CHICAGO TORTURE JUSTICE MEMORIAL
PATRICIA NGUYEN

REPARATIONS IN ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIA
AMY MCGUIRE

UNLEARNING IMPERIALISM
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REPARATIVE FUTURITIES
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REVOLUTIONARY REPARATIONS
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NEITHER TRUTH NOR RECONCILIATION
TSHEPO MADLINGOZI

JUSTICE4GRENFELL
COLIN PRESCOD

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REPATRIATING HAWAIIAN ANCESTORS
EDWARD HALEALOHA AYAU

COVER BY POLA MANELI

NEWS FROM THE FRONTS ABOUT NUBIA (MENNA AGHA)
BLACK MUSIC AGAINST APARTHEID (ATIYYAH KHAN)

30 /// July-August 2020

REPARATIONS
BEHIND THE SCENES

Dear subscribers and occasional readers,

Welcome to the 30th issue of The Funambulist magazine! Our team is still (mostly) working remotely from the confinement of our homes, balancing editorial work, logistical challenges, weekly videoconference meetings and local activism. I want to give props to our brilliant Head of Strategic Outreach, Margarida NZUli Waco, who added academic work to the mix and graduated from KADK with a research on neocolonialism in Tanzania. Although sometimes a bit challenging, nothing much has changed organization-wise at the office since our last issue. We have grown accustomed to this new life-as-usual.

And at the same time, everything has changed.

Those of you who have been long-time readers may know that this issue is of particular importance for us. We have been tip-toeing around the topic of reparations for quite some time now, both in our pages and podcasts. But we would be lying if we said that we expected this issue to be released in such such a global political momentum.

Léopold Lambert and I are based in Paris, France. Like so many places around the world, lockdown restrictions led to an increased control of racialized, precarious and dissident bodies. Conversely initiatives have reasserted the necessity for auto-organization for migrants or sex workers for instance over these last couple of months. This, not to mitigate but to counter oppressive policies. With this intensification and the particular conditions under quarantine, I listened to friends, artists or activists echo how they were mourning the lives they had envisioned for themselves. But far from deterred, they were even more determined.

I guess this is part of the reason why political configurations took this turn in the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder by the police globally. White crusial and historical in the U.S., a milestone has definitely been reached in France. So-called minoritarian initiatives were often met with calls to converge toward mainstream white (often) leftist movements. Black and brown figures are now the leading force of activism, organizing protests, (re)politicizing the pier) are now the leading force of activism, organizing protests, (re)politicizing the pier)

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The last episode of our “Moment of true decolonization” podcast series, Ruth Gilmore Wilson talks about how she was introduced to Stuart Hall’s work and how his words took a particular weight and meaning in the political configuration of the 1980s. Collective reading became the companion of action. We don’t believe that we are publishing “magical words” to quote our guest, but we really hope that this reading will pursue global conversations and provide tools toward collective emancipation.

When we asked him about the genealogy of this piece — long after we had already filled it with our own interpretations in relation to this issue’s topic — he wrote: “This is part of an illustration series I drew in response to a breakup I was dealing with at the time. Each piece in the series also references the lyrics to the song ‘Mountains’ by Charlotte Day Wilson, and this one, in particular, is an interpretation of the lyric, ‘Won’t you come find me?’”

We invite everyone to check his powerfully evocative interpretation of the lyric, ‘Won’t you come find me?’”.


THE FUNAMBULIST

THE ISSUE’S COVER EXPLAINED

It had been a little while that we wanted to work with South African artist Pola Maneli, whose work "looks at the components which make up one’s identity; how they are constructed, misunderstood, disseminated, and ultimately, why the meanings we ascribe to these components seem to be so essential when coming to grips with who we are and who we desire to be." We are therefore very happy to feature his pencil & ink artwork (2019) on the cover of this particular issue.

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OPEN LETTER TO SYLVIA WYNTER: UNLEARNING THE DISAPPEARANCE OF JEWS FROM AFRICA

ARIELLA AISHA AZOULAY

In this moving account, Ariella Azoulay writes a letter to Sylvia Wynter discussing the black scholar’s essay “1492.” She passes her reading through the filter of her experience as an Arab-Jew scholar relocated in the U.S. and reckons with the skewed concept of “Judeo-Christian.”

Dear Sylvia Wynter,

I love teaching your texts. They inspire me and stir the mind of my students. Your essay “1492: A New World View” (1985) helped me understand that the entire world as manufactured out of the events of 1492 is in a dire need of repair, a project that cannot be confined to calls for reparations.

Thinking with you about the world brought about by 1492, I am troubled by the use of the term “Judeo-Christian,” and this is why I am sending you this note. Unlike other terms, whose origins you carefully question and whose meanings you transform, “Judeo-Christian” stands untroubled in your writing, as if there is a confirmed reality behind it. Judeo-Christian — where? When? In whose interest? Against whom? In service of what kind of world? Often, I wish the texts of authors like me to be flawed. But simply changing, excising, or explaining away the vexed term is not enough. A work is required to show how it was manufactured. I finally found the courage to do this in a letter addressed to you. The term “Judeo-Christian,” as I hope you will understand, is in itself a distortion of the work of repair.

Why a letter? Your 1492 text sent me off on a journey, and I feel I owe you a postcard from my travels. I tried to reconstruct my failure to grasp the meaning of one who passed away seven years ago. In my letter to him, I was also writing a letter to my father, who was a native Algerian and could have been one of these girls, disappear to any of these Arab-looking girls, whose picture was taken in 1905, could have been my ancestor. The photographs I have of my grandmother in Algeria, a few decades later, show her already as a French-looking woman, a Jew- Arab who has learned the lesson of Frenchness the school was established to impart. Where did my great-great-grandmother, who was a native Algerian and could have been one of these girls, disappear to?

In the Zionist state where I grew up — Israel — there was no room for my father’s memories of persecution during World War II as an Arab-Jew whose French citizenship was revoked, nor for the vulnerability of Jews in Algeria after the creation of the State of Israel, which was constructed as a Europeanized stronghold against the Arab world. In Israel, where my father migrated in 1949, he was able to take advantage of the World War II imperial bargain, as his French citizenship — given to Algerian Jews in 1870 — meant he could pass for a European Jew (that is, a white Jew), and assimilate, at the cost of forgetting his Arabness. In my letter to him, I am still reconstructing all he had to omit to sustain the self-deception of being French, despite being continual- ly betrayed by the dark color of his skin, his French accent in Hebrew which is more like Arabic, his Arab accent when speaking French.

Your discussion, dear Sylvia, of the substance of memories “we share, those memories of a white bourgeoisie mode of being as the way of being human, forever above both my letter to you and to him. After I started to write to you, I soon realized that a postcard was too small for what I wanted to say. But I still want to share the image I have in mind for your postcard. It is a photochrome image of twelve Algerian girls around the age of six or seven, posing for a photograph in a Delacroix-inflected harem-like setting — some idly standing, others at work — at what is an embroidery school for Arab girls, founded by a French woman a decade after the French conquered Algeria. Any of these Arab-looking girls, whose picture was taken in 1905, could have been my ancestor. The photographs I have of my grandmother in Algeria, a few decades later, show her already as a French-looking woman, a Jew- Arab who has learned the lesson of Frenchness this school was established to impart. Where did my great-great-grandmother, who was a native Algerian and could have been one of these girls, disappear to?

With the conquest, the traditional craft of embroidery, which had been transmitted intergenerationally, was standard- ized into a European curriculum emphasizing mechanized movements, “orientalist” patterns, and the French lan- guage. The young girls in this photochrome were in training to become a labor force producing for European markets. Look at the synchronized movement of their right hands. No doubt, they were asked by the photographer (or their teach- er-patron) to act as if they were in the midst of embroidery. This semi-mechanized gesture is not how their ancestors used the needle, outside of the market logic of French ed- ucational institutions. Note how everything is standardized: were there no left-handed girls among them? Was this “flaw” also eradicated, along with previous modes of em- brodering? Does the standardization of their work connect to the disappearance of my great-great-grandmother?

This lesson of Frenchness, standardization, eradication has a name in French: laicité. The term “secularism” doesn’t quite capture the stripping bare the worldliness, or being in- world of a person, which laïcité requires. Part of solving the “Jewish question” in Europe required the refashioning of Jews as secular Europeans (who could still be “Jews” at home) before they could go in public. With the French con- quest of Algeria, the Jews were singled out from the Arabs and were made into a “problem,” forced to get rid of what identified them as indigenous, so that a few decades later the colonial regime could reward them for their efforts with the gift of French citizenship. Thinking of this Judeo-Chris- tian bargain in relation to the state process of laicité helped me. As my interlocutor, you helped me to identify the “Chris- tian” component in the secular Jew.

Your unmitigated use of the term — Judeo-Christian — assumes a readership that recognizes itself in it. If you could have anticipated a reaction like mine while you wrote, I am inclined to think that you would have asked more questions about it. It’s true, some of your Jewish readers, and maybe some Christians, may find this category reassuring, a confirmation that the post-World War II bargain, the one which promised Jews whiteness and welcomed them into the Christian-secular world, and offered Christians a way out of their guilt, is respected. I’m Jewish, but I am not one of these readers, and I’m not alone.

As I worked to retrieve memories of my family’s Arabness, I joined you in your endeavor to expose Man’s memories as simply one mode of being human, a white, middle-class commitment to perpetuate, as you call it, “imimagin- able evil.” The Judeo-Christian, I begin to understand as I write to you, is one of the latest iterations of the imperial practice of assimilation, one that was materialized on a state-scale with the Christian-European interest in the State of Israel. I was

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born in this State, Israel, and I grew up to refuse to be ruled by the multiple bargains of its creation. I refused to become a memory-less Jew, whose life was mutilated and reformat- ted to begin only with the creation of the nation-state.

I first read your work around 2012, immediately after I moved to the United States. I was still trying to figure out the shape that my book Potential History would take in response to my own migration and my encounter with the afterlives of slavery in the U.S. I was inspired by your commitment to provide a theoretical move into a “realm beyond reason,” beyond Man’s memories, but rather to rewrite their meanings infused in the veins of Jews born in Israel. My second assumption was that they were not included in the memories transmitted to non-white Jews, meaning non-Ashkenazi Jews, meaning Arab-Jews.

I no longer think so. Wrestling with the normalization of “Judeo-Christian” in your writing, I now understand that the state of Israel is actually the materialization of a Ju- deo-Christian vision, though it would have been superficial- ly, and probably also antagonistic, to naturalize this term in a “Jewish state.” It is so obvious now. Not only was the state of Israel created with imperial tools (colonization, partition, deportation, nation-state form); it also replicated the domination of white Europeans of Jewish origin, who turned their way of being Jewish into the only way of being Jewish — a Judeo-Christian Jewishness. In so doing, they imposed the Christian-sectarian state apparatus (which, in Israel’s case is Judeo-Christian) as a universal form. Like other “universal” forms, it is based on differential and unequal governance. For this project, Europeans of Jewish origins had to be whitened, to refute the proof provided by World War II of their non-whiteness. To be whitened, European Jews needed other Jews to be their non-white Jews. This lies at the core of the imperial state.

Jews destroying Jewish worlds didn’t start with the after- math of World War II. Recall the “emancipated” French Jew Isaac-Jacques Adler Cesnoux, who sought to re-educate Arab-Jews in North Africa and to eradicate their Ashkenazim in an effort to make them French, i.e., secular European Jews, who negotiated with European governments to aid the movement of Jews from Europe to Palestine, sometimes in collaboration with the Nazis, showed their commitment to the Judeo-Christian impulsive to cleanse Europe of its Jews. The memories of the Jews as non-whites, as the white Man’s other (alongside the Blacks and Natives), needed to be erased and replaced with something else: the excep- tionalism of the extermination of European Jews. It is this trade that gave birth to “Judeo-Christian” as an adjective for a shared cultural heritage. Thus an Arab country, Palestine, was transformed into a piece of property that Europeans, who acted as if they had rights in it, gave as a gift to anoth- er group of Europeans (see Edward Said, The Question of Palestine, 1992). The gift of Palestine was given in reward by an ‘error’ of natural reason” (“New Seville and the Arab-Jewish distinction: Taking the trouble to separate, the end result was that we have unlearned more of Man’s memories than we normally know the world […].”)

In your text on the Cinematic text and Africa, you relate to cinema as the vehicle through which memories of Man, etched on celluloid, become etched in people’s mind as “cinema as the vehicle through which memories of Man, the Judeo-Christian impulse to cleanse Europe of its Jews. The creation of the State of Israel and the imposition of a system of differential citizenship made Arabism a threat. This Judeo-Christian blow to the worldly sovereignty previ- ously shared by Arabs and Jews in Palestine is the latest re- iteration of the 1492 Christian purification of the Iberian Pen- insula from Jews and Muslims whose blood was not pure. However, much like previous imperial efforts to rid a nation of racial “impurities,” the Zionist purging project failed. Bro- ken promises, histories of suffering, debts, duties, revenge, love, shared habits, mixed languages, images, and cultures escaped any attempt to “solve” their mixture. The question, as you show persuasively, is not if but how you call “in- terstitial symbolic coexistence” can be imagined anew.

What is “Judeo-Christian,” then? It is the name of a post- World War II onto-epistemological barrier that incorporates the Jew into the Christian paradigm at the expense of a shared Judeo-Arab world. Thus, it is not only about “Man and its others,” or maybe never was, since men could not become Man without destroying previous alliances, pacts, and shared worlds, and establishing their domination on and through this dyad. Some, like the Jews, had to be made “other” and then conceptualized into Man’s projects, before Man could define himself by relation to still-existing others. Hence, since 1492 — and even earlier, perhaps, if one think about the Crusades — targeting the Judeo-Arab world has been one of Man’s ration of life, one that in Pal- estine becomes not just a Christian but a Judeo-Christian enterprise. The temporal proximity between the invention of the Judeo-Christian (1492) and the creation of the Jewish State (1948) is not a coincidence.

Re-reading your text on 1492, I am struck by how you refrain from engaging the destruction of the Judeo-Arab world, not mentioning, the purging Jews and Muslims from the body politic of Spain and Portugal from that also occurred in 1492. It is not that you are not familiar with this history; you use it as the background for your discussion of Bartolomé de las Casas and how he “had been trapped by an error of natural reason” (“New Seville and the creation of the state and the imposition of a system of differential citizenship made Arabism a threat. This Judeo-Christian blow to the worldly sovereignty previously shared by Arabs and Jews in Palestine is the latest reiteration of the 1492 Christian purification of the Iberian Peninsula from Jews and Muslims whose blood was not pure. However, much like previous imperial efforts to rid a nation of racial “impurities,” the Zionist purging project failed. Broken promises, histories of suffering, debts, duties, revenge, love, shared habits, mixed languages, images, and cultures escaped any attempt to “solve” their mixture. The question, as you show persuasively, is not if but how you call “interstitial symbolic coexistence” can be imagined anew.

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The violence against non-Europeans and women worldwide, which was required to end World War II and establish a new world order on the ruins, was partially concealed through the spectacle of redress. While non-whites, like in many colonies in Africa or Roma peoples in Europe, were punished, European Jews were differentiated from others who were equally deserving, and granted redress. For Jews, the price and the prize was becoming white, i.e., Judeo-Christian.

In the U.S., given that the majority of American Jews came from Europe, the whitening of the Jews was relatively seamless, and took place alongside the whitening of other American immigrant subcultures that had been despised: the Irish, the Italians, the Poles. As I was born an Arab-Jew in a white Judeo-Christian state, treated as such by others earlier than I could claim it as an identity with any self-awareness, my life experience is of a non-white Jew. To my surprise, since I arrived in the U.S. in 2012, I have been read as a white woman. When I understood that this unintended and undesired “passing” actually has a name — “Judeo-Christian” — it annoyed me in ways two. First, the fictional fusion of Jews with their persecutors and the erasure of Jews’ history of being “others,” second, the homogenization of all Jews into a single category, which is a reiteration of the consistent denial of the existence of the Arab-Jew. “Judeo-Christian” denies whole realities: Jews were part of Arab worlds, Jews were part of Judeo-Arab melting-pot of being and caring. From the 1492 purge of Jews and Arabs from the Christian body politic in Spain and Portugal, Christian European empires reached out to Judeo-Arab worlds in North Africa, South-East Asia, and West Asia and were troubled by them. An emblematic example of this was the establishment of Alliance israélite Universelle schools in North Africa. The schools, which provided a “civilizing” European education, sought to uproot Jews from their Judeo-Arab worlds and make them into quasi-European citizens, separating them and setting them against their Arab co-citizens. Whether in Israel, which I left eight years ago, or in the U.S., where I am a legal resident, I am not ready to trade my life experience as a non-white Jew — a Mizrahi Jew, Sephardic Jew, Arab Jew — for that of a whitened Jew. I refuse to inhabit this position because I do not recognize its legitimacy. In Palestine, it has so often been used to persecute inhabitants, Palestinians but also in different ways Jews, in the name of the modern Jewish nation-state. Here in the U.S., the recruitment of whitened subjects has assisted in the project of enslavement and the continuing persecution of non-white people.

I have long tried to discuss this with colleagues and friends since emigrating to the U.S. But I sensed that my American friends had no context for what I was trying to say, and the conversation could not go beyond an exoticization of me as an Arab-Jew, an identity unfamiliar to most of my interlocutors, despite the existing work of scholars such as Ella Shohat or Gil Anidjar. When it comes to official forms where my “race” should be indicated, “Jewish” no longer existed as an option. Every time I have to fill such a form, the census, or when applying for changing my legal status, I find myself pressured to select “white.” In the local context, choosing “white” seems to me to be less of a lie in the eyes of those who check my forms and raise their eyes to look at me to verify my race, than saying that I am Black, Asian, or Native American.

When I left destroyed Palestine and migrated to the U.S., my engagement with 1948 in Palestine has interwoven with a growing personal and intellectual interest in 1492, in the Iberian Peninsula and beyond. I came to understand what bothered me about the category of the “Mizrahi Jew,” used in Israel to describe Jews from Arab countries. When seen from my chosen research unit of a Jewish “Mizrahi” Jew, used in Israel to describe Jews from Arab countries. When seen from my chosen research unit of a Jewish childhood I was caught Jews from Arab countries in a manufactured history that started in 1948 and rendered everything before into a kind of museified past.” The category of “Mizrahi Jew” normalizes the dissociation of my family from Algeria, and in a broader way from Africa. You may say, as some have already done with a certain historical and scientific authority, that North Africa is “Arab.” No doubt, relating to North Africa as a separate region makes sense, but not at the risk of erasing it from the African continent, nor from broader Jewish life in Africa and the Mediterranean world. That is, North Africa was part of a Euro-African world long before the inventions of Europe and its political and worldly imagination, and see in it the effects of the invented Judeo-Christian bargain that is now at the core of white supremacy. The wholesale differentiation of North Africa from Africa and Europe, like the partitioning of so many other areas in the world, facilitated creation of separate histories for each region, as if each were caught in its own temporality. And this partitioning serves imperial ends by making it impossible to see one global regime that needs to be abolished.

As you can likely guess at this point of my letter, I’m troubled by the disappearance of the Jews from Africa, and more so, by the disappearance of this disappearance from our political and worldly imagination, and see in it the effects of the invented Judeo-Christian bargain that is now at the core of white supremacy. The whole return of Arab and Jewish Palestinians to the homeland they had previously shared.

The right to undo political bargains of this kind is a right descendants in imperial regimes ought to claim to reject colonial violence, growth and domination. We have the right to replace these with the principle of repair. In undressing those bargains, we can repair our shared worlds.

Let me say this bluntly now. I have no memories from centuries of Jewish life in Africa. At the same time I am not inclined to let this manufactured absence determine what I remember and what could and ought to be remembered. I continue to yearn for “memories.” I continue to yearn for the world to be thinkable. It was only because I have spent all this time undoing the Judeo-Christian reference that I encountered in a text I love, your 1492 text, that I could think about the centuries of Jewish life in Africa as also an African issue.

To recover this story through the labor and love of family recollection ought to underscore how naturalized this disappearance of Jews from Africa, and Africa from Jews, has been. Not all of us, descendants of Arab Jews, are fortunate enough to have a share in these memories, for many of the parents and grandparents held them privately as part of a disappeared world.

My father was born in a world in which the memories of being colonized — the destruction of the Jewish-Arab world of his grandparents and their own grandparents — could not be his, though Algeria was still colonized. He was still surrounded by them, but the imperial bargain was already there, luring him to choose alienation from the world of his ancestors in place of a fictitious European identity. I believe that he started preparing himself to become “French” when he was 12 years old. Somewhat, so his story goes, he collected a little money to pay for a French company’s correspondence course, training him to become a radio technician and electrician. Radio was his modern time dream. He sought to distinguish himself from his mother and sisters who were still, in his eyes, backward people, while he was already committed to the globalized world transmitted to him through radio waves.

In his own eyes, perhaps, he was never the colonized. As a Frenchman, he had to deny the Arab world he still grew in,
I too drank the imperial poison. I also turn my back against my parents. I refuse to share their compliance and identification with the state of Israel. Was it the same? No! My father turned his back against his ancestors and normalized the destruction of their world.

But when I turned my back against my parents, a path was opened toward my great-grandparents and their world. I seek repair. In writing to you, and to my father, I am searching and researching my memories from Algeria, where I have never been.

The State of Israel is responsible for the destruction of centuries of Jewish life in Africa. It is also responsible for the destruction of Arab-Jewish culture among those who migrated to Israel. Israel provided the immigrants with new memories and new origins, ones which disappeared Jews from Africa. For a long time, I could not blame the State because my father had always represented this as his choice. After all, I thought, it was my father who turned his back on Algeria of its own free will. And yet — despite all his efforts to be recognized as a French immigrant, all his acquaintances and friends knew he was Algerian. This was a kind of an open secret, an admission of the implicit racism of Israeli propaganda that lured him to believe that the war against the Nazis to save Jews in Europe was continuing in Palestine against the Arabs. Almost everything Arab immigrants brought with them to Israel was denigrated and ridiculed. They were encouraged to unlearn their habits, heritage, much of their food and music, even as their “rescued” culture was preserved in museums and libraries. Imperial logic relies on disrupting intergenerational memories: the parents will die and the children will forget. Used against Arab-Jews, it meant that we would grow up to become “Israélites,” cleansed of Arab-Jewish memories, alienated from Palestinian culture and learning to see Palestinians as enemies.

I was born outside of Algeria in a state where my identity was destroyed for the sake of becoming your neighbors’ enemy. I had to reconstruct the timeline of his life in order to understand, reconstruct his experience from books and memoirs, and adopt this as my memory. I came to understand my father’s choices not as personal ones, but as choices offered to him from a narrowed imperial menu.

Only once, maybe, did my father ask me to mourn — would he agree with me to call it mourning? — this lost Algerian-African world with him, when he asked me to find him photos of the great synagogue in Oran. One of our family, he said with pride, was a hassan, a cantor, there. After my father passed away, I started to mourn this world I had not been allowed to know. It was the first time I felt sympathy toward my father as an imperial subject. I finally was able to recognize in his life something that I always saw sharply vis-à-vis colonized Palestinians: under the imperial condition, no colonized person could be said to have left their world as they pleased, when they wished to, or in the way they might wish to.

If it were not for the way I was looked at when my family name was said — Azoulay, an unequivocally Arab-Jewish name in a Judeo-Christian state — I may have followed my father’s path. But I chose to unlearn imperialism: unlearning israel and acknowledging the existence of Palestine in its place, unlearning the manufactured Israeli identity and recovering the identity of an Arab-Jew, unlearning the dis-appearance of the Jews from Africa to see this world as disappeared, unlearning “Judio-Christian” as a fixed term, and recently rejecting (though in this case I had nothing to unlearn) the white womanhood offered to me as a Jew in exchange for being legible in a world in which an Arab-Jew, a Palestinian-Jew or an Algerian-Jew were legible identities. I will not accept this bargain.

Relatively early in your 1492 text you ask:

“Can we therefore, while taking as our point of departure both the ecosystemic and global sociosystemic “historical-ness” of our contemporary situation, put forward a new world view of 1492 from the perspective of the species, and with reference to the interests of its well-being, rather than from the partial perspectives, and with reference to the necessarily partial interests, of both celebrants and disinterested?”

and immediately reply that “the central thesis of this essay is that we can.” (“1492: A New World View,” 1995).

I share your conviction that “we can.” I tried in my recent book, Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism (2019) to think about 1492 as both a historical moment and a configuration of imperial violence occurring at different moment in different places, which should be imagined as the horizon of return and repart. Thus, 1492 in Palestine is 1948, and in Algeria it is 1830.

In Palestine, the geographical imagination of return is not yet disrupted, and for millions of Palestinians — the expellees and their descendants alike — return means going back to Palestine, a place that for them has never ceased to exist, though they may live as Palestinian-Canadians, Palestinian-Swedes, Palestinian-Americans. When a return is made real — and it will be real — it is not clear how many Palestinians will physically return. The return though, is of Palestinians as a people and Palestine as a world from which no one should ever have been or be expelled. In this sense, return is the condition of repair, a condition under which justice is renewed as a principle. The return of Palestine and the demise of the Judeo-Christian regime called Israel, the undying of the Judeo-Christian bargain, is the condition of repair for Arab-Jews, who will no longer have to keep their Arabness apart from their Jewishness. Memories of Arab-Jews of their origins in Africa are needed, in order to imagine Africa not only as a place from which people and resources are kidnapped and extracted, a place from which people emigrate away, but also as a place of hospitality that in 1492 opened its gates to welcome Jews and Arabs expelled from Spain and Portugal.

I hope this will be a beginning of a conversation and others will join us.

Yours,

Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, teaches political thinking and imperial technologies at Brown University. She is a film essayist and curator of archives and exhibitions. Potential History - Unlearning Imperialism (Verso, 2019) is her latest book, and Errata (Tapiès Foundation, 2019) is her latest exhibition.

Postcard, School of embroidery, Algeria (1905). / Any of these Arab-looking girls, could have been my ancestor. In 1850, a British traveler who visited the school reported: “there were several little Jewish girls squatting most amicably among the Mauresques, conspicuously only by their simpler color of called stuff and a conical cap of red velvet, tipped with gold laces.” In the first decades of the 20th century, postcards of them were sent from France to other European countries. The photographs I have of my grandmother were taken a few decades later, when she was already a French-looking woman, a Jewish Arab who had learned the lesson of Frenchness the school was established to impart. Where do my greatest grandmother, who was a native Algerian and could have been one of these girls, disappear to?