

Just Athens and Jerusalem? What about Banaras? Heroes, Nomads, and Bhaktas at the Cross-cultural Roads

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Contemporary Continental philosophy employs “ethnotropes” in its ethical critique of transcendental phenomenology. Ulysses, the Greek Hero, stands in for Edmund Husserl’s transcendental ego. Abraham, the Jewish Nomad, stands in for Jacques Derrida’s and Emanuel Levinas’s deconstructive subject. Ethical concerns arise when the transcendental ego is posited as the ground for all experience. The transcendental ego intends its world. The fulfillment of intention constitutes the metaphysics of presence. According to Derrida and Levinas, the other is reduced in the transcendental ego’s experience. The other becomes transparent to phenomenological intention. Transparency elides the space between self and other necessary for ethics. Husserl’s transcendental ego is in this way like the Greek Hero Ulysses who conquers all others, returning to Athens unaffected by an encounter with true alterity. Derrida and Levinas employ the Jewish Nomad to offset the violence of the Greek Hero. Unlike Ulysses, for whom all others are merely moments on a centripetal, not to mention violent and heroic, return to the homeland, Abraham never reaches the other, a point constitutive of return. This is the case because Abraham is always awaiting the arrival of the other. Abraham waits for the Messiah to come. Accordingly, Abraham is the ethnotrope for the deconstructive subject for whom the messianic establishes a permanent structure of absence. The messianic is intended as an ethical critique of the heroic. The deconstructive project falls short of its ethical intention. This is the case because the messianic remains tied to the metaphysics of presence. The other is still to come to presence. To complete the critique, a third ethnotrope is available, the Hindu Bhakta. According to the Hindu tradition of viraha bhakti, or love-in-separation, the Other (i.e., Krishna) is withdrawing from the presence of the Bhakta. This establishes the negative messianic. The ethical critique of Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology finds its full voice in Hinduism’s negative messianic. Not only is the other not present, the other isn’t even coming. Banaras’s Hindu Bhakta affords an ethnotropic resource with which to complete the ethical critique of Athens’s Greek Hero begun, yet left incomplete, by Jerusalem’s Jewish Nomad.

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The church father Tertullian once queried the relationship between two prominent centers of human culture in the ancient world, Athens and Jerusalem. His question concerned the relationship of reason to faith. Athens, ostensibly the birthplace of reason, presented a challenge to the traditions of faith emanating from the Promised

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Land, so-called. Remaining unresolved (Swinburne 1977, Craig 2008, Mackie 1983, Coyne 2016, Plantinga 2000), an iteration of Tertullian's question emerged in late twentieth- and early twenty-first century Continental philosophy. This iteration, however, replaced geographical considerations with literary ones: "What does Ulysses have to do with Abraham? And Abraham with Ulysses?" In Continental philosophy, Ulysses and Abraham are what I call, "ethnotropes." These ethnotropes, that is, the Greek Hero and the Jewish Nomad, serve as literary substitutes for the transcendental ego and the deconstructive subject, respectively. No longer an exclusively epistemological issue pertaining to reason and faith, this iteration considers claims regarding ontology as first philosophy and the ethical ramifications associated therewith. As we will see, the myopia affecting Tertullian's concerns continue to inform the Continental discussion.

The nature of the transcendental ego is fully articulated in the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl (1960), an extension of which may found in the ontology of Martin Heidegger (1988) and the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1997). The deconstructive subject (Critchley and Dews 1996), on the other hand, finds its characterization in the works of such authors as Jacques Derrida (1978), Emanuel Levinas (1998), Mark C. Taylor (1984), and John D. Caputo (2000). The latter is meant to be an ethical critique of the former. I do not believe it, or the authors promoting it, achieves its goal. The reason for the failure rests not in the ethically unimpeachable nature of the transcendental ego. Rather, the cultural and philosophical resources at the disposal of those suffering from Tertullian myopia are limited. If we expand our information search, we will see that there is another ethnotrope available to those who wish to displace the transcendental ego's imperious scope. While Athens and Jerusalem, and the associated Greek Hero and Jewish Nomad, provide material with which to think through the ethical relationship obtaining, or not, between the transcendental ego and its other, Banaras, and its Hindu Bhakta, affords a model with which a completed, ethical critique of Husserlian phenomenology may be achieved.¹

The literary theorist Erich Auerbach (1968) was perhaps the first to address the tension between Ulysses and Abraham. The former is well-known for his adventures abroad. Greek heroes travel to foreign lands to conquer and plunder, returning home enriched and edified. Centripetalism characterizes heroic adventures. Such adventures, however, turn out to be no adventure at all. As Auerbach would have us believe, there is no development to Ulysses's character. The Greek Hero remains the same throughout his many exploits abroad. The Jewish Nomad, on the other hand, never returns home. There is a centrifugal force to Abraham's journey. Always hoping to arrive, the Nomad ostensibly never returns or settles. Abraham is no Ulysses (Derrida 1995). To understand the distinction between Tertullian's query and its renaissance in recent Continental philosophy, we must consider what it is that enables the Hero to make the return trip and what it is that keeps the Nomad from such similar satisfaction.

The Continental iteration rests with a revisioning of that to which reason and faith pertain. Reason is ostensibly committed to a totalizing, universalizing discourse

¹For an extended discussion of the following, see Ellis 2013.

regarding that which can be known. Faith, on the other hand, is a discourse pertaining precisely to things unseen and unknowable. Levinas (1969) suggested that this distinction is one between totality and infinity. The question for Continental philosophy ultimately concerns the nature of alterity and the possibility of the ethical within the purview of transcendental phenomenology (Taylor 1987). It would seem that the ethical is impossible without another.

Husserl's phenomenology established the transcendental ego as the ground of all being and experience. The world exists as an object of egoic intention. Such intentions ontologically ground what would otherwise be perceived as a transcendent, mind-independent reality. Husserl notes in his, fittingly titled, *Cartesian Meditations*: "Anything belonging to the world, any spatiotemporal being, exists for me – that is to say, is accepted by me – in that I experience it, perceive it, remember it, think of it somehow, judge about it, value it, desire it, or the like" (1960, 21). This is transcendental idealism, a position which states that "the entire natural world, including human minds, is nothing but an intentional structure of transcendental consciousness" (Philipse 1995, 244). Husserl's ego thus exists in a certain solipsistic state: nothing is truly other for transcendental phenomenology. As it perhaps is with all idealisms, the nature of alterity does not find easy accommodation within Husserl's system. The metaphysics of presence, and its attending ontotheology, struggles with alterity and absence. How can one intend what one cannot intend, or, as Derrida put it, "an intention to renounce intention" (1997, 174)? According to the Continental authors, the other, in order to be other, must be something beyond the intentional horizon of the self. The other must be beyond, or without being (Marion 1995). The Greek Hero Ulysses, for whom all others are merely penultimate moments in an ultimate return to self, is the ethnotropic substitute for the transcendental ego. "The autonomy of consciousness," argues Levinas, "finds itself again in all its adventures, returning home to itself like Ulysses, who through all his peregrinations is only on the way to his native land" (1986, 346), noting elsewhere, "Intentionality remains an aspiration to be filled and fulfillment, the centripetal movement of a consciousness that coincides with itself, recovers, and rediscovers itself without aging, rests in self-certainty, confirms itself" (1998, 48). It is for this reason that Auerbach similarly notes, "on his [i.e., Ulysses's] return is exactly the same as when he left Ithaca" (1968, 17). Centripetal adventures cannot easily solve the riddle of the other.

Husserl's attempt to solve the riddle involves analogy. He recognizes that the other constitutes a certain blind spot within the constituting ego's intentional horizon, but this does not present a truly destabilizing presence. Transcendental egos understand other minds, and other beings, as analogues of self. Husserl claims, "the body over there, which is nevertheless apprehended as an animate organism, must have derived this sense by an *apperceptive transfer from my animate organism... the 'analogizing' apprehension of the body as another animate organism*" (1960, 130). Some suggest that Husserl's solution is no solution. Analogy cannot preserve alterity. "The ego is the same," Derrida argues, "The alterity or negativity interior to the ego, the interior difference, is but an appearance: an *illusion*" (1978, 93). It is precisely here where the ethical concern with phenomenology/ontotheology as first philosophy arises. Transcendental phenomenology simply cannot accommodate

transcendence. There are no others for Husserl's Greek Hero. "The struggle to refute transcendence in all its guises," Taylor notes, "culminates in the philosophy of the constructive subject developed by Hegel and elaborated by Husserl" (1987, 203). Levinas likens this struggle with alterity to an autoimmune disease: "Western philosophy coincides with the disclosure of the other where the other, in manifesting itself as a being, loses its alterity. From its infancy philosophy has been struck with a horror of the other that remains other – with an insurmountable allergy" (1986, 346). Allergic to alterity, philosophy – the very spirit of reason and the universal for Tertullian – attacks itself in its struggle to refute what may be ineradicable to its self, a point to which we return. For now, we see this same conservation of self in the work of Martin Heidegger. For Heidegger (1988), the other shows up in *Dasein*'s subjectivity as *mit-sein*, or being-with-the-other. The other is, in this regard, still a presence for the self. Heidegger's subject, like Husserl's, accommodates the other through its own structure. Heidegger's *Dasein* and Husserl's transcendental ego suffer not perturbation at the other's being, or lack thereof as the case may be. The Greek Hero either remains the same, as Auerbach contends, or is enriched by, according to Hans-Georg Gadamer, the other. We will return to the latter issue below. For now, we can note that the Jewish Nomad putatively affords an alternative.

Unlike Ulysses, Abraham never makes the return trip. This is the case because the conditions for the return never appear. In order for one to make the about face, one must come into the presence of the other. Alterity must become similarity. For Continental philosophy, this may never be the case. Levinas, for instance, notes, "to the myth of Ulysses returning to Ithaca, we wish to propose the story of Abraham who leaves his fatherland forever for a yet unknown land, and forbids his servant to even bring back his son to the point of departure" (1986, 348). Although remaining couched in a geographical idiom, the land remains unknown because the other remains unknown. Unknown land is promised land precisely because it is not here now. Promises, like hope, pertain to the future. Of significance for this discussion are the dynamics of this future other. According to the Continental conversation, a conversation remaining caught between Athens and Jerusalem, the unknown, the promised, pertains to something that has yet to arrive. This is the nature of the messianic. Taylor writes, "For Abraham, the Messiah has not yet come and hence human fulfillment is deferred and delayed. In the absence of the Messiah's presence, there is no *Parousia* here and now" (1987, 8). The messianic ostensibly disturbs the metaphysics of presence because the Messiah is present as currently absent.

The Jewish Nomad operates as the ethnotropic substitute for the deconstructive subject. Deconstructive subjectivities do not enjoy the plenitude of being (Critchley and Dews 1996). This need not mean that the specifically Jewish understanding of the messiah is determinative. For authors such as Derrida and Caputo, there is a notable distinction between the messianic and messianisms. Messianisms are historically and culturally contingent characterizations of a specific agent or event that will come to pass at a future present moment. Messianisms include not only the Jewish expectation of the arrival of the Jewish messiah, but also Christian understandings of a second coming of Christ, Muslim expectations of the arrival of the Mahdi, Buddhist expectations regarding Maitreya Buddha, and Hindu concerns regarding the arrival of Kalki. Perhaps a universal feature of the human imagination,

almost all communities throughout time and space have anticipated the arrival of a definitive event that would bring the present world history to a close. Some Continental philosophers propose for this reason that a distinction must be made between such historically constituted narratives and the (anti)structure of the messianic. Historical messianisms seemingly betray the ethical critique of transcendental phenomenology found within the messianic. As it is with Husserl's analogies and apperceptive transfers, and Heidegger's *mit-sein*, the messianic is intended to be a certain structure within transcendental subjectivity. The messianic ironically intends to destabilize the heroic intention. It is here where the dynamics of alterity become important. For Derrida, and others, the messianic announces that which is still to come to presence for the transcendental ego. The messianic announces that which is to arrive. "If the other is... what is not invented," argues Derrida, "the *initiative or deconstructive inventiveness* can only consist in opening, in uncloseting, destabilizing foreclosure structures so as to allow passage toward the other. But one does not make the other come, one lets it come by *preparing* for its *coming*" (1989, 60 emphasis added). Transcendental egos can only prepare for that which is to come. There is, in this regard, a difference between letting something come and letting something be. Things that are enjoy being present. Things that are yet to arrive are otherwise than being (Levinas 1998). All the same, the messianic harbors hope for a completed metaphysics of presence. There is, to be sure, "a certain messianic hope in the coming of the other" (Caputo 2000, 56). The messianic is intended to disrupt Husserl's analogy, preparing thereby a space for the ethical. Analogies, after all, subsume multiple others within one intentional horizon. In much the same way that the medieval Jewish philosopher Maimonides notes that God's essence is not our essence and it admits of no analogy, so too, all others escape the analogy. Jewish deconstruction (Caputo 1997, 2000) sees every other as wholly other. This is precisely what Derrida intends when he suggests that *tout autre est tout autre*: every other is (w)hol(l)y other. The Jewish Nomad is, for this reason, no Greek Hero: "Abraham, in remaining faithful to his singular love for every other, is never considered a hero" (Derrida 1995, 79).

Tertullian's question, with which we began our discussion, seemingly announces an antagonism. Athens, and its reason, and Jerusalem, and its faith, should not have anything to do with one another. That may be the case. For the present iteration of the concern as expressed through the ethnotropes of the Greek Hero and Jewish Nomad, it is not the case. The present concern has everything to do with the question pertaining to the ethical responsibility Husserl's transcendental ego and Derrida's deconstructive subject have towards alterity. According to Derrida, Husserl's phenomenology does violence against the other. It does so in its unwillingness to recognize that the other is precisely not an analogously constituted self. For Derrida's messianic, the other will always be still to come. Although apparently approaching, the other never arrives. That said, Continental philosophy's ethical criticism of transcendental phenomenology does not reach its full potential. It cannot because it, like Tertullian, remains caught between Athens and Jerusalem. There is, however, another ethnotrope available that carries this deconstructive critique of transcendental phenomenology to its conclusion, a conclusion elusive to deconstruction as it is envisioned with the ethnotrope of the Jewish Nomad and the messianic. These

geographic and ethnotropic limitations, knowingly self-imposed or not, become apparent when we recognize the resource emanating from Banaras, that is, the work the Hindu Bhakta can perform in the current conversation.

Greek Heroes and Jewish Nomads remain committed to a metaphysics of presence. It is such metaphysics that ostensibly preclude an ethical commitment. Presence and alterity are mutually exclusive. If everything is present, if everything is reducible to the present – a present always and already for the constitutive subject – then there is no true other and thus no true ethics. The Continental conversation stops here. It does so because it promotes a parochial commitment. For good or ill, Western philosophy remains committed to the options Athens and Jerusalem hold forth. The twentieth-century Hindu philosopher Jarava Lal Mehta rightly notes in this regard, “The present self-understanding of the West has been mediated by the dialectic of Athens and Jerusalem” (1985, 159). But it need not remain so. Perhaps some decolonization of Western philosophy is in order here.

There is a Hindu iteration of Tertullian’s question: What has Banaras to do with Madurai? And Madurai to do with Banaras? While the church father was interested in the relationship between reason and faith, an epistemological question to be sure, the Hindu question, like the Continental one, is an ontological one. Running throughout Hindu literature and philosophy is the theme of fusion and separation (Kakar 1981, Roland 1988). The extent to which the Western philosophical tradition can be characterized as an allergy to transcendence notwithstanding, the Hindu tradition equally has its moments of reduction. These moments are most frequently found within what has often been considered the preeminent school of classical Hindu thought, that is, the Advaita Vedanta.

Advaita Vedanta is a non-dualistic tradition that proposes there is only one true being in reality, Brahman, an infamously difficult “concept” to translate. That said, Brahman is most often characterized as being, consciousness, and bliss (Deutsch 1980). It is understood to be the only truly existent “entity.” Advaita Vedanta presents a monistic idealism, not wholly unlike Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology. In this regard, ethical concerns have equally been raised regarding Advaita Vedanta’s metaphysics. Although some consider the Advaita Vedanta to be essential to understanding Hindu philosophy, not to mention psychology (Roland 1988), one would be remiss not to acknowledge a countervailing trend within the Hindu traditions. This trend pertains to transcendence. It pertains to alterity.

Hindu mysticism, and much philosophy, is rightly associated with a metaphysics of presence. It often denies the reality of the other (Masson 1980). There is, however, another tradition within the Hindu world that promotes an understanding of alterity. This tradition is associated with bhakti. From the Sanskrit root *bhaj*, meaning to separate/share, bhakti entails a relationship to another. The nature of this relationship has received its fair share of commentary throughout South Asian history. For instance, within the Vedantic tradition, there is a school of thought known as Visistadvaita Vedanta. Associated with the philosopher Ramanuja, this school sought to characterize the relationship to the other as one of qualified, non-dualism. Ramanuja understood that there was a certain identity-in-difference between Brahman (the other) and the individual, often referred to as the Atman. Departing from an earlier Vaishnava philosophy known as the Pancaratra, Visistadvaita Vedanta

comes close to endorsing an ontology of emanations, perhaps much like the Kabbalah according to Maimonides and Moses de Leon. An emanation is not, to be sure, identical to its source and yet it is simultaneously not wholly distinct. The tradition of Vedanta that sought to uphold a distinct division between self and other was, and remains, Dvaita Vedanta (Sarma 2003), or dual Vedanta. According to Madhva, the preeminent Dvaita philosopher, there will always remain a division between Brahman and Atman. This irreducible dualism finds its complement in the school of Samkhya. For the latter, there will always be a duality between the Self (i.e., the *purusha*) and the material world (i.e., *prakriti*). Dvaita Vedantic and Samkhyan endorsements of dualism notwithstanding, these schools quite possibly remain tied to a metaphysics of presence. Although dual, both schools ultimately envision alterity as something that can be known and thus ultimately reduced. These philosophical systems do not represent *bhakti*, or devotion. Perhaps they too are, in this regard, allergic. *Bhakti* is the antihistamine.

The *bhakti* traditions within Hinduism are diverse. A review of this diversity would take the present discussion too far afield. Here the focus will be on one particular strand within the devotional material, that is, *viraha bhakti* (Ellis 2009). *Viraha bhakti* is love-in-separation. Perhaps most pronounced in the late first millennium CE text, the *Bhagavata Purana*, this model of devotion is predicated on the strengthening of devotion due to the absence of the beloved. The beloved, that is, Krishna is dear to his followers, the *gopis*. At one point in the narrative, Krishna decides to withdraw from the *gopis*' presence. In his absence, the *gopis* pine for the return of their beloved. Uddhava, a disciple of Krishna, approaches the *gopis* to inform them of the presence afforded to them through yoga and philosophy. This the *gopis* reject. Through devotion, presence, and a certain philosophy tied to reason and universality, is denied. This is what the other affords. The scholar of Vaishnava traditions, Friedhelm Hardy notes, "his [i.e., Krishna's] motives for concealing himself and causing the *gopis* to undergo the suffering and separation are... elusive... [I]t can be regarded... as done for the sake of letting love and devotion grow" (1983, 536). To put this into the language of the Continental conversation, the withdrawal of the other enables love and devotion, that is, the transcendental condition for ethics. "The *withdrawal* of the sacred," Taylor writes, "releases one into the infinite migration of error where meaning is unrecoverable and direction undiscoverable" (1999, 45, emphasis added). Here an equivocation in the Continental conversation emerges.

For the right reasons, or at least the right Western Christian ones, one might associate the Messiah with the sacred. This may be a mistake. According to some of the Continental thinkers, the Messiah is on a trajectory of arrival. The Messiah is to come to presence. With regard to Taylor's sacred, we see a different dynamic, one more in line with the Hindu tradition of *viraha bhakti*. According to Taylor, the sacred withdraws. Krishna withdraws. The sacred is, in this regard, more akin to a friend than a messiah. Caputo notes, "The *withdrawal* of the friend... the 'passage' that is always being made and always being blocked" (2000, 60 emphasis added). To be sure, messiahs arrive; friends withdraw. According to Mehta, "the principal word for the relationship between the divine and the human is 'friendship'... Krishna is Arjuna's friend and therefore another" (1992, 124). This is where the ethical critique of transcendental phenomenology finds its completion.

Deconstruction has always had a Jewish tint to it (Caputo 2000). It is predicated on a ruptured present. Greek Heroes and Western philosophy, so considered, wish to render all things intelligible and thus reducible to the intentions of the constructive subject. Such presence, such reduction, disallows the space between self and other requisite for an ethical concern. The metaphysics of presence is, for this reason, violent. Derrida, and others, believe that the messianic, as represented through the ethnotrope of the Jewish Nomad, disrupts the totalizing gaze of the transcendental ego. That which is to come is present as absent. The messianic forever rends the idealist's project incomplete. Total presence is an illusion. Derrida's messianic putatively accomplishes this task by being always-to-come. I suggest that this ethical concern, though rightly raised by the Jewish Nomad, ultimately fails to reach the final step. This is the case because things that are yet-to-come are still wedded to the metaphysics of presence. As Caputo notes, there is a messianic hope animating the deconstructive project. Ethics and hope may be antithetical. Perhaps ethics begins with the hopeless, that is, with jettisoning the imperial hope that all things will eventually be rendered present. To be hopeless is not necessarily to be in despair. Perhaps ecstatic love is the condition of the hopeless (Taylor 1984). Models of alterity predicated on a hoped-for presence do not do justice to alterity. For this, we need sacred friends.

The Hindu tradition of *viraha bhakti* presents a model of alterity predicated on friendship. As we have seen, friends withdraw from their others. Truly, absence makes the ethical grow stronger. *Viraha bhakti*'s emphasis on the friend's withdrawal constitutes the negative messianic. Negative messiahs, that is, friends, are not coming. Friends deliberately do the opposite of the messiah. Derrida was right to note that every other is wholly other; however, every other is always and already withdrawing from the phenomenological intention of the transcendental ego. Unlike the messianic other, the friendly other is never coming.

Greek Heroes, Jewish Nomads, and Hindu Bhaktas never encounter the other. The reasons for why this is the case for each ethnotrope, however, are quite different. As we have seen, there are no others for the conquering Greek Hero; others are merely penultimate stops along a centripetal journey back to self. Jewish Nomads, on the other hand, never encounter the other because for the nomad the other is a messiah, still yet to come. Here we can answer Tertullian. What, indeed, does Athens have to do with Jerusalem? Both are committed to the metaphysics of presence. Hindu Bhaktas, on the other hand, do not encounter the other because the other has always and already withdrawn. Bhaktas are devoted to friends, and friends withdraw. It is for this reason that friendship, the negative messianic, completes the ethical critique of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. Athens and Jerusalem need Banaras.

The foregoing discussion rests on a certain abstract level. Talk of transcendental egos and alterity may seem a bit denuded of practical implications. It need not be so. It should not be so. The foregoing discussion ought to inform the one pertaining to actual, cross-cultural encounters. Although alluded to above, this discussion can inform decolonization.

Comparative philosophy is a fraught subject (Larson and Deutsch 1988). Is it even possible to compare philosophies? What does a cross-cultural, philosophical

conversation look like? Although a topic in much need of attention, here is not the place to consider all of the issues associated with comparative philosophy. Rather, we will briefly consider one particular, not to mention central, aspect of the cross-cultural encounter, that is, philosophical hermeneutics.

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1976, 1997) spent his career considering what it means to engage in a dialogue with another, whether that be one's own historical tradition or those of another. The problem arises because of the situated nature of the self. While Husserl may have identified the transcendental structures of subjectivity, all subjects are ultimately and already grounded in one particular, historical context rather than another. There is no Archimedean point (Rorty 1979, 1991). As Heidegger noted, to be *Dasein* is to be always already thrown into a particular culture, tradition, and language. Gadamer agrees. The ineradicable history of any one particular subject disallows a prejudice-free access to the other. Every subject enjoys, or is burdened by, a particular horizon of meaning and expectation. For Gadamer, this means that the other ultimately provides a moment of provocation for the self. The other, if truly other, eludes whatever expectation and anticipation the subject may bring to the encounter and is thus irreducibly provocative. Significantly for the present discussion, the outcome of such provocation, according to Gadamer, is edification. Gadamer's hermeneutics are, precisely in this regard, philosophical. Philosophy, and philosophical hermeneutics, may be inextricably tied to the heroic.

Gadamer's project is committed to a fusion of horizons, so-called. Different horizons engage each other through provocative dialogue. Provocation leads to fusion, or so Gadamer would have us believe. Tellingly, fusion enriches one's base. Like Ulysses on his return home, one grows through the encounter with the other. While this may appear on first pass to be a good thing, politically and ethically speaking, some have expressed worry that Gadamer's project is still tied, like Husserl's ego, to a metaphysics of presence. Philosophical hermeneutics, like heroic phenomenology, may harbor a colonial intention. "When fully developed," Taylor notes, "hermeneutics tends to become culturally imperialistic.... The participants in dialectical/ hermeneutical conversation move toward the other so they can return to themselves enriched" (1990, 142). Mehta similarly writes, "hermeneutics is... a means of achieving cultural totality, if not wholeness, by assimilating the other as element in a total dream image... hermeneutic as a weapon directed against the other" (1992, 174, 183). Gadamer himself admits as much: "the fact that a foreign language is being translated means that this is simply an extreme case of hermeneutical difficulty – i.e., of *alienness and its conquest*" (1997, 387, emphasis added). Elsewhere Gadamer writes, "It [i.e., the hermeneutically enlightened consciousness] is higher because it allows the foreign to become one's own" (1976, 94). Is it always the case that through encounter with the other, one's own base heroically grows? Does it always become broadened? Can one be anything other than a philosopher? This is often how philosophical hermeneutics presents itself. There is yet an alternative.

Philosophical hermeneutics appears tied to the edification of self and thus a certain heroic colonialism. *Postcolonial* hermeneutics, however, is different. Rather than emphasizing fusion, growth, and edification, postcolonial hermeneutics recognizes the potentially disruptive nature of the encounter with the other (Ellis

2013). This would seemingly capture the nature of the encounter between India and Europe (Halbfass 1988, Mehta 1985). Mehta writes, “the only difference in this two-sided, mutual participation is that from the Western end it is in the nature of supplementing the substance of their mainstream culture, an assimilation of the alien and subordinating it within a more widely based totality. From the non-Western, including Indian, the participation is an appropriation of the substance itself, not peripheral as in the Western case, and the only question is, how deep does this approximation go” (1990, 230). Philosophical hermeneutics, like the Greek Hero, supplements itself. Postcolonial hermeneutics, like the Hindu Bhakta, suffers displacement. “Idols must be set up and idols must be broken, these same idols, our own, not those of others,” writes Mehta, “without the final perception of these symbols, including those called concepts, and of our very belongingness to a tradition, as idols to be discarded, down to the very last, there can be no arrival, no homecoming” (1985, 206-207). It is in the very nature of hermeneutics, both philosophical and postcolonial, for a return to the point of departure, a return the Jewish Nomad wholly repudiates. The question concerns the effect upon the point of departure the other has. Mehta writes of the relationship to tradition as “an irreparably broken one” (1985, 261). The distinction between philosophical and postcolonial hermeneutics thus rests with the nature of the self subsequent to the encounter with the other. As Gadamer describes it, philosophical hermeneutics is heroic. The encounter with the other is enriching. Postcolonial hermeneutics, on the other hand, is disruptive, rendering it more in line with the Hindu Bhakta. Disruption of self, both transcendental and historical, reflects an ethical stance toward the other as irreducibly absent.

Tertullian’s limitation continues to inform Continental philosophy. While the church father may rightly be forgiven his cultural myopia, the same should not, nay cannot be said for twentieth- and twenty-first century philosophers, Continental or otherwise. As several authors have noted, it would appear that following to its logical conclusion the trajectory first inaugurated in Athens leads to Husserlian phenomenology. According to authors such as Derrida, Husserl’s project disallows alterity and as such disallows ethics. Employing what have here been called ethnotropes, Continental thinkers invoke the Greek hero, Ulysses. All heroic journeys end with the decimation, and consequent plundering, of the enemy, the other. Such journeys, like the philosophical hermeneutic one, are wholly centripetal. There is always a return to an enriched homeland. Countering the Greek Hero is the Jewish Nomad, Abraham. For the same Continental authors, Abraham substitutes for the deconstructive subject, the one for whom the other is not present for conquest and plunder. Rather, the Nomad is forever nomadic because the other is never present, a presence enabling the return trip. Abraham remains hopeful, however, that the Messiah, the other, will arrive. Intended to provide an ethical corrective to the hero’s metaphysics of presence, Jewish Nomads remain expectant of a fulfilled presence, even if not here and now. This is the phenomenological legacy of Jerusalem. As seen above, however, Tertullian’s world can no longer remain so parochial. Banaras holds out an alternative.

Heroes issue from Athens. Nomads pursue Jerusalem. Bhaktas return to Banaras. The ethnotrope of the Hindu Bhakta proffers a model of the relationship between

self and other that completes the ethical critique of Greek Heroes and their transcendental phenomenology. Unlike the Jewish Nomad forever waiting and hoping for the arrival of the other, the Hindu Bhakta recognizes the other as friend. Friends withdraw from the phenomenological presence of bhaktas. Friendship constitutes the negative messianic. While Greek heroism informs philosophical hermeneutics, Hindu friendship and the negative messianic inform postcolonial hermeneutics. What, indeed, does Athens have to do with Jerusalem? Both are committed to a metaphysics of presence; both lack the resources for ethics as first philosophy. For this, we need Banaras's negative messianic, that is, we need the Hindu Bhakta.

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