

# Towards Prejudiced Unhomeliness and Corrective Alterity: Ontology, Hermeneutics, and Transgressive Myth in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*

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## Abstract

With the advent of today's cross-cultural alterities, the percolating notions of 'home', 'self', and 'other', have undergone radical transformations. This alterity, if at all, has bred a world of changing identities under the indefatigable pretext of a global consciousness. In *Totality and Infinity*, Emmanuel Levinas has made us leery of forging a reality that never existed; a 'saraband of cultures' where nomadic figures become rootless subjects. Amid these palpable alterities, the 'self' has embraced the transient tropes of a planetary world and a diasporic consciousness. The question remains: how is it possible to think of postcolonial subjectivity amid a world of mobility and displacement? Or, more precisely, how can we conceive of subjectivity and alterity? Overridden by these questions, this article critiques the tacit roots of the poststructuralist subject whose rootless wandering demeans the primacy of historical rootedness. The subject's errant rootlessness necessitates a thinking that is neither absolute nor homeless. The postmodern nomad forsakes the *facticity* of home and forges an otherness that is irreducibly errant. In doing so, the nomad grants the 'other' its own myths and ideals. Postcolonial subjectivity, as this article underscores, possesses an indispensable rootedness in the *facticity* of shared existence. This article re-thinks postcolonial subjectivity in accordance with the hermeneutic horizon of 'factual rootedness' in a world of impeding prejudices. While the Western hero *represents* the 'other', the postmodern nomad *transcends* the land. Both models of subjectivity are culturally and politically suspect. Whereas the colonial subject reduces the 'other' to an object of experience, the postmodern nomad does not defy the 'other's' myths and idols. It so happens that instead of forging an alterity that evinces the self/other dichotomy by embracing an absolute otherness, hermeneutic prejudice encourages an alterity that defies the chauvinistic logic of the subject and the 'other's' claim to absolute estrangement. The discussion on hermeneutic subjectivity calls for a radical return to the *soil* to which only the figure of the prejudiced subject can uphold. In *The Waste Land*, the Greek seer Tiresias, defied by Eliot's prejudiced stance, trespasses the threshold of pure subjectivity and forges a transformative subjectivity that illuminates the corrective alterity of prejudice (*Vorurteil*).

**Keywords:** Alterity, Facticity, Myth, Other, Prejudice, Self, Unhomeliness

## 1. Introduction

The condition of postcolonial subjectivity can be encapsulated in three overarching modes of thought: transcendence, rootedness and nomadism. Each mode has tainted the epistemic fabric of postcolonial thought. While transcendence owes its condition to Western subjectivity, rootedness is a trenchant response to indigenous homelessness. Nomadism, however, if it can be called as such, is an incremental by-product of deconstructive theories, which have decimated subjectivity altogether. It happens that one of the encroaching pitfalls of postcolonial thought is its inability to forge dialogue with phenomenology and hermeneutics. For this to occur, aside from the long-standing decolonizing practices, ontology has to decolonize itself from the palimpsests of metaphysical discourses. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Franz Fanon (1963) asserts that “Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it” (p. 210). Outside Fanon's restricted historical critique, the task of the postcolony is to critique the ontological foundations of imperial logic, unveil the postcolonial reproduction of colonial subjectivity, and initiate contact with the philosophical tradition of hermeneutics.

This article's overarching thesis supports the claim that a prejudiced subject allows the space of cross-cultural interaction to be *corrective* rather than exploitative and consensual. This awareness of one's primordial soil provides a moment of self-reflection that dissuades the 'self's' metaphysical tendencies. This main claim is carried through incorporating Heidegger and Gadamer's approaches to the 'self' as inherently prejudiced, historical, and delimited. It claims that the hermeneutic tradition moves beyond the truncating views of historical logic and poststructuralist tropes. Employing the notion of 'prejudice', this study underscores how the postmodern nomad's view of cross-cultural dialogue is ethically suspicious of consensual morality. More so, by incorporating T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* as a poetic exegesis, this study concretizes how the 'prejudice' of modern malaise allows the figure of Tiresias to crystallize the pervasiveness of wounded myth. Eliot's cognizance of wounded myth allows him to evade the salutary effect of nomadic consciousness, abscond from the desire of rehashing an ideal past, and elude the colonial logic of superiority. This reading unravels the inability of postcolonial thought to go beyond the ontology of Western logic. The implications of such a reading exhort a dialogue between the long tradition of hermeneutics and the postcolonial notions of alterity, difference, and cross-cultural dialogue.

## 2. The Ontological Acumen of Postcolonial Logic

With the advent of the Cartesian subject, Western identity depicted the African, the Indian, and the 'other' as not *fully* human. On the ontological level, the 'other' is rebuked, decried and rescinded as an a-historical entity. Hence, the 'other' is not even a subject of epistemological inquiry, much less ontological validity. The 'other', therefore, is besieged by the ontological superiority of a universal 'I'. In this sense, the 'other' does not have access to historical reason. This goes to accentuate the fact that the partiality of Western ontology gives precedence to transcendental subjectivity. In *On the Death of the Pilgrim*, Thomas Ellis's (2013) commentary on the supra-temporal facet of Platonic *eidos* is worth citing:

While most modern thinkers no longer speak of Plato's *eidos*, they nevertheless talk about the human subject, the dialectical process, the will-to-power, etc. All share the same character-istic: they account for the Being of all beings. Metaphysics seeks in this way some universal, supra-temporal element that can take responsibility for the generation of historical traditions over time. (p. 47)

While Western ontology values the Platonic subject in sense-making, the postcolony has *ontologically* reproduced a historical revival of a somewhat suspicious tradition. Even more so, for the postcolony, the subservient acumen of historical revival has ensured that subjectivity is rooted in the notion of *home*; a decolonizing experience that privileges the voices of a forgotten history. This emancipatory facet has led the 'subject' to identify itself with a qualitative mode of reviving history. In the process of historical excavation, the risk of refurbishing the past with the imaginary present is inescapable. In doing so, historiography has become a selective tale rather than an objective rehashing of the past. Ellis's commentary on the primacy of *ontological* critique over cultural appraisals forms the core of postcolonial debacle. He purports the following:

True, overt colonial rule maintains itself in only a few places in the world of the early twenty-first century. That being said, there is, to be sure, a determined concern regarding a more pernicious, because often largely undetected, form of colonialism. Perhaps we are just now coming to grips with the true reach and scope of empire. Successful nationalist projects, to be sure, do not necessarily entail emancipation from *ontological* shackles. (Ellis, 2013, p. 1)

This is where the fallacious defect of postcolonial subjectivity resides, chiefly in the utter disavowal of ontological culpability. Outside the blatant assault on land, culture, and home, there is an *a priori* assault on *Being*. *Being* is reduced to a form of transcendence that is pure, unscathed, and aloof from any historical beginning. History becomes an essentialist paradigm that regards the 'other's' history as stemming from the first-person. Aside from being a postcolonial gesture, the roots of personal history are *ontological*, chiefly because subjectivity traps history in the narcissism of a self-determining subject. This ontological attitude, coupled with the supremacy of the subject, reproduces a derogatory ontology masked under the utopic myth of revival. In “Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History”, Michel Foucault's (1977) rebuttal of origin in favor of a beginning bespeaks the contingency of history:

However, if the genealogist refuses to extend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens to history, he finds that there is "something altogether different" behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms. . . .What is found at the

historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity. (p. 142)

The beginning is always a beginning *from* and a beginning *against*. In other words, the unfolding of history unfurls as a consequence of discouraging other beginnings that might have occurred. This entails that history rebukes the notion of purity and fixity. More so, and in ontological terms, a qualitative rehashing of history might, albeit inadvertently, forge an imaginary past; a past that *never* existed. This would insinuate that any present mind might only rehash a positive history. History, therefore, becomes an endless fabrication of ideal pasts, which by their very nature occlude other possible histories. Ellis (2013) is cognizant of this inclination when he claims that “freedom from colonial rule necessitates an ontological critique often found lacking in the routine, postcolonial emphasis on material history and literature” (p. 4). This goes to delineate that a mere critique of cultural binaries might risk reiterating the transcendental subjectivity of ontological purity in duplicitous forms.

The emphasis on the historicity of the subject has created, almost capriciously, an oasis of minor subjectivities. This fragmented facet of history has the risk of imagining a past that never revealed itself to the ‘other’, a past that is besmeared by the egology of historical subjectivity. For Emmanuel Levinas in *Humanism of the Other*, this inclination towards the revival of history is prompted by a Platonic desire for monism. Levinas’s (2005) critique of historical subjectivity is worth citing:

Apperceiving a situation that precedes culture, to apperceive language from revelation of the Other – who is at the same time the birth of morality – in the gaze in the gaze of man sighting a man precisely as abstract man disengaged from all culture in the nakedness of his face, means returning in a new way to Platonism. (p. 38)

This monistic undertone reproduces a space where cultures identify with their own intrinsic constituents. In this dismembered world, cultures produce abundant binaries that threaten the inherent contingency of human history. In this sense, cultures adhere to a platonic attitude which privileges the metaphysical principle of sameness. Instead of a higher *eidos* that values transcendence, historical rootedness decapitates the world into identifiable units. This attitude removes the constant threat of historical contingency in favor of an imaginary subjectivity that is inexorably suspicious. Moreover, it is true that diaspora came with the realization of extinguishing the utopic merits of nationhood and home. Though diasporic subjectivity refers to an in-between space that rebukes sameness and difference, the post-Cartesian disdain of transcendence and *pure* history forms a borderless consciousness that sinks into sheer nomadism. In “Subjectivity and Spaces of Interaction”, Şule Okuroğlu Özün (2015) explains the diasporic subject’s relationship to temporal symbiosis. He utters the following:

The new forces of the present situation, including past layers, provide the necessary base for the future formations as well. Once an individual sets her country space back in the past, she moves into a new cultural space and into a new present. In the country left behind “the present was embedded in the past. In the new host country, however, the cultural past is different. This means that [their] cultural identity has been compromised”. (75) Diaspora communities while wishing to participate in the new culture mostly hold their cultural past. (p. 190)

The acumen of poststructuralist thought has forged a subject whose diaspora never terminates. This thought creates a nomadic attitude that rescinds the authority of history and reinforces the trope of dispersed histories. Diasporic subjectivity privileges the cross-cultural meeting of different spaces and times, yet the rebuke of ‘home’ is done at the expense of historical prejudice. To this end, the subject is not homeless by virtue of leaving home and by consequence forging a *heterotopic* reality; however, the subject’s unhomeliness starts within the familiar order of life. It is, one might say, the constant mood of unhomeliness that prompts the subject to forsake home. In Heideggerian terms, diasporic wandering understands unhomeliness in reverse. One is not first at home and then wanders errantly. However, one is *always already* unhomely in the familiar abode to the extent that finding home is counterintuitive. In *The Ister*, Martin Heidegger (1996) purports the following in this regard:

Such abode in that which is not ordinary, such not being homely, neither first results as a mere consequence of wandering around, nor does it consist merely in the adventurous. Being unhomely is no mere deviance from the homely, but rather the converse: a seeking and searching out the homely, a seeking that at times does not know itself. (p. 74)

In rather poignant terms, diasporic subjectivity is overtly utopic. The homely is a deviance since *we* all start from the limited horizon of understanding. While the wanderer desires no ethical encounter and thereby leaves no space for the risk, the adventurer – akin to the Greek hero – subjugates the ‘other’ to the absolute knowledge of the naked ‘I’. It is this danger, which the wanderer obfuscates, that prevents the ‘other’ from *consuming* itself in narcissistic tendencies. Whereas the adventurer murders the ‘other’, the wanderer grants the ‘other’ its own myths, superstitions, and archetypes. Notwithstanding the utopic vision of diasporic subjectivity, liberating the ‘other’ from the shackles or ‘home’ and ‘nationhood’ is as morally suspicious as the Western adventurer’s imperious tendencies. If there is no ground upon which to dialogue, any claim to cultural bigotry can be conceded. In this respect, the subject becomes a meandering sojourner, unable to attain truth and rebuke falsehood.

Searching for home becomes an endless cycle of consent and recognition. In “The Spectacle of the ‘Other’”, Stuart Hall (1997) acknowledges the visible context of history, yet he ignores the pre-interpreted forms of prejudice that reinforce the historicity of the subject’s finitude. He purports that “[w]e all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific” (p. 225). Instead of a nomadic subject that regards ‘home’ with a sense of disdain and decrepitude, subjectivity has to acknowledge the unbridled nature of ‘prejudice’; namely that no subject is completely unhomely or homely. The poststructuralist’s dismembering of grand narratives has also engendered an alterity that masks the violence of ‘otherness’. In “Toward a Postcolonial Universal Ontology”, Schlak Gerber and Josia Tembo’s (2019) commentary is worth citing in this regard:

human experiences in general are marked by instabilities, unexpected turns, and the absence of the center. "Fluctuations and indeterminacy do not necessarily amount to lack of order. Every representation of an unstable world cannot automatically be subsumed under the heading 'chaos'" (Mbembe 2001: 8). Therefore, the ontology of multiple *durées* is the condition of all human experiences, and it is not unique to Africa and does not represent backwardness and racial inferiority because it defies the fix linear conception of human history as proposed of modern Western Europe. (p. 16)

Though decolonizing practices demystify culture from historical tropes, it still, albeit languidly, could not rid itself of metaphysical logic in the figure of the nomadic subject; a subject whose alterity is a matter of consent and identification. Alterity, in this convoluted sense, denies the *angst* of risk that arises as a consequence of unhomeliness. While dismantling in its approach, alterity falls into the trap of demanding a home through the process of approving the otherness of the 'other'. Ellis (2013) is fully cognizant of this intricate sense of alterity, which he regards with indelible suspicion:

Accordingly, freedom from colonial rule necessitates an ontological critique often found lacking in the routine, postcolonial emphasis on material history and literature... Though often unrecognized, ontological imperialism finds expression in Gadamer's *philosophical* hermeneutics... Heidegger's "hermeneutics of facticity" in particular announces a welcomed return to the structures of everyday life and concerns, a turn that challenges the dominant calculative and representative modes of discourse latent in the transcendental subject's objectifying gaze. (p. 4)

The diasporic subject attempts to abscond from the disoriented reality of regional histories. However, it does so by forging a nomadic reality wherein the subject is forsaken altogether for the supremacy of an unceasing movement. The diasporic subject abandons 'home', yet it forgets that no subject is *purely* 'rootless'. Heidegger's 'hermeneutics of facticity' asserts, albeit adversely, that "the self is always already rooted in provincial soil" (Ellis, 2013, p. 41). *Facticity* highlights the pre-reflective belonging of human beings to a particular tradition. If not cognizant of the soil, the diasporic subject forges a movement that is rooted in absolute pluralism. Consequently, the diasporic subject fabricates a reality wherein neither the 'self' nor the 'other' exists; a reality where buoyant entities interact in a mystical space. In this light, Ellis (2013) maintains that "the absolute Nomad in his radically errant peregrinations in fact never leaves home, never really travels" (p. 182). According to Ellis, a subjectivity of this kind is inherently suspect since any movement that is bereft of rootedness becomes a paralyzing stasis.

This is precisely where the question of history becomes problematic. While it is true that the nomad deconstructs the past in relation to the present background of differing places, it still forgets that history – in the hermeneutic sense – is the site of prejudices. The nomad only realizes that the past is viable in the moment of encounter. Özün (2015) purports that "when nostalgic diaspora try to handle the present situations and make sense of the past they constantly deconstruct and reconstruct the past times and spaces in the present" (p. 191). The hermeneut, however, ventures into the past with a prejudiced stance on the presentness of the past. The risk of reproducing prejudices for the diasporic subject is even higher when the past becomes an object of scrutiny. In this sense, hermeneutic prejudice forces the subject to unveil its own hubris. The subject's journey becomes one of instruction, betterment, and correction. Venturing without prejudices, the nomad merely prevents the 'other' from disclosing hidden assumptions about the encounter. In a prejudice-free stance, neither dialogue nor surprise can take place other than a cyclical practice of mirroring. The caveat for the nomad lies in reconciling nomadic consciousness with the primacy of historical prejudice.

This is precisely the hermeneutic history that the postcolony subjugates in favour of espousing either an imaginary construction of a pure past or an utter disavowal of home. This goes to show that home is directly linked to history as the hidden precinct of cultural practices and material conditions. As finite historical beings, we would not preserve home if it is fixed and pure. If it were the case, we would simply honour, revere, and worship home. Yet, we only preserve that which can escape at any moment. In *Skillful Coping*, Hubert Dreyfus (2010) underscores in this regard that "Only by knowing that everything human, cultural, and so forth is vulnerable does preserving or transforming it make sense" (p. 28). So to say, only when we comprehend that history is finite, brittle, and at risk of collapse can cultural preservation take place. Preservation, at this juncture, can be transformative of the old world and its fragmentary reality.

A similar interpretation unfolds in Gilles Deleuze's peculiar reading of Nietzsche's nomadic thought. For Deleuze, the nomad, though antagonistic, does not force the opposition with the 'other' into a purity of difference. Deleuze's nomad is counter-territory, yet still very much imbued with the facet of re-inventing the abandoned place. The Jew is a nomad, yet Jewish nomadism does not allow for re-invention. In this sense, Jewish nomadism is not cognizant of the resentment that tarnishes their rootedness. Jewish nomadism, so to say, veils the 'prejudice' of purity that permeates the fabric of nomadic consciousness. For the prejudiced subject, movement is already contaminated by the disenchanting facet of provincial soil. In his daring essay "Nomad Thought", Deleuze (1977) delineates the nomad's onerous task:

The nomad and his war machine oppose the despot with his administrative machine: an extrinsic nomadic unit as opposed to an intrinsic despotic unit. And yet societies are correlative, interrelated; the despot's purpose will be to integrate, to internalize the nomadic machine, while that of the nomad will be to invent an administration for the newly conquered empire. They ceaselessly oppose one another – to the point of where they become confused with one another. (p. 148)

This opposition allows for ethical betterment, which prevents the nomad from sinking into consensual morality. In order to escape the democratization of nomadic experiences, the constant defiance of spaces and times has to be undertaken. As Deleuze (1977) rightly claims, "The 'signifier' is really the last philosophical metamorphosis of the despot" (p. 149). The signifier, here, mirrors the aimless subject whose experiences cascade into mere wandering. While the despot discriminates, the nomad

sinks into the democratization of choice, thereby creating more difference than actual understanding. It follows that the antagonism that allows for nomadism has to persist since nomadic consciousness without the despot reproduces a myriad of errant despots. In so doing, the despot remains a persistent trope in the internalized consciousness of the nomad.

It seems that, following Heidegger, both the metaphysical hero and the nomad deny the rootedness of soil. In doing so, the hero's encounter with the 'other' is domineering. The nomad's encounter with the 'other' is conceding. The hero and the nomad liberate themselves from the *angst* of historical rootedness. Ellis (2013), in this respect, asserts that "For the Nomad, the other's alterity, an alterity forever yet to come to presence, displaces the self, rendering the self ineradicably errant and homeless. (p. 10). This nomadic attitude not only rebukes the finality of home but also forges an 'other' that is fulfilled in being itself. As such, it is no reason that nomadic consciousness veils a morally suspicious doctrine. Ellis (2013) underscores this debacle rather poignantly when he purports that "the putative antagonism between the Hero and the Nomad actually reflects an inversion that remains bound to metaphysics. That is to say, Hero and Nomad are classical tropic binaries" (p. 181). While the metaphysical hero suffers from an imperious ego, the Nomad abolishes the ego altogether.

The claim to nomadic consciousness, following Derrida and Levinas, proves to be intrinsically flawed. The nomad's claim to rootlessness privileges absolute difference. This way, the nomad identifies with a hyper-identity that regards itself as being unscathed by the ontology of grammar and metaphysical logic. In some sense, the nomad's absolute difference becomes a need for an ever-coming identification that neither accepts nor denies. In encountering the 'other', the nomad practices blind tolerance. The nomad does not regard the 'other' with surprise since nomadic encounter emerges out of absolute difference. It is no surprise that Hans-Georg Gadamer (2004) affirms in *Truth and Method* that "Even if we emigrate and never return, we still can never wholly forget" (p. 445). In this sense, the claim to rootlessness does not imply the perishing of our 'habitus'. Only by acknowledging the precedence of our 'habitus' can we return home with novelty. Influenced by Gadamer's hermeneutics, Ellis (2013) states that "mortals always respond from out of a delimited horizon" (p. 82). This delimited horizon is the acumen of an on-going past that rebukes the egology of purity. It announces the claim, as Ellis (2013) maintains, that "the (metaphysical) self is given death" (p. 110). It is this primordial experience that contaminates the structure of historical belonging.

### 3. Subjectivity, Alterity and Hermeneutic Prejudice

The subject is rooted in the soil of a pre-reflective history and community which delimit ontological sovereignty and cultural chauvinism. For the post-modern inquirer, however, the rootless subject falls prey into the nullification of home. The movement of the rootless subject precludes the embrace of the 'other'. This embrace, as it were, denies the foreign 'other' and reduces the encounter into a barbarous play. In *The Ister*, Heidegger (1996) proclaims that "for only where the foreign is known and acknowledged in its essential oppositional character does there exist the possibility of a genuine relationship" (p. 54). By the foreign, Heidegger does not imply the 'other' that is oppositional to a metaphysical 'self'. Rather, the foreign exists in the prejudiced framework of the provincially delimited 'self'. Even more so, the 'self' is inherently foreign by virtue of being delimited by the standpoint of historical prejudice.

Against this claim, the postmodern inquirer vanquishes sameness with the trope of alterity, a moment where the self/other duality is compromised. Though it dismantles the metaphysics of subjectivity, alterity fabricates an encounter that is never consummated, forever aloof, undetermined, and oftentimes mystical. The postmodern inquirer reduces otherness into an irreducible modality, adopting a Derridean process of deferral. While the metaphysical hero murders the 'other', the postmodern nomad robs the 'other' of its finality. While the hero practices excessive despotism, the postmodern nomad practices hyperbolic tolerance. Both practices reduce alterity into a noumenal abstraction. Heidegger's example of Americanism in *The Ister* divulges the politics of representation and sameness that imbue postcolonial thinking. He utters the following:

We know today that the Anglo-Saxon world of Americanism has resolved to annihilate Europe, that is, the homeland [Heimat], and that means: the commencement of the Western world. Whatever has the character of commencement is indestructible. America's entry into this planetary war is not its entry into history; rather, it is already the ultimate American act of American ahistoricity and self-devastation. (Heidegger, 1996, p. 54-55)

If America could unveil the 'prejudice' of European subjectivity in the Anglo-Saxon world, the question of annihilation would not be a matter of stringent debate. Commencement, as Heidegger proffers, veils the character of purity that contaminates subjectivity. Purity arises out of an unwillingness to uphold the primacy of one's historical situation. The claim to historicity summons the 'self' to ignite contact with the hidden voices of history. This way, a 'self' which is historically conditioned recognizes the primacy of delimited viewpoints and truncated stances. It also allows the encounter to involve critique instead of a mere avowal of histories. Global citizenship today is a testament to the ever-increasing state of multiple belongings that are constantly challenged by different vernaculars and emergent identities. It is for this reason that the will to dominate emanates from the subject's willingness to affirm the cartography of unitary identities.

Ellis (2013) explains this pernicious feature when he purports that "Without a same, a subject, an identity, there can be no other, and thus no education" (p. 182). The postmodern inquirer ascertains that rootlessness avows an acceptance of the 'other' in a way that brackets his or her gaze. This encounter, however, is despotic and indelibly duplicitous since it results in complete consent. This consent, by consequence, grants the 'other' its complete freedom, which has not been afforded by the self's prejudiced relationship with the world. Since there is no foreign to juxtapose with, the relation between the 'self' and the 'other' is blurred; there is no space for symbiotic learning. The 'self' and the 'other' become incongruent and encapsulated in a world of limpid affirmations.

This gesture, though ingenious from the outset, couches a deeply disconcerting practice. The 'other' becomes first an object of fantasy and second a subject that has to be tolerated. Doing so, the 'other' no longer surprises us, teaches us, or confronts our historical horizon. Our prejudices, by the same token, remain intact and possibly unperturbed. This is the utmost risk since the postmodern inquirer does not notice the prejudices that might endanger the 'other' in the moment of encounter. Ellis's (2013) commentary on this unruly evasion of 'prejudice' is worth citing:

By appealing to a prejudice-free stance, e.g., the Nomad who is rootless, the subject in effect, and perhaps unbeknownst to him at the time, imposes his prejudices on the object of interpretation. The rootless Nomad and the enlightened Hero both seem to profess a transcendence of parochial partisanship. That is to say, the Nomad repeats the need of the enlightened Hero. This is the greatest danger. (p. 182)

While the postmodern inquirer denigrates the metaphysical 'self', he/she forgets about the *factual* self that is rooted in a pre-interpreted culture and history. Seeing the 'other' in the 'self' does not require a dismantling of subjectivity altogether. The postmodern inquirer vitiates home under the pretense of a vacuous encounter. Most crucially, in "Hermeneutics and Inter-Cultural Dialogue", Fred Dallmayr (2009) states that "Advanced as antidotes or correctives, post-foundational initiatives have a salutary effect" (p. 181). This salutary effect erases the inherent difference that allows estrangement to take place. Claiming liberation is by contrast an evasion from the *facticity* of existence that manufactures a deserted land. The habitus of existence grounds the very nature of the encounter. Stepping outside home is synonymous with 'not knowing' where to go, what to do, how to be, what to say, and when to act. It is not enough to encounter the 'other' in its absolute difference or to interact with the 'other' outside the logic of grammar and metaphysical thinking. The *facticity* of home, therefore, is rooted in the very fabric of human habitus.

Though, for Heidegger, fallenness is a negative state of human existence wherein the subject is crippled by the voices of conformism, it is Gadamer's contribution to Heidegger's *facticity* that bestows the notion of fallenness with an intellectual pursuit. As befits this claim, Gadamer deploys the term 'prejudice' in order to counter the transcendental evasion from the historicity of understanding. For Gadamer, the delimited facet of 'prejudice' is rife with felicity. That is, the inquirer *always already* has an a priori understanding of what it encounters. This allows the inquirer to first divulge the standpoint of his or her historical situation, realizing that the encounter with the 'other' is always performed from a truncated stance. Second, and on such basis, the inquirer projects initial meanings onto the 'other' to be perused, deciphered, and understood. This allows the inquirer to defy its own conspicuous prejudices and allow the 'other' to present itself as an 'other'. This way, the 'other' is exhorted to participate in the process of genuine understanding. It so happens that 'prejudice' allows the 'other' to challenge its own overarching claim to otherness. In this sense, the inquirer faces the despot and the 'other' defies the wise. In "Nomad Thought", Deleuze (1977) explains a similar description of this overarching gesture:

The state of experience is not something subjective in origin, at least not inevitably so. Moreover, it is not individual. It is a continuous flux and the disruption of flux, and each pulsional intensity necessarily bears a relation to another intensity, a point of contact and transmission... In his own pulsional form of writing, Nietzsche tells us not to barter away with intensity for mere representations. Intensity refers neither to the signifier (the represented word) nor to the signified (the represented thing). (p. 146)

Some journeys are done without physically moving into new plains. In fact, this intrinsic nomadism has to do with emptying out the 'self' from monistic, puritan, and pluralist dimensions. Nomadism outlines a modern subjectivity that is in flux, always defying itself yet inherently creative. Eliot's poetic allusions are exemplary here in that the artist's eye captures the external world of Hindu religion, Greek myths, and French disquietude. Eliot's subjectivity is constantly defied by the 'other', yet he never allows the 'other' to float in an absent-minded plain. Eliot's central poetic allusions allow the 'other' to be as porous as the 'self'. As Rosi Braidotti (2014) suggests in "Writing as a Nomadic Subject", "When you remember to become what you are – a subject-in-becoming – you actually reinvent yourself on the basis of what you hope you would become, with a little help from your friends" (p. 173). Eliot's 'others' are also challenged as a consequence of a 'prejudice' about a dejected post-War reality that has debilitated human morality.

This poetic gesture does not create a world of plural identities. It also does not favour a pure history of qualitative pasts. More so, Eliot's gesture does not simply grant the 'other' its own myths. It is crucial for the 'prejudice' to arise as the inter-subjective element of dynamic becoming. For the prejudiced self, the familiar horizon is by nature unfamiliar, defying, and transgressive. Eliot's use of myth is transgressive; it arises out of a penchant towards seeking meaning in a despondent reality. Myth, or transgressive myth to be meticulous, is an attempt to forge an alterity that is instructive of both the 'self' and the 'other'. Braidotti (2014) is aware of the subversive state of nomadic consciousness when she maintains that "some of the greatest trips can take place without physically moving from one's habitat. It is the subversion of set conventions and the consciousness-raising that defines the nomad state, not the literal act of travelling" (p. 182). Eliot's encounter with myth concretizes this disruptive act of nomadic transgression. The use of myth in *The Waste Land* is indicative of a nomadic experience that neither overvalues the past nor allows the present to overhaul Eliot's historical consciousness. To be a nomad, in this sense, is to allow one's 'prejudice' to encounter the transgressive nature of the 'other's' presence.

#### 4. Eliot's Transgressive Myth and Corrective Alterity

In *The Waste Land*, Eliot's infatuation with the voices of history permeates his poetic understanding of the modern world. The myth of Tiresias becomes a harbinger of prophetic doom; a paradoxical experience that characterizes the loss of universal

values and moral principles. This disconsolate reality is visceral insofar as the characters “are restricted to follow the Holy Grail” (Bakalářská Práce, 2016, p. 15). Eliot allows his historical situation to define the trajectory of mythical revival. However, instead of allowing the myth of Tiresias to subjugate the present into its nostalgic realm, Eliot’s modern reality debilitates Tiresias’s supernatural ability. Eliot’s reading of the past is *hermeneutic* rather than rigidly reproductive. Eliot’s contemporary prejudice on the loss of sacredness defies Tiresias’s prophetic capacity. That is why, as Práce (2016) proclaims in *Mythical Method in T. S. Eliot’s The Waste Land*, “characters display limited powers of communication” (p. 16). This contemporary prejudice impedes Eliot from constructing a metaphysical self that annihilates Tiresias’s impact altogether. It follows that Tiresias is wounded by the harsh conditions harbingered in the waste land.

Tiresias’s transgression provides a corrective reading of alterity. First, it allows Eliot to defy his prejudice on the malaise of modern reality. Second, Tiresias’s prophethood is also disrupted. More so, the unhomely personage of Tiresias crystallizes the essence of unhomeliness (*Unheimlichkeit*) as a force that is not only peripheral and uncentered but also creative and felicitous. Tiresias dismantles his own myth by upholding ineffability in the presence of modern reality. However, there is a moment of felicity that imbues Tiresias’s presence. Tiresias’s involvement is disruptive of its own myth, thereby self-affirming movement in prejudice, resistance, and dialogue. Tiresias’s inability to intervene in the disdainful rape scene divulges the dejected nature of modern reality. Braidotti (2014) asserts that “Nomadic becoming is neither a reproduction nor just an imitation, but rather emphatic proximity, intensive inter-connectedness. Nomadic shifts enact a creative sort of becoming” (p. 182). Overtaken by the prejudiced subject, nomadism becomes a resourceful journey towards a purposeful alterity, or more poignantly, a corrective alterity.

Eliot’s historical situation is indicative of this corrective alterity, chiefly in how Tiresias is called forth to defy his claim to prophethood. Even Eliot is exhorted by the presence of myth to test his contemporary prejudice on the state of modern reality. Eliot’s horizon of experience is put at risk by his ability to conjure up the mythical figure of Tiresias. Following Jewel Brooker’s (2022) assertion in “Inside/Outside: Eliot, Perspective, and the Modernist Moment”, “Mortals do not see the world as a whole, but as a continuously shifting array of sights and sounds” (p. 29). Eliot is conscious of finitude in a way that exhorts him to unravel his delimited prejudice. He allows his contemporary prejudice to defy the historical prowess of Tiresias. If this prejudice were to be forsaken, Eliot would indelibly conjure up Tiresias as a prophetic figure, a figure, so to say, that is incommensurable with modern reality. Yet, Eliot allows the past to be transformative, pliable, and transgressive. Eliot’s use of Tiresias, at this juncture, involves a transformative reading of myth. If contemporary malaise is not acknowledged as a legitimate prejudice, Tiresias would be taken as an exemplary figure of history that is endowed with prophethood.

In this sense, Eliot might be regarded as an exemplary figure of prejudiced unhomeliness. As Ellis (2013) purports, “In this regard, the inquirer never occupies a historico-cultural neutrality” (p. 61). Eliot’s use of myth allows him to puncture the contemporary nature of modern malaise. The use of transgressive myth unveils the unhomely facet of modern reality. More so, the use of transformative myth exhorts Eliot to uphold the historicity of understanding. This gesture prevents him from idolizing the past and overvaluing subjective history. It also, more profoundly, disparages the metaphysical attitude of rebuking the vicissitudes of history altogether. Given the paroxysm of ‘prejudice’, neither the metaphysical self nor the historical subject is worthy of praise. In this respect, Ellis (2013) states that “prejudice is not an unfortunate myopia remedied by more so-called tolerant perspectives. Rather, prejudice is an ontological dimension of who we are. We always already read into the other our provincial anticipations” (p. 60). Ontology, therefore, calls forth the ‘self’ into its provincial soil and the *facticity* of human understanding.

Seen this way, Eliot’s use of myth allows for a corrective alterity rather than a consensual alterity. While the latter informs the morally-suspicious nomad who ventures without a telos, the former has an ethical character embedded within the fabric of cross-cultural dialogue. Ignoring the ‘other’s’ claim to truth is as suspicious as being indifferent towards the ‘self’s’ claim to transcendence. In the sphere of cross-cultural dialogue, one’s prejudices – if not divulged – might put the ‘other’ at risk of itself. Granting the ‘other’ its own truth might meagerly construe an otherness that is non-reflexive. In fact, Gadamer (2004) states that “In fact our own prejudice is properly brought into play by being put at risk. Only by being given full play is it able to experience the other’s claim to truth and make it possible for him to have full play himself.” (p. 299). The ‘other’s’ claim to truth is defied by the ‘self’s’ awareness of ‘prejudice’ as both a hampering force and a source of interpretation.

Eliot is able to recycle his prejudices based on the transgressive power of myth. His allusions to myth do not reproduce a nostalgic past nor cast a nomadic experience of reality. In this sense, Eliot is a transgressive nomad who is able to transcend the limits of his prejudices in narrative sequence. Eliot’s awareness of his ‘prejudice’ towards the evasion of the sacred in the modern times helps him construct a symbiotic narrative that enables Tiresias to puncture the ravages of contemporary history. Eliot’s disfigurement of Tiresias’s prophetic message provides a hermeneutic encounter with the past rather than a debilitating imposition of subjectivity. A blind Tiresias is both transgressive in the sense of historical newness and contemporary in the sense of embracing the spirit of the age. Eliot allows his prejudiced stance to divulge the corrective alterity of ‘prejudice’ from both ends. Eliot is able to defy his macabre modern reality by defying Tiresias’s claim to wisdom. Hindered by ‘prejudice’, Eliot evades the detrimental despot by upholding the otherness of his historical situation.

More so, Tiresias is exhorted by Eliot to challenge his own claim to wisdom in a disconsolate modern order. Though Eliot is privy to the past’s nostalgic grip, he is indelibly cognizant of the *facticity* of historical belonging. He neither vaunts about Tiresias’s prophetic power nor dismisses the contemporary upheaval of modern destitution. Eliot (1991) moulds an alterity that is suspicious of the nomadic snag of absolute otherness:

I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs

Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest—  
 I too awaited the expected guest.  
 He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,  
 A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare,  
 One of the low on whom assurance sits  
 As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire. (p. 61-62)

Eliot is unhomey by virtue of allowing his *facticity* to engage with Tiresias's prophetic prowess. Tiresias encounters the woes of modern reality by engaging with the young man's patronizing scene. Tiresias recounts a distasteful love affair between a typist and a clerk. Tiresias depicts a sterile love affair that crystallizes the reduced state of *Eros* in the modern world. Though the Greek Tiresias is blessed with augury and divination, he is rendered impotent by reason of experiencing the fall of Thebes in Greece. Tiresias observes the sickly scene without influence:

(And I Tiresias have foresuffered all  
 Enacted on this same divan or bed;  
 I who have sat by Thebes below the wall  
 And walked among the lowest of the dead.)  
 Bestows one final patronising kiss,

And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit . . . (Eliot, 1991, p. 62)

Perhaps Eliot allows Tiresias to confide his divinatory prowess. Tiresias embodies the essence of a consciousness that loathes the paucity of moral values and the loss of faith in the modern world. Nevertheless, he remains a mere spectator who bears witness to the dejected scene of a sickly modern society. As Ketevan Jmukhadze (2023) purports in "Mythopoeic Image of the City in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*", "Eliot gave Tiresias a binary perspective, therefore the mythological oracle gained a vision of the past and future through the present moment" (p. 15). Having endured the suffering of humanity, Tiresias is able to construe a wholistic vision of human relationships. However, Eliot's contemporary prejudice derives a myth that is wounded by virtue of being unable to puncture the tasteless scene between the typist and a clerk. Though vaunting his prophetic abilities, Tiresias is incapacitated and only observes from distance as he narrates the closure:

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,  
 Hardly aware of her departed lover;

Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:

Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over.' (Eliot, 1991, p. 62)

Though bestowed with foresight, historical grandeur, and infinite wisdom, Tiresias is unable to penetrate the dejected scene of the young man carbuncular. Eliot's mythical character cannot remedy the present moment since his prolific divination encounters a dismembered modern reality. Tiresias's prowess is in fact confronted by Eliot's depiction of the distasteful love scene. His vernacular does not correlate with the hurried actions of modern city life. Language reaches a halt since Eliot's portrayal of modern reality reflects the historical conditions of a contemporary world. More so, it is the inability of Tiresias to fathom this moment that characterizes the very nature of hermeneutic learning. On one side, Eliot's claim to subjectivity is historically conditioned by the reality of a sickly world. On the other side, Eliot does grant the 'other' its claim to wisdom. Instead, he allows the 'other' to have a poignant effect on his reality by virtue of confronting Tiresias's claim to prophethood. Ellis (2013) rightly points to this invaluable experience in the following passage:

By giving the other its freedom to be other by subordinating its own claims to truth, the self, in return, is given its freedom from hidden prejudice due to the provocation that is the other as other. Philosophical hermeneutics thus reveals that one interlocutor depends upon an ethical relation to the other for its own freedom: the benevolent comportment of the ethical relation to the other returns in the form of emancipation of the self from the tyranny of its hidden prejudice. (p. 68)

By being aware of contemporary 'prejudice', Eliot is able to evade the risk that might threaten the myth of Tiresias. If Eliot were not cognizant of modern times, Tiresias's effect would be debilitating, unable to construct a faithful depiction of a spiritually dejected post-War reality. Eliot provokes his own 'prejudice' and by consequence allows the 'other' to restrain his own claim to pure history. Not only this, Eliot defies his own prejudiced contemporary reality and thereby construes the motif of transgressive myth. For this reason, "The self sees only itself in the other either by a reduction of other to self, or by negating the other as a simple opposite of self" (Ellis, 2013, p. 68). Eliot's prejudiced position encounters a Tiresias who can only observe the bilious love scene from afar. It is in this sense that 'prejudice' allows for a transformative and perhaps a corrective understanding of alterity.

If Eliot evades his 'prejudice', he would treat Tiresias as the divine seer whose abilities are impotent in the modern world. If, however, Eliot grants Tiresias his mythical force, a blatant paradox with the waste land would ensue. As Gaurab Sengupta (2020) purports in "Echoes of the Past: Revisiting Myths in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*", "Eliot's mythical method rests on connecting antiquity with the contemporary world" (p. 110). Instead of privileging antiquity or overvaluing the contemporary present, Eliot's contemporary prejudice allows him to forge a faithful depiction of a modern reality that is bereft of moral convalescence. This said, as Ellis maintains (2013), "By giving the other its freedom to be other by subordinating its own claims to truth, the self, in return, is given its freedom from hidden prejudice due to the provocation that is the other as other" (p. 68). In this sense, Eliot's 'prejudice' is defied in accordance with subordinating Tiresias's own claim to divinatory wisdom. Neither



does Eliot claim historical superiority nor does Tiresias confound his otherness with wisdom. Dialogue, therefore, occurs when both the 'self' and the 'other' are willing to gain freedom from the tyranny of 'prejudice' and the proclamation of wisdom.

## 5. Conclusion: The Metaphysical Hero, the Postmodern Nomad, and the Prejudiced Subject at Crossroads

It so happens that our reading of postcolonial subjectivity has engendered the following conclusions: first, the metaphysical subject is culpable of negating the 'other'; second, the postmodern nomad is guilty of affirming the 'other's' myths and idols; third, the prejudiced subject seeks the termination of metaphysical subjectivity by defying its own claim to truth. The postmodern nomad's journey, therefore, is utterly non-hermeneutic. The process of on-going wandering is left to its own unceasing becoming. Since there is no departure from provincial soil, the postmodern nomad forges an otherness that forsakes home under the pretense of liberation. While the metaphysical hero murders the 'other' by valuing the ego, the postmodern nomad values the 'other' by eviscerating its own hidden subjectivity. Unlike the prejudiced subject, the postmodern nomad is not prepared for what is coming, aimlessly wandering, and ethically suspicious of abundant tolerance. To submit to the will of 'prejudice' is in fact felicitous since it allows the 'self' to constantly err and correct its own hidden presuppositions regarding the 'other'. Without such an experience, the 'self' becomes either despotic or utterly disoriented. Leaving home, therefore, starts from the realization that hidden prejudices tarnish one's subjectivity. The myth of Tiresias in *The Waste Land* crystallizes the subversive act of 'prejudice' by defying the 'other's' claim to wisdom.

Thus, the prejudiced subject travels to destroy one's pernicious prejudices and possibly defy the 'other's' claim to infinite wisdom. The 'self', therefore, does not meet the 'other' in utter awe and wonder. Instead, the 'self's' awareness of its own prejudices advocates a meeting that is salutary, prudent, and curative. Seen this way, the overarching difference between the postmodern nomad and the prejudiced subject is the return home. While the postmodern nomad assumes an errant process of wandering and affirmation, the prejudiced subject returns home by constantly challenging its encroaching claim to biased truths. The kind of home that he returns to is the one he carries by virtue of the historical situation. It would seem that the postmodern nomad's journey imparts no learning experience. The 'other' is either reduced to an object of colony or given utmost reign. In neither situation does the 'other' gain an insight into its own prejudices and negative presuppositions. No one has the final word, yet everyone has the proclivity to yearn for an acting on oneself and a liberating of the 'other' from the logic of representation.

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