Memory in France's Cité
Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration**

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Submitted to
Central European University
Department of International Relations and European Studies

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters or Arts

Supervisor: Professor Thomas Fetzner
Word Count: 17, 233

Budapest, Hungary
2016

Abstract

This piece of research situates itself within a significant and timely Setting the Debate intersection made between memory and migration, and thus takes issue with the presumed interdependence of the memory community and the nation state in today's multicultural and globalized society. I begin by reflecting on what I see as problematic in privileging a sense of placement, settlement or consensus of memory by addressing the added purchase of agonism, a political theory that acknowledges the conflictual nature of social life and emphasizes the potentially positive aspects of certain discords. Taking up a case study of France's immigration museum La Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, my project reflects on how the memory of migration and colonialism in France need not privilege the rigid boundaries of the nation state, and as such reconsiders existing debates on migration museums deemed homogenizing, harmonizing or re-affirming the nation. As such, my final research question is in exploratory one; inquiring as to what paradigm drives this institution. This will be substantiated by addressing different considerations of ritual which I feel are relevant and suggestive through engagement with the appropriation of agonism, and the museum case at hand; most notably in respect to mimicry and satire. Analyzing the exhibitory material, conducting interviews and reflecting on the debates surrounding the institution, my considerations will lead me to argue that the pattern unearthed in the CNHI is not one of rearticulating a national master narrative through incorporation of migration, but one of critical reflection, discussion and plurality; of agonism.

Acknowledgements

My sincerest gratitude goes to all those who made this thesis, and indeed this year possible by contributing their support, advice and encouragement. I would like to thank the CEU International Relations Department for the diverse and enriching program that introduced me to authors, ideas and professors that inspired my work and brought this project to life. The process of writing this thesis, and indeed this academic year has been a precious learning experience for me, and continues to be so. I especially thank Professor Thomas Fetzner for his continued support of my project, reading drafts and offering invaluable guidance. I also remain indebted to my Academic Writing Professor Malgorzata Kruszewska whose insightful contributions helped me articulate my thoughts. I extend *un grand remerciement* to the Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration and all the staff members who took the time to speak to me and support my research period.

On a personal note, I could not have made it through this challenging yet wonderful year without the love and support of my family and friends who have always believed in me even when I did not. Last but by no means least, it has been a thorough pleasure to share this CEU experience with a group of such inspiring, bright and supportive individuals, many of whom have become dear friends and given me memories I will cherish for years to come.

“Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous.”

-Confucius

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Introduction

Setting the Debate

In Nora's seminal compilation, he described a *lieu de mémoire* as "any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community (in this case, the *French* community)."¹ However, the presumed interdependence of the memory community and geographical proximity tied to the nation state is inherently problematic in today's multicultural and globalized society. By way of critique to Nora, Noiriel stated that migration featured in *lieux de mémoire* only by its exclusion.² My nuanced critique looks not to the absence of migration; but its permeation into certain spaces that allow for a number of overlapping communities of memory that may coexist beyond the confines of the national framework, both geographical and symbolic. As such, this thesis takes up a case study of France's immigration museum, the Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, (CNHI) and reflects on how the memory of migration and colonialism in France need not privilege the rigid boundaries of the nation state. This will be substantiated by engaging with a conceptual framework that I feel is relevant for the case at hand in order to capture how the memory of migration can be viewed as 'agonistic'³. I will begin by reflecting on what I see as problematic in privileging a sense of placement, settlement or consensus of memory by addressing the added purchase of agonistic plurality within existing debates in the literature on collective memory relating to migration. This will be done by addressing different considerations of ritual which I feel are relevant and suggestive through engagement with the museum case at hand; most notably in respect to mimicry and satire. My reflections will lead me to argue that the

¹ Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de Memoire*, Bibliotheque Illustree Des Histoires ([Paris] : Gallimard, c1984-c1986, n.d.). xvii, emphasis mine.

² Gerard Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot : Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity*, Contradictions of Modernity: V. 5 (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1996, n.d.). xxi

³ Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London : Verso, 2000, n.d.).

paradigm presented in the CNHI is not one of rearticulating a national master narrative through incorporation of migration, but one of critical reflection and plurality; of agonism. I hope that this serve not merely as a heuristic exercise, yet also allow a contributory reflection on how the narratives on collective memory can point to a space of negotiation between rejection and acceptance of a harmonious '*grand récit*', and allow a more positive and cohesive approach than antagonistic or harmonizing commemorative practices provide.

Background

This thesis situates itself within a significant and timely intersection made between memory and migration, both as academic disciplines and policy areas recognizing the importance of history and memories for the incorporation of migrants.⁴ Glynn and Kleist's recent work analyses this intersection, questioning how to reconcile differences within society in terms of an ethnically heterogeneous reality, whilst sustaining national integrity.⁵ This is pertinent when analyzing the French case, a nation that has historically seen minority languages and cultures "lose ground to the cultural norms of the aristocratic and bourgeois elite," and where Noiriel noted migration featured in collective memory only by its exclusion.⁶ As such, my research project will be an exploratory engagement with the CNHI to see how the claim to recognizing, collecting and protecting experiences of diverse immigrant populations in French society is developed within a nationally sanctioned institution.

My position deviates from much scholarship on collective memory; where migrant memories were either totally disregarded by the likes of Nora, emerged as 'counter memories' clashing with homogenous memories associated with national identity⁷, or would incite "animosity

⁴ Irial Glynn and J. Olaf Kleist, eds., *History, Memory and Migration* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 38

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot*, xxi

⁷ Aleida Assman 'Memory, Individual and Collective', in Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 210-224. 215

directed against minorities by still un-healed wounds arising from trauma (of decolonization).”⁸ Rather, in tandem to Baussant’s recent compilation addressing the social processes within the disciplines of memory and migration, I advocate for the existence of ‘multiple pasts’, in which migrant memories “mirror the diversity in multicultural societies like France more comprehensively.”⁹ By analyzing the museum, I propose to contribute to examining how bringing “memories of migrants and the former colonized into the heartland have helped inform major debates over multiculturalism,”¹⁰ and can continue to do so.

Debate on Migration Museums

One advancement in the intersection between migration and memory has found its footing in the establishment of migration museums, which for Baur is one of the most dynamic movements in museology,¹¹ and was termed by Anderson a ‘paradigm shift’.¹² Looking at migration museums in Australia, Canada and the US, Baur uncovered commonalities in a turn towards more ‘popular’ museums¹³ which coincided with an appreciation for social history after the 1970s, addressing social relations, inequalities and marginalization. A similar position was taken by Sutherland, who saw a ‘new museology’ diverging from the traditional view of museums as elitist “inward looking repositories of objects and knowledge,” and rather as institutions that serves their communities.¹⁴ With the rediscovery of cultural heritage advancing “identity politics of ethnic groups and the concept of a cultural melting pot;”¹⁵ it is not surprising that a reassessment of identity politics, memory and cultural heritage would take place in the museum space; described

⁸ Joshua Cole et al., *Memory, Empire, and Postcolonialism: Legacies of French Colonialism*, ed. Alec Hargreaves (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2005). 195

⁹ Michèle Baussant Irène Dos Santos, Evelyne Ribert, Isabelle Rivoal *Migrations humaines et mises en récit mémorielles, Approches croisées en anthropologie et préhistoire*, (Paris, Presses Universitaires de Paris Ouest, 2015) 32

¹⁰ Diana Oscherwitz, ‘Decolonizing the Past’ in Cole et al., *Memory, Empire, and Postcolonialism*. 39

¹¹ Joachim Baur, ‘Imagining a Community of Immigrants. Ré-Visions des Nations dans les Musées d’Immigration des Etats-Unis, du Canada et de l’Australie,’ in: Laure Teulière, Sylvie Toux (Hg.), *Migrations, Mémoires, Musées*, Toulouse 2008, S. 15-30. 19

¹² Gill Anderson (ed.) *Reinventing the Museum. Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, Walnut Creek, Altamira Press, 2004. 1

¹³ Baur, ‘Imagining a Community’, 17

¹⁴ Sutherland C. (2014) “Leaving and longing. Migration museums as nation-building sites” *Museum & Society*, July. 12(1) 118-131, 120

¹⁵ Baur, ‘Imagining a Community,’ 19

by Baur as “a theatre for the production and communication of self-portraits and sketches of identity.”¹⁶

Nevertheless, this identity sketching led Baur, among others,¹⁷ to see the inherent danger in migration museums drafting “a definition of multiculturalism as an expression of national identity.”¹⁸ Attempting to destabilize the concept of the nation by ‘revising’ it to encompass immigrants paradoxically runs the risk of revitalizing it by encompassing migration into a *harmonious whole*.¹⁹ He saw this most prominently in the Ellis Island museum; where “privileging the national perspective, the whole immigration process is implicitly reduced to the process of becoming American;”²⁰ most notably in the omnipresent metaphors of ‘funnel myth’, ‘gateway’ or other allusions to the idea of transformation.²¹ This macro-historical approach that Baur and Sutherland found problematic not only favors a force of integration that might be implausible or misguided; yet also risks projecting an anonymous or abstract attitude that brushes aside personal circumstances and differences; religious, regional or otherwise.²² Further unease was expressed in the three cases of the US, Canada and Australia regarding minimal reference to immigration as a contemporary issue; against the aims of such museum’s to foster social cohesion *today*. Immigration museums have been judged for their tendency to glorify immigrants for their “perseverance, individualism and strengths;”²³ to present a romanticized picture of immigration, or gloss over the often traumatic aspects of migration and memory, and the potential of conflict or wickedness.²⁴

Taking the example of immigration museums, it is clear that certain advances between memory and migration have conflated this intersection with a nation-building project, that still

¹⁶ Baur, ‘Imagining a Community,’ 20

¹⁷ For example, Sutherland C. (2014) “Leaving and longing.” 43.

¹⁸ Baur, ‘Imagining a Community,’ 20

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ “J. Baur, Commemorating Immigration in the Immigrant Society. Narratives of Transformation at Ellis Island and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum,” accessed May 19, 2016, https://www.academia.edu/3725642/J._Baur_Commemorating_Immigration_in_the_Immigrant_Society._Narratives_of_Transformation_at_Ellis_Island_and_the_Lower_East_Side_Tenement_Museum. 132, 137-138

²¹ Ibid; 132, 137-138

²² Sutherland, “Leaving and longing.” 120

²³ Baur, Commemorating Immigration in the Immigrant Society.”132, 137-138

²⁴ Ibid; 140

“presses this multiculturalism in an exclusively national framework,”²⁵ to ultimately “incorporate the foreign.”²⁶ Focusing on integration also risks the presumption that migrants necessarily lose part of their memory or identity on arrival in the new country²⁷ and by way of accommodation to a harmonious whole. I will not assume then, as Huyssens has arguably done in analysis of ‘diasporic memory’ that migrant memories can represent a common and cohesive past, or some assimilable totality;²⁸ and wish to develop my thesis in challenge to such a position.

France’s Immigration Museum

Still, Glynn and Kleist noted that in Europe, where “national histories and memories were considered the cornerstone of social belonging,” fundamental issues relating to belonging and societal identification for migrants were marginalized.²⁹ Thus, immigration museums proved controversial or threatening to national identities, facing multiple delays and debate across the political spectrum.³⁰ This was exemplified in the CNHI, which despite being conceived in the late 1990s, was not opened until 2007. The laudable aims of the French museum to forge social cohesion and solidify the social contract have however still been viewed as mapping an all-inclusive or assimilationist project that still tries to filter migration through “white or European-constructed perspectives” that take national boundaries for granted; thus reinforcing them.³¹ Further, the choice of the building in 1931 Colonial Exhibition’s former Museum of the Colonies has incited assessments of silencing and political forgetfulness, conflating colonialism with immigration and forwarding a romanticized “melting pot identity whilst simultaneously evading postcolonial

²⁵ Ibid; 133

²⁶ Welsch, Wolfgang (1999) “Transculturality; The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,” in Featherstone, Mike; Scott Lash (eds.): *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. by Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash, London: Sage 1999, 194–213. 201

²⁷ Anselm Strauss: “Mirrors and Masks: The Search for Identity. By Anselm Strauss. Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1959. Accessed May 19, 2016, <http://sf.oxfordjournals.org/content/39/1/95.extract>. 186

²⁸ Huyssen, A. *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003) 15

²⁹ Glynn and Kleist, *History, Memory and Migration*, 38

³⁰ Christopher Whitehead, Katherine Lloyd, and Rhiannon Mason, *Museums, Migration and Identity in Europe: Peoples, Places and Identities* (Routledge, 2016).

³¹ Meza Torres, ‘The Museumization of Migration in Paris and Berlin and Debates on Representation’, in *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* IX, 4, Fall 2011. 18

realities.”³² Socio-political debates such as the resignation of seven of its advisory members in 2007 in protest to the creation of Sarkozy’s proposed Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Development, also questioned the official agenda of the museum.³³ The irony in how “the long delay over opening such a museum has led it to become embroiled in current affairs to an extent never anticipated by its initiators” was not disregarded.³⁴

As with Ellis Island, the lack of emphasis on individual trajectories and their diversity has also been deemed in the CNHI as homogenizing the general experiences of all immigrants without distinction.³⁵ This shows how Baur’s reflections above regarding the US, Canada and Australia cannot be thoughtlessly discarded for debate on the French site, where issue has also been taken regarding how knowledge produced by the institution is not articulated by individuals and migrant associations, but national representatives.³⁶ Alongside the lack of official inauguration by the museum, this didn’t help dispel skepticism over the “attractiveness of the museum solution” as a control strategy³⁷ that failed to respond to divergent demands among groups. Such demands reflect the problem of defining immigration within the French model; as a historical process or social question, to be represented through identity papers or individual experience, or indeed as mediating between “those who wouldn’t want to be melded into the category of immigrants”...versus those claiming their belonging to France and its (colonial) difficulties.³⁸ On balance, Green acknowledged that such ambiguities also reflect how “immigration historians in France do not themselves always agree to the weight of a ‘French model’ of integration versus the

³² Mary Stevens; ‘Immigrants into Citizens: Ideology and Nation-Building in the *Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration*’, *Museological Review* 13 (2008): 57-73. 67

³³ Aurore Chéry “La Cité Nationale de l’Histoire de l’Immigration : Une Réflexion Sur Ses Cinq Premières Années D’existence | Contretemps,” accessed May 18, 2016, <http://www.contretemps.eu/culture/cit%C3%A9-nationale-histoire-immigration-r%C3%A9flexion-sur-ses-cinq-premi%C3%A8res-ann%C3%A9es-existence>.

³⁴ Green “A French Ellis Island?” 247

³⁵ Sophia Labadi, “The National Museum of Immigration History (Paris, France), Neo-Colonialist Representations, Silencing, and Re-Appropriation,” *Journal of Social Archaeology*, September 20, 2013, 1469605313501582, doi:10.1177/1469605313501582. 8

³⁶ Stevens; ‘Immigrants into Citizens’ 71

³⁷ Ibid, 63

³⁸ Green, “A French Ellis Island?” 246

representation of cultural diversity.”³⁹ Further, Sutherland’s insight into how European colonial migration disrupts the dichotomy of national/foreigner⁴⁰ is also suggestive of more room for multivocality than in settler formations like the US, and indicates differences not to be disregarded.

In sum, substantial commentary on the CNHI advocated for increased engagement with migrant groups, introspection, and ongoing flexibility within an institution that does not yet abandon nationalistic tendencies and meet the “modern, inclusive and accessible cultural space envisioned for Paris in the post-May 1968 era.”⁴¹ In Hablwachian terms however; the museum’s broader *cadre*, which sees memory existing not in a vacuum but as part of a larger socio-political milieu, demonstrates how the institution’s societal significance remains fluid, and susceptible to continuous reassessment regarding its missions and worth in civil society. Therefore, in spite of acknowledging the purchase of the considerations by the likes of Baur, Stevens and Green above, my empirical engagement presents a different reading; in which references to integration are actually few, and the paradigm of the museum does not adjure to a process of ‘becoming French’ but rather ‘being in France.’ In the new paradigm of museums, Sandel saw a ‘model of social inclusion’⁴² that fosters social harmony. I develop my thesis adjusting to what I see as a model of dialogue and social critique; a means of diffusing tensions and creating a ‘platform for ‘dissonant heritages’⁴³ where disparate memories might circumvent, in virtue of; not in spite of their differences. My aim through engaging with the above debates is to offer my own conceptual reflections in contribution to filling the lacuna between memory and migration, shedding light on how migration within the context of the CNHI, as opposed to fusing within a nation-building

³⁹ Ibid; 244

⁴⁰ Sutherland, “Leaving and Longing” 120

⁴¹ Carol Ann Dixon, “Decolonising the Museum: Cité Nationale de l’Histoire de l’Immigration,” *Race & Class* 53, no. 4 (April 1, 2012): 78–86, doi:10.1177/0306396811433115. 75

⁴² Richard Sandel *Museums, Prejudice and the Reframing of Difference*, (Abingdon, Routledge, 2007) 29

⁴³ Ibid; 21

project, “combines the national past with a transnational perspective which creates opportunities”⁴⁴.

Research Question

I continue by emphasizing the prevalent role that migration can play in memory studies and vice versa; not by integrating migrant memories into national narratives, but by their appreciation as co-existing narratives in their own right and to incite critical reflection on migration and multiculturalism in contemporary society, and the memory thereof.⁴⁵ As such, my final research question is in exploratory one; inquiring as to what paradigm drives the CNHI. I will also explore to what extent my preliminary suggestions of the critical patterns within the CNHI, and this will be substantiated both through a forthcoming conceptualization and empirical analysis.

Methodological Considerations

I adopted an exploratory approach to my research; visiting the museum to analyze the exhibitory material and conduct semi-structured interviews with museum staff. I also mobilized secondary material including newspaper articles and online content, along with my own reflections. I approached my content as “artefacts of social communication;”⁴⁶ aiming to uncover patterns relating to culture, the museum’s appropriation and sociocultural import among various actors; as well as how such factors have developed since the museum’s opening. The advantage of using both interview and content analysis in my methodology is that I engaged with actors directly involved in the museum, yet also employed “unobtrusive measures in which neither the sender nor receiver of the message is aware that it is being analysed;”⁴⁷ a distancing that allowed me to

⁴⁴ Glynn and Kleist; *History Memory and Migration*, 48

⁴⁵ Oscherwitz ‘Decolonizing the Past’ 39

⁴⁶ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis : An Introduction to Its Methodology*, The Sage Commtext Series: 5 (Beverly Hills : Sage Publications, c1980., n.d.). 74-76

⁴⁷ Webb, E.J., Campbell, D. T., Schwartz, R.D., and Sechrist, L. (1981) *Nonreactive measures in the Social Sciences*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 43

pin down patterns unobserved as they emerged from the research, and pick apart individual elements.

Nevertheless, given time constraints and ethical considerations, I was not able to include participant observation in my analysis, for example among school groups. To follow Krippendorff, as the perspective of the actors involved can never truly be observed, my approach assessed indicators as opposed to quantitative measurements.⁴⁸ My interviews were conducted in French, and all transcriptions and secondary material originally in French were translated myself. I took extensive notes and photos during my visit which I referred back to regularly for checking, translating and articulating my reflections. As such, my own reflexivity and interpretations were an important component in my approach; and I attempted to acknowledge my own learning process along the way. This served not only heuristically, but allowed enough flexibility for methodological or conceptual adjustments as the research developed; which was central for my theoretical elements and conceptualizations of agonism and ritual. One such development led me to focus on the use of satire and comics in the museum which I had not foreseen as such an important factor. As an ‘outsider’ myself belonging to none of the national or migrant communities the CNHI aims to depict, I also attempted to adopt the distanced position of what Lindauer termed “critical museum visitor,”⁴⁹ remaining self-critical towards my findings, and as aware as possible of the limits of my own project.

As well as the lack of participant observation, lacking statistics on ethnicity in France also restricted macro-demographic analysis of museum visitors. I also aimed to address the issue of partiality; given my interviewees are directly involved in the museum, and more broadly the compromised position as a national institution with its own agenda and aims. With regard to exhibitory material, there remains the concern of cherry-picking; and several of my observations include in-depth

⁴⁸ Krippendorff, *Content Analysis*. 74

⁴⁹ Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern, and Jacqui True, *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations* (Cambridge University Press, 2006). 27

analyses of exhibits. I maintain this decision however, as my evidence-based approach required that my argument remained substantial, something I felt was more solidly articulated through specific, yet nevertheless salient examples.

Chapter 1

Conceptual and Theoretical Considerations

1.1 Reflecting on Collective Memory and Migration

A common tenet of collective memory is the understanding that despite being carried by individuals, one's sociocultural context determines how narratives, ritual and a group's past is transmitted by a metaphorical memory community. Halbwachs, arguably the pioneer of collective memory, highlighted the *cadres sociaux*, in which our memory is shaped and fashioned within a collectivity.⁵⁰ Erll later developed the concept of 'travelling memory', in which "memories don't hold still for their portraits," yet are formed through the movement of people, objects and media.

⁵¹ She envisaged memory having the capacity to travel through "everyday interaction among different social groups, from trade and travel to migration and diaspora, to war and colonialism."

⁵² These appreciations point to the potential for collective memory to be hybrid and products-in process, fluctuating between different ways of being.

Following Gilroy, the cultural aspect of memory can be delineated into two analytical approaches, by separating the 'routes' and 'roots'. Whereas the latter refers to how social groups situate their collective memory through their 'roots' or alleged origins, the reconstruction of mnemonic 'routes' elicits the paths taken by narratives and rituals.⁵³ Focusing on the processual nature of memory 'routes' over 'roots' is a more illustrative way to complement the transcultural nature of collective memory; in which Erll saw "mnemonic processes unfolding across time and space, *between* and beyond cultural formations."⁵⁴ As with my developing argument, looking to

⁵⁰ Maurice Halbwachs and Lewis A. Coser, *On Collective Memory*, The Heritage of Sociology (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, c1992., n.d.). 56

⁵¹ Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 66

⁵² Ibid., 66

⁵³ Paul Gilroy, *After Empire : Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (London : Routledge, 2004., n.d.).

⁵⁴ Erll, *Memory in Culture*, 67, emphasis mine

‘routes’ shows how collective memory needn’t be confined to the national context, but can be encompassed into intertwining transcultural movements; suggesting how belonging to a (memory) community might serve individuals and groups an adherence to the host society in spite of their divergent ‘routes’ and the ambiguous and transitory nature of their migration, and the memory thereof.

Taken together, these observations illustrate how memory exist as inconclusive and transitional between cultural formations,⁵⁵ as opposed to being linked to an irreversibly defined origin or rigid state. The fluid nature characteristic of the recollection of migration, as well as the discord, tensions or ambiguity underlying individual memories or commemorations, captures well the way that the memory of migration need not be defined by integrating multiple narratives into a harmonious national narrative; but as a collage of identities “from multiple sources and resources, often laced with deep ambivalence.”⁵⁶ For Bastide, such ambivalence can be brought to a “spatial and social reconfiguration;”⁵⁷ which privileges some degree of stability or placement following ambiguity or deformation; whereby individual and collective points of reference and belonging are reorganized and re-established.

1.2 Conceptual refinement: Agonism and the unsettling ‘settlement’

Having said as much, the above reflections on how the memory of migration can be viewed as transitional, liminal or provisional, remains fragile to potential ruptures between these divergent interpretations, and the need to reconcile, ‘settle’ or harmonize such temporary phenomenon. Looking at the memory of migration in its transitory nature still serves as a fruitful way to assess how migrant groups construct their past through ‘routes’ and malleable social frames; yet the very notion of transition still implies the need for a resolution, a reincorporation, or re-affiliation at the

⁵⁵ Ertl, *Memory in Culture* 66, emphasis mine

⁵⁶ Rina Benmayor and Andor Skotnes, *Migration and Identity*, Memory and Narrative Series (New Brunswick, NJ : Transaction Publishers, 2005, n.d.).

⁵⁷ Roger Bastide, (1970) “Mémoire Collective et sociologie du bricolage”, *L’Année Sociologique*, vol. 21, p.65-108. 101

end of a temporary period.⁵⁸ When referring to a memory community in the context of migration reveals the caution needed in inferring a constant quest for reincorporation or harmony into a (national) narrative that is arguably impossible or inappropriate when referring to a multicultural, multilingual group. Erll's travelling memory also acknowledges the incessant transformations of memory practices, however the additional indication of remedying or condensing "complex and confusing traces"⁵⁹ also indicates the need to 'treat' troublesome memories.

As opposed to viewing the transitional or ambiguous aspect of the memory migration in terms of its ultimate stabilization, condensation or placement, I see more purchase not in terms of the destination or consensus, but as a state of agonistic plurality that acknowledges a certain kind of adversity.⁶⁰ Agonism, a political theory that acknowledges the conflictual nature of social life and emphasizes the potentially positive aspects of certain discords, was notably developed by Mouffe, among others⁶¹. In elaboration of Ricoeur's view that societal life has significant space for conflicts of every kind,⁶² democratic politics should not remain in pursuit of conclusion or consensus but through acknowledgement of a "co-existence of opposed and contradictory social forces and ideological dispositions" which are agonistic in kind and dispossessed of consensus.⁶³ Mouffe describes how those involved in the (political) 'struggle' acknowledge that there is "no rational solution to their conflict, yet recognize and respect the legitimacy of their adversaries"⁶⁴. Applied to a memory community; the conflictual nature of dissonant histories and memories would not be disregarded, nor would it shy away from addressing politicized representations of

⁵⁸Harald Wydra 'Liminality and Democracy' in Ágnes Horváth, Bjorn Thomassen, and Harald Wydra, *Breaking Boundaries : Varieties of Liminality* (New York : Berghahn Books, 2015). 190

⁵⁹ Erll, *Memory in Culture*. 70-71

⁶⁰ Krzysztof Wodiczko and John Rajchman, *In Dialogue*, accessed 25 April 2016, <http://www.walkerart.org/channel/2012/in-dialogue-krzysztof-wodiczko-and-john-rajch>.

⁶¹ For example Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal Mouffe. (1985) *Hegemony and socialist strategy: towards a radical democratic politics*. London: Verso, and Bonnie Honig; (1993). *Political theory and the displacement of politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

⁶² Paul Ricoeur, *Reflections on the Just*, trans. David Pellauer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007 (2001). 39

⁶³ Michael Gardiner (2004) Wild publics and grotesque symposiums: Habermas and Bakhtin in dialogue. *The Sociological Review* 52(1): 28–48. 39

⁶⁴ Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political*, Thinking in Action (London : Routledge, 2005, n.d.). 20

past conflicts.⁶⁵ Rather, an agonistic memory community would acknowledge the coexistence and plurality of interests and identities instead of imposing a single exclusionary narrative.⁶⁶ This suggests how agonism could refer not only to encounters among migrant groups, but also in relation to claims of the past articulated within society more broadly, and among a plurality of actors. As such, those engaged in debate or contestation over the mnemonic interpretation of events are not counter-narrators of a grand narrative, nor are they pursuing settlement or ‘reconfiguration’ offered by the likes of Bastide above. Rather, they share “some kind of common bond between the parties in conflict;”⁶⁷ in that inimical or “antagonistic conflicts are less likely to emerge as long as agonistic legitimate political channels for dissenting voices exist.”⁶⁸

In relation to my research; I will explore if the multiple accounts of the past render the museum space a forum in which migrant memories are articulated ‘agonistically’; not marked solely by conflict but by mutual appreciation. The above conceptualization will also lead me to explore who indeed can be spoken of as the ‘adversaries’ in question if my argument to agonistic memory applies. I recently listened to a debate between artist Krzysztof Wodiczko and philosopher theorist John Rajchman on agonistic democracy, in which Wodiczko envisioned the function of public buildings as malleable canvases in which struggles with our problems is public and agonistic encounters may take place.⁶⁹ My reflective questions in terms of my own chosen case study therefore would be if, or indeed how migration museums can be activated to enact agonistic encounters both between migrant groups, but also provide the tools for wider resonation.

With the ruptures that are visible in France and Europe given recent terror attacks, the current migrant crisis, and the view among some that the lack of social cohesion in European

⁶⁵ Anna Cento Bull and Hans Lauge Hansen, “On Agonistic Memory,” *Memory Studies*, November 27, 2015, 1750698015615935, doi:10.1177/1750698015615935. 1

⁶⁶ Ibid, 4

⁶⁷ Mouffe, *On the Political*, 20

⁶⁸ Jacob Torfing, *New Theories of Discourse : Laclau, Mouffe, and Žižek* (Oxford : Blackwell Publishers, 1999, n.d.).

⁶⁹ Krzysztof Wodiczko and John Rajchman, *In Dialogue*:

societies demonstrates a sidelining or “refusal to accept the diversity of migrant memories in perceptions of the past,”⁷⁰ my proposition may seem ambitious. Further, the presentation of agonistic pluralism; whose focus is on encounters between equal adversaries, might even seem misguided in contemporary (French) society where claims have been made regarding both increased hostility *between* and uneven treatment *towards* minorities.⁷¹ I proceed cautiously therefore, yet nevertheless contend that a reconfiguration in conversation with agonism holds the potential towards sustained debate regarding conflictual pasts that is often undervalued. Further, this refinement encourages the interminability of memory to be acknowledged in its own right; linking coexistent cultures and providing the channels for adversarial encounters to form despite their dissonance.

1.3 Subtopics

I substantiate this refinement through the subtopic of ritual which I argue facilitates the channels for this agonistic forum to exist. Thinking of museums connoting a space of secular ritual; Duncan described a ceremonial site dedicated to displaying artefacts “carefully marked off and culturally designated as special.”⁷² As spaces (supposedly) available to everyone, museums serve as reasonably clear demonstrations of the state’s commitment to the principle of equality, diversity and unobstructed exchange.⁷³ This is particularly fruitful with regard to the dialogical features of the concept of ritual; facilitating exchange that is “relatively unobstructed by sociocultural divisions of role, status, reputation, class and other structural niches.”⁷⁴ In the way a ritual activity does, museums relax social rules so groups that would otherwise remain separate interact through

⁷⁰ Glynn and Kleist, *Memory, History and Migration* 42

⁷¹ Jocelyne Streiff-Fénart, “A French Dilemma: Anti-Discrimination Policies and Minority Claims in Contemporary France,” *Comparative European Politics* 10, no. 3 (July 2012): a french dilemma, doi:10.1057/cep.2012.14.

⁷² Duncan, Carol. “Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship” in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Eds. Ivan Karp and Stephen D. Lavine. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991, pp. 88-103. 91

⁷³ Ibid, 91

⁷⁴ Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. (New York, Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982) 48

established practices.⁷⁵ Ritual has thus been acknowledged for its potential to challenge the current order of things, yet also for recurrence, formalism and invariance of established traditions. Acknowledging how ritual can both “affirm the social order whilst facilitating disorderly versions of that order,”⁷⁶ initially felt counterintuitive; yet thinking of the evolution of The Pledge of Allegiance since 1892, illustrates the ambivalent concept of ritual as simultaneously invariant and creative.

In presentation of ritual both as a means to reinforce and refute established traditions or practices, I plan to explore if the museum space provides the channels through ritualized activity that has both the capacity for social solidarity and social critique; and if these channels also contribute to allowing agonistic interaction to take form in a sanctioned institution. Both of these readings show how ritual can incite critical reflection on established practices and a space to step back and look at ourselves and the world with different thoughts and feelings⁷⁷; either uniting previously separate entities in a formally institutionalized setting, or by critical reflection itself. This consideration sets the foundation for considering the ways in which divergent actors appropriate the space as a ritual experience; and will allow me to look not only at agonistic encounters between migrants who exhibit or appropriate the museum space; but also how others mediate and critically reflect on migration and its remembrance in relation to existing narratives and controversies.

The first strand with which to organize and demarcate my empirical material will be referred to as ‘ritual as social critique’, involving challenging, critiquing or parodying existing narratives, stereotypes and hierarchies whose interaction is made possible through the ritual experience of the museum space. This will be addressed by analyzing how exhibitors and actors mobilize and articulate their struggles and protests. Secondly, by bringing together entities that are usually kept separate, migration museums may also serve as a rite of social solidarity that sets a

⁷⁵ Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford University Press, 2009). 40

⁷⁶ Ibid,

⁷⁷ Ibid, 38

forum for greater expression and circulation of ideas and dialogue, and strengthens the bonds between individuals and society through collective experience, expression and legitimation of social life⁷⁸ across a pluralist group. I term the second appropriation ‘ritual of social action’; borrowing the words of Bell as “opportunities for the social group to assemble itself and project images that actually represent the community...to arouse a passionate intensity.”⁷⁹ With this in mind I will consider the ritual community through the manifestations of mimicry and satire that align with the two patterns above, and analyze specific social phenomenon observable in the museum space that I will argue facilitate adversarial life. I hope that such an engagement will elucidate the participants and practices in such rituals through my empirical reasoning and consideration of various actors, and the indicators of their ritualized ways of negotiating social and political life.

1.4 Ritual as social critique

Speaking of ‘rites of resistance’, Gluckman saw social systems as fluctuating; ‘replete with ambivalence: as fields of tensions, cooperation and struggle.’⁸⁰ As with proponents of agonism, this view acknowledges the presence of conflict, and sees “ritual as the occasion to exaggerate tensions that exist in society in order to provide a social catharsis” that allows discontent or grievances the channel to be articulated so that real threats be diffused as part of adversarial life.⁸¹ Participants in this ritualization of conflict; who might otherwise be hierarchized, dichotomized or considered enemies, become imbricated through expressing tension without leading to violence.⁸²

Mimicry, an important term especially in post-colonial theory, links well to the notion of ritual as above; referring to an ambivalent relationship between previously dissociated groups or

⁷⁸ Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford University Press, 1997). 40

⁷⁹ Ibid; 45

⁸⁰ Nigel Rapport and Joanna Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: The Key Concepts* (Psychology Press, 2000). 82

⁸¹ Max Gluckman. *Order and Rebellion in South East Africa: Collected Essays*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963)

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⁸² Rapport and Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*. 230

individuals.⁸³ For Bhabha, (postcolonial) mimicry can be looked at either as a means in which colonisers encourage colonial subjects to repeat the norms of the colonizer⁸⁴, or as a more ambiguous instance where two cultures interact, and the colonial subject becomes “almost the same but not quite”⁸⁵ through imperfect mimesis. The ambivalence in Bhabha’s second reading again incites a shift of everyday social categories and normal conceptions of behavior, time and space;⁸⁶ which lends itself to Gluckman’s theme of critique and resistance. Further, mimicry has also been considered for its inherent danger as a potential threat or pollutant to quotidian routines.⁸⁷ The menacing potential of mimicry, never far from mockery,⁸⁸ provides a further opening to disrupt or blur existing hierarchy or authority. I will argue therefore that one way that ‘ritual as social critique’ is facilitated is through mimicry in the second sense; as a means to mock or critique, made possible through interaction in the museum space.

Moving to satire, extensive research has revealed how groups or individual express themselves satirically in a communal context to deride, mock and ridicule, and how the special circumstances in which these satirical expressions take place render them ritualistic.⁸⁹ Irony, a prevalent feature in satire, has also been recognized as a process in which humans “render their beliefs and desires open to question, parody and replacement”, through exploring and creating infinite possible otherness.⁹⁰ The potential of satire to question or ridicule prevailing follies or vices⁹¹ shows its potential as a ritual of social critique; giving voice to the postcolonial or marginalized subject, reversing roles and inciting “reflection and examination on historical events

⁸³ Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (University of Chicago Press, 1995).

⁸⁴ Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray, *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, Blackwell Companions in Cultural Studies: 2 (Malden, Mass. : Blackwell Publishers, 2000, n.d.). 200

⁸⁵ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London : Routledge, 1995, c1994, n.d.).

⁸⁶ Rapport and Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*. 230

⁸⁷ Ibid. 230

⁸⁸ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. 122

⁸⁹ George Austin Test, *Satire: Spirit and Art* (University Press of Florida, 1991). 67

⁹⁰ Rapport and Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*. 211

⁹¹ For example in Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*. 176-178

once narrated by the colonizers... and now subjected to new ethical standards.”⁹² Expressions of conflict through satirical or mimetic methods provide a viable strategy for dissensual participation and overt contestation; a therapeutic strategy to distance the pain, fear and anxiety inherent in difficult or conflictual recollections; viewed by Zerubavel an alternative to open political protest.⁹³

1.5 Ritual as social action

Many scholars have explored how commemorative narratives are created, reproduced and transmitted by ritualistic celebration of festivals, holidays and memorials.⁹⁴ Turner saw these dynamic moments allowing for fluidity in the creative practices of social groups; “unrestricted by existing categories and ushering new possibilities allowing compromises...venturing out of social order and control.”⁹⁵ This suggest how ritual activity can strengthen the bonds between participants and form new communities of memory; for example through sharing migratory or disruptive experiences and reinforcing a “commonality between subjects whom categories of the present have been made unusually unstable or unpredictable” due to migration and colonialism.⁹⁶ This unity between entities which “appeared tense, contradictory and potentially anomic in the everyday”⁹⁷ pertains not only to encounters among migrant groups or individuals, but also regarding how the past is articulated within society more broadly. This suggests the articulation of contradictory elements in ritualistic practices⁹⁸ can lay the agonistic foundations to draw people together for genuine dialogue and debate, and contribute to the plurality of such debates. Stimulating, as opposed to suppressing the friction and disagreement between different minds,

⁹² Franncois Debrix, *Language, Agency, and Politics in a Constructed World*, International Relations in a Constructed World (Armonk, N.Y. : M.E. Sharpe, 2003., 2003). 128

⁹³ Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*. 176

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Rapport and Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*. 82

⁹⁶ Ganguly, Keya (1992) ‘Migrant Identities, Personal Memory and the Construction of Self’, *Cultural Studies* 6: 27-51. 29-30

⁹⁷ Rapport and Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*. 83

⁹⁸ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. 98

memories and groups allows us to “discard the dangerous dream of a perfect consensus, or harmonious collective will.”⁹⁹

The repetitive character often inherent in ritual certainly speaks to the rendition of mimicry as a means of imitation; an act whereby individuals enact “the sequences, spaces and arrangements of objects” as a means to confer or restore identity.¹⁰⁰ At a first cut, this substantiates how the physical museum space might be deemed a mimetic ritual where individuals follow a prescribed route and decorum.¹⁰¹ Further though, Bhabha’s appropriation of mimicry as “almost the same but not quite”¹⁰² speaks to a shift of normal everyday social categories and an interaction between entities that would normally remain divided and antagonistic; indicative of how the contributors and community the museum aims to represent interact and partake in indeterminate social phenomena. Writing about mimetic desire, Ougourlian spoke of the positive aspects of imitation; which “can remain entirely beneficial: I don’t believe that I am the other, I don’t want to take his place... This imitation can lead me to become sensitive to social and political problems”¹⁰³. Viewing mimicry not as a means to parody or critique, but as affiliation or interaction in intertwined categories, suggests a capacity toward exchanges that sustain adversarial life in which struggles are publicly articulated yet respected and discussed. Releasing tension in a clear cut ordering of social life might paradoxically forge relations and level categories.¹⁰⁴

Similarly, as well as defining satire above a means to critique, it must equally be noted that as a journalistic tradition in France, satire and caricatural cartooning have been deemed “a particularly French, and particularly revolutionary invention”; a graphic metaphor for revolutionary protest.¹⁰⁵ The likes of Philippe D’Orleans and Voltaire employed such methods to

⁹⁹ Chantal Mouffe, ‘Radical Democracy or liberal democracy? *Socialist Review*, May 1990, 58-59

¹⁰⁰ Carol. “Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship” 98

¹⁰¹ Ibid;

¹⁰² Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. 122

¹⁰³ Jean-Michel Oughourlian: *Genèse du désir*. (Paris: Carnets Nord, 2007)

¹⁰⁴ Bell, *Ritual*, 1997. *Rituals, Perspectives and Dimensions*, 40

¹⁰⁵ Frédéric Ogée. “Better in France?”: *The Circulation of Ideas Across the Channel in the Eighteenth Century*. (Cranbury: Rosemont Publishing Group, 1995) 92

mount criticism of French social conservatism and the rigidities of French social establishment by presenting their own criticisms.¹⁰⁶ This sets the ritual of satire within a trajectory that has continued into present day editorial practices but that stems from the opinion-centered journalistic paradigm in France. This second reading of satire and cartooning when viewed through the lens of a broader French editorial tradition also speaks to mimicry; if one views satire as an established practice in French literary society, and sees its imitation as a way to fulfil the outlines and repeat the norms (of the colonizer).¹⁰⁷ Just like the ambiguity of mimicry; satire has also been deemed a ‘refusal to provide the kind of formal coherencies one is conditioned to expect from other literary or historical methods...rendering history an arena in which new things can be seen to appear, rather than one in which old elements simply rearrange themselves endlessly in a finite set of possible combinations.’¹⁰⁸ If this holds; then it could prove suggestive of how museums might mediate creative dialogue with existing societal practices, without being deemed a nation-building project that attempts to integrate migrant narratives into a harmonious whole. The rendition of ritual of social action will be explored looking at how the memory of migration allows discussion and debate to flourish, and ongoing dynamism in contemporary civic action. Viewing the creative content in museums not only as a means of social critique but in negotiation with existing paradigms present a means of affiliation not by outright assimilation yet a cathartic strategy for enduring disagreement expressed through certain subcultures. This conceptual reflection will allow forthcoming exploration of how established artistic or literary traditions may take new form and be reconceived,¹⁰⁹ through reflection on migration. This would provide further analytical purchase for how the museum visitor might also be involved in the museum through a ritual experience that is created through new elements which nevertheless interlace with pre-existing traditions that act

¹⁰⁶ Amelia Faye Rauser, *Caricature Unmasked: Irony, Authenticity, and Individualism in Eighteenth-Century English Prints* (Associated University Presse, 2008). 129

¹⁰⁷ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 98

¹⁰⁸ Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (JHU Press, 1975). 149

¹⁰⁹ Carol. “Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship” 91

as familiar frames ‘to shift into a certain state of receptivity’ and engage in the museum performance.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Ibid,

Chapter 2: The Cité Space

2.1 Political and Intellectual Origins

In spite of lacking statistics on ethnicity, in 2014 the National Institute for Statistics estimated that 19% of the population of metropolitan France were foreign born migrants or their direct descendants,¹¹¹ mainly of European, Maghreb, Sub-Saharan African and Turkish origin. Noiriel, who not only had significant impetus to the scholarly recognition of migrant narratives in ‘The French Melting Pot’¹¹²; also advocated for public recognition in the form of a museum; and was instrumental in the discussions that led to the creation of the Association for a Museum of the History of Immigration¹¹³. However, the CNHI project experienced multiple setbacks and delays; reconsideration under Prime Minister Jospin; stalling due to the 2002 upcoming elections and a reluctance by the Socialists “to be too closely identified with a topic – immigrants – that the rising far right abhorred.”¹¹⁴ Paradoxically, the advancement of Le Pen for the Front National in the 2002 run-off elections led to a landslide victory for Chirac after increased support *against* Le Pen, including unexpected Socialist allies.¹¹⁵ This was accompanied with the disintegration problem in the *banlieues*, the tendency toward communitarianism in France’s assimilation model, and increased intolerance arguably exacerbated by the headscarf debate, the expression (or prohibition) of religious identity, and 2005 riots.¹¹⁶ It is within this political climate and the crossing of political and social lines that the CNHI project was finally pushed through with a governmental report from former Minister of Culture Jacques Toubon. The project, under the authority of Ministers of

¹¹¹ “Insee - Population - Naissances Selon Le Pays de Naissance Des Parents En 2014,” accessed March 26, 2016, http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/tableau.asp?reg_id=0&ref_id=NAISLIEUNAISPAR.

¹¹² Gerard Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot*

¹¹³ Andréa Delaplace and Andréa Delaplace, “Le Musée de L’histoire de L’immigration À Paris: Une Collection et Un Musée En Devenir,” *Anais Do Museu Paulista: História E Cultura Material* 23, no. 2 (December 2015): 239–64, doi:10.1590/1982-02672015v23n0209.

¹¹⁴ Green, “A French Ellis Island? 246

¹¹⁵ Vincent Glad (29 September 2010). “Écarts entre les chiffres police/syndicats: record battu” (in French). *Slate (magazine)*. Retrieved 13th May 2016

¹¹⁶ Mary Stevens; ‘Immigrants into Citizens’ 59

Culture, Integration, National Education and Research, was originally intended as an element of social cohesion, whose long term aims were to recognize the path of integration among migrant groups in France under three dimensions: cultural, pedagogic and citizen.¹¹⁷ Stevens insightfully noted that “in France, debates about cultural identity are increasingly played out on the terrain of the past on account, I suggest, of the absence of other available markers of collective identity for minority groups.”¹¹⁸ This also points to the evolving identity of the institution itself; in which contestation within its own administration and resignation of seven of its advisory members in 2007 evidenced undercurrents that remained wary of the government’s project and integration agenda.

Opened in 2007 without official ceremony, no further visible intervention was expressed in the museum during the Chirac or Sarkozy years.¹¹⁹ It was only officially inaugurated in 2014 under current President Hollande; who according to one of my interviewees shares the vision for the project with the current management of the museum; an impetus which they felt contributed to increased legitimacy and recognition of the institution. The museum aims to collect, preserve and make elements relating to the history of 19th and 20th century migration accessible, and comprises a thematic permanent exhibition presenting a wide range of topics including work, living spaces, emigration, diversity, sports, war and xenophobia. Temporary exhibitions, which currently centers on the theme of *Frontières* (borders), a network, regular conferences, performances and debate series also make up the museum’s content. Aligning with Baur’s estimations on immigration museums above, institutional forums of this kind best serve to foster an integrative narrative that encompasses disparate histories whilst forming an overarching narrative. However, the CNHI’s permanent exhibition *Reperes* (benchmarks), after a redesign in 2014, broaches subjects such as

¹¹⁷ ‘Lettre de mission du Premier ministre adressée à Jacques Toubon, lui confiant la présidence de la mission de préfiguration chargée d’imaginer les conditions de réalisation d’un futur “Centre de ressources et de mémoire de l’immigration”’, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/index.php?lg=fr&nav=83&flash=0> accessed 13th May 2016

¹¹⁸ Stevens; Immigrants into Citizens, 63

¹¹⁹ Green, “A French Ellis Island?” 2007. 246

‘emigration’, ‘facing the State’, ‘Home Life’, ‘Work’, ‘Diversity’,¹²⁰ in which references to integration are few, and align more with the aim to demonstrate the economic, social and contribution of migrants, and relate to contemporary struggles. Further, since April 2014, the museum has exhibited the so called ‘Donations Gallery’¹²¹ of intimate souvenirs; identity papers, and photos belonging to migrants that embody personal trajectories and diverse experiences; recovering the voices of those represented as vital historical resources in their own right and linking intimate testimonies to broader socio-political themes within the museum’s exhibitions.¹²²

The museum’s recent involvement with new network partners and actors such as MSF, MAUS International and Antiracistes,¹²³ extend the reach beyond the national context to actors whose main work is not that of history and migration but whose work aligns more broadly with the museum’s actions on the themes of social solidarity and overcoming discrimination. This reflects the changing socio-political climate in which the museum now exists amid current migration flows; amplifying the CNHI’s focus beyond merely its historical perspective and attention to integration of existing migrants, but as a space for debate on issues surrounding immigration and current policy and scholarly debates.¹²⁴ Coupled with curators increasingly trained in the social sciences, ‘better versed in the history of immigration policy and more sensitive to the social implications of discursive constructions,’ the above subtleties indicate a shift in the vision initially put forward by the museum towards the French model of integration.¹²⁵

These changing dynamics and the sensitivity to socio-cultural actualities as opposed to assimilation are aspects that my material will address; thus far underexplored regarding the

¹²⁰ “La Galerie Des Dons | Musée National de L’histoire de L’immigration,” accessed March 26, 2016, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/musee/la-galerie-des-dons..>

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1988, n.d.).

¹²³ “Les Actions Du Réseau | Musée National de L’histoire de L’immigration,” accessed May 18, 2016, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/la-cite/le-reseau/les-actions-du-reseau>.

¹²⁴ Présidence de la République, “Discours D’inauguration Du Musée de L’histoire de L’immigration,” *Www.elysee.fr*, accessed May 20, 2016, <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-d-inauguration-du-musee-de-l-histoire-de-l-immigration/>.

¹²⁵ Stevens, ‘Immigrants Into Citizens,’ 64

museum as a site of debate and contention. This sustains my conceptual reflections on the purchase of agonism and the suggestion of criticality to explain the patterns I am beginning to unravel. In addition, the artistic force within the museum space is significant, and my interviews revealed that the new 2015 administration is particularly attentive to how the artist is carrier of emotion, discourse or a sensitive relation to questions regarding immigration and its history. Over half of the listed exhibitory mediums are visual or artistic, and a widespread use of satire is mobilized in how migration is remembered in this institution; caricature, cartoon and press cartoons all deserving of their own individual categories.¹²⁶ Certainly not negligible additions to the museum's *mise en scene*, they again connote the potentially critical and confrontational configurations within this space.

2.2 A colonial legacy

Given the prevalent issue of space in my thesis; it feels appropriate to not only regard the CNHI as a site of memory *tout court*, but as an ongoing source of debate, oppositions and exchanges. On first arrival at the museum; the frescos from the 'Permanent Museum of the Colonies' following the 1931 Colonial exhibition¹²⁷ are an impressive part of the building's exterior. However, its deeply entrenched colonial legacy has led to critical remarks on how the edifice in which the museum is housed may be more of a hindrance than a help, and that it risks conflating migration and colonialism.¹²⁸ As such, the CNHI has had to construct itself *against* the problematic history of the building in which it is housed, rather than *thanks to it*.¹²⁹ The aim of contextualizing the controversial nature of the museum and its colonial roots was a substantial challenge acknowledged by one of my interviewees. As opposed to sidelining the colonial legacy however, what he saw as fruitful was ensuring the museum doesn't turn its back on its building; but uses it

¹²⁶ "Collections | Musée National de L'histoire de L'immigration," accessed May 12, 2016, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/musee/collections>.

¹²⁷ Iain Chambers, *The Postcolonial Museum : The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History* (Farnham, Surrey : Ashgate, 2014., 2014). 68

¹²⁸ Green, "A French Ellis Island?," January 1, 2007. 244

¹²⁹ Ibid, 244

to promote dialogue between colonization, decolonization, immigration, so that neither erases the other. My visit revealed that the museum's entire mezzanine floor is dedicated to the history of the building; indicating the ability to look at the building itself as an object from a critical and detached perspective. This metahistorical strategy¹³⁰ renders the museum itself a historical object; heightening the reflexive process of exposing the multiple influences and underpinnings of the institution, contemplating its own uneasiness and provoking further dialogue. Prompted further by the attacks on Charlie Hebdo magazine, the CNHI organized a debate series and awareness raising activities in March 2015 to discuss France's history of colonialism, the presence of discrimination and racism, and also "social and cultural realities of young people being radicalized in France."¹³¹ This first insight points to how the museum might be deemed a ritual experience; a ceremonial site dedicated not only to accumulating artefacts but "reserved for a certain type of contemplation, learning and attention."¹³²

During its existence; the regularity of objections about "the potential occlusion of colonialism in such an ideally charged location"¹³³ actually led to several concessions in this regard. Conferences discussing the links between immigration and colonialism echoed debate in the public sphere concerning the official recognition of torture by the state, and the repeal of the 2005 French law that states the 'positive role' of France's presence in North Africa and abroad.¹³⁴ This is not to say that the building's controversy was purely to thank for such concessions, however it has been acknowledged that 'the area where the *Cité* came under most pressure from civil society and where most changes were made was in relation to the treatment of the colonial past.'¹³⁵ This provides an

¹³⁰ Chambers, *The Postcolonial Museum*, 2014. 45

¹³¹ "La Désintégration | Musée National de L'histoire de L'immigration," accessed April 9, 2016, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/2015/3/la-desintegration>.

¹³² Carol. "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship" 91

¹³³ Stevens; 'Immigrants into Citizens:' 65

¹³⁴ 15 Hours Ago Via Web, "Memory Laws in France and Their Implications: Institutionalizing Social Harmony by Raffi Wartanian," *Humanity In Action*, accessed April 7, 2016, <http://www.humanityinaction.org/knowledgebase/117-memory-laws-in-france-and-their-implications-institutionalizing-social-harmony>.

¹³⁵ Stevens; 'Immigrants into Citizens:'. 65

example of the positive aspect of certain types of conflict as contributing to dynamism and debate between agonistic forces imbricated in the museum space; in which “cultural difference offers not merely problems but also opportunities”¹³⁶ and social action.

This opportunity was seen for Cherkaoui as the occasion for the CNHI’s to “overturn the eurocentrism of the colonial period, and encourage visitors to re-evaluate their own self-definitions by calling into question self and other, French and non-French”¹³⁷. Juxtaposed to Ellis Island Immigration Station, deemed above a homogenizing representation of migration “framing immigration history in terms of ‘Becoming American;”¹³⁸ the fact that the CNHI does not take for granted the spatial undercurrents on which the project rests finds itself deliberately questioning national boundaries and calling into critical consideration national identity. Of course, such an appreciation and the necessary ‘deconstruction’ required to “explain (away) their stereotypical representations of the colonial other,” might go unnoticed by the average museum visitor.¹³⁹ What I hope to show however in the ongoing development of my thesis; is that the critical paradigm of the CNHI that is manifest most strikingly through certain artistic and satirical medium, brings such deconstruction down from the lofty heights of academia, to at the very least provide a dialogical opening of “extended movement for subaltern agencies, recognizing their transformative capacity”,¹⁴⁰ and fostering a critical view of France’s own depiction of its imperial empire. The ongoing contention between colonialism, immigration and de-colonization not entirely resolved,¹⁴¹ and arguably unresolvable reflects one of the museum’s aims to incite reflection on the very definition of the themes it wishes to represent.

¹³⁶ Horváth, Thomassen, and Wydra, *Breaking Boundaries. Varieties of Liminality*. 239

¹³⁷ Cherkaoui, S. L. & Delmas, G. 2007, ‘Actes Sud & Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration, Zon-mai:’ *Parcours nomades*, Paris: 10

¹³⁸ Baur, “Commemorating Immigration in the Immigrant Society” 137

¹³⁹ Cherkaoui, ‘Actes Sud & Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration.’ 67

¹⁴⁰ Maria Malksoo ‘Liminality and International Relations Theory’ 239

¹⁴¹ Green “A French Ellis Island?” 249

2.3 The CNHI as a forum for contestation

Another source of contestation arose in the resignation of members of the CNHI's advisory committee in 2007 in protest to the creation of the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Development.¹⁴² According to one of the advisors Patrick Wiel, it was an act of ethics, seeing the Ministry as a dangerous political manipulation against migration amid rising nationalist xenophobia. He saw associating national identity and migration in the Ministry as an indication that France has an inherent problem with the question of immigration, and an attempt to reign in migration, restrict the entry of certain nationalities and limit visas.¹⁴³ For the eight advisors who left the CNHI, even if the work of the museum had not been tainted by the creation of the Ministry which was subsequently dissolved; it was nevertheless unaligned with the aims of the CNHI: to change the societal perspectives with regard to the presence of migrants and their history and memory; to “repair the circulation of values.”¹⁴⁴

However, what such a dismissal provoked, was a call to reflection within the institution and its ambiguities; in 2011 a reflective study was carried out within a partnership project with Havas Worldwide, a global marketing and communications agency, in order to critically assess the site, its statements and positions.¹⁴⁵ This further concession, spurred by the intervention of the museum's advisors, reflects how the museum can be seen as a ritual space that incites both social action and critique; maintaining a certain level of tension and adversality as a means to channel such cooperation and collective struggle. Certainly, it can equally be deemed that the above resignation was only a portion of the overarching activities of the museum. Nevertheless, the ramifications of the controversy sustains Sutherland's claim that “migration museums are particularly well placed to encourage reflection and debate on questions of integration, solidarity

¹⁴² Aurore Chéry “La Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration”

¹⁴³ “Immigration et Identité Nationale: Une «confusion» et Une «régression» - Libération,” accessed May 15, 2016, http://www.libération.fr/france/2007/05/18/immigration-et-identite-nationale-une-confusion-et-une-regression_9694.

¹⁴⁴ Noël Barbe and Marina Chauliac, *L'immigration aux frontières du patrimoine* (Les Editions de la MSH, 2015). 9

¹⁴⁵ Rapport d'activités de la CNHI 2011, 6

and national community,”¹⁴⁶ and further support my ongoing paradigmatic exploration moving away from harmonizing narratives.

Between October 2010 and January 2011, the CNHI experienced was occupied by illegal workers (*sans-papiers*) in their fight to obtain their right to remain on French territory; most of whom were from Mali and other parts of Francophone Africa. The occupation was orchestrated by a network of trade unions, civil society organizations and other significant NGOs such as Autremonde and the Network for Education without Borders,¹⁴⁷ reflecting a wider protest for the regularization of illegal workers and for a more efficient system for the submission and reception of regularization dossiers. The Place de la Republique is often mobilized in France as a symbolic *lieu de manifestation*¹⁴⁸, and referring to the 2005 strikes of *sans-papiers* in Saint Bernard, Blin notes the importance within social movements that the initial space of action (or occupation) should be emblematic.¹⁴⁹ In tandem with the changing dynamic in the institution discussed above and challenging undercurrents even from within, this gives heavy support of how the CNHI is viewed by migrants not merely for sanitized cultural expression and archive, but also as a noteworthy place in the public arena in which to have their grievances heard and articulated. This certainly gives form to Mouffe’s vision of “a legislatively protected space for articulating claims about the past and its impact on the present”,¹⁵⁰ and contributes to my argument of the CNHI as dialogical; opening up a space for conflict, extended agency, and a ritual of both action and critique. The subsequent concessions made in the recognition of *sans-papiers* following the occupation, for example an agreement with France’s largest trade union allocating premises for immigrants

¹⁴⁶ Sutherland, ‘Leaving and Longing’, 119

¹⁴⁷ Labadi, “The National Museum of Immigration History” 13

¹⁴⁸ “Un Lieu Symbolique : La Place de La République. Crédit : F. Kermorvant,” *Site Officiel Du Collectif Des Associations Unies*, February 20, 2015, https://collectif-associations-unies.org/10655430_1545675365718546_5630188515823831337_o/.

¹⁴⁹ Thierry Blin, “L’invention des sans-papiers,” *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie*, no. 125 (November 28, 2008): 241–61.

¹⁵⁰ Duncan Bell, “Agonistic Democracy and the Politics of Memory,” *Constellations* 15, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 148–66, doi:10.1111/j.1467-8675.2008.00478.x. 158

awaiting the receipt of the work permits,¹⁵¹ shows how claiming the museum space as a ritualized conflict and alternative to violent political protest¹⁵², led to inciting a reconsideration of its policies, critical reflection and social action.

Allowing conflict to take form in the museum favors not consensus or integration of narratives but the *mélange* of cultures and identities; a “palimpsest on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten.”¹⁵³ As well as its colonial legacy, I would advocate that the museum address the occupation as a display of its own deserving as a means to further encourage dialogue and interactivity with the social and legal tribulations faced by migrants today and how the heritage space has been used by migrants as a forum of expression in their collective struggle. This would add increased significance to the themes addressed in the permanent exhibition illustrating the collective and incremental battles experienced by migrants through the themes of living spaces, work, diversity and ‘here and there’.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, I can’t say how the museum’s aim to create a ‘living space’ can be demonstrated more literally than through how migrant communities physically appropriated it, and exemplifies what I outlined as a ‘ritual of social action,’ strengthening of social bonds and articulating shared grievances in conflictual circumstances. I find this agonistic *par excellence*, all the more so given that the occupation remained devoid of violent protest; what Turner saw in the ability of social dramas to act as a ritual catharsis to express or relieve the tension in mounting social pressure or stresses inherent in a particular culture.¹⁵⁵ As such, the agonistic solidarity or collective struggle for inclusive citizenship visible in the museum’s occupation does not emerge out of a harmonious convergence of interests or assimilation.

¹⁵¹ “Travailleurs sans Papiers : Un Premier Accord Pour La Réouverture Au Public (...) - Union Locale CGT Paris 11,” accessed May 15, 2016, <http://www.ulcgt11.fr/?Travailleurs-sans-papiers-un>.

¹⁵² Rapport and Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology*. 82

¹⁵³ Marc Augé, *Non-Lieux* (Verso, 1995). 79

¹⁵⁴ “L’exposition permanente ‘Repères’ | Musée National de L’histoire de L’immigration,” accessed May 18, 2016, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/musee/l-exposition-permanente>.

¹⁵⁵ Turner, Victor (1974). *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. pp. 23–35

Again referring to a lecture given by Wodizcko, he spoke of how agonism is attached to a developmental project.¹⁵⁶ For him, high importance remains on cultural projects to create communicative channels for antagonism to convert to agonism in a symbolic space. These channels allow emotionally charged transmission to find a different form than violence, and are articulated instead through testimony and expression. He drew an astute etymological link by inferring an agonistic ‘protest’ was a combination of *projection* and *testimony*; whereby one protests by way of projecting that which one has witnessed or bore testimony to, towards something better, something different. This projection, which gives insight into how articulating claims to the past can have resonance in the present, for him requires projects, equipment, civil society; exemplified in this chapter as overt resignation, occupation or debate in the CNHI that created the conditions for such protests. As such, whereas speaking of protest can still be seen as problematic in a state sanctioned institution, I argue then that by viewing the divergent ways the museum space is appropriated and ritualized by various groups of protagonists with divergent agendas, developmental projects and extended networks, the conditions are created to ‘testify’ or ‘protest’ relating to the memory of migration in the symbolic museum space; in both its historical and contemporary context.

2.4 Outreach

The CNHI has been shown as an institution that allows disagreement as part of its constitution. Elements of agonism shown in the occupation of the museum by migrants, the resignation of its committee and the continuing debate regarding its colonial legacy give a first insight into the paradigm of the CNHI as a museological model of dialogue and social critique. The appropriation of the CNHI by groups of migrants themselves; the museum’s advisors, and by international organizations in pursuit of global citizenship, render the space “a high-profile platform for expression, the forming of communal bonds and the discussion of controversies.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ Dominic Thomas, *Africa and France: Postcolonial Cultures, Migration, and Racism* (Indiana University Press, 2013). 32

The CNHI is being used as a viable tool of critical reflection and catharsis to release tension both *for* and *among* various participants; in spite of their divergent claims and agendas, often finding resonance further afield and imbricating additional participants. This reflection I find most valuable, and indicative of the CNHI as a ritual space; in its dependence on its wider audience and outreach for acknowledgment and appropriation of its potency.¹⁵⁸

The conflictual nature which allows self-reflection, continuing discussion, members who join and leave, appropriate and disown the heritage space of the museum might indeed be its virtue in driving perpetual reflection and showing how the projects and aims of the institution are interminable, inharmonious; but foster not a fixed representation of the memory and history of migration in France, but continuing debate and a space to relieve tension of the issues both within and external to the museum space. Viewing the museum's larger narrative as critical and agonistic stands as a foundation which I hope will incite fruitful analysis to its content; and sets the paradigm for the exhibitory material that I will assess.

¹⁵⁸ Jane Monnig Atkinson, "The Effectiveness of Shamans in an Indonesian Ritual," *American Anthropologist* 89, no. 2 (June 1, 1987): 342–55, doi:10.1525/aa.1987.89.2.02a00040.

Chapter 3: Ritual Satire

I now approach elements of both the permanent and temporary exhibitions of the CNHI which I contend are representative of the presentation of satire in the museum and its widespread use in how migration is remembered in this institution. What could appear as an arbitrary selection of one particular medium in the museum that does not reflect the content, over half of the listed exhibitory mediums are artistic, with individual categories for caricature, cartoon and press cartoons,¹⁵⁹ showing they are not negligible additions. Further, a comic festival was put on by the museum in 2013¹⁶⁰, and the seven month long temporary exhibition in 2014 ‘*Albums - Bande dessinée et immigration. 1913-2013*’ broaches the phenomenon of migration through comics.¹⁶¹ Nonetheless, the museum content, both materially and online, offers a multitude of such displays, and so the empirical cases below do not represent an exhaustive list of projects and programs, but certainly reflect the significant quantity of satirical material, and artists who themselves feature exhibit widely in the museum. Further, my interview with the museum staff revealed that the new management since 2015 is particularly attentive to contemporary art and looking at how the artist is carrier of emotion, discourse or a sensitive relation to questions regarding immigration and the history of immigration. This creativity is, in my interpretation, both a manifestation of the museum presenting a contemplative account of the memory of migration, and also allowing a channel of social expression for migrants and non-migrants to articulate depictions of their past, present and future through the strategy of humor.

¹⁵⁹ “Collections | Musée National de L’histoire de L’immigration.”

¹⁶⁰ “Exposer La Bande Dessinée Dans Un Musée D’histoire | Musée National de L’histoire de L’immigration,” accessed May 12, 2016, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/2013/5/exposer-la-bande-dessinee-dans-un-musee-d-histoire>.

¹⁶¹ “Albums - Bande Dessinée et Immigration. 1913-2013 | Musée National de L’histoire de L’immigration,” accessed April 26, 2016, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/musee/expositions-temporaires/albums>.

3.1 Social Critique in *Repères*

In its permanent *Repères* exhibition, the vast majority of art work, photography and sculpture that relates to the themes in the exhibition explored above, are presented by artists themselves of migrant origin or descent. One of the center-pieces in the permanent exhibition is French artist of Algerian descent Kader Attia's *Machine à rêves*. The visual exhibit involves a life size model dressed in a sweatshirt marked 'Hallal', poised before a vending machine including items for sale such as 'Hallal' gin, lipstick, Gold credit cards, a 'marriage kit', and condoms, intended by the artist to satirically symbolize the dream of integration and emancipation among young (female) migrants.¹⁶² The piece shows the coming and going between two cultures and Attia's liminal position between French and Algerian society defined by the simultaneous desire to belong to western society and preserve traditional values. For me these contradictions exemplify the potential of irony to profess approval of the very things it wishes to attack. The tone of the piece certainly provides a critical depiction of capitalism and consumer society, in which "emancipation means consumption in response to the needs created by capitalist order."¹⁶³

Attia's *Machine à rêves* demonstrates that ritual satire serve as a means for individual artists to express and orient themselves in a migratory experience by reflecting on their past as this artist has done, but also to incite critique and further reflection, showing the creative capacity of the memory of migration. Attia's work has been broadly used by the CNHI since 2008; in permanent exhibitions and in a 2011 exhibition documenting intersecting identities. His satirical artwork has also appeared in the Saatchi gallery, the Tate and the Venice Biennale, contributing to a recognized trend of artists and curators concerned with stereotyping the Middle East and thus offering new and more complex views and exploring a mixture of traditions.¹⁶⁴ This emerges in the way that

¹⁶² "Musée. Collections : La Machine À Rêve de Kader Attia - Kader Attia | Musée de L'histoire de L'immigration," accessed April 21, 2016, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/musee/collections/la-machine-a-reve-de-kader-attia>.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ "Making An Impact | ARTnews," accessed May 21, 2016, <http://www.artnews.com/2010/05/01/making-an-impact/>.

the ironic personal anecdotes relating to gender, consumerism and sexuality that Attia employed to create the exhibit¹⁶⁵ facilitate a space to publicly break taboos, air grievances and passions through satirical reflection. This incites again the words of Mouffe; who claimed that museums; “far from being condemned to playing the role of conservative institutions dedicated to the maintenance and reproduction of the existing hegemony...can contribute to subverting the ideological framework of consumer society.”¹⁶⁶ As such, the prevalent use of satire in the memory of migration as a tool of social critique can be seen to not only stimulate new struggles, but subvert hegemonic stereotypes and existing sociopolitical discourses on consumerism, migration and migrants themselves; such as the supposed inherently “uncritical attitude in Islam and the inability to bear criticism of own beliefs.”¹⁶⁷

This is also done by the work of Congolese artist Chéri Samba, whose satirical drawings provide social commentary on issues relating to migration, corruption and education to “create a body of work that combines moral discourse, biting satire, and commentary.”¹⁶⁸ Samba’s projects in the CNHI highlight the inherent tensions in the appreciation of migrants’ contribution to French society, for example in his piece *Paris est propre* that shows the arduous work of migrants in their work as road sweepers.¹⁶⁹ Similar depictions of collective experience that evoke more dysphoric memories are provided by Plantu; whose satirical press cartoons depicting the treatment of migrants and their endurance of rigid administrative formalities have appeared weekly in *Le Monde* for over two decades; surpassing 15000 publications.¹⁷⁰ In his extensive works throughout the *Repères* exhibit, the caricature of political dysfunction speaks directly to current themes and tensions surrounding the ‘headscarf debate’, the tightening of visa controls, and the 2005 riots.

¹⁶⁵ “Kader Attia, Artiste Hallal,” *Jeune Afrique.com*, January 24, 2006, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/82060/archives-thematique/kader-attia-artiste-hallal/>.

¹⁶⁶ Chantal Mouffe, *Agonistics: Thinking The World Politically*, 1 edition (Verso, 2013). 100

¹⁶⁷ Tariq Asad *Is Critique Secular?* (Berkeley: University of California Townsend Centre for the Humanities, 2009) xxi

¹⁶⁸ Ivan Karp, D. A. Masolo, and International African Institute, *African Philosophy as Cultural Inquiry* (Indiana University Press, 2000). 215

¹⁶⁹ “Musée. Collections : Paris Est Propre de Chéri Samba - Chéri Samba | Musée de L’histoire de L’immigration,” accessed May 4, 2016, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/musee/collections/paris-est-propre-de-cheri-samba>.

¹⁷⁰ “Plantu - Le Monde,” accessed May 24, 2016, <http://www.lemonde.fr/journaliste/plantu/>.

Outwardly reflecting on collective experience and stereotypes through satire portrays the unstable migratory experience as comical, however the ability to play with artistic and literary devices also demonstrates a means offer unsolicited criticism, defend the right to voice grievances and encourage discourse in an unsettling situation. In addition, the personal reflections of the artists' socio-political commentaries alongside their work demonstrate that ritual satire serves both individual and social purposes; providing the artists with a channel for what Tannen termed 'ritualized adversativeness'¹⁷¹ in which to articulate their emotions, and encourage community reflection on such discourse.

Reflecting on the mimetic nature of his work, Samba offers alternative Parisian sceneries by portraying the crudity of migrant work alongside the indifference of Parisian pedestrians and dog walkers. This is also visible in Plantu's work, many of which caricature Franco-Algerian relations through exaggerated binaries, for example his *Entre Deux Chaises*,¹⁷² in which a male migrant is physically stretched, stuck between France and Africa. The work of both artists, as well as Attia above, incite reflection on the liminal and hybrid space between existing binaries or dichotomizing stereotypes; without privileging the occupation or integration in either. As such, the mocking nature of mimicry, as an inherent threat or pollutant to daily routines¹⁷³ also provides a platform to challenge or allow these binaries to be actively reflected on, yet coexist inharmoniously on both sides of historical wars or social classes. The intertwining accounts in this ritual practice don't project a paradigm of integration in the sense of homogenization; yet allows for potential struggles or dysphoric memories which parody or critique social or political aspects of French life. The "combination of tenderness, humor and bitterness that cuts through language barriers" and existing stereotypes¹⁷⁴ to articulate grievances and the hypocrisies of everyday life solidifies my

¹⁷¹ Deborah Tannen (2002). "Agonism in academic discourse". *Journal of Pragmatics*: 1652–1548. 1651

¹⁷² "Musée. Collections : Plantu, Entre Deux Chaises. 1985 - Plantu | Musée de L'histoire de L'immigration," accessed May 22, 2016, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/musee/collections/plantu-entre-deux-chaises-1985>.

¹⁷³ Schwarz and Ray, *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. 200

¹⁷⁴ Roberta Smith, "Art in Review," *The New York Times*, December 9, 1994, sec. Arts, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/12/09/arts/art-in-review-060259.html>.

reflections on the museum as a deliberative space of agonistic moral exchange, empathy and reflection on current and past situations among fellow ‘protagonists’. Providing the artists a viable tool of expression and catharsis as an alternative to political protest, I am unable to affirmatively conclude that the same channel is shared among museumgoers. I nevertheless suggest that such examples, pervasive beyond the CNHI, form a ritual space in which distinct individuals themselves perhaps haunted by binaries or collective struggle might seek to navigate or ease their own tensions and hybrid identities within a community of adversaries.

On balance, any type of humor and satirical ritual is itself culturally and linguistically bound; and susceptible to marginalizing those that do not ‘belong’ to the socio-cultural milieu within which it operates. Chambers equally noted that museums “have been accused of presenting non-Western cultures in a reified and sometimes caricatural manner,”¹⁷⁵ even if advocating otherwise. Thinking of satire as agonistic initially felt counterintuitive; especially given the arguably inimical critiques that one sees in the likes of Charlie Hebdo. Nevertheless, when employed as a means of exchange, retort or dialogue on migration as with the work of Samba and Attia above, “the charge that sarcasm is antagonistic to dialogue...is more than disingenuous given its use in most deliberative settings,”¹⁷⁶ and as such does not necessarily indicate hostility, but deliberation. Further, even acknowledging the cultural or linguistic limitations of certain types of ritual satire, if exercised within a certain setting, the imaginative nature of ironic or satirical work might give insights, or catharsis that could be bypassed by uncomical representation.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Chambers, *The Postcolonial Museum*, 63

¹⁷⁶ Grovogui, ‘Criticism and Form’ in Debrix, *Language, Agency, and Politics*. 135

¹⁷⁷ Test, *Satire*. 68

3.2 Social action through the temporary exhibition: *Frontières*

Frontières, operational since November 2015 until July 2016 will soon convert to a travelling exhibition.¹⁷⁸ Borislav Sajtinac's satirical critiques of European migration policy, himself a foreign national of France, have found expression not only in the CNHI but have also appeared in international magazines and newspapers including *Le Monde*, *Die Zeit*, and *Stern*. Satirical depictions of migration, Ostpolitik and a 'borderless Europe' feature heavily throughout the temporary exhibition; cited for their mix of poetry and satire, archive footage and comic elements.¹⁷⁹ Similarly, the satirical work by Plantureux provides a sobering depiction of current waves of migration between France and the UK, and the loss of life in the channel tunnel. The unsettling nature of many of Plantureux and Sajtinac's contributions such as the menacing images of 'Fortress Europe' or European 'no man's land'¹⁸⁰ exemplify how humour can provide a means to approach or negotiate a controversial, painful or traumatic experience. This shows satire not as inherently comical, yet has a potency to provoke emotions and reflection that intertwine memory of migration with current struggles. Both artists offer divergent accounts of migration, creating contestation even within their own representation of migrants, Europe and borders. This is reflective too of disagreement between immigration historians in France regarding the 'French model' of integration, cultural diversity and xenophobia,¹⁸¹ again indicating that the ritual experience of nonconsensus and critical reflection might extend beyond the walls of the CNHI and prompt engagement in reflection on the future of the French model of integration. Irony and satire here serve not as an exact reproduction of established order but as an 'incomplete mimesis'; a communicative resource for critique and improvement. Again in the words of Wodizco, conflictual accounts here are not connected to resolution, but the ritual experience channels

¹⁷⁸ "Exposition 'Frontières' au Musée National de L'histoire de L'immigration | Musée National de L'histoire de L'immigration," accessed May 18, 2016, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/2015/6/exposition-frontieres>.

¹⁷⁹ Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Animation: A World History: Volume III: Contemporary Times* (CRC Press, 2015). 110

¹⁸⁰ Borislav Sajtinac, "Europe - Borislav Sajtinac," text, (March 29, 2016), <http://www.sajtinac.fr/index.php?category/Dessins/Europe>.

¹⁸¹ Green, "A French Ellis Island?" 244

symbolic and agonistic communication; my interpretation here is that these projects are creating the conditions for (satirical) conflict to take form within the museum space.

I am not the first to note that satire has an agonistic thrust,¹⁸² Bergson noted that society employs laughter to achieve “the greatest possible degree of elasticity and sociability”; adjusting those who operate with “a certain rigidity of body, mind and character.”¹⁸³ As such then, the mobilization of humor for engaging with migration both in terms of past and present can certainly be deemed ritualistic in inciting a more fluid interaction between subjects¹⁸⁴. I do not mean to argue that satire and caricature guarantees reflection on the plurality of the past or dialogue, but rather brings divergent participants in the museum experience into the discussion not by the provocative nature of satire but by inquisition and scrutiny. This is further important to shed light on how the *Frontières* exhibition’s satirical and ironic depictions relating to migration provides an experimental space to broach moral questions regarding a borderless world, and sustain a certain level of adversarial life through struggles that are both *remembered*, but also those that are *imagined* in the future in relation to current waves of migration and ongoing perils. Given my methodological limitations, I was unable to show affirmatively that the temporary exhibit precipitated a reflective or cathartic response from the audience; however ‘response books’ installed at the exhibit’s exit displayed appreciation of the ‘rich and versatile’ exhibitory material and the ‘fresh and up-to-date look at migration;’ many of the entries from migrants themselves.

3.3 Comics as social critique

I again hope to delineate analytically between the two appropriations of ritual I introduced above through the medium of comics. A collective works *Immigrants* put together by Christophe Dabitch in 2009 collected thirteen migrant testimonies, entrusted them with thirteen comic artists

¹⁸² G. Beiner, *Shakespeare’s Agonistic Comedy: Poetics, Analysis, Criticism* (Fairleigh Dickinson Univ Press, 1993). 239

¹⁸³ Bergson, Henri/ : *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* Trans Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell. London: MacMillan, 1911. 17

¹⁸⁴ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. 89

whose illustrations were also included in the work,¹⁸⁵ and included commentaries from historians such as Noiriél who provided their own reflections on the project. Incidentally, the word satire comes from the Latin “to miscellany or medley,”¹⁸⁶ reflective of Dabitch’s work tying individual memory, artistic interpretation and the infiltration of migration into historian’s archives. The creative capacity of comic journalism in *Immigrants* overtly reflects on stereotypes and addresses the struggles experienced by the thirteen testimonies, showing “imaginative mobility and the capacity to represent the perspective of others.”¹⁸⁷ Translating migrant testimonies into humorous comics that overtly challenge existing social categories, Dabitch’s critical yet creative work goes some way to broach wider social themes and transcend the ‘universalist’ depiction of migrants as powerless or destitute. This reflects my development of ‘ritual as social action’ as the creativity and imagination inherent in the playful genre of ritual satire and irony renders the museum as a space inciting debate and reflection of delicate issues it exhibits.

This is also done through the work of Thomas Dupuis whose comic book *Les Immigrés*, displayed in the CNHI, is part of the series *Petite Histoire des colonies Françaises*.¹⁸⁸ The book itself and enlarged posters of it are displayed in permanent and temporary exhibition, taking a critical tone towards France’s colonial and immigrant history. The work featured in the 2011 Angoulême festival as part of an exhibition that parodies the 1931 colonial exhibition, and Dupuis’ artistic irony has been esteemed for demystifying the supposed ‘benefits’ of colonial rule,¹⁸⁹ demonstrative of how ritual satire can serve as political critique or commentary. This is also suggestive of the mocking nature of what I claim here to be satirical mimicry; in its capacity to blur or parody (previously) existing hierarchies.

¹⁸⁵ “Immigrants | Le Magazine : Beaux Livres | Musée de L’histoire de L’immigration,” accessed April 26, 2016, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/magazine/2010/10/immigrants>.

¹⁸⁶ Kharpertian, Theodore D, “Thomas Pynchon and Postmodern American Satire”, in Kharpertian, *A hand to turn the time: the Menippean satires of Thomas Pynchon*, pp. 25–7

¹⁸⁷ Dana Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror: Essays on the Thought of Hannah Arendt* (Princeton University Press, 1999) 96

¹⁸⁸ “« Petite Histoire Des Colonies Françaises »,” *Le Monde Diplomatique*, September 1, 2011, <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2011/09/DELTOMBE/20943>.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

What I highly valued from the comics displayed in the CNHI was how they provide exhibitor's commentaries that detail the creation process of the memory and imagination used within the comic in appreciation of the origin or initial purpose of the comic, and the intended social commentary within wider society. This is again exemplified in Dabitch's *Immigrants*, whose blurred or 'cartoony' depictions of immigrants avoids reproducing visual stereotypes, rather favoring an indeterminism that is representative of the complexities of individual statuses, journeys and emotions.¹⁹⁰ Further, the preliminary sketches and preparatory work are also included in the museum's displays, for example in Yvan Alagbé's, *Nègres jaunes*, whose sketches were selected and included for their fragmentary, recomposed and incomplete style;¹⁹¹ recalling Baur's assessment of migration museum's as "theatres for the production and communication of self-portraits and *sketches* of identity."¹⁹² At a first cut, the fragmentary and incomplete nature of some of the comics illustrates the liminal character of these recollections of migration as 'products-in-process'. A further interpretation however, is that the unfinished nature of many of the sources provided in the CNHI reveals the potentially amalgamating effect of ritualist satire that enables a pluralist space for multiple interpretations that are part of a continuing discussion or debate. The open-ended nature of these exhibits precludes the need to reach a consensus between the perspectives in *Immigrants* or *Nègres jaunes*, and emphasizes rather the common bond between the parties, and the positive aspect of their struggle as adversaries.¹⁹³ My critical point is supported by McKinney, who saw the dialogue between comic, paratext and historians' commentary as evidence of cartoonists "intentions to intervene in historical debates,"¹⁹⁴ and counterposes what Green saw problematic in the CNHI project that an "aestheticized representation might overwhelm the historical record itself, leading to classic conflicts between academics and curators."¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁰ Jennifer Howel, "Comics and the Demystification of France's Immigration 'Problem': Reading Christophe Dabitch's *Immigrants*", Vol. 24, Iss. 1, 2016. 25

¹⁹¹ "Albums - Bande Dessinée et Immigration. 1913-2013 | Musée National de L'histoire de L'immigration."

¹⁹² "Baur_Imagining-a-Community.pdf." 20, translation and emphasis mine

¹⁹³ Mouffe, *On the Political* 20

¹⁹⁴ Mark McKinney, *Redrawing French Empire in Comics*. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013a) 21-22

¹⁹⁵ Green, "A French Ellis Island?" 248

The depiction through comics of potentially diverging or controversial historical or mnemonic events from artists shows the reflective and instructive capacity of satirical comics. Comment on such forms from historians serves also as “cultural capital and legitimation”¹⁹⁶ to broaden, perhaps ameliorate the reception of comic contributions among readers and museum visitors. This is suggestive of how the memory of migration as depicted in comics is incomplete, yet also open ended and susceptible to multiple, perhaps dissensual narratives that still resonate in the present. It would be useful at this point to underscore how ritual satire can in this way serve for the genesis of new categories (of memory) through an “articulation of contradictory elements.”¹⁹⁷ This has resonated further afield; in the establishment by Kofi Annan and Plantu, one of the CNHI’s principal satirists, of ‘Cartooning for Peace’; the aim of which is “the respect for the pluralism of cultures and opinions,” sensitivity towards the diversity of viewpoints, and “dialogue between artists to confront their divergent ideological perceptions through a critical and ironic look on society.”¹⁹⁸

The CNHI’s smaller and more particular forum reflects a more transnational trend of agonistic solidarity present among comic interpretations that does not strive for harmony or consensus, but thrives on the friction between plural participation. Such representations may be disconcerting, but nevertheless allows such memories to be mediated in a communicative way; and suggest the agonistic memory community I claim is present in the CNHI includes not merely migrants, but establishes a forum for wider deliberation and call to reflection.

3.4 Comic as social action

This next section still broaches the medium of comics, yet analyses a potential leveling effect in which the memory of migration situates itself within broader French traditions and is produced among divergent groups. Let us recall, as above, the French literary and journalistic

¹⁹⁶ McKinney, *Redrawing French Empire in Comics*, 21

¹⁹⁷ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. 32

¹⁹⁸ “Cartooning for Peace,” accessed May 22, 2016, <http://www.cartooningforpeace.org>.

traditions have heavily mobilized satire and humor, favoring an ‘exposé of ideas’ over documentary style.¹⁹⁹ Further, comic itself is a particularly prized tradition in France; visible not least through the outpouring of emotion surrounding attacks on Charlie Hebdo.²⁰⁰ Further, the international comic festival takes place annually in the French town Angoulême,²⁰¹ of which over 60% of exhibitors in 2016 were French²⁰². Bouillon and Poinot noted that the theme of migration has appeared increasingly in satirical publications in recent decades,²⁰³ to be even handed, the CNHI exhibitions also recognizes how satire has been used as a means to depict the distrust felt towards migrants in the late 19th century, and satirize migrant communities, and as such does not shy away from the conflictual nature of the memory of migration or politicized representations of past conflicts.²⁰⁴ Nevertheless, I still argue that more recent depictions of migration explored in this chapter coexist with the heritage of French society; and suggests how satire and humor in comics allows a different type of integration that does not require harmony or incorporation into a master narrative, yet allows it to be exercised on the same plane as established patterns of French journalism.

I found particularly demonstrative examples of this in my research, namely Jose Munoz, Argentinian artist whose images depict a satirical version of Albert Camus’ *L’Etranger*, or the museum’s depiction of the protests against the Algerian war which reflect the work of Alain Frappier *Dans l’ombre de Charonne*²⁰⁵ on the subject. As opposed to analyzing satire for their purpose or social commentary as above, this rendition suggests that comics themselves may serve as a

¹⁹⁹ Albert, P.(1977). *La France, les français et leurs presses*. Paris: Centre National d’Art et de Culture George Pompidou. 39

²⁰⁰ “Attentat à Charlie Hebdo : émotion et indignation place de la République à Paris,” *leparisien.fr*, January 7, 2015, <http://www.leparisien.fr/charlie-hebdo/attentat-a-charlie-hebdo-emotion-et-indignation-place-de-la-republique-a-paris-07-01-2015-4427121.php>.

²⁰¹ “France Takes Its Comics Very Seriously,” *BBC*, February 16, 2008, sec. From Our Own Correspondent, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/7246634.stm.

²⁰² “Festival International de La Bande Dessinée d’Angoulême -,” accessed May 22, 2016, <http://www.bdangoulemepro.com/page-professionnels,exposants-2016,3.html>. Transcription and calculation mine

²⁰³ Gilles Ollivier, “L’immigration dans la BD française,” *Hommes et migrations. Revue française de référence sur les dynamiques migratoires*, no. 1294 (November 1, 2011): 120–23. 120

²⁰⁴ Bull and Hansen, “On Agonistic Memory.” 11

²⁰⁵ “Dans L’ombre de Charonne | Le Magazine : Beaux Livres | Musée de L’histoire de L’immigration,” accessed April 26, 2016, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/magazine/2014/3/dans-l-ombre-de-charonne>.

collectable item for historians; described by Anne-Hélène Hoog as couriers of images, of meaning and indisputably, of history.²⁰⁶ They serve as tools with which one can analyze the place of migration in cultural practices; responding to questions yet also enabling the emergence of new questions and a “flourishing of mnemonic narratives” through comics.²⁰⁷ This points to the value of comics in a museum space to invest new meaning to comics and art forms and render the history and memory of migration as an arena of social action in which new tools of memory can emerge. This exemplifies ritual’s capacity to usher in new possibilities by contributing to the recognition of migration in France’s history through alternative media channels and subcultures that have the potential to reach people across social categories, especially young people.²⁰⁸

This is valuable, given the large percentage of pupils in France’s school system themselves of migrant descent,²⁰⁹ and of differing social and linguistic backgrounds. Through my interaction with the museum, I was struck by the visual force of many of the exhibits that use satire, and as well as seeing multiple school visits during my time there, also read comments in the museum response books of the ability to appreciate the exhibits whilst not speaking French. Through the CNHI archives I found secondary sources of how teachers in several schools in Saint Denis, a multicultural Parisian suburb used comics to encourage migrant pupils to share their migratory experiences and memories as part of FLE (French as a foreign language) class.²¹⁰ This has also been noted as an important pedagogic activity to broach societal problems as part of the ‘Cartooning for Peace’ movement²¹¹. Scaled to the museum, I argue that comic and satirical exhibitions creates the ritual setting that artists, students or museum visitors, orientate themselves

²⁰⁶ Hélène Bouillon and Marie Poinso, “Quand la bande dessinée s’empare de la mémoire,” *Hommes et migrations. Revue française de référence sur les dynamiques migratoires*, no. 1303 (July 1, 2013): 164–69. 164,

²⁰⁷ Ibid; 165

²⁰⁸ Ollivier, “L’immigration dans la BD française.” 120

²⁰⁹ “Insee - Enseignement-Éducation - 18 000 Élèves de Moins Dans La Région D’ici À 2030,” accessed May 5, 2016, http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/document.asp?reg_id=13&ref_id=22455.

²¹⁰ “FLS / FLE (Français Langue étrangère/Français Langue Seconde) | Musée National de L’histoire de L’immigration,” accessed April 26, 2016, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/sequences-pedagogiques-par-discipline-ou-domaine-d-activites/fls/fle-francais-langue-etrangere/francais-langue-seconde>.

²¹¹ “Cartooning for Peace.”

to a collective experience, to France and its literary and educative traditions. This certainly speaks to my rendition of mimetic social action or solidarity; and the comic illustrations of migration in the CNHI that replicate established French tradition are “almost the same but not quite”;²¹² leveling and releasing tension between unrelated entities or social categories through a medium that knows know linguistic parameters. This points once more to the paradigm of the CNHI not being one of reconciling the memory of migration with a substantive national memory, but one of agonistic plurality devoid of hierarchical markers.

In 2002 comics were officially recognized in France as a pedagogic tool for primary and secondary schools under the rubric of visual art,²¹³ allowing teachers to use comics as historical documents and teaching tools. The success of the work *Maus* by Art Spiegelman or Vincent Marie’s *La Grande Guerre dans la bande dessinée de 1914 à nos jours* are testament to such an infiltration of comics as a pedagogical tool, and this shows how the ritual of satire can serve as an experimental pedagogical accomplice for the transmission of history, memory, and the cultural and literary contributions of migration in France. Many of the works displayed by the CNHI make up the list of recommended reading material provided by the Ministry of Education, for example Quitter Saigon from *Clément Baloup*, *Marguerite Abouet’s* Aya de Yopougon L’Ange de la Retirada by *Serguei Dounovetx et Paco Roca*.²¹⁴ My critical point here therefore is not that this small pedagogical development testifies how migration has successfully infiltrated France’s mnemo-historical conscious, but that it points to how the memory of migration may becoming visible and easing tensions through certain subcultures. As Ramadan rightly notes, “if a curriculum does not recognize certain parents’ contribution to society, how can we pretend that it respects their children?”²¹⁵ and the above example suggests increased acknowledgement of how comic forms of

²¹² Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*. 122

²¹³ “Arts Du Visuel,” Document, *Éduscol, Le Site Des Professionnels de L’éducation*, accessed April 26, 2016, http://eduscol.education.fr/histoiredesarts/ressources/grands-domaines-artistiques/Arts_visuel.

²¹⁴ “Lectures Pour Les Collégiens - « Lectures Pour Les Collégiens » - Éduscol,” accessed April 26, 2016, <http://eduscol.education.fr/cid60809/liste-de-lectures-pour-les-collegiens.html>.

²¹⁵ Ramadan, “Fear Will Only Fuel the Riots” *The Guardian*, November 2012, 2005, 32.

memory can have significant creative, cathartic and dialogical capacity. This is further demonstrative in the CNHI in the work of Marguerite Abouet, whose comic strips depicting her memories of migration from the Ivory Coast include blank speech bubbles to invite visitors to reflect on what the comic characters and artists wanted to say. This chimes again with the words of historian and curator Peggy Derder, one of my interviewees, who saw the potential of comics to reflect on the perspective of certain artists or groups and their individual and collective experiences and thus move on from the immigrant as invisible or at best a background figure in comics to a central and active character²¹⁶.

The artistic platform that the CNHI provides, in which migrants and non-migrants alike contribute through the various exhibitions discussed above to satirical and comical depictions of migration, shows how the mobilization of ritual satire does not hierarchize between groups or create enemies or hostility; yet produces an agonistic channel for the expression of memory that thrives on difference; against what Blickstein saw as an institutional downplaying of “controversial ethnic, racial and postcolonial differences” in the museum.²¹⁷ Importantly, if my claim that comics appear as testimony to the history of migration holds, then the latter reciprocally contributes to the history and development of comic strips, notably with regard to the circulation of artists, cultures and ideas that form this so called ‘9th art’.²¹⁸ One of my interviewees also felt that this particular axis of work, and the circulation of the *Bandes Dessinées*’ exhibition since autumn has contributed to a more systematic and solid establishment of the museum’s travelling exhibitions. This puts importance not only on how the memory of migration can enter into dialogue with ‘grand narratives’ through the substantial contributions of ritual satire discussed; but also methodologically through the mechanisms and museological techniques used.

²¹⁶ Peggy Derder, “La bande dessinée, alliée pédagogique de la transmission de l’histoire de l’immigration,” *Hommes et migrations. Revue française de référence sur les dynamiques migratoires*, no. 1303 (July 1, 2013): 170–71.170

²¹⁷ Tamar Blickstein, ‘Forgetful ‘Sites of Memory’: Immigration Museums and the Use of Public Memory,’ *The New School Psychology Bulletin*, 6: 15-31, 16

²¹⁸ “Albums - Bande Dessinée et Immigration. 1913-2013 | Musée National de L’histoire de L’immigration.”

Many of the CNHI exhibitors using satire, street art or comics also contributed to the ‘Changer des regards’ initiative exercised through the Ministry for Culture,²¹⁹ contributed to the European Heritage Days 2015,²²⁰ and the ‘Cartooning for Peace movement,’ presided by Plantu;²²¹ aimed at understanding and debate on the political and cultural issues surrounding migration and other societal issues. This adds further impetus to the claim that ritual satire may allow a larger public to legitimately compare the aesthetic contributions of comics to those of historical texts, and become open to the diverse mnemonic and patrimonial functions of comics relating to migration and migrants in all their plurality.²²² This is also visible in recent movement of British street artist Banksy; whose critique of the use of teargas in migrant camps in Calais was articulated through street art resurrecting scene’s from Victor Hugo’s emblematic (and particularly French) *Les Misérables*,²²³ further emphasizing how attention to artistic reproductions can increase dynamism between political contestation, critical expression and artistic heritage.

This has significant suggestion of how subculture might be serving as a force of integration itself; yet not in pursuit of a master narrative or homogenized or romanticized representation of migration, but “a theatre for the production and communication of self-portraits and sketches of identity;”²²⁴ and a space of principled agonism.

²¹⁹ “Discours de Fleur Pellerin Prononcé À L’occasion de « Migrations. 12h Pour Changer de Regard » Au Musée National de l’Histoire de l’Immigration, Paris, 12 Septembre 2015 - Ministère de La Culture et de La Communication,” accessed May 9, 2016, <http://www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr/Presse/Discours/Discours-de-Fleur-Pellerin-prononce-a-l-occasion-de-Migrations.-12h-pour-changer-de-regard-au-Musee-National-de-l-Histoire-de-l-Immigration-Paris-12-septembre-2015>.

²²⁰ “Les Journées Européennes Du Patrimoine À Paris et France,” *Site Officiel Du Tourisme En France*, accessed April 21, 2016, <http://france.fr/fr/agenda/journees-europeennes-patrimoine>.

²²¹ “Cartooning for Peace.”

²²² Ollivier, “L’immigration dans la BD française.” 120

²²³ “Banksy ‘The Misérables’ in London, UK,” *Street Art News*, accessed May 23, 2016, <http://www.streetartnews.net/2016/01/banksy-the-miserables-in-london-uk.html>.

²²⁴ Baur ‘Imagining a Community of Immigrants’ 20

Concluding Thoughts

By taking issue with viewing memory in an exclusively national frame, or as a means of transition towards a final reconfiguration or integration, my conceptual and empirical contributions painted a different picture, advocating for the interminability of memory to be acknowledged in its own right. A picture not of consensus or reconfiguration but agonistic plurality; in which incompleteness and ongoing debate paradoxically turns out to be a strategy in itself. In conjunction with ritual, I claimed the existence of a memoryscape in which agonistic encounters were able to take form through bringing various actors into discussion and a certain level of catharsis by way of social critique and action as an alternative to violence. By allowing contention in its very nature, the CNHI neither harmonizes migration into a national frame, nor merely problematizes its absence. Rather, it allows exploration of the alternative spaces where these contentious memories appear, in virtue of their difference; offering a contemplative middle ground and a more nuanced view than migration museums as being either integrative or antagonistic.

The agonistic pattern in the museum became visible through analyzing the prevalent use of artistic expression, satire, the buildings own contentious origin, and its polemic occupation and resignation. Sustained deliberation in relation to colonization, decolonization, immigration and contemporary integration were shown to be manifest in these examples, and further assisted me to pick apart what I maintain as a paradigm of critical reflection. This has been suggestive in the way that memory can promote solidarity and dialogue between entities that might otherwise be considered enemies, and were perhaps previously deemed so. My appropriation of agonism has contributed insight regarding the study of migration into how a contractual adherence to a host society can develop among ‘adversaries’ in spite of their divergent ‘routes’ or agendas, yet which is not solicited through outright assimilation into a master narrative, but a different kind of integration viewable through intervention in existing traditions, debates and grievances.

The consideration of ritual throughout this project has advanced my understanding of how we can consider migration museums not as elitist repositories but as institutions that facilitate collective experiences between various participants beyond strict sociocultural or political divisions; in this case artists, migrants and those involved in the museum projects. This gave insight into how ritual is acquired through reflection and critique, but additionally revealed the creation of new ritual activity through the memory of migration that is not dictated by existing doctrine but through expression, deliberation and ‘social action’. Within the intertwining disciplines of memory and migration this has further ramifications, in which increased reflexivity and criticality avoids reifying the evolution of this field of inquiry into a prescribed blue print, but rather an organic and contemplative object of analysis.

Analyzing how the memory of migration can be seen to thrive on a foundation that is agonistic can be instrumental in “constructing visions of the past that support visions of the future embracing distinctive group identities...a hopeful, perhaps wildly optimistic, recognition that it may be possible to create communities of memory even from pasts as complex, contestational, and divisive as those of Germany, South Africa, the Balkans, the American South, Indians in the United States and Mexico, and many others.”²²⁵ The implications of my conceptual endeavors have served as a valuable tool for sociocultural analysis which shows that social bonds are constantly rearticulated and forged, even on the grounds of contentious pasts; further attuning with the fluidity and malleability of memory. This is a valuable assessment in a time where social bonding and international organizations need to be reinforced in the prevalence of antagonism and hostility.

The paradigm I have explored in this thesis that does not seek an integrative harmony of migrants, nor diverts attention from socially prevalent issues or difficult situations goes some way

²²⁵ Jacob Climo and Maria G. Cattell, *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, c2002., n.d.). 36

to counter the tension in speaking of a sanctioned institution certainly driven by its own agendas. Among the divergent groups assessed in this project as ritual participants, my considerations are that the institution's agonistic plurality is most visibly harnessed by artists, satirists and migrants who use it as a space of expression and debate. Given that these participants are shown to interact and intertwine in further networks and public arenas which serve as organic forums in their own right, this further diffuses the underlying pressure of speaking of a dissensual memory community within an official institution. The opening up of different social spaces revealed in my exploratory project can prove a vital tool for future endeavors and a way to pin down how institutions can mediate and create connections and appropriations beyond the intended audience and functions. Seeing the purchase of agonistic memory community in the CNHI as a museological canvass that activates further resonance is even more valuable in an institution whose visitors are largely self-selected and where access remains a significant consideration if my conceptual reflections can be opened up to other settings. It is my hope that my exploratory case study has demonstrated the need for more thorough research that analyses the ways in which conflict can play out in sanctioned institutions.

Indeed, 'ritualized adversarity' was explored through political satire and caricature within a trajectory of French literary traditions. Moreover, this appreciation oriented the analysis of the memory of migration to what many studies thus far ignored; how certain mediums may foster a social and political discussion and the potential for integration, yet not in terms of a harmonized entirety; but by means of a subculture which is itself contentious by nature and favors a plurality of divergent and contentious narratives; quintessentially agonistic. This revealed how the memories of native land, marginalization, and existence between cultures can feed the imagination of designers and artists of various origins, and how such creativity can contribute to institutional and cultural richness and understanding of the current debates and issues surrounding migration and its remembrance; in virtue of its difference and open-endedness. Attention to the fine arts and satire has further opened the door for a new paradigm of museum that acknowledges how these

mediums can carry emotion, discourse or a sensitive relation to questions regarding immigration and its history as organic archives that do not preclude reason, cultural heritage or multivocality.

Specifically, further exploratory research could explore similar patterns among other subcultures; for example how political rapper's particular "following among France's poorest youth"²²⁶ addresses topical issues through rap and hip-hop. Further afield, exploring graffiti and street art in the UK, stand-up comedy or Turkish rap culture in Germany could further unearth how hybrid contributions of migrants might find a way to address collective experience; articulate agonistic plurality and maneuver in an organic memory culture that precludes fixity or reconciliation. The focus on subculture thus has further implications for the analysis of migration museums, where reflecting not only on what is remembered but on the *how* these recollections contribute through different mediums to establishing mnemonic patterns in their own right remains rudimentary.

Given my explorations, and reflecting back on the debates on migration museums, I am inclined to suggest that the reason this model of critique and debate has moved analysis of the French institution away from the 'homogenizing' assessments is owing to the dynamism and friction between immigration, colonialism and contemporary migration that distinguishes the CNHI from the Ellis Island site. Nevertheless, given the changing dynamics this thesis has unearthed within the French institution, a reassessment of migration museums paying heed to mechanisms of criticality and introspection orchestrated through subculture could be a fertile way to reassess which (perhaps underlying) paradigms drive migration museums in an age of contemporary circulation.

Perhaps this dynamism between existing traditions, exhibitory expressions, and socio-political contestation aligns with the value of the institution; one that indicates a transformation of

²²⁶ Suzanne Daley, "Giving Voice to France's Poorest Youth, With Rhymes and Beats," *The New York Times*, January 20, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/21/world/europe/giving-voice-to-frances-poorest-youth-with-rhymes-and-beats.html>.

the relationship between history, memory and heritage that through ongoing dialogue and critical reflection releases tensions between the three by conceding their irreconcilability. It is my hope that this project has laid a foundation for further research not only within the fields of migration and memory, but also relating to popular culture, diaspora, postcolonialism and cultural anthropology, in which increased insight could be gained from how social life and community building is visible through ritual practices; and the kind of encounters they facilitate despite the absence of commonality or consensus.

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