

Museum International



The Cultural heritage of migrants

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Editorial: The legacy of migrants

The present issue of *MUSEUM International* is mainly intended to review the objectives, phases and components in the planning of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration due to open in Paris in June 2007. Secondly, it fits the French project in an international context by comparing it with a selection of articles that present the work of immigration and emigration museums around the world. In both cases, we will explore and probe the historical legacy left by migrants, the subject in this issue of our Journal.

Our survey begins with an observation and a simple question: does the plethora of museum projects on migration reflect an attempt on the part of the public authorities to bypass the issue under the guise of culture and so ignore it politically, or is it an encouraging sign that the missions of museums are being renewed to include social sciences and history? The articles perused would refute the first assumption that these projects were conceived «for the wrong reason but with the right alibi». The diversity and complexity of projects implemented by migration museums, the variety of disciplines and competences harnessed by the National Centre for the History of Immigration in Paris indicate, on the contrary, a trend towards enhancing the civic role of museums. This trend is the main reason for the interest in and role assigned to the French project in UNESCO's international Journal.

The declared political and social aim of research projects on recording immigration in France is to shift from a divisive past to one that unites. The field of heritage has been mobilised for this purpose, following that of history and memory. The wish to delve into the facts and understand the consequences of migration is driven by the imperious need to form links and areas of cooperation between cultural groups in France. The replacing of the word "Musée" with "Cité" highlights the role of the cultural institution that is being created in today's social and political matrix. The purpose of the Cité museum is not just to showcase and narrate different forms of heritage in our contemporary society but also to address certain aspects that cause problems. By way of introduction to the articles on the Cité nationale de l'histoire de

l'immigration, and at the expense of slightly infringing on editing practices, we felt it appropriate to allow Luc Gruson, vice chairman of the CNHI to express his own thoughts on the subject:

“The opening of the Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration¹, as with all national and international projects, poses several challenges. How can it acknowledge the role played by immigration in the history of France and the contributions that foreigners have made to the country, how can it reflect changing mindsets so as to shed light on what it means to be French in a world in which the issue of identity causes tension and denial? This is a symbolic and a long-term project. Who better than a cultural institution, more specifically a museum, could fulfil this mission?”

The legitimate role of immigration in the cultural sphere and, a fortiori, in a heritage context, raises sensitive questions that nonetheless hold out hope for the future. The specific function of the Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration is to allow these questions to be pondered.

A national museum, therefore, but one with initially no collection of its own, but a museum that would collect all tangible and intangible records of the history of immigration in France over the last two centuries. This museum, original in both its theme and in the approach it proposes to conservation, is not just a museum: it is a national centre that features cultural events, a resources centre, an educational project as well as a network of partners.

Firstly, its programming of cultural events. The permanent exhibition entails selecting among the different facets of the theme. It is therefore important to show through varied temporary exhibitions that the question of immigration is not impervious but that it embraces many issue facing today’s societies and the world in general. Such programming must also give the opportunity to implement joint projects to encourage other institutions, not only cultural, public and private, to raise the themes presented by the Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration. On the sidelines of these exhibitions, creators will be approached to question our contemporary world and to propose an approach sensitive to these issues: the centre will house, in the true sense of the term, artists in residence, small-scale or off-site shows, itinerant events and workshops so that the centre becomes a living museum. Of course, we will have to adapt to the monument which imposes its own message. We will have to deconstruct, encapsulate, conduct a dialogue and punctuate to maintain the momentum of a Cité, in addition to the other research and exhibiting functions of a museum.

As a result, the Cité nationale's programme is not only a challenge because of the themes it raises but also because it shifts the institutional borders: it is not really an institution with a social mission, nor is it an educational or research institution, even less an arts centre. However, it must be something of all these things at once. It must simultaneously shake off preconceptions and establish social links while prompting a reappraisal of the relationship between scientific knowledge and artistic creation. Finally, the institution aims to involve civil society through its network. This is perhaps the major challenge: create a heritage institution that takes into account social needs and is not merely the result of a cultural offering.

If the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration can meet these objectives, it will become a place of confrontation, in the noble meaning of the term, between self and others in a national community. At least, it will have the merit of refuting the premise that migration equals conflict."

The French project is a model in various regards. It has drawn on a historiographic revival and on the conviction held by a handful of historians that culture is a mode of civic action in its own right. It challenges its team of curators to establish the scientific basis, legitimacy and consistency for their collections. Finally, the assumed historical legacy of the chosen site (the former Palace of the Colonies) is confronted with the search for staged events, new ways to present them, and attempts to establish new public practices that can endorse its civic role.

The future Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration in Paris and the international experience presented in the current issue of *MUSEUM International* reveal a number of features specific to migration museums. The first is the attention paid to migration processes, anthropologically and historically, and not to material and heritage results. The second lies in their ability to question and deconstruct often negative perceptions about the role of migrants in contemporary societies. The third and final particularity which emerges from the contributions of the authors is that these new institutions have a vibrancy driven by the need to constantly interact with society to draw on its cultural resources. In doing so, they can claim to be rooted in both history and in the living world.

The migration theme as raised by heritage institutions, i.e. by crossing over research disciplines and by not merely showcasing the historical heritage of migrants, seems to us one of the most effective ways to explore the many areas of social development and to demonstrate the specific role of culture in the development

process. Asserting the link between culture and sustainable development has been central to UNESCO's work for several decades. However, the operational programmes that have resulted mainly involve conservation projects and their potential impact on cultural tourism, eliciting criticism that heritage is being marketed. The work undertaken by migration museums is an opportunity to prove a set of theories whose merit until now seems to have lain in its ethical dimension. Reading the contributions to this issue of our journal suggests that the civic initiatives of migration museums should be an integral part of the cultural heritage safeguarding programmes of international organisations, so that heritage preservation truly becomes a key factor in sustainable development.

The present issue was prepared with scientific experts at the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration. Along with the present study based on heritage, UNESCO's Department of Social Sciences (<http://www.unesco.org/migration>), the International Organisation for Migration in Rome (<http://www.old.iom.int>) and the network of CNHI partners have together launched an international network of migration museums (<http://www.migrationmuseums.org>) to which this Journal is associated. The team of *MUSEUM* International has benefited from the combination of all these efforts in preparing this issue.

Isabelle Vinson
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

| NOTES

1. See the web site at <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr>

| The Political Genesis of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration

by Jacques Toubon¹

Jacques Toubon, Member of the European Parliament, is a former French cabinet minister and is the president² of the Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration.

Were it necessary to affirm once again why it is urgent to create the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration (CNHI), a recent film would give us an immediate and spectacular response. Rachid Bouchareb's new film, *Indigènes*, has shaken public opinion and caused political reactions that show how essential it is to make the true history of our nation known to all, and in particular the story of France's immigrants and the links between our colonial enterprise and colonial then post-colonial immigration.

Journalists, spectators and political leaders are discovering or appear to be discovering, with some surprise, historical events that historians have known for a long time and about which they have written, produced documentaries and undertaken research efforts.

This seemingly ingenuous surprise, so far removed from historical reality, demands that we fulfil the mission entrusted to us without delay. This is to acknowledge the place of immigration in the construction of Europe over the past two centuries and thus change the contemporary perception of immigration in our country and in Europe.

Indeed, history reveals the natural, universal and permanent nature of migration and immigration movements. The essential role it has played for our country and for the United States is an example. History shows that immigration is not a confrontation with strangeness, but rather, in the midst of many difficulties and tragedies as well as successes, a decisive contribution to our national identity and to European society.

Bravo therefore to *Indigènes!* I sincerely hope that this film, partly financed by state funds, will be a great success, for not only is it a form of history lesson, but also a truly great film from an artistic point of view.

However, to launch the CNHI project, we did not wait for our top leaders and public opinion to be gripped by this ingenuous surprise as we have recently seen on the television. For almost 20 years now, historians and activists have been striving to pay this tribute, to obtain this acknowledgement, to be able to tell this story to all.

In 2001, the project began to take off following a report to then Prime Minister Lionel Jospin by Driss El Yazami and Rémy Schwartz. The process intensified during the 2002 presidential campaign with the commitments made by Jacques Chirac, who went on to be elected.

In 2003, the government entrusted me with the mission to study and plan what at the time was being called the Centre for Resources and Memory of Immigration. We went to work in May 2003. So for three and a half years now, a small number of people from the Agence pour le Développement des Relations Interculturelles

(ADRI) team have been working on the project. The initial core group was enlarged when the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration came into existence at the beginning of 2005 as a public interest group. Today, some seventy people are working on the project, with contributions from scientists, historians, sociologists, archive specialists and demographers. We are a committed and enthusiastic group, yet very clear-sighted and highly competent. We have been able to carry the project to the point that at the beginning of 2007, the CNHI will be set up as an official public institution, and in June we will be opening the first section of the Cité, with the permanent exhibition called *Repères* (Landmarks).

Today we are gathered for the third symposium organized by the Cité. The first took place at the end of 2003.³ Its aim was to think through the issues of what the project could become, and numerous ideas, coming from the scientific community, the voluntary sector, and local authorities, sprang up in this very place. Then, at the end of 2004, a second symposium focused on the international dimension of the questions raised by the history of immigration and the role of immigration in our societies.⁴ This symposium was more academic and provided us with numerous elements of comparison. I am convinced that the format and content of today's symposium is the result of the contacts and ideas that arose at the end of 2004.

The CNHI will begin its tangible existence late this spring, at the Palais de la Porte Dorée, in Paris' 12th district. It will be expanding gradually, in step with the refurbishment work undertaken in this building,

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which to all intents and purposes is a historical monument. At the end of 2007 we will be opening the temporary exhibition halls and we will also be beginning our cooperation with the Ministry of Education. We will start with a pilot venture with a local school authority, the Créteil district, and will gradually extend this cooperation throughout the department. The beginning of the new school year in September 2007 will be a very important moment for the implementation of the CNHI's educational action.

However, the Cité will not be a school, a college, or even a university. Here as elsewhere, we shall play the role of a spur or facilitator; we will be seeking to give meaning to all that is done here, and to innovate.

In the spring of 2008 we will be holding our first great temporary exhibition, and in the autumn of 2008 we will be inaugurating the media library, the workshop areas and the auditorium. While installing the permanent museum in spring 2007, we will also be completing the restoration of the Palais de la Porte Dorée and inaugurating the central area, which will be a forum for artistic and cultural activities, as well as the home of the network of partners that is integral to the Cité. The report I made to the government in 2004 clearly stated that the Cité will need to develop and operate in a participatory partnership mode. It will thus not only be a cultural and educational facility, but will also be a venue presenting activities and research carried out by local authorities, by universities and research centres, as well as by voluntary associations both in France and abroad. Its partners will belong to and be working in the network.

Today's symposium, from a scientific standpoint, illustrates this participative approach. Many of those who over the next three days will be bringing you the fruit of their thinking, their questions and their research are partners of the Cité. They have begun to work in the historical committee or in our research activities and have contributed to the fulfilment of the CNHI project.

This symposium will be followed by a temporary exhibition in the spring of 2008. It will be the first large temporary exhibition of the Cité and its title *1931* will refer both to the residents with foreign origins in our country and to the apex of our colonial empire that the Colonial Exhibition of 1931 sought to illustrate. In choosing this pivotal date, our intention is to show the complexity of the historical situation and we shall be describing the particularly important moment in the history of immigration to our country when, in the hundreds of thousands, the newcomers acquired French citizenship in the 1920s and 1930s. We will also be previewing the dark period in the late 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s that was to follow this period of great openness in our country.

Perhaps today's symposium will give birth to yet another, allowing us to delve further into this subject. It is not up to me to say and decide what that will be; this is the responsibility of the researchers and teachers. I trust that this symposium will help us advance the thinking concerning these issues and will contribute to informing the public about this fundamental historical reality. I believe that it will be one more stone in the building of the Cité. This is a civic

task, and an educational task. It is also a political task, in the most general sense of that word, as well as a cultural and social undertaking. But above all else, I believe it is a way of ensuring, as any democracy requires, that knowledge is available to everyone so that they can live.

| NOTES

1. Opening speech for the symposium 'History and Migration: The Colonial Question', held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France 28–30 September 2006.

2. Until March 8th, 2007. He is since then the Chairman of the advisory board of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration.

3. 'Their History is our History', held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France 28–29 November 2003.

4. This international symposium, 'Quel est l'état des recherches sur l'histoire de l'immigration en France, en Europe et dans le monde? (What is the Status of Research on the History of Immigration in France, Europe and the World?)' took place at the Bibliothèque nationale de France 9–10 December 2004. The proceedings were published in the May–June 2005 issue of the review *Hommes et Migrations*.



1. Southern façade of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration.

| The Historian in the Cité: how to reconcile history and memory of immigration

by Gérard Noiriel

Historian and sociologist, Gérard Noiriel is professor at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris. His research concerns immigration, the nation-state, and the relationship between history and memory. His most recent publications include: Les fils maudits de la République. L'avenir des intellectuels en France, Fayard, Paris, 2005; Introduction à la socio-histoire, La Découverte, Paris, 2006; and Immigration, antisémitisme et racisme en France (XIX^e–XX^e siècle). Discours publics, humiliations privées, Fayard, Paris, 2007.

Throughout the twentieth century, even though France was one of the first countries in the world to experience immigration, public authorities continued to ignore this vital aspect of national memory, thus contributing to encouraging the French people in their negative image of immigrants. This is the reason for which, almost twenty years ago, I took a public position as historian and as citizen, of setting up a memorial site to enhance this dimension of our collective past.¹ As a result of the founding of the Cité nationale d'histoire de l'immigration (CNHI), this has now become a reality. None the less, in opting for a *cité d'histoire* and not simply a museum, those responsible for this new institution strove to go beyond the mere promotion of migration heritage. In fact the CNHI has devoted itself to the task of altering attitudes towards immigrants, all the while contributing to their integration within French society. In other words, this memorial project hinges on a wager that culture can be a means of civic action.

HISTORIES OF MIGRANTS: PAST AND PRESENT

Among the associated researchers and militants concerned with immigration, many have expressed reticence towards an approach that seems to mix culture and politics. Relying on my own experience and research on the relations between history and memory, I shall start by making explicit the reasons for such scepticism and will then propose some paths capable of preventing the lapse into difficulties of the past.

The crisis of civic uses of culture

To understand why the CNHI provokes debate, it is necessary to start by remembering that the idea of mobilizing culture in favour of the integration of immigrants and to 'change the opinion of the French' is not new. This idea was formulated for the first time in 1976 with the Office National de Promotion Culturelle des Immigrés (National Office for the Cultural Promotion of Immigrants), an organisation created with the goal of compensating for the political right or Conservative government measures to halt immigration. The same logic was taken up again by the political left or Socialist government from 1983. While these leaders had decided to 're-centre' their policy on immigration (thereby abandoning a certain number of promises made to humanitarian associations during the previous years), culture was once again solicited as a means of compensation. The expression '*noir-blanc-beur*' (black-white-beur)² had then been elaborated by government, media and cultural institutions to fight against racism and to favour the integration of second-generation immigrants.

These first two attempts, aimed at mobilizing the culture of immigration towards

civic ends, resulted in failure. The French have not become more tolerant towards immigrants over the last thirty years. This fact can be observed at the political level since the extreme right (Front National), which had not existed at the electoral level in the late 1970s, now regularly wins over 15 per cent of the vote. This can also be observed at the level of public opinion. In the year 2000, according to a survey authorized by the Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme (National Commission on Human Rights), almost two-thirds of those questioned estimated that there were 'too many Arabs' in France. Neither has the development of immigrant cultures had the desired effects anticipated in the domain of 'integration'. The uprisings of the so-called Parisian suburbs (*banlieue*) during November 2005 ended up confirming what several official reports had already underlined in the previous years, that is to say, that public policies conducted in this domain during the last twenty years, as much by the conservative right as by the liberal left, have been a failure.³

Reticence expressed over the CNHI is explained by the fear that the memory of immigration will henceforth be utilized as culture had previously been. Those who criticize this project consider that the present government is seeking to promote the past history of immigrants in order to legitimize the progressively more restrictive measures towards today's immigrants. They equally fear that the carriers or bearers of memory and the professionals in the cultural domain will appropriate this new site for their own benefit. Indeed, one cannot ignore that for the past twenty years the majority of cultural projects on immigration solicited standing government support in the name of the struggle 'against racism',

‘against the colonial fracture’ or in favour of ‘integration’. There is no other alternative but to admit that the results, here again, did not live up to expectations.

How to do otherwise?

One of the original features of the Cité nationale d’histoire de l’immigration (CNHI) is tied to the fact that it houses a research centre, a library, and a creative space, all under one roof. There, too, a wager on the future is at stake, not without risk. If the directors of this institution were content with juxtaposing the competence that they have already exercised elsewhere, the results would probably be disastrous. Experience has demonstrated, in fact, that it is not by multiplying exhibitions and events on immigrants’ cultures/memories that one can profoundly modify general images. As its name indicates, the CNHI takes as its objective the history of *immigration* and not that of *immigrants*. Certainly, there exists a relationship between the two. None the less, the first civic purpose of the centre is to help the public understand the historical process, by which individuals arriving from all horizons will become fully fledged members of the national society. If one could imagine the Musée du quai Branly, for example, possibly leaning heavily on live theatre⁴ to allow the French public to enter into contact with cultures remote from their own, that sort of approach would be nonsensical for the CNHI.

In actual fact, one cannot, on the one hand, advocate ‘integration’ and, on the other hand, encourage memorial initiatives that give a fossilized and reified image of ‘immigrant cultures’. A cultural project that takes as its vocation to

promote ‘integration’ must, on the contrary, stress the *initial cultural mutations* from contact with the host society. It must convey clearly how immigrants have adapted themselves to their new environment, how they have placed themselves in relation to the dominant national culture, how they have succeeded in appropriating it for themselves, often by modifying it to the point at which the latter is enriched through contact with foreign contributions.

To encourage ‘integration’ also means to shed light on the *diversification of cultural identity*. No individual is only an ‘immigrant’, but also a woman or a man who has a profession, who is anchored in a local milieu, participating in diverse forms of sociability (sports, politics, religion and the like). The individual can, should the need arise, preserve ties to his or her place of origin, thereby contributing to an exchange between peoples. Seen in this perspective, the memory of immigration is no longer in the service of a national ‘we’ turned in on itself. It aims to recall a fundamental aspect of the history of humanity, in emphasizing its positive aspects (solidarity, generosity towards others) as much as its negative aspects (behaviour of rejection and hatred).

The historian can play a role in the CNHI by diffusing this type of knowledge to the public at large. Yet I can note that, during the last twenty years, the task has been difficult. The main reason resides in the fact that history and memory are in part contradictory. The historian has the task of understanding and explaining the past, while the carrier of memory looks to promote (that is, save from oblivion) his or her group affiliation to better defend its collective identity. Memorial narratives

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are peopled with victims who require rehabilitation, and with the guilty who need to be denounced. These discourses are so very much more widespread today that they gratify the information/entertainment manufacturers, always in search of a scoop and a scandal, as we have recently seen in France with the polemics placing the victims of the Holocaust and the victims of slavery in competition.

One of the most negative effects of this memorial imperialism resides in the fact that it classifies immigrant individuals into stereotypes. The link that various media establish between Islam, terrorism, delinquency and suburban youth has played a decisive role over the past twenty years in the construction of a negative image of the 'second generation'. Yet those who criticize these pejorative portrayals through invoking the 'colonial fracture' only succeed in opposing the stereotype of the immigrant aggressor to the stereotype of the immigrant victim, by aggravating the confusion between immigration and colonization.⁵

The role of live performance

These stereotypes must be combated as they stigmatize those who suffer from 'no longer being perceived as full-status individuals'. And contrary to what the militants' memory enterprises believe, it is not enough to rehabilitate publicly devalued groups in order to struggle effectively against stigmatization. On the contrary, by typecasting individuals in the name of whom they speak as eternal victims, these spokespersons often further aggravate their difficulties. Numerous sociological studies have demonstrated that to struggle against

humiliation stemming from stigmatization, the best solution is 'to re-individualize' the persons concerned, by making publicly visible the diverse dimensions of their identity, so that in this way they can choose the affiliation that best suits them. It is also necessary to help them to no longer submit passively to the stigma by permitting them to react themselves against these negative portrayals.⁶

The social sciences therefore offer ways of reconsidering the civic function of realms of memory. They invite us to situate ourselves *upstream* from politics, to intervene there, in these places where the collective representations are constructed, portrayals that the players in society use in their daily struggles. If the CNHI truly wants to change the way the French public regards immigration, it is therefore necessary that the centre should encourage proposals that allow the breakdown of dominant stereotypes, in such a way as to recuperate real people, in their infinite diversity, behind administrative categories and public discourses. The centre must also support initiatives in order that those outside the political and cultural professional milieu, and who are directly affected by these stereotypes, can speak out directly.

The American philosopher Richard Rorty has shown that Marcel Proust's *La recherche du temps perdu* (Remembrance of Things Past) might be read as an immense memorial project developed by a man who needed to become a writer in order to liberate himself from those descriptions that had been made of him by people whom he had encountered in his life. Proust had taken up writing because he did not want to be frozen

within the frame of a photograph taken from a perspective that was not his own. To free himself from the regard of others, he thus invented a method of re-describing those very people who had described him. The CNHI would benefit from reflecting on this approach.⁷ It demonstrates that to change attitudes towards immigration, it is crucial to try to ensure that the frontier between the observers and the observed is not immutable.

To explore these routes, new forms of collaboration between the players in cultural life and historians ought to be encouraged. As a result of their research, the latter can enrich the memory of immigration, but they lack the competence to translate their knowledge into an artistic language capable of reaching out to a wide audience. This work of 'translation' comes up against the fact that it is extremely difficult to expose or represent these historical *processes* like immigration or integration by relying upon traditional museographical means. It is for this reason, I think, that it is within the domain of *live performance* that the alliance between history and culture has the best chance of producing positive results. From the nineteenth century, the theatre has been an important means of combating stereotyping of immigrants.⁸ Unfortunately this tradition has declined since the 1980s, in part because the forms of expression invented after May 1968 have worn themselves out. Without being able to insist upon this point here, I am persuaded that it is now possible to conceive of collective projects that facilitate the revival of the critical tradition of live performance, while avoiding sinking into the folklore of 'post-colonial' cultures for tourists seeking thrills.

| NOTES

1. Noiriel, Gérard (1988) *Le Creuset français. Histoire de l'immigration (XIX^e-XX^e siècle)* [*The French Melting Pot. History of Immigration (19th–20th century)*]. Editions du Seuil, Paris; see also Noiriel, Gérard. *L'immigration, enjeu de mémoire* [Immigration, Stakes of Memory]. *Le Monde*, 20 October 1989.
2. The word '*beur*' is jargon for North African Arab people living in France.
3. See the report published by the Cour des Comptes (state monitoring and supervisory body over financial affairs of public bodies and local authorities), *L'accueil des immigrants et l'intégration des populations issues de l'immigration* (Reception of Immigrants and the Integration of Populations with Immigrant origins), La Documentation Française, Paris, November 2004.
4. See Martin, Stéphane (2006) 'Le spectacle au centre du Quai Branly (Theatre at the centre of the [Museum of the Quai Branly])'. *La lettre du spectacle* (Letter on Entertainment), 20 October.
5. For the history of the relations between public discourses and private humiliations, see Noiriel, Gérard (2007) *Immigration, antisémitisme et racisme en France (XIX^e-XX^e siècle)* [Immigration, Anti-Semitism, and Racism in France (19th–20th century)]. Fayard, Paris.
6. For an overview of the research on this question, see Croizet, Jean-Claude, and Leyrens, Jacques-Philippe (2003) *Mauvaises réputations. Réalités et enjeux de la stigmatisation sociale* (Bad reputations. Realities and Stakes of Social Stigmatization), A. Colin, Paris.
7. Rorty, Richard (1989) *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge University Press.
8. This critical tradition perceptible in Yiddish theatre in late nineteenth-century Paris continued up to the 1970s, notably because of immigrant theatre festivals.

| The *Maghrébin*,¹ or North African Culture in Marseilles, France: between the visible and the invisible; between acceptance and repression

by *Émile Témime*

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Some quite old relations

There exists – and has for ages – a provincial particularity, and above all from Marseilles, in relations established with the Maghreb. It helps to recall it briefly. These relations are certainly conflicting, but they have never prevented the pursuit of commercial relations. Without exaggerating the importance of Marseilles' trade with '*la Barbarie*' or Barbary, several aspects should be emphasized. We should note, for example, the presence of natives of Marseilles in Bougie from the thirteenth century, where they had established a warehouse (*fondouk*), which was extremely active. We should also stress the importance, by the mid-sixteenth century, of the *Compagnie du Corail des*

Mers (the Coral of the Seas Company) in Bône,² founded by the Corsican Thomas Lenche with the support of the principal merchants of Marseilles, which set up three trading posts on the Barbary Coast. This marked the early stages of a relatively fruitful association with the Barbary ports, which was maintained during the seventeenth century by the Compagnie Royale d'Afrique (the Royal Company of Africa) up until the French Revolution, and present in Bône, La Calle, and even in Algiers. Wheat imports into Marseilles continued through its intermediary during the course of the eighteenth century, contributing to the supply of southern France.

Algerians were no doubt hardly visible on the quays or in the streets of Marseilles, with the obvious exception of the galley slaves, but their quarters were relatively isolated from the city proper. A citadel of Catholicism, Marseilles officially ignored religious minorities until the Revolution. During the first third of the seventeenth century, merchandise coming from the Maghreb was of little importance, essentially products from stock breeding (hides and wools), sponges and coral (mentioned above) and cultivated goods (especially dates). At the end of the century and, above all in the eighteenth century, trading had already greatly increased. In exchange for sheets, cotton and tobacco, as well as caps, called *bonnets de Tunis* (which the Tunisians re-exported throughout the countries of the Levant) there arrived wheat, oil and woollens. If Algerian or Tunisian merchants were rare in the city, other intermediaries, Jews or Levantines, settled in Marseilles during the Revolutionary period. The Bacri family, originally from Livorno, were among these merchants who traded between

Algiers, Marseilles and the Italian ports. In the eighteenth century, the family had settled in Algiers, but Jacob Bacri founded a commercial firm in Marseilles in Year III of the Republic, which partly assured food supplies to the southern departments. This trade could be glossed over rapidly were it not for the fact that it was at the origin of the debts, which would eventually poison relations between the government of Paris and the *dey* or ruler of Algiers, and serve as a pretext to send forth a French expeditionary force in 1830, the prelude to the conquest of Algeria.

Marseilles is probably the only major city in France to have approved vociferously the expedition to Algiers. Business had protected its interests in Algeria with the creation of companies which were probably of mediocre calibre, but continued under the Bourbon Restoration (1814–30). In what measure did the Algerians themselves get to know about Marseilles? The old Mediterranean tradition, which had imposed language courses in Arabic in Marseilles since 1670, regained vigour under the First Empire [1804–15]. A course in teaching vernacular Arabic had been introduced in 1807, confided to Gabriel Taouil, a priest originally from Damascus, and later to Georges Sakakini and Eusèbe de Salles, all of whom were Christians. The Arabic practised by these men was certainly classical Arabic, which they had learned in the Levant. But de Salles had acquired some land in Algeria, as had a few natives of Marseilles.

The population of Marseilles, in its totality, and despite its unwavering support of colonization, knew little of the Maghreb, or knew it poorly, and even less of its inhabitants. It was their material

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interests that motivated them, if truth be told. Even from 1830, contacts that had been established in Marseilles were more than modest: a few 'Arab' prisoners – an obvious result of the conquest, regarded with curiosity –, or the transit of convoys of livestock – strange world for the Marseilles populace, but commonplace for people from Algiers. The Algeria of 1848 was still a land of relegation, and the Algerian Muslims who had just been submitted to the *code de l'indigénat*³ could not move about freely. Extremely few of them crossed the Mediterranean despite the development of navigation and material exchanges. French Algeria, like the Tunisian Protectorate (from 1881) did not allow the initiation of a real dialogue. Colonization had hardly facilitated exchanges between the populations who remained distant and I would say, exaggerating slightly, even ignorant of each other; in any case, ignorant of each other's culture.

Some episodic contacts

The so-called 'traditionally colonial' relations that existed between the French and the Algerians – and more precisely between the people of Marseilles and the populations from the Maghreb – came to be modified drastically in the first half of the twentieth century. Throughout the Maghreb, colonization clashed with nationalist movements, which took on different guises, both under the influence of the Pan-Arab movements or the Islamic renaissance arising in the Middle East, and French ideas of liberty acquired and developed in France itself. The North Africans did cross the Mediterranean and in spite of themselves when they intervened in two world wars, helping the mother country, as combatants and liberators of the Midi of France in 1944, and notably of

Marseilles, a fact that would slightly change the deprecatory image of the colonized. They crossed it finally when there was a need for their hard work, initially single men, who went back and forth between France and North Africa and who flooded back to the Maghreb during periods of under-employment. At the end of the Second World War, they only numbered around 30 000 in France.

Contacts with the French population thus remained very limited. Soldiers or workers were confined in the majority in camps during the war. At the most, one learned of their presence when, wounded or sick, they were brought into the hospitals where they remained in convalescence. During the period between the wars, however, things were to change. It is estimated that there were more than 10 000 workers in Marseilles in the early 1930s. Undoubtedly they did not make themselves very visible. Coming into a country that was particularly foreign, they sought, in the measure that it was possible, to make themselves anonymous, to blend into the existing population, buying 'European' clothes at the local second-hand clothes dealer, working on the docks or in the factories where, as day labourers, they often replaced the Italian workers, frequenting the cinemas, numerous in this period in the central neighbourhoods, along with the other populations.

As is often the case, it was the gaze of the other that gave to this migration all its importance and all its singularity. A gaze branded by the colonial imprint, by maintaining a form of segregation which came to render visible this specificity: one thinks of the installation of a 'kabyle village' in Marseilles; one envisaged at this

point the creation of a mosque, doubling as a cultural centre. The mosque would never see the light of day, but it was rather remarkable that this project did not come from the Algerians themselves, who had regrouped in the city centre or around the Porte d'Aix. It is also remarkable that a Muslim and North African business office was installed for these very temporary migrants, as a way of helping, but also of monitoring this distinct population. Even if this population was small in number, it was acceptable for it to be the object of specific surveillance measures; and that it had its originality, notably in its diet. There still remained two 'hallal' butcher shops in Marseilles during the war of 1939–1945.

An immigration that became massive

The North African population of Marseilles was to change considerably after the French Liberation. The freedom of movement accorded to Algerian labourers, along with the increased labour demand, led to the massive arrival of workers, which hardly diminished with the upheavals and restrictions of the Algerian War between 1954 and 1962. Marseilles was above all a transition point, and there still existed an invisible migration: Jews from North Africa who spent some time in the camp at Arénas before leaving, for the most part, for Israel; Algerian workers disembarking discreetly onto the docks of Arenç, before being dispatched to multiple work sites across France. At the start there were few numbers of workers, divided between an unstable population that one did not know how to keep a record of, and a population that was better and more durably settled, of which a significant part already lived in families, occasionally with a legitimate wife or a

European concubine, at least in the first few years. The 'familial regroupings'⁴ occurred earlier here than in the rest of France. And the Algerian War only accelerated a movement which had already begun.

The consequences of this war were furthermore of an altogether different dimension. First off with regard to the importance and distribution of this population. The workers had regrouped themselves in the neighbourhoods of the city centre, as already discussed, where it was extremely difficult to control them. They populated the *bidonvilles* or shantytowns scattered throughout the city. The plan to wipe out these *bidonvilles*, applied in the late 1950s, responded simultaneously to a hygienic need and the necessities for police control. The *cités* or housing estates that were built, mostly in neighbourhoods north of Marseilles, were to have housed families of all origins. One knows that they would not get rid of segregation.

The components of this population and its behaviour also changed considerably. Family regroupings accelerated up to the 1970s. And the high birth rate of the North African families marked the city, even if, with the years, these families were to become less numerous. New migrants arrived, Algerians, but also Tunisians and Moroccans who did not always share the same attitudes and who did not necessarily mingle with the others. The old migration remained, but it was aging. The 'old' immigrants had become part of the urban landscape, as much as the children. They lived in the housing estates where they remained after their retirement. They often lingered outside, chatting in the courtyards of the *cités* or around the

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Porte d'Aix. Visible or invisible, it depended. They traversed years of difficult work, badly paid. They formed a segment of this poor population which demanded little, but would not leave. They went to the mosque; one should say they frequented the places of worship, to pray and to find themselves in a place that belonged to them. They saw the space that was once theirs shrink, and newcomers occupying the spaces that they had just vacated. They were the survivors of a world of work that itself had shrunk. They no longer understood the workings of a *cit * in which they used to have their place, settled on, permanent and recognized, and that was escaping them.

Traditions and demands

The youngest, who are French, and from Marseilles, are generally integrated into the population, for the great majority. They attend French schools and speak Arabic, or Kabyle, the language of their parents, badly. Here certain prejudices should be erased. Many of them crossed the barrier: they worked in service trades. They undoubtedly sometimes created their own enterprises with difficulty. Some, particularly the girls, went to university. Mixed couples were very numerous among the youngest, in spite of prejudices and administrative obstacles, and ruptures within families. Changes evolved as rapidly for the Italian migration, which was just as massive and just as miserable.

What remains is the sentiment of a double alliance, which does not always fade away. A part of the family remaining on the other side of the Mediterranean, the fact of having been raised in the poor neighbourhoods, the symbol of which is

obviously the Belsunce quarter, which has only been an 'Arab quarter' for a few decades. The 'kasbah', a commercial quarter that in the 1980s brought to Marseilles a veritable foreign clientele, is now shrinking. The shops are often sold or their boutiques passed on to newcomers, pushing toward the Noailles quarter, traversing the Canebi re, with others coming to take their place, business itself spreading well past Marseilles, starting in the Belsunce quarter warehouses. That there was a mercantile *bourgeoisie* of Maghreb origins is nothing new and only concerns a few. What is new is the increase, in such a short time, of small retailing businesses open late at night or on Sundays, even though the phenomenon is not specific to Marseilles, and has existed in Paris for a long time. It is none the less remarkable as a change in daily life.

Nothing in any of this speaks directly about religion, like that practised in Islamic countries, where the separation between 'communities' was (and is) *de rigueur*. This separation between communities lost its meaning in French territory within a secular system. Of course children of North African origin respected certain rules so as not to shock their parents. To celebrate Ramadan for Muslims or Passover for Jews had hardly any more significance than to celebrate a Catholic ritual during Christmas or Easter for Christian families. That France has become a multicultural country through the presence and respect shown various religious traditions is evident, and it has not changed a great deal in its quotidian practices.

Can one, for that matter, talk about innovations in the culture of the everyday? Nothing in the culinary traditions could shock the

French, who have long been used to *coucous* and *merguez*. The mass arrival of the *Pieds-Noirs*⁵ succeeded in popularising this type of food. North African musical traditions have gained importance, and musicians of Maghreb origins have incontestably attracted a new audience. However, this cannot be considered the trace of a lasting influence, but rather a fashion that has changed over time with a notably increased audience.

The religious Jew and Muslim have always been present in Marseilles, but in a discreet fashion. The great synagogue dates to the Second Empire (1850–1870). Since the Third Republic, the port has been a recognized departure point for the pilgrimage to Mecca. However, as has been emphasized, religion did not display itself, even among the practitioners. Now it has a new visibility, which is sometimes aggressive. The Islamic veil, which was rarely displayed a few years ago, is now worn ostentatiously. Is this a way to signal an identity more than a manifestation of an attachment to a religion? We do not take a position on this point. The wearing of a *kippa* by some Jews, often rather young, undoubtedly reveals the same willingness to affirm their affiliation with a particular community. The renewal and diversity of religious practices in the city, rendered visible by the increased number of religious sites, as well as the commercialisation of religious items, is a reality that we do not intend to underestimate. But it also has a political meaning, even if the word seems improper. It is a way of expressing the maintenance, perhaps even the development of new practices, of the minorities who are determined to assert themselves in a foreign world, and to express it with force in a city in which they have chosen to live, in a city-symbol of the

encounter between men and the dialogue between cultures.

| NOTES

1. Translator's note: This term usually refers to people from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, although it can also refer to Libyans and Mauritians. It has a particular resonance in contemporary France where immigrants from these countries constitute the largest ethnic minority in France'. *Harrap's Unabridged French-English Dictionary*, Vol.2. Edinburgh, Chambers Harrap.
2. The city of Annaba, formerly Bône, is situated in north-east Algeria.
3. Translator's note: Before 1945, a special system of administration, applying to the native populations of the French colonies.
4. Translator's note: *Regroupement familial*: a term referring to a policy of authorizing families of immigrant workers in possession of long-term work permits to join their relatives in France. *Harrap's Unabridged French-English Dictionary*, Vol.2. Edinburgh, Chambers Harrap.
5. Translator's note: This is the name given to the French settlers who settled in North Africa (most notably in Algeria) during the period of French colonial expansion. Most of them resettled in France (mainly on the south coast) after the colonies regained their independence. The largest wave of these settlers to arrive in France was in 1962, following the Algerian war; see *Harrap's Unabridged French-English Dictionary*, Vol.2. Edinburgh, Chambers Harrap, p.907.

| Immigration and Cultural Rights: political recognition and cultural acceptance

by Catherine Wihtol de Wenden

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Introduction

Immigration is not typically regarded as contributing to the building of national identity in European countries or within the European Union, unlike in countries with large immigrant populations such as the United States, Canada or Australia. In the latter countries, the idea that multiculturalism fosters democracy has gradually spread under the influence of theorists on cultural rights such as Charles Taylor or Wil Kimlicka in Canada or of analysts of multiculturalism, such as Stephen Castles in Australia, for whom multiculturalism is a component part of citizenship. In Europe, the notion of cultural rights tends to be associated with acquiring new rights to advance the democratic process. Theorists such as T. H. Marshall defined social rights, early on, as a subsequent stage of democracy in the aftermath of

the Second World War, after the initial recognition of political democracy. Today, cultural rights might be included in the final phase of a campaign for more civil and courteous society. However, most European countries, under the influence of the European Union, are today more intent on fighting for the effective exercise of rights (anti-discrimination campaigns) than on gaining recognition for new rights.

In the last twenty years in Europe, forms of cultural expression have flourished in urban areas, under the impetus of communities descended from immigrant families. Such forms of cultural expression have been associated with claims for greater political recognition (local political rights founded on residency, non-discrimination and citizenship). Is the aim to seek recognition of cultural rights and legitimacy based on the awareness that immigrants have contributed to developing the cultural heritage in host countries, or is the aim to recognize the political and cultural place that these new citizens occupy?

From cultural expression to integration in the national culture of host states

Expressions of immigrant culture began to be an integral part of French popular culture in the 1980s. In a country that has long fed on the ideal of centralization and on the myth of national uniformity, of the existence of a social contract and of a single language defined by the *Académie française*, this de facto integration into the popular cultural landscape may seem surprising. However, it is far from unique since it has served an internal purpose: the Ancien Régime with its provinces and cultural differences built up the centralized state to

more effectively manage these differences, and occasionally minimize or eliminate them; during the Second Empire it was fashionable to wear regional dress and practise regional customs in opposition to Jacobinism; isolated attempts during the Third Republic sought to rehabilitate cultures that were absorbed in the building of the Monarchy, and later of the Republic, by promoting the *Oc* language (Frédéric Mistral) or culture (Jean Giono). These attempts were followed by regionalist and reactionary provocations by the Vichy regime



2. Italians leaving the port of Genoa for the USA (at the beginning of the 20th century).

© Anonymous

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against the Republic. Finally, the regionalism that shifted to the left during the May 1968 movement (Robert Laffont) enacted the slogan «living and working in the regions» and revitalized regional languages such as Breton, Basque, Corsican and Alsatian. The aim was to put rural and regional culture on an equal footing with urban and national culture, to advocate a multicultural France with different languages and cultures, both within associations and in schools. Some schools and universities (such as those in Corte in Corsica, and Rennes in Brittany) rose to the task with mixed results since the transition from a popular culture to a practiced and universal culture failed to occur.

The debate on cultural rights with regard to immigration takes on a different form: the aim is to express political claims (the status of foreigners, illegal residents, police discrimination) through popular culture (theatre, «*beur*» novels¹, films, *raï* and rap music, dance and sketches), to include this culture in the components of French culture (e.g. the Berber language as a language of France) and to express personal life experience in French history (skilled manual workers, slum housing, council blocks, popular Islam, sit-ins by illegal immigrants). There is a high risk here of creating ghetto cultures and communities but this risk may be averted by also claiming access to a practiced culture, by rejecting «cultural» determinism which assigns communities to fixed lifestyles and by claiming the right to be different and culturally indifferent (through the debate on ethnic identity in different forms). The recognition of Islam as a religion in France (and not as an imported religion) and the recognition of local political rights for all foreigners would also enable these cultural rights to be expressed.

From the mid 1970s, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, and African cultural associations had already begun to develop the cultures of the countries from which immigrants originate, sometimes expressed as folklore through exile and through the teaching of original languages («LCO» or original languages and cultures, taught in schools). The aim again is to maintain links with the countries of origin, occasionally with a view to returning to those countries. «Youth» culture took over in the 1980s, promoted by «*beur*» associations, an integral part of militant claims to give young «*beurs*» their place as, in their words, «fully integrated and not fully alienated French citizens». Citizens' claims are mixed with claims for cultural existence. Other associations advocate Berber culture and Islamic culture, while inter-State structures such as the *Institut du Monde Arabe* develop Arabic culture in different, mainly cultivated, forms (e.g. archaeology and history, literature, cinema).

If we put this latter component aside, can we talk about a «ghetto» culture for such cultural expressions or about a «poor man's» culture as Richard Hogarth defined the English working class culture of his childhood in the 1970s? Is this culture an integral part of contemporary French popular culture and French history?

It is true that the culture practiced over the last thirty years or so by immigrants, and by the descendants of immigrants, is today an integral part of natural, young, popular and militant culture. However, public opinion is sometimes reluctant to accept this reality. The debate is compounded when the intention is to include this history in a museum, since certain museum curators may assume that such cultural forms have

mainly produced objects that relate to the day-to-day lives of immigrants (photos, posters, administrative documents, domestic utensils) and not art objects such as paintings and sculptures.

Is the claim for cultural rights justified?

The notion of cultural rights is neither expressed nor claimed as such. The phrase is more a phrase that stems from the upper echelons of central government than a claim issued from the grassroots players concerned (a «top down» versus a «bottom up» approach). The argument is often dictated by the intrinsic workings of democracy: the appeal to electors assumed to belong to different ethnic backgrounds. This trend is also explained by the inclusion of the history of immigration into the cultural heritage, by the attempt to lead a better life together and by the acceptance of immigration as a legitimate component of national history that has long denied its diversity. The catch phrase «their history is our history» which was the driving principle behind the launch of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration in Paris derives from a political decision taken at senior state level rather than from a militant claim, although over many years militant associations have sought to record the history of immigration.² In France, in the former Palais de la Porte Dorée in Paris, just as in the United States at the Ellis Island Museum, in Argentina at the Buenos Aires Museum, in Germany, in Berlin, in Cologne and elsewhere, where immigration museums have opened, the host country decides whether or not immigration history and culture become legitimate and part of a national identity that is not set in stone and with which the new entrants must comply, but as an ongoing process

that changes as the dynamics of immigration change. In Europe, this is a revolution since immigration has for a long time been viewed as a temporary response to labour shortages before it was acknowledged as permanent and final.

This recognition of cultural rights as a political project for society tends to be expressed indirectly through laws and through international bodies. The diversity of cultures has been claimed for over 20 years by the Council of Europe through various reports on schools, on the activities of associations, on equality between men and women and on the expression of religion in host countries. Cultural diversity and the fight against discrimination are part of the progress that the European Union has achieved in the field of immigration.³

The expression of cultural rights is also echoed to some extent in the militant calls to exercise the right to plural citizenship («being French differently», «being both French and Muslim»), to have dual nationality and to claim many affiliations and allegiances while declaring that one is first and foremost a national of the host country where one was born. These claims are accompanied by the call for equal treatment and non-discrimination. They carry weight in democracies through the call to acknowledge diversity through the existence, assumed more than real, of an ethnic vote, above all in face of the danger that poverty, which generates social and cultural divides, will spread among ethnic communities. The aim is not to claim or recognize multiculturalism as a supreme value of integration since the latter has been severely undermined by the failures of integration and of forms of terrorism in communities living in Germany, the

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Netherlands or the United Kingdom. Often, multiculturalism has asserted itself by default as a claim for cultural rights in Australia, Canada (where the creation of a bi-national country failed), or in certain European countries, as a response to the policy of «guest workers» who have settled in their host countries (Germany, Netherlands). On the other hand, multicultural citizenship, the sense of belonging to a culture and cultural integration are examples of cultural rights that have been won.

Cultural heritage and the spread of civil-mindedness

The inclusion of immigration in the building of a new type of heritage and the increasing civil functions of heritage institutions and museums result from a revamping of, and from the teaching of, national identity in many immigration countries that have at times discovered their national identity at a late stage. The acknowledgement of the role of immigration in a country's national identity, through the growing notion of cultural rights, reveals to a part of the population that today national identity comprises another component. This vast project requires us to redefine citizenship in the 21st century where the recognition of cultural rights as a political claim fits into the definition of modern citizenship.

This recognition of the cultural rights of immigrants as a political project of ongoing citizenship is only possible under certain conditions. The first is acceptance of the legitimacy of its history beyond the controversies and politicization of the debate. The second is the inclusion of immigrant rights in expressing and

promoting their culture among the other rights (political and social rights) granted to immigrants and their descendants. The third is the acceptance of this culture in the same way as regional or foreign cultures as part of a national and universal culture. We still have a long way to go to ensure that such multiple cultures become politically recognized and that the cultural rights of immigrant communities are accepted and acknowledged.

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| NOTES

1. In France, the term «*beur*» refers to second-generation nationals of North African descent.
2. The associations Génériques and Im'media, as well as many local associations or those specific to a given nationality or group.
3. Article 13 of the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, the Charter of Fundamental Rights under the 2000 Treaty of Nice, the EU Forum of Migrants (which no longer exists) calls to set up structures to represent Islam and forms of social inclusion to improve «best practices» for living together.



© Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration

3. Renovation of the conference room of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration.

| Portuguese Immigrants and Portuguese Culture in France

by Marie-Christine Volovitch-Tavares and Dominique Stoenesco

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On 6 February 2005, a bust of Eça de Queirós, the late nineteenth-century Portuguese novelist, was inaugurated in the western part of Paris, close to his residence at Neuilly-sur-Seine, where his life and career as Portuguese Consul ended in 1900. Carried out upon the instigation of the Association Culturelle Portugaise de Neuilly-sur-Seine, this initiative thus well emphasizes the ties that numerous Portuguese immigrants in France are determined to establish through the activities of their associations with Portuguese authors and artists living in France. Accordingly numerous cultural initiatives can be found issuing from groups and associations animated by Portuguese immigrants, similar to prestigious Portuguese institutions such as the Centre Culturel Portugais and the Institut Camões in Paris. In their diversity, the multiple views of the *Portugais de France* (as they sometimes choose to call themselves) emphasize the dual evolution that animates many immigrants and their offspring: on

the one hand, the desire to be part of French cultural life, through activities oriented simultaneously towards both their compatriots and the ensemble of inhabitants of their region; on the other hand, the desire to animate their filiations with Portuguese culture all the while enriching it with their creations and sometimes expanding their horizons towards other Portuguese works, without restricting themselves solely to Portugal.

Not being able in this brief article to treat the multiplicity of interests and cultural activities of all Portuguese immigrants in France, we have chosen to stress those whose associations are most devoted to their own initiatives and creativity. We find such strong, diversified investment in all that might animate and develop the Portuguese language in France striking, whether it be, for example, through its transmission to young generations (in public or associative apprenticeships), through the writing of poetry, novels, theatrical productions, or through the running of journals, radio programmes and, most recently, a plan for a television service. At the same time, one discovers a great diversity of musical forms, whether it be the dynamic folklore groups, or the range of male or female *fado* singers or even the very wide gamut of musical groups (love or rock romance, *música pimba* or rap). If the plastic arts are less developed, film and audio-visual productions play a progressively more interesting role.

For a better understanding of these different aspects, it is necessary for us to make a detour through the history of the Portuguese in France. In fact, the attraction for Portuguese writers, artists or scientists to spend time doing

apprenticeships or exchanges in France is long standing; however, before the First World War this Portuguese presence was found outside all migratory workers' movements. The situation changed radically with the engagement of Portugal in the Great War on the side of the Allies, which initiated the immigration of Portuguese workers into France. Their numbers grew rapidly, passing from 10,000 in 1921 to almost 50,000 in 1931. At the same time the existence of one of the longest dictatorships in Europe (1926–74), dominated by Salazar, led to many generations of Portuguese political exiles in France, from the period between the wars, among them several already established authors. Other artists also settled in France, those who, like the painter Maria-Helena Vieira da Silva, belonged to an older lineage of Portuguese artistic presence. Thirty or so years later, after the Second World War, the same diversity was found within a new generation of exiles opposed to a regime incapable of all democratization. At the same time, the freezing of Portuguese society accelerated an economic emigration, particularly towards France, clandestine for the most part, as the regime forcefully impeded legal emigration. Lastly, Portugal's involvement in an interminable colonial war in Africa (1961–74) amplified a series of contestations in Portugal, the exile of many political opponents, and the emigration of workers and many young people likely to be called up for military service. As such, the numbers of Portuguese in France, after having diminished from the 1930s to 1950, recovered very rapidly, growing from 50,000 in 1962 to 300,000 in 1968, to reach almost 750,000 by the fall of the dictatorship on 25 April 1974. Today, at the last census count, the Portuguese still make up the largest group of foreigners in France (550,000), to

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which, in our opinion, it is necessary to add their offspring living in France (whether they arrived with their parents or were born there) and who have most often chosen to be both French and Portuguese.¹

It is therefore not surprising that immigration of such importance took place over more than eighty years, with contrasting social origins and very diverse motivations for emigration, that is to say, bringing highly diversified cultural activities and initiatives: an immigration, on the one hand, of thousands of migrants who went directly from their still very traditional rural world in Portugal, barely equipped with schools, to a French urban life in full transformation; and, on the other hand, of political exiles, often from the urban middle classes, many having already been students. This was also the case for large numbers of new Portuguese immigrants who arrived after the 1980s. In a parallel way, from the 1950s, some artists continued to come to France following on the path of their elders. Some had no ties to the immigrants who arrived as workers. Others wanted to integrate themselves into the cultural life of France and Portugal, although addressing their compatriots. It was in this perspective that for over thirty years, the encounter with Portuguese associations was made, and a rapid review of the last forty years might serve to pinpoint three major phases in these cultural relations. During the last years of the dictatorship some exiles made an appeal through film, theatre, poetry and newspapers to support their opposition to Salazarism. A second phase started with the date 25 April 1974 and the democratic dynamic in Portugal, encouraging the rapid growth of



4. Cover of the DVD-Video "People from Salto" (Memoires of the Portuguese who fled to France in the 1960s). José Vieira, La Huit Production, May 2005.

Portuguese immigrant associations, while in France the context of immigrant struggles implicated the Portuguese in France. This phase continued during the 1980s with inducements accorded to immigrant cultural dynamics in France. From the 1990s a last phase began to emerge with the entry of Portugal into the European Community (1986), the evolutions in France and the cultural link assured by the children of migrants who had been brought up in France and who had also maintained – or renewed – links with Portuguese culture. Little by little, these young Portuguese-speaking descendants or

Luso-descendants, as they are often called, made the Portuguese community emerge from anonymity by participating advantageously in the social, cultural and political life of the society in which they lived and in which they were affirming themselves.²

What position did the official French and Portuguese authorities take in this story? On the Portuguese side, as long as Salazar exercised his power, the emigrants received neither cultural support nor social aid. Only the Portuguese banks operating in France that received significant emigrant savings encouraged some sports activities and rare performances, such as that of Amalia Rodrigues, celebrated *fado* singer, at the Olympia in 1966. The situation began to change when Marcelo Caetano, successor to Salazar, liberalized emigration, signed a new accord with France in 1971 in which some cultural dispositions on teaching Portuguese were added to labour clauses, multiplied the consulates and, in Paris, opened a social and cultural support service to emigrants (in response to the fact that almost half the Portuguese population in France live in the Paris region). This impetus was amplified by the installation of democracy in Portugal. However, after a few years, this dynamic situation became more modest and remains so today with, all the same, the support of cultural associations and some efforts directed towards exhibitions and performances. On the French side, besides Portuguese-language teaching within the school system, aid for Portuguese cultural activities (as for other immigration groups) had long been the domain of FASILD (Fonds d'Aide et de Soutien pour l'Intégration et la Lutte contre les Discriminations – Funds for Aid and Support for

Integration and the Fight against Discrimination), within the administrative service of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Portuguese associations thereby increased in numbers and activities in the early 1980s (benefiting, like all other immigrant groups, from both the complete freedom of association and the new policy of support). But the reduction of this policy, followed by Portugal's entry into the European Community, reduced aid to the Portuguese who had become 'Europeans'. By contrast, numerous local associations continued to receive significant and regular support from their resident municipalities.

Portuguese associations in France, teaching the Portuguese language and cultural activities

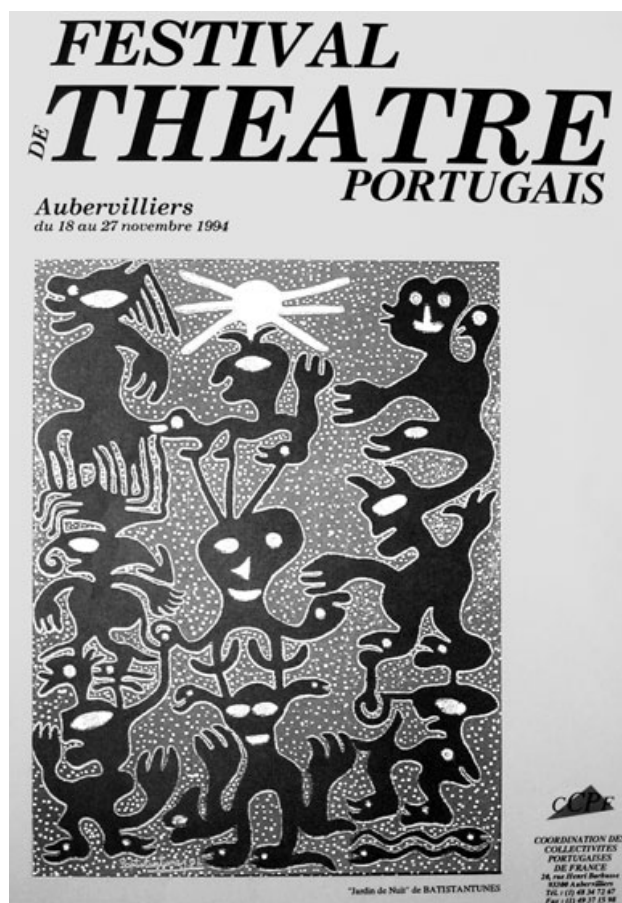
The Portuguese associative movement that developed in France is characterized by its forms of organization. Portuguese immigrants in the 1960s initially associated through informal groups, which invested primarily in folk festivals or sports competitions. After 1974, the most dynamic groups organized themselves into officially declared associations and implicated themselves more in the sociocultural life of their host country. One of their main preoccupations was to enable their children to maintain a link with their mother tongue. The Portuguese associations thus succeeded in obtaining the establishment of a number of Portuguese language courses in the middle and high schools (*collèges* and *lycées*). Simultaneously, teaching Portuguese to children of immigrants was integrated into primary schools through Franco-Portuguese accords or well organized by the Portuguese associations. If until the 1980s the Portuguese classes had been composed principally by students of Portuguese

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origin, today the majority of the 31,000 students who take Portuguese courses are non-native-speaking Portuguese. Moreover, some forty French universities offer Portuguese-language degree courses. This evolution undoubtedly translates as a growing interest on the part of the French for the Portuguese language and Portuguese-speaking culture.

Since the 1980s with the new laws which make the creation of foreign-origin associations easier,³ the number of associations of a sociocultural character has increased, and their activities have diversified, to include debates, exhibitions, radio broadcasts, theatre productions and the like.

Some associations regrouped themselves into federations. Such was notably the case of the *Fédération des Associations Portugaises de France* (FAPF; the Federation of Portuguese Associations in France) in the Paris region, which organized the second *Rencontre Interculturelle et la Journée Mondiale des Migrants* (Intercultural Encounter and the World Day for Migrants) in 2006, as well as a poetry competition destined for a public school audience. The *Coordination des Collectivités Portugaises de France* (CCPF; Coordination of Portuguese Communities in France), also regrouping several associations, organizes the *Rencontres Nationales des Associations Portugaises et Lusophones* (National Meetings of the Portuguese and Portuguese-speaking Associations), and also initiated the *Festival de Théâtre Portugais* (Festival of Portuguese Theatre) which has taken place every year since 1992, in collaboration with French municipalities and Portuguese associations. On the



5. Poster from the Portuguese Theatre Festival, organized annually in France since 1992, by the *Coordination des Collectivités Portugaises de France*.

occasion of this festival, a number of theatre companies come from Portugal, but most are composed overall by young Portuguese born in France.⁴

The press, radio and television

In the 1970s, the number of periodical publications of these associations increased considerably. In forty years more than 100 bulletins, reviews and Portuguese newspapers

appeared in France, though many of them had only a fleeting existence. As of today, the number of associative bulletins, reviews and Portuguese journals with regular publication is around thirty or so. The newspaper of Portuguese immigration in France that was to play the most important role in the associative movement and in its relations with French society, as much for the quality of its contents as for its longevity (1965–96), was *Presença Portuguesa* (Portuguese Presence) with numerous articles published in French. It devoted a major space to issues concerning Portuguese cultural activities in France (literature, teaching, organizational activities, folk festivals).

In June 1983, the first issue of *Peregrinação* – a quarterly review of ‘*Arts et des Lettres de la diaspora portugaise* (Arts and Literature of the Portuguese Diaspora)’ – appeared, founded by a group of Portuguese intellectuals living in France and Switzerland. It was to become the most important review published by Portuguese living abroad. Up until October 1990, date of its last issue, it served as the most vital link between the Portuguese emigrant communities and an editorial reference. *Peregrinação* experienced an equally intense activity in book publication, producing twenty-four books by diverse immigrant authors, from novels to specialized studies, including theatre and poetry. Since 1997, the bilingual quarterly review *Latitudes–Cahiers lusophones* appeared in Paris. Founded by a group of Portuguese speakers and Francophones tied to the Portuguese-Afro-Brazilian world, *Latitudes* places major emphasis on literary and artistic news in Portuguese-speaking countries and communities living in France.⁵ Lastly, we

should mention the existence of a bilingual Franco-Portuguese generalist weekly *Luso Jornal*, its first issue appearing in September 2004, also devoting a major space to cultural development.⁶

The local radio stations have been a natural extension of the activities of the associative movement. From 1982, with the end of state monopoly over the terrestrial radio waves, a significant number of Portuguese associations began to show interest in local radio stations. Meanwhile, in 1987, the French government decided not to renew broadcast authorization to three major Portuguese associative radio stations – Radio Club Portugais, Radio Portugal no Mundo and Radio Eglantine – instead attributing a single frequency to a commercial radio station project presented by the Association Luso-Française Audiovisuelle (Radio ALFA).

As for the public-service radio stations, before the explosion of associative (and commercial) radio stations, only one programme on Radio France, produced and animated from September 1966 by Jorge Reis (a political refugee who arrived in France in 1949), offered practical information to Portuguese workers. On Radio France Internationale, we should recall the programmes of the Portuguese section and notably that of the journalist Álvaro Morna, correspondent to several Portuguese newspapers. In the public television sector, with the exception of *Mosaïques* (1977–87), devoted to immigrant life in France, no other programme endured. On the Portuguese side, in November 2005, because of the financial support of around thirty Portuguese company directors installed in France, a team of mostly



6. Cover of the review "Latitudes - Cahiers lusophones", founded in Paris in 1997, and devoted to Portuguese-speaking countries and the Portuguese-speaking communities living in France.

young people, animated by Antonio Cardoso, launched the television channel CLP-TV in Paris, with specifications scheduling broadcasts in French and Portuguese.

Cinema, literature and the plastic arts

Portuguese immigration in France was to inspire film directors, writers, poets and plastic artists. In 1967, Nita Clímaco relates the odyssey of these

new times in his novel *A Salto*. The Portuguese film director Manuel Madeira, who has lived in France since the 1960s, produced two films that he himself qualifies as 'anthropological cinema': a short film *O Presépio Português* (The Portuguese Crèche) in 1977, and a full-length film *Crônica de Emigrados* (Emigrants' Chronicle) in 1979, both broadcast on French television. A number of offspring of Portuguese parents took over from them with films that have multiplied over the past years. Among others, we may cite Anna de Palma's first feature-length film entitled *Sans elle* (Without Her), produced in 2005, or the work of other young film directors shown during the October 2006 festival *Regards comparés, identités françaises et immigrations* (Comparative views, French Identities and Immigrations) sponsored by the Comité du Film Ethnographique (Ethnographical Film Committee), such as Véronique Mériadec's *Un siècle d'intégration, je viens du Portugal* (A Century of Integration, I come from Portugal) produced in 2004, and Maria Pinto's *Explication des salamanders* (Salamanders' Explanation) in 2006. During 2006, one could also see the films of young Portuguese-born film directors: Jean-Philippe Neiva's *Entre deux rêves* (Between Two Dreams) and those of Pierre Primetens, himself author of *Un voyage au Portugal* (A Voyage to Portugal) produced for the project 'Immigration Portugaise en France, Mémoire des Lieux (Portuguese Immigration in France, A Souvenir of Places)' based on short films produced by young Franco-Portuguese who have attempted to reconstitute the itineraries of their parents.⁷

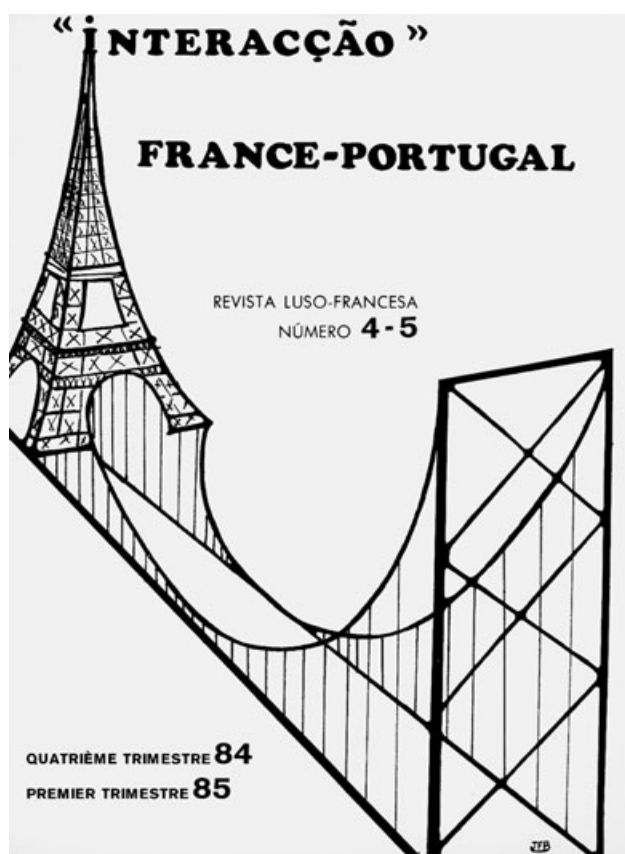
Before certain publishers in France began publishing the works of Portuguese immigrant or emigrant authors in the late 1980s, there were

a few author-financed publications that had already come out. In poetry, the first publication of this genre had been the bilingual poetry anthology *Vozes dos emigrantes em França – 1960/1982* by António Cravo and João Rebelo Heitor. This volume contains around 150 poems culled from associative bulletins and newspapers, or else gathered from school competitions, poetry recitals or festivals. In 1998, in the framework of a Radio Alfa transmission regularly devoted to poetry, the Cercle des Poètes Lusophones de Paris (Circle of Portuguese-Speaking Poets in Paris) was created, responsible for publishing their anthology entitled *Antologia do Círculo dos Poetas Lusófonos de Paris* with Éditions Lusophone of Paris in 2004. The authors of this anthology had the excellent idea to publish biographical texts on each poet facing their poems. The sum total of these individual career notices constitutes a collective memory of immense richness, making this compendium not only a book of poetry, but also a book of life histories and of history.

Created in 1988 by a Portuguese immigrant, Éditions Lusophone is the sole publishing house of this type in France, located in the centre of Paris' Latin Quarter. Ten years later, in 1998, this publisher also started to publish French translations of Portuguese works by the great classical and modern authors, including Portuguese-speaking authors residing in France.⁸ In 2004, this publishing house organized the second Salon du Livres et du Disques Lusophones (Portuguese-language Book and Record Fair).

Among the Portuguese writers and poets domiciled in France (exiles, immigrants or simple

residents), a selective number had started to write and to publish before their departure. The political and social context of their home country came to influence their writings to a large extent, with the evocation of their homeland and its landscapes, their uprooting and solitude, childhood memories, spleen (*la saudade*), fate or destiny (*le fado*), love and religious faith serving as their most recurrent themes. Among these writers and poets, we may cite the following: José Terra, who became a Sorbonne professor, wrote numerous studies on Portuguese history and literature; Joaquim Alexandrino, a poet, obliged to leave school early to work as a herdsman on the plains of Ribatejo, arriving in France in 1965 as a public works labourer; António Caetano, who wrote several of his poems in the jails of the secret police. Later these authors would recite their work on Portuguese radio in Paris. José Augusto Seabra, poet, essayist, diplomat, politician, sought exile in France in 1961, then wrote a doctoral thesis on F. Pessoa, which he defended at the Sorbonne in 1971; António Barbosa Topa, a poet, sought exile in France in 1969 to escape the colonial war; Alice Machado in 1991 (up to this point a poet only) caused quite a stir in the moroseness of Portuguese creativity in France with her first novel, *Portugal, années 60: à l'ombre des montagnes oubliées* (Portugal, the Sixties: In the Shadow of the Forgotten Mountains). In June 2004 Éditions Lusophone published the first anthology of poems by Cristina Semblano, *A minha Língua* (My Language). Her texts are written in her mother tongue when she expresses her most intimate feelings and in French when she evokes aspects of everyday life in her country of adoption. Altina Ribeiro, author of an autobiographical narrative *Le fado pour seul bagage* (Only Fado as Luggage)



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7. Cover of the French-Portuguese review "Interacção", published by the French-Portuguese Association «Inter-Action France-Portugal» from 1980 to 1990.

(2005), writes her text directly in French, adapted to the theatre. Her case is unique. Having arrived in France at the age of seven, and having been distanced from the Portuguese community, she attempted, at the age of forty-five, to reconstitute her personal history and ended her narrative by totally denying her dual cultural heritage.⁹

Other authors, navigating between two languages and two countries in their works, written either in French or in Portuguese, broach themes tied to their country of origin. For example, Carlos

Batista. Despite being torn between the Portuguese of his parents and the French learned at school, at times uncomfortably positioned, he became the translator of the major Portuguese-speaking author António Lobo Antunes, and published his own first novel *Le Poulailler* (The Hen House) in 2005 in which he wrings the neck of the smooth image of Portuguese immigration assimilated almost painlessly by French society. Let us also mention two women authors: Maria Graciete Besse, born in 1951 in Lisbon, professor at the Université de Paris IV Sorbonne, who has written several novels and two books of poetry; and Manuela Degerine, also professor of Portuguese, who, among these writers, is the most successful in recreating the universe of the Portuguese domiciled in France. Lastly we must mention the name of Eduardo Lourenço, Portuguese essayist who has lived in Nice for fifty years and whose reflective books on Portuguese history and society, published in France, should not be overlooked by those French readers interested in Portugal.

The presence and creativity of Portuguese plastic artists in France is important and long-standing. In 1928, at the age of twenty, Maria-Helena Vieira da Silva arrived in this country and in 1938 installed herself in the Villa des Camélias studio in Paris where she encountered other artists, such as Braque, Picasso, Utrillo, Modigliani, Matisse, and the Surrealists. In 1979, fifty years later, France conferred on her the title of *Chevalier* of the Legion of Honour. In 1957, the painter Manuel Cargaleiro also came to set himself up in France, his work above all inspired by the *azulejos*. In 2004 the Manuel Cargaleiro Foundation-Museum was inaugurated, dedicated to the ceramic arts. Numerous other Portuguese artists have lived

or remain in France over these many years, among them the painters Antonio DaCosta and Isabel Meyrelles and the designer Brito, the sculptors César Carvalho and Jaime Liquito. These artists exhibit either in French galleries or at the Calouste Gulbenkian Cultural Centre.¹⁰

Music and song

As for the other artists, we wish to distinguish essentially two situations confronting those artists within the domain of music and song: those coming to France after being chased out of Portugal by the dictatorship, and those born in France or arriving when very young. In the first case, we find Luis Cilia, refugee in France in April 1964, who encountered the politically engaged singer Colette Magny. With his record *Portugal–Angola: chants de lutte* (Portugal–Angola: Songs of Struggle) recorded in Paris in 1964, Cilia denounced the colonial war. In the second case, we should mention Linda de Suza who, after the success of her 1970s autobiographical song, *La valise en carton* (The Cardboard Suitcase), fell into disgrace, becoming in the eyes of Portuguese immigrants themselves a forgettable cliché. Following in the path struck by Amalia Rodrigues, we note at the moment *fado* singers such as Bévinda, who arrived in France at the age of three. Inventing a *fado* combining tropical music from the Portuguese-speaking world, she sings in French and Portuguese; in 1994 she created the Association Fado de Paris, recording her first album *Fatum*. Two other *fado* singers have distinguished themselves in France: Misia, with more literary texts, and Cristina Branco, with a more popular *fado*. We should also point out those artists who affirm both their origins and their

attraction to world music: Dan Inger (his real name being Daniel dos Santos), exposing *fado* to other musical genres (blues, rock, country), and the group *Diferenças*, with a rock repertoire of Portuguese inspiration.

Finally, we must evoke the large number of folk groups who have formed and produced mostly within an associative milieu. Indeed, every year, the majority of Portuguese folk festivals take place within the principal Portuguese immigration communities. At the beginning of 2000, the Club des Jeunes Folkloristes de France (Young Folklorists Club of France) was created, a group whose objectives are to publish a bulletin on Portuguese folklore, to organize conferences, to contribute to the creation of a documentary collection on regional folklore of Portugal and to facilitate visits of folk troupes in France.

Thus, as we can see, Portuguese cultural creativity in France naturally well reflects the story of Portuguese immigrants, moving from years of suffering to years of hope, not escaping the influences of the society in which they have assimilated and have lived for three generations. Characterized by an associative dynamism in which it has evolved and by its diversity of forms and content, this culture preserves strong attachments to Portugal, while at the same time being deeply integrated within French society.

| NOTES

1. Volovitch-Tavares, Marie-Christine (1998) *Portugais de France, un siècle de présence* (The Portuguese in France, a century of presence). In: L. Gervereau, P. Milza, E. Temime (eds) *Toute la France, histoire de*

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2. Cunha, Manuel (2003) L'émission des travailleurs portugais (1966–1992), des politiques migratoires au vécu des acteurs [The Radio Programme of Portuguese workers (1966–1992), migratory policies as experienced by the actors], *Les Portugais et le Portugal en France au XX^e siècle* (The Portuguese and Portugal in France in the Twentieth Century), pp. 49–64, *Cahiers de recherches*, BDIC, Nanterre.

3. Volovitch-Tavares, Marie-Christine (2002) L'émergence des associations portugaises: de l'invisibilité à la légalité (The Emergence of Portuguese Associations: from invisibility to legality), pp.69–87. In: *1901–2001, Migrations et vie associative entre mobilisations et participations (1901–2001, Migrations and Associative Life between Mobilization and Participation)*, *Migrance*, special series.

4. The CCPF has published several small repertoires of around sixty pages: *Répertoire des Musiques portugaises en France* (Repertoire of Portuguese Music in France) (n.d.); *Répertoire des groupes de théâtre portugais en France* (Repertoire of Portuguese Theatre Groups in France) (1994); *Répertoire des groupes de folklore portugais en France* (Repertoire of Portuguese Folklore Groups in France), (1995); *Répertoire de la presse portugaise de France* (Repertoire of the Portuguese Press in France), (n.d.); *Répertoire des associations portugaises de France* (Repertoire of Portuguese Associations in France) (n.d.).

5. *Latitudes – Cahiers lusophones*, No. 1 (September 1997) to No.27 (September 2006), 75, rue de Bagnolet, 75020 Paris. This review, which publishes triannually, proposes a number of articles on different forms of literary and artistic life of the Portuguese – and above all Portuguese-speaking people – in France.

6. For further information, see Albano, Cordeiro (1996) La presse d'expression portugaise en France (The Portuguese-language Press in France). In: *Presse et immigration en Europe* (Press and Immigration in Europe), *Migrance*, Winter 1996, pp.60–5. Génériques, Paris.

7. Vieira, José *Gens du salto, Gente do salto, mémoires des Portugais qui ont fui vers la France dans les années soixante* (People of Salto, Memoirs of the Portuguese who fled to France in the 1960s), double DVD, 195 mins., with booklet; the film *La photo déchirée* (The torn photo) (2001) 53 mins.; several short films and a DVD-ROM, distributed by La Huit production, 218 bis, rue de Charenton, 75012 Paris; e-mail address: distribution@lahuit.fr.

8. Among their publications: *Antologia do Círculo dos Poetas Lusófonos de Paris* [*Anthology of the Circle of Portuguese-Speaking Poets in Paris*] (2004) Éditions Lusophone/Cercle des Poètes Portugais de Paris, 22, rue du Sommerard, 75005 Paris.

9. For more information, see Stoenesco, Dominique (2006) Les poètes portugais exilés ou immigrés en France, de 1960 à nos jours (Portuguese Poets Exiled or Emigrated to France, from 1960 to the present). In: 'Lettres et arts de l'exil-émigration lusophones (Literature and Arts of Portuguese-speaking Exile-Emigration)', *Latitudes – Cahiers lusophones*, No. 27, September, pp.34–45, Paris.

10. *Présences portugaises* (Portuguese Presences), a series published by the Portuguese Cultural Centre, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, presents the biographies of Portuguese writers, painters and musicians having lived in France.

| The Musée National de l'Histoire de l'Immigration: a museum without a collection

by *Hélène Lafont-Couturier*

Hélène Lafont-Couturier is director of the museum at the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration where she is responsible for constituting the collections and creating the permanent installation. A specialist in nineteenth- and twentieth-century painting, she has written numerous articles on exhibitions that she has curated, notably, in 2003, Vénus et Caïn – Figures de la préhistoire, 1830–1930.

The Musée de la Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration offers the particularity of being a museum without a pre-existing collection, while it represents a fundamental facet in the history of France, long-forgotten, often neglected, and now in the process of rediscovering its full measure of importance in the varied appearance of a construction of national identity. Uncovering this memory, as Gérard Noiriel so affirms, to explain what France owes to immigration, is to give its millions of inhabitants the possibility of situating their history within the much more vast ensemble, without which it would disappear or dissolve.

The permanent installation of the museum must enable the public not only to understand the history of France, but also to be aware of the role of those who, within this history, were once foreigners. A museum defines itself through its collections. A museum without a collection cannot exist, so, the first priority is to question the definition of the heritage of immigration in order to determine the principal axes of the constitution of the collections. This subject is complex and

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undoubtedly without a definitive answer at this point. The other main difficulty encountered is the constraint of time, a tight schedule provoking rapid decision-making that must not undermine either the time for reflection or for exploration and research. A committee of professionals has been constituted, based on their very diverse training in, for example, history, history of art, contemporary and nineteenth-century art, history of photography, ethnology and social anthropology. Our work sessions, crucial and passionate, have given rise to extensive debates in which each member has contributed generously through sharing his or her knowledge and experiences in order to carry out relevant choices, as incontestable as possible.

The programme concerns, chronologically, the analysis of immigration history in France from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present and, methodologically, the definition, within that history, of the intense moments, the phases of rupture, the lengthy movements and the plurality of views of communities situated at home or in exile.

This history presented by the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration intends to address itself to as wide a public as possible. Based on this fact, the Cité must devote itself to being a museum of appealing history and a site where each visitor can seize this aspect of national history, for a long time obscured.

Plurality of views

How is it possible to convey a complex, sensitive discourse, on a sometimes dolorous history, in a

seductive way? Conforming to the Planning Commission's report, the museum has opted for a hybridization of views. The historical view based on archival facts culled from the past to the present, enables a contextualization of 200 years of immigration in France. The anthropological view relies on the contemporary observed fact to return to the past and to analyse, by taking from migrants' words, the evolutions of the identity concerned. The artistic view proposes a subjective, aesthetic, even emotional, interpretation of the migratory event. Through initiating a dialogue between these diverse disciplines, the museum hopes to assist in understanding, without imposing truths, and to open up knowledge without excluding new sets of problems. The socio-historical context thus finds itself associated with the trajectory of specific lives and with artistic interpretations. It is also through this hybridization of views that the museum hopes not only that this history will be rendered legible, but also that the public will journey through the permanent installation in a spirit of inquiry.

In deciding to integrate the creative artistic dimension in an official way, including the most contemporary manifestations, we begin from the premise that art has its place in a museum of history, just as history has its necessary place in a museum of fine arts. However, to what extent? Art constitutes an extraordinary enrichment, especially in its affective dimension, but it also entails a risk if it is poorly utilized. In opting for the acquisitions of contemporary art, the Musée de la Cité affirms its willingness to constitute a reference collection on this subject.

Newest addition to the family of national museums, the Musée de la Cité nationale de

l'histoire de l'immigration has just been registered in complementarity to these already existing establishments. The works acquired by the Musée de la Cité must therefore be acquired with discernment. Works which enter the collection must imperatively respond to a reflective and plastic requirement and to a certain coherence. In the domain of fine art acquisitions, the museum does not envisage, for example, constituting collections that are representative of all foreign artists present in France during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Furthermore, it is hardly likely that the museum would, in the future, dispose of a budget that would allow the acquisition of works by Brancusi, Chagall, Picasso, Kandinsky, Sam Francis, Hantai, Riopelle, Adami or Velickovic. Besides, these artists are already well represented in French collections. As the Musée de la Cité hopes to complement other existing establishments, such an acquisition orientation would not be justifiable.

However the problematics of immigration, territory, frontiers or boundaries, and roots are now central to the artistic approach of a great number of artists, French or foreign, residing and working in France. Apart from an illustrative response to the Cité's intentions, the museum hopes to study this production and progressively constitute a collection that signifies this phenomenon. Works which combine reflexive quality and exceptional plasticity will therefore have their specific role within the collections of the Musée de la Cité.

The recourse to contemporary art allows another approach to the subject. Thus the sculpture *Climbing Down* by Barthélémy Togo, plunges with humour and dynamism into



8. *Climbing Down*. Barthélémy Togo, 2004. Dimensions: 400 x 600 x 500 cm.

dislocations and the question of precarious housing. His installation (six superimposed beds, four ladders, forty bags, personal objects, suitcases, portraits) should have the capacity to surprise visitors, while evoking a painful subject. On the same theme, the work of Hamid Debarrah places itself on the edge of the documentary and the artistic. *Faciès inventaire*. *Chronique du foyer de la rue Très-Cloître* (Facial Inventory. Chronicle of a Hostel on the rue Très Cloître) consists of a group of fifty black-and-white photographs organized in ten sequences, each around the daily life of one man. Each portrait is a diptych (both positive and negative prints), accompanied by three images of each

man's environment. To evoke the daily life of these men who are neither from here and no longer from there, Hamid Debarrah met with hostel residents to explain to them the meaning of his approach. The executed work on the immigrants' precarious existence is produced with discretion, all the while signifying (through the interpretation of positive and negative prints of the same portrait) that the complete man is simultaneously from here and from elsewhere.

Certain artists' exhibits treat with relevance specific themes such as that of double absence, and thus replace more effectively the role commonly held by the ethnographical community. Kader Attia's work *Correspondance* (two videos and thirty photos) illustrates the tie that exists when family members find themselves separated, through a correspondence between photography and video, in which the artist serves as a go-between messenger delivering images, either by post or during his visits, to one or the other.

The ethnographical vision

The ethnographical object, even if it does not exist in and of itself, very obviously has its place in the core of the collections of the Musée de la Cité. Only the vision of a scientist, an ethnologist as it happens, creates the ethnographical object, as the object of his or her study. In doing so, we cannot put the ethnographical and art object into opposition, both being visible constructions emerging from knowledge that renders a discourse legitimate. The selection and presentation of objects is above all an act of the author who signs a discourse, a point of view, an analysis, which takes

precedence over nature and the quality of the object.

In general, we try to avoid the trap of 'the aestheticization of the real'. Consequently, it is advisable to rid ourselves of the presupposed aesthetic so as to give the object, a priori banal, characteristics of an 'icon' emblematic of an individual life experience, and capable through a discourse of evoking an emotion in the same way as a work of art. As such, as Jacques Hainard has written, 'the form, the aesthetic, the *wear* are not latent criteria, and the non-spectacular, the banal, the everyday find their full legitimacy over the exceptional'. As for the exceptional, it becomes ultimately anecdotal and non-representative.

We should thus be amazed by the fact that these 'simple' everyday objects can prove to be 'iconic'. The permanent exhibition will reveal to the public the meaning of such objects that do not respond to the criteria of an art object, but are the repositories of a way of life. So as to evoke the themes of the reasons for departure and the choice of France, the object is justified by its concrete testimonial character, thereby relegating the aesthetic character of videos, in face of the terms of the discourse, to a secondary position.

The accumulation responsible for presenting the selected objects from the start must demonstrate the diversity of circumstances and the status or social positions of migrants coming to France. To the 'container' (bags, sacks, suitcases, bundles, boxes, etc.) should be associated the following thematic groupings:

What is carried away from 'here' to 'there'

This section contains objects that evoke the territory of origin, the familiar universe that one is determined to leave. Added to the souvenirs (photos of a village, family albums, etc.), and nostalgia (decorative objects, music, etc.) are the desire to maintain contacts (address books, telephone numbers), even to the point of an anticipated homeward journey (letters evoking an early or later return), and the objects of a former daily life (furniture, the Russian migrant's samovar, the Turkish coffee grinder, religious items, etc.) selected for future homes.

Objects of knowledge and know-how

Migrants also leave with their knowledge and their skills, their training, professional experiences that they want to continue, to evolve in France, or on the contrary, to question or challenge (tools, diplomas, etc.).

The emptiness, and the lack of suitcases

There is never a 'void' in what one carries away. Even in the absence of a material object, one takes into account the immaterial aspect of what is carried away. Thus it becomes necessary to reregister the habits, attitudes and beliefs, the dreams and the mythologies.

The gaze of the players, testimonies and images

Given the issues that the definition of an immigration heritage engenders, it seems indispensable to us to associate the close and

distant descendants of migrant populations with this work. The collection of objects must ideally allow the recording of the memories of the object's owners. Without this initiative, there is a great risk of falsifying or misappropriating the significance of the object.

As a consequence, the testimonial account is equally fundamental; it is the constituent of the permanent record. It may take a direct form (filmed testimony of a living person) or indirect (written account or recorded oral testimony); what matters is the desire to allow the memory to express itself as the reality of a group or an individual, whatever its relation with historical fact which this memory permanently confronts.

Image represent one of the essential axes of the constitution and development of the collections, and respond to this plurality of views. By turns, the work of art or the historical document witnesses collective destinies as life stories, the medium of an idea as an accompanying tool to a theme or as a witness to it. The image translates the human dimension of immigration. The principal difficulty of these images, and specifically of photographs from the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, is the question of their context. In point of fact, captions are very often missing or too succinct, and always difficult to verify. Portraits of immigrants are most always found deprived of their history. Representations of the most recent or the most unusual types of immigration thus dominate. Particular attention is paid to the balance of images collected and presented, as the museum must find a happy medium in the choice of images exhibited. An equilibrium must be achieved between photographs considered quintessential or

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emblematic (when we are discussing immigration in general or more specifically that of France), and previously unpublished images.

Certain themes lend themselves more precisely to the visual treatment of immigration history, such as departure, arrival, the question of housing or again of work. If the universe of the *bidonville* or shantytown has given place to a great number of representations, that of the *banlieue* or urbanized suburb in its function as home to those who come from afar is at the origin of another proliferation of images. In this way, the humanist universe of Robert Doisneau is completed by the representations of a tougher, more violent world that has not always attracted photographers. The relation to the image has profoundly altered. It is now more difficult to set up an unrestrained view there. The photographic ensemble compiled by Patrick Zachmann between the early 1980s and 2003 thus shows the evolution of this *banlieue* in which he loved the ethnic and cultural mixture, as well as the evolution of his approach and his vision.

If the world of work triggers and structures migrations, there exist very few portrayals of immigrants working. The images that do exist are, in actual fact, less representations of work and more formal constructions executed in reference to it but without it. Too often the representation of work takes its interest from the picturesque effects engendered by the figuration of a trade. A great number of photographic reports of the world of work were carried out during the second half of the nineteenth century, featuring the world of factories, metallurgy, roads and bridges, transportation routes, public building works,

spinning and weaving mills, and the chemical industry. The men who figure in these images are often of foreign extraction, but difficult to identify. In 1891, half of the immigrants present in France worked in groups symbolic of the French industrial revolution: mining, iron and steel, or chemical industries. In 1931, more than two out of three immigrants worked in these sectors of production and, after the Second World War, the growth of the automobile sector was difficult to portray without their contribution. From the 1960s, the number of photographs directly linked to the conditions of immigrant life – work and lodging – increased markedly. Several photographers devoted most of their work to immigration, such as Gérard Bloncourt, Yves Jeanmougin, Jean Pottier and Jacques Winderberger.

Photography is therefore at the centre of the Cité's collections. In certain images, the separation between art and documentary is sometimes fluid and tenuous. The work of Thomas Mailaender, recently acquired by the museum, securely belongs to the artistic sphere, but possesses an undeniable documentary function as well, in relation to the museum theme. *Voitures Cathédrales* (Car Cathedrals) is a series of large format photographs produced by this artist who features cars 'without a destination nor port of registry, caught in a moment of transit'. During the summer of 2004, the artist worked as an engineer with the Société Nationale Maritime de la Méditerranée in Marseilles so as to be able to photograph freely the cars that embarked, loaded down with suitcases, bags, manufactured goods, and thereby transformed into improbable volumes. In this way he produced the *Voitures Cathédrales*



9. *Les Voitures Cathédrales*, Thomas Mailaender, 2004. Dimensions: 118 x 92 cm.

series, 'taking up the generic term invented by the dockers of the autonomous port of Marseille and which designates these vehicles which ship, by sea, tons of merchandise across the Mediterranean,

from Marseille to the Maghreb'. According to the artist himself, 'The title given to the series underlines the monumental aspect of these vehicles and confers the status of an icon upon them. It renders homage to these heaps of merchandise which defy the laws of gravity.... In constant transition between two territories, North and South, these containers on four wheels are the evident materialization of a concept of the frontier or border and the cultural proliferations that result there.'

It is by proposing these complementary visions, as so many significant overtures on the subject, that the Musée de la Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration will fulfil its mission of questioning the contemporary, in the light of the still obscure immigration history in France.

| How to Reconcile the Irreconcilable: the place of ethnology in the Museum of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration

by Fabrice Grognet

Fabrice Grognet is a project leader in the field of ethnology within the management of museography at the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration. Before the creation of the Cité, Fabrice Grognet worked at the Musée de l'Homme (Paris). He is the author of several articles on the history of the museum and its anthropological collections. He also curated the exhibitions: Greenland, Ammassalik: Contact in 2005; Tassili of Algeria, Memories of Stone, before the Desert, Art and Life ' in 2003, and The Voyage of the Korrigane: an Odyssey in the South Seas in 2001.

Conceived in nineteenth-century museums around the elaboration of collections which permitted the archiving of an otherness presumed vanished, ethnology gradually detached itself from the model of the natural sciences to define itself on the basis of new sources, to follow a course uniquely its own: the observation of the contemporary. Thus oral testimony, photography and film came to replace the 'testimonial objects' collection, envisaged as objective archives of humankind. The illusory quest for original traditions was itself ultimately transformed into a study of contemporary societies.

Between the conservative museum freezing the past into a 'state memorial' (Prado, 2003) and the ethnographical initiative, a continuous process of observation of identities in flux, the divorce seemed absolute: 'The remarkable thing is that anthropology is not doing so badly. And it is with a

sometimes bemused, sometimes tender eye that researchers and teachers look towards that which henceforth has become the history of their discipline' (Jamin 1998, p.66). Therefore, what might be the contribution of ethnology in a Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration, and in particular in its museum? Is there not a paradox, verging on a misunderstanding, in wanting to associate ethnology with a memorial institution? Can ethnology, as a collective undertaking, respond to the imperatives of memory? Can the museum itself respond to present-day concerns and to contemporary heritage?

From the 'testimonial' object to the testimony of Humankind; from the fieldwork to the museum; from the past to the present

From a historical point of view, by the late nineteenth century, ethnology was institutionalized in French museums, these 'realms of memory' *par excellence* (Nora, 1997). From the moment that the first fully qualified ethnographical museum was established in France in 1878, following the Universal Exposition of the same year, the very definition of ethnography seemed to be oriented towards a description of material culture of 'primitive' peoples 'without history'.¹ Even so, the collections constituting the core of the brand new Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro (the Museum of Ethnography in the Trocadéro Palace, Paris) demonstrated that the descriptive term 'ethnographical' coincided, granted, with a majority of objects belonging to 'exotic' contemporary peoples, but also with the archaeological vestiges of vanished civilizations, the facsimiles (life-size or scale models), human

remains, or representations of physical types obtained from sculptures, plaster casts or photographs. In fact, the work of the description of peoples was at that time subordinate to the natural history of humankind, and all the material items charged with the retranscription of the long march of humanity towards 'civilization'² were qualified in a generic manner as ethnographical objects. It has always been that the study of peoples and the ambition to conserve all material traces displaying otherness, as much physical as cultural, as much present as past, thus appeared intimately bound. The museum has since become the legitimate laboratory of anthropologists' 'office practice'.³

Concurrent with the elaboration of theories based upon skulls and serial objects, ethnographical collections have also participated in the elaboration of a French national heritage based on cultural elements derived mainly from foreign sources or the colonies, but also from French metropolitan campaigns. In actual fact, if in the context of colonial expansion the most current meaning thus insinuates that ethnology in a way privileges the so-called 'savage' peoples, the study of 'folklore' and European rural traditions implicates that no part of the world is protected from becoming the object of the young science. The study of the Australian Aborigine (considered the most 'primitive' of the 'savages'), or the metropolitan Breton, ultimately reveals the same basic attempt, that is, to archive that which is assumed to be in the process of disappearing: the 'savage' as a result of colonization, the 'rural' as a result of industrialization. As such, ethnology, the discipline of urgency towards the presumably volatile object, has above all been

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institutionalized in the privileged site of the museum as a science attempting to thwart the destructive effects of time by archiving Humankind and its works.

It was necessary to wait for the late professionalization of ethnography in France, which finally occurred during the 1930s,⁴ before an independent definition (*vis-à-vis* natural history) of the ethnographical object was established definitively on the basis of the theoretical influence of the social anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1872–1950). Ethnography thus ceased to be the exhaustive description of peoples across the history of humanity. Henceforth it recuperated the study of culture by means of direct observation, on the basis of a situation empirically selected. From this point, ethnology became the study of ‘living’ cultures with participatory observation as a methodological principle. The scientist could no longer be contented with studying and classifying material works within the framework of a museum that had stood as the sole institutional research site. The ethnologist, by definition ‘a person with practical fieldwork training’, thereby replaced the ‘office practice’ anthropologist. This new manner of proceeding was put into practice without the material products losing their predominant heuristic value. The objects most commonly used within the core of societies remain the scientific ‘witnesses’, according to the formula established in the *Instructions Sommaires pour les Collecteurs d’Objets Ethnographiques* (Concise Instructions for Collectors of Ethnographical Objects): ‘Almost all phenomena of collective life are susceptible to being translated by the given objects, due to this need that has forever motivated humans to leave an

imprint of their activity on physical matter. A collection of objects systematically gathered is therefore a rich compendium of ‘exhibits’ whose assembly forms archives more revealing and reliable than written archives because it is made up of authentic and autonomous objects that could only have been fabricated for specific needs and characterize better than anything else specific types of civilizations’ (MET 1931, pp. 6–7). ‘Ethnography has become the official business of specialists in the study of material civilization’ (MET 1931, p. 5). The material, the concrete, the objective are keys that reach all the better into the immaterial foundations of a culture, which the ethnologist mistrusts from the testimony of a ‘native’ whose language he does not know and whom he most often remunerates for his services. The tangible object, predating the collection, remains, therefore, the privileged source. The museum itself also remains, at least for the time being, the institution of predilection and the sole institutional pole where the goal is no longer exclusively ‘to collect objects, but also and above all to understand humankind and less to archive the dried-out remains as though in a herbarium, but to describe and to analyse the modes of existence in which the observer directly takes part’ (Lévi-Strauss 1958, p. 404). With the development of fieldwork methodology (notably vernacular language training) and with the support of photography and film, material works are losing more and more of their heuristic value. More than the objects, it is the relation *homme–objet* (human–object) of the study that claims his or her rights, and the ethnologists, in orientating their interests towards the elaboration, persistence and redefinition of the identities of the social groups to which they are witness, generate new sources.

The emergence of new institutions without collections (universities, institutes of advanced research or learning) have meant that ethnologists have progressively abandoned the museum, which witnessed the birth and development of their discipline. Under the equal influence of the structuralist paradigm, ethnological research has become disinterested in objects and has left them to establish itself and evolve within institutions where the substitute object may suffice.⁵ Parallel to this distancing or abandonment of ethnology from its collections for that which ultimately became its history (Jamin, 1998), the ethnological 'museum laboratory', whether destined to present French popular culture (Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires; National Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions) or foreign cultures (Musée de l'Homme; Museum of Man), is losing its momentum. Public galleries are not being renovated, and museums are stagnating. They no longer present science in the making, but rather give testimony to ways of life called 'traditional', 'pre-industrial', petrified 'in the eternal present' (Gaugue, 1999, p. 337). By not renewing its collections on view, by fetishizing, for example, objects from the colonial period collected in fear of a probable disappearance of otherness,⁶ the institution thereby makes artificial the renewal of ethnology with its former nineteenth-century meaning in the context of a public gallery.

The potential dialogue between memory and ethnology

Yet has ethnology finished with the world of museums and the heritage process? As we are beginning to see, ethnology today no longer resembles a science, itself solely capable of

supporting the project of a museum whose concept (conservation and presentation of objects no longer utilized)⁷ has hardly evolved since the nineteenth century. How, besides, should the contemporary⁸ be collected in order to suggest a continuous process and, above all, why pursue this notion when, following a commonly held view, such a collection would contribute to the uniformity of cultures? Even so, since the 1970s France has not ceased to fund institutions (ecological museums, regional and industrial museums) to proclaim its 'ethnological heritage'. As a society of 'consummation', conscious of its own continual process of historical changes, France has become a 'society of conservation' (Fabre, 1994). Consideration of a heritage related to immigration in France was even clearly formulated, in the early 1990s, as a possible opportunity in the field of ethnographical museums.⁹ But this collection and transformation into a heritage of objects of 'all sorts, like so many witnesses to a bygone era or a laminated culture, obeys a logic that is unique unto itself' and, according to Fabre, 'does not maintain the necessary relationship with ethnology as a social science... It is not the social facts that are so assembled but the precious objects that collectors and viewers recognize immediately with emotion and pleasure' (Fabre, 1986). In other words, to collect objects for a museum, even devoted to a specific social group, is not necessarily implementing ethnography, in the same way that to regroup old ethnological sources in a museum does not in fact create an ethnographical museum in the modern sense of the term.¹⁰

For a collected object to become an ethnographical source, a 'testimonial' object in the

scientific sense, the ethnologist must select from the material products of a society those that would be interpreted in 'this singular adventure, that is, the relationship of the researcher and the group that he has chosen' (Fabre, 1986) as resource for his research. The ethnographical object does not therefore exist without the ethnographer's point of view and analysis. But does an ethnographical object exist? If we start from the principle that ethnology is founded upon the study of contemporary social surroundings, and living cultures, an object would cease to be ethnographical, that is to say, of interest to ethnographers, from the moment when that object no longer serves a purpose. The object without practical or symbolic use would no longer be a reference to members of a group, and therefore could not operate as their testimony. In other words, the ethnographical object would be perishable. It would perish at the same moment as all cultural practices that concern it cease. In a certain sense, the object would thus be removed from the culture that created it. It could remain a testimony, a cultural document as in archaeology, but it would no longer be proof of extinct practices. None the less, behind the ethnographical object that moves through time as a historical document, a possible encounter between history and ethnology might be envisaged around the elaboration of heritage. In having the identification processes as its object, ethnology is not cut off from history and from archiving human events. If the historian starts off from a fact retrieved from the archives to go back in time to the present, the ethnologist starts off from his or her observation to return to the past.¹¹ In following one or the other of their respective paths, undoubtedly the historian and ethnologist might ultimately meet up in an

unexpected place: the museum. But what sort of museum are we talking about? A traditional museum that envisages only the 'safeguarding of memory' or a museum of 'interpretation', of 'society' (Duclos, 1992) that puts the contemporary in question?

In addition, the definition of a museum depends upon the specific manner of envisioning its collection.

The Museum of the Cité nationale d'histoire de l'immigration

The permanent galleries of the Cité nationale d'histoire de l'immigration aim to produce a historical synthesis of 200 years of immigration in France at the very moment that this process constitutes one of the major themes of the current political debate. Also, this still undervalued history, this social fact, at last of recent interest as much to French historians as ethnologists, has become the subject of a new institution. Its goal is to address itself to today's citizens by reaffirming the place of immigration in the history of the Republic (Raffarin 2004). 'A centre of history and living memory with a cultural vocation' (Toubon, 2004, p. 10), the Cité, whose museum does not own pre-existing collections, also envisages the establishment of an inventory of immigration heritage through a national 'collection appeal' which seeks to mobilize the community (associations and individuals) directly. In other words, so as to constitute its own collection which will be openly displayed not only in the permanent gallery (around pre-determined themes) but also in the 'benefactors' gallery',¹² the museum is directly soliciting migrants and their descendants. Those objects voluntarily donated will

ultimately represent what the participants (or their descendants) envisage as being representative of their own itinerary as migrants. But do all these objects and testimonials so reunited constitute a coherent collection or will they remain a sum total of memories individually expressed? Will they all enter into the French national heritage or will a selection process be imposed¹³ and, if so, according to what criteria? What sociocultural categories of migrants will ultimately respond to this appeal? And fundamentally, is the unification of donations really an exercise in the act of collecting?

More than the permanent itinerary (anchored within a historical discourse) and the 'benefactors' gallery' (migrants' participation and appropriation of public space), the elaboration of future temporary exhibitions¹⁴ related to current events, might provide the occasion to assemble new, concrete, scientific documents during the course of fieldwork research. An ethnographical collection (autobiographical accounts, photographs, films, objects) could as such permit the establishment of an inventory of things (material and immaterial) mobilized, consciously or not, by today's migrants. The new corpus assembled in this way would allow treating the contemporary dimension without limiting itself to the sole spontaneous dimension of the oral narrative, next to the artistic treatment,¹⁵ and completing or even throwing light on the exhibition of objects in the 'benefactors' gallery'.¹⁶ In conclusion, would not circulating archives for future historians be provided by this process of scientific acquisition permitting the renewal of the museum collection, prompting a more 'removed' or distanced view on the phenomenon of immigration?

Sequencing the historical past, elaborating upon a national heritage through the participation of the community, querying through an artists' point of view: where in all such participatory planning is the place of ethnology in the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration? For the moment, the question is not unequivocal within a young institution in the process of self-definition during its development period. All the same, one can well imagine an ultimately profitable association both for the discipline of ethnology, which might in this way revalorize its current research within a national museum, and for the institution of the museum of collections and evolving heritage. Will the new Cité become this realm of invention, instating a dialogue between history and ethnology, between the study of the past and the observation of the present, around the constitution of a new heritage? The Cité museum could become the instrument of this exchange, notably through the orientation of its temporary exhibitions programme and its associated acquisitions policy.

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| NOTES

1. In his *Essai sur l'éducation intellectuelle avec le projet d'une science nouvelle* (Essay on Intellectual Education with a Proposal for a New Science), the Swiss moralist Alexandre César de Chavannes (1731–1800) used in 1787, and for the first time in French, the term 'ethnologie' in his discourse on the mores and customs of non-Western peoples.

2. According to the contemporary linear or positivist concept of the evolution of human societies (Auguste Comte, Lewis Henry Morgan), the works of 'primitive' societies are capable of explaining, through comparisons, the history of Western societies envisaged as the outcome of the history of human progress.

3. The 'office practice' of anthropologists theorizes about the museum on the basis of travel accounts and collected objects (in the majority from the colonies) by naturalists, doctors, the military or colonial administrators.

4. In the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro (MET; Museum of Ethnography in the Trocadéro Palace) as it was first called, and then, from 1937, in the Musée de l'Homme (Museum of Man) and the Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires (National Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions); these latter two museums were created from the separation of the MET collection, one museum concerning the ethnography of France and the other for the rest of the world.

5. 'The ethnologists of my generation still collected a few objects: I brought to the museum a case full of stone tools from the Baruya of New Guinea. But this was my last opportunity. Afterwards I only made films, like most of my colleagues'; see Godelier, Maurice, (1999) Un musée pour les cultures (A Museum for Cultures), *Sciences Humaines*, No. 23, pp. 19–20 (special edition).

6. As evidenced by the first French national museum of the new millennium: the Musée du quai Branly.

7. In France museums have been developed primarily with state support and around fine arts collections.

8. See Le Menestrel, Sarah (1996) La collecte de l'objet contemporain. Un défi posé au Musée de la Civilisation à Québec (The Collection of the Contemporary Object: a challenge for the Museum of Civilization in Quebec), *Ethnologie française*, No. 27, pp. 74–91, (Culture matérielle et modernité [Material culture and modernity]).

9. See Guibal, Jean (1992), 'Quel avenir pour le musée des ATP? Entretien avec Jean Guibal (What future for the museum of the ATP? An interview with Jean Guibal), *Le Débat*, No. 70, May–August, pp.157–63; see also Pizzorni-tie, Florence (1993) Réflexions autour d'un paradoxe: faut-il et comment traiter du contemporain dans les musées d'ethnographie? (Reflections around a Paradox: is it necessary, and how, to treat the contemporary in ethnographical museums), In: *Actes des premières rencontres européennes des musées d'ethnographie* (Proceedings of the First European Meetings of Ethnographical Museums), pp.243–9, École du Louvre, Paris.

10. The Musée du quai Branly acquired its new collections in the auction rooms without resorting to fieldwork collecting.

11. 'Ethnology, devoted to the study of living and existing societies, must not forget that for them to be such, it is necessary that they have lived long

and have thus changed'; see Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1958) *Anthropologie structurale I* (Structural Anthropology I), p.132. Éditions Plon, Paris.

12. In its mission to safeguard material and immaterial traces of immigration history, the Cité must support itself through the participation of immigrants in France. It is to this end that the 'benefactors' gallery' was established.

13. 'To collect is by definition a process of selection that excludes all neutrality. It always implies a certain discrimination, which results in an interpretation of the past as well as the present.'; see Le Menestrel, *art. cit.*, p. 80.

14. With regard to the history of museums concerned with cultures and thus identities, it appears that only a dynamic policy of temporary exhibitions associated with the presentation of an 'exhibition of synthesis' (see Guibal, *art. cit.*) seems capable of counterbalancing the crystallization of cultures that the galleries called permanent engender.

15. The museum already has some collections of contemporary art.

16. In this regard it would be interesting to analyse the eventual differences that might exist between the results of the CNHI's 'collection appeal' and those that would be procured as the result of an ethnographic study around the same panel of persons.

| The Former Palace of the Colonies: the burden of heritage

by *Dominique Jarrassé*

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When making their way to the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration, visitors are startled (if they are not already familiar with the building and its history) to spot from afar a few elephants, dromedaries, a hippopotamus, some crocodiles and exotic fauna prefiguring the celebrated aquarium housed within and to rediscover all sorts of people bustling about in the midst of luxuriant foreign plants. Once arrived on the threshold, by raising their eyes, visitors then notice an enigmatic allegory of the motherland who welcomes them, the only figure whose eyes meet theirs within this immense low-relief frieze. It would be necessary to go back seventy-five years in order to comprehend that they are entering into what used to be the Palais des Colonies, or Palace of the Colonies, the high realm of French colonial memory which, if bearing witness to a morally ambivalent period, is none the less a masterpiece of Art Deco architecture and colonial art.

The burden of colonial memory

Does this mean that France, through this irreplaceable testimonial of the International

Colonial Exhibition dream machine of 1931, would assume this other past 'that will not go away', its colonial past? No, the reassignment of the palace, treated more as a building rather than the sacred site of French colonial fact, tends to hide the meaning, by wanting to substitute it for another memory, that of the migrations of workers who contributed to the building of France. Symptomatic of the concurrence of memories that seem to characterize a nation, one could say, 'sick with its memory'?¹ According to current practices, policies thus consign to culture, most often to the museum, the task of treating social wounds, even going so far as to attempt to assure the transformation of the pages of our history, turned shameful, into symbols. In this era of diverse memorials, events are read inversely, but still not for themselves. There is here an approach, equally ideological, but the opposite of the life that 'France the greatest' experiences, to magnify its action overseas and to make heroes of the Brazzas, Gallienis and Lyauteys. According to changes of affection towards this museum, the procedure consists in holding these cumbersome heroes at a distance, these visions judged more or less infamous and in contradiction with the multicultural values that henceforth we would embrace, to debase Janniot's bas-reliefs on the façade of the building to the rank of caricature, stigmatized by the advertising slogan, known throughout France: '*Y'a bon Banania*'.²

However, in this Palais de la Porte Dorée – an appellation that (like the Musée du quai Branly) attests to a French incapacity to even name the things touching upon this past – the iconographical programme depicted on the walls is not easily forgotten. It is too present, being

deployed across almost 2,000 m² of frescoes and bas-reliefs; it is too powerful, too magnificent as well. It even risks loading an enormous burden on to the construction of a still very fragile heritage concept, that of immigration. As in the assigned 1,100 m² of the new Cité museum, there corresponds an existing 1,130 m² of Janniot's bas-reliefs, will not the weight of the sculptures exalting the contributions of the colonies to France risk stifling the new discourse? To the 600 m² of frescoes displayed in the *Salle des Fêtes* on the (henceforth) politically incorrect contributions of France to the colonies, how will the assigned wall space of the media library respond? The glorification of the civilizing mission of France is not so easily substituted by that of its mission of integration, faltering as it is. Elsewhere, very subtly, the supporters of the 1931 project had attempted to transcend modern colonialism, of which no one was truly ignorant of its misdeeds, by inscribing it within a long history, starting with the Crusades (Godefroy de Bouillon heads the lists of colonizing heroes), and continuing through the discoveries of the sixteenth century (Jacques Cartier) and the founders of the Empire (even lost) like Champlain and Cavelier de la Salle, and others.

The weight of colonial memory in this building is such that in its desire to confront it, the Cité risks becoming obsessed by it. All its preliminary activities, which could have value as manifestos, reveal the colonial: scenography by Aimé Césaire, colloquium on the 'colonial question', a temporary exhibition on 1931. The risk of too strongly associating the two memories is great, induced by the monumental building. Certainly both memories have in common the



10. Annam. Young girl collecting hevea sap.



11. Annam. Sculptors.

representation of one part of the other, this combination coming, for that matter, from of an entity that was constructed as a cohesive ideal which would be fissured. Of course, veritable prophet in his own land, Paul Reynaud, Minister of the Colonies, had himself considered the Cité internationale des Informations (International Information Centre) in 1931, a temporary pavilion located facing the Palace, as the ‘Assemblée Plénière des Peuples Migrateurs (Plenary Assembly of Migrant Peoples)’. But beyond these

discourses, the management of these memories remains critical. Listed as a heritage monument, not only because of its architectural character, but also for its testimony of an ideology of ‘France the greatest’, the former Musée des Colonies (Museum of the Colonies), the former Musée d’Outre-mer (Museum of Overseas Territories), the former Musée des Arts d’Afrique et d’Océanie (Museum of the Arts of Africa and Oceania) remains the carrier of a décor dedicated to the glory of colonization, whose profound

significance should be grasped. In a period when it appears unacceptable to recognize ‘the positive role of the French presence overseas’,³ it is rather curious that a Palace (on whose walls are sublimated past exchanges between France and her Empire), lives on.

Colonial fairy tale and fiction

For a long time France dreamed of a great colonial exhibition that might assure the triumph of the imperialist ideology promulgated by certain fathers of the Third Republic, but who never reached unanimity. France also dreamed of a museum worthy of the grandeur of its empire when Belgium already had the Tervuren, the Netherlands the Tropenmuseum, and Great Britain the imposing Imperial Institute. It was agreed from then on to coordinate these propagandistic proposals by casting them in the festive dimension of an international exhibition that came to nourish a colonial, exotic image, already well implanted. ‘The fairy-like vision is achieved through teaching’, wrote a chronicler at the time.⁴ ‘The garden of colonial marvels, rustling each evening, prodigious lace of fire and liquid architecture, translates a magnificent lesson of energy and human solidarity within an atmosphere of dreams.’

The permanent Museum of the Colonies, the one edifice standing as a veritable microcosm concentrating all these images and values, ought to have assured the transmission of a message beyond the ephemeral imperial. Having become Commissioner-General of the exhibition in 1928, Marshal Lyautey, crowned by his work in

Morocco, had preferred a ‘House of the Colonies’. Reconciliation of the two concepts was therefore attempted, not without creating difficulties for the architects and for future visitors. The building still had to house the exhibitions, the ritual inaugurations and receptions, even lectures, from whence came the immense *Salle des Fêtes*, now occupied by the Cité. For a building assigned to colonial propaganda, it seemed sufficient to the architect Léon Jaussely (1875–1933), initially charged with the project, to design a museum with cupolas, minarets and galleries to give an allure of a palace from *A Thousand and One Nights*. Records suggest that the intervention of Albert Laprade (1883–1978), solicited to assist the then ailing Jaussely, led to the actual modernist alternative. In the words of Laprade, his elder colleague Jaussely’s project would have been conceived ‘in a spirit clearly archaeological, in a style inspired by “Khmer-Indo-Chinese!”’, ‘Without Mr. Laprade’, a commentator added, ‘what picturesque and humorous visions would we perhaps have benefited from, what aesthetic genre, “elephant’s trunk”, “pagoda”? Let’s consider ourselves lucky.’⁵ The senator Adolphe Messimy (1869–1935), who directed the Senate Commission for the Colonies, had pronounced himself against the favoured ‘colonial style’, short of creating a hybrid monster, one colony to the detriment of others, the two references in the running being the architecture of the Maghreb and that of Indochina. Notwithstanding its modernism, the palace was obliged to serve colonial propaganda: Laprade decided to entrust it to the decorators and sought to mask the nudity of a too geometric and purist concrete architecture by what he himself qualified as a ‘great tapestry of



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12. Façade of the former Palace of the Colonies.

stone’, which he envisaged ‘highlighted in colour and gold’.

The sobriety and elegance of Laprade’s design scheme merits emphasis: he designed simple volumes, its concrete structure permitting good ventilation and illumination. The portico on the main was a concession to classical taste, as was the use of stone cladding to hide the concrete. To justify the finesse of his columns, which did not actually support the cornice and left the bas-relief to show through advantageously, Laprade resorted to an exotic reference: ‘The svelteness of the

columns was desired to convey a slight scent of exoticism. There are overtones of the Indies, of Persia, of the kiosks of mirrors, of Persepolis, in a word, of the Lands of the Sun.’⁶ It is significant, moreover, that the slight columns were adopted as a principal motif for the composition of the ceremonial central door to the exhibition, designed by Léon Bazin (1900–75), Laprade’s collaborator.

Of an ordinance worthy of the Prix de Rome, the building, oriented towards the south, is organized symmetrically: from one end of the entry

to the other, underlined by a slight projection, two identical wings are deployed. In the interior, a transverse ceremonial central gallery terminates in two corner salons, to the west, that of Paul Reynaud placed under the invocation of African culture, and to the east, that of Marshal Lyautey, assigned to Asia; along the axis of the portico, is the main entry to the *Salle des Fêtes*, squeezed between two lateral rooms and galleries. The extra height of the ensemble, asserted by a base wall and mirrors of water, accentuates the monumentality. Lastly comes the remarkable system of roofing that renounces traditional cupolas for the modern principle of a roof terrace. The *Salle des Fêtes* was in fact given a pyramidal roof composed of superimposed concrete frames forming five steps to assure indirect lighting with a very beautiful effect. The galleries themselves are illuminated with polygonal lanterns. Between the exhibition pavilions with forms reminiscent of the temple of Angkor, the mosque of Djénné, the souks, pagodas and the like, and the museum with its pure forms, magnified by nocturnal lighting, the ensuing contrast is immense. The exterior décor set behind the portico, a bas-relief (not extending over ten centimetres in depth), contributes to this spirit of respect for the geometrical volumes and for the mural.

The shock of images

It was thus left to the painted and sculpted decoration to assure the colonial propaganda as the programme required. Obviously the scope of the commission necessitated resorting to toughened, well-qualified master artists:⁷ for the frescoes, Pierre Ducos de la Haille (1886–1972), Prix de Rome winner who succeeded his master teacher Paul Baudouin as professor of frescoes at the *École*

des Beaux-Arts; for the sculpture, Alfred Janniot (1889–1969), one of the most powerful artists of his time, recommended by Antoine Bourdelle himself, who characterized him as the ‘virgin of the Pompiers style, even though a Rome Prizewinner’.⁸ Both adopted Laprade’s aesthetic position – monumental simplification – all the while striving for detail in their compositions. They accepted the rule of the frame. To preserve this principle, the statue by Léon Drivier (1878–1951), *France bringing Peace and Prosperity to the Colonies*, that had been placed on the entrance steps, was later installed on the avenue leading to the Bois de Vincennes. Although a complement to the iconographic programme, in that it symbolized victorious France bringing peace, it appeared stylistically incongruous.

The overall coherence of the programme hinged on the notion of exchange between metropolitan France and its colonies. On the façade, the bas-reliefs feature *The Economic Contributions of the Colonies to France*, while in the interior, the *Salle des Fêtes* is surrounded by frescoes by Ducos de la Haille illustrating its pendant *The Contributions of France to the Colonies* on the cultural and social level. At the end of the ceremonial gallery the two salons celebrate *The Contributions of Africa* in the Paul Reynaud salon, painted by Louis Bouquet (1885–1952), a disciple of Maurice Denis; and *The Contributions of the Orient* in the Marshal Lyautey salon, commissioned by André and Ivanna Lemaître.

Hailed as ‘the most colossal bas-relief in the entire world’,⁹ the façade sculpted by Janniot is a veritable *tour de force*, not just simply for the conception and the execution completed in two

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years across 1,130 m² of this frieze, but also for the adopted scheme. The sculptor explained two possible solutions for covering the ten-metre-high walls, as follows: 'The Assyrian or Greek bas-relief where the white void is more important than the sculpted part' and 'the oriental Hindu-Khmer or Javanese bas-relief, where the voids are practically non-existent'.¹⁰ The second solution seemed to suit him in his concern to attach and establish a unified mural ensemble, reinforced by the archaistic options, such as a suppressed or simplified perspective in a few architectural representations, faces in profile or the use of plants to mask changes in plan. A historian of antique art aptly characterized his plastic choices:

The first problem posed by the execution of the programme given by the architect to the sculptor was a technical problem. Ordinarily the height of the bas-relief barely exceeds the size of the persons who are depicted. However, it was impossible to conceive figures over ten metres high. What remained, so as not to resort to archaic procedures in the superimposed registers, was the type of composition of which ancient tapestries offer some models: to make the real horizontal plane pivot, on which the figures move, in such a way that it is mistaken for the vertical plane of the wall. This convention suppresses the perspective and imposes the same scale on all the figures. One notices that, after a rule applied in tapestries to avoid implausible details, the figures' feet are almost never depicted.¹¹

Its immense composition is constructed according to a geographical division: to the left, Africa, and at the corner, Madagascar and the colonies of America; to the right, Indochina and in the corner, the islands of Oceania. In this way, the backgrounds of the corner walls are indicated by a motif of wavelets. Similar to a tapestry in which human and animal groups stand out, the flora serve specifically as the backdrop to the

elephants from Africa and Asia which, turned towards the centre, respond to each other. Symmetry is established at the axis of the central door surrounded by allegories: France accompanied by Peace and Liberty (two figures repeated in the interior) and mother goddesses; the ports of France followed by caravels occupying the sides. From one end to the other, in two very dense compositions, colonial activities are depicted, whether they are agricultural, crafts or mining. Within each, the lines of perspective subtly direct the reading: in the African relief, some dromedaries attract the viewer's attention to the centre marked by the elephants, while the bounding lion and the hippopotamus disperse the points of view centrifugally. In the Asian relief, the buffaloes form a dynamic line towards the elephants and a tiger wrestling with a python, which assure the link with the other section of the façade. Janniot also succeeds in filling in the rather narrow piers by inserting a few peaceful scenes, such as fruit picking, millet grinding, transporting Congolese ivory, fabricating palm oil, harvesting sugar cane, cotton or rubber, spinning silk threads or sculpting, as well as scenes of hunting hippopotami in Oubanghi or crocodiles in Madagascar. The large surfaces are assigned to food crops, hunting, fishing and the exploitation of forests rather than to products such as phosphates, reduced to a mere inscription. Minor architectural features crown the composition. On the lateral walls, the islands recall a watery paradise theme.

The colonist does not appear in these bas-reliefs. The realities of forced labour are masked by a seductive harmony and plastic beauty of the bodies; each African woman displays an original

coiffure, and the sculptor reconstituted various human types, elaborating upon all details even to the point of showing scarifications. What a contrast, at the same time, between the elegant young girl gathering the sap of the hevea and the abominable conditions under which this work was done! Like the Greeks or Renaissance artists, Janniot idealizes the scene; he projects colonial exploitation beyond a specific time frame by inserting his figures within luxuriant nature, by orchestrating the rhythms of an intense life according to his aesthetic imperatives, by erasing the conquests and the exactions, the miseries and the revolts. The masterpiece of colonial art is therefore a good example of propaganda, amplification of the colonial illusion for which it remains the best mirror. None the less, possessing the grandiose character of a primitive work, its sculptural qualities raise it to the rank of Assyrian or Egyptian reliefs, or to the rank of Lorenzo Ghiberti's door-panel reliefs for the Baptistery in Florence.

Despite their value, the frescoes do not attain the same degree of success. Nevertheless they form one of the most imposing ensembles of public mural art of the period, now enjoying an undeniable revival. Perhaps equally these programmes are sticking more than to the letter. The Salon of Africa renders homage, on the one hand, to Arabic civilization through philosophy, sciences and the arts, and on the other hand, to *Afrique noire* or Black Africa through a major composition which shows an Apollo drawing inspiration from an African muse in the midst of a jungle where Pegasus, a lion and a leopard meet, and where emerges an edifice inspired by the mosque of Djenné, close to the French West African pavilion.¹² Considerably more animated

than the sections on the Arabic civilization, this panel is not without an introduction of a stereotypical vision of the 'African soul' and the rhythms that agitate it, symbolized by the elongation of the bodies and the arabesques. Elsewhere, groups evoking Asia in the Lyautey Salon present, in contrast, an atmosphere of serenity and closed compositions: each major religion, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism, is symbolized by its founder and the benefits he brings. Through their picturesque effects, the Indian myths (depicted by episodes from the deeds of Krishna or the life of Rama) occupy a privileged place. The architect Laprade would have liked more unity between the two ensembles, requiring 'of Monsieur Bouquet less systematic deformations, [and] of Monsieur Lemaître to the contrary a little bit more stylization'.¹³

He was more satisfied with the stylizations of Ducos de la Haille, whose frescoes, it is true, necessitated an imposed order deployed along the walls of a 39 m² room, in relation both to the principal motif *France and the Five Continents* on an axis to the entrance, and to the play of symmetry between the allegories and scenes disposed along the perimeter.

Remarkable for its shimmering colours, the central panel presents a scene encircling the imperial figure of France dressed in red, echoing in reverse the façade reliefs: to the right, an elephant carries an African goddess and, to the left, a white elephant, surmounted by a saddle with a baldaquin, enthrones a goddess with multiple arms and a cobra. Below, Oceania (to the left) and America (to the right) are stretched out on sea horses, the latter curiously symbolized by

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Manhattan skyscrapers. This last allusion was judged inappropriate by the architect, fearing that one would perceive a pretension here with regard to the United States. Surmounted by foliage sheltering doves and by veils, France holds Europe in one hand and a dove in the other, symbol of a new Pax Romana.

The scenes spanning the lateral galleries alternate with eight allegorical figures illustrating the benefits of colonization, consistent with the uninhibited ideology of the period: to the left, on the piers separating the doors, Justice and Liberty are associated with the compositions showing justice rendered to the natives, charity towards childhood and the abolition of slavery (a white father liberating a black youth with a gesture not without reference to a baptism). To the right, on the piers, Peace and Work bring prosperity. To anchor these allegories in colonization, they also stand out from the background of caravels and offer a few touches of local colour, such as a black child hanging from the flags of Peace. In the corners are painted the allegories of Science and Art, Commerce and Industry, complemented by specific scenes. To the right, Art receives the attributes of archaeology and architecture (the architect is Laprade himself); to the right, Science calls forth the image of care: vaccination, the railway, the telephone – all symbols of progress. The unified ensemble is assured by the marine backgrounds criss-crossed by caravels and the presence of doves of peace. On the upper floor, the walls offer examples of colonial vegetation, palm trees, aloes and euphorbia or spurge, as Anthony Goissaud specifies.¹⁴ Formerly concealed by the conversion of the Musée des Arts Africains et Océaniens (Museum of African and Oceanic Arts), these paintings have now resurfaced as a result of

architect Patrick Bouchain's renovation, which ought to be a source of delight for visitors. This attests to the new respect given to a building too long unappreciated.

If it is difficult not to regret that the former Palais des Colonies (Palace of the Colonies) was not affected by the presentation and the study of this primordial phase not only of our history and our constructed identity, but of our very culture. There remains hope that its décors, preserved and enhanced, will maintain a coherent discourse not only on our colonial past – parallel and without confusion to that of the new Cité – but also on our post-colonial present, a field that has certainly had difficulty emerging in France. Of course, it was already a very heavy memory to carry, and the question can be rightfully asked as to how, crammed with the memory of two centuries of immigration, the building can traverse the ages without a new avatar, how the new discourse on this heritage in construction, that of the migrants, can develop without the support of a genius like Janniot and without anchorage in a site. Because, if on Ellis Island, the site incorporates the memory and the ensuing heritage function, at the Palais de la Porte Dorée, as attest the more or less ephemeral phases of its anterior affections, the site incorporates (despite certain concealments) the colonial memory and the great fairyland of 1931. With time, by a sort of right of anteriority and by the power of these immovable décors, this dimension ought to surge up again ever more powerfully.

| NOTES

1. Interview with Pierre Nora. *Le Monde* 2. No. 205. 18 February 2006.

2. Translator's note: Banania is a beverage made from banana flour and cocoa, made popular by its bright yellow tin, illustrated by a smiling bandana-clad African woman. *Y'a bon Banania* imitates African patois, loosely translated as 'There's good in Banania'.
3. Article 4 of the law voted in February 2005 and repealed.
4. Trillat, Joseph (1931) Exposition Coloniale Internationale de Paris (International Colonial Exhibition in Paris), *Larousse mensuel*, Vol.8 No. 295, September, p.801.
5. Zahar, Marcel (1931) 'L'architecture', *La Renaissance*, Vol. 14, No. 8, August, p. 227 (special issue, *L'Exposition coloniale*).
6. Draft of a 'Note for M[onsieur] le Maréchal Lyautey relative to the Permanent Museum – Vincennes', Archives Nationales, 403 AP 12.
7. For further details, see Jarrassé, Dominique (2002) Le décor du palais des colonies: un sommet de l'art colonial (The Décor of the Palace of the Colonies: a culmination of colonial art), In: *Le Palais des Colonies. Histoire du Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie* (The Palace of the Colonies. History of the Museum of the Arts of Africa and Oceania), Germain Viatte (ed), pp.78–121, RMN, Paris.
8. Bourdelle cited by Laprade in his typed memoirs, p.128, Archives of the MAAO, Barré-Laprade donation.
9. Goissaud, Antony (1931) Le Musée permanent des Colonies (The Permanent Museum of the Colonies), *La Construction Moderne*, 31 January, p. 279.
10. Subject reported by Armand Dayot, Voyage à travers nos colonies (Voyage through our Colonies), *L'Art et les Artistes*, No. 117, May 1931, p. 264.
11. Charbonneaux, Jean (1931) Preface to *Le Bas-relief du musée des Colonies. Janniot, sculpteur* (The Bas-relief at the Museum of the Colonies: Janniot, sculptor), Librairie d'Art Louis Reynaud, Paris.
12. Afrique Occidentale Française (French West Africa) regrouping Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Burkina Faso and Benin.
13. Laprade, 'Note concerning the fresco commissions for the Musées des Colonies', n.d., Archives of the MAAO, Barré-Laprade donation.
14. Les fresques de la Salle des Fêtes du Musée permanent des Colonies (The Frescoes of the Salle des Fêtes in the Permanent Museum of the Colonies), *La Construction Moderne*, 7 June 1931, p. 572.

| A Realm of Memory for a Cité d'histoire

by Maureen Murphy

Maureen Murphy is an art historian; she heads the inaugural exhibition project for the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration. Her research is concerned with the history of cultural institutions as well as the representation of Africa in the museums of France and the United States since the 1930s.

'White air is full of words', wrote Salman Rushdie in 1999.¹ Between the walls of the Palais de la Porte Dorée rises a history mingling the pomp and circumstance of the violence of domination, the superficiality of exoticism with the profundity of stereotypes, the grandiosity of colonial works of art with the flaws of a bygone model whose memorial revivals are none the less still numerous today. Constructed on the occasion of the 1931 International Colonial Exhibition, the building initially called the official museum of the colonies changed its names and attributions time and time again: the Musée des Colonies et de la France Extérieure (Museum of the Colonies and of France Abroad) in 1932, the Musée de la France d'Outre-mer (Museum of France Overseas) in 1935, to become the Musée des Arts Africains et Océaniens (Museum of African and Oceanic Arts)² following colonial independence. This symbolic detachment in relation to the colonies, expressed in the selection of names imposed on the institution, reflects the image of the politics of progressive disengagement led by France *vis-à-vis* her empire. Today, the palace houses the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration (CNHI). From one history to another, a shift has occurred, yet the substrata remains unchanged. How is colonial

memory to be reconciled with the history of immigration today? What are the points of articulation between the imaginary conveyed by the building and the discourse of the cultural centre? Putting the creation of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration into historical perspective will permit a better understanding of the stakes and the questions raised by the choice of building.

The official museum of the colonies: *Collège de France des Sciences Coloniales*, or an instrument of popularization?

The sole construction of solid and durable materials, the 'Musée Permanent des Colonies' or official museum of the colonies, which during the International Colonial Exposition presented a 'condensation' of the colonial empire, had to be reconverted in the aftermath of the event. Often presented as a relatively homogeneous project, ranked beside ideology and propaganda,³ the museum none the less aroused lively debates and did so immediately upon its inception. Between the first commissioner responsible for the mission, Gaston Palewski (1931–34),⁴ and the first director of the museum, Ary Leblond (1934–39),⁵ there arose numerous divergences of opinion. Inscribed in an already well-endowed institutional context, the museum of the colonies had to find its own role and legitimacy. Gaston Palewski was obliged to 'restrict himself to following "the native from our diverse dominions" in his contacts with French civilization',⁶ the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro⁷ already assuring 'the study and presentations of ethnography of the French colonies'.⁸ Ary Leblond wrote, by contrast, that 'if the Musée du Trocadéro could call itself the Musée

de l'Homme, the Musée de la France d'Outre-mer, limiting and subordinating its ideal to a more strictly national necessity, intends to be the Musée de l'Homme Colonial Français (the Museum of French Colonial Man) – including those born in our overseas dominions as well as the European, called upon to serve the nation in its mission to make the "native" evolve from these adoptive lands towards a state of well-being and happiness, in body as well as spirit, to which all humanity has the right.'⁹ If the former, Palewski, restricts his study of the *indigènes*, Leblond considers the question to be the civilizing mission of the nation. One prefers to direct the museum study to subjects of the empire in a more exhaustive manner, while the other considers the colonized only in light of the colonizers' deeds.

A close friend of Georges Henri Rivière, nominated assistant director to Paul Rivet at the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro in 1928, Gaston Palewski would have wanted to conceive a *Collège de France des Sciences Coloniales* (*Collège de France* of the Colonial Sciences) based on the model of museums in Belgium and the Netherlands.¹⁰ 'It appears that the initial concept of a museum of propaganda and popularization, such as had been delineated in the first study commission, was too limited', he wrote in one of his reports dated 1933.¹¹ 'A colonial museum ought to propose a dual object of interest, on the one hand, to a broad public and, on the other hand, to all those who require specialized and technical documents', he wrote on another occasion.¹² Gaston Palewski's proposal was not retained, however, and with Ary Leblond, the original demands formulated by Governor-General Olivier were taken up again: 'to make the Musée de

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Vincennes... an instrument of popularization¹³ whose collections would be 'the most beneficial to public education and the most expressive of colonial life'.¹⁴ Within the rooms, the discourse imparted during the colonial exhibition had lost its vigour. As a result, the museum was obliged to constitute a 'condensation' of the empire, to revive in the French people an interest in their exotic dominions, inciting them to invest in colonial products, or perhaps to leave home to establish a new life overseas.

The entrance hall – the '*Galerie des Races*'

The visitors' experience of a real-life situation began right from the start in the area around the building: having mounted the palace steps and admired Alfred Janniot's 'stone tapestry' (evoking the fauna and flora and imperial subjects harvesting the natural resources that supply raw materials to the metropolis), they reached the museum entrance. A panel over the door carries an allegory of the motherland personifying the metropolis towards which boats and caravans converge, transporting cocoa, peanuts and rice imported from the French dominions.¹⁵ In crossing the palace threshold, the visitor was ready to discover the riches of '*la plus grande France* (the greatest France)'. During the 1930s, the entry hall was dedicated to the '*Galerie des Races* (Gallery of [Human] Races)': aligned along the pillars, on the side of the glass bays, a series of sculptures representing diverse 'indigenous types' from the colonies was presented, set back framing the visitors' promenade. Oscillating between ethnographical testimony and object of artistic contemplation, these busts were representative of colonial art fashionable in Europe during this era¹⁶

and give testimony to the distance assumed by the institution *vis-à-vis* the practices of scientific institutions, such as museums of natural history¹⁷ or museums of ethnography. In this instance, the emotional quality of the sculptures was given priority because if they were intended to evoke different ethnicities, they were not on display to illustrate a scientific theory but to affect the visitor's sensibilities. The busts were not displayed in glass cases accompanied by texts and photographs with precisions on their origins; they were exposed in a gallery to accompany the visit. The power of France, the grandeur of its work was expressed in the range of pacified and subjugated figures.

The retrospective section or 'the colonial past'

Elaborated during the 1931 exhibition, the retrospective section (on the upper ground-floor level) illustrated the history of French colonization, from the Crusades to the 1930s. Although Gaston Palewski had wanted to eliminate the Crusades section, which he considered as 'a psychological anachronism',¹⁸ the gallery remained in its original state until the 1960s.¹⁹ 'From the *Halle d'Honneur* (ceremonial entry hall)', wrote Ary Leblond in 1939, 'one reaches the historical gallery which, by its busts, portraits, landscapes, dioramas, costumes, arms, flags, signatures and diverse souvenirs commemorates the apex of French colonization through the ages of Saint-Louis to Lyautey'.²⁰ Art objects, documents, relics and souvenirs were dispersed under glass cases to present the major figures of the colonial conquests, sanctified, in a way, by the filiation established with the Crusades. This section echoed the list of well-known personalities who had contributed to

the colonial conquest, their names (still visible today) inscribed on the west façade of the building, beginning with the figure of Godefroy de Bouillon.²¹ Between the exterior and interior of the building, between the iconography and the discourse circulated in the rooms, the discursive elements answered each other and formed a unity.

The colonial present

After having explored the past, the visitor was invited to discover the colonial present, on the mezzanine level. 'This floor,' wrote Ary Leblond, 'is made up of a series of rooms or rather salons, reconstituting, through the most varied art and documentation, the atmosphere of each of our overseas possessions. In moving from one to the other, one traverses, so to speak, the French colonial universe'.²² None the less Gaston Palewski would have wanted this ensemble to evoke 'the most characteristic scenes of colonial life with all the guarantees of ethnographical exactitude: all aspects of social life (religious ceremony, court life, bourgeois life) and economic life (the street, the market, craft industry, hunting, fishing) should be presented'.²³ Ary Leblond described the colonial present in terms of 'salons' and 'atmosphere'; Gaston Palewski demanded some 'guarantees of ethnographical exactitude'. In the spirit of the first, 'each of our overseas dominions would have such a salon, both for receptions and for intimacy, in such a way that the metropolitan would have the illusion, upon entering, of disembarking on to the soil of this colony and that the French and the *indigènes* (natives) who were born there sense the charm of the place and find themselves "at home"'.²⁴ While Gaston Palewski demanded the veracity of the document, Ary Leblond sought to

create an illusion. The former took as a model European colonial institutions, the latter the colonial exhibition at Vincennes. In photographic views of the rooms taken in 1938, the objects are hung on the walls as so many striking motifs. In the room dedicated to Africa, for example, the salons were divided according to a geographical order mixing the names of countries (Somalia, Morocco) with designations of entire regions ('Black Africa', 'North Africa') or with ethnic names such as 'Tuareg'.²⁵ Combining the European artists' canvases with African utilitarian or religious objects, the museology was responding to an aesthetic composition. The play of symmetry, formal repetitions and accumulations were the guiding principles of this spatial scenography of disparate objects. This bias responded to a major demand: 'to attract as quickly as possible the greatest number of visitors, and from all classes'. 'The museum', wrote Ary Leblond, 'must instantly become an intense site of attraction'.²⁶ To this end, it was necessary to make 'the largest section possible susceptible to interest the public – which has a child's curiosity on the subject of the colonies – directly, through what speaks to the eye: painting, images, sculpture, decorative art. Art must occupy the vestibule of this palace where it is important to make the public interested in the economic wealth of our colonial domain: our rice, coffee, wood, peanuts, cotton, rubber, etc.'²⁷

The economy section

The economy section thus seemed to constitute, for Ary Leblond, the most important part of the museum, vestiges of which are still visible today: the dioramas dedicated to the rice or peanut

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harvest, as well as inscriptions inciting visitors to invest in these colonial products, rekindling an epoch where the overseas was considered as a possible escape issue from the current economic crisis: 'In overseas France, without the abundance of food cultures, no well-being for the natives, no labour, without labour, no cotton, no coffee...', one can read on the walls. In using a negative turn of phrase, in insisting more on the loss than on the gain, these few lines echo contemporary anxieties. Another citation, this time signed by Paul Reynaud, Minister of the Colonies, reads as follows: 'The mobilization of colonial riches for the happiness of all humans constitutes the highest justification of colonization.' Investment in overseas products would thus constitute simultaneously a response to the economic crisis and an act of generosity towards the colonized peoples. This discourse, which clearly reveals propaganda, is witness to a past era and arises again forcefully in the present, on the palace walls. Dioramas, slogans, titles displayed in the salons, on the frescoes in the economy section; the palace is filled with the atmosphere of an epoch. The traces of history are read on each detour along the corridor, by the aquarium.²⁸ This building as well as its historical charge are 'a realm of memory'²⁹ *par excellence*: are they for all that reconcilable with the new attribution of the site as the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration?

From Palace of the Colonies to a Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration

The ties between colonization and immigration are complex, as demonstrated by the plurality of research and points of view.³⁰ For all that, in the collective French imagination, the term

'immigrant' refers to populations originating in the former colonies, in particular North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. One of the challenges faced by the CNHI will be to construct this association in the light of history. Immigration with colonial origins constitutes only one of the most recent waves of immigration. It will be a concern not to minimize the support of these populations to French culture but to reinscribe it within the long history of the construction of national identity. When the decision on the site was announced publicly in 2004, certain individuals expressed fears of seeing memories superimposed; others would have wished the palace to be dedicated to a museum of colonization. For reasons both symbolic and budgetary, the Palais de la Porte Dorée was chosen to the detriment of other sites, which necessitated more building work.³¹ The bas-reliefs, the frescoes, as well as all the multiple traces of the colonial ideology of the 1930s will be the object of the visitors' circuit and will be analysed and explained to the public so as to avoid all confusion. The creation of the CNHI within the Palais de la Porte Dorée will be the occasion to confront, indirectly, the painful, rich and complex history of the relations maintained by France with her former colonies, as witnessed by the subject of the inaugural exhibition scheduled for May 2008, provisionally entitled *1931*, and which will treat colonization and immigration in France.

| NOTES

1. Rushdie, Salman (1999) *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*. Vintage Modern Classics. London.

2. Under the impetus of André Malraux, appointed Minister of Culture, the museum was attached to the Ministry of Culture in 1959 and became the Musée des Arts Africains et Océaniens (Museum of African and Oceanic Arts). In 1990, it became a national museum – the Musée National des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie (National Museum of the Arts of Africa and Oceania). With the creation of the Musée du quai Branly, the above-mentioned museum closed its doors in 2003, as did the Musée de l'Homme (Museum of Man). The collections of these two institutions were regrouped to constitute those in the Musée du quai Branly, dedicated to the arts of Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania, and inaugurated in June 2006.

3. For information on the building's history, see *Le palais des colonies. Histoire du musée des arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie* (The Palace of the Colonies. History of the Museum of the Arts of Africa and Oceania). RMN, Paris 2002; *Du musée colonial au musée des cultures du monde* (From the Colonial Museum to the Museum of World Cultures). In: Proceedings of the colloquium organized by the Musée National des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie and the Georges Pompidou Centre, Maisonneuve & Larose, Paris 2000; *Le musée et les cultures du monde*, Les Cahiers de l'École Nationale du Patrimoine, Paris, 1998.

4. Gaston Palewski (1901–84) was first an arts student at the Sorbonne, then studied at the École des Sciences Politiques, the École du Louvre and at Oxford University. Between 1924 and 1925, he was a member of the cabinet of Marshal Lyautey, then Resident General in Morocco. In 1928, as a collaborator with Paul Reynaud, Gaston Palewski became his cabinet director at the Ministry of Finance from 1931 to 1939, all the while pursuing his activities as official representative of the Musée des Colonies between 1931 and 1934.

5. Authors of colonial novels and art criticism in Réunion, the two cousins Georges Athénas and Aimé Merlo wrote under the pseudonyms 'Marius and Ary Leblond'. Aimé (called Ary Leblond) founded the Musée Léon Dierx on the island of Réunion before being nominated director of the Musée de la France d'Outre-mer in 1934. See Fournier, Catherine (2001) *Marius-Ary Leblond, écrivains et critiques d'art* (Marius and Ary Leblond, Writers and Art Critics), L'Harmattan, Paris.

6. Palewski, Gaston (1933) Rapport sur l'organisation du musée des Colonies – Plan d'organisation du musée (Report on the organization of the Museum of the Colonies), Box 38, file 229, Archives of the Musée de la France d'Outre-mer, Musée du quai Branly, Paris.

7. Constructed on the occasion of the Universal Exhibition of 1878, the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro was not originally conceived to house ethnographical collections. After the departure of its first director

Théodore Hamy, the museum fell into oblivion. A new team headed by Paul Rivet was set up in the late 1920s, and in 1937 the Musée de l'Homme was inaugurated. On the history of the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro, see Dias, Nélia (1991) *Le musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro (1878–1908). Anthropologie et Muséologie en France* [The Museum of Ethnography at the Trocadéro, Paris (1878–1908) Anthropology and Museography in France], CNRS Éditions, Paris.

8. Palewski, *op. cit.*

9. Ary Leblond, Au musée de la France d'outre-mer [At the Museum of France Overseas], 1939, Box 38, file 59, Archives of the Musée de la France d'Outre-mer, Musée du quai Branly, Paris.

10. Gaston Palewski left on a mission in 1932 to visit the Musée Congo Belge in Tervuren (now the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale), in Belgium, as well as the Institut Colonial in Amsterdam.

11. Palewski, *op. cit.*

12. *Ibid.*

13. Governor-General Olivier was the rapporteur-general assigned to the exhibition.

14. Reynaud, Paul (1931) Lettre aux Messieurs les commissaires de l'Algérie, des Colonies, Pays de Protectorat, Territoires sous mandat et des Sections Spéciales de l'Exposition (Letter to the Commissioners of Algeria, the Colonies, the Protectorate Countries, Mandated Territories and the Special Sections of the Exhibition), dated 9 September, 1931, Box 28, file 167, Archives of the Musée de la France d'Outre-mer, Musée du quai Branly, Paris.

15. The frescoes in the meeting hall echo the bas-reliefs and evoke the influence of France worldwide. For an analysis of the décor and iconography of the building, see the article by Dominique Jarrassé, in this issue.

16. In addition to the historical collection of the former Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie now conserved in the Musée du quai Branly, the Musée des Années 1930 at Boulogne-Billancourt conserves a number of testimonial items of this so-called 'colonial' art. For a Belgian source of comparison, see Guissent, Jacqueline (ed.) (2003) *Le Congo et l'art belge, 1880–1960* (The Congo and Belgian Art), exhibition catalogue, La Renaissance du Livre, Paris (Reference series).

HISTORIES OF MIGRANTS: PAST AND PRESENT

17. Regarding the ethnographical sculptures at the Muséum d'histoire naturelle, see Durand, Jeannine (1994) *La galerie anthropologique du Musée d'histoire naturelle et Charles-Henri Joseph Cordier* (The Anthropological Gallery in the Museum of Natural History and Charles-Henri Joseph Cordier), *La sculpture ethnographique, de la Vénus hottentote à la Tehura de Gauguin* (Ethnographical Sculpture, from the Hottentot Venus to Gauguin's Tehura), Les dossiers du Musée d'Orsay Paris; see also Musée d'Orsay (2004) *Charles Cordier, l'autre et l'ailleurs* (Charles Cordier, the other and the elsewhere), exhibition catalogue, Éditions de la Martinière, Paris.
18. Palewski, Gaston (1933) *Quelques suggestions à propos du musée des Colonies* (Some Suggestions concerning the Museum of the Colonies), Palewski proposal., Box 38, file 229, Archives of the Musée de la France d'Outre-mer, Musée du quai Branly, Paris.
19. In this regard, see Taffin, Dominique 'Les avatars du Musée des arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie (The Avatars of the Museum of the Arts of Africa and Oceania)', in *Le palais des colonies, op. cit.*
20. Ary Leblond, *op. cit.*
21. Godefroy de Bouillon (1058–1100) was one of the principal leaders of the First Crusade organized in response to Pope Urban II's appeal in 1096, and the first sovereign of Jerusalem.
22. Ary Leblond's expression echoed the promotional discourse of the International Colonial Exhibition, which proposed to the French to come along and 'travel around the world in a day'.
23. Palewski, Gaston (1933) *Rapport sur l'organisation du musée des Colonies – Plan d'organisation du musée* (Report on the Organization of the Museum of the Colonies – Organization plan of the museum), Box 38, file 229, Archives of the Musée de la France d'Outre-mer, Musée du quai Branly, Paris. This section also included displays of 'indigenous art' on the mezzanine balconies.
24. Leblond, Ary (1935–39) *Notices, articles et causeries sur le musée*, (Notices, articles and conversations on the museum)', file 53, Archives of the Musée de la France d'Outre-mer, Musée du quai Branly, Paris.
25. These titles are still present on the palace walls today.
26. Ary Leblond's letter to *Monsieur le ministre* of the colonies, 23 September 1933, 'Projets muséographiques et de développement du musée (Museology and Development Proposals for the Museum)', file 20, 1933–36, Archives of the Musée de la France d'Outre-mer, Musée du quai Branly, Paris.
27. *Ibid.*
28. The aquarium was constructed on the occasion of the Colonial Exhibition of 1931 and continues to attract a great number of visitors.
29. This expression is borrowed from the work edited by Nora, Pierre (1984) *La République – des lieux de mémoire* (The Republic – Realms of Memory), Gallimard, Paris. Quoted in Charles-Robert Ageron, 'L'exposition coloniale de 1931: Mythe républicain ou mythe impérial? (The Colonial Exhibition of 1931: Republican or Imperial Myth?)'.
30. Reference is made here to the colloquium entitled 'Histoire et Immigration: La Question Coloniale (History and Immigration: the Colonial Question)', 28–30 September 2006, held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France François Mitterrand, Tolbiac Site, Paris.
31. Several Parisian sites were envisaged as, for example, a section of the Palais de Chaillot, the Hôpital Laennec, the warehouse of the Magasins Généraux at La Villette, the former American Centre at Bercy or the roof of the Grande Arche at La Défense. On the subject, see Toubon, Jacques (2004) *Rapport au Premier Ministre, Mission de préfiguration du Centre de ressources et de mémoire de l'immigration* (Report to the Prime Minister, Planning Commission for the Centre of Resources and Memory of Immigration), Paris, La Documentation Française, Paris.

| Landmarks – A Permanent Exhibition: 200 years of immigration

by Pascal Payeur and Lydia Elhadad

Pascal Payeur, a theatre designer, studied at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Appliqués in Paris. He currently designs exhibition projects at the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration.

Lydia Elhadad, a specialist in museography, obtained her DEA (diplôme des études approfondies) in history from the Université de Paris VII and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS). She began her career in 1979 at the Georges Pompidou Centre in Paris as assistant to the exhibition curators. Working independently since 1995, she develops various projects for local authorities and the Ministry of Tourism, and notably multimedia exhibitions.

'Exhibography': a shared experience

When we embark on any of our scenographic projects, whether for a museum, a temporary exhibition or an installation for a particular event, we ask ourselves one essential question: What are people coming here for? Everything stems from this: all the elements of the scenography and museography that are used in the exhibition areas, which have themselves been designed as places for discovery, exchange and emotions. As this implies, all the scenographic elements – the collections themselves, the space, light, equipment and sounds – help tell the story and reveal in full the nature of the art included in the exhibition. In trying to answer our original question we are naturally and inevitably led to re-evaluate that most basic of subjects, the media exhibition. We are led to determine, to choose, to qualify and to

justify our relationships with concrete things – with objects, texts and images – but also to consider the subject of time – to work out the appropriate length for the visitor’s journey around the exhibition, steering a course somewhere between a show and a multimedia event, so that the visitor is fully involved. To use Jacques Hainard’s¹ neologism, we see ‘exhibography’, (writing an exhibition) as a set of connections between science and history, of links between knowledge and heritage. Our role here is to match the contents with the way they are displayed in a given space.

It is very true that to go to an exhibition is, as Jacques Hainard says, ‘to live intensely a shared experience’, to the extent that the work of creating theme-based exhibitions or museums can only be achieved using refined multidisciplinary experience. And this is true not only for the visitor, but also for the scenographer and the museographer, whose first role is to unite to achieve their common goal. There are many different professions and skills involved in this collective creation, ranging from furniture design to graphics, from light to sound, from audiovisuals to texts, and including interactive multimedia.

The background to the scenographic project of the Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration (CNHI)

As we have suggested, the real challenge involved in our work is not large-scale design, but tailor-made creations. We do not work on repeats, but on a one-off basis. So we began our work on this scenographic project by considering the relationship that the CNHI wants to establish with French society and with the public. The

scenographic itinerary is intended to help visitors relate to the collective history of immigration and to the particular histories of migrants. With this in mind, we have tried to develop these two dimensions of the individual and the collective, as a dynamic driving force of memories to be experienced by all publics, along a journey that covers 200 years’ history of immigration in France.

As Marcel Mauss has stressed, immigration ‘is a social given’. Thus, sociologists and ethnologists have tried to grasp the social phenomenon in its entirety, ‘to deal with the physical, physiological, psychological and sociological aspects of all behaviour’.² So how did we respond as scenographers and museographers? It appeared to us that immigration was as much a subject of human sciences as a phenomenon of society. A society that permanently integrates into its culture the ingredients of the world’s great civilizations: art, history, religions and humanism. Although immigration is anchored in history and in our memory, it is none the less present in the everyday world and relates back to concrete realities of society.

Connecting visitors with history, connecting the collective to the singular

The scenographic itinerary is an open device, built on a series of immersing, emotional and pedagogical experiences. Fragments of lives, trajectories, and itineraries are experienced anew through narratives and testimonies from individuals, installations, images, projections, games and objects. Sequences retrace the diversity of the particular itineraries of individuals, and re-create the great collective history of

immigrations. This imaginary itinerary belongs to those who have taken part in the history. It is based on a play on emotions and intimacy, with actual lives of real, flesh-and-blood people – beginning with their voices, individual voices, the stories of immigrants and their journeys. All this creates a coherent, measured score, with its strong beats and its silences, which follow one another along a gallery almost 100 metres long and a dozen wide.

For this project, it is the staging of the non-physical that is used to trigger emotion. Sound is used extensively to convey the lives, words and testimonies of individuals. This is also ideal for re-creating the atmosphere of the melting pot of communities, the sounds and music of daily life, of languages and accents.

The project gives a special place to testimonies of those who have lived this history. In order to make these ‘individual voices’ strong and visible, to help visitors relate to these fleshed-out memories, we have chosen intelligent, versatile audio guides that allow visitors access to eyewitness narratives throughout the journey. This allows us to let the spoken word resonate alongside other media, including objects, images, three-dimensional works of art and photos. Our scenographic project needed to meet certain fundamental challenges of mediation specific to this exhibition. We were probably influenced by Marcel Mauss’ famous work, *The Gift*, by which we imagined that a highly symbolic area should be given over to collecting objects. The Gallery of Gifts in the centre of the building was designed as a vast, new, original concept built around objects to be collected in a reciprocal spirit between donors and museums. Travelling

through the themed sequences of the exhibition, the Landmark tables are a set of specific props that guide and invite the visitor to explore the keys of this collective history.

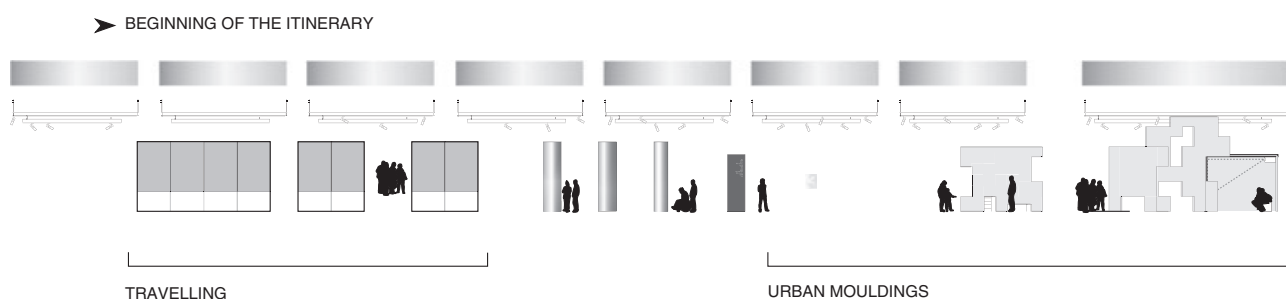
Landmark tables

How should we write up a thematic journey, how can we present the point of view of the researcher, the historian, and make this scientific narrative accessible to everyone? Landmark tables are showcase-lecterns presenting tables placed throughout the exhibition to support these different approaches. The historical perspective of each theme is set out on these supports, so that chronology is present as a leitmotiv punctuating the journey. This chronological guide is placed on vertical display panels integrated throughout the exhibition, which are visible from a distance. These interactive, multimedia landmark tables are totally flexible and updateable. Visitors use a touchscreen to trigger graduated lighting to access information. This technology uses graphic and chronological pointers to encourage the visitor’s natural curiosity, making exploration appealing, sensitive and intuitive.

Images and their presentation

Another core question was the status of images, and how to present them. We chose to put very different sizes of image side by side, letting the different scales play their own roles. Visitors are immersed in huge projections for great mythical historical scenes, such as the exodus of whole populations, wars or labour disputes. These are placed next to small mosaics of images and portraits of individuals to be viewed in close-up,

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which offer an intimate view of emotions and reunions. Mobile panoramas using computer graphics make full use of the images available on the subject.

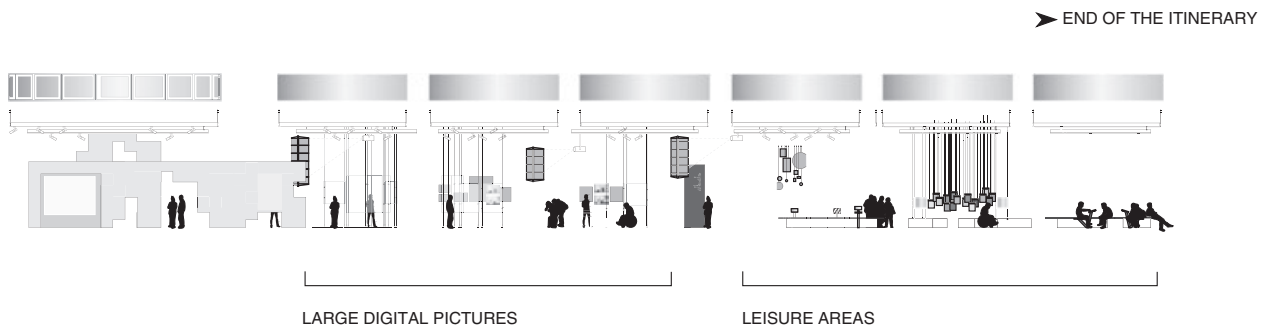
Once migrants have arrived in the host country, their lives are often a series of ups and downs, starting off in poor temporary accommodation, and ending up creating a community and a neighbourhood ethos. All this highlights the great courage, commitment and solidarity of migrants. But life is still hard and the cupboard stays bare, because the money earned here is sent back to the family in the home country. This way of life, living with very little, is a strong signal that real life is elsewhere. That's how life is for these men and women who don't quite belong here, but don't really belong there any more. The portraits face each other to show that in ethnic minority groups they are simultaneously from here and from there.

Photos by Patrick Zachmann, Hamid Debarrah, Thomas Mailaender and others play on proximities, contacts, face-to-face meetings and confrontations of images. We have hung them in cubist-style arrangements and series, in compositions of photographic panoramas and ordered groups. Moulded mobile

alcoves and screens have windows cut into them, looking out over the neighbours, the street or the courtyard of the tenement block: glimpses and multiple perspectives, viewpoints over the local ethnic community and establishments. We are seeking to offer different ways of using the senses by interweaving the plastic qualities of photographic images, their contents and supports.

This installation of synchronized projections unfolds on glass sheets set up like so many standing stones. Moving pictures and stills, portraits of groups and individuals travelling, interspersed with fragments of texts naming people, giving points of departure and arrival, dates, etc. All these elements flow over a giant screen to re-create a panorama presenting the experience of migration. The background acoustics are created using vibrating blades. The sounds migrate from one end of the installation to the other in the same dynamics as the images. The varying sizes of the images and the different acoustic bands evoke the way individual and collective stories are interwoven.

In an open, fluid, porous space where they can explore in any direction (either in order or randomly), visitors discover a series of five film



and slide projections on large screens suspended in space, which are designed as large tableaux. Put together, this creates a living panorama of places, great sagas of building sites, factories, stadiums, schools, marches, barracks, battlefields, picket strikes, etc.

What do people take when they leave their country? The transitional objects belong to a unique experience, the great journey, the first day and the arrival in an unknown universe. Each object that a person takes preserves the thread of memory, it is unique and unparalleled. It is charged with an individual destiny and can tell many stories, long or short, of trajectories, experiences and confrontations both before and after the journey. Fragments of life in the form of costumes, tools, posters and portraits balance the monumental image panoramas. A stream of individual testimonies from the different periods of history and the various different mythologies.

The itinerary closes with a portrait of multicultural France which, shaped by two centuries of immigration, has become a land that is a meeting place of many cultures. As the historian Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard points out, the French nation is made up of what successive

migrants have brought to it, and the 'history of immigration is the history of France, it is what gives it its identity'.³ This examination of the melting pot that constitutes our society is an examination of its cities and streets, the rhythms and rites of conversations. It portrays those who cross borders and cultures, explores objects and markets, and retraces the steps of the mobility that shapes today's society. The aim is to turn the meaning of things inside out, starting from our commonplace daily objects, languages, practices and sociability.

Leisure lounges

The leisure lounges at the end of the itinerary provide matter for reading and interpretation interactively and collectively. This is a place for sharing narratives on the diversity of mixtures and the birth of the multicultural society. Visitors can meet, share ideas and enjoy themselves around a collection of objects and music, where the very language affirms its own identity. These areas are as much about provoking questions as about entertainment. It is a pause to consider our society made up of hybrids, of mixing and sharing, and it ends this imaginary journey made by people who left home two centuries ago. A large wooden



14. Le Travelling.

kiosk houses a jumble of icons of daily culture, objects, images – record covers are hung from the ceiling, like in a local ironmongers. A place where you can find everything, the reflection of daily use and melting pots. Here the audio-guide acts as the interpreter of the hanging record sleeves.

The French language has a special place in this last part, truly reflecting interpersonal exchanges. There are games built around a selection of French words of international origin, set like footbridges to travel into the history of languages. Multi-player games for writing a collective text together, one that is always

changing: ‘We do not live in a country, we live in a language’, said Cioran. And after him, Gao Xingjian said the same thing in another way: ‘My real country is the French language.’ So we wanted to emphasize the living aspect of the language, of voice and words. Because language is living, and we are all multilingual without realizing it.

The Gallery of Gifts

The Gallery of Gifts is on the gangway-balcony of the reception hall in the centre of the museum, and acts as a depository of the memory of immigrant populations. It is the place for collecting and

displaying the objects that the museum is given. We have designed it as a new and original memory event, in the very heart of the CNHI, presented in specially designed modular showcases. There, the objects are allowed to speak: the donor describes the history and the nature of the object and the reason for donating it. The museum explains why it accepted the object and chose it to be displayed in the gallery.

Behind long glass windows stretching from floor to ceiling are mural display cases. Their façades are decorated with graphic panoramas made up of collages of small posters. These are taken from family photo albums, visual testimonies which, as new objects arrive, will create a set of modular windows inside the panorama. This layout is designed to be added to over a long period, growing with the collection. It is also our response to the question of the updateable nature of the museum and its scenographics.

| NOTES

1. Jacques Hainard is the director of the Ethnographical Museum in Neuchâtel (Switzerland).
2. Lévy-Strauss, Claude (1988) quoted in *Dictionnaire universel des noms propres*, p. 1174, Le Robert, Paris.
3. Blanc-Chaléard, Marie-Claude (2001) *Histoire de l'immigration*, La Découverte, Paris.

| A Crucible for Questions

by *Karthika Nair*

Karthika Nair is in charge of artistic and cultural programming at the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration. After working as a journalist, she specialized in cultural management. She has worked at the public cultural centre at the Park and Great Hall of the Villette, comprising the Cité de la musique, the Maison des Cultures du Monde (Centre of World Cultures) and the Centre national de la danse (National Dance Centre).

The Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration does not exist. What do exist are scores of Cités nationales de l'histoire de l'immigration. Like the elephant in the Sanskrit fable, the *Panchatantra*, which was identified in turn by four blind men as being either a rope, a pillar, a fan or a snake, this project impels myriads of visions. There are at least as many as the people involved in its creation, directly or indirectly, and – after its opening in April 2007 – more are likely to come from the general public, the media, the powers that be and so on; the list will be endless, as will the definitions, the expectations and probably the criticism. Perhaps the greatest challenge faced by this institution is to subsume these multiple particles, all the while allowing them to thrive, in order to emerge as a cogent structure whose bedrock is its very plurality.

In the pages that follow, one gets glimpses, to take an analogy from another field, of what the light reflected from one face of this highly refractive chunk of hard, crystallized carbon could give – when cut and polished. Because that is the process it will have to undergo: a diamond left to itself is just a shapeless abrasive lump.

Remember, this is just one facet of a whole – one vision. A vision of what the credo of an arts

and programming wing should be in a cultural complex, which is at the same time a national museum, a research and academic hub, a vanguard for civil sector and citizen advocacy organisations, a publishing unit – all firmly focused on the issue of immigration.

But it appears that before defining content or aim, we need to rationalize the very existence of an artistic wing within a museum specializing in the history of immigration. For although museological policies over the last two decades have evolved to encompass artistic activity in a great number of historical and civilization museums, and although the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration – whose name itself denotes its composite nature – has more than one activity, the presence of art in the realm of immigration is still less than self-evident.

To circumscribe the role or import of art within an issue-based paradigm seemed rather parochial. I therefore extend the question to defending its existence *per se*, as well as its 'functionality'. Art exists in its own right, on its own terms. Without the necessity of justifying itself, or the additional onus of purpose. Yet, throughout time, we find that it has questioned mankind, consistently jolted it into making new discoveries, unsettled societal preconceptions, ripped apart the status quo and given us other ways of viewing the world. It unearths fragments of the past, hurls shards of an often painful present straight into our faces, and sometimes it offers terrifying or tantalizing oracles of the future. It is, perhaps, above all, a reminder that nothing is sacrosanct: certainly not the sacred monster, art, itself. That is why what we are attempting to build

here is, first and foremost, an arena of free artistic expression. Where artists can deliver their thoughts – unfettered, unguided, through the creative language of their choice, in the manner that seems most befitting to them – cerebral, visceral or soulful – on the countless concerns surrounding immigration. Concerns that are just as inextricably bound to this issue as ligaments to a bone: boundaries, belonging, uprootedness, integration, exclusion, otherness, home, identity, and so on.

An arena that will not claim to enforce one worldview, nor will it presume to provide solutions. But it will try to raise questions. Innumerable questions, queries, critiques from all fronts, on all things – including the same artistic expressions that set the stage for these questions. An arena where dissent and debate will be recognized as contributors in their own right to constructive co-existence. A place we will visit not to learn about the Other and his strangeness, but to recognize how 'other' we ourselves are, how we are all composed of Others. It will be a nimble tightrope act in a world that is becoming increasingly intolerant of contention. To tread the fine line between criticism and censure, between dissent and divisiveness. To provide a platform for opinion that is not necessarily our own, and to voice both our disagreement with the given view and defend the right to state both. But the idea here, at this moment, is not to perorate about what we wish or intend. If we are committed to our aim, then the first act is to step aside, and hand over this space to those whose creative ethos will contour our activity. The stage is theirs, even while it is a work in progress. If they continue to step under our spotlights, and fuel the crucible with their

questions and their aspirations, the lights will keep burning in this theatre.

First, we clear the stage for Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, a Flemish-Moroccan choreographer and dancer who has just completed work on the Cité's first commissioned artistic project, the *Zon-Mai*, a gigantic multimedia installation that he designed and realized with the video artist, Gilles Delmas. For Mr Cherkaoui, who grew up in Belgium and works in several countries with dancers from all across the globe, questions of movement, of migration and of home are an indelible part of both his choreography and his life. His commitment to the present moment finds anchor in hopes for the future and a lucid awareness of the past:

I would like this institution, the CNHI, to provide keys to understanding history, but not from one monolithic perspective: I would like to come here, and find scores of different viewpoints. We grow up learning of the past, of colonialism, of post-colonialism, of the immigrant issue, from history books, but they depict just one version of facts and phenomena. If one reads of those very events in the history books of another country, history will take on another colour altogether. Or take television: news reports on the same occurrence on two channels in two countries reveal how diametrically they can differ, how the gospel truth in one country will be dismissed as propaganda in another country. Truth has many shades, and people need to see all its hues. So what I would seek from the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration is the presence of these multiple –complementary or conflicting – standpoints on some of the significant events that have marked the course of recent history. So that I always have both

the freedom and the means to make an informed judgement; that regarding a particular event, I could choose to abide by a certain point of view yet accept a second or third perspective about another event. We are inundated by clichés about otherness; television, advertising, the mass media as a whole ensure a relentless supply of images that only strengthen preconceptions. The museum will, I trust, be a haven where this barrage of obviousness will be rebuffed. And a place that will pay heed to terms that are used and misused without much thought: words like 'integration', which have connotations that are now not innocuous. On an artistic plane, I hope that there will be an avoidance of exoticism, because it is frighteningly easy to distance oneself from an issue, and to reduce its immediacy, by rendering it remote and alien. In my work, I strive to highlight the similarities in human beings, and in the human condition, even amidst the 'otherness' that is banded about. The goal is not so much to discover the Other as it is to discover oneself. The act of plunging into and 'exhibiting' the different components of French history or art would reveal the innumerable influences that have gone into weaving this culture: Anglo-Saxon strands, the Mediterranean warp and the Latin weft, to name but a few. This variegated 'quilt', with its constituent values, is what I'd like to take up and deconstruct so that we can really grasp who and what we are; acknowledging the past that has shaped our present, the same present which will define our children's future.

I firmly believe that an encounter with the Other's culture or art does not end with singing its praises but in peering behind that beauty and unravelling the skills that go into it, learning the events that shaped its culture and then recognizing it in its entirety – to the extent that it is possible.

Because genuine respect can only be born out of understanding similarities and differences; a meeting between two beings just cannot be reduced to hello and goodbye muttered in quick succession! As an artist, as a human being, this is how I picture my life: I need to learn, swap skills and beliefs. I grew up with a fixed set of values, now it is time for me to widen my vision, get acquainted with the values, the mores of others, and perhaps, add them to my own. And the more I learn, the more I fine-tune my senses, the greater my awareness of subtleties. The Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration should be an agora where these values, this sensitivity can be shared.

There is nothing novel or groundbreaking in what I am propounding: this kind of 'interbreeding' has been happening for centuries. Medieval music, for instance, has roots that range from Arabic through Jewish to Christian traditions, reminding us how musical cultures have always influenced each other. There was a migration of styles of music from south to north and all around. But today, movement and migration have taken hugely political overtones, and these natural occurrences are subordinate to man-made regulations, to 'democratic' laws and to state policy.

What I expect most from this institution is a reminder of the timeless intermingling that shapes us, shaped our ancestors, and will continue to shape mankind. A reminder that nothing is frozen in time, preserved in a pure form – neither art nor values, nor a culture; the minute we are born, and exposed to air, we begin to change. Civilisations, countries, are the same. What I seek at the Cité is a celebration of this magnificent impurity that surrounds and fills us all.

The other associated artist to draw a blueprint of his aspirations for the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration is Mohamed Rouabhi, writer, playwright and theatre director who will be conducting a series of workshops for the construction workers who are renovating the Palais de la Porte Dorée which houses the Cité. Mr Rouabhi, a French citizen of Algerian descent, whose works contain a searing analysis of colonialism and its aftermath, is no stranger to this monument or to its chequered legacy. In his impassioned and staccato style, he lists his expectations both from the nascent organization and from the artists who will appropriate this platform:

The Palais de la Porte Dorée is significant because since it is reopening, people will be curious to visit, make comments and contributions, and ask questions. I think that all of this is rich enough material for the Cité to find its niche in France. However, as for all public places, the Cité should not remain a kind of monolith belonging to a few well-intended individuals. It is the people that should take control in order to create a place for their own history, their future history, and to make their contributions, filling the space with their testimonies, their hopes, but also their sorrows, and their questions. The Cité can be considered as a stake which is planted in the ground in order to designate a new landscape, a new perimeter of questioning and construction. It is the work of artists, whether in the performing arts, the fine arts or cinema which is the determining factor. Artistic vision does not necessarily provide a counterpoint in relation to history, but it facilitates addressing questions which are often neglected or ignored by society at large.

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Artists, like writers, have always been those to ask the unpleasant questions. It is always those that do not feel they belong to a particular ideology, government or institution. This space to manoeuvre, and this freedom of thought and expression have always been there to ask the fundamental questions, sometimes using humour or derision, at other times, using the tragic.

Art exists to divide, it is not an objective point of view on the world. The work of art needs to exist to criticize that which does not appear criticizable. This seems fundamental regarding the questions raised by the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration. It is for us as artists to traverse this place and not create something immobile. We want to be able to enter such places, to work in them, and then be able to leave again. The Cité should draw inspiration from what has already been done and what did not work, from all that has not yet been done and should perhaps be attempted; trying new forms of collaboration with people, particularly avoiding creating something charged with meaning that would resemble what we had before. The desire to share, which is very human, lies behind every great project. However, the institution in France is such that this willingness is absorbed and suppressed as the years go by. The excesses of the institution's administrative machine can lead to the failure of projects. We hope that this will not again be the case with this institution, but that we will succeed in creating an open, porous space where propositions will never be fixed for the duration, but on the contrary, constantly refreshed and reinvigorated.

I think that the originality of the Cité is to try and imagine initiatives in conjunction with all those likely to work on them, and to listen to those who are

accustomed to this interaction. I envisage the Cité as a propitious occasion: one must be 'cheeky', this can be the hallmark of a place's identity, and the word 'identity' is quite strong here. In other words: we are in the year 2007, it is new and we are going to risk new and original initiatives. It is necessary to astonish and surprise in order to stand out from the rest.

The key word has been spelt out 'identity'. Hopefully, by providing a space where both artists and audience can be reassured that identity should be volitional, where we can choose to be ourselves, in all our multifarious grime and glory, this organization will also shape its selfhood.

| The Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration: a place for partnering and networking

by Agnès Arquez-Roth

Agnès Arquez-Roth obtained her DEA (diplôme d'études approfondies) in the comparative history of religions and religious anthropology from the Université de Paris IV. Her professional experiences led her to take part in the creation of the Musée d'Orsay and for seven years she was involved in developing the museum's cultural services. She also directed an association in favour of territorial development and the integration of young people. Within this framework, she developed many cultural and artistic projects for the International Festival of Graphic Arts in Chaumont (France). She is currently responsible for developing the network policies of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration.

The Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration (CNHI) is quite clearly a public cultural institution of a new kind, inasmuch as it will seek to create a necessarily complex interaction on several levels between a cultural institution and civil society, articulating a venue with a network of partners. To understand these political, strategic and structural choices we must go back to the political and social context from which the project originated. There was a painful awareness of a significant gap between the principles of equality proclaimed by the French Republic and the social, political and economic realities of a large number of French citizens from a foreign background. The CNHI project chose to look at this gap between 'utopia' and 'reality' through the prism of representations. Several stages conditioned the process that established the project:

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- recognition of a network of community stakeholders who had been active around these issues for thirty years, in particular issues relating to the memory of immigration;
- scientific knowledge, by developing the history of immigration and making good use of relevant resources;
- challenging the whole of society thanks to cultural and artistic programming (exhibitions, live shows, etc.);
- debating immigration and its history in the public arena, thanks to symposia, educational programmes, etc.

The CNHI has therefore chosen to confront several issues from a structural point of view:

- the project's political and institutional significance, in particular through the space given to civil society and a network of partners, who are at the very heart of the project;
- the issue of a cultural identity made up of multiple strands, at all levels, from local to international;
- the need to recognize that the mindsets and representations prevalent in French society with regard to immigration and immigrant population groups need to be transformed, because France, like many countries in Europe, is undergoing a crisis of models and values.

The challenge facing the CNHI is to integrate this ambition with the founding principle of the French Republic as being one and

indivisible. Yet, to be enriched by the plurality of its cultural heritage, France must be able to appeal as much to the responsibility of the state, as to that of civil society and of each citizen.

The political context of the creation of the CNHI

The relationship between the CNHI and French integration policies is obvious and illustrates the political dimension of this project in several ways. Jacques Toubon, chairman of the planning commission (*mission de préfiguration*) has declared on numerous occasions: 'The history of immigration is also, in some ways, the history of integration.... In many ways, it is the story of the failures and the successes of integration.'¹

Over time, and with the changes that have gradually affected its immigration policies, France has gone from a social treatment of integration, built on a passive approach based on reparation, to a dispassionate, guilt-free approach that seeks to highlight the value of integration. In 2001, the then Prime Minister Lionel Jospin asked Rémi Schwartz, a member of the Council of State, and Driss El Yazami, chief representative of the Association *Génériques*, to draw up a feasibility report. This was handed in in November of the same year, with the title 'Report on the Creation of a National Centre for the History and Culture of Immigration'. From the outset, the report raised the issues of the political challenges such an institution would have to face.

In 2002, France's integration policy was structured around three pillars: first, a policy built



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15. The installation «Voyage to the Rhine and Danube», at the Immigrant's Housing Centre (Rhin et Danube) in Lyon (France), 2005. ARALIS Production.

on the willingness to welcome and integrate immigrants, enhanced by the notion of a contract with the new arrivals; secondly, a policy seeking to promote first and successive generation immigrants both socially and professionally; and, thirdly, a new policy to actively combat racial discrimination. The new impetus given to the High Council for Integration on 24 October 2002 was a reminder of the involvement and responsibility of the host society in the integration process, defined at the time as a dynamic dialectic process between the whole of society and the migrant population groups. Finally the Interdepartmental Committee for Integration, created on 1 April 2003, proposed

fifty measures, one of which was the launching of the CNHI planning commission.

In the French context, the word 'integration' has now come to mean the welcoming of newcomers, guaranteeing them equal rights and equal treatment, while leaving unchanged the rationale of one indivisible nation and republic. Yet this paradoxical injunction, and the gap between political will, public action, and social realities, represent a very real challenge to French society as a whole. It is therefore quite naturally that, in recent years, an essential dimension of integration has been the determination to remember and chart the

identity of immigrant population groups. This conviction was initially forcefully defended by the voluntary sector before being picked up by the authorities, as may be seen in the 1989 initiative of the Association *Génériques* with its exhibition *A France of Foreigners, A France of Liberties: the press and communities in the Nation's History*. This was the first major exhibition dedicated to the history of immigration since the French Revolution. It was presented for the first time in February 1989 at the History Museum in Marseilles, then in Orléans at the Collégiale Saint-Pierre Le Puellier, before going on to the Grande Arche de la Defense in Paris, and finally to Strasbourg. From the first Arabic language newspapers, founded in France in the middle of the nineteenth century, to today's Kurdish or Armenian scientific journals, the exhibition *A France of Foreigners, A France of Liberties* retraced two centuries of the history of these hundreds of newspapers created by the various immigrant communities, as well as the main figures who founded and gave life to these 'letters from exile'. In a simplified version, the exhibition continues to be presented by numerous associations and educational institutions. The question of the memory of immigration therefore first made itself felt to the authorities through the challenge to succeed with their integration policies. This fostered the awareness of a link between 'memory, identity and integration'. Olivier Rouselle's observation is now a recognized fact: 'Integration functions as a fusional process, never as an amputation. There cannot be a lasting integration unless it is nurtured by the building of identity through additionality, and not by caesura, less still by censure. The conscious or despondent silence of the parents will be systematically reflected in the revolt and rejection of the children. The mechanisms of integration will

never operate on amnesic, fictitiously reconstructed beings. In such cases, cultural resurgence takes on deconstructed and caricatured forms.'² It gradually became obvious, even in the voluntary sector, and contrary to accepted ideas, that to intervene on such issues required developing scientific processes of observation and analysis that give due weight to the history and memory of immigration. The fact is that to work on representations related to immigrant population groups and to immigration means changing one's perception of how the history of national identity has been developed. The history of immigration is a recent discipline among historians. It began as a result of the coming together of several research projects, from the academic world and from community projects, which mutually enriched each other. The first studies, in the 1970s, essentially focused on the social history of the working classes and international relations. In the 1980s, in particular thanks to Gérard Noiriel, they moved on to an approach linking the immigration movement to the constitution of the nation-state.³ The two approaches – history and memory – though different, have the important and legitimate ability to shed light on the history of representations and genres. It is as much a question of knowing and understanding as of transforming the social and political realities which today endanger the cohesion of our pluralistic society.

In a context that seeks to give due weight to migrations, both in Europe and internationally, the CNHI project seeks to bring the debate into the public arena. It is a public institution which, as much through the way it operates as through its programming, seeks to bring together multiple social and political expectations by placing culture at the heart of social and political action.



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16. Choeur d'hommes. Les Cent voix (Men's Choir - The Hundred Voices), directed by Brahim M'Sahel and Christian Zagaria, 2003. ARALIS Production.

Prefiguring the project

This institution of a new kind aroused contradictory feelings among the partners, from the expression a certain gratitude to the hope of change, from the fear of disappointment to the refusal to be instrumentalized. The voluntary associations argued strongly for this project to be borne by the authorities, for they saw in this the stakes of their recognition and a means of transforming society. While for some the nature of the project might be a cause for concern, others see it as an opportunity for giving a renewed

dynamic to locally rooted projects, allowing these issues to be faced across the whole country, in interaction with their European and international dimensions. Some of the project's elements illustrate this determination to collectively develop a project that brings together public recognition and community-based innovation.

The task entrusted to Jacques Toubon since 2003, first through the planning commission (*commission de préfiguration*) and then through the CNHI Public Interest Group until the end of 2006, consisted in drawing up a summary of the

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expectations and imagining how the project could be developed internally in accordance with the dual nature of the CNHI, that of an institution and a network. Thus different working groups were constituted right from the early days of the planning commission:

- a scientific council, consisting of researchers and of representatives of institutions responsible for conservation, heritage and museography. Its mission consisted of defining the themes of immigration history that would be covered by the CNHI project (social and political migrations, colonial history, etc.); the chronological and thematic representation of this history; and the types of population (foreigners, immigrants, emigrants, those perceived as foreigners, etc.);
- a technical committee, consisting of representatives from the authorities and from the Fonds d'Action et de Soutien à l'Intégration et à la Lutte contre les Discriminations (FASILD, Fund for Action and Support of Integration and the Fight against Discriminations)⁴ whose task was to define the budget, the status and the venue for the CNHI;
- a forum of voluntary associations, which also included public figures, whose mission was to think about the CNHI's programming, as well as about the development of a wider network able to contribute to the centre's debates and activities.

The latter working group very quickly brought to light the need, even at this early stage, for cross-cutting action, so as to not run the risk of seeing the project splintering into each of the professional fields concerned, disconnecting them from the overall policy perspective and from its impact on the transformation of representations.

A steering committee, consisting of the members of the scientific council and the forum, was formed in November 2003. Starting in 2004, the involvement of a network of partners from the whole country was seen as a priority, leading to twelve regional meetings. These gave an opportunity to present and discuss the project with local stakeholders, that is, local authorities, associations and businesses. The outcome of these meetings was a cross-cutting enrichment of the various worksites preparing the CNHI. Later, the Public Interest Group structured its mode of operation around a board of directors, a scientific and cultural council, a steering committee, a historical committee, an education committee, and a forum of voluntary organizations characterized by a strong representation of members from civil society and the network of partners. Finally, an *établissement public administratif* (EPA; public administrative office), created on 1 January 2007, founded the new institution by decree. It kept the general organizational principles, but substituted the scientific and cultural committee and the steering committee with an advisory board. The original nature of this cultural institution is thus now enshrined in legislation, because by creating an advisory board in the EPA – a totally innovative decision so far as French institutions go – the legal structure has been able to adapt to the constraints of networking.

This ambition for a participative and consultative relationship between an institution and a network of partners is rendered more complex by the number of players involved. A study undertaken by Opale⁵ reveals the following spread: 40 per cent of those involved in these projects are artistic and cultural structures, with a significant contribution from theatres (27 per cent) and the audiovisual sector (22 per cent); one in four structures come from the social and sociocultural field; 10 per cent of the players are intercultural and community associations, with a significant weight of 'advocacy' groups; 7 per cent of the players are local authorities; 7 per cent of the players are heritage institutions (museums, archives, libraries, etc.); the contribution from public education institutions is weak (5 per cent), essentially represented by junior high schools; lastly, ethnic community associations (4 per cent) and historical associations (5 per cent) clearly remain a minority. This spread is also very unequal geographically, and nearly all the projects are in an urban environment. This heterogeneity is characteristic of the highly diverse positioning of people's representation of the history and memory of immigration. The nature of the projects supported illustrates this: 60 per cent of them are stories related to individual memories. The CNHI must therefore deal with multiple players and projects. This situation constitutes both a strength and a weakness for a project with nationwide ambitions. It does not want to cut itself off from the testimony coming from individuals, but it must also make sure that this testimony is confronted with what the historians have to say and exposed to the academic rigour required for an improved understanding of these phenomena.

A network of partners

The CNHI's network of partners is seen as one of its major building blocks. Long discussions have taken place as to the nature and form of this network. They have often been very telling of the difficulty of even thinking about how to involve civil society in such an ambitious project. To begin with, and to enable the network to become a full-fledged stakeholder in the institution, it was necessary to study the range of possibilities available for going from the idea of a co-production to its effective implementation. Two conditions needed studying and clarifying for the network-Cité relationship to work. It was necessary, first of all, to define the levels of involvement (individual roles and positions), and then draw up the procedures that would make it possible to articulate and adjust the proposals made by the network with the programmes of the CNHI. The major difficulty lies in the fact that the network pre-existed the CNHI. This means that a balance must be found so that defending and fulfilling the common public interest becomes a concern and a responsibility shared by all those involved, and is no longer seen as exclusively the state's responsibility exercised through its public service. The participatory and consultative approach of the planning commission was sometimes criticized for going too far in seeking consensus, with the fear that this would lead to wiping out or at best watering down the core issues that the CNHI means to raise among civil society. Giving a correct perspective to this tension by defining what constitutes the common public interest should make it possible to avoid the risk of a consensus seen as too soft by some, while encouraging a level of tension capable of

generating meaning in a context that extends not only to the national level but stretches even further to include a European and international perspective. The Cité's network of partners quickly adopted this approach, because giving a rightful place to migration movements and to the history of immigration, presents the same challenges for all countries, when it comes to building a collective identity.

While some partnerships have already started on a scientific level, as can be seen in the international symposium 'Museums and the History of Immigration, a challenge for every nation' organized by the CNHI in 2004, other initiatives are beginning to take shape and they give these growing networks a dimension that links the artistic, cultural and scientific fields with the political thinking of these societies that are now plural in their make-up. This openness to an international dimension is integral to the CNHI's purpose. The involvement of the network's partners can be seen not only in cross-border projects but also in their participation in international debates and in the creation of international networks.

A challenge for the future: from ideas to action

At the time of writing, this network of partners is included in the project but is not yet fleshed out in the reality of its actions. The question of financial resources, and their territorial distribution between the network and the CNHI, is an essential element of the search for suitable collaboration modes between the two entities of the project. An approach that might help to overcome diverging interests consists, for future cooperative

projects, in giving people the assurance that they are serving the common goals of the project, that is to say, transforming the way the immigrant population groups and immigration movements are perceived. The aim is to encourage a common culture consisting of multiple contributions, on the one hand, and to affirm the principle of subsidiarity between the Cité and the network, on the other, so that their actions are complementary. The usual mode of interaction between a public institution and its partners is through subsidies or provision of services. Defining a common public interest and participating in the governing bodies of the institution introduces partnerships based on contract agreements. These define the conditions for co-production as well as mutual relay functions, over and above the classic definition of service provision and grants.

Apart from the financial and administrative considerations posed by these diverse modes of cooperation, the latter also raise the issue of professional practices in the various fields covered by the CNHI project. The first phase requires organizing the awareness of the public regarding the changes taking place at the Palais de la Porte Dorée facility, not only from an architectural point of view, but also in terms of the perception of their meaning. This is being done thanks to a programme of activities both in the Palais, despite ongoing refurbishment, and outside its walls. It is a project that is developing as it moves towards what some might perceive as a form of utopia, but which has its roots in the social and political realities of a multicultural society. The CNHI project defines the road map in terms of meaning (knowledge), direction (programming) and

significance (recognition of a common multistranded culture). It incorporates and reflects complex contemporary issues that are benefiting from increased attention through the combination of a variety of professional practices internally, thanks to a multidisciplinary team, and externally thanks to the network.

The originality of this museum lies in the fact that it does not have any pre-existing collection. It is therefore a matter of building up a collection that will illustrate a statement, and not for its intrinsic value. The scientific and cultural nature of the project sets the museum in an educational approach whose goal is 'to restore a forgotten chapter of French history and include it in the story of the nation'. A part of this collection is being constituted through targeted appeals, and here the network of partners plays a major role. Thanks to this collection of objects and oral memory bites, the museum is contributing to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage as defined in the 2003 UNESCO Convention: 'This heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups... and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.'

However, the CNHI is not only interested in honouring the past but also in recognizing the importance of the present, thanks to a cultural and artistic presence that will be able to illustrate the key notions of identity, otherness and any other topic related to the Cité's rationale. In this context, it is a matter of referring to the function of culture in the 'Cité' taken in its wider sense of

where citizenship is exercised, without running the risk of artistic and cultural creation being instrumentalized to serve a particular viewpoint. The challenge posed in seeking cultural democratization may be seen both in the determination to reduce the distance that separates certain audiences from the culture on offer, and in the desire to promote the recognition of the various cultural expressions that make up our common culture. Here too, the network voiced some concerns about the temptation to set up a cultural institution within the CNHI, which would develop parallel to the expression of the emerging cultures, sometimes as a result of initiatives taken by some of the network partners themselves. The programming in fact raises the question of the limits between cultural and social-cultural action, between the domination of centralized Parisian programming and local regional ambitions and expectations. Thanks to its close collaboration with the network, the CNHI project seeks to leverage the cultural, political and social dimensions of a comprehensive programming that would be as relevant in Paris as in the regions or abroad. Working on the reciprocal representations of the players should result in enriching co-production experiences, as has been the case for the presentation of *Zon-Mai* by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, following commission from the Cité and presented during regional events in a promising partnership with local players. Finally, the network will also have a role to play in the policy of mediation that it is hoped the CNHI will instate between the different audiences. In as much as the goal of this project is to change people's representations, this is not something that can happen through a compartmentalized perception of the various audiences.

The CNHI orchestrates the juxtaposition of four complex elements. The challenge is to find how to articulate this in a way that will highlight the consistency and the consequences of the commitments expressed through the project from its inception to its fulfilment today. French society as a whole, even as it becomes aware of its inequalities and reaffirms the need for a transformation of mentalities in line with its commitment to republican principles, is seeking new modes of organization of society that can accommodate what is now its plural and multicultural fabric. The second element is the emergence of the question of the history of immigration. The challenge is to know that history, to accept it and to open it up to public debate.

The third element is territorial. This is where the project is anchored in social, cultural and political realities. The country's provinces are simultaneously faced with a greater decentralization of public responsibilities from the all-powerful Parisian centre, the complexity of questions of scope that range from local to international, the difficulty of having to find financial resources and the need to create networks for sharing ideas and actions. And finally the CNHI itself, an institution of a new kind, having the dual nature of a place and of a network, that brings together these first three elements, while seeking to define itself not just as a receptacle for these elements but also as a public cultural institution in its own right. This project is therefore highly ambitious. It is all the more complex because each of its elements is evolving at its own pace, not always in step with each other, in an economic, political, cultural and social contingency over which none of them has total control.

The original nature and the strength of this collective initiative lie no doubt in the acceptance of the collective risk posed by asking questions that are vital for tomorrow's society, even if they upset present points of reference and representation. We now need to ensure the continuity of the conditions that can make these changes successful. This means:

- recognizing what is unacceptable from the point of view of the founding values of human rights and of the French Republic,
- knowing and remembering the history of immigration so that it becomes possible to share the fundamental questions raised by this situation,
- undertaking the artistic, cultural and scientific actions that have been made possible by political will and by the resources deployed.

The equilibrium that this project needs to find between a place and a network of partners, between utopia and reality, must be the variables of stability that Maxence Fermine has called the art of the tightrope walker:

There are two kinds of people

Those who live, play and die

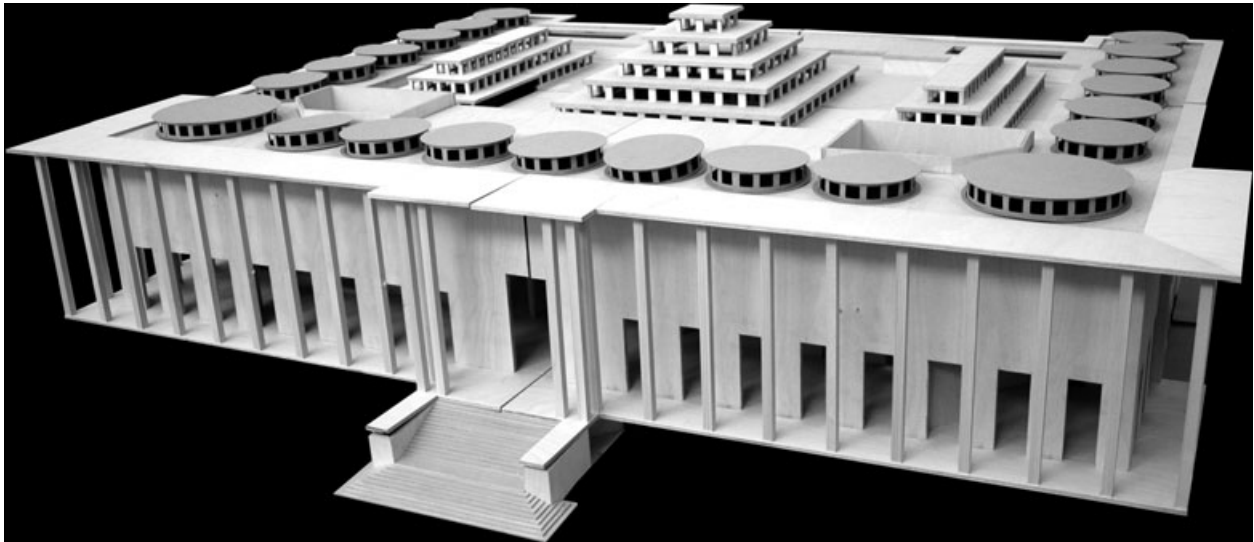
Those who will never do anything other than keep their balance on the tightrope of life

There are the players

And there are the tightrope walkers.⁶

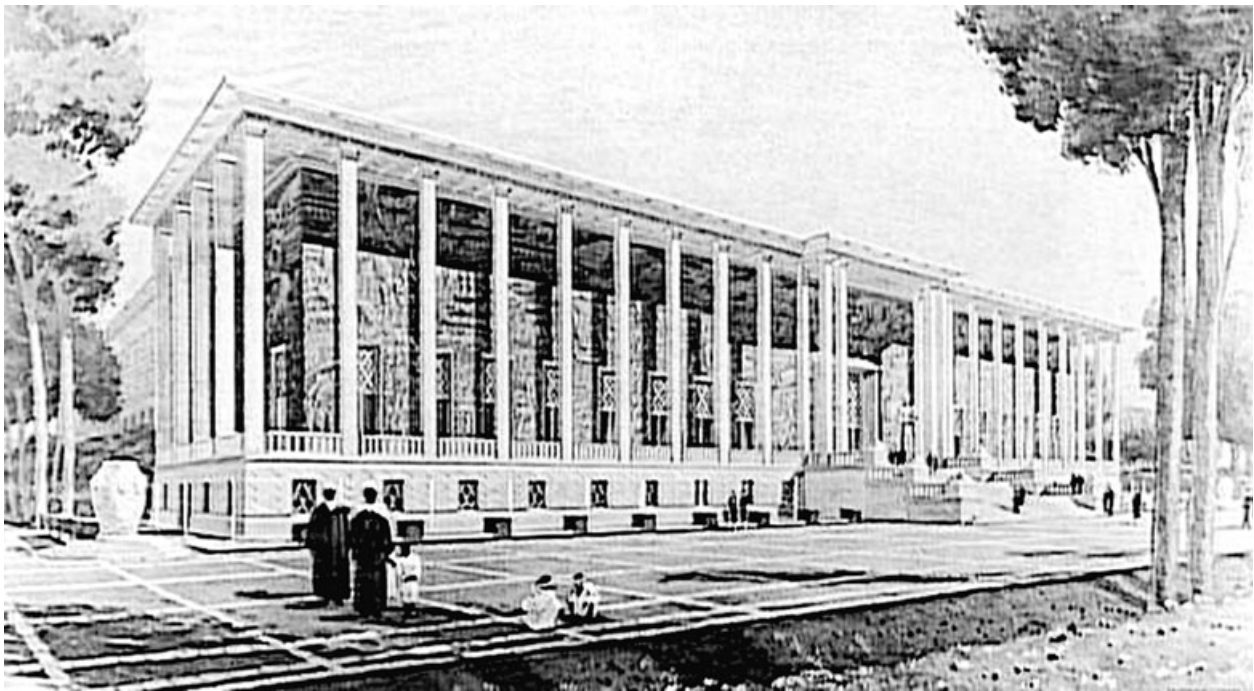
| NOTES

1. Opening speech of the symposium held on 9 November 2003 at the French National Library (BnF).
2. Olivier Rousselle, *conseiller d'État*, former general director of the *Fonds d'Action et de Soutien à l'Intégration et à la Lutte contre les Discriminations*, 2003.
3. Noiriel, Gérard (1987) *Le creuset français, histoire de l'immigration, XIX^{ème}–XX^{ème} siècles*, Éditions Seuil, Paris.
4. The FASILD has since become the Agence pour la Cohésion Sociale et l'égalité des Chances (Agency for Social Cohesion and Equal Opportunity).
5. Opale, 'Etude sur les attentes des acteurs locaux', January 2006. The study is available for download from the CNHI's website under 'Agenda 2006'. Editor's note: Opale is an association created in 1988 to develop local cultural projects through studies, networks, guidebooks, training, and cultural action to highlight living memory.
6. Ferminé, Maxence (2000) *Neige (Snow)*, Éditions Seuil, Paris.



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17. Model of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration.



© 2007. musée du quai Branly/Scala, Florence
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18. Drawing by Léon Bazin of the façade of the former Palace of the Colonies.

| Documenting Immigration: from resource centre to media library

by Claire Tirefort

Claire Tirefort currently heads the Media Library of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration under construction. Her previous posts have included project manager at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (French National Library) where she was involved in opening a documentation centre within the Curatorial Department, and project manager for the document exchange network of the International Centre for Prehistory.

The public opening of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration is an opportunity to take an inventory of immigration resource centres in France: what audiences do these centres target, what functions should they perform and how do they meet the needs of their users, in particular through the development of new technologies? The present article explores the relationships between documentation and immigration through experience gained from past and present projects on immigration in France.

Users of documentation on immigration fall under a number of major categories. First, local players involved in welcoming and integrating immigrants (MPs, social workers, associations, and economic stakeholders). For them, the resource centres are forums to share and exchange experience, reflect on issues and describe phenomena. The second category of users includes students, researchers (in sociology, history, political science, economics, ethnology and anthropology) and journalists. They turn to documentation centres in search of specialized and scientific publications. The final category is the general public interested in the historical, sociological or cultural aspects of immigration,

whether for private reasons or because they are conducting an educational project. The media library at the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration will offer this potential audience a multidisciplinary and multimedia collection of materials.

A brief history of immigration resources in France

The first documentation centres on immigration in France were opened in 1973. They targeted teachers, trainers and educators. At this time, the Ministry of Education opened the CNDP-Migrants (Centre National de Documentation Pédagogique).¹ In order to investigate the role and impact of immigration on societies, an association, the Centre d'Information et d'Études sur les Migrations Internationales (CIEMI)² was founded from the archives of an Italian newspaper aimed at immigrants in France. At the end of the 1970s, as new immigrants joined families who had already immigrated and as numbers of asylum-seekers grew, French society began to pay attention to immigration issues. To facilitate the integration of foreigners, a national association, the Agence de Développement des Relations Interculturelles (ADRI)³ provided training and set up a resource centre for local players. The early 1990s saw the opening of resource centres devoted to municipal policies aimed at developing social infrastructures.⁴ From 1996, ADRI was given a further mandate to promote meetings and to create a network of resources on immigration.

The above organizations began working in a network with a view to merging their information and certain of their functions. The *Remisis*⁵ documentation network created by the CNRS in

1979, assembles some twenty documentation and resource centres with a view to disseminating a joint bibliographic database. A network of regional resource centres for municipal policy-making has been growing since 1993. In 1999, the Integration Network was created⁶ from regional resource centres and with the participation of ADRI.

Resource centres: action through the dissemination of knowledge

Professionals can turn to different national organizations devoted to welcoming and integrating immigrants, and to anti-discrimination measures:

- national institutions (government departments or associations) that develop information portals;⁷
- regional centres that compare the knowledge of researchers with social realities at the local level;
- militant associations that work to defend the rights of foreigners and welcome them through training seminars, publications and joint campaigns.⁸ Some associations offer information, interpreting and translation services by contacting immigrants directly. The resource centres aim to support and upgrade the skills of key local players through training seminars, workshops and technical support missions (local audits, partnerships) and by preparing educational tools. The resource centres must also capitalize on and disseminate knowledge derived from different exchanges and experience. In particular,

they must work with specialists or with project leaders.

The resource centres use the Internet to disseminate the information they produce, whatever the nature of such information (current events, definitions of concepts, programmes of activities and training seminars). In order to merge regional information, the resource centres make available online directories of key players,⁹ fact sheets and the proceedings of study workshops.¹⁰ They provide documents and records in fields in which integration policy has been applied: welcoming of foreigners, access to public services, measures against discrimination, municipal policy-making, associations, art and culture. The resource centres frequently publish reviews or newsletters on hard copy or on-line. All their publications offer professional users a diversified source of information and materials for reflection and discussion. Each centre produces bibliographies, news of recent publications or special features in bibliographic or digital form. Certain resource centres propose a question-and-answer service from their own resources or by directing users to other documentation centres or to other project leaders. Disseminating knowledge on the Internet entails placing thematic content on-line. For example, the portal on Social Cohesion produced by the Ministry of Labour, Social Cohesion and Housing offers a range of structured information on the theme 'Migration and integration'. The main aim of the resource centres is to enable key local players to conduct their own projects by offering them tools and techniques: an MP responsible for delivering a local integration policy in his or her locality can find material with which to develop action plans; a

trainer in the Integration Network can consult the website and physical documentation of the centre to prepare his or her training workshop; an association leader can consult similar fact sheets on the regional resource-centre website to implement measures against discrimination. He or she consults the centre's question-and-answer service which can put them in touch with another project leader or expert. The documents and records at the resource centres are designed as fully functional actionable materials for professionals in the social sector.

Documentation centres as research tools

In universities and associations, research centres aim to help students and researchers to analyse migration phenomena and to compile a history of immigration in France. The social, political, historical and cultural dimensions in their fields of study tend to overlap. The documentation centres have mainly focused on acquiring sociological and anthropological materials. In this type of service offering, the documentation centres mainly aim to grant users access to their database and documents. The main documentary service is consultation of the catalogue on the Internet. An agenda on the same website announces scientific events connected with the organization. The website lists the editorial output of the research centre. The documentation centres are gradually extending their on-line catalogues with digital documents or with links to other resource sites. The website of *Génériques*, an association, makes inventories and disseminates records on foreigners in France. It provides access to several databases that comprise archives, newspaper articles and posters. The Internet user can simultaneously

consult several archive inventories. The Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (BDIC) provides a documentary portal that acts as a research interface between collections of documents. The catalogue of *Trois Mondes*, another association, is compiling a film and video collection on intercultural issues and provides links to images or specialized topics. The Ville-École-Intégration facility at the Centre National de Documentation Pédagogique is both a reference library and a resource centre, as ADRI was: it offers teachers and educators bibliographical information as well as research materials on municipal policies in the areas of integration and education. Its on-line catalogue with 27,000 references can be consulted based on different criteria, following the section on special features and new documents and publications. There is a clear desire to direct Internet users to targeted news items rather than to the entire documentary output.

The documentation and resource centres are evolving in a similar way: their documents and records constitute a knowledge base on current news, mainly through thematic features. Similarly, they are open to other fields such as the history of immigration and to new potential audiences.

The media library: opening the doors of knowledge

In 2004, the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration project was officially unveiled. The aim was to provide a centre for storing records, organizing meetings and offering documentation and resources to a broad public. Its future media library includes the documentation collection of the ADRI but in different areas of specialization:

concerning the theme of integration and discrimination, it was decided to acquire generalist materials aimed at the general public. Furthermore, a special collection of recorded materials was compiled on the history of immigration. This media library will fully open in 2009. It is expected to open a documentation centre, reserved for a limited public, starting in 2008.

As the Internet spreads, the media library and museum have a major role to play in preserving the memory of immigration and in transmitting knowledge. To meet the needs of students and a broad public, the media library of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration assembles specialised documents and records on the history and cultures of immigrants in France over two centuries. A generalist collection on current, sociological, political and economic aspects of immigration is being compiled for the general public. It will complement the other documentation centres, to which the media library will direct requests from specialised users. The documentary portal centralizes and merges knowledge to enable Internet users to understand the content of all materials supplied by a network of producers. Document, museum and archive databases, information directories and specialized articles become complementary knowledge components that can be consulted simultaneously. By organising these information sources around given themes, a broad public will be able to access them more easily.

The fields of knowledge proposed are not only documentary, but literary and artistic as

well. Just as a museum exhibits objects and documents as works of art, the media library associates art and literature with scientific disciplines. These works (photograph albums, novels, comic strips, poetry) raise awareness on the history of immigration and more effectively express citizenship, cultural identity or racism than scientific research. Such documents and records will be prioritized in the media library and on the web portal. Disseminating knowledge about immigration requires using multimedia supports, including iconographic media, sound and video. All these media will be included in a digital library accessible via the Internet or an intranet site depending on the licence rights purchased to disseminate such information.

The media library of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration introduces the general public to immigration and offers students and professionals work tools on immigration history and cultures. The aim is to disseminate this knowledge among visitors so that they can appropriate it. With this in mind, the CNHI has opened a forum to promote meetings between visitors and project leaders. It has also launched a virtual forum on its web portal. Users can then participate in knowledge-building by contributing comments or testimonials in projects that seek to record the history of immigration.

Changing perceptions on immigration

Just as the resource and documentation centres on immigration, the media library at the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration seeks to further knowledge and learning by shifting the focus on immigration. It is developing a

collection aimed at young people on themes related to citizenship. Besides the history and cultures of immigration, the collection will also cover otherness, tolerance, racism and forms of discrimination. Documentary workshops will be held in pursuit of this educational objective: information search sessions in the multimedia centre and the presentation of documents in the reading room will enable both children and adults to analyse information published on immigration through websites, articles, albums, photographs, posters and films. Images are an effective means to reflect on and influence perceptions and will be utilized in the workshops, media library and digital library. The general public and specialist users can access writings, recordings, films or photographs on the history of immigration. In partnership with a national network, the media library lists and collects publications from projects on the history of immigration. These materials often concern cultural events that are also listed by the CNHI. The aim will be to collect unedited testimonials such as sound recordings and digital texts and to provide access to them. The Oral History project conducted by the Ellis Island Museum in New York may serve as an example: in the library of this local museum, the public can listen to the testimonials of immigrants by consulting the museum's database.

The media library wishes to enhance this unique collection of oral recordings that cover the history of immigration in France. To achieve this, it will provide greater access to this collection and organize information around historical events. During documentary workshops

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or exhibitions, the use of testimonials such as iconography will impact perceptions on immigration. The Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration aims to strengthen social links by recording the history of immigration and by preserving its memory.

| NOTES

1. The CNDP-Migrants is now known as Ville – École – Intégration (VEI, City – School – Integration). Website: <http://www.cndp.fr/revuevei/>.
2. Website: <http://www.ciemi.org/>.
3. Established in 1977, ADRI was initially called ICEI (Information Culture et Immigration).
4. The Documentation Centre of the Délégation Interministérielle à la Ville (DIV), established in 1993, heads a network and was one of the first of its kind. Website: <http://i.ville.gouv.fr/Data/cdrdiv.html/>.
5. Remisis: Réseau d'information sur les migrations internationales et les relations interethniques. <http://www.remisis.org>
6. This network is now called RECI: (Ressources pour l'Égalité des Chances et l'Intégration). It is presented on the ORIV resources centre website: <http://www.oriv-alsace.org/pages1/1-qui/reso.html#reseaureci/>.
7. N.B., along with the already mentioned DIV centre, the Direction des Populations et des Migrants (DPM); l'Agence Nationale pour la Cohésion Sociale et l'Égalité des Chances; Migrations Santé.
8. In particular, the GISTI: (Groupe d'Information et de Soutien des Immigrés).
9. Consult the EPI website: Espace picard pour l'intégration. <http://www.epi-centre.org/>.
10. Examples of fact sheets on special topics can be found on the websites of Profession Banlieue (<http://www.professionbanlieue.org>) and of the Institut régional de la ville (<http://www.irev.fr>). The latter website also includes the proceedings of the one-day study workshops.

| The Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration: site of transmission and public education

by *Nathalie Heraud*

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France has long remained a 'country of immigration that it ignores', to adopt the expression of the historian Philippe Dewitte,¹ even though immigration has existed as a massive phenomenon for over two centuries, and the French population has been profoundly changed as a result of this foreign contribution. Ignorance or denial, this state of affairs falsifies the perception that the French have of their own identity. The major challenge of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration (CNHI) is to influence this representation, to approach the historical reality in order to enable a better grasp of what constitutes 'French identity'.

In order to attain this goal, the CNHI will install a permanent exhibition retracing two centuries of immigration history in France, together with a media library, a cultural programme, temporary exhibitions and a web site, in sum, services conceived as diverse means to collect, preserve and transmit the traces of the past and the present of immigration in France. If the CNHI strives to be a resource for specialists on the subject, it intends above all to be a site of transmission of this history, aimed at as wide a public as possible, and to give centrality to this

migratory phenomenon throughout the contemporary world.

Supervision of the CNHI, shared by two other administrative ministries, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Social Cohesion (under the Ministry of National Education), clearly manifests the willingness of public authorities to have this institution orientate itself toward the transmission of France's immigration past to a school audience. One of the roles of primary and secondary education is the formation of responsible and discerning citizens. The Cité can contribute to this formation by enabling a better understanding of what constitutes the identity of contemporary France. In order to better fulfil this mission, the CNHI has been endowed with a Pedagogical Committee, charged with defining the major orientations of its educational policy. Its education department implements this policy to allow the best possible cooperation between the resources offered by the CNHI and the Ministry of National Education.

Immigration history at school

The name assigned to the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration invites us first off to reflect upon the teaching of a particular discipline, history, which is the object of a specific and mandatory educational programme from the second cycle of primary [or middle] school until the *terminale* [final year or upper sixth form].

Systematized under the Third Republic (1870–1940), history as an academic discipline then assumed a civic goal, that of educating French citizens to be proud of their nation and its political

republican system. The actual outcome of this educational programme was undoubtedly more complex and subtle, in that it simultaneously involved the development of judgement, and the education of critical minds, capable of analysing human and social situations under different forms. Yet academic history preserved the role of transmitting a collective memory and of introducing the students into a collective consciousness of belonging. Otherwise, it was generally the history-geography teachers' responsibility to fill the hours of civic education that reappeared in the secondary-school curriculum by the 1890s.²

The history programmes were constructed in such a way as to give students fundamental reference points based on the historical past of humankind. Their structure thus revealed a choice, effectuated according to precise objectives. The more one approaches the contemporary period, the more one sees that history taught in school (both primary and secondary) was centred on two aspects: international relations and the history of France. The programme consisted of teaching students the facts, enabling them to situate themselves in the world and to comprehend fundamental knowledge about the identity of the country in which they live. Immigration history education thus became essential here. Work conducted by historians during the 1980s, and notably after the 1988 publication of Gérard Noiriel's pioneering book *Le Creuset français. Histoire de l'immigration (XIXe–XXe siècles)* [The French Melting Pot. History of Immigration (19th–20th Centuries)], largely demonstrated, in fact, the influence of immigration on the constitution of contemporary French society. To be deprived of

immigration history would amount to being deprived of one of the basic facts of French contemporary history. As the sociologist Abdelmalek Sayad has written: 'To work on immigration is to work on France: on the France of yesterday, thus the history of France, the history of the French population and, even more, on the history of the French nation.'³

Yet, if immigration in France is an ancient phenomenon,⁴ having begun over two centuries ago and having become significant by the end of the nineteenth century, there had not yet developed the same historical study of this question. Not until the late 1980s was its field of inquiry formulated. Now we know that there still exists a lag between the university's treatment of a question and its transposition into the school teaching programme. This fact is translated in two ways. Firstly, the programmes may require a long time to integrate the advances of historical research. Secondly, the teachers themselves may require new training, because they have not been trained to handle these thematic questions as they were not – or very rarely – included in university courses when they were students. Thus, according to a study⁵ led by the Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique (National Institute for Pedagogical Research) in the early 2000s, almost all the teachers questioned estimated that they did not have sufficient knowledge in the domain of immigration history to be able to tackle the theme in their courses.

Faced with these needs, with the lack of support for treating the immigration theme which none the less appears fundamental, the CNHI offers the pedagogical means (until now

non-existent or difficult to find), assembled in one place on the same site, not only in terms of continuing education tools for teachers, but also for pedagogical support to make possible a better approach to the theme of immigration with their classes.

An interdisciplinary pedagogical offer for school audiences

One of the roles of the CNHI is to be a site of popularization, an 'interpretation centre'⁶ on immigration research conducted by the social sciences. The centre is thus making available thematic bibliographies and film lists for teachers, as much to allow them to complement their knowledge as to prepare resources likely to be used with their classes. In a similar way, the education department is establishing chronologies and files of summaries of pedagogical implementation propositions⁷ tied to education programmes. These tools are being diffused on the Cité web site. Along with these teaching tools, the Cité is contributing to the continuing education of teachers in collaboration with apprenticeship training sessions organised by the academic authorities.⁸ From the inauguration of the CNHI, some sessions will be held for teachers to guide them in the utilisation of the available resources, as well as the lecture programmes.

The CNHI will itself, moreover, function as a pedagogical tool put at the disposition of teachers with their classes. The permanent exhibition is central to this plan. Without being conceived as 'a museum for school classes', it could be a precious aid for a school audience. To this end, the education department is elaborating

its support material for visits, conceived in function of class levels and educational programmes, permitting teachers to construct their independent visits. Some specific guided tours are also proposed for school groups, as well as workshops to examine themes more thoroughly.

A museum facilitates cross-fertilizations, through diverse media, first of all, that the classroom cannot provide. Objects, archival documents, posters, photographs, sound recordings, video installations and the like are put on display along the itinerary. The diversity of display items allows an interdisciplinary exchange, sometimes rather difficult to organize in a school context, even though this interdisciplinarity is indispensable to comprehend a full-scale social phenomenon like immigration.

Granted, the exhibition retraces two centuries of immigration history, but this fact does not signify that only the discipline of history is featured. The presence of animated maps,⁹ the theme of the voyage and the frontier,¹⁰ like that of housing logically touches on geography. A history of vocabulary surrounding words about immigration,¹¹ a sequence on languages,¹² composed simultaneously of games, a video installation,¹³ and interviews with foreign authors who have chosen the French language, offer resources within a framework of education in French as well as other living languages. The exhibition is enlivened by a series of art works (photographs, video installations, sculptures¹⁴) allowing an approach through the plastic arts. An initiation into ethnology, not in itself a subject taught

within the French school system, will be made possible through many angles, such as the sequenced reading of exhibit objects of everyday life, for example, in the sequence *De(s)constructions*,¹⁵ composed of a selection of around forty 'icon' objects, constituting French cultural heritage, and delving into their authentic origins. Throughout their visit, moreover, students will be invited to ask themselves questions on civic order, whether it be about problems tied to the evolution of law or to the question of stereotypes, and the portrayal of or regard toward the other. Posters offer a particularly rich support for this type of approach. School visits to the museum would thus make possible the link-up between various disciplines, and through it, a better understanding of a complex phenomenon, that of immigration.

The entire exhibition plan, adapted to school audiences, takes as its goal to show and to make visitors aware of the major role that immigration and immigrants play in the French national construction. The designers of the permanent exhibition have searched to give a global account of immigration in France, 'to give some markers to those who want to understand this great demographical and social adventure that was, and still is, immigration in France'.¹⁶ In an extracurricular framework, this could have an advantage, in replacing the migratory phenomenon over the long duration, of lessening the drama of an often dolorous history and memory for its actors, amongst whom some of the students are the inheritors, or even the representatives. Yet recourse to individual memories and to biographies, far from having been neglected in the

permanent exhibition, also presents major pedagogical interest.

History, memory and the school: what possible uses of the CNHI?

The question of memory, and its ties to history,¹⁷ is at the heart of contemporary questions on identities and their construction. Immigration itself touches on the question of identity, and notably on national identity. And the school age is precisely the moment during which individual identities are constructed. The CNHI thus finds itself at the epicentre of topical issues, which pose problems to the academic institution. Since the 1970s, the school has been asking itself if it ought, and in what way, take into account the specificities of students with foreign backgrounds, of the immigrants themselves, or their children.

It seems that we have arrived at a relative consensus on the subject of teaching immigration history. The question is still little and poorly taken into account within school programmes, and often left to the individual teacher's initiatives. However, the idea that immigration history is an important element in comprehending the construction of France is becoming more and more widely shared. In France, history in the schools maintains, more or less, the role of the 'great national novel' in which each individual ought to be able to find his or her place, in which individual, family or community memories ought to be able to recognize themselves or at least not to feel rejected. It is also for this reason that the history of immigration must be studied at school, to allow the students, inheritors of this history, to attach

their family memories to their country: 'The history of immigration attaches itself to the national history and renders logically and comprehensively the fact of a presence come from afar.'¹⁸ Many teachers resent the necessity of treating these questions in their courses. Yet perhaps because of the quasi-absence of immigration history (at least explicitly) in the programmes, but also because of the scarcity of pedagogical supports, the question is often broached, with the best of intentions, through students' private family souvenirs. This practice provokes questions, such as that raised by Sophie Ernst: 'In any case, work on history is fundamentally the obligation of the school, but memorial research is troubled within the context of an obligatory public education. Memory cannot be obligatory.'¹⁹

All the more given the fact that here, far from allowing immigration history to be posited as a memory common to all French people, whatever their family origins, this has pedagogical consequences of 'shunting otherness back to students who are, besides, often in full search of identity', as a researcher in the science of education observed.²⁰

Perhaps the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration can itself, in the realm of memories, offer a framework to teachers in which to start studying this question. The permanent exhibition plan, which cross-references individual testimonies and life narratives in regards to 'major history', indeed invites visitors to make this round trip between individual destiny and collective fate. Moreover, through this network of associations on which it stands, the CNHI is in

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contact with numerous witnesses to this history of immigration, amongst whom many have the desire and the capacities to relate an account of their experiences before school classes. One of the tasks for the Cité's education department is undoubtedly to explore that area of research, and accompaniment of exchanges amongst witnesses and school groups within the framework of museum visits, media library workshops, or encounters in academic establishments. This might be a means to approach the question of memory without the forced recourse to family souvenirs which intrude into the private domain, but not the school.

The Cité's mission of transmission obviously does not end with the school audience. But this sector does call for specific methods, some of which will also be destined for a wider public, whether it be children outside the educational system or adult groups. Specific workshops or intervention methods adapted for school children could as such be available to function for a diverse audience, and vice versa.

| NOTES

1. Dewitte, Philippe (2003) *Deux siècles d'immigration en France* (Two Centuries of Immigration in France), Paris, La Documentation Française.
2. Under the form of courses in civic education in middle school (*collège*) and a civic, judicial and social instruction course (*Enseignement civique, juridique et social*, ECJS) in high school (*lycée*). Often entrusted to history/ geography teachers, these teaching programmes can also be taught by teachers from other disciplines.
3. Sayad, Abdelmalek (1990) Les maux à mots de l'immigration (The Ills over Words of Immigration), *Politix* No. 12, p. 7.
4. The word 'immigration' is used here in the meaning that Gérard Noiriel gives it: a displacement including the passage over a frontier, and which can only exist from the moment when the legal concept of 'nationality' was put into place, thus at the beginning of the nineteenth century.
5. Corbell, L., Falaize, B. *et al.* (2000–03) *Entre mémoire et savoir: l'enseignement de la Shoah et des guerres de décolonisation* (Between Memory and Knowledge: Teaching about the Holocaust and the Wars of Decolonization), INRP/IUFM, Versailles (research report).
6. Toubon, Jacques (2004) *Mission de préfiguration du Centre de Ressources et de mémoires de l'immigration* (Planning Commission for the Centre of Resources and Memory of Immigration), La Documentation française, Paris.
7. Propositions elaborated by the teachers participating in groups of pedagogical reflection organized by the CNHI since 2005, in collaboration with the academies of the Île de France.
8. During the planning process, these actions had been taken in partnership with the academies of the Île de France, for reasons of geographical proximity.
9. Prologue to the exhibition.
10. First part of the itinerary, *Émigrer* (Emigrate).
11. Prologue to the exhibition.
12. In the third part of the itinerary, *Diversités et cultures* (Diversities and Cultures).
13. Sedira, Zineb (2002) *Mother Tongue*.
14. Togu, Barthélémy (2004) *Climbing Down*.
15. Third part of the itinerary.
16. Blanc-Chaléard, Marie-Claude (2001) *Histoire de l'immigration*, p. 3, L'Harmattan, Paris.
17. See Traverso, Enzo (2006) *Le passé, modes d'emploi. Histoire, mémoire, politique* (User's Guide to the Past: History, Memory, Politics), La Fabrique, Paris.
18. Ernst, Sophie (2003) L'école et les mémoires de l'immigration. Au milieu du gué (School and Memories of Immigration: in the middle of the

ford), in Lorcerie, Françoise (ed.), *L'école et le défi ethnique. Éducation et intégration* (School and the Ethnic Challenge: education and integration), ESF INRP, Paris.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Falaize, Benoît (2006) L'immigration dans les classes, entre reconnaissance politique et estime de soi (Immigration in the Classroom, between political recognition and self-esteem), *Education and Management*, May, p. 47.

| The Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration and its Public: images, perceptions and evolutions

by Fanny Servole

Fanny Servole studied the history of art at the École du Louvre. She is responsible for developing the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration's policies concerning the public.

A few months away from its inauguration, the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration (CNHI) knows nothing or very little about its future visitors. Nothing, because created *ex nihilo* and with no valid comparisons possible, the CNHI cannot rely on precedents or similar French institutions. If in fact there are some sites devoted to immigration history in other countries, like Ellis Island in the United States, there still remain difficulties in transposing the characteristics and attendance figures from one site to another, the cultural practices and treatment of immigration being specific to each country. Hardly anything, if it were not for the results of a study (currently in press) conducted between December 2005 and December 2006 by Jonna Louvrier, Alexandra Poli and Michel Wieivorka regarding the images and perceptions of the project, and from which this article is very largely inspired. As it takes as its objective bringing about changes in the way people perceive migratory phenomena, the CNHI is generating (by virtue of its subject) representations that can prove to be either obstacles or incentives to the visit. Thus it seems important in terms of image, notoriety, and therefore frequentation, not to underestimate them so as to surpass them.

Nothing is known about its future visitors, but a little is known about the visitors to the tropical aquarium located in the lower area of the Palais de la Porte Dorée. Constructed for the International Colonial Exhibition of 1931, this building is being renovated in order to redefine this former palace of the colonies and thus enable it to be discovered anew. Despite the inherent components of the Cité's 'contents' and 'container', this institution aims to set very high standards. According to the planning commission's report, 'the museum will address the greatest audience'.¹ Is it challenging or utopian to think that it can attract not only the habitual public audiences to cultural sites but also those who, on the contrary, never frequent museums, and those who also hover between the two extremes?

In autumn 2005, the Ministry of Culture launched a study of the images and perceptions surrounding the proposal for the CNHI. The study was entrusted to a team of researchers from the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales. With the objective of taking a census of representations, which different categories of potential publics might have concerning the project, the study recorded several problems with the very subject of the Cité itself: the nature of the project being understood with difficulty by the public, and the difficulties of its theme.

Some evolutions in the very nature of the proposal

Although in 2003 the planning commission's objective was to reflect on the terms and conditions for a centre of resources and memory of immigration, in its report submitted in 2004 it proposed the creation of a 'museum'. The initial

remarks on the creation of a site dedicated to the history of immigration already favoured this designation. From the early 1980s, the Association pour un Musée de l'Immigration (Association for an Immigration Museum), as its name indicates, supported this concept: 'Indeed, of all the conventional cultural institutions, the museum imposes itself as the most logical when it concerns promoting a phenomenon or the vulgarization of research, as it directly provides the phenomenon studied the visibility of an exhibition for the public.'²

Finally, as had been recommended by Driss El Yazami and Rémy Schwartz in their first report submitted to the government in 2001, it was the versatile character of the site that was decisive in the choice of its definitive name: 'the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration'. It was defined as a multidisciplinary establishment that includes, notably, a national museum dedicated to the history and the cultures of immigration. This shift in terminology is not without consequence in relation to the subject of its public. In fact, the stakes are no longer the same: the 'targeted' audiences are no longer uniquely those who are at the origin of the project – researchers and local participants – from now on they include the usual museum public, the public attracted to the tropical aquarium, school groups, fans of the building, the neighbouring public, and so on; in sum, 'the greatest number'.

Still on the subject of the public, the study shows that what should have been from the start an element of notoriety, in the end perhaps proved itself to be an obstacle.³ The report submitted in 2001 had already underlined that, 'to identify the

future centre with a museum would amount to the *patrimonialisation* of immigration, as if it belonged to the past and was no longer an active process'.⁴ This reservation still crops up in the results of the most recent study. The ambiguity is complete: among those questioned, the local actors are those who seem both to be the most desirous of improving the image of immigration through the creation of a museum, while remaining the most reticent to the *muséification* of this history, which would relegate it to a finite episode in the history of France.

Confusions over the type of museum

The category of museums to which the CNHI attaches itself may be equivocal. It is neither a museum of fine arts nor a museum of history in the strict sense of the term, nor is it a memorial site; it is a museum of society or social museum. There is an additional obstacle: social museums in France until now have not been frankly successful with the public or their trustees, contrary to their Canadian, American or German counterparts. The consequences in terms of the public are here again inevitable: not adhering to a category of museums familiar to a 'wide public', the Cité is difficult to identify. This may be all the more prejudicial since one of the reasons for visiting a site is its notoriety: that of its collections of course, as well as its site. There would even be, as the study shows, a certain confusion: the CNHI would be identified – based upon the presence of the words 'history' and 'national' in its name – as the archetype of a history museum. Two caricatural elements stem from this classification: the Cité is viewed as a memorial, rooting the history of immigration to a finite period and describing it uniquely by its dates. By

extension, as excerpts from the study indicate, it would be seen as a daunting place, scientific in nature, making it necessary 'to read a great deal of panels, making for a slow visit; requiring reading, and studying, in order to understand'.⁵ As such, the CNHI seems reserved for a small number, specialists on the subject of immigration history and, consequently, hardly accessible to a non-specialist public, particularly unsuited for family visits. The educational character of the Cité would be for the latter to the detriment of its entertaining character. Concerning the scenography and content of the permanent installation, designed for the 'museum' section of the Cité, this image seems unjustified. Indeed, with stress placed on individual history, memory proves that the importance here is not to understand but to perceive and to feel. It is therefore necessary to investigate the reasons for this disdain, for this confusion between the rationale of the creation of the CNHI and the development of its proposition.

Difficulty of the theme

Another danger indicated by the study is the subject of this institution itself: a subject 'hardly marketable' (according to various persons questioned on the subject), embarrassing, troubling, even bothersome, a political subject or rather a partisan one whose corollary would be the struggle against racism. This even though it would have been seductive to think *a priori* that the one-fifth of the French population who has a grandparent or a great-grandparent of immigrant origin ought to be a 'targeted' public.

The omnipresence of the immigration question in the media tends, on the one hand, to

reduce immigration to a news item and, on the other hand, to consider it as a social problem. On these two issues, the Cité may suffer in seeming to appear either as an ad hoc and opportunist response, or as a site where the visit would be a duty and not a pleasure. As the results of the study indicate 'the sensational and omnipresent character of the immigration theme in the public debate cannot be overlooked, facilitating even less the calm reflection on the public expectations of the Cité, shaping not the image of a historical phenomenon meriting a museum, but that of a "problem" for French society – but who wants to visit a site signifying the existence of a 'problem'?'⁶

This question also seems to apply to the school milieu, which could pass *a priori* for a 'captive' audience. Recognizing the difficulty in examining this subject in class, teachers request study tools, and scientific knowledge.

This media and political overkill on the immigration issue leads to two principal consequences: it overtaxes a sector of the population, and stigmatizes those who have lived through immigration. There is a strongly anchored tendency to consider that people with immigrant origins would constitute an important public for the Cité. However, contrary to the United States where immigration is perceived as a chance, the dominant political discourse during recent years has favoured assimilation, integration, the dissolution of otherness in the French melting pot. The very condition of the immigrant, largely perceived in a negative light, is synonymous with suffering, discrimination, racism, and exclusion. It is therefore contradictory to take as a given that someone

who has personally experienced immigration would want to visit a site that recalls personal suffering, after being constantly asked to forget the past. Finally, if necessary to add a last point, perhaps we should objectively ask whether the dominant trait of someone whose grandparent or great-grandparent was born abroad, resides in their relationship to this immigration.

What is striking is that, despite the newness of the project, despite the absence of information on the subject, very few people questioned on the subject challenge the pertinence of the creation of such a site. However, the discrepancy is all the more striking in that those same people who consider the creation of the Cité as a necessity, do not declare themselves interested in visiting it. For the moment, the CNHI, in spite of all its efforts, has too much of an image of a specialized institution to attract the widest public possible. Perhaps this is due to the fact that it has based its discourse on the justification of its *raison d'être*, on its objectives, more than on its offer, however rich and varied. As is always the case, it seems necessary to ignore these presuppositions in order to position the CNHI within the French cultural sphere, before its inauguration, to avoid scaring away potential visitors and to attempt, on the contrary, to enable them to familiarize themselves with this new site.

The Palais de la Porte Dorée, its rehabilitation, its geographical location

The question of future visitors to the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration would not be complete without examining its implantation in an existing building. The Palais de la Porte Dorée

presents many interesting aspects for its public: the history of its construction (still a particularly sensitive subject), and the tropical aquarium. However, this double richness needs reconciling within the same space, a strong historical charge, a new project to impose, and a public that frequents the aquarium as a leisure attraction. Is it an additional challenge to think that visitors to the aquarium and those to the Cité, who are radically different in their composition, age, and socio-professional category (according to the first study), might cross paths and intermingle?

An inhabited building

If the palace was chosen in the first instance for its quality as a historic monument which would enable the history of immigration to be enhanced advantageously, the history of the building itself can be considered an equivocal factor. In fact, if the history of immigration is poorly understood by those questioned in the study, it is almost systematically associated with colonization, decolonization and their consequences. It is therefore necessary, as the architects wish, to consider the former palace of the colonies as an historical object, as a testimonial rather than an anachronistic site. As a rare example of Art Deco architecture as well as an emblematic model of a certain regard towards the exotic, the Palais de la Porte Dorée is a great book simultaneously illustrating images of the other from 1931 and, through its very architecture, synthesizing foreign contributions. Here, too, the CNHI must create a wide discrepancy between the heritage discourse, the history of architecture or the history of art, and an objective discourse on the use of this architectural vocabulary. Expectations are thus

great, from various publics questioned in the study (but also, one can imagine, from other types of public) to better understand the context of the building's creation and to be aware of it by deciphering its various decorative elements.

Another aspect of the palace is its tropical aquarium which attracts on average 200,000 visitors annually. According to the study, the primary characteristic of this public is its family orientation: practically all visitors are accompanied by children, often of a young age. The Aquarium visit appears more like an outing to the zoo or an amusement park than a visit to a museum. Indeed, the proximity of the aquarium to the Vincennes zoo, providing an alternative enclosed space in winter and the leisure activities of the Bois de Vincennes in summer, transforms the palace into a customer catchment area in the extreme east side of Paris. These 200,000 existing visitors must therefore be considered as the first tangible evidence of a public in 2007. The challenge seems to be both not to lose them, but also to secure them as loyal visitors. However, it is these very people who most put into question their eventual visit to the Cité, its capacity to interest a young, particularly very young, public its competence to treat a delicate subject in the most sober way possible.

A necessary renovation for a larger public

In hoping to address itself to larger numbers, the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration must make itself accessible, that is to say, to render its subject and its building accessible. Constructed more than seventy years ago, the palace does not respond to all present-day norms for reception and

accessibility. The rehabilitation undertaken has as its mission, therefore, to upgrade and to open the building, by reworking from the original architectural drawings and attempting to break down its solemn aspect. Successive allocations of the palace had, in effect, privileged the exhibition walls, sometimes to the detriment of legibility, openness and multipurpose spatial possibilities. Within the renovation campaign, several areas will come to symbolize the place accorded to the public within the institution. The reception spaces have been reconceived, with the large central hall being earmarked to serve as a meeting and debating area. The creation of services (a café), and conveniences (access ramp, elevators, rest spaces) will facilitate visits, and circulation within the building, and potentially increase the numbers of visitors. The objective is to make a lively and welcoming site in which each visitor will feel at home. 'A museum must be frequented and not visited.'⁷

Public audiences outside the walls

Lastly, if the Palais de la Porte Dorée is primordial as a physical reception space for the Cité public, the building nonetheless does not constitute the only 'entrance' for this public. Two components specific to the Cité complicate the definition of its public: the network of partners (which might be envisaged as privileged relays within the regions) and the Internet site. These components may, in fact, make the history and the memory of immigration known to a larger public – through regional activities in collaboration with the CNHI or by making information accessible at all times and places – and also incite visits to the Palais de la Porte Dorée. The case of the CNHI's website (<http://www.histoire-immigration.fr>) is rather

emblematic of this dual challenge. Created well before the Cité opens its doors, with the result of having an existence of its own, it does not function only as a display case of the cultural establishment, essentially providing practical information necessary for a planned visit to the centre. The website has been, from the start, conceived as a space of the Cité's prefiguration, perhaps more than a mirror, a double cultural and artistic offer. Just as a festival offers official and 'off-programme' planning, the Cité's website makes it possible to be in touch with other types of audiences. It already taps more than 30,000 visitors each month, that is to say, more than the palace could ever receive, for reasons of security. A study is underway to arrive at better qualifying these Internet visitors and to know to what degree the information found on the website necessitates a visit to the CNHI as well. Like all the public on the Internet, it is always made up of a real and potential public.

Considering the results of the study, it might prove to be utopian for the CNHI to want to address a wider audience. Indeed this reveals all the tensions of this project: its nature, its theme, its implantation, and all the consequences that stem from it in terms of the public. Not appearing sufficiently 'cultural' for culture audiences and too serious for those considering cultural visits as a leisure activity, the Cité may realign itself on a core audience, that would include the specialists on the subject, academics, teachers, and local actors. However, what might appear as obstacles must, to the contrary, be taken as levers to alter the way the public perceives migratory phenomena. It is evident that to open such a place and to attract the public is a challenge, but it is also the great strength of this project. Can this challenge be

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turned into a success? And if so, how do we measure it? By its attendance figures? Its notoriety? By the shift in the attitudes towards immigration?

| NOTES

1. *Rapport de la mission de préfiguration du centre de ressources et de mémoire de l'immigration* (Planning Commission's Report on the Centre of Resources and Memory of Immigration), p.35, La Documentation Française, Paris, 2004.

2. *Rapport pour la création d'un centre national de l'histoire et des cultures de l'immigration* (Report on the Creation of a National Centre of History and the Cultures of Immigration), *Migrance*, No. 19, 4th issue, 2001, p. 14.

3. As the study took place principally in the context of the museum, it might be assumed that persons questioned had a natural tendency to consider the CNHI above all as a museum.

4. *Rapport pour la création d'un centre national, op. cit.*, p. 15.

5. Excerpt from an interview from the study.

6. *Étude des images et perceptions du projet de la 'Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration'* (Study of Images and Perceptions of the Project of the 'Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration'), 2005–06, ADIS, Paris, in press.

7. Minutes from a visit to the Museum of Civilization (Quebec), talk by Claire Simard, in *Rapport de la mission de préfiguration... op. cit.* (CD-ROM).

| The São Paulo Immigrants' Memorial: fields of research and challenges in the twenty-first century

by Ana Maria da Costa Leitão Vieira

Ana Maria da Costa Leitão Vieira is Director of the São Paulo Immigration Museum and vice-president of the Federal Council of Museology, Brazil. She was formerly director of the Museums and Archives Department of the State of São Paulo Government from 1989 to 1996.

Safekeeping

Safekeeping an object does not mean hiding it or locking it away.

You do not safeguard something in a safe place.

An object in a safe place is kept out of sight.

Safeguarding something means looking and gazing at it, staring at it and admiring it, elucidating it or being enlightened by it.

Safeguarding something means contemplating it, watching over it, that is, guarding it, being awakened by it, defending it or fighting for it.

Antonio Cícero, 'Safekeeping: Selected Poems', *Brazil Record*, p. 11, Rio de Janeiro, 1966.

The institution

The Immigrant Memorial Museum is managed by the Government of the State of São Paulo, Brazil. Founded in 1993 as the Museum of Immigration, it was restructured in 1998 with the aim of acquiring, preserving, classifying, researching, publishing and promoting the documents/testimonials on the History of Immigration and the memories of immigrants who arrived in the State of São Paulo from 1820 onwards. The Immigrants' Memorial occupies part of the old *Hospedaria dos Imigrantes* (Immigrants' Lodge) opened in 1887, today a listed heritage site. Over the years, it has housed 1.8 million immigrants belonging to seventy different nationalities, and from different ethnic backgrounds, as well as 1.2 million workers from various parts of the country, mainly from the Northeast.¹ The Immigrants' Memorial is located in the City of São Paulo, in between two neighbourhoods with strong Italian connections: Brás and Mooca. These neighbourhoods developed after a group of pioneering Italian immigrants settled there and opened businesses (stores, services and factories).

The Immigrants' Lodge, administered by the State of São Paulo Department of Agriculture, has built up a substantial official collection of documents and records on policies regulating labour among field workers between the early nineteenth century and the 1950s. With the abolition of slavery in 1888, the government signed an agreement with landowners and coffee plantation owners in an attempt to finance immigrants from Europe and Japan to replace slave labour. When they arrived at the lodge, the immigrants were registered and their personal

details recorded (nationality, profession, origin, destination, religion, sex, educational qualifications, marital status, and family history). From the 1950s, following industrial expansion in São Paulo, worker profiles shifted from agricultural to urban/industrial. Based on its official records, the Immigrants' Memorial has issued disembarkation certificates that confirm that immigrants have entered Brazil: these certificates are necessary to obtain dual nationality, complete passport formalities, make name changes and gain official recognition of descendants.

At present, the Immigrants' Memorial is the second most visited museum in the city of São Paulo. It attracts a total of 80,000 'spontaneous' visitors as well as many students in the Memorial's Education Department. On average, we receive 400 students a day.

We believe that such major interest shown by the public is due to a number of factors:

- The history of the state of São Paulo highlights industrialization and immigration processes. In Brazil and mainly in this state, cities developed with the arrival of immigrants. The city of São Paulo has neighbourhoods made up of people from Italian, Lithuanian, Arab, Japanese and other ethnic backgrounds.
- Immigration and its influence on the cultural development of the Brazilian people is part of the school curriculum.
- The immigrant communities have themselves been involved in setting up the memorial and today participate in the



19. *Recém-Chegados*. Portuguese immigrants in front of the Immigrants' Centre, São Paulo, 1938.

programming of its activities. The museum records, stores, preserves and publishes the intangible heritage of immigrants, that is, local foods and tastes, music and dance. These communities are involved in exhibitions on special themes, commemorative functions, workshops and the Immigrants' Gala held once a year.

The collection

The Memorial's collection includes documents and records produced by official agencies in the State of São Paulo and in Brazil's other states:

- Manifests of immigrants who arrived (1888–1978) and departed (early 1900 up to the 1950s).
- A total of 109 registers of immigrants and migrant workers housed at the lodge (1882–1930).
- Registration documents issued for foreigners living in São Paulo from 1945 to 1988 by the Regional Government of São Paulo (Federal Police Department).
- Foreigners' registration documents issued by police stations in the state's inland townships from 1938 to the mid-1940s.

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20. A passport belonging to a family of Italian immigrants, Italy, 1923.

- Administration documents issued by the Bureau of Agriculture from 1920 to 1960. These documents concern the ownership of land, labour policies and settlement rights.
- Immigrant records (work papers, résumés, candidacies) based on information received from the Inter-governmental Committee for European Migrations (CIME) between 1947 and 1970, including records on war refugees.
- Personal documents from the beginning of the twentieth century to 1950, including passports, business cards, worker ID cards and personal correspondence.
- Books and periodicals. These were initially collected in the 1940s to support the Immigration and Settlement Department at the State Secretariat for Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, responsible for the old Immigrants' Lodge. Today, these books and periodicals are consulted for the memorial's own research projects and to assist interested members of the public. The collection includes 3,446 books, plus periodicals, newspaper clippings, archives, leaflets, academic theses, and testimonial transcripts.
- Maps and street plans, from the beginning of the twentieth century to the 1960s. These materials include land



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21. Arrival of immigrants at the Immigrants' Centre train station, São Paulo, 1907.



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22. Locomotive 353 in front of the Immigrant Memorial platform, São Paulo, 2005.

survey maps of the state of São Paulo, maps of settlement centres and regions, rainfall-index measurements, maps produced by the Immigration and Settlement Department, layouts of settlement centres and Regions, maps of farm allotments and plans of the Immigrants' Lodge.

- Photographs taken in the 1930s and 1940s on the activities of the settlement services and on welcoming migrant workers.

This collection has been supplemented by:

- Audiovisuals: testimonials from immigrants of various nationalities chosen by the *Setor de História Oral* (Oral History Department).
- Videos on specific topics: the collection assembles documentaries and interviews on the theme of immigration produced by television stations and cultural institutions. It also includes videos on

temporary exhibitions and on the Immigrants' Gala event held each year at the memorial.

- Iconography: from the 1990s, other photographs were added to the collection. They originate from photographic exhibitions, from immigrants and from activities conducted by the Oral History Department.
- Artefacts such as pieces of furniture and everyday utensils used in the old Immigrants' Lodge as well as by the immigrants themselves, including traditional clothing, coins, personal belongings, work tools, furniture, domestic utensils, ornamental and decorative objects, weighing scales, microscopes, medical, surgical and dental instruments.

Museum policy

At the beginning of 2005, we decided to broaden the scope of existing activities.



23. Photomontage of the Immigrant Memorial Building, in 1998 and 1910. São Paulo.

Our aims were fourfold:

1. To bring the Immigrants' Memorial closer to the field of academic studies by developing joint projects and activities, by making our collection accessible to university researchers and by holding seminars with visiting professors.
2. To fit the Immigrants' Memorial into the context of international centres for migration studies by establishing contacts and exchanging information with museum institutions in other countries.
3. To extend the field of research to beyond the nineteenth century, the period of mass migration to Brazil, and to focus on contemporary migrations as well.
4. To promote discussion on contemporary migration so that the Immigrants' Memorial can become a centre for migration studies.

This policy has produced a number of tangible results:

In February 2006, we launched a new Memorial website containing 985,183 names of immigrants who landed in São Paulo between 1888 and 1978. This website has sparked interest from around the world and we are currently processing an average of 1,000 requests a month.

In June 2006, we took part in the International Visitor Leadership Program at the invitation of the US State Department. We attended meetings and signed cooperation agreements with leading institutions and museums on migration studies in Washington, Chicago and New York.

We were invited to attend the opening session of the seminar on 'The History of Labour and Immigration, and Union of Italian Migrant Workers in Latin America' on 16 March 2006 at



© Memorial do imigrante

the University of São Paulo, promoted by the 'Genoa International Centre for the Study of Italian Emigration' (CISEI) and sponsored by CGIL Italia to commemorate its centenary. These events led to a constructive dialogue between academic specialists and an institution responsible for preserving original documents for research purposes.

In April/May 2006, we held a seminar entitled 'Portuguese Immigration in Brazil', with invited specialists from the academic world. It was suggested to create a chair in Portuguese immigration within the Immigrants' Memorial.

In October 2006, we held our first seminar on 'Contemporary Migrations – Challenges for the Twenty-first Century.' For the first time, government ministries such as the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of External Relations,

NGOs that assist immigrants, academics, as well as immigrants and refugees themselves were able to express their views and opinions inside a museum. The presentations and testimonials made by the latter were collected by the Memorial's Oral History Department, and today form part of our collection.

The memorial pioneered the creation of the Brazilian Network of Institutions and Organizations for Immigration Studies which initially comprises eleven member entities, including the National Archives. The network will have a link to our website where the institutions will be listed. A database and search engine will facilitate research on given topics and locate collections that exist within the country.

We share the building of the old Immigrants' Lodge with the *Arsenal da Esperança*,

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an NGO that works with immigrants, refugees and internal migrants and which has a structure similar to that of the old lodge.

We are currently building a digital cinema that will screen films on immigration.

We are involved in joint projects to preserve the cultures of immigrant communities. We also advise on the building of museums for these communities, and organise exhibitions, meetings and festivities in our own facilities.

Together with the Arsenal we developed and inaugurated two projects:

The Memorial's Education Department which enables students and academics to find out how immigrants and internal migrants were previously welcomed. At the *Arsenal da Esperança* they can see what an immigrants' lodge looks like today.

Internal migrants and immigrants accommodated at the Arsenal are trained to work as tour guides, to undertake repair and restoration work, and to perform minor maintenance at the memorial.

Conclusions

From the earliest arrival of immigrants into the country, Brazil has been an example of a nation whose economic expansion has been largely due to the settlement of immigrants. In terms of community relations, the integration of

immigrants into Brazilian society has been more positive than negative. However, today Brazilians are emigrating and recent waves of immigration into the country differ from those in the past. As a result, Brazilian museology in terms of thinking and practices has undergone an overhaul that mostly began in the 1980s. The museums are increasingly assuming a social role as spaces for developing and expressing cultural values while reflecting on, representing and interpreting social reality. The Brazilian Museum System² refers to the museological institutions that provide collections and exhibitions for the public in order to shed light on identity-building and on critical perceptions of Brazilian culture. It also refers to 'institutions that carry out programmes, projects and action plans that use cultural heritage as a resource for education and social inclusion'. In this sense, heritage 'is not an end in itself but an instrument of social change.'³ However, we should not overlook the key functions of museums. With regard to migration phenomena, these functions concern the academic world, government and non-governmental organizations, consulates and embassies as well as immigrant communities. Immigration museums should be places where these organizations can meet and conduct a dialogue with society. Museums devoted to migration studies position themselves in the political sphere of organized society: as cultural institutions their role is also to focus on migrations within the ambit of culture. This perspective will further our understanding of such phenomena and provide greater scope of action with social organizations and groups. Immigration museums should be ready to supply information to the authorities that frame public

policies since the historical record they contain will help to anticipate the positive and negative aspects of such policies.

A migration museum will acknowledge culture without creating ghettos. As José Nascimento Jr states, 'Our challenge is to ensure the expression of different views and opinions. That is the practice of inclusive museology.' Moreover: 'The museum must set down limits, raise questions as well as highlight differences, diversity and conflict.'⁴

The museum will be a place where immigrants will be given a voice and where they will feel comfortable to relate their own experiences, talk about their problems, in short, tell their stories. Immigrants will make themselves known to society which discriminates against them through ignorance. We agree with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), that the media are often responsible for spreading negative stereotypes of migrants and refugees and for stoking racist and xenophobic feelings.⁵ Such media include fictional films that misrepresent and distort reality, misinforming society about the role of migrants in their host countries.

Migration museums must be well-informed on both existing national and international migration laws and should be available to the general public, and to immigrants in particular, to make them aware of their rights and duties. They should therefore maintain close and permanent contact with national and international institutions and NGOs that support immigrants. Similarly, they should maintain close links with government bodies such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry

of External Relations, and with the Federal Police. Just as musicians and artists research historical materials to inspire them to create new works, politicians, parliamentarians and lawyers should use museums to obtain and research information on existing legislation.

As the UNHCR recommends, such museums should develop cultural and social programmes to raise the awareness of public authorities and society on the importance and cultural diversity of international migration. Immigrants should not be portrayed only as victims or as people in need, but as assets to society.⁶

In tracking the movements, itineraries and integration dynamics of different communities, of the links, both past and present, between countries of origin and host countries, and between the first generations of migrants and their descendants, migration museums will remove national barriers and will work in tandem with similar international institutions and museums in other countries.

The history of mankind is the history of human migration. Migration continues to be about surviving in the world and about building identities. Archaeology has already demonstrated that humans originated from the African continent and from there they travelled and settled around the world. The creation of nation-states cannot conceal the migratory origins of each and every one of us. The dynamics of human geography and of contemporary history requires filling the missing links in this memory chain. In addition, we who work in migration museums must be aware of this task.

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| NOTES

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2. Sistema Brasileiro de Museus do Ministério da Cultura, Federal Government of Brazil
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5. United Nations High Commission for Refugees (2006) *Public Policies for International Migrations – Migrants and Refugees*. UNHCR, Brasília, May, p. 88.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

| The Political and Social Significance of a Museum of Migration in Germany

by Aytac Eryilmaz

Aytac Eryilmaz is the managing board member of the Documentation Centre and Museum of Migration (DOMiT), in Germany. He was, with Dr Matilde Jamin, the organizer of the exhibition entitled Strange Homeland: A History of Immigration from Turkey at the Ruhrlandmuseum in Essen, in 1998. He then curated the exhibition Forty Years of Foreign Homeland in Cologne (2001), and Project Migration, which was initiated by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes, the Federal Cultural Foundation of Germany (2005–2006). He is also one of the initiators of a Migration Museum in Germany – A Centre for History, Art and Culture.

After the end of the Second World War, there were several waves of immigration to and processes of integration into Germany. It is important to differentiate between East and West Germany, as both countries experienced these processes differently. Seven types of immigration processes can be identified.¹

Migration in Germany after the Second World War

The first type of immigration concerns German refugees, expellees and deportees in the post-war period up to the early 1960s. There were about 18 million German people in the eastern provinces of the German Reich and in the German homelands in eastern, central and south-eastern Europe. About 14 million of these people had fled, been expelled or deported to western Germany. In the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), influential organizations of expellees demanded for decades the right to return home. In the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), the

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'resettlement problem' was totally taboo in order not to offend neighbouring eastern countries. The social and economic integration of these refugees and expellees improved when the FRG's economy boomed during the country's economic miracle. This was even the case for nearly 2.7 million immigrants from the GDR who arrived in the FRG between 1949 and 1961, the year of the building of the Berlin Wall.

The second type of immigration, labour migration, started after 1955. The FRG signed agreements on this issue with Italy in 1955, and later with Spain, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, Morocco, Tunisia and the former Yugoslavia. The FRG also cooperated with the Republic of Korea in recruiting labour migrants. The Berlin Wall stopped the inflow of workers from the GDR, thus the FRG increasingly began to recruit millions of labour-related immigrants from south-eastern Europe – the so-called 'guest workers'. Between the end of the 1950s and the stop of the recruitment in 1973, about 14 million foreign workers came to the FRG. About 11 million of them returned home, whereas the rest stayed. Soon after their arrival, their families followed. In the GDR as well, there was a small group of foreign guest workers, according to a government agreement. In 1989, about 190,000 foreigners still lived in the GDR. Most of them were factory workers. About 59,000 of them came from Vietnam and 15,000 from Mozambique.

The third category of immigration consists of the asylum seekers and other refugees, among which the most significant groups were the communists and the socialists from the period of the Greek civil war and military juntas in Spain

and Portugal, as well as from Chile after the fall of the Allende government. After the military coup in Turkey in 1980, thousands of asylum seekers came to Germany. As a result, there were more than 100,000 asylum seekers in Germany in 1988, and in 1991 nearly 260,000. Finally, in 1992 their total number amounted to 440,000. With the growing demands of refugees, asylum rights were limited by the German Government in 1993. After 1993 the numbers of asylum seekers decreased gradually to 28,914 in 2005.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the number of *Aussiedler* (resettlers: ethnic German immigrants from Eastern Europe) increased. These resettlers are ethnic Germans whose ancestors left Germany before the twentieth century. Their immigration, representing the fourth type, thus constitutes a return to their native country. Between 1950 and 2002 more than 4 million resettlers returned (to the FRG and to reunified Germany). Most of them, about 2.9 million people, came after 1987 during the *glasnost* and *perestroika* period. Until 1987, the ethnic Germans' countries of origin were Poland and Romania, and after 1990, the former Soviet Union.

The fifth type of immigration involves Jews from the former Soviet Union, a recent development in Germany. In July 1990, the Council of Ministers in eastern Germany declared that persecuted Jews had the right to seek asylum in the former GDR. After this declaration, nearly 5,000 Soviet Jews applied (up to April 1991) for permanent residency in the territory of the former GDR. Between the opening of the frontiers of the eastern European countries until the end of 2003, about another 180,000 Jews emigrated from the former Soviet



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24. Living room in exhibition 'Fremde Heimat – Yaban sılan olur', Essen 1998.

Union and came to Germany. Eastern European resettlers and immigrants with a Jewish background receive support from government funds for migration and socio-economical integration. This is not the case for the Roma from eastern Europe, the sixth type of immigration. According to official estimates, about 250,000 Roma refugees came to Germany from Romania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria between the beginning of 1990 and 1993, the year of the new asylum laws. With the simultaneous expansion of the delimitations of Europe and the lowering of the numbers of official asylum seekers, the numbers of illegal residents has also increased,

mounting to nearly one million in Germany at present, representing the seventh type of immigration process.

The new statistics on migration to Germany come from the *Statistisches Bundesamt*, the German statistics office. For the first time in German migration statistics, the 2005 microcensus took into account the 'population with a migration background'. According to its figures, 15.3 million of the total of 82 million people living in Germany has a migration background. This number represents around 19 per cent of the total

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population, 9 per cent of which are non-German and 10 per cent German citizens.

The significance of the history of migration in a society of immigration

One of the important conditions of human existence is to narrate history, to impart knowledge to successive generations, enabling them to take responsibility for their own lives and history. The more children hear their parents talking about their history and their everyday life, the easier it is for children to master their own future. Thus, one of our central concerns is to make visible the history of immigrants, which is very often only a subject of discussion in novels narrating family stories. A number of questions arise: how is migration remembered and by whom? Is migration represented in society and, if so, how is this done? Which common icons or stereotypes are to be questioned and which points of view are to be exposed in society?

Most of the young immigrants have only a fragmentary knowledge of their family's past because many parents taboo their experiences of migration, often considered shameful. Their history is barely represented in the historiography of immigration countries. Thus, succeeding generations which do not find their family's past either in the great narratives, in the history classes at school, or in the culture of the society in which they are living, have great problems determining their position within that society.

Memories are extremely fragile. They fade, fall into oblivion and are excluded, so often they are difficult to visualize. Nevertheless, they are very

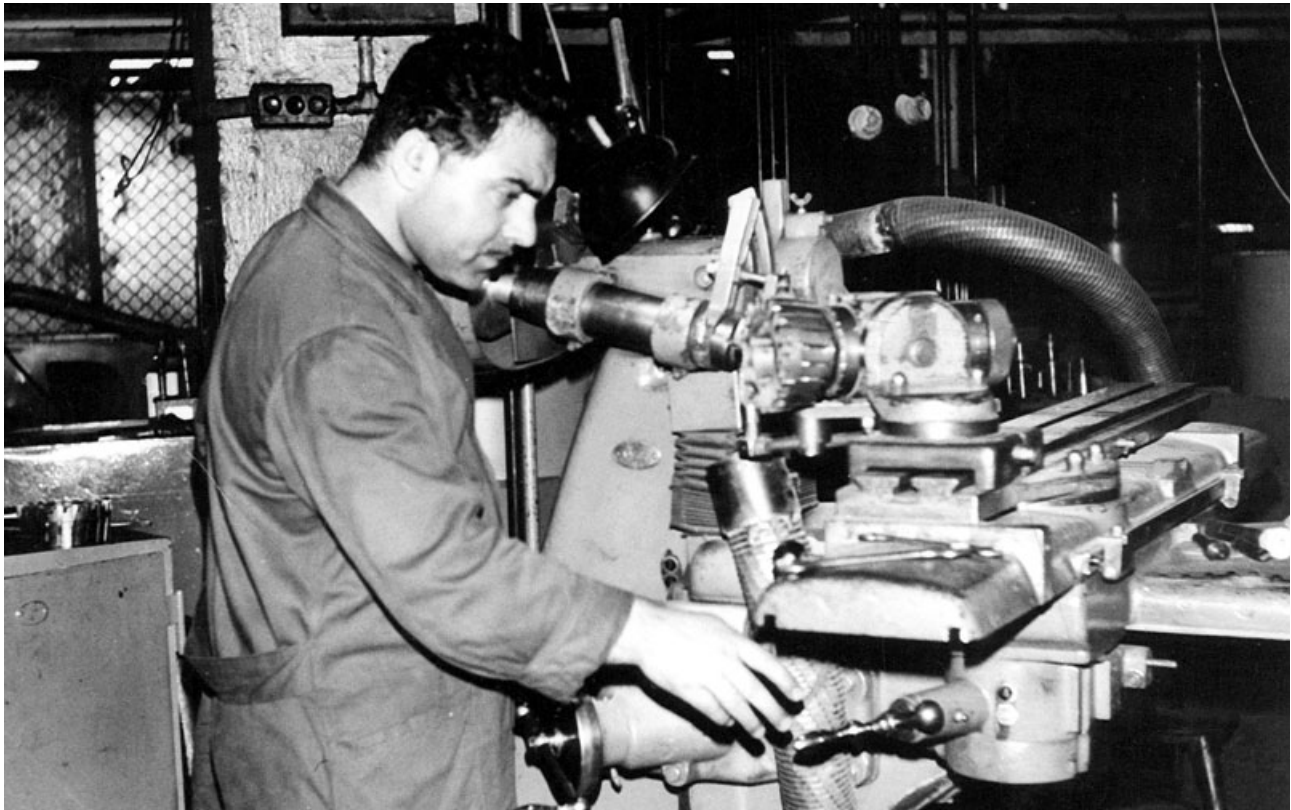
powerful. Memories can be constructed or rejected; they can be rebuilt, renewed and imagined.

Memories of the past always change. Even when groups share cultural memories, they are subjective and cannot be generalized. A science of history that discusses collective memories makes attributions without exactly knowing which reality is meant. Experiences are individual and so are historical sources, documents of the past, exhibits and articles. History is often remembered very selectively. Historical events are permanently overlaid by the interpretation of current events. Cultural memories seldom reflect reality; they more often refract past experiences and also present social needs and current social situations of migrants.

The voices of migrants and their children, in the process of reconstructing their history, is highly critical, both culturally and politically. After decades of its renunciation as a country of immigration, today Germany is able to recognize that the immigrants and their children are creating a new 'transnational' social identity. It is the migrants' voice which enables the transmission of their knowledge through literary narrations and public interest stories. As long as the migrants remain foreigners excluded from history, this history will remain foreign to them, too. If elements of the migrants' everyday life can be integrated into history, which is becoming more and more complex, this history will be rejuvenated. Thus, a sense of affiliation for migrants will be possible.

Pictures of history and creators of history

The mass media produce new pictures on a daily basis, affecting and influencing our



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25. Köln, Ford Factory, 1966.

perception of the world. Our consciousness as well as our subconsciousness form our pictures. These pictures are the paradigmatic media of memory.

In Germany, the art of memory is very closely connected to the remembrance of Auschwitz. The memory of the crimes committed during the Nazi regime and the Holocaust is omnipresent in Germany. The omnipresence of the past manifests itself in controversial public debates about responsibility and guilt, historical interpretation and the culture of remembrance. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, National Socialism was equated with Stalinism, and the

national discussions about the Germans being the victims became more and more the focus of public statements and debates. Remembrance of the past is always coupled with identity and interpretation. Cultural memory manifests itself in archives, museums, monuments and memorial sites, as well as during days of remembrance of national history. The content and structure of this memory reflects the political, social and economic status of a country. 'There is no political power without control over archives, without control over memory', claims Jacques Derrida.² Therefore, the history of exhibitions and museums is closely bound to the history of colonialism, the concept of the nation-state and capitalism.

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In the eighteenth century, museums were instruments of national consciousness. The possession of objects from other cultures was a testimony of national superiority. In the globalized world of the twenty-first century, histories can no longer be solely national accounts because migration plays a key role in European societies. 'The crisis of Europe is a mental crisis', observes the well-known German sociologist Ulrich Beck who unambiguously makes clear how the problem of immigration can be solved in the European mind: 'We have to break out of our confining concepts of nation/state categorization.' In the world, coherent and unified as a world market, global risks and modern communication technologies are a fact, Beck notes, from which we cannot step backward. 'The globally enforced neighbourhood where everyone lives together with everyone is the *conditio humana* at the beginning of the twenty-first century', Beck continues, underlining that the retreat into ethnic nationalism all over Europe is 'not realism but retrogressive illusionism'.³ The past is composed of working on cultural memory, and facilitated through exhibitions and museums.

The Museum of Migration in Germany

The transnational society is a social and political reality. One out of every five residents in Germany has a migration background. The latest census shows that this number will grow, and by 2010, around 40 per cent of those under forty years of age will have at least one parent of foreign descent. Kofi Annan, then United Nations Secretary-General, recently presented a report showing that some 191 million people now live outside their countries of origin. According to Annan, it is

important to understand the advantages of immigration, because both the expelling and the receiving countries would profit from it.

Migratory movements are neither historical failures nor exceptions from a normal order, as is often assumed, but a universal characteristic of history itself. This is the underlying belief of the work of the Museum of Migration in Germany.⁴ So far, the history of immigration has not been understood as an integral part of German social history. The Museum of Migration endeavors to bring about a shift in the perception of the relationships between migration and national history. It presents a forum for an exciting and highly relevant discussion about identities, self-definitions and perceptions of the self and the other at an individual as well as a societal level. It raises consciousness about the historical, present, and future interconnections of transnational societies at a European and world-wide level – beyond all national affiliation and ethnic appreciation.

A historical reappraisal within the context of a museum can make use of the opportunity not to present history as a chronology of happenings, but to show the history of migration as a part of global social change and as one of the major forces of this change. The museum can sensitize people to the social reality. The visualization of the history of migration and the transfer of knowledge about migration are essential premises for an integrative society. However, a museum should not be a place of ritual remembrance, reconstructing historical self-assurance predominantly based on national concepts. The opportunities of a migration museum lie in the reservation of space for the hybridity of

cultural life concepts. In an immigration society, identities are based upon heterogeneity, frontier crossing and intercultural exchange. Family narratives, which are mostly lost in oblivion, are re-evaluated within a public discussion and are carried over from the social context into the cultural, political and academic realm.

The Museum of Migration is conceived as a multifunctional centre of history, arts and cultures of migration. It is composed of the Museum Area, a Documentation Centre, a Scientific Forum and a Virtual Museum. The Museum Area includes a permanent exhibition about the history and the presence of migration, the historical collection and temporary exhibitions. The concept of the permanent exhibition is interdisciplinary and provides multiple perspectives on migration. The Museum of Migration aims at attracting a broad international audience, and especially migrants themselves, not only the educated élite. The visitors' service runs a museum shop and offers guided tours of the exhibitions in different languages. Museums should also serve as a tourist destination. The future of museums – and the Museum of Migration – does not lie in novel staging, but in new contents that foster open-mindedness in a critical public, and provide places for reflection and communication, instead of places of excitement.

The Interdisciplinary Scientific Forum is dedicated to questions on contemporary history and the cultural tradition of an immigration society. It develops a network with domestic and international scientific institutions. The Virtual Museum of Migration presents the highlights of the exhibitions on the Internet. By 3D-Zoom-Records

of the exhibition, it provides an insight into the history and present conditions of migration and an access to up-to-date information.

The Documentation Centre of Migration (DOMiT)

In 1990, the Documentation Centre and Museum of Migration in Germany, DOMiT,⁵ was founded by a small group of Turkish intellectuals, all of them migrants, in order to preserve the remembrance of the migration from Turkey to Germany. Its objectives were to present migration as a part of German history, to preserve the heritage of the immigrants, and to make it publicly accessible for research and for self-assertion of migrants and their offspring as well as for German society as a whole. Since 2002, this socio-historical and cultural-historical collection has been expanded, and now includes documents and material on migration from the countries of origin of 'guest workers' as well as 'contract workers'. The result is a unique collection on the history of immigration to Germany from Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, the former Yugoslavia, Morocco, Tunisia, the Republic of Korea, Vietnam, Mozambique and Angola.

DOMiT has four fields of activities: the first is to group an archival and museum collection on the history of immigration since the 1950s; the second, to develop and conduct research projects on this subject; the third, to compile and present historical exhibitions; the fourth, to organize lectures, workshops and conferences.

DOMiT is a private association of public utility according to German law. Work is financed on a project basis, through membership fees, charitable donations and considerable unsalaried

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work. Up to now, there has been no institutionalized, long-term public funding. DOMiT relies on new projects in order to secure its existence.

The Collections of DOMiT

So far, DOMiT has succeeded in compiling a unique collection of books, grey literature,⁶ 'newspapers, magazines, documents, photographs, films, audio recordings, leaflets, posters and objects reflecting the history of immigration to Germany.'⁷ The library of the Centre for Documentation is a reference library, at present containing about 12,000 titles, around 4,000 of which are already accessible through a database. Users have access to specialized literature on sociology, history and society, politics and public discourse, social relations, law, economics, education, health, culture and geography. Newspapers and magazines from the migrants' communities are of special interest. Those publications, mostly in the immigrants' native languages, are sources of extraordinary historical value.

The picture library contains photos of individual donors (most of them with a migration background) as well as professional photos. The private collections allow a unique view into the life of immigrants, adding everyday scenes to the overall image of migration. In addition, professional photographers have donated copies (printed or digital) of photos and photo series on migration to DOMiT. Today, 4500 photos can be researched in a database by key words, topics, place, date and so on. The video library contains VHS cassettes, DVDs and films which either

illustrate the history of migration or have been produced by people with a migration background. The collection comprises documentaries, artistic productions, movies, recordings of events, news programmes, educational material, and advertisement films.

The archive of sound recordings contains interviews, music and radio programmes. From the mid-1990s, DOMiT has been conducting biographical interviews with immigrants, people in their environment, and people with special functions like employees of the Federal Employment Office or activists for migrant organizations. These accounts complement the history of migration based on written documents. The acoustical archive also holds sound-storage media with a variety of music appreciated by the immigrants, from traditional songs of their homelands, to new music emerging from their experience of migration in their new countries. A wide spectrum of music types are represented: folk songs, hymns, 'guest-worker ballads', protest songs, hits, pop, and much more.

The collection of written documents consists primarily of documents related to recruitment, work, living situations, cultural activities, political participation, trade-union activities, religious practices, fostering of tradition, life in associations and the like. Typical materials are correspondence to and from the authorities, personal documents required for recruitment, different identification cards, work contracts, internal reports, diaries, travel reports, rules of worker hostels, leaflets. In preparing various exhibitions, DOMiT has collected a diverse collection of objects from everyday life, such as

furniture from migrants' hostels and traditional clothing. Devotional objects stand next to souvenirs from home countries, while consumer items bought with the first German salary reflect immigrants' desires and aspirations which are very close to those of their German contemporaries. The stories of these objects come alive in their owners' accounts.

In January 2003, documentation at DOMiT took a new direction with the introduction of database software called FAUST. Since then, the inventories have been reorganized, including the transfer from the old database to the new one. These are ongoing efforts which will continue for some time. FAUST allows visitors to search digitalized pictures as well as sound files and texts. Most of the new photos and documents added to the collection since 2003 have been digitalized; additionally, objects have been photographed, enabling the user to locate them in the database by searches. Up to now, about a third of the interviews with immigrants and people involved in migration issues have been digitalized and made accessible through abstracts and additional information in the FAUST database. The collections are widely used by scholars, journalists and museum curators for their exhibitions. Artists and film-makers also find inspiration by exploring the broad range of our material.

Exhibitions at DOMiT

One important field of DOMiT's activities is the presentation of immigration history through temporary exhibitions. In 1998, DOMiT cooperated with the Ruhrlandmuseum in Essen, in producing the bilingual exhibition *Fremde*

Heimat – Eine Geschichte der Einwanderung aus der Türkei (Homeland Abroad – A History of Migration from Turkey). For the first time, an established museum and a migrant-based organization worked as equal partners and mounted an exhibition that presented the perspective of the migrants as well as the perspective of the native German population. This cooperation was very helpful for DOMiT, as it opened doors to public authorities, archives and other institutions. The Ruhrland Museum, on the other hand, succeeded in attracting a new audience. More than 30 per cent of the visitors were migrants, a remarkably high figure for an exhibition presented in a German cultural institution. Both partners benefited from an exchange of knowledge and know-how. On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the recruitment contract between the Turkish and the German Governments in October 1961, DOMiT prepared the exhibition *40 Jahre Fremde Heimat. Einwanderung aus der Türkei in Köln* (The Forty-year Foreign Home: Immigration from Turkey in Cologne). Based on the Essen exhibition and adapted to Cologne's local history, it was shown in the Cologne city hall and accompanied by numerous events.

From October 2002 until February 2006, DOMiT was one of four partners in the so-called 'Project Migration'.⁸ Launched by the *Kulturstiftung des Bundes* (the Federal Culture Foundation), 'Project Migration' was designed to depict the societal changes brought about by migration movements, and to work as an interdisciplinary, multiple-stage process spanning several years. More than 120 events have taken place under the project's auspices. Illustrating and underscoring

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the causes and implications of migration in a variety of ways, these activities have taken place at the *Kölnischer Kunstverein* (Cologne Art Society) in Cologne, as well as in Frankfurt, Berlin, Belgrade and Istanbul, also in Crete and in other locations throughout Europe.

DOMiT traces and collects the objects and documents to be displayed in exhibitions. As a matter of principle, researchers working on DOMiT's exhibition projects have migration backgrounds themselves and are able to speak the respective languages in order to interview first-generation migrants about their personal histories and experiences in the language of the migrants' choice. It is this personal contact and the trust built up in many conversations that motivate donors to lend or donate their personal belongings to our archive.

7. Dokumentationszentrum der Migration. (Documentation Centre of Migration) DOMiT (ed.), Cologne, 2005.

8. See <http://www.projektmigration.de/>.

| NOTES

1. Bade Klaus J. & Oltmer, Jochen (2005) *Einwanderung in Deutschland seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Migration in Germany after the Second World War), in *Projekt Migration*, pp. 72–81. Dumont, Cologne.

2. Derrida, Jacques (1995) *Mal d'Archive*. Éditions Galilée, Paris.

3. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 23 May 2006.

4. See <http://www.migrationsmuseum.de> in Cologne.

5. See <http://www.domit.de/>.

6. Editor's note: Grey literature is a term used to refer to types of literature that are not available through conventional bookselling channels such as publishers. Examples of grey literature include technical reports from government agencies or scientific research groups, working papers from research groups of committees, brochures, pamphlets, etc.

| The Danish Immigration Museum of Furesø: the history of immigration and the collecting of memories

by Cathrine Kyø Hermansen and Thomas Abel Møller

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Thomas Abel Møller is the curator of the Danish Immigration Museum and secretary of the Migration–Cooperation of Danish Museums. His research focuses on migration history and local cultural history. He has a Master’s degree in history, from the University of Copenhagen.

The Danish Immigration Museum¹ is part of the Furesø Museums, a private institution.

Until around 100 years ago, the municipality of Furesø consisted of a few towns in a parish with several hundred inhabitants. Although less than a day’s journey from the capital, it was nevertheless a long way out in the country. Today, Furesø has grown from those few small towns into a Copenhagen suburb. Development in the 1960s resulted in a large number of new residences and the building up of an industrial area. As was the case in other parts of Denmark, some of the ‘guest workers’ or ‘foreign workers’ from other countries found work in the grimier aspects of industry and places to live in bed sitters, etc., in the city. According to a belief widely held in Denmark, this was the first period during which ‘guests’ from outside were admitted into the

homogeneous, blond Danish population, an occurrence seen as both foreign (although not dangerous) and exotic. But this belief did not stand up to closer examination, even in the rustic idyll of Furesø Municipality. Between 1870 and 1917, 423 foreigners were given work permits in Furesø towns, where the total population during the same period was never more than 3,200.

Between 1890 and 1960, sixty-two people residing in Furesø were granted citizenship, before the municipality became a Copenhagen suburb. And the population had increased to only 10,000 by the end of the 1950s. Today, Furesø Municipality has 37,000 inhabitants, of which nearly 11 per cent are of foreign origin and/or nationalities other than Danish.

The Danish Immigration Museum is an integrated part of the locally funded Furesø Museums and has participated in the *Migrationpuljen* (Migration Pool), a joint project by Danish museums on the history of migration. Through its website, the Danish Immigration Museum is developing its own autonomous, national profile.

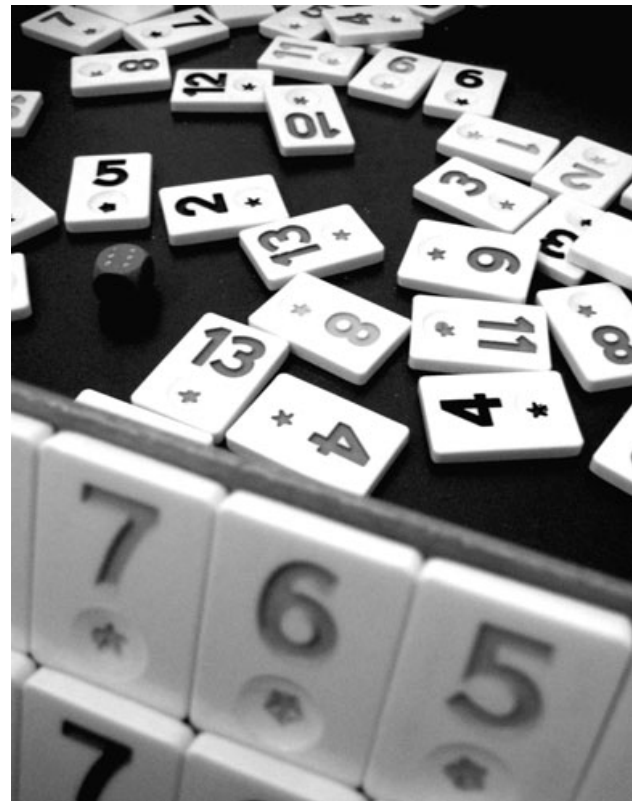
The history of immigration in Denmark²

Particular interest in the history of immigration is a relatively recent phenomenon in Denmark. It began with the growing debate during the 1970s on immigration policy when historians began to take interest in the issue. Danish historians have typically concentrated on the history of immigrants as a function of the country/area of emigration. They have often studied immigrants, and the circumstances of their lives, as ethnic groups that

came to Denmark within specific time frames. The descriptions have also been based on the same perspectives as those adopted by the current political, cultural and wide-ranging popular debate on immigrants in general.³

This type of immigrant history originates in historical research in countries in which immigration is a fundamental aspect of the history of those countries. Titles such as *They Chose Minnesota* or *The Atlantic Migration* are but two examples of an international tradition that is at least 100 years old.⁴ As a whole, this historical writing resembles a listing of more or less well-defined immigrant groups on the basis of ethnic, religious, national and cultural factors, from the Dutch in the 1520s to recent refugees from Kosovo, Iran, Afghanistan and Iraq.⁵ This traditional approach to the description of immigrants presents certain problems. The focus is placed on 'groups' as homogeneous categories of immigrants at specific periods of time. This reduces immigrants to being guests in the history of Denmark and the important role that they have often played in the historical processes of change is downplayed. In order to arrive at an understanding of the role of immigration in Denmark, it is necessary to be clear about the host country's need for, use of, and attitude towards immigrants at the time of their migration. The history of immigration in Denmark could, for example, be studied as part of the chronological eras into which the rest of Danish history is divided. The history of immigrants according to era would thus shift the focus from an ethnic, cultural or religious subdivision and become both a chronological and a broader thematic framework within what is broadly referred to as Danish history.

As far back as 1978, Charles Tilly outlined his migration models, according to which he divided migration into four basic types. First of all, local migration, which takes place over a relatively short distance within a labour or marriage market. Secondly, circular migration, primarily known as seasonal migration for agricultural work or during especially large civil-engineering projects. Thirdly, chain migration, which often occurs over greater distances and in which contact with the native place is gradually lost. Finally, Tilly proposes a fourth category, career migration, which occurs particularly over long distances, responds to the demand for specially trained labour and is associated with the search for work. Pull-or-push forces thus take on new dimensions which are particularly valuable as tools in the context of migration history.⁶ The push effect is due to forces in the countries of emigration or areas that stimulate migration away from those areas. The pull effect is the result of forces in the countries or areas migrated to that stimulate migration to those areas. Against the background of international work-immigration in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century, economic factors have predominated. Immigration and emigration were explained by viewing people as economic actors, as *Homo economicus*.⁷ This type of sociological or economic migration theory can hardly be labelled as erroneous, but social scientists, anthropologists in particular, have been looking at migration from a different point of view. It is certainly not without interest that our professional approach is perceived as being relevant to the same questions raised by both the political elite and the population at large. In more recent migration history, concepts such as interpretation,



© Danish Immigration Museum/Peter Bengtson

26. An 'okey'-game in the 1971-room of the Turkish guest workers at the Danish Immigration Museum.

ethnicification and exoticification are seen as groundbreaking tools with which to expand the focus of migration history, a kind of 'superstructure' laid over traditional migration-theory thinking.

At the Danish Immigration Museum, we seek *inter alia* to view immigration using an era-related approach.

What is an immigrant and what is immigration?

In order to be able to work with the history of immigration, we needed first to decide what the

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term means both *per se* and in a historical context. It is customary to speak of immigration as a more or less ongoing displacement between one country and another. In everyday life, this is generally sufficient. But, if we are to use the word 'immigration' in a professional context, it gives rise to several considerations. First of all, we can consider the area from which immigrants have moved and the area they have moved to. Are customary nationality designations useful in this context? If we are considering immigration to Denmark in the first half of the 1800s, are we referring to immigration to the Kingdom of Denmark or immigration to Denmark, Norway and the Danish duchies of Schleswig, Holstein and Lauenborg? And what about Greenland, Iceland and the Faeroe Islands? Similarly, there may be problems with defining where immigrants come from. The Polish immigrants to Lolland, Falster and Bornholm between 1890 and 1930 rarely came from Poland, since Poland did not actually exist as an independent nation-state before 1918. The Polish area was divided between the Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian Empires. Reference is often also made to Poles as coming from the Russian Poland or Galicia. This gives rise to new problems because this province was divided between Russia and Austria-Hungary. Moreover, a large percentage of the population in eastern Galicia at that time was actually Ukrainian. There is also a problem here with the applicability of national designations. When we work with the history of immigrants, it is therefore essential that we define very carefully the areas being studied.

If we descend one level further into the geographical analysis, we discover that

immigration from a defined foreign territory, where a foreign language is spoken, which has a different culture, a different religion, etc., may perhaps not be very different from migration from country towns in northern Zealand to the capital, Copenhagen. Immigration (across a border) is also migration which, in one way or another, has quite a lot in common with migration and urbanization as a whole.

After historical and geographical considerations, problems arise in defining the very nature of immigration. If we understand immigration as migration to, for example, a well-defined Denmark with a view to remaining in the country, then the history of immigration actually covers relatively few people. Over time, many people emigrated to Denmark with the intention of staying for only a short period of time, and then to return home or move on to somewhere else. This applies to many of the Swedish and Polish farm workers, who are often considered by historians to be seasonal workers. It also applies to many of the so-called guest workers who came to Denmark in the late 1960s from Turkey, Yugoslavia, Pakistan, etc. And what about the tourist from the USA who found a Danish girl, a job, had children and remained in Denmark? What about the German soldiers who stayed here for years during the Occupation? The Third Reich, and hence German soldiers, certainly had the intention of remaining. When is a person an immigrant and when not? This very important question requires clarification and, as seen above, is not particularly easy. One study has shown that the definition of an immigrant, and thereby immigration as such, is extremely variable. Approximately 160 schoolchildren in

The screenshot shows the 'The Danish Emigration Archives' website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with buttons for 'Home', 'Information', 'News', 'Databases', 'Publications', and 'Addresses'. Below this is a 'SearchMenu' section with various search criteria: Name (example: Hansen, Anton), Occupation (example: Smed), Age, Last residence (example: Randers), Parish (example: Randers), County (example: Randers), Destination (example: Chicago), State (example: Iowa), Country (example: USA), Contract no. (example: 4586), and Date of reg. (example: 1892 og 9 (september 1892)). There are also buttons for 'Start søgning' and 'Nulstil'.

27. Screen capture of the Archives from the Danish Immigration Museum.

the eighth and tenth grades, and first-year secondary-school classes in Furesø indicated, in a questionnaire survey at the end of the 1990s, that they believed that Turks and Pakistanis were immigrants. But they were clearly in doubt when it came to Swedes or North Americans. Only three generations ago, there was no doubt out in the Danish countryside that a Swedish farm worker was an immigrant, a (sometimes exotic) foreigner.

The popular perception of immigrants is thus a key element in our understanding of, and hence our attempts to define, the concepts for scholarly use. The fact that this issue has given rise to extensive political, cultural and popular debate over the last twenty-odd years naturally means that we, as historians, cannot avoid our research becoming de facto political. And this is part of the challenge, since many people believe that they know something about this topic and everyone has an opinion.

The history of immigration through several historical perspectives

In short, we feel that the history of immigration consists of at least three interconnected approaches. We can consider immigrants from the point of view of groups that arrived at a given point in time and study their conditions and behaviour. This has to a large extent been the focus of previous immigrant history in Denmark, as in many other places. We can also study immigrants as emigrants. In order to be an immigrant, it is necessary also to be an emigrant. So we shift our focus and concentrate our study on conditions, behaviour and the reasons for migration, which can be compared with the corresponding factors in the immigration country. Finally, the perspective can be immigration as an integrated contribution to – and not a curious tangent to – history in both the countries of immigration and emigration. In this case, it becomes important to consider apparently simple but actually quite complicated factors such as why there was a need for, and the possibility of, immigration in the immigration country, as well as the influence that this immigration had with respect to economic, social, religious, cultural and political conditions. The same questions can be asked in relationship to the emigration area.

The Danish Immigration Museum has found that it is necessary to work with both an archival and a museum-related approach to traditional and more recent immigrant history.

In addition to the collecting of related objects and materials, we therefore have focussed our work in two directions. We build up databases on immigrant history. These provide excellent

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opportunities for studying immigration over a period of approximately 200 years, from 1800 to 2000. And we also work with life-history projects: immigrants to Denmark are invited to write or tell their life stories. These life stories are collected and archived for the future. The Danish Immigration Museum has initiated various individual projects, large and small; described below are some aspects of the life-history projects.

Life-history projects

Immigrants have much to tell. Why did they leave their homelands? Did the new country live up to their expectations? What negative and positive experiences have they had? The history of the Swedish milkmaids and the 'beet Poles' who came to Denmark at the end of the 1800s unfortunately show that there are not very many experiences that those with an immigrant background have themselves written down or related. The cultural history of immigrants in Denmark has not been examined very closely. This applies to many of the themes and perspectives of their history. Unfortunately, this cultural perspective is also conspicuously absent in the many reports that sociologists and economists write about today's 'aliens'. Contemporary immigrant history often lacks a cultural perspective. At the Danish Immigration Museum, we have been working with what we refer to as 'life-history projects'. We invite immigrants to write down their reminiscences, which we then collect and archive for the future. We have found that it can be difficult for a museum to garner the necessary trust from the various immigrant groups and individuals whose reminiscences we would like to collect. So we have created a network

of contact people from various immigrant and ethnic groups. They most often assist us in making contact, though many of them have also been involved in actually carrying out our projects. For example, the museum, with a great deal of help from a colleague with a Tamil background, recently collected the reminiscences of Danish Tamils. Thanks to thorough knowledge of, and excellent contacts with the Tamil community in Denmark, we made contact with a large group of adult Tamils living in three Copenhagen suburbs. They were first sent a letter from the museum and, shortly thereafter, were contacted by telephone. Thanks to this personal approach, many agreed to participate in the project. They told their stories which were recorded. After a little more than eighteen months, approximately eighty hours of recordings had been collected. Thirty main interviews and six additional interviews have been transcribed in Tamil, amounting to approximately 400 typewritten pages. The material is covered by accessibility clauses and has so far been only partially translated into English. In addition, the museum staff, through various networks and contacts, has conducted interviews with refugees from Chile and Uruguay, and with Christian immigrants and refugees from the former Yugoslavia. It has also conducted a religious/sociological study of the ways in which Christians from Yugoslavia practise their religion in Denmark. We also have a more open research-project, a series of publications that ensure that research in this area, including that done by university scholars, is available to interested parties. One example of these publications is the *Pakistan Memoirs*, a book project focussing on Pakistani women. The museum sponsored a book on a group of immigrants from which very little is

ever heard: Pakistani women, their experiences and memories. The book illustrates Pakistani women in Denmark and tells, in their own words, about their role in society and in their families. The book has given voice to several generations of Pakistani women. They were offered the choice of writing down their memories in either Danish or Urdu. Those unable to write told their stories, which were recorded. Much of the memory material is subject to accessibility clauses and has been archived for the future; a smaller amount was published in book form, in which seventeen of the women tell their stories.

Yet another group that all too seldom is given the opportunity to tell its stories consists of children with a non-Danish ethnic background. They were given a voice in the museum's exhibition, *Things Telling Stories*. The children were asked freely to choose one thing from their country of origin and one thing from Denmark. They needed only be things that the children wanted to show and tell other people about. The children chose things on the basis of their personal backgrounds and on their interpretation of the 'task'. They were interviewed by an ethnologist and their stories and the things they had chosen were used to create an exhibition. An additional positive consequence of the exhibition was that many of the children brought their families with them to the museum. Many of these people had never visited us before. The same basic idea led us to distribute disposable cameras to children who travelled 'home' during the summer holidays with their immigrant parents.

The museum continues to work on establishing contact with children and young

people from immigrant backgrounds, in an effort to continue to develop and improve this research.

Immigrant-history databases

The three current databases, collectively known as 'ImmiBas', which the Danish Immigration Museum is assembling and makes available to the public in cooperation with the Danish Data Archives, are visited daily by both Danish and foreign genealogists, and by people searching for their immigrant or emigrant ancestors (<http://www.ddd.dda.dk>). The databases provide the foundation for an entirely new field of research into immigrant history, which is sweeping away many myths and generating many new questions. For example, the databases show us that the extensive labour-immigration that began at the end of the 1800s and lasted until the First World War should be viewed as one part of an urbanization process during which the immigrants, primarily men, migrated in the same direction as Danish workers. At present our immigrant-history databases consist of:

- 67,000 entries concerning aliens who were given work permits between 1812 and 1924
- 50,000 entries concerning citizenship granted since 1776
- 31,000 entries concerning aliens expelled between 1875 and 1919.

We at the Furesø Museums are convinced that it is our task to help make as much source material on immigrants as possible available to interested parties. The databases on the Internet make an enormous amount of source material

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available and this material can then become the basis for new research in this field.

At the Danish Immigration Museum, we therefore do not look at the history of immigration as a field of special study that can be of benefit to immigrants themselves or that we can consider as an exclusive and exotic element in our efforts to understand the past, but rather as a discipline equal to others in the general study of history and, for institutions such as ours, in the study of our specific local history.⁸

| NOTES

1. <http://www.famus.dk/>.

2. See also Sane, Henrik Zip, *Indvandringen efter ca. 1800*, Farums Arkiver & Museer, Møller, Thomas A.: *Immigrantmuseet under Farums Arkiver & Museer* In *ABM-skrift*, No.13, Ed.: Per Bjørn Rekdal. ABM-utvikling Oslo.

3. One concrete example of this type of immigrant history is the anthology, edited by Bent Blüdnikow, which consists of a number of articles on immigrants, all with a chronological, ethnical slant. The book chronicles the major waves of ethnic groups that came to Denmark: Blüdnikow, Bent (ed.) (1987) *Fremmede i Danmark: 400 års fremmedpolitik.. Fremmede i Danmark – 400 Års Fremmedpolitik* (Aliens in Denmark – 400 years' of Foreigner Policy), Odense University Studies; Jensen, Bent (2000) *De fremmede i dansk avisdebat: fra 1870'erne til 1990'erne*. (Foreigners in the Danish Newspaper Debate from the 1870s to the 1990s). Spektrum deals in a similar way with the description of immigrants in the Danish press. The author in fact divides immigrants into ethnic groups, and Swedish labour (1850–1900), Polish workers (1892–1930), Russian Jews and German refugees (1945–49), and Hungarian refugees (1956). An example of an approach that brings this topic more into focus is to be found in Fenger-Grøn, Carsten & Grøndahl, Malene *Flygtningenes danmarkshistorie 1954–2004*, Aarhus Universitetsforlag, which provides a description of refugee conditions in Denmark and of changes in Danish immigrant policy, up to 2004, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees: but still without a specific ethnic breakdown.

4. Holmquist, June D., (1981) *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups*, Minnesota Historical Society Press. Hansen, Marcus Lee (1961) *The Atlantic Migration 1607.1860 - A history of the continuing settlement of the United States*, Simon Publications (Reprint edition 2001).

5. Refugees leave their home countries because of persecution while immigrants migrate by 'free choice' or because of daily living conditions in their homelands. Denmark banned immigration in 1973. Today it is possible for people to obtain residence permits in Denmark as refugees, for purposes of family reunification, in order to study and, in some cases, to work (for researchers or others with particularly sought-after qualifications). EU citizens are free to work in Denmark. Migrants or immigrants are not considered anywhere in the world as refugees, even if they have migrated because of, for example, environmental pollution, natural catastrophes or poverty.

6. Tilly, Charles, (1978) *From Mobilization to Revolution*, McGraw-Hill. and (2006) *Identities, Boundaries, and Social Ties*. Paradigm Publishers.

7. Tilly, Charles, (1978) *Migration in Modern European History*, in McNeill, William H. & Adams, Ruth S. (eds.), *Human Migration: Patterns and Policies*, Indiana University Press.

8. Sane, Henrik Zip, *Nye perspektiver på arbejdsindvandringen ca. 1850–1940*, Farums Arkiver & Museer.

| Museums Devoted to Migration: the Portuguese Emigration Museum

by Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade and Miguel Monteiro

Maria Beatriz Rocha-Trindade obtained her PhD from the Université de Paris V (Sorbonne). She is currently professor of sociology at the Open University in Portugal, where she established in 1994 the Centre for Studies on Migrations and Intercultural Relations. She is also the author of several publications on migration.

Miguel Monteiro obtained his degrees in History from the University of Porto and the University of Minho. Since 1997, he has taught as Associate Professor at the College of Fafe, in Portugal. He is director and coordinator of the Museum of Emigration: Communities and Luso-Descendants (www.museu-emigrantes.org).

Examining migration routes

In any international migration process, whether from the point of view of a single individual, a migrating family, or more broadly from the point of view of groups and collective movements, it is important to understand each stage in a given migration route. This phrase denotes each step in a given international migration process, from the time it begins, as it unfolds and to the time it ends. To be fully understood, migration routes should involve gathering as much knowledge as possible on the background of the country of origin, that is, on the context of the region and where migrants have previously lived, even before they take the irreversible decision to leave. It is particularly important to understand day-to-day living conditions, conditions of work, the socio-economic status of individuals and their families, and their prospects for rising up the social and

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economic ladder and, finally, the amount and reliability of information available on the opportunity to emigrate to a given destination, and the advantages and foreseeable problems that such a decision would entail.

With regard to the context of the migrant's country and place of origin, it is important to understand the steps and reasons leading up to the final decision to emigrate: official documents to be submitted, obligations to be met in the short or longer term, formalities to be completed on the management of personal assets (property, land, businesses) or provisions to support families not accompanying individuals emigrating to a foreign country. The third stage of the route concerns international relocation *per se*. While today, in case of legal emigration, this part of the process is given little attention, this was not so previously as regards trans-oceanic journeys, which could last several months and entailed major risks to the health, well-being and security of passengers. This stage of the migration process involves travel between the migrant's place of residence and the port of embarkation, as well as any possible delays in the ship's date of departure. On arrival in the new country, administrative and legal formalities need to be completed, plus migrants may continue their journey to reach their final destinations. These phases may be time-consuming, confusing and tiring. Conversely, when the new arrivals are met by relatives or by local contacts, the process could be simplified considerably.

A distinction is usually made between the migrant's entry into the country, and arrival at his/her first destination, the period of residence during which accommodation (albeit temporary)

is provided and migrants seek their first job and the processing of formalities to obtain official papers to settle permanently in the new country. This process tends to take much longer in the case of clandestine migration, owing to the illegal presence of migrants in the foreign country concerned. A period of residency is regarded as a prolonged stay if the individual remains in the new country of residence for a fairly long period of time, during which other family members join the migrant, the family grows and gradually integrates into the lifestyle and customs of the host society. The migration route may end in one of three different ways: final settlement in the host country, return to the country of origin when emigration has failed to live up to expectations or, lastly, a hybrid situation involving itinerant periods of residency in one or other of the countries involved.

Museums on emigration and immigration

Migration is essentially a dual process in that it implicitly involves two different countries. It relates to the migrant who plays a dual legal role: that of an emigrant, from the point of view of his country of origin and his fellow countrymen, and that of immigrant in the eyes of the authorities and citizens of the country where he takes up residence. Migration museums seek to reflect this dual reality (emigration or immigration) according to the context in the host country or in the country that produces migrants. In this regard, countries whose population is basically made up of immigrants have a particular interest in devoting their immigration museums to the array of nationalities whom they have hosted. Residents of foreign origin are in a similar

situation, in that they may have a strong enough motivation to set up and maintain a museum space dedicated to their fellow countrymen who have settled in the same country. On the other hand, countries which are traditional sources of migration tend to open emigration museums following decisions taken by central, regional or provincial governments. These museums focus on their own nationals who have emigrated abroad, on destinations of particular relevance to certain locations in the country from where many emigrants have originated. These museums generally target the younger generations to enable them to grasp the cultural, social and economic significance of waves of migration in the history of the country, region or locality concerned, either because many of the country's nationals have begun their journeys from there (emigration museums) or because many foreigners have settled there (immigration museums).

A further reason for opening these museums is to enable the descendants of migrants to gain information and personal details about their ancestors, in the form of individual documents, genealogies and data on their countries and cultures of origin. In this connection, no distinction is made between emigration museums and immigration museums. The following is an inexhaustive list of different types of migration museums:

1. Immigration museums

National museums:

- Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration, Palais de la Porte Dorée, Paris (France)

- Ellis Island Immigration Museum, New York (United States)
- Pier 21 National Immigration Museum, Halifax (Canada)
- Immigrants Memorial or Immigration Museum, Moca, São Paulo (Brazil)
- The Immigration Museum, Melbourne (Australia).

Museums of immigrant communities:

- Portuguese-American Historical Research Foundation on Portuguese Roots, Franklin, North Carolina (United States)
- Museum of Japanese Immigration, Liberdade, São Paulo (Brazil)
- Memorial of Polish, Italian and Ukrainian Immigration, Curitiba, Paraná (Brazil).

2. Emigration museums

National museums:

- Emigration Museum: Comunidades e Luso-Descendentes (Communities and Portuguese Descendants) – Fafe, Minho Interior (Portugal)
- House of Emigrants, Våxjö, Småland (Sweden)
- Norwegian Emigrant Museum, Hamar (Norway)
- Icelandic Emigration Centre, Skagafjörour (Iceland)
- Deutsches Auswanderer Haus, Bremerhaven (Germany).

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Regional or local museums:

- Museo de la Emigración – Fundación Archivo de Indianos, Colombres, Asturias (Spain)
- Museu da Emigração Açoreana (Museum of Azorean Emigration), Ribeira Grande, S. Miguel, Azores (Portugal).

Emigration Museum: Communities and Portuguese Descendants

The decision to open this museum, located at Fafe, Minho Interior, Portugal, was taken by the City Council of Fafe in 2001. Since it was opened, it has regularly cooperated with the Centro de Estudos das Migrações e das Relações Interculturais (Study Centre of Migrations and Intercultural Relations), Portugal, the Casa da Cultura de Porto Seguro, Brazil and the Federação das Associações Portuguesas (Federation of Portuguese Associations) in France. It is the only national Portuguese museum and is fully justified by the fact that 5 million Portuguese live overseas, the equivalent of half the population domiciled in Portugal itself (10 million).

The Emigration and Communities Museum seeks to probe migration phenomena, the reasons why individuals leave their country of origin and why they return home. One approach taken by the museum is to use new technologies that handle large volumes of data to facilitate identifying emigrants in any given situation. It draws on all official and private records on the Portuguese, that is, on municipal, district and national records. These are entered in a national database that identify and track Portuguese

emigrants and communities around the world. These technologies are used to reconstruct 'life stories', i.e. destinations, reasons for returning home, obtaining emigration documents, itineraries of emigrants and descendants, thanks to donations received by the museum. By preserving this type of historical and social memory, the museum becomes a place in which to arrange, store and manage information for further investigation and so encourage studies into where emigrants settled and where they returned to, focusing on industrial, commercial, and philanthropic architecture, journalism, associations, and the arts, as well as the flow of ideas between Portugal and the destination countries.

The museum brands itself as a webmuseum, that is, an information platform facilitating research and dissemination for a target audience: emigrants, their descendants, and associations, including scholars, based on a descriptive, analytical, interactive and networking approach. The virtual section of the museum is organized into six rooms devoted to given themes, as described below. The physical and material support section includes the Archives Department, the Museum Building, several Museological Centres and Historic Sites.

The Memory Room traces destinations that emigrants have travelled to and the countries to which they have returned. Themes include: architecture, the dissemination of ideas, public policies in economic, social and cultural fields and in urban and rural contexts, philanthropy and the influence this has had on social patterns of behaviour and on private life.

The Diaspora Room features a database organized by geographical region (Europe, North America, Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Brazil and the rest of South America) so as to identify Portuguese communities around the world.

The Origin Room features genealogies and allows access to them. These genealogies are supplemented by other documentary sources, information on families and on the 'life stories' of family members.

The Communities Room is devoted to communities of people who immigrated to Brazil, Europe, North America, Africa, South America and Asia. It provides information on their history, their life and work and on the links they maintained with their countries of origin.

The Portuguese Language Room provides information on the life and work of individuals, and traces associated with the worldwide spread of the Portuguese language, highlighting major expressions of Portuguese art and culture since the time the Portuguese colonies were first conquered, and from the time Rio de Janeiro became the capital of the Kingdom until the present.

In the Knowledge Room, scientific works on colonisation and emigration can be consulted and visitors can access documents, authors and research institutions. The IT system is organised under specific topics and areas of research.

The Museum House is a historical museum and reference library on emigration. The different rooms trace the origins, itineraries and life of migrants. Personal objects are displayed and

reconstruct the everyday lives of the affluent families of emigrants who returned from Brazil, highlighting the migration process and social mobility.

The choice of location for the building, its architectural features, interior décor and furnishings, emphasizes its importance within an urban setting, as well as the history of the families of Brazilians in public and private life. Its appearance incorporates Portuguese culture in the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century.

The Museological Centres and Historic Sites are laid out in the Memory Room. These physical spaces can be visited and give shape to a multi-faceted museum that highlights the displays and the memories associated with them. Documentary and museum collections are stored here. At Fafe, the centres display material and symbolic expressions of emigrants to Brazil and those who leave to return home. They serve to structure the different sections of the museum: Hydro-electrics, Philanthropy, Industry, Public Sightseeing, the Brazilian Home, Education, the Arts, Press and Media, Railways, Automobiles.

The Historical Archives endeavour to recover documents and objects used by emigrants and their descendants, and requests for donations to the museum. They comprise the following illustrative and descriptive documents: letters, diaries, photographs, personal objects and the reconstruction of environments associated with migration processes, with special focus on all categories of documents collected and archived (embarkation records of passenger liners, records

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of passports issued, and departures from and entries into another country, residence or work permits granted, foreign labour contracts, population censuses and lists and surveys of immigrants). All these are valuable records for the migration museum.

The museum also offers support services: to plan and conduct research; investigate and track the origins of individuals; obtain information on territories of origin; provide contacts and organize activities. It also provides links to knowledge centres; collections of documents, scientific research and specialised bibliographies; information on temporary exhibitions on cultural and educational themes as well as information on scientific, cultural and social meetings.

Finally, the museum's Investigation Centre whose researchers investigate migration from different angles, is coordinated by a university professor who specializes in this subject.

An attempt has been made to establish a permanent link with national and foreign research centres by means of protocols and directly with specialists on Portuguese migration to fully integrate the centre into an international network for theme-based research purposes.

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| Mobilizing Communities and Sharing Stories: the role of the Immigration Museum in one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world

by Padmini Sebastian

Padmini Sebastian is the manager of the Immigration Museum (a campus of Museum Victoria) in Melbourne, Australia. She participated in the first Expert Meeting on Migration Museums, co-organized by the Psychosocial and Cultural Integration Unit of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Migration Programme of UNESCO. She contributes to a number of committees and forums relating to migration and cultural diversity.

Immigration is a significant feature of contemporary Australia. Since the Second World War, almost 6 million people have immigrated to Australia – today, one in four of Australia's almost 21 million population was born overseas. New Zealand and the United Kingdom are the largest source countries for migrants. The Australian community is and has always been diverse. From its ancient indigenous origins to British colonization and international immigration, Australia has acquired a rich and diverse ethnic and cultural inheritance.

'Community' is referenced in this article to denote people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who participate and contribute to shaping our social, cultural, political and economic fabric. The Immigration Museum in Melbourne collaborates with culturally and

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linguistically diverse communities in Victoria in order to document, collect and present stories and experiences of immigration and diversity. At the heart of our 'Community Connections' programme is a community that is vibrant, cohesive and sustainable. The work we do contributes to this central aim. Immigration, diversity and identity have been at the forefront of the political and social milieu since the early nineteenth century. While assimilation was a key policy in Australia, integration policies have been in place since the late 1960s. Multicultural policies became part of the Australian political and social framework in the 1980s. Today, we are living in an international context of fear and mistrust of 'difference'. In Australia, there is a move towards stricter immigration restrictions and we are also dealing with the consequences of a post-9/11 world. In this context, museums must play a proactive role to foster respect and understanding, and to educate and inform citizens about the benefits of diversity and difference. The role of museums such as the Immigration Museum is important in connecting with communities and reflecting the diverse society that we live in. It is also a forum to 'sell' the benefits of migration and diversity. Through dialogue and discussion, there are opportunities to inform and influence the character of the place that we live in, to encourage ongoing community discourse, and play a transformative role in society.

The Immigration Museum

The establishment of the Immigration Museum was a Victorian State Government initiative. It is one of two museums in Australia dedicated to exploring the significance of the migration



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28. Nyabana Riek's mementos of Sudan are few and represent precious ties to her family (her parents live in Sudan), culture and Africa. She escaped war and conflict in Sudan and migrated to Australia.

experience and the resulting cultural diversity in Australia. Feasibility studies were undertaken over a period of approximately ten years and there was extensive lobbying from various community leaders to create a museum that would validate and celebrate Victoria's cultural diversity.

Victoria is one of Australia's most culturally diverse states. Almost a quarter of the population was born overseas, while 43.5 per cent of Victorians were either born overseas, or have a parent who was born overseas. Victorians come from over 200 countries, speak over 180 languages and dialects, and follow over 110 religious faiths.¹ Most of the overseas-born Victorians came to

Australia as migrants hoping to find a better life for themselves and their children. A significant number came to Australia, and Victoria, as refugees – first Europeans displaced by the Second World War, then refugees from the wars in Indochina and South-East Asia, and more recently, refugees from conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East, and Afghanistan.

Museums provide a forum for learning about the past and understanding how it continues to contribute to who we are today and into the future. The Immigration Museum opened in November 1998 as a campus of Museum Victoria. Our challenge was to create a museum about the history and impact of immigration that has relevance and resonates with communities. To achieve our vision, and establish a museum that would thrive and contribute to our rich social and cultural capital, we determined to focus on the many dimensions of immigration, the common and shared experiences across time and cultures, and its influence, rather than develop a museum based on the history of the resettlement of culturally specific groups, or one that told a chronological history.

The Immigration Museum's Visitor Experience Brief outlines the following:

The immigration experience is about leaving, journey and arrival. The Immigration Museum explores every element of leaving one place to settle in another, in all its broadest implications, including the interpretation of immigration within a context of indigenous impact and exchange. The programmes of the museum call upon memories, emotions and stories

to powerfully evoke the experiences of immigration and involve the visitor. It is recognized that these experiences can be best understood through personal and localized stories which reflect larger trends and interactions as well as challenge mainstream historical narratives.

This is a museum as much about absence as presence. The act of immigration is about departure, leaving things and people behind and about bringing 'cultural' rather than 'physical' baggage. The Immigration Museum, through the content and methodology of its programmes, seeks to unearth unheard voices, redress historical imbalances and challenge pervasive assumptions about race and ethnicity.... By recognizing and valuing our diversity we will become a more inclusive society.

To unify the many aspects of the museum's planning and programmes, an underpinning communication objective was developed. This statement remains the fundamental principle of all the museum's programme: 'There is an immigration story in the life or family history of every non-indigenous Australian.' This statement informs all exhibition development, learning activities, public programmes, marketing and promotional strategies. It also encourages the exploration of personal and family experiences and histories among our visitors.

The strengths of the museum are the many real and personal stories it presents. It is through these that the museum is invested with its authority and integrity. It is a respected and highly valued dimension of the museum and every visitor's response and reaction to this, invests it with an even more powerful quality.



© Photograph by James Geer

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29. The experience of the Chen and Wang families is an epic tale of separation and reunion spanning five generations. Wei Wang is fourth generation Australian – his ancestors were drawn to Australia by the gold rush in the 1850s.

Diversity, non-participation and the Immigration Museum's approach

The issue for cultural institutions operating in and for Australia's diverse population has to be the relationship that exists between these institutions and culturally and linguistically diverse populations of visitors, collaborators and advocates. We as museums and cultural agencies must build trust and ongoing relationships, as well as create experiences that connect and resonate with communities. In Australia, research to date has indicated that people from diverse

communities, depending on when they arrived in Australia, are less likely to participate in cultural activities. The following statistics are useful to consider:

- 13.3 per cent of the Australian population was born in non-English speaking countries;
- 16.7 per cent of Victorians were born in non-English speaking countries, representing nearly 800,000 Victorians;
- 36.4 per cent of Victorians have at least one parent born in a non-English speaking country; demographic analysis indicates that less than 49 per cent of all Victorian residents can claim all four grandparents being born in English speaking countries.²

We generally know why there is limited participation from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. First, there are those who are interested in attending and participating in the arts but who do not attend as a result of access barriers. These barriers may include a lack of information or participation in information streams that provide details about arts activities and performances. Other barriers can include the timing and cost of productions, the venue, signage and bilingual material, and finally, the attitude of staff. A second explanation is that communities do not wish to engage or participate when what we present is irrelevant or considered unattractive. Thirdly, there are those who are not interested and do not attend. While developing these audiences requires the greatest resources and takes the most time, it is ultimately the approach that is going to provide the best long-term results. The greatest successes



© Photograph by Ben Healey, Museum Victoria

30. Pacific Islander Festival at the Immigration Museum where representatives from the community identified material culture that is part of Museum Victoria's collection.

in this regard have been those achieved by many community cultural development projects that allow both the time and effort required to develop a more meaningful and long-term participation.³

Museums must therefore consider their approach and attitude to working with communities, and invest in resources to enable meaningful engagement.

'I came half an hour before the museum closed. Suddenly I realized that I hadn't done my

*afternoon prayer (I am a Muslim). I asked the staff for a space to pray and they were really friendly and helpful.'*⁴

As shown by this example, our attitude and approach to diversity is holistic – not only do we create solace for personal reflection and transcendent experiences, we ensure that everyone who works at and contributes to the Immigration Museum has empathy and is able to listen and learn from our visitors and advocates. We take a long-range view to developing relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. But at the same time, we recognize that we cannot be everything to everyone all at once and a long-term approach that enables meaningful connections is therefore important. We work with communities to collaborate, co-author and present a number of initiatives.

Community connections at the Immigration Museum

One of the key approaches to 'bringing in' communities to shape programmes and explore our diverse heritage is the Community Connections programme, an inclusive, participatory and collaborative model that espouses what the late Stephen Weil, who worked at the Smithsonian Centre for Education and Museum Studies, described as what museums can contribute to society. According to Weil, 'Museums have the capability to impart knowledge, to stimulate enquiry, to develop skills, to provide aesthetic and other effective experiences, to strengthen communal ties, to kindle individual ambition, to offer perspective, to influence attitudes, to shape behaviour, to convey values, to



© Photograph by Ben Healley, Museum Victoria 31

31. The story of the Buchenwald Boys is one of human resilience. It is not a story with a happy ending for each of the 'boys' in this group carries within him forever the memory of unparalleled tragedy. Sixty years after leaving the Buchenwald Concentration Camp in Germany, they told their stories at the Immigration Museum.

generate respect... and more.⁵ Community Connections is an annual programme of exhibitions and festivals by and for the community. It is a strategic and targeted approach to ensure that we proactively develop relationships and collaborations with communities to share histories, stories, experiences and traditions. This programme is about collaborating with communities to create something that otherwise would not exist. Community Connections also assists both established and new communities with limited resources to realize their potential through participation in developing community cultural

projects. It is a forum for the community to take on a leadership role in organizing community participation and contribution, such as festivals.

Festivals are one-day events organized by representatives from a community. They are planned two to three years in advance and are informed by ongoing and regular conversation and consultation with relevant communities. These events are an occasion to explore the diverse traditions of communities and mark milestones in the community, such as thirty years of Vietnamese settlement in Australia (2005) or the fortieth

anniversary of official immigration from Turkey (2007).

‘Once again, thank you for your support in this worthy event. Looking forward to working with you again in organizing the festival to celebrate the 40 years of Vietnamese Refugee settlement in Victoria! I’ll come back to the IM with some of our friends during this weekend to see the exhibition. Nhan Quyen, a Vietnamese newspaper, has published a great article about the exhibition/festival in this week’s issue.’⁶

Communities either approach the museum or we seek participation from various community representatives and groups. We encourage intergenerational and intracommunity participation and contribution. The majority of this work is undertaken on a voluntary basis, so it is important for the museum to be flexible and adaptable. We do however provide a framework and context for developing and presenting festivals along with administrative and other support.

The Pacific Islander Festival brought together fourteen communities from the region to work together to create the programme. A Committee of forty people met to plan and organized the events and activities. The museum provided staff, funding and other relevant support to realize the project. The majority of participants and visitors to the event had never previously visited the Immigration Museum. Since the festival, we have continued to work with representatives from the communities to discuss opportunities for exhibitions and youth collaborations. We also seek expressions of interest from communities to develop and present community exhibitions.

A panel of internal museum representatives and community stakeholders select exhibitions based on community representation, support and ideas. We provide feedback to those communities whose projects were not selected and encourage them to re-apply. We continue to review this process so that we create opportunities, not barriers, for participation.

‘We were able to share and celebrate important stories about our community’s traditions and history. I think one of the most important outcomes of the exhibition was that women with traditional weaving and embroidery skills felt valued, perhaps for the first time, in Australia.’⁷

The process of developing and presenting community exhibitions within an environment of mutual trust and empathy generally results in meaningful collaboration and an understanding of the importance of personal items in the official documentation and preservation of Australian history. The value of these items needs to be considered as part of the ongoing recording and documentation of Australia’s rich and diverse immigration experience and cultural diversity. Community exhibitions endorse the material culture that emerges from communities as significant within Australia’s history, and contribute to the state’s heritage assets.

‘In 2005 I was part of a team that organized, designed and researched an exhibition called Welcome to My Home. The idea for the exhibition came from a number of people from within the Bosnian community with an aim of introducing a relatively young Bosnian community to a wider context of Australian society. Through stories of

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*journey and through precious memorabilia from Bosnia we introduced ourselves properly for the first time and with respect.*⁸

The Immigration Museum is a neutral venue for communities. Many of the groups who create these programmes have never previously worked on such projects. Festivals and exhibitions bring together young and old within each community to explore their heritage and traditions, and most importantly to provide a forum for personal growth, self-awareness, respect and well-being for individuals within the communities. Ethnospecific communities are not homogeneous: within groups there is a diversity of language, religion, customs, class and politics. Whenever the museum works with community groups, we encourage both the expression and presentation of such differences.

The Sri Lankan Festival at the Immigration Museum in 2004 was a case in point – ethnic and religious groups worked separately to develop a programme of events and activities. However, on the appointed day they came together at the Immigration Museum to present a rich, diverse and inclusive festival that was embraced by all groups within the community. Over 1,500 people from the community attended and took part in the event. Both the community and the museum acknowledged it as a successful festival that brought the community together and enabled inter-religious and ethnic interaction.

Every community that we work with has unique and differing needs - we continue to evaluate how we work with these communities and we define our flexible framework in order to

accommodate the requirements and capacity of each community.

The key to the success of the Immigration Museum programme of Community Connections is our willingness to take a back seat and enable communities to develop programmes that are culturally relevant and reflect the communities' aspirations. It has now been nine years since we opened, and our relationship with Victoria's culturally and linguistically diverse communities is growing. This is reflected in the number of over fifty communities who have actively created programmes and exhibitions at the museum, and the profile of our visitors, of which 54 per cent are born overseas.

Museums and cultural organizations are in a unique position to facilitate political change – it may not be immediate, but we can engage people to consider diverse viewpoints and affect political change. Our work at the Immigration Museum is not over and the stories have not concluded. Ours is an ongoing journey together with the communities we represent and with which we collaborate. As society and communities evolve, we as museums must respond to the changes and continue to re-invent ourselves so as to be proactive and relevant community participants.

| NOTES

1. 2001 Australian Bureau of Statistics census data. Australia's fourteenth national Census of Population and Housing took place on 7 August 2001. Data has been used from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 census in relation to population and ethnic diversity (www.abs.gov.au).

2. *Ibid.*

3. See Migliorino, Pino (2006) *Cultural Perspectives*. Sydney, Australia. www.culper.com.au/.
4. Comment made by a visitor to the museum, April 2006.
5. Weil, Stephen E. (1990) *Rethinking the Museum and other Meditations*. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington D.C.
6. Organizer, Vietnamese Festival, 2005.
7. Representative from the Punjabi Community in Victoria, 2002.
8. Organizer, Bosnian Community Exhibition, 2005.