Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

FEMALE NOMADIC SUBJECTIVITY IN EAVAN BOLAND'S POETRY

Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU

Ph.D. Dissertation

Ankara, 2025

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ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

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Prof. Dr. Hande SEBER (Jury President)

Prof. Dr. Huriye REİS (Main Adviser)

Prof. Dr. Zeynep Zeren ATAYURT FENGE

Prof. Dr. Özlem UZUNDEMİR

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ABSTRACT

DÜRÜKOĞLU, Okaycan. *Female Nomadic Subjectivity in Eavan Boland's Poetry*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Ankara, 2025.

The concept of female nomadic subjectivity, introduced and developed by Rosi Braidotti, challenges the essentialist definitions of the female self and refers to a constantly evolving form of female subjectivity. Instead of accepting female subjectivity as fixed and stable, Braidotti's nomadic subjectivity regards it as fluid and mobile. Accordingly, this dissertation aims to explore Eavan Boland's poetry collections, *A Woman Without A Country* (2014) and *The Historians* (2020) within the framework of Braidotti's theory of nomadic subjectivity, which offers a feminist rethinking of subjectivity as fluid, relational, and resistant to fixed cultural roles and argues that Boland questions and revises the traditional portrayals of Irish women in official culture and represents Irish women as female nomadic subjects by using the Braidottian three levels of sexual difference, the politics of location and nomadic memory. Boland problematises the male-oriented approach of traditional Irish poetry, which disregards the multiplicity and complexity of Irish women's experiences and creates simplified versions of their subjectivities. Therefore, in *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians*, Boland reconfigures female subjectivity in regard to Irish history, culture and memory and foregrounds the notions of movement, displacement and fluidity in the representations of Irish women. Thus, her poetry exemplifies a portrayal of Irish women's fluid subjectivities by deconstructing the traditionally accepted norms and forms in regard to their representations. In this context, highlighting the importance of the particularity of location for developing nomadic subjectivities for women, *A Woman Without A Country* focuses on diverse and authentic experiences of Irish women through the three levels of sexual difference. In *The Historians*, Boland uses Braidotti's nomadic memory to draw attention to erasure and silence experienced by Irish women in the collective memory and reintroduces Irish women as nomadic subjects who are both witnesses and contributors to Irish history. Accordingly, this study shows that Boland's poetic reimagining of Irish women as female nomadic subjects opens up alternative and creative possibilities for reconsidering female subjectivity beyond rigid and static habits of thinking.

Keywords

Eavan Boland, *A Woman Without A Country*, *The Historians*, female nomadic subjectivity, Rosi Braidotti, nomadic memory, Irish women

ÖZET

DÜRÜKOĞLU, Okaycan. *Eavan Boland'ın Şiirlerinde Kadın Göçebe Öznelliği*, Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2025.

Rosi Braidotti tarafından ortaya atılan ve geliştirilen kadın göçebe öznelliği kavramı, kadın benliğinin geleneksel ve özcü tanımlarına meydan okumakta ve sürekli gelişen bir kadın öznelliği biçimine işaret etmektedir. Kadın öznelliği kavramını sabit ve istikrarlı olarak kabul etmek yerine, göçebe öznellik onu akışkan ve hareketli olarak görür. Bu doğrultuda, bu tez, Eavan Boland'ın *A Woman Without A Country* (2014) ve *The Historians* (2020) adlı şiir koleksiyonları öznelliğin akışkan, ilişkisel ve sabit kültürel rollere dirençli olduğu fikrini feminist bir biçimde yeniden ele alan Braidotti'nin göçebe öznellik teorisi çerçevesinde incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır ve Boland'ın resmi kültürdeki İrlandalı kadınların geleneksel tasvirlerini sorgulayıp gözden geçirdiğini ve Braidotti'nin üç düzeydeki cinsel farklılık, konum politikaları ve göçebe hafıza kavramlarını kullanarak İrlandalı kadınları kadın göçebe özneler olarak temsil ettiğini savunmaktadır. Boland, İrlandalı kadınların deneyimlerinin çokluğunu ve karmaşıklığını göz ardı eden ve kadın öznelliğinin basitleştirilmiş versiyonlarını yaratan geleneksel İrlanda şiirinin erkek odaklı yaklaşımını sorunsallaştırmaktadır. Bu nedenle, Boland, *A Woman Without A Country* ve *The Historians* adlı eserlerinde İrlanda tarihi, kültürü ve hafızası açısından kadın öznelliğini yeniden yapılandırır ve İrlandalı kadınların temsillerinde hareket, yer değiştirme ve akışkanlık kavramlarını ön plana çıkarır. Dolayısıyla Boland'ın şiiri, geleneksel olarak kabul görmüş normları ve temsil biçimlerini yapı bozuma uğratarak İrlandalı kadınların akışkan öznelliklerinin bir tasvirini örneklemektedir. Bu bağlamda, kadınlar için göçebe öznelliklerin geliştirilmesinde konum özelliğinin öneminin vurgulayan *A Woman Without A Country*, İrlandalı kadınların üç düzeydeki cinsel farklılık üzerinden çeşitli ve gerçek yaşam deneyimlerine odaklanır. Boland, *The Historians* eserinde Braidotti'nin göçebe hafızasını kullanarak İrlandalı kadınların kolektif hafızada deneyimlediği silinme ve sessizliğe dikkat çekmektedir ve İrlandalı kadınları hem İrlanda tarihinin tanığı hem de katkıda bulunan göçebe özneler olarak yeniden tanıtmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışma Boland'ın İrlandalı kadınları kadın göçebe özneler olarak şiirlerinde yeniden yorumlayışının, kadın öznelliğini kalıplaşmış ve durağan düşünme alışkanlıklarının ötesinde yeniden ele almak için alternatif ve yaratıcı olanaklar sunduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Eavan Boland, *A Woman Without A Country*, *The Historians*, kadın göçebe öznelliği, Rosi Braidotti, göçebe hafıza, İrlandalı kadınlar

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation studies Eavan Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* (2014) and *The Historians* (2020) through the lens of the theory of female nomadic subjectivity developed by Rosi Braidotti. Building on nomadism and using Braidotti's theory of 'female nomadic subjectivity' as a theoretical and methodological tool, this dissertation argues that Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* (2014) and *The Historians* (2020) destabilise the traditional representations of Irish women by presenting female nomadic subjects through Braidotti's concepts of three levels of sexual difference, the politics of location and nomadic memory. In her book *Nomadic Subjects*[1], Rosi Braidotti offers the nomadic perspective as an alternative approach to female subjectivity. Her nomadism is one of the extensions of contemporary subjectivity theories which reject the fixities regarding the traditional approaches to identity politics, and it is "against the settled and conventional nature of theoretical and especially philosophical thinking […] [and contribute to the recent] decline of metaphysically fixed, steady identities" (*NS* [1st ed.] 4, 5). Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's nomadology, Braidotti reworks the concept of nomad thought and places it in a feminist framework to "develop and evoke a vision of female feminist subjectivity in a nomadic mode" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 1). Braidotti's nomadic subject defies all the traditional notions of identity and aims to deconstruct the accepted norms related to women in general.

As stated, this dissertation employs Braidotti's concepts of the politics of location, the three levels of sexual difference and nomadic memory as foundational frameworks for understanding the development of female nomadic subjectivity in Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians*. Braidotti's theory of nomadism is not formulated in isolation from these concepts; rather, they form the necessary groundwork through which nomadic subjectivity is developed. The politics of location anchors subjectivity in historical, cultural, and embodied contexts, while the three levels of sexual difference trace the process of becoming a nomadic subject beyond essentialist binaries. By

[1] Hereafter referred to as *NS*.

foregrounding these components in the analysis of *A Woman Without A Country* in the first chapter, this dissertation establishes the conditions under which Boland's female poetic subjects begin to move toward a nomadic state of subjectivity. This trajectory is further explored in the second chapter through the concept of nomadic memory in *The Historians* which provides multiple and alternative possibilities of representation of Irish women as nomadic subjects in the unrecorded past and memories.

It should be noted that the politics of location is a foundational concept that informs both Braidotti's three levels of sexual difference and her notion of nomadic memory. By rooting subjectivity in specific places, histories, and embodied contexts, the politics of location affirms the particularity of women's lived experiences. In Boland's poetry, this manifests through her focus on domestic spaces, Irish historical landscapes, and intergenerational memory. These are the contexts in which Boland's women emerge as situated nomadic subjects rather than abstract or universal subject positions. The specificity of location not only enables Boland to explore differences between, among, and within women but also shapes how memory is preserved and reinterpreted. Thus, Boland's engagement with a particular location becomes central to her construction of female nomadic subjectivity, which allows for fluid, embodied subjectivities that resist static or essentialist representations.

In fact, Braidotti revisits Adrienne Rich's notion of "politics of location" developed in her "Notes toward a Politics of Location" (1984) to highlight the importance of the situated experience as a necessary constituent of female nomadic subjectivity. Braidotti uses the situated experience of women as opposed to the universalised static subject position identified with women by the patriarchal system of thought (*NS* [1st ed.] 164). As stated, the particularity of location is the precondition for the recognition of the complexity and diversity of female experience. Braidotti, hence, offers a cartographic method of creating female subjectivity and defines the politics of location as "a politically informed map of one's historical and social locations, enabling the analysis of situated formations of power and hence the elaboration of adequate forms of resistance" (*NT* 271). This cartographic method empowers the subject because it takes into consideration what

restricts or limits the representation of the subject by questioning its cultural, historical, and social motives. Braidotti suggests that representing the female experience through a specific location or place on the map also produces knowledge unique to that environment as it has all the norms, regulations, and accepted truths of that location. Accordingly, by focusing on Ireland as a particular location that impacts the experiences of women she represents, Boland questions the monolithic and stereotypical representation of women in Irish national and cultural discourse. The poet suggests that "I wanted to see the powerful public history of my own country joined by the private lives and solitary perspectives, including my own, which the Irish poetic tradition had not yet admitted to authorship" (*Object Lessons*[2] 187). She underlines the idea that the representation of female subjectivity cannot be separated from the Irish cultural and historical knowledge. She employs the politics of location to trace the complex feelings and emotions Irish women genuinely experience while representing them as female nomadic subjects.

In the context of this dissertation, female nomadic subjectivity refers to a mode of subjectivity represented in Eavan Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians* that resists fixed, static, or idealised portrayals of Irish womanhood. Instead of adhering to traditional roles such as the national mother, passive muse, or symbolic figure of cultural continuity, Boland's female figures become female nomadic subjects who are shaped by movement, contradiction, and relational complexity. These women inhabit a space between personal memory and collective history, between domestic life and national discourse, and they shape their subjectivities through continual negotiation rather than resolution. This nomadic vision of female subjectivity is traced in Boland's poems through the poet's engagement with the politics of location, her exploration of three levels of sexual difference and her use of nomadic memory as a means of disrupting linear, patriarchal narratives of Irish history and culture. Boland's female subjects are defined by their capacity to rethink, reframe and re-inhabit the earlier stereotypical and conventional roles and positions from within. In this dissertation, then, Braidotti's theory of female nomadic subjectivity serves as a critical lens to articulate how Boland positions Irish women as historically conscious, self-reflective and active agents who refuse

[2] Hereafter referred to as *OL*.

reductive subjectivities and instead embrace multiplicity, fragmentation, and change as female nomadic subjects. It is through Braidotti's theory of female nomadic subjectivity that Boland's poetry challenges conventional representations of women in the Irish poetic tradition and offers a more fluid and layered vision of female subjectivity and experience.

It should be noted that many critics have examined Boland's poetry by taking into consideration her rejection of the passive and simplified images of women in traditional Irish poetry. Thus, the critical analysis of her poems revolves around Irish women's misrepresentation in the poetic tradition. In this regard, Abbie L. Cory calls Boland's writing strategy a "project of disrupting hegemonic representations of Irish women in Irish male-authored poetry" (961). Yet, there is a lack of research on Boland's works, including *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians*, in terms of nomadic subjectivity, and Braidotti's theory of nomadic subjectivity has never been used in the analysis of Boland's collections. Indeed, some studies have identified representations of fluid female subjectivity in Boland's poems and have found a certain connection between Boland's works and nomadic subjectivity. For instance, Carmen Zamorano Llena, in "The Salvage from Postmodernism: Nomadic Subjectivity in Contemporary Women's Poetry in the British Isles", analyses some of the poems of Carol Rumens, Fleur Adcock, and Eavan Boland in terms of the representation of female subjectivity from the nomadic perspective but Zamorano Llena's study fails to provide an in-depth analysis of nomadism, especially for Boland and her poems. Sarah Fulford, in *Gendered Spaces in Contemporary Irish Poetry*, discusses how Irish women poets, including Eavan Boland, leave behind the conventional representation of female subjectivity and experience "so as to chart a less sacred, more fluid, less grounded and less delimited" (133) assertion of a female subject position. In her book, Fulford also refers to Braidotti's concept of nomadic subjectivity while analysing the poems of Medbh McGuckian (191,196) and Sara Berkeley (215, 245) but Boland's poetry is excluded from this nomadic perspective. Similarly, Pilar Villar-Argaiz, in *The Poetry of Eavan Boland*, highlights that it is possible to read Boland's works on account of the fluid representation of female subjectivity (3) but his major concern is to analyse her poems from a postcolonial perspective. These studies contribute to the studies of Boland's works regarding women's representations in

Irish poetry, but they do not offer a detailed analysis of her poems concerning nomadic subjectivity.

Examining Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians* within the theoretical framework of nomadic subjectivity, this dissertation embodies many firsts. This study has been one of the first attempts to thoroughly examine Boland's latest poetry collections, which have not received as much critical attention as her earlier collections. For instance, there is no critical analysis of *A Woman Without A Country* although the collection has been reviewed by several scholars. Only Jody Allen Randolph, in her book *Eavan Boland* (2013), offers a review of the selected poems of the collection before its publication (178-183). This dissertation draws on Allen Randolph's discussions in regard to the selected poems of *A Woman Without A Country* by extending and reinterpreting them through the lens of nomadic theory and a deeper emphasis on the representations of female nomadic subjectivity. Similarly, *The Historians* has been reviewed multiple times but the only in-depth critical analysis is Pilar Villar-Argáiz's article "Past, Secrecy and Absence in Eavan Boland's *The Historians*". In her article, Villar-Argáiz explores the role of memory, secrecy, and historical absence in the collection with particular attention to Boland's treatment of national history and silenced narratives. However, her reading does not engage with the concept of nomadic memory nor does it examine the collection through the lens of female nomadic subjectivity. This dissertation builds on the importance of memory in *The Historians* but differs from Villar-Argáiz's approach by situating Boland's use of memory within the theoretical framework of Braidotti's female nomadic subjectivity. Most importantly, no study has used the concept of female nomadic subjectivity as a main theoretical tool to analyse Boland's representation of female subjectivity in any of her collections. In this respect, this dissertation develops a critical approach to study Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians* in a new conceptual framework.

Braidotti defines nomadic subjectivity, in the broadest sense, as a figuration that refutes any established understanding and representation of womanhood and explains that a figuration

> is a politically informed image of thought that evokes or expresses an alternative vision of subjectivity. There is a real urgency to learn to think differently about the notion and practice of subjectivity. This entails the creation of new frameworks, images, and modes of thought, beyond the dualistic conceptual constraints and the perversely monological mental habits of phallocentric thought. (*NS* [2nd ed.] 22)

Braidotti argues that the traditional and classical notions of subjectivity have begun to be challenged, and a visionary form of understanding and interpreting any subjectivity has been developed. Braidotti calls for finding different mediums or ways of contemplating any subjectivity and the shattering of the established line of thought and restrictive dualistic thinking. As Baştürk suggests, Braidotti's ideas underline ways "to think and live politically without any need to refer to any transcendental codes which are expected to define the being" (39). As a result, she introduces her concept of female nomadic subjectivity as a figuration which promotes a new vision of fluid female subjectivity and experience by moving beyond old and conventional schemes of thought.

The fluidity of female subjectivity, which will be discussed below in relation to the representation of Irish women as female nomadic subjects in Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians,* accords with what Braidotti defines as a becoming subject. Hence, female nomadic subjectivity is linked to the concept of becoming since the "[p]rocesses of becoming […] are not predicated on a stable, centralized Self who supervises their unfolding. They rest rather on a non-unitary, multi-layered, dynamic subject" (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 118). According to Braidotti, the rejection of the fixity of identity is related to the concept of becoming that nomadic subjects experience. This concept denies the need for any limitations or set of rules that define the subject's identity. Braidotti suggests that people are in the process of continuous becoming, and especially with the epoch of modernity in the Western world, the long-established notions of subjectivity have begun to be questioned. It is this questioning that leads to "the crisis and decline of the classical system of representation of the subject, in the political, epistemological, and ethical sense of the term" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 96). This crisis paves the way for the formation of the German and French schools of critical thought.

The German school of thought is associated with J. Habermas, and a larger number of influential philosophers and theoreticians, such as Foucault, Deleuze, Derrida, and Irigaray, represent the French school. Braidotti underlines the fact that both schools emphasise "the political need for a revision of the Enlightenment as the myth of liberation through reason" (*NS* [1st ed.] 96). In other words, the notion of reason, which is regarded as the most significant and essential attribute of human beings in the context of the Enlightenment, is challenged by these two schools, and the primacy of reason is critiqued in order to point out that such thinking blocks the way for multiple and new modes of thought. In the light of these developments in relation to the notion of reason, Braidotti defines modernity as "the moment of decline of classical rationalism and the view of the subject attached to it. The century-old identification of the subject with his/her rational self is challenged" (*NS* [1st ed.] 97). Such a critical approach to the established convention of reason also brings out the non-conventional attitude to human subjectivity free from any restrictive and dogmatic conventions or traditions, and prioritises the concepts of transformation, mutation, metamorphoses, and becomings. As a result of this interest in change and transformation, the fluid assertions of identity gain prominence in contemporary theories.

Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming, Braidotti points out the importance of the fluidity of nomadic subjects. For instance, she reworks Deleuze's theory of becoming, and she combines it with nomadism and feminism to argue that female nomadic subjectivity is a way of freeing women from any socially and culturally established norms. Although Braidotti's ideas differ from Deleuze and Guattari's theory in terms of sexual difference in the becoming process, she asserts that Deleuze's concepts of rhizome, becomings, and nomadology are highly relevant to her female nomadism in the deconstruction of a patriarchal pattern of thinking. Braidotti suggests that the becoming process leads to multiple figurations, and these figurations function as "a living map, a transformative account of the self" (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 3). Moreover, it is through these figurations that women come to think and behave as independent subjectivities and avoid becoming stereotypical, silenced female subjects. In other words, "becomings take place when a body […] begins to perceive, move, think and feel in new ways" (Hickey-Moody and Malins 6). As stated, nomadic becoming defies all the borders

and limitations put on the subjects. Instead, it enables the formation of fluid and non-fixed subject positions.

Braidotti regards this becoming process as an important part of her project of nomadic feminism. She deconstructs what is traditionally constructed as a universal image of womanhood by redefining female subjectivity through nomadic figurations. Particularly, she pays special attention to the concept of becoming-woman as to be further analysed below. Actually, Braidotti underlines that becoming-woman is the initial step to question "the overemphasis on masculine sexuality, […] the persistence of sexual dualism, and the positioning of woman as the privileged figure of otherness. […] 'becoming-woman' triggers off the deconstruction of phallic identity through a set of deconstructive steps" (*Nomadic Theory*[3] 39). Focusing on as many different ordinary and authentic experiences of women as possible is the key component in problematising the traditional representation of women since the portrayal of multiplicity and diversity of women's experiences challenges the universalised image of women through creating new visions and interpretations of female subjectivity.

Braidotti draws significant inspiration from Deleuze and Guattari's theory of becoming but she revises it through a feminist lens to articulate her concept of nomadic subjectivity. Therefore, an examination of Deleuze and Guattari's becoming process is necessary to contextualise Braidotti's theoretical departure and development. She defines Deleuze and Guattari's becoming as "the affirmation of the positivity of difference, meant as a multiple and constant process of transformation" (*NS* [1st ed.] 111). It is an important attempt to renounce stable and ordered identities based on rational, systematic, and established notions of classical theories of identity. Since Deleuze and Guattari reject the hierarchical representation of any subject position, their theory of becoming functions as a gateway to reach more fluid and diverse assertions of subjectivity. The root of becoming lies in the fact that it does not recognise any superior or high form of subject position. It is not about becoming something else or creating associations between two entities or notions:

[3] Hereafter referred to as *NT*.

"Becoming is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something; neither is it regressing-progressing; neither is it corresponding, establishing corresponding relations; neither is it producing, producing a filiation or producing through filiation" (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand* 239). Becoming is more about accepting diversity and multiplicity than assuming the notions of sameness and uniformity. It can be suggested that the process of becoming opens the way for embracing differences without falling into habitual thinking patterns. Furthermore, becoming takes place in in-between spaces where there is unpredictability, uncertainty, and obscurity. Deleuze and Guattari state that becoming "passes *between* points, it comes up through the middle […] A becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two; it is the in-between" (*A Thousand* 293). In these liminal places or zones, multiplicity and differences can flourish in unexpected and unpredictable ways.

It is important that nomadic becoming reshapes the classical image of human subjectivity, and the earlier classical representation of the thinking subject leaves its place to "a nomadic, disjuncted [sic] self" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 101). In this respect, Deleuze and Guattari claim that "[t]he world has lost its pivot; the subject can no longer even dichotomize, but accedes to a higher unity, of ambivalence or overdetermination, in an always supplementary dimension to that of its object" (*A Thousand* 6). Human beings become supplementary parts of ambivalent forces in the world, and all the long-established notions about the position of humans lose their previous connotations and associations. According to Braidotti, Deleuze and Guattari accept the human body, not as the superior entity but "as the complex interplay of highly constructed social and symbolic forces. The body is not an essence, let alone a biological substance; it is a play of forces, surface of intensities; pure simulacra without originals" (*NS* [1st ed.] 112). This new perception of the body claims that biological and psychological essentialism is not the only factor to define a subject's identity. For example, Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, based on the unconscious and psychosexual drives, offer a limited point of view in contemplation of the subject's identity. Rather than focusing only on internal forces such as desires and the unconscious, Deleuze and Guattari pay considerable attention to outside forces which also have a claim in shaping subjectivity. The embodied subject is the product of all the intersecting forces of the world, and these forces lead

human beings to possess non-unitary and fluid selves. Hence, Deleuze and Guattari do not promote the representation of the static self. Moreover, they claim that there are not only feminine and masculine subject positions but also a multiplicity of subjectivities. This multiplicity is achieved through the process of becoming: "there are as many sexes as there are terms in symbiosis, as many differences as elements contributing to a process of contagion. […] [M]any beings pass between a man and a woman; they come from different worlds, […] they cannot be understood in terms of production, only in terms of becoming" (*A Thousand* 242). Thus, the only way to accept multiple differences regarding subject positions is to depend on the process of becoming. Braidotti argues that this new image of the subject as multiplicity and process also affects the interpretation and reading of female subjectivity. While redefining female subjectivity, multiple variances such as social class, age, sexuality, and race are taken into consideration. This new vision of subjectivity "emphasizes the situated, specific, embodied nature of the feminist subject" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 99).

What is crucial in Deleuze and Guattari's approach to the concept of becoming is their insistence on the element of minority. Becoming-minority or nomad is one of the key figurations of their philosophy, and they believe that all becomings are minoritarian. They assert that

> all becoming is a becoming-minoritarian. When we say majority, we are referring not to a greater relative quantity but to the determination of a state or standard in relation to which larger quantities, as well as the smallest, can be said to be minoritarian. […] Majority implies a state of domination, not the reverse. (*A Thousand* 291)

It can be put forward that the starting point of the becoming process is becoming-minoritarian. Minorities have the ability to oppose what the majority stands for, as can be seen in the example of real-life nomads from which Deleuze and Guattari derive their initial metaphor for their philosophy. Becoming-subject should be one of the members of underrepresented groups of minorities because it is the only way to challenge a state of domination represented by majority. Deleuze and Guattari emphasise the importance of becoming-minority/nomad in that nomads are able to wander in all in-between and liminal spaces where all the hierarchical ideas and orders are disturbed. As Patricia MacCormack puts it, "all becomings repudiate cultural arboreal (tree-like) structures of

access and power, value and valuelessness based on any notion of fixed or complex subjectivity. […] [B]ecoming is as much about becoming non-dominant as it is becoming something else" (3). Becoming-subject can transgress the borders and limits in understanding any subject position, offering alternative ways of contemplating human subjectivity.

The lived practices of real-life nomads function as a foundational metaphor for both Braidotti's nomadic subjectivity and Deleuze and Guattari's nomadology. A crucial link between Braidotti's concept of becoming and Deleuze and Guattari's nomad thought lies in their shared emphasis on fluidity, movement, and the rejection of fixed, hierarchical structures. As stated above, drawing inspiration from the practices of nomadic communities whose lives are defined by adaptation, deterritorialization, and continuous negotiation with shifting environments, Deleuze and Guattari conceptualise the nomad not merely as a figure in motion, but as a mode of thought and existence that resists closure and embraces transformation. So as to understand the image of a nomad in Braidotti's nomadic theory within the scope of this dissertation's aims, it is useful to understand Deleuze and Guattari's concept of nomadism. In their collaborative work, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari introduce their nomadism and nomad thought. The book consists of fifteen plateaus, and each plateau can be accepted as a different section, but all of them are connected to each other in building meaning and shaping Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy. Brian Massumi explains the function of the book as follows: "[each plateau] is an orchestration of crashing bricks extracted from a variety of disciplinary edifices. They carry traces of their former emplacement, which give them a spin of defining the arc of their vector" (7). In the twelfth plateau titled "Treatise on Nomadology—The War Machine", it is observed that they define nomadology as a war machine, and the section begins with an axiom: "The war machine is exterior to the State apparatus". To comment on their idea of nomadism, they refer to the work of Georges Dumezil's analysis and reading of Indo-European mythology in which there are two leaders of political sovereignty represented by the magician-king and the jurist-priest. These two representative figures are the opposite sides of the same political system, and Deleuze and Guattari describe them by using binary oppositions such as "the obscure and the clear, the violent and the calm, the

quick and the weighty, the fearsome and the regulated" (351). Although they stand in opposition, they need each other to exercise their political power. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the political myth of sovereignty represents the State power and "[t]hey are the principal elements of a State apparatus that proceeds by a One-Two, distributes binary distinctions, and forms a milieu of interiority" (352). On the contrary, the war machine cannot be located in the State apparatus, and "it comes from elsewhere. […] [It is] a celerity against gravity, secrecy against the public, a power *(puissance)* against sovereignty, a machine against the apparatus" (352). Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari explain the principles and functions of the war machine by referring to the real-life nomads and their lifestyle, and they claim that "[*t*]*he war machine is the invention of the nomads*" (380). Nomads' mobility, their evasion of using the sedentary roads, their autonomous nature, and their resistance to the State philosophy and regulations constitute Deleuze and Guattari's nomad thought. To put it another way, they use the metaphors of nomadic people to elaborate on counter-thought which resists the systematic and established pattern of thinking.

Nomad thought or thinking is against the State philosophy, which creates impositions and despotic authority to maintain its power. The State dictates its rules and regulations to sustain the order in the established hierarchies. However, nomad thought disrupts the philosophy of the State, and, in Deleuze's words, nomadic thinking as the war machine becomes "an extrinsic nomadic unit as opposed to an intrinsic despotic unit" ("Nomad Thought" 148). Sameness and constancy are two major principles of the State philosophy and these principles are attributed to the thinking subject and to its presumed concepts (Massumi 4). Nomad thought subverts these principles of sameness and constancy. Instead, it respects difference and multiplicity:

> 'Nomad thought' does not lodge itself in the edifice of an ordered interiority; it moves freely in an element of exteriority. It does not repose on identity; it rides difference. It does not respect the artificial division between the three domains of representation, subject, concept, and being; it replaces restrictive analogy with a conductivity that knows no bounds. The concepts it creates do not merely reflect the eternal form of a legislating subject, but are defined by a communicable force in relation to which their subject, to the extent that they can be said to have one, is only secondary. Rather than reflecting the world, they are immersed in a changing state of things. (Massumi 5)

The significance of nomad thought lies in the fact that it knows no transcendental or superior concepts and truths. Instead of committing itself to hierarchy and dualistic thinking that dominated Western philosophy, nomadic thinking focuses on the difference, change, and interrelation of beings and things in the world that seem to be in a state of constant transformation. In a nomadic context, a war takes place "against the strategisation of thought by the mechanisms of power [by taking the example of] the actual wars perpetrated by nomadic societies in prevention of the formation of a state apparatus" (Reid 63).

Braidotti, too, uses nomadism as "the kind of critical consciousness that resists settling into socially coded modes of thought and behavior. […] It is the subversion of set conventions that defines the nomadic state, not the literal act of travelling" (*NS* [1st ed.] 5). Evidently, Braidotti's nomadic subjectivity functions as a war machine that aims to eliminate negative and debasing connotations attributed to any subject position. In other words, for Braidotti, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of nomad becomes "a powerful metaphor for the female feminist subject" (Davis and Lutz 374). According to Braidotti, nomadic thinking "has the potential for positive renaming, for opening up new possibilities for life and thought, especially for women. […] Nomadic subjects are capable of freeing the activity of thinking from the hold of phallocentric dogmatism, returning thought to its freedom" (*NS* [1st ed.] 8). As stated, Braidotti extends this framework into the realm of subjectivity, where becoming is not a linear progression but a dynamic process grounded in multiplicity and relationality. Within this theoretical context, the becoming process of female nomadic subjectivity is fundamentally shaped by an ongoing engagement with change, fluidity, mobility, and resistance, and it mirrors the nomad's navigation of shifting terrains and their wage of war over the state apparatus, and by an embodied openness to revision and redefinition.

In fact, it is important to note that Boland's act of writing the actualities of women's lives is itself a becoming process in terms of the fluid identity of a poet and its subversion of the set conventions that limit the representation of the female self. In other words, Boland can be regarded as a nomadic woman poet. In her second essay collection, *A Journey with*

Two Maps: Becoming a Woman Poet (2011), Boland explores the process of becoming a woman and a poet at the same time. It should be noted that she does not refer to the process of becoming-woman within the scope of nomadic theory, but her definition of a poet recognises the idea of becoming as important. Like Braidotti states for becoming-woman, Boland claims, of her book, and the poet, that

> [t]his is a book of being and becoming. It is about being a poet. It is also about the long process of becoming one. If these seem in the wrong order there is a reason: the disorder is part of my subject. There is nothing settled about a poet's identity. The becoming doesn't stop because the being has been achieved. They proceed together, attached in ways that are hard to be exact about. (xi)

She underlines that becoming-poet is a never-ending process for her, and her words signify that many factors shape the relationship between being and becoming. Neither this relationship nor its variables can be defined precisely because becoming and being are fluid notions that reject definite and ultimate conclusions. Nomadic theory also prioritises "change and motion over stability" (Braidotti, *NT* 29), and this rejection of stability is linked to the concept of becoming. As Braidotti argues, the process of becoming "works on a time sequence that is neither linear nor sequential because processes of becoming are not predicated upon a stable, centralized Self" (*NT* 35). The process of becoming thus seeks to eliminate the factors that confine subjects to certain boundaries and limitations. As a result, they create resistance to what restricts them for the benefit of an overarching system of thought that controls subject positions. Clearly, the act of becoming is a kind of resistance that strives to give power and unconditionally improve the conditions of subject positions. In Braidotti's words, "[b]ecomings are the sustainable shifts or changes undergone by nomadic subjects in their active resistance against being subsumed in the commodification of their own diversity. Becomings are unprogrammed as mutations, disruptions, and points of resistance" (*NT* 122). It is understood that nomadic subjects are bound to the process of becoming as a way of promoting the fluid assertion of subjectivity, and this act of becoming defies the monolithic and essentialist representation of any subject position, specifically for women. This fluidity of subjectivity, which eventually refutes the essentialist and traditional view of womanhood, is what characterises Boland's poetic identity too.

Boland describes her act of writing poetry as a woman poet in a male-dominated Irish poetic tradition as "a wilful detour from the usual narrative of poetic inheritance" (*A Journey* 38). This detour becomes possible by attaining a fluid subjectivity as a woman poet in a patriarchal poetic tradition. As Boland claims in her essays, there was a "monolithic poetic past" (*A Journey* xiv) in Ireland that excluded women's voices and experiences. Yet, she proves that it is possible to unite these two different concepts: embracing experiences as a woman and being a woman poet. Her poem "The Women", published in *The Journey* (1987), combines these two different aspects of her life:

> This is the hour I love: the in-between,
> neither here-nor-there hour of evening.
> […]
> This is the time I do my work best,
> going up the stairs in two minds,
> in two worlds […]
>
> The hour of change, of metamorphosis,
> of shape-shifting instabilities.
> My time of sixth sense and second sight (5-7, 10-12)

Accordingly, Boland describes the moment she writes her poems by using the terms "the in-between" (1), "neither here nor there hour" (2) and "the hour of change" (10). In this regard, she does not refer to the traditional time sequence, but as nomadic theory suggests, she reveals that her "shape-shifting instabilities" (11) consist of her ability to make transitions from becoming-woman to becoming-poet or vice versa, and this becoming or metamorphosis is not based on linear or sequential time sequence. Vesna Ukić Košta suggests that "[i]n this process of constant intermingling and shape-shifting it is not possible for one sphere of her life to dominate the other. This woman seems to find creativity in exactly this state of liminality, so to speak. One (hemi)sphere of life nurtures the other and they cannot exist separately" (7). To put it another way, Boland is able to move from one role to another as a fluid subject. It is this kind of fluidity that is observed in her female poetic personas in *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians*. She creates nomadic subjectivities for women by recognising as many different, complex, and diverse moments of women's lives as possible in her poems. Nomadic subjectivity in her

poems can be traced in these different moments of female experience since it is possible to encounter a variety of emotions, feelings, hardships of life, and aspirations of Irish women.

When Boland's attempt to revise the stereotypical representation of women in her poetry is taken into consideration, it is observed that she opposes the passive and silent figurations of women in both history and literature. She tries to give agency to women by focusing on the ordinary and authentic experiences of Irish women in contrast to the stock images of womanhood. At this point, the idiom of ordinary and authentic experiences of Irish women within Boland's poetic discourse needs to be defined and discussed in detail. Boland argues that the reality surrounding the lives of Irish women is underrepresented in Irish poetic tradition. Irish women's experiences are presented in a limited fashion by attributing stereotypical roles to them. They are excluded from the official culture and literature for the sake of creating a false representation of women as emblems, icons, and silenced figures. As opposed to these culturally and socially oriented silenced women figures in Irish literary tradition and history, Boland becomes the spokesperson for the voiceless women who stayed in the margins. In one of her essays, Boland states that women are silenced due to male poets' portrayal of them as passive and decorative entities in their poems. She puts forward that "[w]omen in such poems were frequently referred to approvingly as mythic, emblematic. But to me these passive and simplified women seemed a corruption. […] For they were not decorations, they were not ornaments" (Boland, *OL* 95). Boland reveals that ordinary experiences and aspects of women's daily lives are neglected and excluded from the Irish poetic tradition at the expense of creating an unrealistic image of Irish women. In her words, "[a] woman's life was not honored. […] The so-called ordinary world, which most of us had come from and some would return to on the last bus, was not even mentioned" (*OL* x). What is excluded or marginalised about women's experiences in traditional Irish poetry becomes the focus of Boland's poems. For Boland, what is "real, actual, describable" (Boland, *A Journey* 19) in relation to the concrete expression of ordinary life from the perspectives of mothers, wives, and daughters is the subject matter of her poetry. For instance, domestic concerns, instances of motherhood, marital relationships, and suburban life experiences are the indicators of the experiences of Irish women for Boland. What is presented in her poetry

points out the diversity of the female experience. Boland shuts down the stereotypical thinking about women and suggests that tradition is the biggest hindrance to portraying the truths of women's lives. Earlier stock images of Irish womanhood, such as the Mother Ireland trope, have taken the credibility and reality from women's representation. Boland underlines the importance of the actuality of women's lives, consisting of ordinary but relatable experiences, by stripping them from the systematic process of marginalisation within the male-oriented literary culture.

However, certain critics have developed counter-arguments to Boland's representation of Irish women in her poems. These critics accept that Boland's poetry attempts to deconstruct the patriarchal image of women, but they argue that she fails in her mission as a result of her revisiting the stock images of women. For example, Gerardine Meaney accuses Boland of creating another stereotypical version of female experiences in her poem "Mise Éire" by stating that "[t]he versions of femininity presented in the poem are once again shocking in their stereotyping" (146). Also, Brian Henry claims that Boland presents the simplified images of womanhood in her poem "The Death of Reason". He states that "[a]lthough Boland deftly uses the woman to represent several things (art, reason, England), she falls into the trap that she denounces in "Outside History": she transforms the woman into an icon" (199-200). Indeed, Boland uses images of womanhood that the patriarchal tradition of Irish poetry created. However, it should be noted that those earlier traditional images of women were produced in order to create essentialist notions about them by disregarding the complexity of female experiences concerning their psychology, emotions, and feelings. Conversely, Boland's revisiting of some of these traditional representations of women can be regarded as a conscious act of her poetic strategy to lay bare the artificiality of female subjectivity celebrated by the patriarchal culture. This strategy of Boland has a significant connection in regard to her representation of Irish women as nomadic subjects. Braidotti claims that the redefinition of female subjectivity as nomadic subjects is possible through the repetition and revisiting of the old scheme of thought about women, and defines this method as "the working through of the stock of cumulated images, concepts, and representations of women, of female identity, such as they have been codified by the culture in which we live" (*NS* [1st ed.] 169). Accordingly, Boland employs and reworks the stock images of women to form

a poetic space where all the silenced and marginalised female figurations can raise their voices. Even if Boland's poetic personas sometimes remain silent in the poems, their sole presence as the subjects of poems rather than as the objects contributes to Boland's poetic agenda. In other words, it is indeed to promote fluid assertions of female subjectivity that Boland resorts to traditional representations of women.

Boland, thus, as the concept of becoming suggests, introduces images of female subjectivities that differ from the universal or cultural production of womanhood in Irish culture. In order to reconstruct the image of women, she writes about Irish women who speak, act, desire, and resist mainstream ideology. In her essay entitled "A Kind of Scar: The Woman Poet in a National Tradition", she states that "I must be vigilant to write of my own womanhood – whether it was revealed to me in the shape of a child or a woman from Achill – in such a way that I never colluded with the simplified images of woman in Irish poetry" (23). Boland's poetry presents female nomadic subjectivities of a suburban woman or an emigrated woman and sometimes experiences of women as mothers and wives. Accordingly, poems in Boland's latest two poetry collections, namely, *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians* demonstrate that Boland's women are fluid representations of female nomadic subjects who are in a state of becoming as per the feelings, struggles, and sufferings of women in Ireland. In this regard, it is important to note that Boland's poetry rejects the "oppressive legends of femininity—the virginal Hibernia, the Shan Van Vocht, Cathleen Ni Houlihan, the Dark Rosaleen, Mother Ireland" (Kirkpatrick 1) all of which are the product of the phallocentric culture that dominated social, political and religious life in Ireland.

It should be noted that the concept of becoming is not a singular strategy as Deleuze and Guattari introduce multiple forms of becoming such as becoming-animal, becoming-molecular and becoming-imperceptible. These different processes of becoming constitute Deleuze and Guattari's opposition to Western philosophy's transcendentalist attitude towards the human subject, and becoming-minority stands for the general figuration of their philosophy. Yet, among all of these becomings, becoming-woman appears to be the backbone of their concept of becoming. They state that becoming-woman is the essential

part of all becomings. While explaining the minorities' position against the majority, Deleuze and Guattari state that the male is the norm and the heart of a logocentric worldview, and the woman is reversely posited as the other. Man stands for the majority while woman is regarded as part of a minority (*A Thousand* 291). Since women are always accepted as the other, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that they become the ultimate example of alienation and degradation. In Braidotti's words, becoming-woman "is the key, the precondition, and the necessary starting point for the whole process of becoming. […] [W]oman is the privileged figure of otherness" (*NS* [1st ed.] 114). Deleuze and Guattari highlight that there cannot be becoming-man because they are not in the position of a minority. Becoming-woman gains the fundamental position among all becomings:

> there is a becoming-woman, a becoming-child, that do not resemble the woman or the child as clearly distinct molar entities (although it is possible—only possible—for the woman or child to occupy privileged positions in relation to these becomings). What we term a molar entity is, for example, the woman as defined by her form, endowed with organs and functions and assigned as a subject. Becoming-woman is not imitating this entity or even transforming oneself into it. […] not imitating or assuming the female form, but emitting particles that enter the relation of movement and rest, or the zone of proximity, of a microfemininity, in other words, that produce in us a molecular woman, create the molecular woman. (*A Thousand* 275)

Evidently, for Deleuze and Guattari, it is important to free women from the dualistic and opposing representation of male and female subject positions by offering the concept of a molecular woman. According to them, all becomings are molecular in that it is not possible to restrict the movements of molecules. They are able to wander in all the in-between and liminal positions, and they transform themselves into one another without the aim of building an analogy between two concepts (*A Thousand* 272). In this respect, Deleuze and Guattari state that becoming-woman also means becoming-molecular but this becoming does not result in imitating the concept of woman in the Western thought. The molecular woman is purified from the previous negative connotations in the hierarchical system of representation of human subject positions. In other words, their approach to becoming-woman requires the erasure of the sexual difference or the dissolution of sexed identities. Thus, becoming a molecular woman is essential for deconstructing the patriarchal system of thought. They promote the genderless representation of the woman's subject position and assert that feminine qualities should be removed from their entities by focusing on the forces or molecules that form them.

However, this dissertation does not follow Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-woman although Braidotti is heavily influenced by their ideas on the becoming process. Braidotti suggests that Deleuze and Guattari's theory of becoming-woman is such a significant effort to challenge the classical norms of female subjectivity, yet they present certain conflicts and ambivalent attitudes concerning female subjectivity. Firstly, Braidotti underlines the fact that their philosophy disrupts the dualistic categorisation of subject positions but their specific emphasis on becoming-woman again puts women in the position of the other. In Deleuze and Guattari's system of thought, women are still regarded as the privileged other as opposed to men, and seeing becoming-woman as the precondition of all becomings paves the way for the marginalisation of women once again. Braidotti finds their approach problematic for feminist concerns since it "undermines the specificity of woman as well as the special role of feminism" (Goulimari 99), and the genderless position of woman is not helpful in freeing women from the position of the other. Elizabeth Grosz also shares similar concerns regarding Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-woman. She claims that their philosophy poses serious problems for the understanding of female subjectivity since it seems that "Deleuze and Guattari's frameworks inevitably fall prey to their own criticism, […] insofar as they deterritorialize women's bodies and subjectivities only to reterritorialize them as part of a more universalist movement of becoming" (182). By setting the becoming-woman as a precondition or necessity for all becomings, they again create the universalist and essentialist subject position for women.

As Braidotti consecutively stresses in her nomadic project, one of the foundational traits of her nomadism is to promote the positivity of difference from which her female nomadic subjectivity derives its power of displaying the inequality between the sexes. Braidotti argues that Deleuze and Guattari's genderless representation of female subjectivity is even dangerous for women. In order to deconstruct the phallogocentric perception of woman, they created the molecular woman within the becoming-woman process but this deconstruction process can never be applied to women. Braidotti underlines that "one cannot deconstruct a subjectivity one has never controlled. Self-determination is the first step of any program of deconstruction" (*NS* [1st ed.] 117). Her concern is related to the systematic marginalisation of women. For centuries, the difference has been used

pejoratively for women, and this difference in negative connotations limits the conceptualisation of female subjectivity. As a result, women are never in control of their own being but they are always defined by their secondary position compared to men. Hence, Braidotti's concept of nomadic female subjectivity is a strategic approach to save difference from negative connotations regarding female sexuality:

> The mimetic reassertion of sexual difference challenges the century-old identifications of the thinking subject with the universal and of both of them with the masculine. The feminism of sexual difference challenges such encompassing generalizations and posits as radically other a female, sexed, thinking subject, who stands in an asymmetrical relationship to the masculine. Repetition engenders difference, for if there is no symmetry between the sexes, it follows that the feminine as experienced and expressed by women is as yet unrepresented, having been colonized by the male imaginary. Women must therefore speak the feminine, they must think it and represent it in their own terms; read with Deleuze, this is an active process of becoming. (*Metamorphoses* 26)

For Braidotti, the specificity of female sexuality should be the main agenda of reading and interpreting female subjectivity. Her aim is to transgress the boundaries of the conventional classification of women as the other. She reclaims the difference as a positive force in empowering female subject positions. As stated above, the emphasis on sexual difference eliminates the generalisations about women, and it presents women as genuine subject positions who are aware of their sexuality. It is observed that Braidotti's understanding of becoming-woman is in stark contrast to Deleuze and Guattari's articulation of female subjectivity. Instead of positing woman as a genderless subject position, Braidotti embraces female diversity in its complexity. Deleuze and Guattari's becoming molecular woman "clashes with women's sense of their own historical struggles" (*NS* [1st ed.] 120). The experiences of women have always been under the shadow of male fantasy. To put it another way, the patriarchal point of view creates certain limited subject positions for women, and it determines what is classified as feminine behaviours and qualities. However, Braidotti claims that feminine experiences should be represented, talked about, and thought about by women, and it is the only way to free difference from negativity concerning the representation of female experiences. For Braidotti, embracing diverse portrayals of feminine experiences by women defines the concept of becoming. That is to say, she revises Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of the concept of becoming-woman in her theory of sexual difference.

Braidotti's insistence on the positivity of difference in relation to women paves the way for reviewing female subjectivity without taking the male as a master signifier. This reviewing process consists of developing different methods and ways to prove the impossibility and impracticability of classifying women into a single category that disregards the diversity of female experiences. Braidotti states that "[m]ultiplicity does not reproduce one single model […] but rather creates and multiplies differences" (*NS* [1st ed.] 112-113). Hence, she pays special attention to every single female experience in formulating new versions of female subjectivity. For Braidotti, acknowledging the sexual difference in terms of nomadism is to accept the subject position of woman as a fluid entity which is open to constant process of transformation. As explained above, Braidotti's nomadism is related to thinking outside the established and conventional approaches while interpreting female subjectivity. The metaphor of nomads signifies the nomads' mobility and their rejection of the dominant and oppressive state philosophy. Building on this metaphor of nomads, Braidotti draws a parallel between nomads and women in order to stress that the definition of women under patriarchal oppression can only be changed if they manage to challenge the long-established system of thought that dominates the lives of women. Just as nomads disregard the rules of the State, women, as nomads, should also transgress the limitations and borders put on their selfhood. In this context, an affirmation of sexual difference is the key to freeing women from any negative associations. Lisa Folkmarson Kall puts forward that "[i]nstead of simply rejecting or affirming sexual difference, Braidotti explores the meaning of this difference and the way it comes to expression […] [Thus], she locates sexual difference at the very core of subjectivity" (196).

Hence, Braidotti rejects Deleuze and Guattari's genderless subject position of women because she believes that it is not possible to erase sexual differences from the ontological condition of human beings. In other words, awareness of sexual identity cannot be removed or changed:

> One can clearly choose to disguise this fact, to avoid all the morphological wrappings of sexual difference, such as a penis actually attached to a desiring male body, biblical-style penetration, fecundation of the ovum via penetration of sperm-carrying penis into the vagina. One can sing the praises of masquerades and polyvalence, such as lesbian cross-dressers who pump iron; one can choose to emphasize all kind of

> prosthetic or technological alternatives, such as women with strap-on dildos and penis-less men, but that will not suffice to erase sexual difference. A mere shift in the empirical referent cannot alter the somatic and psychic traces of sexual otherness. These traces are encrypted in the flesh, like a primordial memory, a genetic data-bank that pre-dates entry into linguistic representation. (*Metamorphoses* 46)

As can be understood from Braidotti's examples of bodies that transgress the boundaries of male and female anatomy, although one can manage to hide all the sexual referents, it is not possible to erase the traces of our sexual otherness from our consciousness since they are all encoded in body and mind without the possibility of eliminating them. Thus, acceptance of sexual difference is the starting point of taking into consideration the specificity of female sexuality and experience.

As observed, while Deleuze and Guattari conceptualise becoming-woman as the foundational step in all becomings, their approach ultimately depersonalises and abstracts the category of 'woman,' which presents challenges for a feminist analysis of embodied female subjectivity. Braidotti critiques this limitation and reclaims becoming-woman as a sexed and situated process—an adaptation that resonates more directly with Boland's intricate and layered representations of female subjectivity. Their abstraction of becoming-woman into a universal, genderless process disregards the embodied and sexed experiences of women, which Boland explicitly foregrounds. Rather than depersonalised or unsexed subjects, Boland's poems consistently prioritise a distinctly female perspective, rooted in memory, domestic life, and historical marginalisation. For instance, in *"*Our Future Will Become the Past of Other Women*"* from *The Historians*, Boland positions Irish women as conscious agents of historical memory, not as universal figures but as gendered subjects shaped by their social and cultural experiences. Likewise, in *"*Eurydice Speaks*"* and "Amethyst Beads" from *A Woman Without A Country*, Boland reshapes the traditionally silenced female mythological figures through the specificity of the female experience which refuses earlier mythic and universal representations. These poems rely on the recognition of sexual difference, which is overlooked by Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-woman. Thus, Boland's work aligns more closely with Braidotti's feminist revision of becoming-woman, which affirms the material and political significance of female subjectivity.

While highlighting the importance of sexual difference, Braidotti refers to Butler's theory of gender performativity that she discusses in *Gender Trouble*. Although both Braidotti and Butler aim at reinterpreting the female subject position as "an active, dynamic, metatheoretical and subversive being, who is thought capable of subverting […] the entire edifice of Western patriarchial, phallic thinking, be it in aesthetics, in epistemology or in ethics" (Mortensen 54), their ideas on the notion of sex significantly differ from each other. Butler argues that both gender and sex are constructed notions, and she criticises the dualistic and fixed representation of these terms. She expresses that her aim in *Gender Trouble* is "to counter the normative violence implied by ideal morphologies of sex and to uproot the pervasive assumptions about natural or presumptive heterosexuality that are informed by ordinary and academic discourses on sexuality" (xx). This normative violence is related to the gender ideals that are supported by essentialist views regarding gender and sex politics. For Butler, gender is an intersexual notion, thus fluid, that cannot be consistently and coherently represented as a result of its connection to social, cultural, and sexual imperatives. In this paradigm of multiple interpretations and readings of gender, Butler signifies that sex cannot be reduced to biological determination. She highlights the distinction between sex and gender in terms of their constructed nature, and puts forward that

> the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of "men" will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that "women" will interpret only female bodies. (10)

Butler valorises the fluidity and mobility in the notions of sex and gender, and her conceptualisation of these notions rejects patriarchal and essentialist viewpoints. In this regard, Braidotti shares Butler's criticism of the normative and exclusionary nature of sex and gender binarism on account of women's identity and representation, and she suggests that sex is "[n]ormative because it enforces compulsory heterosexuality, exclusionary because it conceals the multiplicity of differences that constitute the subject" (*NS* [1st ed.] 275). Yet, as highlighted above, Braidotti still claims that sex is an unchangeable biological precondition in understanding female subjectivity and experience. The traces of heterosexuality and the actuality of the sexed bodies cannot be denied since "sexual difference is written on the body in a thousand different ways, which includes hormonal and endrocrinological evidence" (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 47).

Hence, revisiting Luce Irigaray's concept of mimesis[4], Braidotti follows the strategy of "the extreme affirmation of sexed identity as a way of reversing the attribution of differences in a hierarchal mode" (*NS* [1st ed.] 169). Braidotti claims that her project consists of a twofold aim: the critical revisiting of conventional and debasing representations of women, and the invention of new versions of female subjectivity. These two different aims are actually interrelated in that it is not possible to create the new without questioning the old. In Braidotti's words, "the new is created by revisiting and burning up the old. […] [O]ne must assimilate the dead before one can move onto a new order" (*NS* [1st ed.] 169). One can understand that neutralising the previous negative connotations of difference regarding the position of women has a precondition which is to question and criticise the existing definitions of women. This revisiting may be classified as a repetitive act, but it also functions as a powerful tool to encourage women to talk about their differences genuinely.

Accordingly, Braidotti divides her nomadic project of sexual difference into three different levels. The first level of these is the "differences between men and women", while the second level concerns the "differences among women", and the third is related to the "differences within each woman". She underlines the fact that these three different levels do not belong to any hierarchy or order. On the contrary, they simultaneously exist on the same plane of reading female subjectivity. Each level sheds a different light on interpreting any female subject position, and they do not aim to categorise women into a single concept of womanhood. Braidotti claims that the three levels of sexual difference play a vital role in the becoming process central to the development of female nomadic subjectivity.

[4] Mimesis is a strategic tool proposed by Irigaray in order to challenge and expose the construction of the stereotypical representation of women. Mimesis as a tactical disruptive strategy involves women's deliberate assuming of the feminine roles assigned to them by the patriarchal discourse. Yet, this is not a simple act of subordination to the stereotypes. As Irigaray notes, it also includes the aim of "convert[ing] a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to begin to thwart it […] To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it" (76). Mimesis allows women to mimic the feminine roles while it also exposes the artificial and misleading representation of female subject position. Irigaray's mimetic strategy paves the way for the affirmation of the positivity of difference. Hence, Braidotti is also inspired by her in formulating her three levels of sexual difference and she writes that Irigaray's "repossessing the feminine through strategic repetitions engenders difference" ("Of Bugs and Women" 122).

Braidotti's first level of sexual difference problematises the essentialist mode of subjectivity which recognises the male as a universal and rational subject position. This universalism is problematic for women since it creates a hierarchy, and women are regarded as inferior to men. Besides, this false universalism accepts difference as a pejoration. The first level of difference, "differences between men and women," aims at thinking and defining difference and otherness based on phallogocentric values. The fundamental aspect of this level of difference is to save women from patriarchal definitions and connotations. Also, this process reveals the discrepancy between the two sexes and points out that the asymmetry between the sexes results from the universalist and essentialist reading of female subjectivity. Hence, the first level of difference disregards any attempt to eliminate sexual specificity which paves the way for a supposedly "postmodern and antiessentialist subject. […] [It] reconnect[s] the whole debate on difference to the bodily existence and experience of women" (*NS* [1st ed.]160).

Braidotti's major concern in the second level of sexual difference, "differences among women", is "how to create, legitimate, and represent a multiplicity of alternative forms of feminist subjectivity without falling into relativism" (*NS* [1st ed.] 162). Before articulating this level of difference, she highlights that *Woman* should be recognised as an umbrella term that consists of diverse and different female experiences and identities. However, the notion of *Woman* has always been marginalised since the multiplicity of female experiences has been disregarded by patriarchy. In this respect, the second level of difference seeks to raise feminist consciousness about the centuries-old marginalisation of women in patriarchal history and culture. For Braidotti, the recognition of the systematic devaluation of women by patriarchy is the starting point of the creation of feminist consciousness, which forms the common bond among women. The second level of difference claims that women may share certain common experiences "but they are not, in any way, *the same*" (*NS* [1st ed.] 163). Accordingly, one of the most significant aspects of the second level of difference is the emphasis on the disparity between woman as representation and woman as experience. To be able to comprehend and distinguish these different concepts of women rescues women from the monolithic system of thought that produces the stock representations of womanhood by disregarding the multiplicity of female experiences. At this point, Braidotti introduces the idea of the politics of location

which constitutes the backbone of the second level of difference. This idea is linked to the disapproval of "global statements about all women and [the importance of] attempting instead to be as aware as possible of the place from which one is speaking" (*NS* [1st ed.] 163). Taking into consideration race, age, class, etc., in interpreting female subjectivity is to reject global generalisations about women.

Braidotti's third level of sexual difference focuses on the differences within each woman. Here, she points out that identity and political subjectivity are completely different notions. Identity, as Braidotti puts it, "is a play of multiple, fractured aspects of the self. […] It is fixed through memories and recollections [and] identity is made of successive identifications, that is to say unconscious internalized images that escape rational control" (*NS* [1st ed.] 166). It is understood that identity is mainly connected to unconscious processes, and it is not always possible to represent the self through rational paradigms. On the other hand, political subjectivity "is a conscious and willful position" (*NS* [1st ed.] 166). One can conclude that identity is constructed out of lived experiences and memories, and it showcases an unceasing attachment to the unconscious identifications of the self. Braidotti states that the third level of sexual difference "envisages the subject as the crossroads of different registers of speech, calling upon different layers of lived experience" (*NS* [1st ed.] 166). Each female subjectivity embodies different experiences and unconscious desires. "Differences within each woman" reveal that rationalism is not always a practical tool to understand the female subject. That is to say, female subjectivity is more complicated and multi-dimensional than the patriarchal culture portrays it.

These three levels of sexual difference proposed by Braidotti are crucial milestones for reconsidering female subjectivity in an unprecedented way. The overall aim of the formulation of the division of difference in three separate planes is to give prominence to the positivity of difference. Braidotti links these three levels of difference to the becoming process by claiming that they are "different moments in the process of becoming-subject" (*NS* [1st ed.] 151). Accordingly, she defines the becoming process as "subversive moves of detachment from the dominant system of representation" (*NT* 7). Thinking and elaborating on differences among, between, and within women can be interpreted as a

subversive move from the dominant and traditional line of thought in regard to women's position in the hierarchical mode of subject representation. It is observed that Braidotti frees difference from negativity. In her words, she "[has] nomadized difference, stressing the need to work through many differences" ("Preface" x) with an aim of offering a wide range of female experiences which are not based on any hierarchy or superior order. The difference as a pejorative concept loses its power over women. While doing so, nomadic becoming-woman is used "as a feminist method of practice that will allow for united action across these differences, while respecting racial, ethnic or cultural specificities" (Gedalof 191). Evidently, the nomadic becoming favours instability, fluidity, and flexibility and provides the necessary ground for different and diverse representations of female subjectivity. Moreover, it creates a non-hierarchical plane of discussion in which multiple female nomadic figurations can coexist without being labelled as the other or the marginal. In so doing, the established definitions and classifications of women can be challenged. Building on this theoretical framework, the first chapter of this dissertation traces how each of Braidotti's three levels of sexual difference (differences between men and women, differences among women and differences within each woman) emerges in different groups of poems in *A Woman Without a Country* and accordingly develops nomadic subjectivities for Irish women who are in the process of becoming.

Apart from the three levels of sexual difference, Braidotti conceptualises nomadic memory or remembering in the nomadic mode, which will be the main theoretical tool to analyse Boland's *The Historians* in the second chapter. Nomadic memory is another important element of constructing nomadic subjectivities. For Braidotti, female nomadic subjects cling to nomadic consciousness, which is bound to the nomadic memories. Remembering in the nomadic mode is a way of moving away from the established patterns of thinking. In Braidotti's words, remembering in the nomadic mode "makes all thinking into an affirmative activity that aims at the production of concepts, precepts, and affects in the relational motion of approaching multiple others. Thinking is about tracing lines of flight and zigzagging patterns that undo dominant representations" (*NT* 2). The dominant representations that are highlighted by Braidotti refer to the central memory system of the majority as opposed to the minorities. Nomadic memories do not belong to this central memory system, and they are related to the memories of minorities. Nomadic

memories of the minority subjects aim to create virtual possibilities because remembering in the nomadic mode aims to shatter the authority of the historical narratives that exclude the minority voices. In this respect, nomadic memory "undoes the static authority of the past and redefines memory as the faculty that decodes residual traces of half-effaced presences; it retrieves archives of leftover sensations and accesses afterthoughts, flashbacks, and mnemonic traces" (Braidotti, *NT* 2).

Accordingly, remembering in the nomadic mode can be regarded as a reaction to the official version of history that tends to silence minority voices. This act of remembering disrupts the traditional representation of subjects in history, and it is interested in providing virtual spaces where the questioning of the old established truths is deconstructed or viewed from new angles. Anton Göransson articulates in his article that nomadic memory is "to bear witness of the non-representative and non-discursive subjects that continuously falls out of the frameworks of history" (4). In other words, nomadic memory can be seen as a tool to regenerate the power of the past as opposed to the dominating and limited perspectives presented by an official history. It tends to create counter-history via subjugated knowledges, and as Braidotti aptly puts it, nomadic subjects' memory "is activated against the stream; they enact a rebellion of subjugated knowledges" (*NS* [1st ed.] 25). Remembering in the nomadic mode can be taken as an act of revealing buried and hidden knowledges for the sake of maintaining the authority and power of the history of the majority. These subjugated knowledges are the "historical contents that have been buried or masked in functional coherences or formal systematizations" (Foucault, *Society* 7). Nomadic subjects search for the means of excavating these buried contents in history. Michel Foucault elaborates on the notion of subjugated knowledges as follows:

> When I say "subjugated knowledges" I am also referring to a whole series of knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naive knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity. And it is thanks to the reappearance of these knowledges from below, of these unqualified or even disqualified knowledges, it is thanks to the reappearance of these knowledges, […] it is the reappearance of what people know at a local level, of these disqualified knowledges, that made the critique possible. (*Society* 7-8)

What is significant in Foucault's explanation above is that reevaluating and rediscovering those inferior knowledges paves the way for a new critical consciousness that has never existed as a result of the marginalisation of minority groups. This critical process provides a solid ground to question what is regarded as 'inferior' and 'disqualified' and it "challeng[es] established practices of remembering and forgetting by excavating subjugated bodies of experiences and memories, bringing to the fore the perspectives that culturally hegemonic practices have foreclosed" (Medina 11). Similar to Braidotti, Foucault also links his discussion to memory. The questioning of previously disregarded knowledge is possible with the memories belonging to the minority groups. He calls those memories that disrupt the knowledge of the majority "the very memory that had until then been confined to the margins […] [and] the raw memory of fights" (*Society* 8). Moreover, these memories are not part of the official history. Instead, they contribute to the formation of counter-history. In this regard, counter-history refers to the unrecorded and excluded actualities of the minorities. Evidently, there is a strong bond between counter-history and memory. As José Medina explains,

> The counter-histories that critical genealogies can produce are possible because there are people who remember against the grain, people whose memories do not fit the historical narratives available. Counter-histories feed off such counter-memories and at the same time transform them, revitalizing practices of counter-memory and offering them new discursive resources to draw on. (12)

Accordingly, the precondition of forming the counter-history is the very memory belonging to the people who are excluded from the official narratives. Such memories serve as a crucial foundation for the creation of alternative historical narratives that refuse to be subsumed by dominant discourses, thereby enabling new interpretive frameworks for understanding the lived experiences and resistance of minority communities.

In line with the aforementioned objectives, it is significant to explain why this dissertation builds a connection between Boland's works and the concept of female nomadic subjectivity. In her more than fifty years of literary career, Eavan Boland (1944-2020) ponders over the issue of the marginalised and silenced women in Irish history and literary tradition. In her poetry and essays in which she combines her ideas on the poetic agenda and her life experiences, Boland has unceasing interest in the diverse representations of Irish women muted in official documents such as historical records and the constitution,

and in literary works. Boland's themes in her collections revolve around the oppression of women, the otherness of women, voicelessness, resistance to mainstream ideologies, and outsideness/alienation. For instance, in *In Her Own Image* (1980), Boland confronts the physical and psychological realities of female experience, challenging the mythologised portrayals of women in Irish literature. In *The Journey and Other Poems* (1987) and *Outside History* (1990), Boland further explores women's exclusion from national and historical narratives and positions female figures not as symbols of Ireland but as subjects alienated from the myths and monuments of the nation. These poems foreground women's struggle to speak from the periphery and resist the dominant masculinist and nationalist ideologies. In *The Lost Land* (1998), Boland examines the loss not only of homeland but also of female lineage and cultural continuity. Clearly, her keen interest is in how women, especially Irish women, are denied subjectivity as a result of the patriarchal ideology and its logocentric conception of women as the other. Boland underlines that Irish nationalism and Irish national identity prevent (Irish) women from attaining full and complex subjectivity and this paves the way for women's representation as "the passive projection of a national idea" (Boland, *OL* 96). She aims to revise and reconstruct these traditional and silent representations of women in Irish poetry. Accordingly, Boland's primary concern is to unravel the complexities and diversities inherent in Irish women's subjectivities, which are traditionally suppressed and marginalised by male-focused discourses and ideologies. This critical aim of Boland aligns with Braidotti's concept of 'female nomadic subjectivity'. Braidotti suggests that nomadic subjects "are transformative tools that enact progressive metamorphoses of the subject away from the program set up in the phallogocentric format" (*NS* [2nd ed.] 12). Nomadic subjects stand for change and transformation and move beyond the rigid and traditional understanding and representation of any subject position. Similar to Braidotti's nomadic vision of female subjectivity, Boland, in her poems, also frees women from the established forms of representation and opens up new possibilities and modes of expression for women by challenging their fixed and archetypal representations as passive heroines that have dominated traditional Irish poetry. Her focus, thus, is on the othered and marginalised Irish women. In other words, Boland does not produce an essentialist view of womanhood as opposed to the male-dominated Irish poetic tradition. Accordingly, this study aims to show how Boland problematises the stereotypical

representation of women's experiences in *A Woman Without A Country* (2014) and *The Historians* (2020) and presents the fluidity of female subjectivity, that is, the female nomadic subject position. As discussed below, in the following chapters, Boland prioritises the diverse and multiple experiences and memories of the traditionally marginalised figures and creates an inclusive poetic space where the multiplicity of Irish women's subjectivities and experiences are foregrounded.

Considering Eavan Boland's concern and agenda regarding the politics of women's identity in her poetry, Boland becomes the arc-female poet of her generation who challenges the patriarchal line of Irish poetry through her subject matter consisting of unrecorded emotions, feelings and truths of Irish women's lives. It was particularly in the 1980s and 1990s that Irish women poets aimed to transform the female image in traditional Irish poetry. Although modern Irish poetry flourished with male Irish writers such as William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, Patrick Kavanagh and Seamus Heaney, this male line of Irish poetry offered a restrictive image of the female subject position. Starting from the works of William Butler Yeats "with whom the story of modern Irish poetry inevitably begins" (Andrews 3), Irish women have become the silent and passive images and lifeless objects. Yet, many Irish women poets, including Eavan Boland, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, Medbh McGuckian, and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, refuse to maintain this patriarchal line of poetic tradition in which male poets "emptied the female figures in the poems of any particular traits of personality" (Zamorano Llena, "Remembering", 352). Especially, Boland manages to open an alternative space through her development of female nomadic subjectivities that makes it possible for women to move from being an object of the poem to the subject of the poem. As Anne Fogarty asserts, "[m]ore forcefully and persuasively than any other contemporary Irish woman poet, Eavan Boland has explored and laid bare the psychic trauma caused by a wholly male-centred, national literary tradition" (271). Similarly, Pilar Villar-Argáiz suggests that Boland "[has] expanded the boundaries of conventional poetics to let in the rhythms, cries and silences of the female body. [Boland's works] has changed the scene in Irish poetry, by recognising women as active subjects of poetic creation, and not merely decorative emblems or passive objects" ("Between Tradition" 118).

Boland's poetic aims and aspirations can be said to strengthen the role she plays in changing the poetic tradition. It is possible to state that, as Catherine Kilcoyne puts it, Boland's "career has seen her move from marginal poet to national poet. This is evidenced by her success internationally and at home, her stature at Stanford University and the inclusion of her poetry in the Irish Leaving Certificate Syllabus" (89). Furthermore, as Mary Robinson states in her address on the occasion of her inauguration after she was elected in 1990 as the first female president of "a new pluralist Ireland" ("Address" n.p.), Boland's poetry makes sure that "women who have felt themselves outside history [are] written back into history, in the words of Eavan Boland, 'finding a voice where they found a vision'" ("Address" n.p.).

Moreover, as the leading figure who steers the change that took place in Irish poetic tradition in representing women, Boland underlines the fact that when nationalism and femininity are merged, the simplification of the female experience is inevitable. In Irish national tradition, Ireland is represented as a woman and "[w]omen (or those women generally *included* in the 'national' category 'Irish women') were allocated a particularly subordinate role in the Irish nationalist project of identity construction. The country itself was represented as a woman in nationalist images" (Connolly 178). For instance, many iconic representations of women such as Cathleen ni Houlihan, Dark Rosaleen, Mother Ireland, and the dualistic placement of a young beautiful girl and an old hag in Aisling poetry are extensions of Irish nationalist tradition which aims to construct certain stereotypical versions of womanhood. Specifically, in the works of Irish male writers, there is the presence of women as abstract images in that "the various female figures dwell in oracular silence, always objects, whether of terror, veneration, desire, admiration or vituperation, never the coherent subjects of their own actions" (Coughlan 187). Katharina Walter points out that "these figures present generic and simplified images of women, who can be oversexed or desexualised, and whose motherhood, where applicable, is depersonalised and politicised" (314).

Clearly, the identification of women with nationalism hinders the development of female subjectivity in all its complexity. As Boland puts it, "[o]nce the idea of a nation influences

the perception of a woman then that woman is suddenly and inevitably simplified. She can no longer have complex feelings and aspirations" (*OL* 12-13). Boland strongly opposes this reductive representation of women imposed on them by the male-oriented vision of female subjectivity, and she reflects her desire to carve out a place for women and their ordinary experiences in the patriarchal tradition of Irish poetry. She claims that what is presented in the official history for the cultural image of women does not reflect the complexity and diversity of women's experiences. According to her, women become "metaphors, invocations, similes and muses" (Boland, *OL* 28) but they never become what they are in reality. So as to change this perception of women as silenced objects of the nation, Boland initiates the process of deconstruction of the cultural image of womanhood by reflecting Irish women's ordinary and authentic experiences in her poetry. In Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians*, female nomadic subjects dominate, women and womanhood are redefined, and all the totalized or normative ideas concerning women are challenged or questioned. Indeed, as Braidotti suggests for female nomadic subjectivity, Boland's poetry is concerned with fluid representations of female subjectivity which can be regarded as the revisions of the emblematic and iconic portrayal of Irish women in the male-oriented Irish literary tradition. Accordingly, Boland's portrayal of Irish women in *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians* offers a transformative force for the erasure of the traditional representation of women and inscribing the diversity of female experiences.

In the light of what has been discussed so far, this dissertation argues that Boland's female nomadic subjectivities revise the previous representation of women and disrupt the traditional image of women. As stated above, this dissertation is to follow three different methodological tools in tracing the development of female nomadic subjectivity in Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians*. In the first chapter, the politics of location and the concept of three levels of sexual difference will be used to investigate how Boland develops female nomadic subjectivities for Irish women to reflect the complexity and diversity of their experiences in *A Woman Without A Country*. These three levels of difference denote the differences that exist in women's experiences and aim to free women from conventional representations. Then, the second chapter argues the importance of nomadic memory in forming nomadic subjectivities for Irish women in *The*

Historians. The selected poems of this collection develop creative alternatives for the inaccessible past of Irish women, and thus, the poems form Irish women as fluid nomadic subjects. Consequently, this dissertation reveals that in Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians*, Irish women are in the process of becoming female nomadic subjects in terms of embracing differences in their experiences and subjectivities.

Accordingly, in the first chapter, Eavan Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* (2014) is discussed as a work that foregrounds the representation of Irish women who experience marginalisation within the cultural, social, and historical heritage of Ireland. This collection problematises Irish women's exclusion from Ireland's official culture and suggests that marginalism and exclusion result in the loss of a country on the side of women. Thus, the collection reveals the importance of the situatedness of a female subject position in representing the struggles and experiences of women throughout the centuries. In this respect, the first chapter reads Boland's poems in the titular section of the collection, "A Woman Without a Country", regarding the politics of location and argues that Boland forms female nomadic subjectivities in *A Woman Without A Country* by focusing on the experiences of women of Ireland. Moreover, this chapter uses Braidotti's three levels of sexual difference in the analysis of "Amethyst Beads", "Eurydice Speaks", "Talking to My Daughter Late at Night", "One Thought, One Grace, One Wonder at the Least" and "An Island of Daughters". It states that Boland employs these three levels of difference in forming female speakers as nomadic subjects whose experiences are particularised within a specific location. Each of these levels aims to provide depth to the representation of female subjectivity. By closely examining these layered differences, the chapter argues that Boland develops female nomadic subjectivities for Irish women that resist essentialism and embrace multiplicity. Through her treatment of embodied differences, Boland creates poetic spaces in which Irish women can redefine themselves outside the constraints of national, historical, and patriarchal narratives.

The second chapter furthers the discussion of Boland's female nomadic subjectivities by focusing on the poems "The Fire Gilder", "Anonymous", "Eviction", "The Historians", "Statue 2016", "Margin", and "Our Future Will Become the Past of Other Women" in

The Historians (2020). The second chapter engages with how the use of fluid nomadic memory paves the way for the fluid representations of Irish women's subjectivities and presents the problematical aspect of the official discourse of history which silences women. In these poems, Boland draws attention to the unsaid and excluded parts of Irish women's experiences in history and lays bare the differences between the past and history. By comparing the past and history regarding Irish women's experiences, this chapter aims to present that Boland's poetic personas are female nomadic subjects who try to fill the gaps in the official history by using their fluid nomadic memories. As Braidotti claims, a nomadic subject "is akin to […] counter-memory. […] [T]heir memory is activated against the stream; they enact a rebellion of subjugated knowledges" (*NS* [1st ed.] 25). In a similar vein, Boland highlights that the past represents a more fluid and dynamic account of female experiences since the past consists of unrecorded memories of Irish women which reject the definite and static historical knowledge recorded by the male-oriented discourse. The chapter concludes that Boland aims to free women from the static representations of female experience and subjectivity and supports the fluid representation of Irish women by creating alternative possibilities for their marginalised experiences in her female nomadic subjectivities.

This dissertation concludes that a reading of Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians* from the perspective of Braidotti's views about female nomadic subjectivity suggests that Boland rejects the nationalist and cultural patriarchal discourse in Ireland which tends to regard Irish women as elusive objects, not as speaking subjects and accordingly portrays Irish women as nomadic subjects. The dissertation demonstrates that Boland's portrayal of women as nomadic subjects is Boland's tool for criticising the dominant patriarchal ideology which supports the stereotypical and static representation of the female subject position. Hence, Boland refutes the monolithic and static model of Irish womanhood by creating Braidottian nomadic subjectivities for women who embrace the diversity, complexity, and multiplicity of female experience. She tries to shed light on what is marginalised, suppressed or belittled on account of Irish women's experiences, and while doing so, Boland represents Irish women's subjectivities as active and fluid, thus nomadic, as opposed to the traditionally passive projection of female subjectivity and experience.

CHAPTER 1

LOCATION, SEXUAL DIFFERENCE AND FEMALE NOMADIC SUBJECTIVITIES IN EAVAN BOLAND'S *A WOMAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY*

This chapter reads the poems in Eavan Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* (2014) in relation to her development of female nomadic subjectivities. It does so through focusing on Braidotti's concepts of the politics of location and three levels of sexual difference because they are the important factors in the formation of female nomadic subjects. Accordingly, the chapter introduces Braidotti's concept of the politics of location necessary for the representation of women's experiences in diversity. In fact, the politics of location can be accepted as the precondition in the recognition of the multiplicity and complexity of women's experiences. In other words, analysing the development of nomadic female subjectivities in Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* through Braidotti's three levels of sexual difference, explained below, benefits from the notion of "politics of location" developed by Adrienne Rich after the publication of "Notes toward a Politics of Location" (1984). Braidotti employs the politics of location in her nomadic philosophy to highlight the importance of the situated experience of female nomadic subjects. The notion of "politics of location" builds a connection between female subjectivity and their situated experience, and rejects the universalist attitudes towards women.

Braidotti claims that it is not possible to change the monolithic representation of women without particularising the place where women are subjected to certain inequalities and struggles (*NS* [1st ed.] 163). That's why, the particularity of location paves the way for the recognition of women's experiences more explicitly when compared to the traditional application of universal notions to women that erase the particularity of their lives. Similarly, Boland, in *A Woman Without A Country*, problematises Irish women's systematic marginalisation and underlines the idea that Irish women are threatened to

become the outsiders of their country if the politics of location is not observed in their representation. In fact, not just in *A Woman Without A Country* but in almost every collection of hers, Boland focuses on the excluded voices and experiences of women from Ireland. As a result, her poems become poems using the Braidottian idea of politics of location to give voice and space to the marginalised female experiences from a particular location, which is Ireland. In this respect, this chapter argues that Boland's use of the notion of politics of location provides her poems with the necessary foundational context for representing Irish women as nomadic subjects. Accordingly, the chapter begins with the analyses of the first group of poems, "Art of Empire", "Anonymity", and "A Woman Without A Country" in order to reveal the similar trajectory between Boland's and Braidotti's understanding of the particularity of location as a necessary context for the development of female nomadic subjectivity. This trajectory deepens in the analyses of the second group of poems namely, "Amethyst Beads", "Eurydice Speaks", "Talking to My Daughter Late at Night", "One Thought, One Grace, One Wonder at the Least" and "An Island of Daughters" in that these poems particularise each women's experience in specific historical, cultural and social terrain which enables the development of female nomadic subjectivities through Braidotti's three levels of sexual difference theory that are "difference between men and women", "differences among women", and "differences within each woman" (*NS* [1st ed.] 158).

Indeed, Boland's formation of nomadic subjectivity in *A Woman Without A Country* unfolds itself in her rejection of the passive and fixed representation of Irish women in Irish poetic tradition. In her essays, she argues that the representation of female subjectivity in Irish poetry is based on the patriarchal discourse of gender. She writes that "the accepted masters of the tradition […] handled the feminine image in a way which made the action expressive while the image was silent and passive" (*OL* 26). According to her, the fundamental reason behind such a passive representation of women in poetry is the lack of female literary foremothers in the poetic tradition (*OL* 183-184). Many Irish women poets assert that this lack of female predecessors in the tradition becomes problematic for women writers because it results in women's alienation/ estrangement from the male-dominated literature. For instance, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, in her influential

essay “What Foremothers?”, points out that the idea of a woman poet in Irish literary tradition is regarded as an anomaly: “The very concept of a woman being a poet was inherently threatening, as witnessed by the extreme hostility that surrounds the subject” (24). Boland also states that the words women and poet “were oil and water and could not be mixed” (*OL* xi). As a result, women’s experiences are told from the male perspective which eventually leads to the limited representation of a female subject position. To put it another way, the representations and images of women in Irish poetry “are all fictions of the imaginations of men”, as Dhomhnaill puts forward (21). The male-dominated Irish poetic tradition treats women as emblems, icons, and metaphors, and all of these images pave the way for the simplifications of the female experience. Boland problematises this emblematic status ascribed to women by stating that “[a]s a woman the life I lived—its dailyness, its complexity—had been given a place of passivity and silence in the very tradition that had given me my voice as a poet” (*OL* 184). Also, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill puts forward that “a diagrammatic and dehumanized image of woman has been used by Irish male poets as a kind of literary shorthand long after it was necessary and how the image of woman in the national tradition is a very real dragon that every Irish woman poet has to fight every time she opens her literary door” (31). Accordingly, Boland struggles to find a connection between her experiences as a woman and those hollow images of women created by male writers. As she puts it, “I did not recognize these women. These images could never be a starting point for mine. […] I stood in an immediate and unambiguous relation to human existences which were only metaphors for male poets” (“The Woman Poet” 152). In this respect, Boland refuses to contribute to this traditional representation of female subjectivity and experience because she believes that Irish literary tradition disregards the complexities and diversity of Irish women’s experiences.

In this regard, Boland’s poetic discourse can be accepted as a driving force for her generation of women poets to change the established definition of womanhood. Primarily, the generation of Irish women poets, who actively and consistently wrote and published between the 1970s and 90s, including Boland, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Medbh McGuckian, and Paula Meehan, represents the shift of perspective

on the role and position of women that is accelerated by the feminist discourses they develop. In Daniela Theinova's words, "these poets searched for an authentic expression of their individual autonomy, defined mostly against the backdrop of the prevailing masculinist discourse and the restricting images of femininity in the male tradition and in the public mind" (4). The most common iconic feminine figures created by the male tradition are "the poetic muse, the 'virgin mother' and Mother Ireland/Cathleen Ni Houlihan" (Mills 69). These figures are derived from Irish mythology as well as iconographic and religious texts. Certain symbolic roles and associations are attributed to these images so as to form "stilted, 'pure', lifeless" (Mills 74) female figures. They are portrayed as beautiful, passive, and voiceless women in order to create an idealised version of femininity for Irish women. As stated, Boland challenges these ornamental and emblematic uses of women in poetry, and she seeks to change this male-oriented vision of female subjectivity that is dominant in the poetic tradition. In an interview, Boland points out the reason behind the creation of such simplified images of womanhood:

> I was seeing the image-structure of women in Irish poetry in a way I hadn't seen it before. I was seeing how often those images were set up to serve as other meaning: nationhood or land. And how little the actual human truths of a woman's life had been allowed to speak in that poetry. (Allen-Randolph, "A Backward" 299)

Boland, here, refers to two significant notions that control the representation of women in Irish poetry: nationalism and the association of Irish women with land or earth. Especially, the latter notion, the Ireland-as-woman trope, is the centuries-old ramifications of the Irish national and cultural context. As a matter of fact, although the beginning of this trope cannot be precisely known, its roots can be traced back to pre-Christian Ireland and medieval Irish mythology where the relationship between a sovereign goddess and a king determines the condition of the kingdom and the land. This goddess figure might appear in a deformed form, or she is represented as a young and beautiful woman depending on the political competence of the king (Nash, "Embodied" 112). Later, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this goddess figure was reused in *aisling* poetry, a popular nationalist dream vision poetic tradition in the Irish language (Delay 74). In *Aisling* tradition, the conquered land is called *Spéirbhean* which means Sky-Woman, and a beautiful female figure is employed under the names of *Éire*, *Ériu*, *Banbha,* or *Fódla*. In the later phase of the eighteenth century, the Sky-Woman was

represented by using the flesh and blood female figures in folk songs under the names of Caitlín Ní hUallacháin, Síle Ní Ghadhra, Cáit Ní Dhuibhir and Rosaleen (Theinova 32).

As observed above, Boland draws attention to both nationhood/nationalism and the trope of Ireland-as-woman because there is a specific connection between these concepts regarding women's representation. Irish nationalistic discourse, which promotes women's passive and silent representation, can be seen as an extension of the Ireland-as-woman trope. In fact, nationalism is the leading factor that shapes the relationship between place and gender in Ireland (Meaney, "Race" 48). The feminisation of Ireland has been used as a trademark to form an Irish national identity. In the nationalistic discourse, the feminine qualities are attributed to the Irish landscape, eventually marginalising women in their community. Rose Atfield asserts that "[i]n Irish cultural convention, woman's place has been colonized, subjected to restricted and marginalized interpretation and representation. Nationalism has led to the placing of an idealized, simplified, passive image of woman on a pedestal" (171).

In this respect, Anne McClintock argues that the passive role of women in Irish nationalism is not peculiar to Ireland. On the contrary, the erasure of women's participation and voices in the national past is a common strategy of national discourses of countries:

> All nations depend on powerful constructions of gender. Despite nationalisms' ideological investment in the idea of popular *unity*, nations have historically amounted to the sanctioned institutionalization of gender *difference*. No nation in the world gives women and men the same access to the rights and resources of the nation-state. (61)

Although nationalism aims to unite the people of a specific country, there is an apparent inequality in its discourse because it tends to create an imbalance between men and women in terms of their rights and positions in society. This inequality is not advantageous for women because nationalism attributes passive and symbolic roles to women while it presents men as active agents of society. To put it another way, "[e]xcluded from direct action as national citizens, women are subsumed symbolically

into the national body politic as its boundary and metaphoric limit" (McClintock 62). This metaphoric contextualisation of women in society is connected to the correlation between the nation and a woman's body. In Gerardine Meaney's words, "[i]f the nation is experienced as 'a body', then the body in Western culture is primarily figured as and through the female body" ("Race" 49). In the context of nationalism, a woman's body corresponds to the landscape that men should protect. Hence, women become the bearers of symbolic roles and meanings, and they are eventually excluded from realistic depictions and representations.

This correlation between land and femininity has been one of the foundational principles of forming Irish national identity and created the static and fixed representation of Irish women. Many feminine experiences, including motherhood and female sexuality, are tailored for Ireland. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the relationship between Ireland and femininity was strengthened by the Irish government and the Irish nationalist movement. It is even highlighted in the Irish Constitution (1937) that women belong to their homes and they should not take an active role in public life: "In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved" ("Constitution of Ireland", art. 41, sec. 2). Furthermore, newspapers of the early nineteenth century also supported the division of roles regarding men and women, and many of them encouraged the nationalist discourse's endorsement of passivity in women's lives. For instance, the *Irish Homestead*, the weekly publication of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, as James MacPherson puts it, regards "domestic role of women as the foundation for a new national identity. […] The ideas expressed in the pages of the *IH* created an ideal Irish female identity which in turn formed part of a construction of an ideal Ireland" (151).

Indeed, the Ireland-as-woman trope finds new connotations, including the notions of motherhood and passive femininity within the development of the Irish nationalist movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Irish nationalists moulded the idea of national identity to create the gendered representation of Ireland. Irish

masculinity was highlighted as opposed to femininity, which eventually paved the way for the strict difference between the positions of men and women. The reason behind the emphasis on masculinity arose from British colonialist discourse which effeminised the representation of Irish men. To refute this false representation of Irish manhood, the Irish nationalist movement supported the hypermasculinity of Irish men (Nash, "Embodied" 114). While doing this, the nationalist ideology attributed domestic and maternal ideals to women and promoted certain allegorical representations of Ireland stripped of sexual connotations.

Clearly, Boland objects to these allegorical images and ideals of traditional femininity and its silent and passive female images through the concept of nomadic subjectivity. As Braidotti claims, female nomadic subjectivity is a new figuration of female subjectivity, and it is one of the "points of exit from phallocentric schemes of thought" (*NS* [1st ed.] 38). A female nomadic subject questions the old schemes of thought and representation in order to form a new vision of subjectivity. Braidotti calls this technique "the metabolic consumption of the old in order to engender the new" (*NS* [1st ed.] 38-39). Similarly, Boland believes that a new version of female subjectivity can be formed or created if the traditional representations and meanings ascribed to women are worked through. Accordingly, Boland questions the validity of Irish nationalist discourse which controls the representation of Irish women. Boland states that

> I thought it vital that women poets such as myself should establish a discourse with the idea of a nation. I felt sure that the most effective way to do this was by subverting the previous terms of that discourse. Rather than accept the nation as it appeared in Irish poetry, with its queens and muses, I felt the time had come to re-work those images by exploring the emblematic relation between my own feminine experience and a national past (*A Kind* 20).

Similar to what Braidotti's nomadic theory requires, Boland reworks the older images of female figures in the poetic tradition by subverting the very qualities that are attributed to them, such as passivity and sexual purity. She does not see any connection between those silent and passive projections of feminine experiences and her experiences as a woman. As she further states,

> [w]hen I read about Cathleen ni Houlihan or the Old Woman of the Roads or Dark Rosaleen, I felt that a necessary ethical relation was in danger of being violated over

> and over again, that a merely ornamental relation between imagination and image was being handed on from poet to poet, from generation to generation, was becoming orthodox poetic [or literary] practice. It was the violation, even more than the simplification, which alienated me" (*OL* 152).

Evidently, the earlier stock images of womanhood exemplify that there is a lack of authenticity and truth regarding Irish women's lives and experiences. Hence, she refrains from maintaining this essentialist attitude of the literary tradition against women and offers an alternative perspective for portraying "the actual human truths of a woman's life" (Allen-Randolph, "A Backward" 299) rather than decorative and emblematic female figures. As Boland states, the iconic and emblematic portrayal of Irish women results in the erasure of "any complicated human suffering" (*OL* 137) from their lives. In response to this strategy, Boland points out that the generalisation and simplification concerning Irish women underestimate the differences in female experience and the representation of female subjectivity. Instead, Boland fills her poems with a wide spectrum of experiences of Irish women which are generally excluded from the official history, culture, and literature. To put it another way, she offers a panorama of Irish women's experiences by giving voice to different women in different conditions without establishing hierarchy or superiority in these representations. Her poetic personas can be any ordinary woman who seems to embrace her womanhood and feminine experiences in all their complexity and diversity. As she states, her subject matter can be anything that constitutes the ordinary details of the daily life of a woman: "And my lexicon was the kettle and the steam, and the machine in the corner, and the baby's bottle. These were parts of my world. Not to write about them would have been artificial. These objects were visible to me. They assumed importances" (Allen-Randolph, "An Interview" 124).

In her poetry, hence, Boland's objective is to present a variety of women's experiences as a way of making up for the lack of diverse perspectives in reflecting women's feelings, aspirations, and struggles. Indeed, Boland's poetry employs nomadic subjectivity to change the established definition of female subjectivity and through the differences that exist in women's experiences, she uses the three levels of difference "as the starting ground the [sic] disidentification of women from phallogocentric modes of thinking and teaching, and [to] replace […] them with the sort of nomadic intersection of differences"

(Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 207). *A Woman Without A Country* is important in the sense that it underscores the significance of creating an alternative poetic space where women can share their feelings, emotions, and experiences instead of being subjected to the emblematic status in Irish poetry. In fact, *A Woman Without A Country* represents female nomadic subjectivities through focusing on the relationship between mothers and daughters and the friendship among women. Thus, each poem becomes a nomadic space for women to experience their womanhood without any restrictive ideology and discourse. As the analysis of the poems demonstrates, Boland's female subjects in the poems are nomadic, that is, they are in the continuous process of becoming. Hence, as stated above, each poem in *A Woman Without A Country* possesses a different level of female experience and showcases "a passionate plea for the recognition of the need to respect complexities" (Braidotti, *NS* [2nd ed.] 164) in the representation of female subjectivity.

A Woman Without A Country was published in 2014. The collection provides a wide range of themes, such as loss, history, motherhood, and nationalism. As can be understood from the title of the collection, Boland's central concern is to question how Irish women lose their country because of their systematic exclusion from the country's history and culture. For instance, David Wheatley, in his review of *A Woman Without A Country* written for *the Guardian*, asserts that "[t]he book is about loss and, […] [n]eglected lives are juxtaposed with the overweening narratives of empire and nation state" ("A Woman" par. 2). Lucy Collins states that *A Woman Without A Country* "has played an important role in shaping the critical discourse surrounding contemporary Irish poetry. Boland's return to key scenes and her reiteration of images […] throughout her work remind us how established narratives have a pervasive, even incantatory, cultural power" ("Individual" 83). The collection consists of four sections, namely "Song and Error", "A Woman Without A Country", "The Trials of Our Faith", and Edge of Empire". The first section, "Song and Error", a ten-poem sequence, focuses on the wide range of ideas that Boland deals with throughout her literary career. For instance, she reflects on the experiences of motherhood in "Talking to My Daughter Late at Night". In "Amethyst Beads" and "Eurydice Speaks", she reinterprets the stories of Persephone and Eurydice from a

feminist perspective and recruits these traditionally silenced female mythological figures as speaking subjects. Also, in "Song and Error", Boland pays homage to "the old Latin Master" (1), Ovid and his *Carmen et error* and tries to understand and comment on what led to Ovid's banishment. Then, "The Lost Art of Letter Writing" focuses on what the Irish immigrants experience overseas and the fact that the art of letter writing "is lost when it no longer knows/ How to teach a sorrow to speak, come, see" (26-27).

The second titular section in *A Woman Without A Country*, "A Woman Without A Country", consists of seven poems and six prose lessons which accompany them. Each prose lesson explains the main idea of the following poem. The section deals with how Ireland as a country marginalises women and their experiences. In many of the poems, Boland investigates her grandmother's marginalised experience. For example, in "I Think of Her", she explores the loneliness of her grandmother when her husband sails. In "Studio Portrait 1897", the speaker is looking at the portrait of the grandmother and criticises the way women are silenced by asking, "Where is the source of her silence?" (11). "The Long Evening of Their Leave-takings" explores Boland's mother's connection to the Irish Sea in that she "was married by the water./ […] / She said her vows beside a cold seam of the Irish coast" (1,3).

The collection's third section, "The Trials of Our Faith", explores religious themes and occasions in Irish culture. In "The Moving Statue", Boland revisits one of the religious phenomena that happened all around Ireland in 1985 in which the statues of the Virgin Mary were spotted to move (Boland, "Moving" 13). In the titular poem, "The Trials of Our Faith", the speaker in a museum speculates on religion and spirituality by looking at "a bruised Psalter" (10) on which "Christian history appears/ Rewritten on the skins of flayed animals" (14-15). The final section, "Edge of Empire", is directly related to colonialism, emigration and its effect on one's relation to his/her own country. In "The Port of New York: 1956", the speaker retells her experiences as a child who "came to the New World" (6), and the poem explores the feelings of loss, nostalgia and the difficulties experienced by a child in a foreign city, New York. In "Reading the Victorian Novel",

the hypocrisy and indifference of the British Empire to Ireland are laid bare when the speaker overhears the conversation of an English parson about the issues that take place in the region. The poem exposes that when the subject is Ireland, members of the clergy adopt an indifferent attitude. Instead of focusing on famine and fever, they are interested in "[…] whether/ the carriage wheel may have been the culprit" (26-27).

In *A Woman Without A* Country, two groups of poems are chosen for analysis in terms of the use of the politics of location and the development of female nomadic subjectivity accordingly. The first group consists of "Art of Empire", "Anonymity", and "A Woman Without A Country", all of which are included in the second section "A Woman Without a Country". These poems showcase Boland's use of Braidotti's concept of the politics of location and the importance of a particular location for the representation of women in Ireland. As stated, Braidotti uses the notion of politics of location as a necessary tool for recognising the differences in women's experiences and highlights that external factors should also be taken into consideration so as to comment on one's subjectivity. In this respect, recognising a particular location becomes a fundamental point of view in interpreting female nomadic subjectivity. Accordingly, each poem focuses on the way Irish women are disowned by their country, Ireland. In other words, just as Braidotti emphasises, these poems lay bare that the multiplicity and diversity of Irish women's experiences are overlooked since Ireland and its male-oriented culture do not include the stories and experiences of Irish women.

The second group of poems includes four poems from the first section "Song and Error" and they are "Amethyst Beads", "Eurydice Speaks", "Talking to My Daughter Late at Night" and "One Thought, One Grace, One Wonder at the Least", and a poem from the third section "The Trials of Our Faith" which is "An Island of Daughters". These poems illustrate the three levels of sexual difference as the essential components of female nomadic subjectivity, namely, "difference between men and women", "differences among women", and "differences within each woman". In Rosi Braidotti's words, these levels of difference central to the formation of nomadic subjectivities are "not to be taken

as a categorical distinction but as an exercise in naming different facets of a single complex phenomenon" (*NS* [1st ed.] 158). Braidotti claims that these levels are necessary for the development of female nomadic subjectivities who are in the process of becoming. Each level of difference possesses distinctive characteristics in analysing and commenting on female subjectivity and experience. As discussed below, the second group of poems are also divided into three groups. The first pair of poems, "Amethyst Beads" and "Eurydice Speaks", construct female nomadic subjectivities in that they exemplify the refusal of universalist implications about women in mythological narratives, which is in accordance with the first level of difference, "difference between men and women". The second pair of poems, "Talking to My Daughter Late at Night" and "One Thought, One Grace, One Wonder at the Least", exemplifies the second level of difference, "differences among women" which aims at reflecting the individual real-life experiences of women. As a poem of the third level of difference, "An Island of Daughters" focuses on a female speaker's dream, which recalls a dystopic atmosphere for women, and exemplifies the formation of female nomadic subjectivity through its focus on "differences within each woman". This level deals with the unconscious processes of thought and images of the female mind to highlight the complexity of women's experiences. Yet, it should be noted that these levels are not discussed and placed in a hierarchy or a particular order. They are, in fact, one of the parts of this complex phenomenon of becoming-woman in the process of female nomadic subjectivity. Although the analysis of Boland's poems follows the numerical order of these three levels, it is not essential to follow this particular order since these levels can be experienced simultaneously without the specificity of time and place. Braidotti argues that "it is precisely the ability to exist in transit from one level to another, in a flow of experiences, time sequences, and layers of signification, that is the key to the nomadic mode, an art of existence" (*NS* [2nd ed.] 151). Similarly, it is seen in Boland's poems that Boland also places these levels in a flow of female experiences in different time sequences and places, eventually providing fluidity and mobility for the female nomadic subjects in becoming.

As stated above, in *A Woman Without A Country*, Boland forms nomadic subjectivities with an emphasis on the politics of location, and she identifies Ireland as the specific location to explore the differences in women's experiences. As Braidotti states, in reworking Adrienne Rich's notion of the politics of location in order to highlight the importance of the situated experience of women, a female nomadic subject "must be located somewhere to make statements of general value" (*NS* [1st ed.] 36). Rich's and Braidotti's ideas on the situated experience of women stem from their refusal of the global statements that erase the particularity of the female experience. While doing so, they both reject Virginia Woolf's famous statement in *Three Guineas*. Woolf writes that "the outsider will say, 'in fact, as a woman, I have no country. As a woman, I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world'" (313). Woolf recognises the importance of a global sisterhood of women in their continuous marginalisation within the history and culture of their countries. She asserts in the context of England that her country has treated women as slaves for centuries, and it always protects the interests of men. Eventually, her country failed to protect women's rights. That's why Woolf claims that it is natural for women to display certain indifference to "patriotic demonstrations" (314). Yet, Rich states in her essay that "[a]s a woman I have a country; as a woman I cannot divest myself of that country merely by condemning its government on by saying three times 'As a woman my country is the whole world'" ("Notes" 212). Clearly, Rich does not accept Woolf's idea of the global sisterhood which disregards the differences existing in women's experiences since Rich argues that "place on the map is also a place in history within which as a woman, a Jew, a lesbian, a feminist I am created and trying to create" ("Notes" 212). The sense of location Rich emphasises for the formation of female subjectivity includes factors such as race, sex, or ethnicity, as inseparable parts of any subject position's location. Accordingly, recognising the land of the woman is equal to recognising the differences in women's experiences.

Similarly, Braidotti points out that recognising the land or place/location is a significant factor in acknowledging the struggles and difficulties experienced by a female nomadic subject. She states of Woolf's view that it is "[t]he identification of female identity with

a sort of planetary exile" (*NS* [2nd ed.] 55). By referring to Woolf's statement, she underlines that

> I am not entirely happy, however, with this metaphor of exile: being "a citizen of the world" may seem attractive at first, but it can also be an evasive tactic. As if all women had in common were a sense of their homelessness, country-less, of *not* having a common anchoring point. I do not find this satisfactory either in terms of historical truth. […] I think that generalizations about women should be replaced by cartographic accuracy, attention to and accountability for differences among women. (*NS* [2nd ed.] 56)

Braidotti highlights that dissociation from location/land paves the way for fixed and universal subject positions. As mentioned above, although Braidotti's concept derives its source from real-life nomads, female nomadic subjectivity does not celebrate rootlessness or lack of connection to the land. As Braidotti puts it, "[n]omadism […] is not fluidity without borders, but rather an acute awareness of the nonfixity of boundaries. It is the intense desire to go on trespassing, transgressing" (*NS* [2nd ed.] 66). Nomads' fluidity and immobility become a source of inspiration to interpret the female subject positions. She underlines the fact that although nomads react to the regulations and rules of the State, they recognise certain land. Nomads' resistance or their desire to transgress the borders can be meaningful if their target of resistance directed against a certain location is recognised. In this regard, Caren Kaplan notes that "a politics of location identifies the grounds for historically specific differences and similarities between women in diverse and asymmetrical relations, creating alternative histories, identities, and possibilities for alliances" (139).

As in Bradotti's nomadism, Boland's poetic concerns and discourse have certain parallelism with Rich's notion of politics of location in that Boland, too, clearly recognises the importance of place/location as a powerful tool to lay bare the differences in the representation of the female experience and to avoid a monolithic and dualistic representation of Irish women's experiences. In *A Woman Without A Country*, Boland problematises the rootlessness of Irish women and questions the importance of "the acquisition and loss of identity" (Allen-Randolph, *Eavan* 178) by Irish women. She connects this theme to women's loss of a country as a result of Ireland's patriarchal ideology that controls the representation of women in official culture and history. For

Boland, a sense of belonging is an important aspect of reflecting the particularity of the female experience and as she states, women's ordinary and authentic experiences represent "a sequence and repetition which allowed the deeper meanings to emerge: a sense of belonging, of sustenance, of a life revealed, and not restrained, by ritual and patterning" (*OL* 170). If women are confined to universal notions such as the idea of global sisterhood, which lacks a specific speaking stance, this situation creates simplified versions of the female experience and diminishes women's sense of belonging. Accordingly, Boland opens her title sequence, "A Woman Without A Country" with an epigraph that highlights the main argument of the title sequence: "*This sequence is dedicated to those who lost a country, not by history or inheritance, but through a series of questions to which they could find no answer*" (25). Here, Boland emphasises the sense of loss that Irish women feel, but this loss can be taken as an emotional experience, not as a means of a physical loss of land. It is underlined that Irish women question who they are and where they belong to. However, they cannot find any answers to these questions, and this lack of answers has distanced them from their country, and accordingly, it weakens a sense of belonging for women. Evidently, the title sequence indicates how the systematic exclusion of women from the cultural and historical heritage of Ireland results in the loss of a country/ belonging on the side of women. In fact, the entire title sequence can be accepted as a long meditation on the lost and forgotten voices of Irish women. Although Boland uses Woolf's statement as an epigraph to the collection and a variation of her words as the main title, Boland displays a critical stance about the erasure of women's representations in Ireland. The sequence, hence, is the declaration of Boland's rejection of universalising women's experiences within the context of Irish society.

Accordingly, the first group of poems, namely, "Art of Empire", "Anonymity", and "A Woman Without A Country", stresses the importance of the politics of location in developing female nomadic subjectivities. These poems underline the fact that Irish women are prevented from possessing a complex subjectivity since Ireland refuses to include them in the country's cultural, social, and historical heritage. Hence, Boland draws a parallel between the loss of identity for a woman and the loss of a country. For instance, in "Art of Empire", Boland exemplifies how silencing women becomes

Ireland's official strategy and the importance of the particularity of location for the representation of Irish women. The poem points out that Irish women's lives and experiences are overshadowed by the official strategy of an empire, and in the context of the poem, this empire refers to Ireland. Boland points out that the art of an empire, as the title indicates, is its strategy of marginalising women. This situation suggests that this empire cannot accept women as its subjects and they "can inhabit it only through […] silence" (Allen-Randolph, *Eavan* 181). This silencing results in the loss of connection between women and their country. Accordingly, before the poem begins, Boland states in "LESSON 1" that her grandmother "had existed at the edge of [Ireland]" (29), and she asks "Did she find her nation? And does it matter?" (29) Building on her recalling of the private memory of Boland's grandmother, the poem draws attention to the systematic exclusion of women's voices from their country:

> If no one ever mentioned how a woman was,
>
> what she did,
>
> what she never did again,
>
> when she lived in a dying Empire. (9-12)

In this context, the women as subjects are "skilled in the sort of silence" (21), and they can only be included in history or culture by their silence. This idea is conveyed through a bird in the grandmother's blackwork warning her that she should utter "*not a word not a word/ not a word not a word*" (27-28). In other words, these lines can be accepted as a sign of both the individual and collective silence of Irish women. The grandmother's individual silence is a reflection of how women collectively have been rendered invisible in Ireland's past. Evidently, the poem suggests that women's lives are destined to silence and forgetting if no one represents them. As the poem points out, "if what was not said was never seen/ If what was never seen could not be known" (13-14) and this silence and invisibility point out Irish women's loss of their connection to their country. In this regard, the poem can be accepted as a poetic manifesto that highlights the importance of the notion of the politics of location for the development of female nomadic subjectivity.

The poem particularly focuses on the grandmother's house. Her act of "stitch[ing] shadow flowers/ into linen" (22-23) demonstrates women's confinement to domestic sphere and roles. Also, "shadow flowers" (22) may connote the Irish women who are in the shadow of the patriarchal structures that exist in Ireland. Boland, here, regards "location" (Ireland) not only as a physical or geographical place but also as a social place which limits and stereotypes women's experiences. So, the poem questions Ireland as a social space where Irish women have experienced marginalisation and exclusion. Yet, her act of embroidery provides an opportunity to reconsider her marginalised position as a woman in her country. While the grandmother's location refers to a place of silence for women in Ireland's past, her act of embroidery symbolises her struggle to express herself. In other words, even the bird she stitches on her blackwork tries to silence her. However, she tries to find a way to raise her voice through her needlework, which represents both her confinement in her house in Ireland and her intention to escape from it. In this respect, her embroidery can be accepted as an act of resistance to the restrictions and oppression resulting from her location. It is also highlighted in the poem that the grandmother's life in Ireland is in the shadow of the imperial past of Britain. Although the empire "recede[s]--/ taking its laws, its horses, and its lordly all" (16-17), it "leave[s] a single art to be learned" which is a woman's quiet embroidery (21-24). The poem problematises this silencing of women and criticises the grandmother "who never looks up/ to remark on or remember" (24-25) the conditions that condemned her to the oblivious state in her country. It is implied that the process of redefining this woman's subjectivity without patriarchal restrictions can be achieved by questioning and criticising the political, geographical, historical and social realities of her location (Ireland). Thus, Boland emphasises that this woman's subjectivity cannot be considered separately from her location. Accordingly, the poem reveals that Irish women's marginalisation in Ireland is an obstacle to represent them as female nomadic subjects because a female nomadic subject is an embodied figuration which does not promote rootlessness or homelessness (Braidotti, *NS* [2nd ed.] 26). In order to make these Irish women visible in their culture and history, the country/ Ireland should include and represent them by speaking out, remembering and mentioning their experiences. Through this inclusion of Irish women in Ireland's culture and history, they can become embodied figurations of female subjectivity and, thus, nomadic subjects.

In the previous poem, “Art of Empire”, Boland discusses the importance of politics of location by centralising her grandmother’s life, which is invisible in the history and culture of Ireland. This time, in “Anonymity”, Boland explores the notion of the particularity of location by focusing on the anonymous female figures in a museum. The poem reinforces Boland’s central thesis that women are both physically and metaphorically excluded from their country. The poem, by underlining the function of the particularity of location, demonstrates that women are objectified and detached from national history as they are confined to the generalisations which disregard the particularity of their experiences. Accordingly, the poem introduces nameless static female figures in the display cases of a museum, and they are “[a]ssembled from the treasures of a country:/ A finger of silver. A mineral breast./ An ear poured out in bronze.” (19-21) These lines suggest that women’s bodies are dissected and become treasures of a nation. However, these treasures (dissected bodies of women) are presented as if they are the only aesthetic and lifeless objects of history by ignoring their lived experiences. Their lives are summarised by brief and general explanations on the wall (4). The poem implies that these anonymous women in the poem are erased from Ireland’s historical and cultural heritage as a result of generalisations about them which overlook differences in their experiences. One of them “was the wife of a king in/ A valley rinsed by a wealth-bringing river” (5-6) and the other woman “was a servant: see the flesh tones,/ The beads. She was clothed in/ An opulent fashion only when she died” (7-9). The common point in these historical female figures is that they are “[w]omen without a country” (18) since these women become figures of anonymity in the museum as a result of the lack of information regarding their lives. This lack of particularity of experiences and differences makes them mere objects of display and “[f]igures in glass cases” (3) exhibited at the nation’s museum rather than being flesh and blood human beings who lived their lives as part of Irish culture and history.

Still, the poet’s mentioning of these anonymous women in the poem is the practice of showing the “power as restrictive but also empowering or affirmative” (Braidotti, *NT* 216). The anonymous women in the museum exemplify the dominant patriarchal power that existed in Ireland regarding the constant marginalisation of Irish women. In this

system of thought, these women do not have any chance to be recognised as a result of the dominant patriarchal power, which is restrictive. Yet, the poem steps out of this dominant system of thought in that the poet criticises the way these women are anonymised and marginalised: "Powerless queens; stock-still, enslaved/ Girls at the entryway to anonymity" (16-17). The phrase "entryway to anonymity" (17) suggests that the women in the poem, who are referred to as "queens" (16), "girls" (17) and "a servant" (7), are not entitled to a place or an identity. They become fluid anonymous figures that travel through history as the unidentified objects of a museum since they are never fully located. Their fluid existence is identified by a sense of loss and dislocation. For Boland, these women cannot find a home/particular location within the boundaries of history and the nation. Still, Boland turns the restrictive patriarchal power into an empowering and affirmative one by making these anonymous women the subject matter of her poem. In other words, the use of anonymous female figures in the poem proves one of the assertions of the concept of nomadic subjectivity: creating "forms of resistance" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 24) to the dominant system of representation. By recording the presence of these anonymous women, the poem attempts to make their subjectivities visible. Boland's representation of these women, although they are silent and anonymous, suggests that "literal expression of the politics of location […] bring[s] into representation that which the dominant system had declared off-limits. They are situated practices that require the awareness of the limitations as well as the specificity of one's locations" (Braidotti, *NT* 217). Accordingly, Boland, in the prose lesson of the poem, claims that these women in the museum are not heroines or metaphors. By focusing on an anonymous woman, she asserts that [s]he was not Ireland or Hibernia. […] Her flesh was flesh. Not wood or ink or marble" (36). She underlines the fact that these women are not mere metaphors of the nation. They are as real as any Irish woman, although they are placed in the exhibition cases as symbols of the Irish nation. Representation of these anonymous female figures forms a resistance to Ireland's official and traditional strategy of silencing women and their experiences.

As in "Art of Empire" and "Anonymity", in the final poem of the first group of poems "A Woman Without A Country" too, Boland expresses how "[w]omen have been

physically and symbolically dispossessed of a place from which to speak" (Braidotti, *NS* [2nd ed.] 257) if they are subjected to the patriarchal notion of women's non-belonging. The poem epitomises the way Irish women are turned into static and elusive objects by male image-makers of their country. In the prose lesson that precedes the poem, Boland claims that "[t]he issue between an artist and a truth is not a self, but an image. In an unrecorded existence she was neither and both. What troubled me was not whether she had included her country in her short life. But whether that country had included her" (38). "A Woman Without A Country" problematises the representation of women in art by focusing on "the narrative of the copper engraver who indifferently records a starving woman during the Famine, turning her body into an image acceptable to the *London Illustrated News*" (Allen-Randolph, "Ethics" 72). There is a specific focus on how the anonymous female figure is the product of the male imagination, as "[h]e puts his tools away,/ One by one; lays them out carefully/ On the deal table. His work done" (28-30). The starving woman is reduced to the status of being an icon or an image by disregarding the reality surrounding her life and experiences as a woman living during the famine years. In this respect, it should be noted that the Great Famine of 1845 was a pivotal moment in Irish history since it affected the social, cultural and political life in Ireland. Millions of people were forced to emigrate, and the population rapidly decreased as a result of famine deaths. Accordingly, a great demographical change occurred in Ireland. Although the majority of Irish society greatly suffered from the famine and its outcomes, Irish women's real struggles are excluded from history for the sake of creating a false image in the eyes of the public. As Anna Clark puts it, "women became passive, suffering symbols of the famine" (162). However, Irish women were significant contributors to the Irish households during the food crises of the 1840s in that "women not only cared for homes and children […] but they also produced and sold food, which brought in much-needed revenue to rural households" (Quinn and Delay 111). In other words, women experienced the famine, and they took part in it, but they were just used as icons or images for the newspapers. The poem suggests

> She is ready for the page,
> For the street vendor, for
> A new inventory which now
> To loss to laissez-faire adds

The odor of acid and the little,

Pitiless tragedy of being imagined. (22-27)

A male engraver creates the image of this nameless woman to represent famine victims. Yet, the poem makes clear that there is a disparity between what is presented and what reality is. The starving woman victim of the famine is subjected to a "[p]itiless tragedy of being imagined" (27). As Jody Allen Randolph indicates, Boland claims that "art itself has had some agency in stripping the women of their identity" (*Eavan* 180). In a broader context, Boland not only points out the role art and literature play in the representation of women's experiences but also underlines that the whole country (Ireland) is responsible for women's marginalisation in society. The poem criticises that the traditional representation of female victims of the famine does not shed light on the genuine experiences of women in Ireland, and the nameless woman in the poem "having been colonized by the male imaginary" (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 26) becomes one of the women without a country due to the lack of agency and control over her representation. The engraver "sever[s]/ Her body from its native air" (20-21) and the particularity of her experience as a woman who lived in the famine years is undermined by the male ideology of producing a stereotypical representation of women in Ireland. Eventually, she becomes an iconic figure of the famine. In this context, Boland's poem develops a critical stance about "the dangers of generalising statements about the position of women, of speaking 'for' other women as if their positions are identical to one's own" (Eagleton 299-300). This woman, although a victim of a national disaster such as famine, has no right to tell her own story. Through her, the poem exposes the woman's physical and symbolic displacement from a particular location. Even if she lives in Ireland, she cannot find a particular place of her own in either national history or artistic representation/creation. Boland questions the simplified images of Irish womanhood by suggesting that this anonymous woman should be a "situated […] [and] culturally differentiated subject" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 4), thus, a female nomadic subject.

Boland's endeavour to tell the stories of the grandmother in "Art of Empire", the anonymous women in "Anonymity" and the female victim of the famine in "A Woman Without a Country" can be taken as an attempt to save them from anonymity and to

emphasise the significance of the particularity of location for the development of female nomadic subjectivity. These poems exemplify that the specificity of location is an essential part of giving credibility and authenticity to the representation of women as it "refers to a way of making sense of diversity among women" (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 12). Boland's representations of women suggest that the particularity of location can contribute to the development of female nomadic subjects, without which women can be reduced to becoming female figures in display cases of a museum or a female statue whom a male artist engraves.

As conceived so far, the emphasis on the particularity of location functions as a necessary foundation for the representation of Irish women as nomadic subjects. Building on Boland's discussion on the politics of location in the first group of poems, the second group of poems show how the particularity of location interacts with the three levels of sexual difference in portraying women as fluid and active nomadic subjects rather than passive objects of culture and history. Accordingly, the second group of poems trace the formation of female nomadic subjectivity by emphasising the diversity and complexity of women's experiences through Braidotti's three levels of sexual difference.

To begin with, the poems "Amethyst Beads" and "Eurydice Speaks" present forms of female nomadic subjectivity by focusing on the "difference between men and women", which is Braidotti's first level of sexual difference in the process of becoming-subject. This level of Braidotti's "methodological map" (*NS* [2nd ed.] 151) criticises the patriarchal structure through which women were subjected to the essentialist images and characteristics created by the male vision. In this patriarchal structure, men represent the universal subject position which is self-regulating, rational and self-conscious. On the other hand, women are regarded as "a corporeality that is both exploited and reduced to silence" (*NS* [2nd ed.] 151), and uncontrolled and irrational othered-subject. Braidotti's aim in this level of difference is to be critical of the existing definitions surrounding the representation of women and to be creative in the formation of new images of female subjectivity that are nomadic. Accordingly, the first level of Braidotti's paradigm of

sexual difference is evident in the above-mentioned poems that concern mythological female characters silenced in mythological narratives. The poems, through their representations of silenced mythological female figures, offer revisionary interpretations of their position and suggest creative possibilities in which women are no longer absent or silent but speaking subjects. In other words, Boland deconstructs the identification of women with inferiority, silence and anonymity and develops female nomadic subjectivities. By emphasising the differences between the male and the female in the traditional representations, Boland aims to displace the notion that manhood or masculinity is a universal notion that shapes the understanding of the self/subjectivity in Western thought and philosophy (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 78). Hence, Boland's poems refute what Braidotti claims as "the assimilation of women into masculine modes of thought and practice and, consequently, sets of values" (*NS* [2nd ed.] 153). Her poems show the importance of the specificity and validity of female experience and aim to correct the imbalance in the representation of female subjectivity.

Clearly, Boland does not directly use the myths and legends in her poems but reinterprets and reinterrogates them to question the roles ascribed to women in these sources. To put it differently, she revises the classical narratives, and her revisionist representation in "Amethyst Beads" and "Eurydice Speaks" recalls Alicia Ostriker's notion of revisionist mythmaking. Ostriker introduces the method of mythmaking as a revisionist strategy adopted by women writers. She suggests that when a poet uses a traditionally known story or a figure in an unprecedented way, it is seen that there is a revisionist aim in the act of writing (72). In these revisionist accounts of the classical texts, as Ostriker explains, "the old stories are changed, changed utterly, by female knowledge of female experience, so that they can no longer stand as foundations of collective male fantasy" (73). In Boland's poems, "Amethyst Beads" and "Eurydice Speaks", the revision of the older texts from the female point of view is introduced as "the subversive function of the imagination" (Rich, "When" 23) of the poet. In other words, the traditional qualities that are associated with women in classical sources, such as submissiveness, obedience, and passivity, are subverted, and this paves the way for, in Adrienne Rich's terms, "entering an old text from a new critical direction" ("When" 18).

This revisionist mythmaking aspect of Boland's poems is directly related to the development of nomadic female subjectivities. In fact, mythmaking is an important part of nomadic subjectivity since Braidotti calls her nomadic subjectivity "a political myth" (*NS* [2nd ed.] 29) in order to highlight the importance and role of narrativity and storytelling in the development of a new form of subjectivity. In other words, Braidotti privileges the artistic creation over scientific rationality during the creation process of this form of subjectivity by stating that "[p]olitical fictions may be more effective […] than theoretical systems. The choice of an iconoclastic, mythic figure, such as the nomadic subject, is consequently a move against the settled and conventional nature of theoretical and especially philosophical thinking" (*Metamorphoses* 7). Braidotti challenges the dogmatic and linear system of thought that is dominant in Western philosophy. She presents mythmaking as a necessary initiative to overcome the static representation of subject positions, and she believes "in the potency and relevance of the imagination, of myth making, as a way to step out of the political and intellectual stasis of our times" (*NS* [2nd ed.] 26). Evidently, Braidotti's nomadic subjects as mythic figures represent dynamic and fluid subject positions which defeat the linearity, and she uses "mythmaking as a means of advancing the development of new subject positions" (Kjellgren 68) that are nomadic subjectivities.

Similarly, Boland recognises the fact that the myth of subjectivity has political repercussions since human beings are bound to the institutional, historical, and social factors that determine their place in society. Thus, she tries the mythmaking in the nomadic mode to overturn the existing definitions and perspectives shaping female subjectivity. For her, classical rewritings challenge the traditional representation of women by rejecting Ireland's dominant social, cultural, and political discourses about women and their place in national history and culture. Hence, when we look at her poems, "Amethyst Beads" and "Eurydice Speaks" in terms of the formation of female nomadic subjectivities, we see that the female subjects in them are in the process of becoming and each one of them represents a new political myth that rejects the conventional and settled versions of their earlier representations.

For instance, “Amethyst Beads” and “Eurydice Speaks” both include female speakers. As a rewriting of a mythological story in which female characters are traditionally victimised or subjected to male domination, “Amethyst Beads” recalls the myth of Persephone and Hades, while “Eurydice Speaks” focuses on the story of Eurydice and Orpheus. Boland takes issue with the portrayal of women as passive and silent in these stories. Clearly, in the traditional versions of these stories, Persephone and Eurydice cannot be heard, or they are not in a position to raise their voice against the false dichotomy of the patriarchal culture which regards women as inferior compared to men. As can be seen, the notions that “a man should be active and aggressive, a woman passive and subject to control by the men in her family, are expressed in virtually every Greek myth, even the ones in which the women seek to gain control of their own lives” (Lefkowitz 207). These myths are universal narratives that emphasise the weak and passive position of female subjectivity.

It is important that, in terms of female nomadic subjectivity, through revisiting the differences between men and women, Boland’s poems show that the traditionally silenced women figures evolve as speaking subjects and reject the universal narratives that limit their representation. Accordingly, in “Amethyst Beads”, a female speaker retells the story of Demeter and Persephone. In this regard, it should be noted that the myth of Demeter and Persephone is repetitively reinterpreted in various poems of Boland. As Virginie Trachsler states, “for many years this myth remained the most frequent classical hypotext in Boland’s work” (46) since Boland associates her motherhood experiences with it. In other words, Demeter “becomes a figure of maternity, mirroring the poet’s [Boland’s] experience as a mother as she reflects on her evolving relationship with her two daughters” (Trachsler 47). For instance, in her 1994 collection *In a Time of Violence*, she explicitly refers to the myth of Demeter in her poem, “The Pomegranate”: “The only legend I have ever loved is/ the story of a daughter lost in hell./ […] Ceres and Persephone the names” (1-2, 5). In “The Pomegranate”, Boland openly draws a parallelism between the myth and her life, and she uses the myth to comment on her relationship with her daughter. The poem embodies the collision of the mythological world and Boland’s own life: “And the best thing about the legend is/ I can enter it anywhere. And have” (6-7). In her subsequent collection *The Lost Land* (1998), Boland again uses the myth of Demeter

in several poems such as “Daughter” and “Ceres Looks at the Morning”. Evidently, “Amethyst Beads” offers a mythical rewriting of the same story with a strategy of developing female nomadic subjectivity. The female speaker alludes to the myth by suggesting that

> A mysterious brightness
> made underground where there is no sun
> only stories of a strayed child and her mother bargaining
> with a sullen king. Promising and arguing:
> what she can keep, what she can let him have. Shadows
> and the season violets start up in are part of
> the settlement. […] (8-14)

This part of the poem retells the myth of Persephone, ‘a strayed child’ who is abducted by Hades, ‘a sullen king’ and Demeter, as a ‘mother bargaining’, accepts Zeus’ decision of Persephone’s fate in regard to staying for six months in the underworld and for another six months on earth. The speaker does not directly use the mythological names. Instead, she expects the readers to understand the mythological undertone by using associative adjectives that refer to the characters in the original myth. The female speaker combines the classical story of mother and daughter with the ordinary instances of mothers’ lives regarding their children. For instance, the poem enters the realm of mythology when the speaker gives a long meditation on a necklace made of amethyst beads, and it starts off describing the moment the speaker takes the beads out of its special box. The female speaker contemplates how these beads’ colour changes due to shedding tears: “at the well of the throat where/ tears start/ they darken” (4-6). She describes this necklace as “an impression of earthly housekeeping” (7). It should be noted that the necklace is used as an object which combines the domestic and the mythic implications.

The female speaker is in the domestic setting, and through the necklace of amethyst beads, she remembers and revises the mythological story from her own perspective. In this respect, “earthly housekeeping” (7), which stands for the domestic, is shown as a particular place of resistance and survival for the female speaker as opposed to the mythic

which is traditionally dominated by the male-oriented point of view. Accordingly, "Amethyst Beads" demonstrates the first level of sexual difference of nomadic subjectivity both by including a female speaker who centralises a female perspective and ordinary instances of her domestic life and by refuting the male perspective that dominates the myths. Boland merges the actual world with the mythical world with the aim of saving women from universal and symbolic roles and meanings. In other words, Boland focuses on the 'actual woman' and her experience by bringing the mythical female figures (Demeter/Persephone) closer to reality. The poem aims to locate the female experience in a particular setting such as an earthly domestic home. While doing so, the poet uses the everyday concerns of a mother figure for her child. In this regard, Boland removes the female experience from the universal setting which prevents the representation of women's lives in diversity and multiplicity. It is through the actual experience of an actual woman that Boland uses the myth and develops nomadic subjectivities. The poem, hence, offers a criticism of the masculine subject position as the universally accepted truth and viewpoint about subjectivity (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 159) and rejects the essentialist perspective in the original story.

Evidently, "Amethyst Beads" exemplifies the mythmaking in the nomadic mode. As the first level of difference of a becoming-subject indicates, the prioritisation of the male principle is rejected in the poem since it marginalises a female subject's position as inferior. Karen Bennett comments on the significance of the myth of Demeter for women writers by stating that

> mythological figures are reflections of archetypes existing deep within the collective unconscious. […] Demeter's quest for her lost child [is] usually interpreted as the female quest for psychic wholeness. In many cases, Hades is seen as representing patriarchal society which estranges woman from her deeper Self and enslaves her; and wholeness is interpreted as consisting of reunion with the powerful Goddess archetype. Indeed, a whole body of feminist thought is centered on the notion that, before the onset of patriarchy, there existed a universal fertility Goddess figure (who had many different manifestations) that represented the power of the feminine principle in its purest form. (18)

As Bennett argues, male supremacy in the original story paves the way for the representation of women as fixed and hollow images who drift away from their true selves. In order to save women from this male-oriented point of view, women writers use

the story of Demeter to refer to the importance of the power of the female principle. By prioritising the female point of view in "Amethyst Beads", Boland underlines the importance of the "power of the feminine principle" (Bennett 18). Moreover, the poem silences the male voices. In the speaker's rendering of the classical story, Boland prefers to focus on the female point of view rather than the male perspective. In the original narrative, the main story consists of the actions initiated by male characters such as the abduction of Persephone by Hades and the decision of Zeus regarding Persephone's fate. In this respect, the actions undertaken by men constitute the main narrative. This male-oriented perspective, as Braidotti claims, leads to "the conflation of the masculine to represent the human and the confinement of the feminine to a secondary position of devalued otherness" (*NS* [1st ed.] 154). By incorporating the female perspective into the poem, Boland rejects the patriarchal universal narratives' tendency to exclude women's feelings and experiences in mythological stories. Her aim in retelling the mythological story is to give agency to women and their experiences without making them the other as opposed to the male principle. Accordingly, Persephone is described in the poem as "a strayed child" (10). It is an expression that suggests Persephone's state of displacement and fluidity rather than settling her into a fixed position. While Hades' underworld is a space where she is forcibly placed by a patriarchal force, Boland disrupts this narrative by not presenting Persephone as a passive object of a male negotiation. The only reference to Zeus' decision regarding Persephone is made by the speaker who utters that "[…] [s]hadows / and the season violets start up in are part of / the settlement." (12-14) The poem does not refer to the details of the settlement in the original myth and it is not stated whether she lives in the underworld or completely with her mother. The only identification used to refer to Persephone is "a child" (22). Clearly, she is not depicted within the boundaries of the traditional storyline. This exclusion of the traditional storyline provides fluidity to her in that Persephone exists as a female nomadic subject between the mythical world and the actual human world. This fluid position of Persephone shows that she refuses to be associated with a patriarchal identity (Hades' wife), and she is defined through her relationship with her mother (a child).

The poem is based on what these two women individually experience by eliminating the male intervention. The fluidity of Persephone is also highlighted by the poem's rejection of presenting Persephone's story in a well-organised narrative. Instead, the poem conveys her story through fragmented images/phrases such as "only stories of a strayed child and her mother bargaining / with a sullen king." (10-11) This fragmented structure supports the tenet that the female nomadic subject is not bound to the patriarchal and archetypal expectations of female subjectivity and experience, and as Braidotti asserts, writing the experiences of nomadic subjects means "disengaging the sedentary nature of words, destabilizing commonsensical meanings, deconstructing established forms of consciousness" (*NS* [1st ed.] 15). Accordingly, Persephone's story is not completed by the speaker, and this leads to the definition of her as a constantly moving and fluid female subject. Clearly, the monolithic and traditional experience of Persephone in the original myth is undermined, and this creates a line of evasion to portray Persephone as a female nomadic subject who defies linear representation rather than a traditional mythological female hero.

Similarly, Demeter's refusal to be confined to a traditional mother role and her attempt to redefine her relationship with her daughter reconstruct her as a female nomadic subject. She is represented as a powerful mother figure who is "wise to the healing arts of compromise, / of survival" (16-17). Here, the poem refers to the agreement between Hades and Demeter regarding Persephone's fate. In the traditional story of Demeter, female characters (Demeter and Persephone) are silenced, and their feelings and emotions are told by prioritising the male point of view. Demeter is forced to accept the decision of Zeus regarding her daughter's fate. Yet, the poem presents Demeter as the dominant authority to negotiate her daughter's future: "Promising and arguing:/ what she can keep, what she can let him have." (11-12) The patriarchal power (Zeus/Hades) that oppresses and marginalises women's voices (Demeter/Persephone) is destabilised by giving the authority to decide on a female character.

In line with the first level of difference, the poem is both critical and creative in that the revisionary interpretation of a mythological story criticises the notion of the man as the universal subject position. In this way, Demeter becomes a female nomadic subject who stands against the patriarchal power as a figure of resistance. In Sarbin's words, Boland's use of the mythic and the legendary is related to the presentation of "intimate moments and/ or empowerment of women" (90). For instance, after the mythological story is introduced in the poem, the speaker begins to talk about how amethyst beads are said to have a healing power when a child suffers from a fever:

> And when I wear them it is almost
> as if my skin was taking into itself
> a medicine of light. Something like the old simples.
> Rosemary, say, or tansy. Or camomile
> which they kept to cool fever.
> Which they once used to soothe a child
> tossing from side to side, beads of sweat catching
> and holding a gleam from the vigil lamp. (17-24)

Inspired by the mythical narrative of Demeter's experiences as a sacrificing and loving mother, this female speaker meditates on the mother-and-daughter relationship in diversity and complexity by incorporating ordinary but relatable experiences of mothers regarding their children. The poem's narrative emphasises the bond between women, and the threat this bond faces from a patriarchal structure (Hades). Boland reconstructs female subjectivity beyond a male-dominated framework through the mother-daughter relationship which focuses on Persephone's portrayal as the daughter of Demeter rather than her role as the wife of Hades. While doing so, the poem eliminates the universal setting and tries to particularise the location of these women as domestic space. In line with the first level of difference, Boland brings "this devalorized and misrepresented entity […] into representation" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 160) by disregarding the male intervention and agency, and presents Demeter and Persephone as nomadic subjects who are fluid, relational and transgressive.

In addition, the poem creates a female nomadic subject who is in the process of becoming in its ambiguity in relation to the identity of its speaker. It is possible to read the poem by taking into consideration two different perspectives. On the one hand, the speaker might be Demeter. On the other hand, the poetic persona might be an ordinary mother figure who expresses her real emotions regarding her daughter. Moreover, the line in italics written at the end of the poem holds an important place in the poem in terms of this ambiguity. The poem draws attention to another speaker who is a sick child mentioned by the female speaker earlier. This child cries out in her sleep, and she says "*Wait for me. Don't leave me here.*" (26). This line is most probably uttered by Persephone although it is not openly stated. By taking into consideration the mythological story, the poem implies that Persephone is a speaking subject who reveals her fears and concerns about being left alone in the underworld. This ambiguity creates a double vision which signifies the multiplicity and diversity of the female experience. As Nessa O'Mahony puts it, "the Ceres myth is one that can mean something different to a woman at various stages of life" (147). In other words, the double vision in the poem contests the assimilation of women's experiences and feelings into one concrete meaning because it highlights that any mother and daughter can relate to the poem's underlying themes and concerns. The double vision and ambiguity of the speaker are the core aspects of the concept of becoming in its aim of creating a fluid female subject position. As Braidotti claims, the nomadic subject is a "process, made of constant shifts and negotiations between different levels of power and desire, that is to say, wilful choice and unconscious drives" (*Metamorphoses* 22). To put it another way, the becoming process promotes a fluid and less grounded version of subjectivity. In this regard, Boland's poem "Amethyst Beads" offers multiple possibilities in regard to the speakers of the poem, and thus makes the representation of female subjectivity complex and multifaceted. In "Amethyst Beads", the identity of the speaker is based on the act of change and transformation, and the female speaker "no longer coincides with the disempowered reflection of a dominant subject who casts his masculinity in a universalistic posture" (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 11). Instead, the speaker is the female nomadic subject who is able to tell her experiences as a mother or a daughter without being subjected to male intervention.

As in "Amethyst Beads", Boland continues to use the mythmaking method to develop female nomadic subjectivity in "Eurydice Speaks". In the poem, she undermines the male perspective dominating the original story in which Eurydice dies due to snake venom on her wedding day. Out of grief, her husband Orpheus decides to bring her back to mortality, and he tries to persuade Hades and Persephone about Eurydice's return to the world. They accept Orpheus' offer on the condition that he must not turn back to look at Eurydice until she steps out of the territory of the underworld. Yet, Orpheus cannot wait, and he turns his head to glance back at his wife while Eurydice is still in the underworld. As a result, she is once again sent back to the underworld (March 572-573). It is observed in the myth that the narrative focuses on Orpheus, and the feelings and experiences of Eurydice are excluded. Hence, women are portrayed as passive and weak figures. However, as the title suggests, Eurydice speaks in the poem, which illustrates the essential part of the first level of sexual difference, "the critique of universalism […] of masculinity" (Braidotti, *NS* [2nd ed.] 152) because mythological texts are accepted as the universal narratives that shape and give meaning to the lives of people for centuries. They contribute to the patriarchal tradition that limits the female perspective and experience. In Vanda Zajko's words, "classical myth possesses huge cultural authority and has operated, for the most part, to perpetuate the oppression of women" (396). On this point, Lidia Curti also argues that although women are dominated by men in classical texts, they are the main source of conflict in these narratives: "Mythical stories are fabulations of women, probably not created by women. In those narratives, as in other dominant discourses, they are used as metaphors […] [and] women have been important motors of mythical (hi)stories." (ix). Conversely, as "Amethyst Beads", "Eurydice Speaks" solely focuses on women's experiences and offers the female poetic persona's agency and point of view as its primary concerns. It focuses on the female experience and critiques the universalist approach which regards the male subject position as a superior concept while marginalising women.

In contrast to the traditional mythical stories, Boland's poem "Eurydice Speaks" prioritises the female perspective and increases the presence of women in the myth. As Florence Impens states, the poem "reverses the narratorial point of view of the source text

to let the woman express her love for Orpheus" (162). When Eurydice speaks in the poem, she asks Orpheus several questions about her predicament: "How will I know you in the underworld?/ How will we find each other?" (1-2). Her questions express her sense of insecurity and reveal that she has fears about not finding Orpheus in the underworld. Eurydice also laments her departure from the actual world for the underworld. She describes the wonders of "the physical earth" (3) such as its "skies […] with actual stars" (4), "earthly winters" (11), and its dusk and frost (12-13), and clearly prefers not to go. Her comments on the negligence of the real world in the representations of the myth are significant in showing the limitations of the traditional representations of women. The myths ignore or disregard the ordinary but recognisable incidents of the earth, which are unappreciated or unrecorded:

> And no one needed to write down
> Or restate, or make a record of, or ever would,
> And never will,
> The plainspoken music of recognition,
>
> Nor the way I often stood at the window—
> The hills growing dark, saying,
> As a shadow became a stride
> And a raincoat was woven out of streetlight (14-21)

In this context, Boland revises the original myth from the female point of view by giving importance to the particularity of location for women. As Braidotti suggests, locating female subjectivity frees women from overall generalisations and statements, making it possible to respect differences in the female experience (*NT* 271). As the poem shows, the mythical version of the story isolates and separates Eurydice from the real world and the particular location. Including the details of the world serves to the development of the speaker's initial concern in that none of them can be found in the underworld: "What will we do with the loneliness of the mythical?" (6). It should be noted that Eurydice is taken to the underworld as a token/symbol, whereas in Boland's retelling, she becomes a real figure in a real place. Eurydice reveals that she is accustomed to living on the earth by stating that she and Orpheus "lived for so long on the physical world" (3). Eurydice

prefers to be a woman of a particular location in the actual world because she is aware of the fact that the mythical/symbolic world fails to portray the reality of women's lives. In other words, what Eurydice reveals in regard to her fears, aspirations, dreams and concerns is usually excluded from the classical and universal narratives.

The poem builds a connection between the ordinary and the mythical in order to provide more grounded and accurate insights into the mostly neglected aspects of women's lives and experiences. As Eurydice asserts in the poem, ordinary instances of women's experiences, such as "the way [she] often stood at the window" (18), constitute the very essence of their lives. It is through these details and feelings of Eurydice as the female subject that the poem develops a female nomadic subjectivity. By giving space to Eurydice's point of view, Boland proves that "[t]he apparent repetition or reassertion of feminine positions is a discursive strategy that engenders difference" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 118). In other words, the poem presents Eurydice as a female nomadic subject who rejects the universal masculine position by laying bare different facets of her experiences as a woman. She is no longer a silent figure of myths but a female nomadic subject who speaks of her fears, worries and her love for Orpheus.

As argued, Braidotti attempts to subvert and criticise the universalism of masculine supremacy and ideals by recognising the first level of sexual difference as the difference between men and women. This recognition requires a subversion of the male principle, and it is exercised through the revision and reinterpretation of the mythological stories in which the male characters are centralised. Instead of presenting the dominating men in the classical texts, Boland prioritises the female perspective by representing female mythological figures as female nomadic subjects.

In a similar way, Boland's "Talking to My Daughter Late at Night" and "One Thought, One Grace, One Wonder at the Least" illustrate how the second level of sexual difference, that is, "differences among women", functions in the development of female nomadic

subjectivity. Braidotti's main focus in the second level of difference is on the reflection of the female experience as diverse and complex as possible by acknowledging the differences in women's real-life experiences. In Lisa Folkmarson Källs's words, Braidotti's second level of difference stresses "how to achieve an alternative female subjectivity which recognizes differences among women" (199). It accepts the notion of woman as an umbrella term that interprets and reads women's experiences in multiplicity and complexity. The second level of difference thus highlights the fact that women's experiences cannot be reduced to stereotypical roles and expectations since they are not the same, although women share similar experiences in their lives (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 163). For Braidotti, the fundamental aspect of the second level of difference is to differentiate between the notions of 'woman as representation' and 'woman as experience' (*NS* [1st ed.] 164). The notion of 'woman as representation' refers to the oversimplification of the female image in patriarchal discourses. This type of representation of women is inclined to produce a static construction of female subjectivity devoid of any complexity. On the other hand, 'woman as experience' aims to "move beyond established conceptual schemes" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 165) about women by focusing on the authentic and individual experiences of women. Accordingly, this level of difference suggests that the development of female nomadic subjectivity is based on women's real-life experiences.

In her poems "Talking to My Daughter Late at Night" and "One Thought, One Grace, One Wonder at the Least", Boland develops female nomadic subjectivities by redefining motherhood, female friendship, and marital relationships. Boland's representations of Irish women reject their essentialist point of view in the Irish poetic tradition which associates women with stock roles such as a sacrificing mother (Mother Ireland) and a passive female figure waiting to be saved by men (Boland, *OL* 27). Thus, her poems foreground the complexity of female subjectivity and their real-life experiences by bringing together different and multiple experiences of Irish women. In this respect, Tsung Chi Chang argues that Irish poetic tradition lacks the perspective which reflects the diversity and multiplicity of Irish women's experiences since such metaphorical and conventional representations of Irish women "[dismiss] the realities of women's historical

experience and, therefore, fail to represent the down-to-earth existence of women. As a result, women are not portrayed as self-sufficient entities" ("Unsettling" 594). In her poem "The Journey", published in *The Journey* (1987), Boland comments on how the Irish poetic tradition excludes the realities of women's lives, and she writes that "[d]epend on it, somewhere a poet is wasting/ his sweet uncluttered metres on the obvious / emblem instead of the real thing" (7-9). If "the obvious emblem" (8-9) stands for the concept of "woman as representation", then "the real thing" (9) refers to the notion of "woman as experience".

Evidently, "Talking to My Daughter Late at Night" exemplifies the notion of 'woman as experience' that is highlighted by the second level of sexual difference defined by Braidotti. The poem displays an intimate moment that a mother and a daughter experience in a particular location, which is their house. It is written from the perspective of a maternal figure who shares her concerns and affection for her daughter. As indicated in the title, the mother and the daughter are having a late-night talk, and the speaker describes the moment with her daughter by creating a familiar domestic setting:

> We have a tray, a pot of tea, a scone.
> This is the hour
> When one thing pours itself into another:
> The gable of our house stored in shadow. (1-4)

By using the moment between a mother and a daughter, Boland lays bare the different facets of maternal experience. Instead of portraying motherhood as a representative notion, Boland regards motherhood as an individual experience devoid of stereotypical roles and expectations. In a broader perspective, this poem is an indicator of Boland's subversion of the notion of motherhood as representation that is widely used in Irish cultural and political discourses. As discussed in detail at the beginning of the chapter, the institutionalised form of motherhood and female experience have been used excessively by the Irish nationalist and cultural discourses. The feminisation of Irish land and the definition of women's role as mothers by the constitution are indicators of how the dominant patriarchal culture promotes the monolithic representation of the female

experience or the institutionalised version of motherhood. In particular, Irish nationalist ideology promotes the representation of Ireland as a woman, and in this representation, Ireland is referred to as either a mother or the Virgin Mary. This gendered representation of the nation paves the way for the creation of the trope of 'Mother Ireland' (Kearney 20). Elizabeth Swanson Goldberg argues that women are allocated passive roles as opposed to men in the nationalist discourses:

> Woman has historically carried several tropic burdens in relation to nation, including, in her chastity, symbol of the nation's honor, and in her maternity, culture-bearing for the nation. The tropological implication of "nation" contains an implicit paradox, a paradox that relegates women and the nation to be in need of masculine protection, but also that the nation must be male in its power relations. (97)

As stated, feminine experiences or qualities are attributed to women as a way of restricting their active participation in the public sphere, and the correlation between nation and femininity is supported in order to highlight the importance of active male power. In the context of Irish nationalism, Heather Ingman states that "[f]ixed constructs of gender thus played a central role in the building of the Irish nation. Politics and public life were regarded as masculine sphere and women were confined to a single identity, the domestic" (12). Particularly, the association of Ireland with the notion of a motherland that needs male protection is a common strategy of the patriarchal national discourse. It is through these passive and fixed representations of womanhood that Irish women's position in society and culture is marginalised because motherhood as representation, in Adrienne Rich's words, "has ghettoized and degraded female potentialities, […] [and] under patriarchy, female possibility has been literally massacred on the site of motherhood" (*Of Woman* 13).

This trope of 'Mother Ireland' is excessively used by Irish male writers as a contribution to nationalist ideology. They employ the trope of Mother Ireland "as spiritual or symbolic compensation for the colonial calamities of historical reality. The mythological mother would restore the lost national identity by calling her sons to the sacred rite of blood-sacrifice" (Kearney 14). Especially during the Irish Literary Revival years, Ireland was represented as a devoted mother figure who needed to be protected by Irish men. Tina O'Toole states that "[t]he Mother Ireland figure was deployed to inspire young men to

take up arms for the nationalist cause" (88). However, Boland does not accept this trope of Mother Ireland and subverts it as a reaction to "the silent feminine imagery in the lore of the nation"[5] (*OL* 70-71). Boland transforms the silent and passive mother figure of traditional Irish poetry into a speaking subject who is ready to share her experiences from the female perspective, and accordingly, Boland in "Talking to My Daughter Late At Night" demonstrates the notion of woman of experience in the second level of difference.

In the poem, the late-night talk of a mother and a daughter paves the way for understanding the female experience in all its complexity and diversity. In other words, it can be inferred from the speaker's words that the maternal figure of the poem experiences complex and varied emotions ranging from fear and the sense of loss to hope and nostalgia. The complexity of an individual experience of motherhood first reveals itself in the speaker's longing for her daughter's childhood because it, as she suggests, "ended years ago" (7). Later, this nostalgic feeling leaves itself to a flashback about one of her daughter's sad memories, and she reflects on how she, as a mother, fails to console her daughter's distressing experience: "No certainty I can find/ The if or maybe that might remedy/ An afternoon you walked up the hill/ After school. In winter, in tears" (9-12). Yet, the speaker states that their conversation serves as "more than remedies" (19). Then, while the mother feels a sense of loss because it is not possible to return to the childhood of her daughter, she also celebrates her relationship with her daughter by describing them as the "living citizens" (17) of civilisation of love (15). Evidently, in "Talking to My Daughter Late at Night", the female speaker is under the influence of the stream of emotions, thoughts, and fears regarding her individual experiences of motherhood. In the poem, it is not possible to find a passive and iconic representation of motherhood devoid of genuine emotions and diverse perspectives. The stream of emotions that this mother figure embodies enables the assertion of fluid female subjectivity and experience in that the complexity and multiplicity of the emotions and feelings of the female speaker disrupt

[5] For instance, in her poem "Mother Ireland" published in *The Lost Land* (1998), Mother Ireland is stripped of the earlier essentialist connotations. In the poem, Mother Ireland finds her own voice, and she says that "I was a hill/ […] I did not see./ I was seen" (6, 8-9). The traditionally objectified figure of Mother Ireland becomes the subject of the poem, and this time, she is going to narrate her experiences from her perspective: "Now I could tell my story./ It was different/ from the story told about me" (17-19).

the conventional images of motherhood. This drive towards fluidity prepares the ground for the development of female nomadic subjectivity in Boland's poem as Boland lays bare "diverse ways of understanding and inhabiting the subject position of woman [of experience]" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 115) instead of sticking to the linear and static representation of womanhood. The mother in the poem hence performs as a female nomadic subject who experiences different kinds of emotions and feelings so as to exemplify the diversity and complexity in the maternal experiences of women.

Correspondingly, Pilar Villar Argáiz comments on Boland's portrayal of the motherhood experience in her poetry:

> Boland openly challenges the patriarchal view of motherhood, which dictates what mothers should feel towards their children and subsequently what their reaction should and should not be. By portraying a mother's multiple fears and her sense of loss, this poet expresses the multidimensional nature of the female, as against monolithic representations of women. […] Boland expresses the often confusing and conflicting emotions a mother generally experiences, and disrupts the view of motherhood encouraged by the Irish national tradition. Her mothers are realistic figures. ("Matrophobia" 142)

As indicated, Boland questions the representation of motherhood within the already-established patriarchal system that decides on the roles and duties of mothers according to the masculine ideals of Irish society. In fact, Boland is frustrated by how the Irish poetic tradition treats motherhood. She draws attention to the fact that there is hardly any poem that prioritises the maternal experience in detail, and she realises that "this venerable, exact, magisterial craft [poetry] had no place for the central adventure of my life" ("*from* Daughter" 350). Especially when Boland's daughter was in intensive care after she was born, she tried to find consolation and relief from poetry in order to overcome her loneliness, but she failed: "The power, privilege and consolation of art—why did it leave me and my child so unattended in that room? The more I thought about it, the more the question seemed urgent, huge and ominous" ("*from* Daughter" 368). "Talking to My Daughter Late At Night" can be accepted as an answer to her question. Accordingly, in the poem, Boland presents motherhood as a multifaceted female experience. Within the context of nomadic subjectivity, "Talking to My Daughter Late at Night" displays the difference between the notions of 'woman of representation' and 'woman of experience'.

Boland shows that motherhood as representation lacks the particularity of maternal experience. Her mother figure exemplifies the notion of "women as experience" that the second level of difference stresses "in the recognition of diversity and yet of common experiences and concerns" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 132). In other words, the mother is one of the women of experience as the second level of difference suggests, thus a female nomadic subject who revolts against the archetypal representation of motherhood in Ireland. Instead of focusing on the symbolic meaning of motherhood and the mother-child relationship, "Talking to My Daughter Late at Night" examines motherhood as a concrete experience consisting of ordinary yet relatable incidents of women's lives such as concerns, fears and love of a mother figure (12, 17).

The issue of creating female nomadic subjectivity dominates the poem "One Thought, One Grace, One Wonder at the Least" in a similar manner to "Talking to My Daughter Late at Night". The poem forms the female speaker as a nomadic subject by using the female friendship as a driving force. The main concern of the poem is to comment on the function of language used in art. In this regard, it is important to note that the title of the poem holds a significant place since it is a line taken from Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. In his speech, Tamburlaine tries to find an answer to the question, "What is beauty, saith my sufferings, then?" (V. I. 160), and he finally admits that it is not possible to reach an ultimate definition of it: "Yet should there hover in their restless heads/, One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least,/ Which into words no virtue can digest" (V. I. 171-173). Tamburlaine's speech points out that even if the ablest poets try to define or articulate the nature of beauty, they are destined to fail in their mission since "for by delineating what human wit cannot grasp, beauty makes unwitting contact with the 'one thought, one grace, one wonder' beyond the capacity of any talent or virtue" (Parker 225). Similarly, the speaker in Boland's poem "One Thought, One Grace, One Wonder at the Least" explores the beauty of nature and how poetic language is able to record the things in nature: "[…] petals, bracts, even ash trees/ Filling up with words,/ Each one of them opening out/ So language can find it, can save it" (42-45). Although Boland's questioning of the function of language in describing the beauty of nature is the main theme in the poem, this questioning is initiated by female friendship and experience.

To put it another way, Boland takes power from her female neighbour in developing the poem's argument. Her female friend's act of reading a book in the late hours of the night encourages the speaker to comment on the use of language in art:

> My neighbour liked to read late at night.
>
> And late was late.
>
> After dark, when everything was quiet
>
> I waited for her lamp to straighten out,
>
> Asiatic lilies, lupin rows,
>
> Lattices with their zigzagging shadows. (1-6)

The beginning of the poem indicates that two women and their ideas will be at the center of the poem, and this particularity of the female perspective proves the complexity of the female experience Braidotti emphasises as central to the second level of sexual difference in developing female nomadic subjectivities. The female speaker of the poem tries to understand "the times [they] live in" (19), and she and her neighbour are presented as women of experience, not as women of representation. Both women are mothers, and the speaker says that "[their] children slept" (7), and both of them refrain from sleeping. The female neighbour is reading a book (16), and the speaker comments on a variety of subject matters after being inspired by "a glowing disciple issued from [her neighbour's] window" (8). These are reflections of different individual experiences and perspectives of women who are in the process of becoming nomadic subjects with respect to providing a diverse and complex interpretation of women's experiences and female friendship. They are not silent and passive women of representation as Braidotti highlights in the second level of difference (*NS* [1st ed.] 164). It can be suggested that Boland portrays different facets of the female experience while "recogni[sing] a bond of commonality among women" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 163). Especially after Boland moves to one of the Irish suburbs, her poetry is under the influence of what she experiences in a suburban environment, and she feels a connection between herself and other women who go through the same struggles and life experiences. She explains this connection as follows:

> […] I would feel all the sweet, unliterate melancholy of women who must have stood as I did, throughout continents and centuries, feeling the timelessness of that particular instant and the cruel time underneath its surface. They must have measured

> their children, as I did, against the season and looked at the hedges and rowan trees, their height and colour of their berries, as an index of the coming loss. (*OL* 168)

Boland uses the suburban setting as an inspirational bond with other women who share the same feelings, emotions, and struggles as herself. Similarly, the female speaker in "One Thought, One Grace, One Wonder at the Least" describes the suburban setting in which she and her female neighbour live. Their neighbourhood is quiet (3), and there are streets covered by ash trees (9) and hollyhocks (9). Particularly, the poem focuses on the moment when the speaker and her neighbour experience a late-night awakening. Her neighbour's act of reading a book late at night helps the speaker to remember one of their conversations in the summer (18-20), and she appreciates their friendship. This moment between the speaker and her friend is, in Vesna Ukić Košta's words, one of "[t]hose moments that Boland so vividly and excitedly talks about, very ordinary and trivial at first sight, are the moments that many women 'out there' have shared with her" (14). In this respect, the poem presents the speaker as a female nomadic subject who can find a correlation among other experiences of nomadic subjects, and this leads to the formation of a diverse and complex version of female subjectivity. The shared experiences of nomadic subjects reflect "emphatic proximity [and] intensive interconnectedness" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 5) to create a common bond among women's representation. The female speaker shows that women's lives consist of daily but ordinary incidents such as remembering one of their conversations with their friends (18-22) and staying awake late at night (1-6). She underlines that these incidents and moments are actual human truths of women's lives. Hence, it is observed in the poem that Boland does not simplify or marginalise any experience of women. On the contrary, she tries to embrace each incident of women's lives as a way of offering an alternative version of women of experience. Accordingly, Boland's poem proves that "some experiences were reminiscent or evocative of others; this ability to flow from one set of experiences to another is a quality of interconnectedness. […] Some states or experiences can merge simply because they share certain attributes" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 5). The lives of the female speaker and her friend are interconnected by their shared experiences of womanhood. The speaker, as a female nomadic subject, is able to move between their shared memories and experiences. In other words, the poem merges the experiences of these two women, and it highlights that there is an invisible bond between them.

More importantly, this bond is triggered by the outside world. In other words, the female speaker of the poem is a female nomadic subject in the development, and one of the parts of this development process is to build a connection between the self and the outside world. Along with the subject's self, the consciousness is also in the process of becoming by "captur[ing] the outside world [and] by making itself receptive to the totality of perception" (Braidotti, *NT* 152). Braidotti explains that

> [w]hat gets activated is a seemingly absent-minded floating attention or a fluid sensibility that is porous to the outside and which our culture has coded as 'feminine'. […] It combines the accuracy of the cartographer with the hypersensitivity of the sensualist in apprehending the precise quality of an assemblage of elements, like the shade of the light at dusk or the curve of the wind just before the rain falls. (*NT* 152)

The female poetic persona of Boland's poem exemplifies this act of 'capturing the outside world'. After the poetic persona highlights the bond between herself and her female neighbour, her perception is interrupted by the outside world: "And my neighbor, who dies years ago,/ Is closing her book/ […] as/ Light slips down from the Dublin hills" (38-39,41). Also, at the beginning of the poem, the speaker says "I waited for her lamp to straighten out/ Asiatic lilies, lupin rows,/ Lattices with their zigzagging shadows" (4-6). Evidently, the female speaker has a hypersensitivity to the outside world because her consciousness is in the process of becoming. Although the speaker's consciousness becomes fluid and mobile, this singularity of female experience is based on the particular location. As argued above in some detail, spatial awareness provides the necessary context for women to embrace and comment on their differences. In the context of the poem, it is seen that the speaker particularises their location as Dublin (41). Then, it is observed that "what is mobilized is one's capacity to feel, sense, process, and sustain the impact with the complex materiality of the outside" (Braidotti, *NT* 152). Boland presents the female speaker and her neighbour as women of experience, and they exemplify the commonality among women, but the commonality, here, is not used negatively. On the contrary, the commonality of the experiences of these two women refers to the common but, at the same time, the individual experiences of them. As Braidotti indicates, though women share similar experiences, they are not the same (*NS* [1st ed.] 163). Their act of staying up late evokes different sensations and emotions for them, and this turns into a crucial aspect that nourishes and proves the diversity of women's experiences in forming female nomadic subjectivity. Accordingly, the speaker's alertness to the outside world,

her attachment to the particular location (Dublin) and her connection to the female friend contribute to the presentation of her as a female nomadic subject.

Boland deepens the complexity of female subjectivity and its role in the development of female nomadic subjectivities through Braidotti's third level of difference, "differences within each woman," in "An Island of Daughters", which deals with its female speaker's unconscious images in her dream. "Differences within each woman" aims at focusing on the split and fractured constitution of a female self. Here, Braidotti specifies the difference between identity and political subjectivity which have an equal role and share in shaping female subjectivity. For her, political subjectivity "is a conscious and willful position […] [while identity] bears a privileged bond to unconscious processes" (*NS* [2nd ed.] 158). The third level of difference deals with how a female subject displays the fractured self via unconscious images. The identity of a female self, which is filled with unconscious images, "avoid[s] hegemonic recodification of the female subject" (Braidotti, *NS* [2nd ed.] 158) since these unconscious images disrupt the ordered and overarching system of thought that controls the representation of female subjectivity. Braidotti explains that

> the body cannot be fully apprehended or represented: it exceeds representation. A difference within each entity is a way of expressing this condition. Identity for me is a play of multiple, fractured aspects of the self; it is relational, in that it requires a bond to the "other"; it is retrospective, in that it is fixed through memories and recollections in a genealogical process. Last, but not least, identity is made of successive identifications, that is to say, unconscious internalized images that escape rational control. (*NS* [2nd ed.] 158)

Evidently, Braidotti provides another perspective on the representation of female subjectivity by endowing it with various layers of lived experiences and unconscious images. In other words, the unconscious images and processes of female subject positions also contribute to the notion of complexity which seeks to save women from the monolithic and static representation.

Accordingly, "An Island of Daughters" reveals this split and complex female self via its speaker's dream, representing female subjectivity as relational and retrospective. "An Island of Daughters" belongs to the third section of the collection, 'The Trials of Our

Faith'. The poem is about its female speaker's dream in which she finds herself on an island of daughters. It develops a critical stance towards how women are excluded and silenced in Ireland's history and culture. The poem starts off describing how the speaker's dream begins by "unstitch[ing] the gall ink/ and script/ from great books" (3-5), and she flies over the seas to reach an island of daughters (6-11). Later, the speaker offers three different versions of the same dream in three stanzas. These three versions of the same dream create a dystopic atmosphere for women. Most importantly, the poem's female speaker lays out the unconscious images present in her identity. In the first version of her dream, she mentions how the historical narratives are inclined to develop a debasing point of view about women:

> even the war memorials
> to who we fought
> and who fought us
> speak with one voice
> about the sadness,
> the remembrance,
> the wretchedness of daughters. (16-22)

The speaker in the poem refers to "the war memorials" (16) in which women are associated with negative connotations such as sadness (20) and wretchedness (22). It can be suggested that the war memorial stands for the overarching grand narratives that tend to ostracise women's experiences and voices. This part of the poem criticises the essentialist and linear representation of female subjectivity and experience in male-oriented writings by claiming that the official narratives, such as war memorials, "speak with one voice" (19) against women. However, this linearity of the official documents regarding the representation of women is challenged by the speaker's dream which lays bare the unconscious acts of the female mind. As Braidotti explains in the third level of difference, a female nomadic subject is in "an imaginary relationship to one's history, genealogy, and material conditions" (*NS* [2nd ed.] 158). Through the speaker's dream which is the product of her unconsciousness, the poem creates an imaginary relationship to the official culture and history of Ireland. Although she is dreaming, her unconscious mind merges with her memories and recollections. Accordingly, the speaker mentions a

girl who “makes her way home in/ the predawn” (35-36), and this girl is in some sort of mysterious occupation since she tries to reach her room quietly but fails: “her foot falling/ on the one step on the stair/ that makes noise” (41-43). At this point, the poem creates confusion and uncertainties since there is no clarity about the identity of this girl or whether this girl is the speaker or not. However, as the third level of difference points out, these uncertainties and discontinuities are significant in reflecting the complexity within each woman. They are not “defeats or lapses […] [but they represent] different layers of lived experience” (Braidotti, *NS* [2nd ed.] 158-159). Moreover, the poem furthers the speaker’s dream by portraying a gloomy and dark atmosphere of this imaginary island while complaining about the lack of particularity in the representation of female subjectivity:

> In which there is only
> monochrome on
> the edge of evening, at
> the end of the horizon,
> not the thigh-deep grasses
> of Ferguson, the magenta seas
> of Mangan’s dirge,
> no refrain, no celebration,
> just shadows
> of women in the shadow of a nation. (22-33)

Here, Boland describes the island of daughters by using the adjective monochrome, and she calls the inhabitants of the island the shadows of women. The speaker draws attention to the dark atmosphere of the island in that there are no bright colours in the sunset, but only black and white. Most importantly, the female speaker refers to two influential Irish male writers, Sir Samuel Ferguson and James Clarence Mangan, who are known for their patriotic and nationalistic themes in their works. For instance, Ferguson is regarded as one of the fathers of the Irish Literary Revival, since he possesses “an antiquarian fascination with Ireland’s mythical past” (Pereira 69). Also, Mangan is accepted as a nationalist poet for his “stirring nationalist anthems like ‘Dark Rosaleen’, or his depictions of the horrors of the Great Famine” (Fegan 195). The speaker suggests that

this imaginary island does not share any similarities with Ferguson's and Mangan's depictions of Ireland. Clearly, the poem "avoid[s] hegemonic recodification of the female subject" from the male perspective (Braidotti, *NS* [2nd ed.] 158). In other words, the poem points out that the unconsciousness of the female nomadic subject refuses the male standpoint and depiction of the physical land. This island does not have any heroic qualities or celebration since women are treated as shadows of the nation (33). The nation/ country (Ireland) represents women as shadows with the lack of any distinctive characteristics. Yet, the poem rejects this linear representation of female subjectivity by embodying different layers of the female speaker's mind, consisting of "unconscious internalized images that escape rational control" (Braidotti, *NS* [2nd ed.] 158). In line with the third level of sexual difference, the poem develops the speaker as a female nomadic subject since it focuses on the unconscious processes of the female mind through narrating the dream of a poetic persona, and as Braidotti suggests, "[t]aking unconscious structures into account is crucial for the [female nomadic] subjectivity precisely because they allow for forms of disengagement and disidentification from the socio-symbolic institution of femininity" (*Metamorphoses* 40). Accordingly, the female speaker, as a nomadic subject, is responsible for showing the importance of the unconscious images of a female mind as a reaction to the linear representation of the female experience. The speaker's disengagement from the traditional representation of female subjectivity and experience can be observed in her absolute refusal of the depiction of an imaginary island by the male-oriented ideology (22-33). The female speaker's critical attitude towards the misrepresentation of women by the official discourse showcases "a structural non-adherence to rules, roles and models" (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 40). The unconscious images and acts, such as an imaginary island of daughters (11) and flying overseas (7-8) are parts of this structural non-adherence to previously accepted truths and beliefs regarding the representation of female subjectivity and they merge with retrospective memories and recollections of the fears and concerns of the speaker in regard to marginalised and silenced women of a nation. In the end, this paves the way for the complex and diverse representation of female subjectivity, which resists being codified into a hegemonic order built by male-oriented discourses.

In light of Eavan Boland's portrayal of female subjectivity in *A Woman Without A Country*, it can be concluded that Boland's female speakers can be accepted as female nomadic subjects in terms of embodying the complexity and diversity of Irish women's experiences. Read through the perspective of Braidotti's nomadism, *A Woman Without A Country* promotes fluid assertions of female subjectivity by rejecting the patriarchal and traditional conception of womanhood. Boland's questioning of the marginalisation of Irish women in Ireland, both culturally and historically, and her revision of the traditional representation of women by mirroring the reality surrounding the lives of Irish women enlarge the scope of Irish poetry. Within this context, *A Woman Without A Country* exemplifies Braidotti's female nomadic subjectivity based on three levels of difference in the process of becoming-woman. Boland's poems prove that the female speakers in the poems are in the process of becoming-woman in terms of embodying the diverse and complex female experience denied to Irish women in the traditional poetic tradition.

CHAPTER 2

THE ROLE OF NOMADIC MEMORY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF FEMALE NOMADIC SUBJECTIVITY IN EAVAN BOLAND'S *THE HISTORIANS*

In Chapter I, Boland's development of female nomadic subjectivity in *A Woman Without A Country* is traced through Braidotti's three-level diagram of sexual difference. It is shown that each of the three levels of sexual difference identified by Braidotti is employed by Boland in different groups of poems to develop female nomadic subjectivities for Irish women. The chapter concludes that Boland's representations of female nomadic subjectivities in terms of observing the politics of location and the three levels of sexual difference reject the traditional perspectives that shape the representation of Irish women in traditional Irish poetry. Her assertions of the fluid nature of female subjectivity draw attention to the potential diversity and multiplicity of the relationships and genuine moments women experience in developing their subjectivities.

This chapter is concerned with Boland's representation of female nomadic subjects whose nomadic subjectivity unfolds itself through nomadic memory in *The Historians*. Its main argument is based on the fact that several of the female speakers in *The Historians* are present through memories that are excluded, suppressed, and marginalised within Irish cultural and social contexts. Using the memories of women in their representation disrupts the official historical narratives and ideologies representing women as static and one-dimensional and allows Boland to criticise the official discourse of history that tends to oppress minority voices and marginal groups such as Irish women. This chapter hence engages with how women's memories become nomadic and contribute to the development of women as nomadic subjectivities since their memories impart mobility, change, and fluidity to female subjectivity and experience, to allow "processes of

metamorphosis of the self" (Braidotti, *NT* 164). Boland thus presents Irish women and their experiences as fluid and non-essentialist, as nomadic, in Braidottian terms.

'Nomadic memory' signifies a fluid and creative form of memory which belongs to the historically marginalised or oppressed subjects. As Braidotti puts forward, nomadic memory is a "creative reading of memory" (*NT* 31) since it aims to develop creative alternatives for the representation of the traditionally marginalised subject positions. One of these alternatives is the creation of nomadic subjectivity through memory. Nomadic memory activates the process of defamiliarisation from the dominant version of the representation of a subject position. It deconstructs the stable identities and paves the way for the development of a fluid nomadic subjectivity. In other words, nomadic memory is not itself fixed or static, and it is directly related to attaining fluid subjectivity. As Braidotti states, "[m]emory is ongoing and forward-looking precisely because it is a singular yet complex subject that is always already in motion and in process. This [nomadic] memory has to do with the capacity to endure, to "sustain" the process of change or transformation" (*NT* 235). As stated, nomadic memory resists to the central memory system that supports the static representation of subjectivity and rejects the authority of history by sticking to the virtual possibilities produced by imaginative nomadic thinking. Hence, nomadic memory allows "the active reinvention of a self that is joyfully discontinuous, as opposed to being mournfully consistent, as programmed by phallogocentric culture. It destabilizes the sanctity of the past and the authority of experience" (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 169).

In *The Historians*, the representations of Irish women are characterised by what is called nomadic memory in the poems "The Fire Gilder", "Anonymous", "Eviction", "The Historians", "Statue 2016", "Margin", and "Our Future Will Become the Past of Other Women". Moreover, the memories revealed by Irish women in these poems are the product of a collective effort. In other words, Boland's "representation of [Irish] women from the past emphasizes the connected nature of women's lives across time" (Collins, *Contemporary* 11) and sheds light on the common/similar stories, emotions, feelings and

occasions experienced by Irish women. Accordingly, *The Historians* presents multiple ways of creating nomadic subjectivities for Irish women through their memories, which are their individual yet connected experiences of similar forms of marginalisation and exclusion.

In line with nomadic memory's engagement with creativity, the above-mentioned poems creatively shed light on the inaccessible past of Irish women. Each of the selected poems paves the way for a possibility or alternative representation of a traditionally marginalised Irish woman as a female nomadic subject through their fluid nomadic memories. In "Anonymous", for instance, there is an alternative representation of one of the anonymous Irish women who contributed to Irish political history as a dispatch carrier, yet her efforts and activities remained unknown and unrecognised. Similarly, "The Fire Gilder" offers a creative possibility of representation for an ordinary mother through the speaker's memory of their conversation, which is based on the mother's explanation of the art of fire gilding. This mother's art is not recognised by the official culture but the poem makes the mother's representation as a female artist possible as a result of the speaker's nomadic memory and remembrance. Secondly, it is observed in many of the poems that the nomadic memories of Irish women are fluid since they belong to non-linear time zones. The speakers go back and forth in time through their memories, and this co-presence of multiple time zones contributes to the development of Irish women's subjectivities as fluid, thus, nomadic since the ability to move between past and present provides fluidity, which shatters the linear and essentialist representation of Irish women. Accordingly, in "Eviction", there is an alternative representation of an unknown grandmother figure, and the poem creates a version of her eviction trial that takes place in one of the courts of Ireland through the speaker's memory. This memory is fluid in that the speaker travels to the moment of the grandmother's trial that is experienced in the past, while the poem clarifies that the speaker is "in a modern Ireland" (23). Consequently, it is not only the speaker's memory that travels through time but also this unknown grandmother. Thanks to this memory, she becomes a fluid nomadic subject.

The use of memory and the criticism of official Irish history in terms of Irish women's representation have been the major subjects of research for Boland's poetry. For instance, Lucy Collins, in her book *Contemporary Irish Women Poets: Memory and Estrangement*, analyses Boland's poems in her earlier collections regarding the importance of personal memory during the writing process of her poems (23-48). Also, Catherine Kilcoyne, in her article "Eavan Boland and Strategic Memory", explores the problematical relationship between Boland's use of memory and Irish history (89-100). In this respect, James Ward, in his book *Memory and Enlightenment: Cultural Afterlives of the Long Eighteenth Century*, reads Boland's selected poems to show how Boland reflects the eighteenth-century enlightenment ideals by using memory and the act of remembering (152-161). It should be noted that these studies do not include Boland's latest collection, *The Historians*, in their discussions. However, Pilar Villar-Argaiz, in her notable article "Past, Secrecy and Absence in Eavan Boland's *The Historians*", argues that Boland applies ruptures and interruptions to her poetic narrative so as to lay bare the difference between the linear history and the fluid past (69). Although Villar-Argaiz discusses the importance of memory and imagination in certain poems of *The Historians*, she focuses on the formal and stylistic devices of Boland's poems, and her analysis does not concern itself with the construction of female subjectivity regarding the representation of Irish women. Most importantly, these earlier studies do not offer analyses of Boland's poems concerning nomadic memory and female nomadic subjectivity. Therefore, although this chapter builds on the insights from these critical studies, it discusses the relationship between nomadic subjectivity and nomadic memory in *The Historians*.

Posthumously published in 2020, *The Historians* epitomises Boland's final endeavour to question the official discourse of history concerning Irish women via the use of nomadic memories of the oppressed and silenced female subjects. In early April 2020, Boland brought together her final poems to publish but she died on 27th April 2020 as a result of "a major stroke at her home in Dundrum, Co Dublin" (Doyle, "Eavan Boland, leading Irish poet"). The collection is also posthumously shortlisted for the Costa Book Awards, and the judges chose *The Historians* as the winner of the Costa Poetry Award, stating that the collection is "[a]n extraordinary book of lyrical power that has some of the finest lines

of poetry written this century" (qtd. in Doyle, "Eavan Boland wins"). As Emmitt states, the collection contains "many of the themes and ideas that have been central to [Boland's] *oeuvre*, such as the differences between the official story she calls "history" and the buried and forgotten lives of women" (14, emphasis in original). As can be understood from the title of the collection, Boland questions what is included or not in the official history, and she underlines the idea that history is hostile to the experience of Irish women. As Elaine Feinstein states, "the violence of Irish history" is one of her powerful themes, and she takes it as her central concern in many of her collections (n.p.). Not only *The Historians* but almost every collection of hers is "concerned with what history includes and excludes, with writing herself as a woman poet into history, with recovering from the darkness of exclusion and neglect so many lives that have flared and died outside history" (Dorgan n.p.). Specifically, the eponymous first section, 'The Historians', revolves around the central argument of how official history is exclusionary in terms of voicing the inequalities, concerns, and traumas of Irish women. It is seen that Boland makes use of the memories of herself, her family members, the unknown Irish women, and sometimes important figures from the past, such as Constance Markievicz and Louie Bennett, who are Irish suffragists, to develop nomadic subjectivities through alternative memories.

As stated above, Boland's use of nomadic memory in the construction of female nomadic subjectivity in *The Historians* problematises the suppression and marginalisation of the experiences of Irish women in official narratives and discourses. *The Historians* consists of four sections under the titles of 'The Historians,' 'How We Were Transfigured,' 'Margin,' and 'Our Future Will Become the Past of Other Women.' The general concern in the poems of each section is the problematisation of the marginalised and excluded status of Irish women. In other words, Irish women who experience injustice and inequality with respect to their representation are the subject of the poems. The first section, an eight-poem sequence called "The Historians", explores the problematic relation between the past and history in Ireland, and Boland's poems suggest that the past recorded in historical accounts needs to be revisited to recover the unvoiced and forgotten stories of Irish women. Accordingly, her poems in "The Historians" present an alternative version of history writing in which the memories of Irish women dominate. A

representation of Boland's mother in "The Fire Gilder", an unnamed Irish woman who is an unacknowledged contributor to Irish history in "Anonymous", an Irish grandmother who is treated unfairly by the Irish judicial system in "Eviction", and two Irish women who burn the written documents in their houses in "The Historians" to express their disbelief in male-oriented record-keeping are the ones whose memories are used to showcase the gap between how women are represented in the official history and what they genuinely experience in their lives.

The second section, "How We Were Transfigured", deals with the feeling of loss as a result of women's unappreciated efforts and experiences and how this feeling paves the way for uneasiness, confusion and sometimes frustration for the female subjects. For instance, the opening poem of the section "For A Poet Who Died Young" reveals the speaker paying tribute to a woman poet who died at a very young age, and then the poem draws attention to how this poet's poems resonate with the speaker in terms of offering comfort and familiarity of what she experiences in her life. The poem can also be accepted as a poetic manifesto for Boland as it underlines the importance of a woman poet's poems in describing unmentioned and disregarded experiences of women's lives. The poem laments the loss of this woman poet, and it challenges the patriarchal tradition by suggesting that "[w]hatever a dead poet could have I wish for you./ But a living woman/ is what you should have been" (19-21). Through this dead woman poet, the poem revisits Boland's ideas on the powerful patriarchal tradition in Irish poetry which marginalises women poets. As Boland states, "[t]he way to the past is never smooth. For a woman poet it can be especially tortuous. Every step towards an origin is also an advance towards a silence" (*OL* 23-24). The dead woman poet in "For A Poet Who Died Young" is shown as one of the victims of this silence forced on women writers by the dominant male ideology of Irish poetry. Boland, in this section, also questions the fragility of memory in lived experiences, and she lays bare how some experiences are destined to disappear as the speaker utters in "Be": "somedays/ should simply be./ Not be remembered" (28-30). In "Lost", Boland again shows that it is not possible to remember even the simplest occasion or act such as "that quick conversation beside the hedge/ on a summer day" (4-

5) or “the plants everywhere/ blooming” (10-11). As can be seen, Boland investigates how the feelings of loss can be traced in women’s lives.

Similarly, the third section, “Margin”, consists of poems in which Boland indicates her vexed relationship with Ireland and its biased attitude towards women. “Broken”, the first poem in this section, asks “*Ireland,/ how could I ever have loved you/ if I never believed you?*” (16-18). The poem problematises how Irish women are dispossessed of their society and culture. As Boland points out, “I have never felt I owned Irish history; I have never felt entitled to the Irish experience.” (*OL* 190). Accordingly, the female speaker’s broken image on the surface of the Liffey in her dream refers to the distorted and excluded account of Irish women’s experiences and memories. In the titular poem “Margin”, Boland tries to figure out how the ones who stayed in the margin or are subjected to marginalisation, such as the female speaker of the poem, can find ways to tell their stories or experiences without any obstacles or prejudices.

This chapter focuses on seven poems in *The Historians*, namely, “The Fire Gilder”, “Anonymous”, “Eviction”, “The Historians”, “Statue 2016”, “Margin”, and “Our Future Will Become the Past of Other Women” as they illustrate the relationship between female nomadic subjectivity and nomadic memories. However, the purpose of using nomadic memory differs in them. Of these poems, “The Fire Gilder”, “Anonymous”, “Eviction”, and “Margin” focus on the local but ordinary Irish women whose lives and experiences have been completely neglected and excluded by the official Irish history and culture. Boland vehemently argues that “[t]he life of the Irish woman—the ordinary, lived life—was invisible” (“Irish” 104) in Irish literature. The term ordinary here refers to the Irish women whose experiences are considered inappropriate as the subjects of poetry. Yet, Boland suggests that “I wanted to see the effect of an unrecorded life—a woman in a suburban twilight under a hissing streetlight” (*OL* 187) on poetry. Accordingly, an unacknowledged mother figure in “The Fire Gilder”, a victimised grandmother in “Eviction”, an unknown silenced ordinary Irish woman in “Anonymous” and a marginalised Irish woman who is on the verge of awakening to self-realisation and self-

awareness in “Margin” are not traditionally included in the official narratives. Yet, these poems retrieve them from the unrecorded and unwritten past and present them as essential parts of Irish women’s past with the help of nomadic memories. By bringing these marginalised and erased Irish women to the centre through nomadic memory, these poems aim to reconstruct a past that official historical discourses have neglected. This reconstruction of the past is about recovering and restoring the memories of ordinary Irish women’s personal experiences that are deliberately left out. That is why nomadic memory here is interested in filling the gaps and erasures in official history. In other words, the use of nomadic memories in the poems includes a restorative function by expanding the narrowness of the historical documents regarding Irish women’s experiences. It is seen in the above-mentioned poems that Boland offers the creative redefinition of ordinary Irish women as female nomadic subjects through nomadic memories. These poems underline that these Irish women refuse their absence in history and culture as a result of the patriarchal power that existed in Ireland.

Unlike the previous group of poems, the use of nomadic memories in “The Historians”, “Statue 2016”, and “Our Future Will Become the Past of Other Women” are not only interested in filling the gaps or restoring the unrecorded experiences of unknown Irish women. These poems lay bare the insufficiency of official historical records regarding the already-established portrayal of Irish women’s subjectivities, and the nomadic memories used in them demonstrate that the existing representations of Irish women in official history are inaccurate and inadequate. These poems interrogate the historical record-keeping itself and aim to expose how it transforms women’s subjectivities into incomplete and misleading forms. Boland’s use of nomadic memory in these poems revisits her ideas on the relationship between nationalism/official historiography and the representation of femininity. Boland argues that even if Irish women claim a presence in history or literature, their representations are subjected to stereotypical roles and expectations since the official culture denies the reality of women’s experiences to create simplified images of them: “What I found was a rhetoric of imagery which alienated me: a fusion of the national and the feminine which simplified both” (*OL* 128). Accordingly, it is observed in “The Historians”, “Statue 2016”, and “Our Future Will Become the Past

of Other Women" that nomadic memories adopt a critical perspective to question the misrepresentation of women in official culture. In this respect, the use of nomadic memories in these poems deconstructs traditional historiography and forces history to confront its own fallible nature in terms of representing the complexity and multiplicity of Irish women's subjectivities. The questioning of history through memory is achieved by revisiting and revising what has been written and suggested about Irish women, and they are represented as female nomadic subjects. This strategy of revision is in line with the development of nomadic subjectivities for women in that nomadic subjectivity "attacks from within the stock of cumulated images and concepts of women as they have been codified by the culture. […] Women need to re-possess the multilayered structure of their subjectivity as the site or historical sedimentation of meanings and representations that must be worked through" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 39). The poems work through the previous representation of Irish women in history and reveal the ways Irish women are portrayed within the established schemes of thought. While doing so, these poems make use of Irish women whose experiences are part of Irish history or have historical significance in Ireland. Accordingly, "Statue 2016", for instance, is about Constance Markievicz who is one of the pivotal suffragist figures. Also, "Our Future Will Become the Past of Other Women" makes use of many Irish suffragists such as Anna Haslam, Charlotte Despard and Louie Bennett. These two poems show how such important female historical figures are iconised or turned into static figures of history and illustrate the ways to defy the deterministic and essentialist representations of them. Such figures claim fluid subject positions in Boland's poems as female nomadic subjects through a reconfiguration enabled by nomadic memory. The titular poem "The Historians", too, functions as a poetic manifesto for the construction of traditionally stereotyped women as female nomadic subjectivities through memory. In other words, "The Historians" foregrounds the limitations of official history in telling women's experiences in detail and accurately. Indeed, "The Historians" conveys Boland's continuous criticism of the exclusion of women from the official history of Ireland. As she puts forward, "[m]en are acculturated, by art, history and power—this is how it goes—to control the relation between the inner and outer world. Not only to control it. To define it also" ("from *Daughter*" 358). Boland underlines the fact that men have the agency to control what can be included in or excluded from the official history, and this situation leads to the

definition of women through the male gaze. Boland shows in "The Historians" that the nomadic memories of women, which shed light on women's unrecorded past, can be used functionally to overcome the traditional lack of power concerning women's representation.

As discussed in chapter I, Braidotti pays special attention to the politics of location in her concept of female nomadic subjectivity. Although a nomadic subject is a subject in transition, it is not pushed out of location and history. Most importantly, location is a fundamental aspect of any subject position because it shapes our understanding of the world and others and because it is "collectively shared and constructed, jointly occupied spatiotemporal territory" (*NS* [2nd ed.] 16). In this respect, the politics of location functions as a way of raising awareness about different power structures and forms of representation. Recognition of a particular location, as Braidotti puts it, "acts as a spotlight illuminating aspects of one's material and discursive conditions that were blind spots before" (*NS* [2nd ed.] 16). In a similar fashion, Boland in *The Historians* uses Ireland for her politics of location. In this regard, as Chiara Bonfiglioli states, "[t]he exercise in "locating yourself" is not so much about listing elements that define our identity […] but rather about acknowledging the discourses of power we are embedded in, and the intersecting material and discursive boundaries that shape our vision of ourselves and others" (200). In Boland's *The Historians*, the particularity of location, thus, reveals the power exercises that hinder the fluid representation of female subjectivity and experience, similar to "black women's texts and experiences [which] make white women see the limitations of our locations, truths and discourses. Feminist knowledge is an interactive process that brings out aspects of our existence, especially our own implication with power, that we had not noticed before" (Braidotti, *Metamorphoses* 12-13).

Moreover, as Braidotti suggests, there is a strong connection between location and nomadic memory or counter-memory. She states that "locations are approached as geo-political, but also temporal zones, related to self-reflexivity, consciousness, self-narrative and memory" ("Feminist Philosophies" 198). In fact, one of the key objectives of any

feminist philosophy, including feminist nomadism, "is not about restoring another dominant memory but rather about installing a counter-memory, or an embedded and embodied genealogy" ("Feminist Philosophies" 198). Accordingly, "[a] location is an embedded and embodied memory: it is a set of countermemories, which are activated by the resisting thinker against the grain of the dominant representations of subjectivity" (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 29).

In fact, Braidotti uses the terms nomadic memory and counter-memory interchangeably. In a broader perspective, counter-memory refers to acts of developing a memory resistant to the dominant ideologies and mindsets that represent the voice of the majority against the voice of the minorities. Apparently, Braidotti derives her inspiration for formulating nomadic memory from Michel Foucault's ideas, and asserts that nomadic memory or "[t]he minoritarian memory propels the process of becoming by liberating something akin to Foucault's 'counter-memory'" (*Transpositions* 167). Nomadic memories and remembering in the minority mode are hence employed by nomadic subjects whose memories are subjugated and oppressed by the majority. Accordingly, nomadic subjects "are those who have a peripheral consciousness and have forgotten to forget injustice and symbolic poverty: their memory is activated against the stream; they enact a rebellion of subjugated knowledges" (Braidotti, *NS* [2nd ed.] 60). In particular, counter-memory, or the act of remembering in the minority mode, is significant for women because they are always regarded as the other or inferior as opposed to men, and their experiences have always been underestimated.

Clearly, nomadic memory is defined as a minority position against majority subject positions. The majority subject is the controller of the dominant memory system which is fundamentally working against the minority groups. Deleuze and Guattari point out that men represent the majority subject, and men declare themselves as the dominant form of subject representation since "the majority in the universe assumes as pregiven the right and power of man" (*A Thousand* 291). Deleuze and Guattari claim that women have memories, "but the Memory that collects those memories is still a virile majoritarian

agency" (*A Thousand* 293). Accordingly, Deleuze and Guattari offer a different form of memory that aims to diminish the power of the majority-memory. As Braidotti explains,

> Deleuze activates a minority-memory, which is a power of remembrance without *a priori* prepositional attachment to the centralized data bank. This intensive, zigzagging, cyclical and messy type of remembering does not even aim at retrieving information in a linear manner. It simply intuitively endures; it also functions as a deterritorializing agency that dislodges the subject from a unified and centralized location. It disconnects the subject from his or her identification with logocentric consciousness and it shifts the emphasis from being to becoming. (*Transpositions* 167)

Thus, minority-memory/nomadic memory works against the power dynamics of the majority and shows the oppressive nature of the central memory system that creates the binary positioning of subjects. In other words, minority-memory/nomadic memory attempts to deconstruct the logocentric mindset and consciousness by adopting a different kind of remembering and leading subjects to a process of becoming. Braidotti shows nomadic remembering as an essential part of the subject in becoming since nomadic memories, as she states, "are affirmative, destabilizing forces that propel subjects actively toward change" (*NT* 32-33).

Boland's view of memory as used in *The Historians* resonates with Braidottian understanding of nomadic memory. Boland's poems in *The Historians* draw attention to the difference between the past and history in terms of the representation of Irish women. Boland believes that official history tends to exercise dominating power over the minority voices as "the Irish past and Irish history were not the same thing, could never be the same thing, and that the second had in some way suppressed the first" ("I will" n.p.). For her, what is suppressed is Irish women's memories. Not only does she address this difference between the past and history in terms of the representation of women, but also points out, in her conversation with Pilar Villar, that there is "a wide and instructive distance between those two. I believe history is an official version of events—it is itself a constructed narrative. But the past, at least as I came to see it, is a place of silences and losses and disappearances" ("The Text" 53). Boland's construction of female nomadic subjectivities in *The Historians* is hence generated by Irish women's memories consisting of silences, shadows, and disappearances. She is concerned that "if the distance between

the past and history is not navigated, is not charted through its dark spaces and sinuous turns, the effect can only be this: History will suppress the past (Boland, "Daughters" 14-15). Accordingly, in *The Historians*, there is an emphasis on the value of the excluded and hidden knowledge, experiences and memories of Irish women.

As stated earlier, "The Fire Gilder", "Anonymous", "Eviction", and "Margin" concentrate on ordinary Irish women whose experiences and memories are subjected to erasure and marginalisation in official history. Yet, these poems insert these marginalised voices into the male-oriented history by presenting Irish women as female nomadic subjects with the help of nomadic memories. The speaker's nomadic memory in each poem aims to fill the historical gaps by resurrecting and reclaiming the overlooked and erased voices of ordinary Irish women. These memories reconstruct the official history since they position Irish women, who did not formerly have any representation, both as fluid female nomadic subjects and as active participants in Irish history and culture. Accordingly, "The Fire Gilder", the first poem of the opening section, 'The Historians, presents a memory of a conversation between a speaker and her mother. This mother and daughter relationship is highlighted at the very beginning of the poem when the speaker utters that "[s]he loved silver, she loved gold,/ my mother." (1-2) Jody Allen Randolph claims that the mother in "The Fire Gilder" is the representation of Boland's mother, Frances Kelly, who was a painter and states that Boland, in the poem, "reimagine[s] the invisible world of her mother's past" ("Remembering" 68). Along with Randolph's identification of the mother figure in the poem with Boland's mother, many critics similarly claim that the poem is based on a conversation between Boland and her mother (Emmitt 14, Villar-Argáiz, "Past" 82). This assurance in regard to the mother and daughter representation in the poem is the result of Boland's continuous praise and admiration for her mother as a role model and a powerful influence on her as a writer. Boland asserts that "[m]y mother was my hero. […] As an awkward and displaced teenager I looked up to her" (*A Journey* 3). Considering the fact that "The Fire Gilder" is about a mother who is explaining the art of fire gilding and a daughter who devotedly listens to her, the poem can be said to reflect Boland's relationship with her mother.

"The Fire Gilder" also defines the nomadic memory and exemplifies its use. The poem begins with the speaker's memory of her mother describing the process of "gild[ing] any surface" (7), which includes the acts of melding, heating, and burning. Boland draws attention to what the mother says about the gilding process by inserting her voice into the poem: "*The only thing*, she added---/ but what came after that I forgot" (15-16). Here, the poem loses its clarity and precision because the speaker's memory fades, and she cannot remember exactly what her mother said. Pilar Villar-Argáiz asserts that the forgotten information "is deferred to climactic position to the end of the poem. […] Instead, Boland deviates our attention as she engages in the ambiguous terrain of memory and the past" ("*Past*" 82). The memory failure of what the mother said is an example of how the nomadic memory works since Braidotti identifies nomadic memory as "the struggle to remember" (*Transpositions* 167). The speaker's memory is not entirely reliable, and it may fail to clearly and accurately describe the happenings. Indeed, the failed memory of the mother makes the speaker realise the difference between individual memory and official knowledge kept by the records:

> My subject is the part wishing plays in
> the way villages are made
> to vanish, in the way I learned
> to separate memory from knowledge,
> so one was volatile, one was not (24-28)

The volatility of memory seems to be preferred over the assumed certainty of the official narratives. In fact, the speaker clarifies that she gains the ability to understand the difference between memory and official discourses as one of fluidity. As Braidotti states of nomadic memory, the memory used by the speaker is "fluid and flowing" as opposed to the fixed nature of official narratives and history (*Transpositions* 168). Also, this discontinuous and fluid memory of the speaker foregrounds the role of creativity in nomadic memory. Like a fire gilder, who merges gold with mercury to gild any surface, the remembering strategy of the speaker is to combine the actual events with imaginary recreations:

> […] I started writing,
> burning light,

building heat until all at once
I was the fire gilder
ready to lay radiance down,
ready to decorate *it happened*
with *it never did* (29-35)

In this respect, nomadic memory blends "*it happened*" (34) which stands for the concept of knowledge as unchangeable and certain, and "*it never did*" (35) as a challenge to that. It should be noted that the poem here presents a description of nomadic memory which is defined by Braidotti as "a creative […] memory [having a] close relationship to the imagination" (*NT* 31). In fact, in her poem "We Are Always Too Late", published in *Outside History* (1990), a similar idea is conveyed. "We Are Always Too Late" reads

Memory
is in two parts.

First, the re-visiting
[…] Then
the re-enactment. Always that. (1-3, 12-13)

As this division suggests, while revisiting the lived experiences and incidents, it is not possible to remember the exact picture of the past, and this failure to remember paves the way for imaginative recreations or re-enactments of the past. Eventually, the past can be recreated and reevaluated from new angles and perspectives. In this regard, as Catherine Kilcoyne asserts, Boland's "memory poems both show frustration at the failure that is always behind any reconstruction of the past and at the same time revel in the playfulness of memory's openness to textual creation" (91). Boland highlights the fact that revisiting the past is an obligatory act but her aim is not to fill the gaps or to close the distance. As she states, "Then why go there? Why visit the site of our exclusion? We need to go to that past: not to learn from it, but to change it. If we do not change that past, it will change us" (*A Journey* 251). In fact, revisiting the past through nomadic memory always generates a potential for change and transformation as a result of the strategic employment of an "imaginative force" (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 168). This potential of reenactment and recreation of the past is crucial for the development of nomadic subjectivity since, as

Braidotti puts forward, nomadic memory is "transgressive in that it works against the programmes of the dominant memory system [of the official discourse]" (*Transpositions* 168). At this point, the association of the mother figure in the poem with Boland's mother is useful in understanding the transgressive nature of nomadic memory in reconstructing official history. Boland states that her mother's life consists of many unfortunate events and she claims that she

> measured history by her life. 1909, for instance—not the year of the Land Purchase Act but the time her mother died in a fever ward in Dublin. 1915. The year after the Great War started, yes. But more importantly, the year she was called out of class in the Dominican Convent in Dublin to be told her father had drowned in the Bay of Biscay. 1916. The year of the Irish Rising. But also the year she was made a ward of court. (*A Journey* 4)

Clearly, Boland navigates her mother's past and attempts to reconstruct the official history which traditionally excludes her mother's experiences. Most importantly, Boland refers to another misfortune of her mother's life as a painter. She recalls the occasion in which she accidentally realises her mother's painting in an art gallery: "I knew at once, without a second glance—without study, consideration, or hesitation—that it was my mother's painting" (*A Journey* 9-10). However, she also realises that the painting was signed by her mother's teacher: "I looked again to be sure. Yes, there was his signature, in the bottom right of the painting, where she usually put her own. His signature. Her painting. Her vision. His price. And that was that." (*A Journey* 10). Boland uses this incident of her mother to indicate how Irish women's lives and voices are erased and overlooked by the dominant patriarchal strategy of Irish culture.

By taking into consideration the implied connection between Boland's mother and the speaker's mother, it can be suggested that Boland's use of nomadic memory in "The Fire Gilder" offers multiple possibilities to represent the unrecognised women of the past. In this respect, "The Fire Gilder" creates a possibility of representation for the speaker's mother or Boland's mother because this mother figure, in either case, is not traditionally included in official history or in the dominant memory system. In other words, the craft of the speaker's mother, which she learns by attending art classes (4), resides in the speaker's nomadic memory, not in the official history or documents. Fire gilding is an art that requires patience, skill and transformation and she creates something new by

combining metals, that is, by blending gold with mercury. This nomadic memory of the speaker about the craft of the mother enables the mother to raise her voice and redefine her identity. The poem's use of nomadic memory shows the potential for the reconstruction of official history and also proves Braidotti's assertion that "[w]hen you remember to become what you are- a subject-in-becoming- you actually reinvent yourself on the basis of what you hope you could become" (*Transpositions* 168). In this respect, the poem reinvents the mother figure as an artist who speaks and explains her art, not as a traditional, silent and passive mother figure. Through nomadic memory, she is restored as the teller and subject of her past and becomes a nomadic subject.

It is important to note that the role of creativity in nomadic memory is also emphasised at the end of the poem by the speaker's sudden remembrance of her mother's words: "all at once I remember what it was/ she said: *the only thing is*/ *it is extremely dangerous*" (36-38). The mother's words at the end intend to present "poetry as a powerful, ferocious tool" (Villar-Argáiz, "*Past*" 85) as it presents the unwritten and unrecorded memories and experiences of women. It is not clear whether this is the exact remembrance of the mother's words or the inclusion of "*it never did*" (35) as the poem suggests. This unclarity of the memory's reliability is an example of reconstruction of the past through nomadic memory which creates possibilities for female nomadic subjects. Nomadic memory "has as much to do with the imagination, that is to say creative reworking, as with the passive repetition of chronologically prior, recorded and hence retrievable experiences" (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 173). Evidently, the poem can be accepted as a passive repetition of the speaker's experience/memory with her mother. This half-remembering of the speaker's memory leads to the creation of nomadic memory, which combines half-truth and half-creativity. In other words, the speaker, like "the fire gilder" (32), who is engaged with the restoration of old objects and materials, uses memory for reinvention and recreation of women in history to lay bare that official history is open to questioning and is not reliable regarding the portrayal of women's experiences. Although the material the gilder renovates remains the same, the gilder reconstructs and transforms it. In a similar fashion, the speaker illustrates how she develops a female nomadic subjectivity for the mother by intertwining the actuality (memories based on lived experience) with

the imaginative framework. In this sense, instead of preserving the knowledge/memory she received from her mother in a fixed form, the speaker burns it and decomposes it like a fire gilder. Accordingly, as a female nomadic subject, the mother breaks away from her position as a marginalised and forgotten mother figure. Hence, the poem demonstrates that the fluidity of female nomadic subjectivity is reliant on a re-creation of the past through nomadic memory.

A similar idea of developing female nomadic subjectivities through nomadic memory can be identified in "Anonymous". The poem is about an anonymous Irish woman who carries "a dispatch order" (20) to "Haddington Road/ and O'Connell Street" (11-12). Although the poem does not explicitly reveal the historical background, it refers to Irish women as supporters of the Irish Republican Army who took an active part during the Easter Rising as the message carriers. Many Irish women contributed to the Easter Rising as active female revolutionaries so as to resist to British rule along with the male revolutionaries, but women's efforts were not appreciated compared to men's. Sharon Furlong puts forward that "[t]hese women are often dismissed as being of secondary importance. […] [However,] they carried dispatches, dangerously liaised with British soldiers for information, raised money to help the Volunteer movement and kept the nationalist fervour alive" (70,71). Among the activities carried out by Irish women, the dispatch-carrying plays a significant role in maintaining communication between important locations such as Haddington Road and O'Connell Street (11-12), as the poem suggests. Senia Pašeta underlines that the dispatch-carrying by Irish women was "the most dangerous and perhaps the most successful work undertaken [by them]. […] Women carried messages because it was believed that they could slip by police and military authorities, who were less likely to suspect or detain women than men" (179-180). Accordingly, Boland, in "Anonymous", offers a creative possibility of representation for this anonymous woman and her efforts as a dispatch carrier through the nomadic memory of the speaker. The nomadic memory creates this anonymous and ordinary Irish woman as a female nomadic subject whose legacy and experience are mentioned and recognised.

Prior to the creation of nomadic memory, the speaker in "Anonymous" reveals her knowledge in regard to the life of this woman and claims that "[s]he was a closed book,/ a near relative" (1-2). It is understood that there is no detailed information about this close relative but the speaker suggests that she "once heard/she carried messages,/ communications, worn-/out documents" (5-8). It is apparent that there is no clarity of information regarding this woman because the speaker's information is based on what she hears from another person. It is not clear whether the source of this information is reliable or not. Jody Allen Randolph argues that this anonymous female figure is actually Boland's aunt: "The closed book Boland imagines here was her mother's eldest sister, Margaret Kelly, whom Eavan never met" ("Remembering" 69). Although there is clarity of information about the identity of this woman, Boland refuses to give the name or background of her aunt in order to create a possibility for a female nomadic subject position. Braidotti argues that

> [r]emembering in the nomadic mode requires composition, selection and dosage; the careful layout of empowering conditions that allow for the actualizations of affirmative forces. Like a choreography of flows or intensities that require adequate framing in order to be composed into a form, intensive memories activate empathy and cohesion between their constitutive elements. Nomadic remembering is like a constant quest for temporary moments when a balance can be sustained, before the forces dissolve again and move on. And on it goes, never equal to itself, but faithful enough to itself to endure, and to pass on. (*Transpositions* 168)

As Braidotti notes, nomadic memory is selective and careful about creating balance in revealing information related to memories because remembering in the nomadic mode refers to the continuous act of remembering without finalising the memories or past experiences. Similarly, Boland is also selective and careful about the information about her aunt. She blocks the way to create a full picture of her aunt. Instead, Boland blurs the line between fact and fiction, and offers her nomadic memory as the guide to the story of the anonymous woman:

> On cold nights
>
> when mist rolls in
>
> from the ocean
>
> somewhere near Clontarf
>
> I think I see her strolling,
>
> holding on

to a folded message,

a dispatch order. (13-20)

The speaker creates a liminal setting which is cold, misty and undefined, and this liminality paves the way for the formation of partial and imaginative memory. The phrase "I think I see her" (17) emphasises uncertainty, yet it is precisely this ambiguous act of seeing, which is a poetic vision rather than a historical fact, that allows for the construction of nomadic subjectivity. The woman becomes a presence in absence and a mobile trace in the mist, not rooted in the past but reanimated in the poet's present. As Jody Allen Randolph indicates, Boland has never met her aunt, and also, Boland's mother does not talk about her sister ("Remembering" 69). Moreover, this anonymous female figure is "almost the same age/ as the century" (3-4). There is not much history can offer as opposed to the nomadic memory presented in the poem:

Then I ask myself,

what is it I know?

The evening mist unfolds.

It is empty. That

is history. This

is only poetry. (21-26)

The speaker questions her knowledge about this anonymous woman, and by asking "what is it I know?" (22), she departs from certainty to form a nomadic memory. Then, the speaker lays bare the ultimate dichotomy by suggesting that the limited information regarding her aunt is the subject of the official history, and it is empty. On the other hand, the poem presents a possibility, an imaginative recreation, that prevents the monolithic and static representation of the anonymous woman. In other words, it is through the inscription of the anonymous woman in a poem that makes her a noticeable subject of Irish history. The poem has achieved what history could not, that is, the remembrance of the anonymous woman. Boland asserts that while history may forget, poetry remembers through imagination.

If the speaker of the poem did not mention this unknown Irish woman, she would continue to be an unrecognised woman figure in Irish history. It should be noted that the anonymity of the woman is necessitated by what she does as an undercover messenger during the Easter Rising. Evidently, Boland does not use the name of her aunt or her background, but she highlights that neither this woman's contribution to the Irish Revolutionary period nor the message she carries is included in history. In this respect, the speaker's nomadic memory shows that the official history is "empty" (24) regarding this woman's experiences. Although the Irish woman in the poem contributes to her country's history as a dispatch carrier, she becomes an empty figure of history. The poem criticises how this woman's efforts and experiences are undermined and excluded from the official history. While doing so, it is important to note that instead of depicting her by using definitive and conclusive terms, the poem relies on memory and recollection, and works through this memory, which is not directly available to the speaker to create its female subject. The nomadic memory confirms its unclarity by presenting this woman as anonymous (17). In other words, the nomadic subjectivity of the female figure is stressed by naming her as "anonymous" but also writing her into history through the poem. Evidently, the poem reconstructs official history by restoring what possibly happened in the past of the anonymous woman through memory and "disconnects the subject from […] her identification with logocentric consciousness and it shifts the emphasis from being to becoming" (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 167). Accordingly, a creative possibility of representation for the Irish woman in the poem is offered when the speaker claims that she remembers seeing this anonymous woman wandering on the streets of Ireland: "I think I see her strolling" (17). Her movement/strolling in the speaker's nomadic memory envisions her as an active and fluid woman. The poem shows that she relies on her own movement/personal journey rather than accepting the silence and erasure imposed on her by official culture. She is neither fully settled in home nor in history as a fixed being, and she is in a constant state of activity and re-creation (becoming fluid). Instead of being the erased and static figure of history, she gains a more recognisable status in Irish history since nomadic memory offers a possibility of fluidity and mobility which dislodges her from the male-oriented history and integrates her into the unrecognised past of Irish women as a nomadic subject.

As "Anonymous" illustrates, Boland's use of nomadic memory functions to restore the experience of Irish women to history and recognise their contribution to Irish culture. In a similar vein, "Eviction" uses nomadic memory to develop a nomadic subjectivity for an ordinary Irish woman. The subject of "Eviction" is Boland's grandmother whose family "finds an eviction notice on [their] door" (2). The poem uses the theme of the actual mass evictions that took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a historical background. These evictions increased the tension between the English landlords and Irish tenants, and James H. Murphy states, "[d]uring the Famine of the 1840s and thereafter the eviction of tenants for the non-payment of rent (and for other reasons) added—or was used to add—fuel to the fire of popular anger against landlords" (730). It is estimated that these evictions affected more than "140.000 families, amounting to over half a million individuals" (Andrews 140). Building on this historical context of evictions, Boland's poem is based on a real historical incident related to her grandmother's official eviction notice, which took place in 1904. Boland, in one of her essays, states of her grandmother's eviction that "[t]hey had been evicted from a smallholding near the river Barrow in Kildare. There were almost no details. […] But if there were no details, the image of an eviction was a brutal Irish generic" (*OL* 43). The poem, hence, introduces the historical background as gathered from a journal: "I linger over the page of the *Drogheda/ Argus and Leinster Journal*, 1904" (24-25). In reinscribing the story/history of the grandmother, "Eviction" exemplifies a two-step process of remembering in the nomadic mode or writing from memory. As a first step, in "Eviction", similar to what Braidotti suggests, writing from memory "means that one is exempted from checking against the original, at least during the process of writing the actual commentary" (*Transpositions* 171). In the closing lines of "Eviction", the speaker reveals that she is exploring the archives of Drogheda Argus & Leinster Journal in order to find details regarding her grandmother's trial of her eviction. Yet, the speaker's "attention has/ no agency, none at all" (27-28), that is, she is unable to find any information about her grandmother. Accordingly, the speaker continues to write from memory, and the grandmother's story cannot be challenged since the original document fails to provide insightful details about the experience of the grandmother in the courtroom. This proves that, as Braidotti states, "[t]he 'truth' of a text resides rather in the kind of outward-bound interconnections or relations that it enables, provokes, engenders and sustains" (*Transpositions* 171). Since

there is no evidence regarding what the speaker's grandmother experiences in reality, the poem does not have to follow the original experience of the grandmother, and hence, the poem paves the way for a possibility of representation of her unrecorded experience. Accordingly, while the poem is based on concrete evidence of the grandmother's eviction notice, it gazes into the courtroom where the eviction trial must have taken place and speaks of the experiences in the courtroom:

> Now she is in court for rent arrears.
>
> The lawyers are amused.
>
> These are the Petty Sessions,
>
> this is Drogheda, this is the Bank Holiday.
>
> Their comments fill a column in the newspaper. (3-7)

Then, the speaker asks questions regarding her grandmother's trial and the modus operandi of the court and its lawyers: "Was the notice well served?/ Was it served at all?/ Is she a weekly or a monthly tenant?" (8-10). These questions prove that Boland is not able to understand what happens in that court regarding her grandmother's trial as the memory of this specific incident of her grandmother's past is not accessible to her. In this respect, Paul Connerton argues that

> [a]cross generations, different sets of memories, frequently in the shape of implicit background narratives, will encounter each other; so that, although physically present to one another in a particular setting, the different generations may remain mentally and emotionally insulated, the memories of one generation locked irretrievably, as it were, in the brains and bodies of that generation. (3)

As indicated by Connerton, the members of different generations differ from each other in terms of having shared memories. Although they share similar memories, they also have certain memories which cannot be transmitted from one generation to another. Similarly, in "Eviction", the speaker realises that her grandmother's memory is locked in an earlier generation. The poem employs nomadic memory to become a criticism of the official discourse of history. Indeed, there are gaps in the official record of the eviction of the grandmother:

> The case comes to an end, is dismissed.
>
> Leaving behind the autumn evening.
>
> Leaving behind the room she entered.

Leaving behind the reason I have always

resisted history.

A woman leaves a courtroom in tears.

A nation is rising to the light.

History notes the second not the first. (14-21)

Evidently, Boland underlines the fact that history is unwilling to record what the ordinary woman, the citizen of Ireland experience at the courtroom when they are delivered eviction notices as it is interested in reflecting the nation in its glory instead of recording "[a] woman [who] leaves a courtroom in tears" (19). The opening line establishes a legal and official finality by claiming that "[t]he case […] is dismissed" (14). Yet, this closure is juxtaposed with the personal and emotional response of the speaker. Nomadic memory of the speaker includes the details of the affective and material realities of the grandmother by emphasising "the autumn evening" (15) and "the room" where the eviction trial takes place. Also, the emotional experience of this woman is highlighted by her "tears" (19). The poem indicates that these details are not traditionally included in the official history. In other words, the poem points out that the grandmother is traditionally "frozen in the image of the past" (Braidotti, *NT* 153) since Irish history subordinates and totally ignores her experience. However, the grandmother becomes a fluid nomadic subject since nomadic memory "destabilizes identity by opening up spaces where […] possibilities can be actualized" (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 167). The poem opens up such a space where an alternative version of the grandmother's experience is offered, and a creative possibility regarding the representation of the grandmother's subjectivity is recognised.

Furthermore, this resurrected grandmother figure, as a female nomadic subject, reacts to the archetype of an old woman/ a crone in Irish mythology. The crone (the old woman) is one of the most controversial female figures in Ireland's mythology. The crone is generally represented as a grandmother, a witch or a hag goddess (Malone 1). She is traditionally associated with wisdom and knowledge, and she represents "the summation of a woman's entire life" (Malone 2). The crone belonged to the cult of the Triple Goddess in paganistic cultures along with the Maiden and the Mother. Each of them symbolises a

different aspect and stage of a woman's life. However, the cult of the Triple Goddess is overthrown by Judaeo-Christian religions and beliefs. As Manuela López-Ramírez puts forward,

> the advent of patriarchy changed how elder women were perceived, and their societal roles. In patriarchal communities, the Crone, the Divine Old Woman, was feared due to her power and leadership. Therefore, Christianity endowed the Virgin and Mother with the pure and ≪good≫ qualities of the Goddess, which the Virgin Mary embodies, and the Crone started to symbolize the ≪negative≫ and evil attributes. The Crone figure became a purely wicked archetype, the witch or the hag, a stereotype that is still in force today. (103)

While the Maiden and the Mother are integrated into the male-oriented religions, the Crone (an old woman/a grandmother) is cast aside and ostracised. Accordingly, Boland does not use this archetypal crone figure in "Eviction". In the poem, Boland depicts an old Irish woman who experienced an eviction trial and is marginalised by the official Irish history as the crone figure of Irish mythology: "The lawyers are amused./ These are the Petty Sessions" (4-5). "Eviction" disregards this male-oriented point of view and restores what is silenced and erased from the official history with regard to Irish women. In other words, Boland "seek[s] silenced voices – erased from the narrative of history, erased by paradigms in a literature that didn't allow for them, and erased by the fictive interventions of language – to re-imagine a vanished past" (Randolph, "Remembering" 69). It is thus through nomadic memory that Boland is able to retrieve the unrecorded struggles and experiences of her grandmother as an old woman subjugated by the official discourse. As nomadic memory signifies, "the 'truth' of a text is somehow never really 'written'. Neither is it contained within the signifying space of the book, nor is it about the authority of a proper noun, a signature, a tradition, a canon, let alone the prestige of a discipline" (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 171). The image of her grandmother in tears in court, and the effects of the end of the trial on her are recorded through nomadic memory which allows a recreation of the past. The speaker's inability to access the details of the trial reveals the fact that women's experiences and sufferings in the official discourses are erased and marginalised.

It is also important to note that we observe in "Eviction" a creation of nomadic memory which is realised by adherence to a non-linear time sequence in that nomadic memory

"constantly reconnects to the virtual totality of a continuously recomposing block of past and present moments" (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 171). While explaining the understanding of time in nomadic remembering and thinking, Braidotti argues that time has a dual structure, and the two times are "the linear one – *Chronos* – and the undifferentiated one – *Aion*" ("Writing" 173). Here, Braidotti borrows from Gilles Deleuze's notion of time. Deleuze argues in *The Logic of Sense* that there are two types of time and

> one of which [Chronos] is always definite, active or passive; the other [Aion] is eternally infinitive and eternally neutral. One is cyclical, measures the movement of bodies and depends on the matter which limits and fills it out; the other is a pure straight line at surface, incorporeal, unlimited, an empty form of time, independent of all matter" (62).

Chronos stands for the organised and linear time sequence that every matter is bound to. On the other hand, Aion is the unlimited and unorganised time sequence that cannot be measured by traditional techniques. In Rob Luzecky's words, Aion is "coextensive with the entirety of time – the memorial past, the lived present, and the undisclosed future" (52). Hence, Aion represents the multiplicity of time in that there are no straight-up divisions between the different occurrences of time. Accordingly, Braidotti claims that nomadic memories belong to Aion in which there is the fusion of present, past and future. This "recomposing block of past and present moments" (*Transpositions* 171) is also evident in "Eviction". The speaker says at the end of the poem that she is exploring the archives "in a modern Ireland" (23) but the poem starts off describing the past in which her grandmother lives. It is clear that the poem slips back and forth between past and present. Nomadic memory, hence, represents the grandmother as a figure not only of the past but also present. Braidotti reads this effort of nomadic memory "as creative and highly generative interconnections which mix and match, mingle and multiply possibilities of expansion and growth among different units or entities" (*Transpositions* 171). The fluid representation of the grandmother in "Eviction" thus offers new insights and interpretations into female experience and subjectivity, which is not possible in the official discourse of history. The poem, in fact, presents the grandmother figure as a nomadic subject who is recovered from, in Boland's words, "the distaff side of history" ("Daughters of Colony" 28) and saves Irish women from the monolithic and static representation of female experience they are subjected to in official history. Boland's

grandmother, as a woman of a particular location (Ireland), gains visibility and recognition in the nomadic memory of the speaker.

"Margin", which is the titular poem of the third section 'Margin', further illustrates the relationship between the marginalised ordinary Irish women and their becoming female nomadic subjectivities. Choosing the title 'Margin' for the poem, Boland establishes a link between women's marginalised experience and Irish history. The female speaker is one of the women of the margin who expresses that, as Helen Emmitt asserts, "[o]wning and writing the margin is her truth, not the historical truth that she feels lies by omission but her own truth from her own life and language" (15). The poem presents a self-assertive woman who realizes that the patriarchal system in the Irish social and cultural structure is an obstacle to telling her own stories and memories. In other words, the female speaker's truth about her life and experiences consists of her nomadic memories. The poem, hence, presents her as a nomadic subject in development since she gives importance to her individual (nomadic) memories, which are shaped by the forces and agents that exist in the physical outside world (nature). Accordingly, the poem seems to be concerned with a scientific article about the hawk moth's ability to see in dim light by slowing its brain down. The speaker introduces this scientific finding as an anecdote: "Yesterday I read about the hawk moth, / […]/ how it can slow its brain down/ at the end of the day so as to see better/ in failing light" (1, 4-6). Boland, here, refers to the contemporary discovery of the scientists who

> investigated visual processing in dim light—and its functional consequences—in the hawkmoth *Manduca sexta*, an agile flyer that extracts nectar from moving flowers while hovering even in very dim light. The moths compound eye has an adjustable pseudopupil that allows a large number of the highly refractive eye facets to deliver light to a single photoreceptor in low light, thereby increasing sensitivity. (Sponberg, Dyhr and et all, 1245)

The hawk moth's ability to see in dim light becomes an important metaphor for the female speaker of the poem. It is clear that the poem has parallelism between the hawk moth and the female speaker in that similar to the hawk moth which adjusts its brain function to see better in darkness, the speaker "waited for the last April cloudiness/ to turn dark" (7-8), and she "walked out in [her] neighborhood as hills/ slipped into the horizon" (9-10). Indeed, she goes outside to question "[h]ow will we see inside it,/ our own dusk?" (11-

12). “[O]ur own dusk” seems to refer to the darkness that makes Irish women “invisible and robbed them of their actual, physical womanhood” (Kennedy-Andrews 243). This line also refers to Boland’s own statement regarding her marginalisation in Irish literary tradition: “My particular darkness as an Irish poet […] [is the result of] lacking the precedent and example of previous Irish women poets” (*OL* 151). Just as Boland questions the darkness in the literary tradition regarding the lack of female writers as a woman poet, the speaker of the poem also questions this darkness by her act of going outside which aligns with the hypersensitivity of nomadic subjects to the outside world. Through their encounters with the outside, nomadic subjects reach “the totality of perception” (Braidotti, *NT* 152) while remembering in the nomadic mode. The physical outside world and elements “rush on toward the sensorial/perceptive apparatus with exceptional vigor and higher degrees of definition” (Braidotti, *NT* 152) and activate nomadic memory.

In “Margin”, the female speaker desires to be influenced by the elements such as “the shade of light at dusk or the curve of the wind just before the rain falls” (Braidotti, *NT* 152) and she awaits the darkness of the world to shape her senses and perceptions just as the hawk moths do. She uses these moments in nature to raise her awareness about the problematical relationship between the official documents about women and their real experiences by asserting that “[f]lags rising. Memories failing./ No one left to say who those/ men in the paragraph are.” (11-15) Here, the poem indicates that the majority’s memory kept by history eventually loses its power and significance as time passes. Accordingly, the speaker rejects the dominant memory and introduces her nomadic memories as a woman. According to her,

> telling the island to myself, as I always have,
> so as to see it more clearly:
>
> not the land of fevers and injuries. But the region
> I found for myself,
> described for myself in my own language. (23-27)

The poem hence presents a multiplicity and complexity of female experience and develops a female nomadic subject who achieves self-realisation and self-definition through nomadic memory. As a nomadic subject, the speaker "aims at […] affirmative self-realization" (Braidotti, "Writing" 173). She is ready to tell her individual experiences and memories, which are completely different from the majority's memory in that she refuses to tell the stories belonging to "the land of fevers and injuries" (25). The female speaker accuses the official history of including only military achievements and the heroic stories of soldiers. She dismisses it as there is no connection between her experiences and memories as a woman and the male-oriented experience in official history which "prioriti[ses] the male combatant experience" (Walsh 8). The poem also draws attention to how historical discourses have lost their validity and become impractical versions of the past by suggesting that "[o]ld quarrels clothed in a hundred years of heat,/ now shivering in the cold" (16-17). The speaker claims that the official history is the product of the collective act of memory but it is impractical since these memories, as the speaker utters, now become failing memories (13) and they shiver in the cold to suggest their outdated and invalid nature. These failed memories represent "the struggle to repossess a historical or genealogical memory" (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 167) of the majority. Such failure of remembering the majority's memories leads to the creation of nomadic memories "which dislodges the subject from his or her sense of unified and consolidated identity" (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 167). In other words, the development of a fluid nomadic subjectivity is possible through failed memories.

It is in accordance with this struggle to remember that the female speaker defines herself as "a transient" (19) woman who is going to tell her fluid nomadic memories in her own language (27). The use of the word 'transient' to define the female speaker contributes to her representation as a nomadic subject in that she gains fluidity as a woman who acknowledges her potential for mobility after she rejects the linear and static representation of women in official discourses. In this respect, the poem presents its female speaker as a female nomadic subject who has "a deep yearning for the transformation or a process of affirmation" (Braidotti, *NT* 229) since she reveals her desire to tell her own memories and experiences (23-27). For this purpose, the speaker

walks through the neighborhood: “I walked on past lighted windows, / drawn curtains” (18-19). This part of the poem contains both the ordinariness of everyday life and a sense of defamiliarisation and transience within this ordinariness. The speaker does not belong to the settled domestic order inside the houses because she is outside and on the move. She is on the verge of defining her own subjectivity through memory, which is not tied to national history, and accordingly, her memories do not fail as the majority’s memories (13). On the contrary, they are constantly reconstructed by her walk and observations of the outside: “I walked out in […] neighborhood/ […] It was colder now” (9, 20). Her subjectivity is shaped by this movement and fluidity since at the end of her movement, she decides to tell her story/memories described only for herself in her own language (27). This woman is in line with Braidotti’s assertion that a female nomadic subject “can only be in transit, moving on, passing through” (*NS* [1st ed.] 93). The speaker is neither defined as a national symbol nor as a silent woman. Instead, she, as a fluid nomadic subject, stands on the “margin” (29) which is her own created territory.

Clearly, the imitative and creative act of the female speaker regarding the hawk moth’s special ability, which is introduced at the beginning of the poem, contributes to the speaker’s representation as a female nomadic subject. As stated, on the one hand, the speaker apparently criticises the linear and silent images of women in the official documents. On the other hand, telling her experiences “in [her] own language” (27) possesses creativity in itself as nomadic remembering consists of “creative repetitions, i.e., retelling, reconfiguring, and revisiting the concept, phenomenon, event, or location from different angles, so as to infuse it with a nomadic spin that establishes multiple connections and lines of interaction” (Braidotti, *NT* 230). In fact, the poem begins with this creative self-fashioning when the speaker likens herself to a hawk moth in order to find new ways of telling her story and memories. Instead of contributing to the dominant memory system which disregards women’s experiences, the female speaker prefers to focus on her individual memories and experiences by establishing a creative resemblance between herself and a hawk moth. In other words, the development of the speaker’s fluid nomadic subjectivity through nomadic memories is triggered by the materiality of the outside. Braidotti claims that this outside may refer to “a roar of cosmic energy or the

unspectacular and barely perceptible heartbeat of a squirrel" ("Writing" 172). In the poem, this outside force is shown as a hawkmoth. The female speaker builds an invisible connection between the hawkmoth and herself and develops an awareness related to her own memories and experiences. Apparently, she, as a female nomadic subject, "create[s] connections where things were previously dis-connected or seemed un-related" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 93). Eventually, this awareness has a definite effect on presenting her as a nomadic subject who aspires to change and transform.

Hence, "The Fire Gilder", "Anonymous", "Eviction", and "Margin" aim to reconstruct history by including the individual nomadic memories of ordinary Irish women which have been completely disregarded by the official culture. In this regard, the nomadic use of memory in these poems brings these ordinary women into history as female nomadic subjects and claims their ignored experiences as part of women's past. Likewise, the poems "The Historians", "Statue 2016", and "Our Future Will Become the Past of Other Women" create and use nomadic memory through problematising the existing definitions and representations of Irish women for the construction of nomadic subjectivities. The nomadic use of memory in these poems deconstructs the traditional discourse of history in which women become silent icons and motifs, and this reassessment of women's representation in official history recreates Irish women as nomadic subjects. "The Historians", for instance, is concerned with memory, past and history, and women's relationship to them. The Irish women in the poem are presented as nomadic subjects who "are committed to the radical task of subverting conventional views and representations […] of female subjectivity" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 3) through the use of fluid and transformative nomadic memory. This poem starts off by offering two versions of history: the first version presented by Boland consists of mothers who are holding letters, poems, and a journal to burn them (5-10). At the beginning of the poem, the poetic persona suggests that "Say the Word *history*: I see/ your mother, mine." (1-2) Traditionally, history is not initially intended to connote the experiences of mothers/women since "the very notion of history, both of history as of the things that happened and as the commemoration and recording of these things was gendered. The subject of the record was […] carried on by individual 'world-historical men,' acting as the agents of change"

(Melman 9). This conveys the idea that women are forced to become the agents of passivity, and they remain historically invisible. However, "The Historians" applies the revisionary approach to male-determined historical writing by implying that history begins with women: "your mother, mine" (2).

Then, the second version of history is presented by the speaker's words that "[n]ow say the word [history] again" (11), and this time, history refers to "a story that needed to be told---/ the patriots still bleeding in the lithographs/ when we were born. Those who wrote that story/ labored to own it" (12-15). In the second version of history, Irish history is filled with the stories of heroes and patriots. In this male-dominated discourse of history, women's experiences are excluded. Also, the poem here draws attention to the fictional aspect of historical writing. The speaker calls history a 'story' which is written by men. Yet, this his/story is not factual since it lacks the women's experiences and focuses on the stories of the patriots and heroes. The poem juxtaposes these two different versions of history, one of the women and one of the dominant official discourse, and gives space to women and their history. In Lucy Collins' words, the poem draws attention to "a moral difference between the male-determined histories and the kind of history that women will write" (*Contemporary* 8-9). Accordingly, the poem describes the role of Irish women's transformative memories in the deconstruction of official history:

> But these are women we loved.
>
> Record-keepers with a different task.
>
> To stop memory becoming history.
>
> To stop words healing what should not be healed. (16-19)

Mothers and other silenced women represent a different version of history, a past. As the title of the collection and the poem suggest, these women are historians, but not in a conventional manner. They are newly introduced historians whose aim is to close the gap between official history and the past that keeps the memories of Irish women. As the speaker asserts, the memories of Irish women cannot be recorded in the same way the historical events or occasions are recorded. Their record-keeping is not bound to the traditional way of recording the past because they are "[r]ecord-keepers with a different

task" (17). While the official discourse of history relies on written documents to record historical events and occasions, Irish women in the poem adopt a different method of recording their past experiences "to stop memory becoming history" (18). Theirs, in fact, is nomadic memory that revises the dominant memory of the majority by emphasising women's non-linear and fluid memories. Irish women in the poem underline that "[t]he linguistic signifier is merely one of the points in a chain of effects, not its centre or its endgame" (Braidotti, *Transpositions*, 171). In other words, the written documents are just one way of reading and interpreting women's experiences which are recorded in an essentialist manner. The poem draws attention to the unreliability of male-oriented record-keeping and exemplifies one of these written documents as a journal kept by the father of one of these women: "One of them holds your father's journal with its note/ written on the day you were born" (6-7). In order to comprehend and understand women's experiences in their full complexity and diversity, official historical documents cannot be taken as the main source of information as it is "a story that needed to be told" (12). That is, it is approved and shaped by an official and authorised point of view. The speaker, whose memories and experiences are overlooked by official history, expresses a sceptical attitude towards such historical recording. The fluidity of nomadic memory is highlighted in the poem when Irish women, as historians, suggest that they aim to protect their memories from "becoming history" (18).

As conceived so far, Boland constructs memory as a fluid concept in "The Historians" and the poem, accordingly, foregrounds the Irish women as female nomadic subjects who are the active agents of this fluidity. In other words, the poem points out that these women are no longer passive contributors to history since they take action to claim a more active position when they show their desire to burn the written historical documents. For the nomadic memories to prevail, "[b]efore the poem ends/ they will have burned them all. / […] / Each of them puts a match to the paper" (9-10, 24). At the end of the poem, they finally manage to "put their hands close to the flame/ They feel the first bite of the wind./ They lace their pages with fire. […]" (25-27). Their act of destroying what has been recorded and said for them by male-orientated record-keeping "open[s] up spaces of movement and of de-territorialization" (Braidotti, "Writing" 173) where their

subjectivities formed as nomadic rather than featuring "as queens, as Muses, as convenient fictions of a hollow victory" (Boland, "The Woman Poet" 155). Irish women's antagonistic attitude towards "the received and handed-down version of history" (Symth 36) and the act of burning as an exercise of their active agency adds complexity to their representation and prevent their monolithic representations as silenced female figures in a male-oriented history. Through their nomadic memories which are "not held in the mould of linearity, or the confines of the printed page" (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 171), the poem constructs the Irish women as active historical agents/historians who eliminate the male control over their representations in official history.

Similarly, "Statue 2016" and "Our Future Will Become the Past of Other Women" focus on Irish women of historical significance in Irish history as nomadic subjects formed through nomadic memory. "Statue 2016" is about a statue built to commemorate Constance Markievicz, who was an important suffragist figure and who took part in the Easter Rising (Emmitt 15). The poem refers to the actual historical debate about Markievicz's statue which was unveiled in Saint Stephen's Green in 1932 (Dubois 96). Although her statue was built to recognise her efforts and contribution to the revolutionary period of Ireland as one of the leading female figures, her comrade Hanna Sheehy Skeffington showed her discontent about the way Éamon de Valera depicted Markievicz in the statue. Skeffington states that

> [t]he picture painted by Eamon de Valera of labour's revolutionary heroine is conventionalised beyond recognition. It resembles those portraits by 'studio artists' that improve away the real features of the sitter, smoothing out the wrinkles and furrows for a touched-up image of their own, the image of a chocolate-box heroine. (qtd. in McIvor 63)

Evidently, the normative ideals and models of Irish womanhood are used in the portrayal of Markievicz, and she is portrayed "within the framework of traditional, Catholic femininity" (McIvor 62) of the patriarchal ideology of Ireland. It should be noted that although Irish women contributed to the Irish Revolutionary period as active military forces, their presence in the Easter Rising was traditionally underestimated. Certain roles were distributed among Irish women as cooks, maids and first aid volunteers while most of them accepted dangerous and difficult roles as dispatch carriers, section leaders and

squad commanders. However, their help and contribution were rejected by the Nationalist men: “After all their preparation, [Irish women] found that the men whom they had thought of as comrades-in-rebellion, if not comrades-in-arms, strongly objected to their presence. De Valera was never persuaded to accept their role” (Sawyer 88). The reason behind such objection to active female rebels is the belief that these women became unrepresentative of their sex regarding traditional femininity. Their roles as active military rebels were regarded as an anomaly and subversion to the ideal representation of a devoted mother and housewife. For instance, Constance Markievicz, in order to commemorate her contribution to the Rising, was taken a studio portrait while wearing a male uniform. This photograph created a negative impact on the media and the Nationalist movement since, as Jessica Elizabeth McIvor articulates, “it contradicted their attempts to legitimise and redefine the Easter Rising within a Catholic, patriarchal framework. In a similar process of redefinition, they circulated photographs of Markievicz […] in an attempt to overshadow her transgression of gendered norms by framing her within tropes of gendered domesticity and motherhood” (57). The above-mentioned statue of Markievicz is also the product of the male-oriented ideology which tries to cover the assertive stance of women taking active roles in history and to mute their voices. In this respect, Boland’s “Statue 2016” provides a critique of the static and idealised version of women’s representation through Markievicz’s statue and Boland deconstructs the dominant ideology of the official history by using nomadic memory.

Boland, in “Statue 2016”, presents her individual interpretation of the discussion regarding Markievicz’s statue by comparing the fixity of the sculpture and the flexibility and fluid representation of an ordinary Irish woman who possesses nomadic memory. Firstly, the speaker describes this statue as placed in “Stephen’s Green. A half torso. / Her head and shoulders framed/ by the coarse flowers of the boxwood shrub.” (1-3) Then, the speaker who examines this statue in contemporary Ireland remembers her visit to the same statue when she was young: “I was young here. In those years/ night came quickly down on my neighbourhood.” (4-5) As Jody Allen Randolph suggests, the specific memory of the speaker exemplifies “the fluidity and physicality of the memory” (“Telling” 297). The speaker clearly revisits her past and presents nomadic memories which belong to “the

fleeting copresence of multiple time zones in a continuum" (Braidotti, *NT* 228). However, the speaker's fluid nomadic memory is not available to the statue of the woman. The poem shows that in the sculpture of Markievicz

> A scalding alloy of tin and copper once
>
> rinsed everything out of her head.
>
> Molten bronze poured away her name
>
> and whatever else of memory
>
> might have been there, even
>
> the apple blossoms of her native Magherlow:
>
> all of it flensed off to make this fixed look. (13-19)

Evidently, the description of the statue emphasises the erasure of the real female figure and her "memory" (16). The statue, instead of celebrating and perpetuating the revolutionary character of Constance Markievicz, renders her to a fixed traditional woman of male ideology. In this respect, Lucy Collins argues that

> historiographical process entails a systematic examination of evidence in the pursuit of understanding, while memory remains subjective and loosely formed. […] [O]nce the sites of memory become history, rather than part of living commemorative experience, they cease to be fully meaningful. […] It also marks a specific disjunction between the material of everyday life and that of narrative history – a division more profound in the experience of women than of men. (*Contemporary* 6-7)

As stated, there is an obvious distance between everyday experiences recorded by nomadic memory and historical narratives, and this distance is more problematic for women than men in representing their experiences. Hence, in order to close this distance, Boland in "Statue 2016", too, highlights the power of nomadic memory in women's lives in rejecting the fixed and static nature of historical writing and "deterritorializ[ing] stable identities" (Braidotti, *NT* 228). The poem shows that women's past thrives in nomadic memories. While doing so, the female speaker's nomadic memory is juxtaposed with the static representation of the woman of the statue to underline the significance of nomadic memory. The sculpturing process "rinsed everything out of her head", and as the poem specifically points out, her memories and past are erased "[t]o make it seem set. To make it look necessary" (20). Furthermore, "[m]olten bronze poured away her name" (15) that is her individual identity and character. She no longer has anything to prove what she

actually was like or how she became a figure worth to be sculptured. Clearly, the sculpturing fixates the woman and erases out all her individual characteristics and memories. On the contrary, the speaker is able to present her nomadic memories of the past. The female speaker compares what she thinks of the statue now (present self) and what her younger self has in mind. Her younger self does not make any comments regarding the woman of the statue. Instead, she only reminisces about her family by revisiting a specific memory in which her "children slept, worn out by play. / When I lit the lamp in the corner/ my hands were made of light." (6-8) However, her present self critically comments on the statue by stating that even the "season cannot matter now/ to the woman raised above […] on a plinth" (11-12).

Although the female speaker's ideas and comments about the statue vary considerably throughout the years, no change is offered to the statue. To put it differently, unlike the female speaker of the poem, it is seen that there is no hint of life or fluidity offered for the woman of the statue since she becomes an icon-rendered life statue stripped of her memories. As the poem underlines, Markievicz is subjected to simplification and domestication by the male-dominated commemoration in official culture. Instead of representing her military activity and courage during the rebellions, the reality regarding Markievicz's contribution to Irish history is distorted by sculpturing her within the notions of ideal femininity. Boland underlines the significance of fluid nomadic memory in the construction of female individuality since it provides the necessary complexity and multiplicity for women's subjectivities. Accordingly, considering the female speaker gains fluidity through her nomadic memories moving between past and present, the poem points out that Irish women of historical significance suffer from cultural and individual identity loss in the absence of nomadic memory. Thus, the turning of Markievicz into a statue and an iconic representation defies any possibility of presenting her as a female nomadic subject since her memories are "flensed off" (19).

In correspondence to "Statue 2016", the poem "Our Future Will Become the Past of Other Women" reconstructs Irish suffragists as female nomadic subjects through collective

nomadic memory. It is "commissioned by the Government of Ireland's Permanent Mission to the United Nations and the Royal Irish Academy to commemorate [Irish] women winning the right to vote and casting their first ballot on December 14th, 1918" ("Eavan Boland Poem"). The female speaker of the poem emphasises the excluded past of Irish women, and hence, questions and revises the marginalised experience of them in official history. The poem begins with an allusion to the past of the Irish women who suffered and sacrificed themselves to acquire the right to vote (7-14), and refers to Irish women's labour of planting and harvesting. It suggests that Irish women in the past contributed to the economic welfare of Ireland just as men but their contribution is underrepresented: "Show me your hand. I see our past, / Your palm roughened by heat, by frost. /By pulling a crop out of the earth" (1-3).

Traditionally, the details of Irish women's lives are excluded from national history as it is believed that "[t]he subject of history and its agent was the male citizen. Women had no place in the public and political history" (Melman 10). However, the poem offers the rearrangement of official history by including the forgotten details of Irish women's past/memories, such as their labour on the land. The poem most probably revisits the contribution of Irish women to the economic welfare of their families through their work on the land in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

As Quinn and Delay note, although there was a division of labour between Irish women and men at that time, "[w]hen necessary, women not only cared for homes and children but also compacted dung, gathered turf, and set and dug potatoes along with them [during the Famine years]" (111). Taking into consideration this historical evidence of Irish women's past, the poem forms the nomadic memory through the line "Show me your hand. I see our past" (1) and brings traces of the unrecorded past into the present. The hardening of the working hand with "heat" and "frost" can be accepted as concrete evidence of the hardships women have faced throughout history. This is a fluid nomadic memory of the disregarded experience of the Irish women carried in the body rather than in fixed historical documents. This part of the poem builds a connection between body

memory and nomadic memory. Marianne Hirsch articulates that "we inherit not only stories and images from the past, but also our bodily and affective relationship to the object world we inhabit" (24). Hirsch suggests that memories are not only located in the minds of the subjects since memories are sometimes "located in the body […] [and] can, partially and imperfectly, be transferred across subjects and generations" (80). This body memory becomes fluid through bodily experience transferred between generations. In this regard, body memory can also be accepted as nomadic. The bodily mark that occurred in the past is transmitted through generations, and hence, this memory gains fluidity as it is carried into the present. The first stanza of the poem represents this process of transmission of body memory from one generation of Irish women to another when the speaker feels the hardening of the hand of the unknown Irish woman (1-6). This woman's memory, located in the body, acquires fluidity because it no longer only stays on the body of the previous generation. Her memory marked on her body travels through time and becomes nomadic.

After the poem highlights the importance of the fluidity of nomadic memory in the first stanza, it marks the underrepresentation of Irish suffragettes in the second stanza. The poem pays tribute to the Irish women whose efforts were neglected by official history, and claims their experiences as part of history. Indeed, the history claimed by women erases their ghost status and restores them to national history:

> That was your world: your entry to
> Our ancestry in our darkest century.
> Ghost-sufferer, our ghost-sister
> Remind us now again that history
> Changes in one moment with one mind.
> That it belongs to us, to all of us.
> As we mark these hundred years
> We will not leave you behind. (7-14)

This part of the poem is significant in terms of remembering in the nomadic mode as the poem initiates the process of remembering the lost lives of Irish women and recuperating

their absence through a sense of solidarity. In this regard, as Braidotti suggests, nomadic memory in the poem is collective, as "it is […] shared. It is held together by narratives, stories, exchanges, shared emotions, and affects. It is neither equal to itself nor does it guarantee self-perpetuation. It is a moment in a process of becoming" (*NT* 164). The poem builds a connection between the past, present and future and activates the nomadic memory so as to "remember" (19) and "celebrate" (20) these suffragettes. The collectivity of nomadic memory is stated in the line "No one is left behind or should be" (15).

This collective nature of memory leads to the positive assertion of building a better future for women. Thus, the poem presents "the possibility of a horizon of hope, a productive consciousness that yearns for a future" (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 154). Indeed, it states that "[o]ur future will become/ The past of other women" (69-70). Most importantly, this line reveals the connection between nomadic memory and the development of female nomadic subjectivity. The speaker emphasises the importance of transmitting the Irish suffragettes' past struggles as a legacy to the memory of future generations. In this sense, time operates in a cyclical and layered structure rather than presenting a linear progression. The struggle of women for the right to vote is not a starting point but a continuation of the silent efforts of previous generations, as indicated at the beginning of the poem. As a result, nomadic memory is shaped by movement and multiple experiences of women. Accordingly, this nomadic memory creates Irish women as female nomadic subjects who are active agents of change since they write their own stories and transmit them to future generations as a legacy. This shows that Irish women construct their own subjectivity by remembering and reinterpreting the past themselves. Irish women, in this context, cannot be confined to a single narrative, but rather move across time and space, constantly reconstructing both their memories and their subjectivities.

It is important to illustrate the change from traditional remembering to nomadic remembering, and the transformative power that nomadic remembering has. The poem acknowledges Irish suffragettes as the "ghost-sufferer" (9) and "ghost-sister" (9) in "our darkest century" (8), producing only "silences of other women" (25). The terms "ghost-

sufferer" (9) and "ghost-sister" (9) refer to Irish women whose images and representations are simplified and iconised. The poem, here, criticises the official historical discourse which undermines the efforts of Irish women during the Suffragette movement. As stated earlier, Irish women who take active parts in the Suffragette movement and the Easter Rising are ostracised by the patriarchal gender discourse, and they are not included in the main narrative of military history. Although it is known that seventy-seven Irish women were detained after the Rising in the Richmond Barracks (McAuliffe et al. 19), their presence in historical records is underrepresented. In this respect, the poem implies that Irish women have a ghost-like appearance, and their struggles and sufferings are not appreciated. They suffered, but they became the ghost-sufferers whose suffering was underrepresented.

However, nomadic memory "is freed from fear and other negative traces. As such it is capable of forgetting the hurt, envy and resentment and opening up spaces in which to activate a productive force. This active […] remembrance constitutes both a present free of negative passions and also the possibility of the future" (Braidotti, *Transpositions* 154). Clearly, nomadic remembering does not keep the negative memory but instead focuses on the possibility of the transformation of the self through alternative modes of remembering. Thus, in Boland's poem, women are transformed from "ghosts" to actively engaged figures whose memories are rather positive forces for them. In this regard, Boland uses the strategy of naming names for those who contributed to the Suffragette Movement. In the poem, she names sixteen women suffragettes such as Louie Bennett, Anna Haslam, Helena Molony, Florence Moon, Constance Markievicz and Louisa Todhunter. Huriye Reis[6] argues that naming "keeps the communication between the past and the present alive" (54) as it builds "a strong sense of the past for the creation of a reliable future" (64). In a similar vein, Boland's use of these women's names in the poem suggests that Irish women cannot be reduced to ghost status in history or their experiences cannot be simplified since they are the active contributors to the Irish past, and "the

[6] Reis indicates that William Butler Yeats commemorates Irish nationalists in his poems by naming them. The strategy of naming names is employed by Yeats to construct and glorify Irish history and national identity (53-54).

memory of Irish women/Who struggled and prevailed" (80-81) regarding the sufferings and struggles of them become significant milestones in building a future that includes all women:

> If we could only summon
> Or see them these women,
> Foremothers of the nurture
> And dignity that will come
> To all of us from this day
> We could say across the century
> To each one—give me your hand:
> It has written our future. (61-68)

As stated, the forgotten memories of Irish women are retrieved from the unwritten past in order to create a future for the upcoming generations of women. Accordingly, nomadic memory consists of "the act of transcending the negativity itself, transforming it into something positive" (Braidotti, *NT* 164). The female speaker, then, offers a creative possibility by imagining what the suffragettes of Ireland might have experienced during their struggles to gain the right to vote:

> Now imagine these women
> Gathering one by one in Irish cities
> Late in 1918. In a cold winter.
> Each of them ready to enter
> History, called to their duties
> As new citizens to exercise
> A hard-won right. this franchise. (50-56)

Nomadic memory presents the Irish suffragettes who get together and try to change their destinies. In other words, it joins "memory and imagination into propelling a vital force that aims at transformation" (Braidotti, *NT* 164) and releases the traditional representations of Irish women from "the shadow of their past" (57). The poem, thus, attempts to retrieve what is unavailable in the original experiences of these women. It offers a reinterpretation of the historical record and a creative and alternative

representation of these women as nomadic subjects. Accordingly, nomadic memory depicts these Irish women as they really are, that is, as women of experience who take action to improve their conditions. The poem, in a way, refuses to leave these Irish women as "ghost-sister" (9) and "ghost-sufferer" (9) and rehabilitates them as female nomadic subjects through the nomadic memory employed. Through the revision of the representation of these Irish women, the poem deconstructs the official historical recording regarding these women's earlier ineffective/ghostlike positions, and proves the possibility of reconfiguration of history by suggesting that "[…] history/ Changes in one moment" (10-11).

In conclusion, in *The Historians*, Boland develops what Braidotti calls female nomadic subjectivities through nomadic memory which is set against the linearity and fixity of the official history associated with the female experience and subjectivity in the male-dominated Irish literary tradition. In this context, Boland uses memory as a creative means for expanding and restoring the female experience and reveals what is hidden and marginalised in official narratives in terms of women's experiences. It should be noted that the use of nomadic memory thus fills the gaps in the past of Irish women and offers freedom and mobility for female subjects. In this way, Boland's poetry saves Irish women from remaining iconic and emblematic figures of history or being entirely erased by official history. As discussed above, women in "The Historians", "Statue 2016", and "Our Future Will Become the Past of Other Women" overcome the simplification of their representation in the official discourse of history through nomadic memories. Similarly, the lived experiences of ordinary Irish women and their lack of representation are marked through nomadic memory in "The Fire Gilder", "Anonymous", "Eviction", and "Margin". The unmentioned sufferings of the grandmother in "Eviction" and the unacknowledged contributions of the anonymous woman to a historical occasion in "Anonymous" fill the gaps in Irish history with the help of nomadic memories of the speakers. Irish women in these poems gain fluidity, and as female nomadic subjects, they move beyond the limitations set for them by the traditional line of thought.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has sought to show that Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians* include a nomadic perspective which aims to question and reshape the traditional and essentialist representation of Irish women in Irish poetry. It is argued that Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians* use the Braidottian idea of 'female nomadic subjectivity' to challenge the monolithic and marginalised representation of women in Irish poetry and replace it with the diversity, multiplicity and complexity of female nomadic subjectivity and experience. It demonstrates that Irish women in Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians* are female nomadic subjects that exemplify "the potential for positive renaming, for opening up new possibilities for life and thought, especially for women" (Braidotti, *NS* [1st ed.] 8).

Accordingly, this dissertation first traces the representation of Irish women as fluid nomadic subjects in *A Woman Without A Country*. It uses Braidotti's politics of location, which suggests that the representation of women as female nomadic subjects can only be possible if they locate themselves within their specific conditions rather than accept universalising narratives that erase differences. The first chapter lays bare the differences that exist in Irish women's experiences and subjectivity to develop female nomadic subjectivities. The chapter indicates that Boland, in the first group of poems, "Art of Empire", "Anonymity", and "A Woman Without a Country" problematises Irish women's loss of a country as a result of historical, gendered, and cultural injustices regarding their lives in Ireland's past. The analyses of "Art of Empire", "Anonymity", and "A Woman Without a Country" conclude that the dislocation of Irish women from Ireland stems from the male-oriented discourses that have excluded women from the country's cultural, social and political heritages. It is seen that Boland's emphasis on Ireland as a particular location for the development of Irish women's subjectivities refuses the silence imposed on Irish women and insists on their presence within Irish culture. *A Woman Without A Country* shows that Irish women should be represented as culturally differentiated and situated female subjects to reach the nomadic state of subjectivity.

Moreover, by building on the politics of location, it has been observed that Boland develops female nomadic subjectivities for Irish women in *A Woman Without A Country* through the three levels of sexual difference identified by Braidotti. Evidently, Boland's poems, "Amethyst Beads" and "Eurydice Speaks," construct female nomadic subjectivities according to the first level of sexual difference to eliminate male universalism, which disregards the female point of view. Thus, they exemplify the refusal of universalist implications about women in mythological narratives. These poems concentrate on the once-silenced female mythological characters instead of prioritising the male perspective, and through a revisionist reading of the myths, she represents the traditionally unrecorded emotions and struggles of female characters. She, thus, lays bare the unreliability of the classical texts in terms of representations of Irish women. In "Amethyst Beads", although the poem's underlying narrative is about Hades' abduction, Boland does not even mention the names of male characters. Instead, she prefers to give agency to the female characters. In the poem, Demeter and Persephone, who are traditionally silenced female mythological characters, become active agents of change rather than occupying oppressed and marginalised subject positions. They are not subjected to the male-oriented authority that is dominant in myths. For instance, Demeter is portrayed as an active player rather than a passive mother figure in the negotiation regarding her daughter's fate (12). Also, in "Eurydice Speaks", though the original classical text is mainly about a male character (Orpheus), Boland gives full agency to Eurydice as a speaking subject. She comments on her fears, love and aspirations that she experiences in the physical world and reveals that she does not desire to stay in the underworld. The rejection of the male perspective and inclusion of the female agency recreate Eurydice as a female nomadic subject. As a result, both in "Amethyst Beads" and "Eurydice Speaks", Boland subverts the classical storyline through her reimagining of figures like Demeter and Eurydice as nomadic subjects rather than static archetypes.

Likewise, employing the second level of sexual difference developed by Braidotti which brings together different and multiple experiences of a female subject position in order to develop female nomadic subjects without falling into essentialism, Boland's poems "One Thought, One Grace, One Wonder at the Least" and "Talking to My Daughter Late at Night" recognise multiple differences in motherhood experiences and female friendship.

"Talking to My Daughter Late at Night" describes a mother's feelings for her daughter and how she appreciates her relationship with her daughter. It reflects on the maternal experience of women in all its complexity. In "One Thought, One Grace, One Wonder at the Least", a poetic persona talks about her neighbour and how they interpret their individual experiences regarding their lives. It has been shown that the poem exemplifies the commonality among women but the commonality, here, is not used negatively. On the contrary, the commonality of these two women refers to the common, but at the same time, the individual experiences of them. Eventually, the poem presents these women as nomadic subjects whose experiences showcase the multiplicity and complexity of the female experience. The chapter concludes with the analysis of "An Island of Daughters", which demonstrates Braidotti's third level of difference, "differences within each woman". It accepts the female self as a subject position consisting of conscious and unconscious acts and images. The poem focuses on a female speaker who reminisces about her dream, which recalls a dystopic atmosphere for women, and accordingly, it deepens the complexity of the representation of Irish women's subjectivity by exploring the unconscious process of a female mind. Subsequently, this chapter has inferred that Boland challenges the established representation of Irish womanhood to highlight the emotional and existential complexity of female subjectivity. Boland, in *A Woman Without A Country,* points out the impossibility of representing female subjectivity in the monolithic and static framework, that is, through the official strategy of Ireland's dominant patriarchal literary tradition. As a result, Boland develops multiple female nomadic subjects who embody varied real-life experiences, emotions, thoughts, struggles and concerns of Irish women.

The second chapter, after examining Boland's poems "The Fire Gilder", "Anonymous", "Eviction", "The Historians", "Statue 2016", "Margin", and "Our Future Will Become the Past of Other Women" has identified a nomadic perspective that criticises the traditional and essentialist representations of female subjectivity in the official historical documents. Within this context, it has become clear that Boland in *The Historians* develops female nomadic subjects through the use of nomadic memories. Boland's use of memories of Irish women in these poems is in line with a nomadic vision of memory in terms of offering non-essentialist and fluid representations of women and illustrating

the multiple and creative possibilities of representation of Irish women's experiences that were undermined in the unrecorded past. Thus, the chapter draws attention to how the purpose of using nomadic memory can vary by dividing the poems into two groups. In the poems "The Fire Gilder", "Anonymous", "Eviction" and "Margin", the use of nomadic memory aims to provide creative and alternative representations for ordinary Irish women who have been excluded from the official culture and history. The grandmother figure in "Eviction" as a victim of the Irish government, an anonymous wandering woman in "Anonymous", the mother figure in "The Fire Gilder" and a marginalised Irish woman in "Margin" do not have any previous representations in traditional Irish poetry. Yet, these poems restore the individual nomadic memories of these forgotten Irish women and reinscribe them into the official culture as nomadic subjects. The second group of poems, "The Historians", "Statue 2016" and "Our Future Will Become the Past of Other Women" are related to historical and political female figures of Irish history. The use of nomadic memory in these poems engages with the direct criticism of the discourse of official history by revising the existing representations of Irish women of historical significance. For instance, the female speaker's nomadic memory in "Our Future Will Become the Past of Other Women" confers fluidity on Irish suffragists since it enables their experiences to move through generations. This fluid memory saves Irish suffragists from occupying fixed female subject positions and allows them to become nomadic subjects who build a connection between the past and the present. Similarly, "Statue 2016" describes a statue of one of the suffragists whose memories are swept away during the sculptural process. The poem focuses on "*memory*" (16) and underlines that memories play a crucial role in representing the female subject as nomadic.

The analysis of these two groups of poems demonstrates that the use of nomadic memory is not a singular strategy, but it can be accepted as a dynamic and fluid force which is capable of both restoring the lost voices of the Irish past and challenging flawed narratives and representations regarding Irish women. These poems collectively call for a historiography that embraces the multiplicity of women's experiences, and they claim a creative space for both the erased and the misrepresented as in Carmen Zamorano Llena's words, "Boland uses the past to bring the margins to the centre and establish a dialogic

relationship between the official and the silenced stories" ("Overcoming" 159). An important result of the nomadic memories of the Irish women in Boland's poetry is that they diminish the power of the dominant memory system because the fluid memories enable the subjects to move beyond the programmed or already-established truths and beliefs regarding their subjectivity.

Accordingly, this dissertation contributes to the critical tradition of Boland's poetry and enhances it by identifying a different interpretive framework for the representation of Irish women's subjectivity in Boland's *A Woman Without A Country* and *The Historians*. Boland creates alternative female figurations who resist being cultural icons, emblems, national allegories or passive muses devoid of any complex traits of personality. Instead, these figures emerge as complex, self-aware, and fluid subjects—what Braidotti terms "nomadic subjects"—whose identities are not fixed, but continually shaped by shifting relations, contexts, and histories. In other words, Boland's representation of Irish women moves beyond the established constructions of female subjectivity by offering Braidottian nomadic subjectivities. Clearly, Boland centralises women in her poems as dynamic agents who redefine the traditional boundaries concerning women within home, nation, and self. As Braidotti notes, nomadic subjectivity "cannot be reduced to a linear, teleological form of subjectivity but is rather the site of multiple connections" (*NS* [1st ed.] 36). In this respect, as stated, this study draws attention to the interconnected nature of relations that affect Boland's representation of female subjectivity through her use of dynamic agents of change, her problematisation of the collective memory and the male universalism, and her criticism of official historical documentation and the nationalist discourse of Ireland. Boland thus creates an awareness that Irish women are not silent and passive subjects. Such awareness provides the ground for the diverse and complex representation of the female subjectivity and allows for the recognition of differences in their experiences.

Future studies might focus on how Boland's poetic strategy of constructing female subjectivity resonates with other contemporary Irish women poets, and these comparative analyses might provide new insights into Boland's reconfiguration of female identity and

representations of Irish womanhood. Also, the intersections of class, race and gender can be explored in Boland's works which might uncover the deeper layers of factors that shape and affect the representation of Irish women. It is equally compelling to consider the way Boland represents male figures in her poems. Although Boland's primary concern in her poetry is to explore the representation of female subjectivity and experience, she occasionally includes male representations as historical agents, familial presences or symbolic counterparts to women. Examining the construction of male subjectivity in contrast to or in accordance with the female subjectivity could enrich the critical understanding of gender relations in Boland's poems.

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APPENDIX 1. ORIGINALITY REPORT

	HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ	Doküman Kodu *Form No.*	FRM-DR-21
		Yayım Tarihi *Date of Pub.*	04.01.2023
	FRM-DR-21 Doktora Tezi Orijinallik Raporu *PhD Thesis Dissertation Originality Report*	Revizyon No *Rev. No.*	02
		Revizyon Tarihi *Rev.Date*	25.01.2024

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞINA

Tarih: 19/06/2025

Tez Başlığı: Eavan Boland'ın Şiirlerinde Kadın Göçebe Öznelliği

Tez Başlığı (Almanca/Fransızca)*::

Yukarıda başlığı verilen tezimin a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 133 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 19/06/2025 tarihinde şahsım/tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda işaretlenmiş filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı % 6'tir.

Uygulanan filtrelemeler**:

1. ☒ Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç
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3. ☒ **Alıntılar hariç**
4. ☐ Alıntılar dâhil
5. ☒ 5 kelimeden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tezimin herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumlarda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU

Öğrenci Bilgileri				
	Ad-Soyad	Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU		
	Öğrenci No	N19142166		
	Enstitü Anabilim Dalı	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı		
	Programı	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı		
	Statüsü	**Doktora** ☒	**Lisans Derecesi ile (Bütünleşik) Dr**	☐

DANIŞMAN ONAYI

UYGUNDUR.
Prof. Dr. Huriye REİS

*Tez **Almanca** veya **Fransızca** yazılıyor ise bu kısımda tez başlığı **Tez Yazım Dilinde** yazılmalıdır.
**Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orjinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları İkinci bölüm madde (4)/3'te de belirtildiği üzere: Kaynakça hariç, Alıntılar hariç/dahil, 5 kelimeden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç (Limit match size to 5 words) filtreleme yapılmalıdır.

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TO HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Date: 19/06/2025

Thesis Title (In English):Female Nomadic Subjectivity in Eavan Boland's Poetry

According to the originality report obtained by myself/my thesis advisor by using the Turnitin plagiarism detection software and by applying the filtering options checked below on 19/06/2025 for the total of 133 pages including the a) Title Page, b) Introduction, c) Main Chapters, and d) Conclusion sections of my thesis entitled above, the similarity index of my thesis is 6 %.

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	Name-Surname	Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU			
	Student Number	N19142166			
	Department	English Language and Literature			
	Programme	English Language and Literature			
	Status	**PhD**	☒	**Combined MA/MSc-PhD**	☐

SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

APPROVED
Prof. Dr. Huriye REİS

**As mentioned in the second part [article (4)/3]of the Thesis Dissertation Originality Report's Codes of Practice of Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences, filtering should be done as following: excluding refence, quotation excluded/included, Match size up to 5 words excluded.

APPENDIX 2. ETHICS COMMISSION FORM

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		Yayım Tarihi *Date of Pub.*	22.11.2023
	FRM-DR-12 Doktora Tezi Etik Kurul Muafiyeti Formu *Ethics Board Form for PhD Thesis*	Revizyon No *Rev. No.*	02
		Revizyon Tarihi *Rev.Date*	25.01.2024

HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞINA

Tarih: 19/06/2025

Tez Başlığı: Eavan Boland'ın Şiirlerinde Kadın Göçebe Öznelliği
Tez Başlığı (Almanca/Fransızca)*::.....
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Yukarıda başlığı verilen tez çalışmam:

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2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılmasını gerektirmemektedir.
3. Beden bütünlüğüne veya ruh sağlığına müdahale içermemektedir.
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5. Diğer kişi ve kurumlardan temin edilen veri kullanımını (kitap, belge vs.) gerektirmektedir. Ancak bu kullanım, diğer kişi ve kurumların izin verdiği ölçüde Kişisel Bilgilerin Korunması Kanuna riayet edilerek gerçekleştirilecektir.

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurullarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kuruldan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim.

Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.

Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU

Öğrenci Bilgileri			
	Ad-Soyad	Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU	
	Öğrenci No	N19142166	
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	Programı	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı	
	Statüsü	**Doktora** ☒	**Lisans Derecesi ile (Bütünleşik) Dr** ☐

DANIŞMAN ONAYI

UYGUNDUR.
Prof. Dr. Huriye REİS

* Tez **Almanca** veya **Fransızca** yazılıyor ise bu kısımda tez başlığı **Tez Yazım Dilinde** yazılmalıdır.

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		Yayım Tarihi *Date of Pub.*	22.11.2023
	FRM-DR-12 Doktora Tezi Etik Kurul Muafiyeti Formu *Ethics Board Form for PhD Thesis*	Revizyon No *Rev. No.*	02
		Revizyon Tarihi *Rev.Date*	25.01.2024

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Date: 19/06/2025

Thesis Title (In English): Female Nomadic Subjectivity in Eavan Boland's Poetry

My thesis work with the title given above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on people or animals.
2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).
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4. Is not a research conducted with qualitative or quantitative approaches that require data collection from the participants by using techniques such as survey, scale (test), interview, focus group work, observation, experiment, interview.
5. Requires the use of data (books, documents, etc.) obtained from other people and institutions. However, this use will be carried out in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Law to the extent permitted by other persons and institutions.

I hereby declare that I reviewed the Directives of Ethics Boards of Hacettepe University and in regard to these directives it is not necessary to obtain permission from any Ethics Board in order to carry out my thesis study; I accept all legal responsibilities that may arise in any infrigement of the directives and that the information I have given above is correct.

I respectfully submit this for approval.

Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU

Student Information					
	Name-Surname	Okaycan DÜRÜKOĞLU			
	Student Number	N19142166			
	Department	English Language and Literature			
	Programme	English Language and Literature			
	Status	**PhD**	☒	**Combined MA/MSc-PhD**	☐

SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

APPROVED
Prof. Dr. Huriye REİS