
Deleuze and Race

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A Deleuzian *Ijtihad*: Unfolding Deleuze's Islamic Sources Occulted in the Ethnic Cleansing of Spain

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Deeply enfolded into the history of European thought live the philosophy, science and culture of the medieval Muslim world. Some of the deepest of those folds were made in the Iberian peninsula, over a long period from the establishment of the first Muslim caliphate in Andalusia in 756 to the expulsion of the last Muslims from Christian Spain in 1614. In these folds, I argue, lie the sources of many concepts central to Deleuze's thought. *Ijtihad* is a self-reflexive Arabic noun derived from the verb *jahada*, 'to strive, to fight', from which also derives the familiar noun *jihad*. *Ijtihad* means to struggle within oneself, endeavour or interpret. This chapter's *ijtihad* is to unfold a place and time where Arabic philosophy thrived; Muslims, Christians and Jews engaged in tense and lively collaborations; translators brought Arabic thought into Latin; and Islamic culture shaped the nascent Europe. Those folds were seared shut in Spain in an ethnic cleansing based on a notion of Christian nationhood, in one of the first articulations of modern racism. Philosophy, too, underwent an ethnic cleansing.

One of Deleuze's greatest contributions to contemporary thought was to liberate the world conceptually from any kind of preordained causality, so that causes can be really immanent and we can understand the world as a constant becoming. Every being individuates according to immediate circumstances: this is life in its magma-like diversity. What guarantees the freedom of becoming is the *univocity of being*, being as a contentless, universal predicate. Deleuze found numerous allies, including Leibniz, Spinoza and Duns Scotus, in his fight against Platonism, a top-down determinism in which the world is ultimately a representation of Ideas. These allies, in turn, relied on concepts developed in Islamic philosophy. Their source, and therefore Deleuze's, for the concept of the univocity of being was Abu 'Ali al-Husayn ibn Sîna (980–1037), the great Persian philosopher who lived in Bukhara and wrote in Arabic.

Like other classical Islamic thinkers, Ibn Sînâ struggled to come up with a concept of causality that is not representational, responding to the Muslim concept of God as a Being beyond comprehension.

Muslims do not comprise a 'race'; the vast and variegated body of thought we might call classical Islamic philosophy comprises the work of Arab, Persian, Indian and Turkish thinkers. (Some prefer to refer to Arabic philosophy, designating a linguistic rather than a religious-political site. Both terms are useful.) However, racism informed the way European thinkers constituted European philosophy as independent of its Islamic heritage. As Martin Bernal (1987) has established, the historiography of philosophy eradicated the Middle Eastern and North African contributions to modern European thought. Late-medieval Christian Scholastics acknowledged what they borrowed from Muslim philosophers. But later European thinkers disingenuously claimed a direct link between European and Greek thought, disavowing the hundreds of intervening years of Islamic philosophy upon which emerging European thought relied. The term 'Renaissance' itself suggests that philosophy was dead until it was reborn *in Europe*. Much of the Islamic genealogy of European thought is only recently coming to light (Saliba 2007). For a long time, Western historians, when they acknowledged Islamic scholarship at all, claimed it only preserved Greek thought until Europeans could get their hands on it. But lately historians have been demonstrating that Islamic scholars critiqued and significantly developed Greek works, and also developed intellectual traditions independent of Greek philosophy, producing a specifically Islamic body of thought; and that these works were known, translated and taken up by European scholars. To decolonise European philosophy we need to rediscover its Islamic (and many other) origins. For Deleuzian thinkers, decolonising philosophy has the added benefit of historicising the philosophy of becoming.

The *ijtihad* of this chapter, then, requires a visit to Muslim Andalusia and Christian Spain. I will point out some concepts from Ibn Sînâ that, acknowledged or not, inform Deleuze's conceptions of the univocity of being, the virtual and becoming. We will learn how Ibn Sînâ's writings were translated in the twelfth century, against the backdrop of creative intercultural ferment, in what was to be the last major intellectual connection between Islamic and European thought. We will discover how the idea of race originated in fifteenth-century Spain as a canny power grab. And we will witness the violence with which Christian powers gouged the living Islamic heritage out of the nascent Europe.

The Rise of the Concept of Race in Christian Spain

How did a concept of race develop from religious difference? In the ancient period, the Latin word *Maurus* signified a native of Mauritania, a region corresponding to present-day Algeria and Morocco (*Oxford English Dictionary* (OED)). According to James Glick (2005: 185), in medieval Spain people of all religions perceived ethnicity in terms of religious affiliation. Though most usages of the word referred to dark skin, Spanish Christians used the word *moro* to speak of Muslims of any kind, regardless of skin colour and of what we now call ethnicity; Arabs, Berbers and former Christians who converted to Islam were all *moros*. (In contrast, *cristiano* signified a Romance speaker from the north of Spain.) Later, the word became a synonym for dark skin, as in an early English usage, 'Ther was no grace in the visage . . . Sche loketh forth as doth a Moor' (1390, OED). Yet usages of *moro* or, in English, Moor, indicate that the imprecision of the word confused writers; they needed to distinguish 'black Moors' and 'whyte Moors' (Boorde, *Introduction to Knowledge*, 1547; OED) and, in later years, to distinguish shades of skin colour further. Lithgow's *Travels* of 1632 mentions 'A Towne inhabited by Christians, Arabes, and Moores: not Black Moores, as the Affricans be, but . . . a kind of Egyptians'. In short, the word *moro* (and its variants in other European languages) evolved from a geographical term to one for religion to one that indicated skin colour, each connotation blurring with the others.

The word *race* originated in Spanish. Rarely used before the fifteenth century, the word *raza* was early used to connote the succession of generations. However, L. P. Harvey (2005: 7n4) argues that it originates from the medieval word *raça*, meaning 'defect': for example, in a bolt of cloth. Other scholars suggest that *raza* and *raça* have distinct origins but that, in the fifteenth century, *raza* took on the negative connotation of *raça* as a defect or fault (Wilson and Frederiksen 1995: 11). In practice, the word came to indicate the threat to the purity of blood posed by Jews and Muslims in Spain, which I will discuss later.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) attribute racism to the abstract machine of faciality, the particular configuration of subjectivation and signification that requires a face-like organisation. This organisation of power, they argue, arose with Christianity. I would suggest that the association of Christianity with faciality did not arise at year zero, as their chapter title indicates, but a couple of centuries later, after Christianity was established as a religion and possessed a figurative art. To historicise even more, the etymologies above suggest that, in medieval Spain, when

Muslims governed most of the peninsula, Christians did not yet seek to distinguish race, the visible sign of difference. Christians only invented the category of race when they began to compete with the Muslims for power. And then racism did indeed function as Deleuze and Guattari say it does, by 'propagat[ing] waves of sameness until those who resist identification have been wiped out' (1987: 178). When Muslims and Jews fell under Christian rule, their rulers forced them to convert and to abandon all signs of religious, cultural and linguistic difference. Yet, after imposing sameness on Muslims and Jews, the Christian rulers refused to consider the converts truly Christian – I must add, rightly so for the most part, for the converts developed elaborate strategies to pursue their religions invisibly. Racism, and the word *race*, arose in Spain when it was no longer possible to tell a person's religion from her or his appearance. Racism arose as a need to make visible a difference that was not visible.

Racism's cruelty, Deleuze and Guattari continue, 'is matched only by its incompetence and naïveté' – as Monty Python's Spanish Inquisition skits have demonstrated forensically. The elaborate hedging that characterises the usage of *raza* and 'Moor' bears this out, as did the Inquisitors' need to cast their eyes down from a man's face, where no sign of religious difference showed, to his penis. More on this later.

Thus, as the Spanish sought to distinguish their Christian whiteness from the non-Christians of the peninsula, the words that would come to indicate race seized up, became *facialised*. Philosophy too underwent a kind of coagulation as Christians adapted it, and finally cut it off, from its Islamic origins.

From Islamic Philosophy to Deleuze

In our present climate of 'clash of civilisations', few Westerners realise that philosophy from Iran and the Muslim world provided the spark that jump-started philosophy in the West. Yet the history of philosophy is very much a history of migrants and refugees; philosophy itself is a refugee. Philosophy in the Christian West had been almost moribund ever since the Emperor Justinian closed the School of Athens in 529. The Neoplatonist philosophers expelled from Athens sought refuge in Iran, where the Sasanian monarch Khosrow I endowed chairs in philosophy for them, as well as Zoroastrian magi, Nestorian Christian theologians and Jewish physicians (Lewis 2008: 20–1). Thus, before the advent of Islam, Iran provided a healthy environment for philosophy. Then, just over a century after Mohammed's *hijra*, the 'Abbasid Caliphate,

founded in Baghdad in 750, sponsored a full-fledged intellectual renaissance, an enormously productive movement of translation and new creation of philosophy, science, mathematics, poetry and art. In ensuing centuries, a vast and varied philosophical tradition developed throughout the Muslim world from India to Andalusia, intertwining Greek thought, Islamic rationalist theology, Isma'ili thought, Sufi mysticism and many other strands.

In examining how Arabic philosophy was translated in medieval Spain, and thence became thoroughly braided into European thought, I seek to identify elements that ultimately inform Deleuze's thought. Surveying the history of philosophy with an eye to influences is a demanding *ijtihad*. Many Deleuzians lack the thorough steeping in philosophy that Deleuze stated was necessary to understand his own work. Yes, some of the concepts at work in contemporary philosophy have a three-thousand-year history, though this does not mean that all philosophy is a set of footnotes to Plato or Aristotle – in fact, some of it is a set of footnotes to Ibn Sînâ. In this chapter, in tracing historical connections from Ibn Sînâ to Duns Scotus, and from them, mostly via Leibniz, Spinoza and Whitehead, to Deleuze, I seize what are actually the most obvious points to unfold. The presence of Ibn Sînâ's thought in Deleuze is relatively easy to discover, for he was the magister, influencing almost every strain of Islamic and Western medieval thought, even though little of this influence is acknowledged in the West now.

There remain many other connections to explore, a few of which I examine in *Enfoldment and Infinity* (Marks 2010). For example, a little more digging may ascertain whether and what links exist from the tenth-century experimental and theoretical optics of Ibn al-Haytham to Henri Bergson's theories of perception and memory and from Bergson to Deleuze (Marks 2010: 62–5). Other research might yield a deep history of the Hermetic tradition, the secret and unofficial underside of official thought that informs Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor science. We might trace the transmission of Isma'ili Shi'ite ideas of the secret, alchemy (ibid.: 244–6), and cryptography from the Arabic science of letters (*'ilm al-hurûf*) through intermediaries such as the Majorcan philosopher and missionary Raimón Llull to Leibniz (Cramer 2005; Link 2010; Zielinski 2006) and from Leibniz to Deleuze.¹ The more minor the tradition, the more enfolded its influence.²

Ibn Sînâ's Legacy in Deleuze

Often one can discover parallels between Islamic and Western philosophy, although a clear path of influence cannot be asserted. But sometimes the path of transmission itself is discernible. In the case of Ibn Sînâ, we can retrace the path quite well, for much of his work was translated into Latin in Spain in the twelfth century. Ibn Sînâ's writings distilled almost all the major currents of Arabic philosophy: Peripatetic philosophy both Aristotelian and Platonic, Islamic Neoplatonism, Islamic rationalist theology, Sufism and elements of Isma'ili Shi'ite thought. His thought was diffused throughout the Muslim world, where, as late as the eighteenth century, philosophers were creating new concepts based on Ibn Sînâ's body of work. His metaphysics, logic and psychology also had an enormous impact on medieval European philosophy and comprise some of the occulted sources of Deleuze's philosophy.

Kalâm theologians of the eighth to tenth centuries developed an ontology of radical contingency in which essence is fundamental and existence must be caused. They posited that the most broadly applicable category in reality is the thing (*shay'*), which in turn divides into existent (*mawjûd*) things and non-existent (*ma'dum*) things. All of these can be placed in relation to a predicate, the most universal subject: God. God commands a thing to exist, or not. This gave God, in *kalâm* theology, perfect freedom, including the freedom to make the universe disappear. Yet at the same time, Islamic philosophers in the Greek tradition wanted to incorporate the Aristotelian conception of causality, with God as the First Mover, in order to support both the monotheistic doctrine of creation and the assumption of a stable universe necessary for scientific inquiry.

Ibn Sînâ's entirely innovative ontology in the *Metaphysics* of his compendium *Al-Shifâ'* (the Healing) brought these currents together. It stabilised the radical contingency of *kalâm* theology by synthesising it with Aristotelian causality, as well as the emanationist cosmology of Neoplatonism. Ibn Sînâ shifted the emphasis from the *kalâm* theologians' distinction between thing and existent to the distinction between essence (*mâhiyya*, whatness) and existence (*wujûd*). In this he also adapted Aristotle's distinction between essence, what a thing is, and existence, whether it exists. But he modified Aristotle's First Cause, making it ontological rather than temporal: creation results from causal, not temporal ultimacy (Goodman 1992).

Being, Ibn Sînâ argued, applies to all entities, existence to actualities that have been realised. Everything that is contingent must be caused

by something else, except for the one being that is necessary in virtue of itself, God. God is the one predicate. Every other being is either necessary in virtue of another – that is, it is caused, and therefore necessarily exists – or possible in itself. Thus he innovated three categories of being: the necessary of existence in itself (*wâjib al-wujûd bi-dhâtihi*); the necessary of existence through another (*wâjib al-wujûd bi-ghayrihi*) and the possible of existence in itself (*mumkin al-wujûd bi-dhâtihi*). God's essence and God's existence are identical, while for other beings, existence is accidental to essence. Considered in itself, each effect is radically contingent (Wisnovsky 2000). As the seventeenth-century Iranian philosopher Mullâ Sadrâ Shîrâzî summarised, for Ibn Sînâ 'an essence is in itself indifferent toward existence or non-existence' (Janssens 2006: 3). In rejecting the pre-existence of essences, Ibn Sînâ threw out both Platonic essences and Aristotelian categories: being is precategorical. This is Ibn Sînâ's doctrine of the *ontological indifference of essence* (Gilson 2002: Chapter 4), or the univocity of being. As Robert Wisnovsky writes (2000: 115), this was a concept 'made almost from scratch, using materials that were still quite raw in the year 1000'.

This doctrine informs the *Logic*, the first book of *The Healing*, in which Ibn Sînâ wrote that essences of things (*mâhiyyât al-ashyâ'*) have three aspects: neither concrete nor mental existence; concrete, extramental existent; and mental existent. Using the example of 'horse', Ibn Sînâ asserted that, first, it exists in itself, without any relation to either concrete or mental objects (equinity); second, it exists as actualised essence, existent in the real world (this horse); third, it exists in the mind (idea of equinity). Equinity is the horse's nature, but it is not a horse's nature to exist; I can think of a horse even when no horse exists. This tripartite concept gives essence a remarkable liberty, for it is 'indifferent' to existents, concrete or mental, indifferent to both singularity and universality.³

The Scholastics Roger Bacon, Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus, among others, adopted Ibn Sînâ's three categories of existence, clearly attributing them to him. They termed them *esse proprium* (nature as just in itself: for example, equinity as such, also known as common nature), *esse essentiae* (nature as existent in thought: for example, the idea of equinity) and *esse existentiae* (nature as existent in the world: for example, this horse). John Duns Scotus made an important modification to Ibn Sînâ's three categories of being. In Book II of the *Ordinatio*, compiled shortly before his death in 1308, Scotus argued that *esse proprium* or common nature, indifferent to individual existence as it is, can only exist in particular things. Common nature individuates, 'contracts', according to a principle of individuation Scotus called

haecceitas, 'thisness'. This concept, as we know, became indispensable to Deleuze. This horse has a grey patch on its left jawbone and a fear of children in ponytails. The concept of haecceity celebrates the mercurial power of individuation, the unpredictable arrival of newness in the world. Each thing possesses a degree of liberty of becoming, and in its haecceity it thumbs its nose at Platonic forms and Aristotelian species. Though it is Scotus's innovation, the concept of *haecceitas* is deeply indebted to Ibn Sînâ's categories.

Now we can identify a number of clear antecedents in Ibn Sînâ for some of Deleuze's most important concepts.

The univocity of being

The clearest resonance of Ibn Sînâ's thought in that of Deleuze is the concept of the univocity of being. As we have seen, it derives, via Duns Scotus, from Ibn Sînâ's doctrine of the *ontological indifference of essence*, which arises from the category of necessary of existence in itself. In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze wrote:

There has only ever been one ontological proposition: Being is univocal. There has only ever been one ontology, that of Duns Scotus, which gave being a single voice. We say Duns Scotus because he was the one who elevated univocal being to the highest point of subtlety, albeit at the price of abstraction. However, from Parmenides to Heidegger it is the same voice that is taken up, in an echo which itself forms the whole deployment of the univocal. A single voice raises the clamour of being. (1994: 35)

From Parmenides to Heidegger . . . but with a significant stop in eleventh-century Bukhara. Deleuze attributes the univocity of being here to Duns Scotus but, as we have seen, the latter drew it directly from Ibn Sînâ. Deleuze's next sentences, 'We have no difficulty in understanding that Being, even if it is absolutely common, is nevertheless not a genus. It is enough to replace the model of judgement with that of the proposition,' directly paraphrase Ibn Sînâ's propositional logic.

In *The Logic of Sense* Deleuze acknowledges Ibn Sînâ's doctrine of the ontological indifference of essence and the categories essence in itself, essence as a mental object, and essence in actual existents, which he takes from Étienne Gilson's 1948 *L'Être et l'essence* (2002). Having converted the concept *essence* to *sense*, and again echoing Ibn Sînâ's propositional logic, Deleuze plays Ibn Sînâ off Lewis Carroll to demonstrate that sense is independent of the modality of the proposition, as Ibn Sînâ demonstrated that essence is indifferent to existence.

It . . . behooves the event to be cited by the proposition as future, but it behooves the proposition no less to cite the event as past . . . Carroll asks the reader to guess whether he composed the verses of the gardener's song in accordance with the events, or the events in accordance with the verses.

The importance of this simultaneity for Deleuze is to demonstrate the 'splendid sterility or neutrality' of essence in itself, indifferent to universal and singular, to affirmation and negation, indeed to all opposites: 'Is it, then, the status of the pure event . . . to surmount all the oppositions in this way?' (1990: 34–5).

The virtual

We are beginning to see relationships between Ibn Sînâ's innovative distinction between necessary, contingent and possible being, and Deleuze's Bergsonian concept of the virtual. Discussing their relationship, I have proposed this synthesis: 'The virtual . . . is the field of all nonexistents; it is the necessary being from which every being either arises or does not arise' (Marks 2010: 14). Ibn Sînâ's metaphysics permits the existence of non-being, a concept he gained from the Stoics via Plotinus. The Stoics' criticism of Aristotle stated that the broadest category is not being but being *and* non-being, subsumed in the Stoic category 'the something', entities, including all that are or are not but can be spoken of (Goodman 1992: 69).⁴ The category of 'the something' thus includes both virtual and actual beings (a concept that informed both Spinoza's *Ethics* and Deleuze). Plotinus, whose philosophy was foundational to Islamic Neoplatonism, adopted the Stoic approach in his critique of Aristotle. Ibn Sînâ in turn adapted the Islamic Neoplatonist conception of a One that contains both being and non-being to his concept of the Necessary Existent.

Here lies the Ibn Sînian origin of Deleuze's famous 'clamour of being' (1994: 35): Being is full existence that is not actualised. Being is greater than existence, for we can conceive of the being of things that do not exist. Existence or actuality is the tip of the iceberg of essence or virtuality.

However, Ibn Sînâ's category of the necessary of existence through another states that what is caused must exist. In this, as Goodman (1992) notes, he fell into Aristotle's trap of thinking that whatever is truly possible will become actual. Non-being exists, but impossible objects do not. Thus the main difference between Ibn Sînâ's necessary being and Deleuze's virtual is that the latter's concept of the virtual is vaster – more infinite, we can say precisely – because it encompasses the impossible.

In the section of *The Logic of Sense* discussed above, Deleuze critiques Ibn Sînâ by converting the concept *being* to the concept *sense*. He argues with Ibn Sînâ for a fourth category: not only the necessary of being in itself, the necessary of being through another and the possible of being in itself, but also the *impossible* of being.

Impossible objects – square circles, matter without extension, *perpetuum mobile*, mountain without valley, etc. – are objects ‘without a home,’ outside of being, but they have a precise and distinct position within this outside: they are of ‘extra being’ – pure, ideational events, unable to be realized in a state of affairs . . . If we distinguish two sorts of beings, the being of the real as the matter of denotations and the being of the possible as the form of significations, we must yet add this extra-being which defines a minimum common to the real, the possible *and the impossible*. (1990: 35)

A square circle is impossible, but it has a sense. As Paul Bains writes, ‘For Deleuze it is the univocity of being that allows it to escape the circle of the proposition’ (2006: 68). This is the sole correction needed to make Ibn Sînâ’s first category of being identical to Deleuze’s category of the virtual. In fact, al-Ghazâlî (whose work was translated under the Latinisation Algazel) already argued with Ibn Sînâ that not everything possible is actual. Moses Maimonides developed this argument, and then Leibniz, who offered it to Deleuze. Thus, to some degree, Deleuze is taking up al-Ghazâlî’s critique of Ibn Sînâ. All these corrections, each of which expands the powers of the virtual, augment Ibn Sînâ’s utterly foundational designation of a Being teeming with virtuality.

Becoming and the univocity of being

A Neoplatonist thread runs from Plotinus to Ibn Sînâ’s thought, all the way to Leibniz and Deleuze. The Neoplatonist element introduces a problem into the genealogy above, because it plays up the quality of becoming yet undermines the freedom of the virtual. As I mentioned, Ibn Sînâ’s Necessary Existent borrow some characteristics of Plotinus’ One. In turn, the way existing entities differentiate in Ibn Sînâ echoes Plotinus’ insistence that all beings have in common that they differentiate from the One and seek to return to it. Lenn Goodman writes:

To be sure, Aristotle was right that there is no common trait that all beings share in sheerly by the fact that they are beings. But, as Plotinus saw, the very fact of differentiation from absolute unity, the attempt at self-affirmation and turning back toward the unity of the One, are in a way something that all beings have in common, not in *how* they interpret the

possibilities of existence, but in the fact that each being and kind *does* in its own way interpret these possibilities. (1992: 69–70)

For Plotinus, the history of a being equals its struggle to realise its potential. It is clear how welcome this idea was to Islamic religious thought, for it animates the beautiful metaphors of worldly striving to become the mirror of God that informed Islamic Neoplatonism and Illuminationism. The concept of *ijtihad* also relates to this self-struggle. This concept of a thing’s perfectibility also informed Spinoza’s *Ethics* (Goodman 1992: 71), and it models Deleuze’s category of becoming. It sounds as if all these conceptions of perfectibility involve a reabsorption into a One.

Yet the immanence of Ibn Sînâ’s concept of Being makes the crucial difference. Ibn Sînâ’s ultimate Being is not prior to being, as in Plotinus and Plato; it is being, being *in process*. Thus Parviz Morewedge (1992) argues that the conception that process is fundamental reality originates in Ibn Sînâ’s concept of being.⁵ Morewedge quotes this passage: ‘In their natures, entities are disjunctively “many” in process of passage into conjunctive unity. This Category of Ultimate replaces Aristotle’s category of “primary substance”’ (1992: 62). The source is not Ibn Sînâ, nor a Neoplatonist or Sufi thinker, but Alfred North Whitehead’s *Process and Reality* (1978), characterising concrescence or creative coming-together.

To what degree does Ibn Sînâ’s being differentiate without regard for a teleological return? In its Neoplatonist aspect, Ibn Sînâ’s divinely driven becoming appears teleological, for the purpose of each entity is to become more like God. But the immanence of Ibn Sînâ’s being and its propositional nature seems to allow entities creative freedom – as much creative freedom as God has, but not more. As Goodman writes, ‘Ibn Sînâ does not explain how God’s wisdom leaves room for real alternatives, a question taken up by Ghazâlî, Maimonides, and Leibniz, and in our own [twentieth] century by Bergson and Whitehead.’ Yet ‘not until Spinoza was a more adequate way found than the Neoplatonism relied on by Avicenna for integrating particulars with the wholeness of God’ (1992: 95–6). Goodman points out that it remains a question whether the conception that things might have been different from how they are can work without creation as their cause. Leibniz (taking up, as we saw, the argument of al Ghazâlî, who in turn developed Maimonides, who drew on Ibn Sînâ) still needed a creationist model to ensure that this is the best of all possible worlds.

A more fluid concept of becoming lies in Ibn Sînâ’s *Physics*, Chapters 10 to 13 of *The Healing*. There Ibn Sînâ distinguishes two notions of motion: a mental notion, grasping the totality of motion from beginning

to end point; and a notion of the intermediary state between the two points, which, existing in reality, constitutes motion proper. His entirely new emphasis on motion as 'situs' (position) and objective existence of time, Jules Janssens writes, means that time 'defined as a continuum produced by the passing of the "flowing now"'. But mentally, time is still infinitely divisible, so 'now' presents itself as a limit: a concept of flowing-now that produces real time (Janssens 2006: 12–13). Ibn Sînâ's account of time thus uncannily anticipates Bergson's; however, I cannot demonstrate a direct line of influence.

Deleuze is not a Platonist – because Ibn Sînâ wasn't

Deleuze has been slammed as a closet transcendentalist and Platonist, in particular by Alain Badiou, who, in *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being* (2000), criticises Deleuze for privileging an ultimate unity that transcends differences. Badiou argues that, with the concept of the univocity of being (which we now know to come from Ibn Sînâ), Deleuze did not 'reverse Platonism' as he intended but reaffirmed it: the univocity of being results in 'a single clamor of Being for all beings'. Badiou argues that the virtual / actual pair posits the virtual as a Platonic One, of which the actual is a kind of simulacrum. Thus, he concludes, Deleuze's virtual remains transcendent. Others have made similar charges. Peter Hallward (1997) argues that Deleuze's Real is merely the self-differentiation of the Plotinian One. The Neoplatonist ring of this resonates further in Hallward's comparison of Deleuze to the Illuminationist philosophy of al-Suhrawardî (1997: 18).

But the study of Deleuze's antecedents provides a much more nuanced view. The above discussion of Neoplatonist tendencies in Ibn Sînâ might seem to confirm Badiou's critique, but it does not precisely because Ibn Sînâ synthesised Neoplatonism with the very different cosmologies of *kalâm* theology and Aristotle. The Aristotelian element is obvious to readers of medieval philosophy such as Nathan Widder (2001), who refutes Badiou by demonstrating that the univocity of being is not a Platonic doctrine but an Aristotelian one refined by Duns Scotus. 'Univocity is hardly concerned with establishing a unity among differences, but rather with linking differences *through their difference*' (Widder 2001: 438). Unfortunately, Widder drops the essential link between Aristotle and Scotus that Ibn Sînâ created. But further exploration into the Arabic sources of univocity shows its debt to Ibn Sînâ's synthesis of Aristotle and Islamic thought, as I have shown, with particular elements of Neoplatonism. Regarding this last, it is helpful to keep in mind that, while in Plato and in the Neoplatonism of Plotinus, the One

is/outside being and knowledge, for Ibn Sînâ the source of being, the Necessary Existent, is *immanent*: a category of being within being (see Morewedge 1992: 60; Owens 1992: 44). All this does not quite put Badiou's critique to rest, but it invites Deleuzians to examine deeper the non-Platonist sources in Islamic thought.

Because of the racialising politics that caused Europe to turn its back on its Islamic heritage, Ibn Sînâ's ideas continued to develop differently in the West and the Muslim world. While Ibn Sînâ's writings were being translated in Spain, disseminated in Europe, tinkered with and absorbed so completely that their origins were forgotten, philosophers in the Muslim world, especially in Iran, India and Ottoman Asia Minor, continued debating and refining them (Gutas 2002). Mullâ Sadrâ in particular seems to have developed Ibn Sînâ's thought in a direction similar to that taken by Deleuze. A monist and radical existentialist and one of the most influential early modern Islamic thinkers, Mullâ Sadrâ argued that God is devoid of essence. Existence is ontologically prior, dynamic and in flux; existence is a principle of *individuation* (*tashakkkhus*) and, in turn, things are *modulations* of the singular reality that is existence. Essences, Mullâ Sadrâ wrote, citing the mystic Ibn al-'Arabî, 'have never smelt the fragrance of being' (Rizvi 2005). We can hear the Neoplatonist and mystical elements in Mullâ Sadrâ's monism, but this concept of the universe as non-deterministic, dynamically individuating system resonates strongly with Bergson, Whitehead, Simondon and Deleuze.

More knowledge of philosophy in the Muslim world since Ibn Sînâ would shed light on the limits of Deleuze's non-Neoplatonism and find new meeting points between the thought of the two philosophers. It seems to me that this is a good time to rebuild the highway between the philosophy of the Muslim world and the West, which thinned to a skinny path after the twelfth century and then sank away altogether.

The Iberian Peninsula in the Twelfth Century

Ibn Sînâ's work, and that of other thinkers writing in Arabic, passed selectively into the West through a very narrow bottleneck: most were translated into Latin in Toledo in the twelfth century. Those translations were carried out against a background of enormous cultural and political foment. We need some sense of the rich centuries of mutual influence and intercultural collaboration in the Iberian Peninsula, first under the Islamic caliphates, sultanates and *taifa* states (a very long period, 756–1492), and second (overlapping the first), in the emergent culture of Castilian Spain, beginning in 1085 and concluding in 1516.

In the early eighth century, Visigoths, recent Christian converts, occupied the Iberian Peninsula. By most accounts, Visigoth government was sporadic, so in 711 it was easy for Berbers from North Africa to conquer large areas of the peninsula. In 756, Abd al-Rahman, the only one of the Umayyads of Damascus to have survived the massacre that established the 'Abbasid caliphate, arrived in Andalusia. He established a new Umayyad caliphate with its court in Córdoba. During the three hundred years of Umayyad rule, the population began to grow and Andalusia became prosperous. Some Christians fled north, while others converted to Islam. The Islamic culture of Andalusia thrived, its achievements in governance, agriculture, science, urbanism, poetry, philosophy and art utterly dazzling the Christians across the Pyrenees. Andalusians adopted Arab irrigation methods and drought-resistant crops, some of these learned from Indian agriculturists (Glick 2005: 68–9). The caliphate sponsored philosophy, literature, music and all the courtly arts. Muslim artisans practised the fine arts and crafts of the East, including ceramics, textiles, metalwork, bookbinding, leatherwork and ivory carving, becoming a centre for the export of luxury goods to the Church and nobility northward and well beyond the Pyrenees. These crafts kindled desires among Christians to the north and dominated the economy accordingly. In the tenth century, a finely worked saddle of Cordovan leather cost more than the horse, and a saddle could be traded for a mill (ibid.: 132–3).

In calling this culture Islamic, I include the Jewish and Mozarab or Arabic-speaking Christian people (from *mustarib*, made-Arab) of the Iberian peninsula who lived under Islamic governments. According to Islamic law, monotheistic 'people of the book' who live in Muslim-controlled lands were protected (*dhimmi*) by the Muslim rulers. In Andalusian towns, Christians lived among Muslims, while Jews, no strangers to persecution, lived in walled quarters with gates. Muslims and Jews participated vigorously in the secular high culture, Mozarab Christians less so. The public language of all Andalusians, Muslim, Christian and Jew, was Arabic.

After three centuries of Umayyad-ruled Andalusia, however, power relations became more fraught. Two successive invasions from North Africa, the Almoravids in 1056 and the Almohads in 1130, broke up Umayyad unity. Christian rulers to the north gained power and territory at the same time. Loyalties fell along lines of power and protection, not religion: established Muslim rulers formed alliances with Christian kings against the invading North African Muslims, while Christian rulers fought among themselves for territory. In 1085 Alfonso VI, the

Christian ruler of Castile and León, captured Toledo; in the next two centuries Christians won other battles, until Spain became a checkerboard of Muslim political enclaves (*taifas*) and Christian-ruled regions. The emirate of Granada remained as the only Muslim-ruled territory in Spain until its demise in 1492.

Yet during these centuries, Islamic culture and trade continued to dominate the peninsular landscape. In the eleventh century, Muslim *taifas* paid tribute to Christian rulers, who promptly reinvested it by purchasing Muslim-made luxury goods (Glick 2005: 132–3). Even when Christians were officially crusading against Muslims in Spain, Christian relics were wrapped in luxury silks from Andalusia woven with Arabic blessings (O'Neill 1994).

Andalusia's role in the history of cosmopolitanism is fundamental. Between 756 and 1492, Andalusia was a 'first-rate' place, María Rosa Menocal writes, borrowing an idea from an author dear to Deleuze, F. Scott Fitzgerald, because it was 'capable of accepting that contradictions – within oneself, as well as within one's culture – could be positive and productive' (2002: 11). Andalusia produced multiplicities and thrived with a rhizomatic hardiness. Popular accounts of medieval Andalusia, such as Menocal's, usually refer to it as an idyllic period of free cultural mingling, with Christians, Muslims and Jews 'working side by side' in construction, crafts and translation. Scholarly evidence suggests, however, that these groups interacted with a great deal of negotiation, mutual suspicion and occasional violence, and when they worked together it was for perceived mutual benefit. Yet through these opportunistic local alliances, language, religion and art in Andalusia became irretrievably hybrid.

Thus, when the Christian monarchs of the north sought to conquer Andalusia, and to consolidate it as a Roman Catholic state under Castilian rule, they faced an inextricably mixed culture. As Menocal argues, the idea of Spanish, or specifically Castilian, identity had to be manufactured. And the need to subsume the lively, writhing creature of Andalusian culture surely fuelled Christian racism in Deleuze and Guattari's sense of incorporating or obliterating difference.

The Translation Movement: Reterritorialising Islamic Knowledge

After Alfonso conquered Toledo, the city became the twelfth-century world's centre of translation. Scholastic clerics travelled from afar to take part in the hothouse of intellectual activity. Refugees from the

Almohad-occupied south, especially Jews who fled persecution, further enriched Toledo's culture and translation activity. Christians recognised that they urgently needed Islamic knowledge, but they also had to neutralise its Islamicness. Yet to do so, they needed to immerse themselves in Islamic thought and work intimately with Muslim collaborators. Thus the translation movement incurred an Islamic deterritorialisation of Christian thought and Christian submission to Islamic culture before the Christian scholars could reterritorialise Islamic thought.

The major tradition of translation was most keenly focused on Islamic science, mathematics and agriculture. Church fathers also commissioned a number of apologetics that would help Christian readers understand Islam, the purpose being to arm them to convince Muslims of the error of their religion. Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, argued that the polemic with Islam should be carried out intellectually (in opposition to the bellicose Crusade-flogger Bernard of Clairvaux). Thus, in 1142, Peter sought a translator for the Qur'an, to provide Christian theologians with a 'true account of Law of the Saracens and their prophet Mohammed's life'. He found Robert of Ketton, translator of the mathematics of Al-Khwarizmî. Robert worked with Peter of Poitiers, a Mozarab identified as Patrus Toletanus, and a 'Saracen' named Mohammed. This was a very free translation, incorporating commentary and explanations from recent exegesis that reflected local Muslims' current understanding of the Qur'an, and addressing a Christian readership. Known as *Lex Mahumet pseudoprophete*, the translation was a 'medieval best-seller'; there exist twenty-five extant manuscripts and two sixteenth-century printed versions (Burman 1998: 704; Menocal, et al. 2008: 202–3). This popular book thus paradoxically compelled Christians seeking to discredit Islam to absorb it as a living tradition.

Most translators worked as teams, relying on the Castilian spoken language as intermediary. Menocal (2002) emphasises that the translation movement could only have happened in the context of Castilian Spain, for Castilian was the shared language of Mozarabs, Jews and Mudejars (Muslims under Christian rule). An Arabic speaker would translate orally from Arabic to the Romance vernacular; another person would translate from the vernacular to Latin; and a third, usually the credited translator, would write down the Latin version.

Most of the collaborators' names are not known, but two accounts state that Ibn Sînâ's *De Anima* was translated word for word from Arabic to the local Romance vernacular by an intermediary, the Mozarab Johannes Hispalense (simply, John of Spain) and then into Latin by Domingo González (Dominicus Gundissalinus). Abraham Ibn

Da'ud (Avendauth), a Jewish philosopher who fled from Córdoba to Toledo to escape Almohad persecution and who would have known both Arabic and Romance, also worked with Gundissalinus on the translation (Menocal et al. 2008: 206). Gundissalinus 'and an unknown collaborator' also translated Ibn Sînâ's *Metaphysics* (Burnett 2005: 395).

In short, the translation movement exposed Christian scholars to Muslim influence even as the translation movement tended to elide the contributions of all but the Latin scholars. This, and the Latinisation of Arabic names, were first steps in the European reterritorialisation, the Christian *whitewashing*, of received Islamic thought. Yet the European Renaissance would never have occurred without these sources in Islamic philosophy written in Arabic.

Ethnic Cleansing and the Birth of Racism in Spain

The Andalusian creative coexistence was made possible, in large measure, by Islamic law, which protects – in principle and, under the Umayyad caliphate in Andalusia, in practice – all non-Muslim 'people of the book'. The *dhimmi* paid higher taxes, were not permitted to marry Muslims and in other ways were reminded of their minority status, but protection was written into the law. The Christian monarchs of Spain had a similar practice but based on civil not religious law, and thus open to revision and renegeing (Harvey 2005: 29). This is one reason why the fates of Muslims and Jews declined so precipitously as Christian monarchs gradually conquered Muslim-held territories.

In 1492, the army of the Castilian monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella defeated the last Islamic caliphate, the Nasrids, in Granada. That same fateful year, Columbus carried out the monarchs' mission to find a new sea route to India, and Ferdinand and Isabella forced all Jews of Spain either to convert or to be expelled. As a people without a nation to rally behind them, Jews were particularly vulnerable; already England, France, Scotland, Sweden and other countries had expelled them (Harvey 2005: 17). Probably because of the strength of Muslim nations that could rally to Andalusian Muslims' aid, Ferdinand promised, in the 1492 terms of surrender, that Muslims would be allowed to continue to worship.⁶ But the Church in Spain quickly reversed this promise. On the excuse of a Muslim revolt in 1499, Archbishop Cisneros overturned the terms of the 1492 peace and declared that all Muslims, like Jews, must either convert, be expelled or be sold into slavery. Some Muslim administrators and businessmen made deals with the Castilian government to

convert and keep their positions. From 1500 to 1502, rural Muslims revolted against the conversion decree, and the Castilians besieged and bombarded their villages, massacring residents, and in one case blowing up a mosque in which 600 women and children took refuge. Some Muslims were able to buy back their confiscated property at a punishingly high price; if not, they had no recourse but to become slaves when their property was confiscated (ibid.: 34–42).

In the decades that followed, race and religion operated as covers for the economic exploitation of Muslims, as of Jews. The state gradually criminalised every aspect of Muslim culture and disenfranchised Muslims of their property. Christians moved into villages that Muslims had evacuated. They took over farms and artisanal works. Interestingly, after 1501, an *anti-emigration* policy took hold, apparently because the state needed Muslim converts – Moriscos, ‘little Moors’ – as a tax base, source of cheap labour and source of expertise in all kind of manufacture. A rash of detailed laws listed all the things that were now forbidden, as a result accurately describing Muslim practices: from halal meat to decorating one’s skin with henna to bathing on Fridays (to prevent secret worship in clandestine mosques) and Sundays (to prevent Moriscos from secretly enacting Muslim devotions while attending church). Over the ensuing century, Muslim ways went deep underground.

In 1504, the conquered Muslims of Spain received a deeply compassionate message from a mufti in Oran, Algeria. The ‘Oran fatwa’ allowed Muslims to practise their religion in secret through dissimulation (*taqiyya*), and gave them detailed suggestions as to how to go about it. Christians would test Muslim converts’ sincerity by forcing them to drink wine and eat pork, practise usury, and marry their daughters to Christians; the Oran fatwa advises to do the deed but ‘Reject it in your heart’ (Harvey 2005: 63). In these and many ways, the Spanish Muslims learned to be crypto-Muslims. Appearing to erase their differences in accordance with Christian facialisation, Muslims enfolded their religious and cultural ways so deeply as to become imperceptible.

In 1449, the government of Toledo declared the infamous doctrine of *limpieza di sangre*, ‘purity of blood’, meant to distinguish the so-called New Christians – Jews who had converted but now offensively called *marranos*, pigs – and the Muslims who had converted (Moriscos, Mudejars), from the ‘Old Christians’, who had supposedly never intermingled and descended straight from the Visigoths. Pope Nicholas V rejected this new statute because it made religious conversion impossible. In fact, the goal was not religious but political: to keep power in Catholic hands by keeping Jews and Muslims out of public office. And

‘purity of blood’ was an impossible proposition – the beginning of the absurdity of modern racism. The people of the Iberian Peninsula had intermingled for centuries; in fact, Muslims had been encouraged by their religion to marry Christian and Jewish women, while Christians had converted to Islam to obtain access to power. Many Muslims were descendants of Christians who had converted. Many other minorities inhabited the peninsula: Arabs, Berbers, people of Gothic and Roman descent, black Africans and so on. It was impossible to detect a person’s ‘race’ by skin colour or facial features alone – which is why the Inquisition had to resort to examining men’s foreskins (Harvey 2005: 7–9).

In a fantasy of ethnic purity, the Castilians disingenuously but famously called their war on the Muslims the *Reconquista*. ‘Reconquest’ suggests a return to Visigothic times, an impossible and surely undesirable disentangling of the rich cultural weave of Andalusia. Instead, the emergent Christian Spain of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries absorbed the best of its Jewish and Muslim heritage, while its rulers sanctioned massacre, relocation and deportation of Jews and Muslims.⁷

Conclusion

Between 1609 and 1614, Spain expelled all remaining Muslims under brutal conditions. More than a hundred thousand Muslims died either resisting expulsion, during their passage by land or sea, or at the hands of fellow Muslims when they landed in North Africa (Majid 2009: 40). Spain was at last ethnically ‘clean’ – though the Spanish and Portuguese were required to prove the purity of their blood for centuries to come. Fraternities, religious orders, military orders and other organisations wrote into their statutes rules that postulants had to submit to an inquiry into their ancestry. Of course, this was open to abuse. In 1618, an official remarked that

to be regarded as of noble or pure blood, you needed either to have no enemies or to be rich enough to buy false witnesses, or else to be of such obscure origin that nobody knew where you had come from; if you were completely unknown, you could pass for an Old Christian. (cited in Pérez 2005: 55)

The Inquisition gave Spaniards other worries too; the Edict of Faith listed heresies including possession of works of Judaism, Luther, Qur’anic texts, and after 1738, freemasonry. This last is provocative, given freemasonry’s crypto-heritage of Islamic hermetic traditions.

What remained of the Muslim and Jewish heritage of Castilian Spanish philosophy and culture would be mostly homogenised within Castilian culture; what could not be subsumed would be excluded. The 'first-rate' multiplicity of Andalusia's long period of brilliant cultural exchange gave way to repulsive ethnic violence, neurotic protestations of white Christian purity and a perverted version of Andalusian intellectual promise.

The ethnic cleansing of Muslims and Jews from Spain, and emergent Christian nations' expurgation of their Islamic intellectual roots, fashioned a rupture in what we have discovered to be otherwise been a continuity in philosophy. Even though Islamic philosophy passed selectively through the translation bottleneck of twelfth-century Toledo and Christian whitewashing, it forever shaped philosophical activity in Europe all the way to what we call 'French theory'. Dreaming that events might have gone another way, I imagine how rich modern philosophy might have been if West European and Islamic philosophies had maintained contact. If only Deleuze had been able to engage with the thought of Mullâ Sadrâ! If Leibniz had had direct intercourse with Isma'ili Shi'ite thought . . . Whitehead with *kalâm* theology . . . and Deleuzianism with contemporary Muslim scholars like Mohammed Arkoun. May these imaginings stimulate new becomings! For Deleuzians have exciting, productive acts of unfolding still in front of them, of unfolding the real connections with the rich history of Islamic thought, and to invent new ones.

Notes

1. Raimón Llull embodies the multiplicity of fifteenth-century Spain: he advocated for the expulsion or conversion of Jews, and he was also inspired by Islamic mysticism and translated the logic of the Sufi philosopher Al-Ghazâlî (Akasoy 2009: 128). He had a Muslim slave on whom he likely relied to learn some of the more closely guarded aspects of Islamic thought (see Vernet 1975).
2. Part of the problem seems to be a lack of communication between scholars of medieval and modern philosophy; the former are usually aware of at least some of the influence of Islamic philosophers, while the latter are not.
3. Joseph Owens (1992) argues that Ibn Sînâ's liberation of thought from a concrete object in the concept of mental existence constituted a radical break no less than the rupture between medieval and modern thought, though it would not be fully realised until Descartes.
4. It would be wonderful to know more about how Ibn Sînâ and other Islamic philosophers developed Stoic thought, especially given the latter's importance to Deleuze.
5. Other scholars argue that there is no evidence for a mystical or illuminationist strain in Ibn Sînâ's thought, as Morewedge claims: see Szpiech (2010) and Gutas (2002).

6. As L. P. Harvey (2005: 32) points out, this stipulation meant that an individual could follow his or her own judgment against the doctrine of the Church – then a controversy raging throughout Western Europe.
7. Jews had apparently fled or been forced into exile by the end of the fifteenth century. Yet, in fact, the Spanish Inquisition targeted crypto-Jews almost entirely, with very few of its prisoners accused of crypto-Islam. In the second half of the fifteenth century, the Inquisition charged twelve thousand Moriscos with apostasy, half in the thirty years before expulsion. But between 1615 and 1700, only 9 per cent of Inquisition judgments were against Moriscos. This suggests the Moriscos really did leave, while some Jews remained in Spain in disguise.

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