

Retrieving Home: An attempt to Reconstruct Identity in the Poetry of Eavan Boland

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Abstract

Identity crisis is a developmental event in which an individual questions his or her sense of self and position in the world. Identity formation is regarded as one of the most difficult battles that an individual encounters during his or her life. This mission gets more challenging with colonization and the mingling of many civilizations. The Irish poet Eavan Boland is one of prominent poets who concentrate in her poetry to portray the negative consequences of colonization on the individual. This paper attempts to examine Boland's poems from postcolonial perspective and show how Boland in her poetry depicts the identity crisis issue as one of most harmful experiences, in which the individual feels alienated and unhomed even if her or she in the homeland as well as to show the difficulty of the continuous endeavors to reconstruct the pure identity.

Keywords: Identity crisis, alienation, displacement, Homi K. Bhabha, unhomed.

Introduction:

That what we call a place is really only that detail of it which we understand to be ourselves Eavan Boland: *Object lessons*

This paper discusses some of Boland's poems that she writes them after returning to her home Ireland, after spending her childhood in England. She is no more in strange country, rather she is now in the lap of her mother country. In spite of that, Boland seems unfamiliar with her current location, she feels estrangement in her native land because her remoteness from Ireland has created what she describes as "an extraordinary distance between the word *place* and the word *mine*"(36).

Pilar Viller comments on the Boland's situation "the importance of feeling and knowing how to perceive landscape , of establishing a relationship between the self and land, overwhelms Boland even as a girl who is finally back in the home country"(170). As a girl who spends her childhood in exile and alienation sense, she would find difficulty to fit with new place as well as people even if it is her country, she feels disappointed when she lives this situation of displacement.

The process of formation identity

One of the poems which conveys the dispersion feeling of Boland in Ireland is " Heroic" from *The Lost Land* (1998).In this poem, Boland puts two images side by side to show her inner struggling." I was still at school and on my own\And walked and

walked and sheltered from the rain”(4,5),the first image is presented when Boland walks in Dublin’s streets through her journey to find out her Irish homeland as well as her Irish identity, she sees something which attracts her attention:

The patriot was made of
drenched stone.

His lips were still speaking.
The gun he held had just
killed someone.

I looked up. And looked at
him again.

He stared past me without
recognition.

I moved my lips and
wondered how the rain
would taste if my tongue
were made of stone.

And wished it was. And
whispered so that no one
could hear it but him. Make
me a heroine.(6-14)

The second image which is presented by statue but it is not any statue, she describes the statue as “patriot” which is made from stone and standing in the middle of tough weather which it is rainy. This solid image of the patriot stone which has sense of patriotism contrasts the fluid identity of Boland who wanders looking for her cultural identity as an Irish. It seems that this statue has more authenticity than Boland has, because this statue is regarded as a hero which sacrifices a lot for Ireland so it is treated like brave and immortal, in contrast to Boland who does not introduce anything to her country. For years she was a

way and does not know anything about her country just tales from her parents. She lacks sense of patriotism and does not feel that she is Irish citizen. She is in state as Bhabha argues “sense of uncanny” it means that she does not feel homely in her country and this is return to her circumstances as a young girl under the influence of two cultures and two different worlds. This stone carries Irish identity in time when Boland tries to look for and construct her identity.

“His lips were still speaking”(7). This stone is personified here and has the ability to speak about his heroism, his country as well as his history in contrast to Boland who portrays herself as “my tongue were made of stone”(12). She is unable to utter only few things about Ireland. She can be described in Bhabha’s words as “she is living a broad at her home”. Also she describes herself in this situation as “She had no speaking part”(66). She is not part from this country nor its history while this stone has strong sense of identification to Ireland, its culture and its history which Boland lacks this sense. Even in her country, she feels outsider and has no- belonging position, she wants this statue to recognize her but it seems she is invisible to the statue, she is not like the statue because she is not fully Irish. Moreover, she begs for the statue to make her “heroine” but simply the statue is not distinguishing her as Irish citizen.

Boland in this poem, reveals her feeling as cracked and displaced not only from England but also from her nation. She is always plagued by a sense of exclusion, she

assumed that these sentiments would go as soon as she returned to her homeland, but she was mistaken, and she would experience the same agony of her childhood in England.

The following poem follows the same theme as the previous one, which depicts Boland's search for information about her homeland, that she is completely unaware about it. The poem is "Unheroic" from *The Lost Land* (1998) which starts by these lines:

It was an Irish summer. It was wet.

It was a job. I was seventeen.

I set the clock and caught the bus at eight and leaned my head against the misty window.

The city passed by. I got off above the Liffey on a street of statues:

Iron orators and granite patriots. Arms wide. Lips apart. Last words.(1-8)

Boland begins the poem by speaking about her job in summer at her seventeenth. Like the previous poem, she walks in Dublin's streets and she stuns by the "Iron orators and granite patriots"(7). She walks among these statues as though she is trying to take the opportunity to pick up what Ireland's patriots and heroes left off (Arenson 165). At the same time Boland is bleak because those statues have good identification with Ireland in contrast to dispersed Boland who admits that by saying in her interview "A Backward Look: An

Interview with Eavan Boland" (1999) with Allen-Randolph:

The almost physical oppression I felt walking down O'Connell Street. .. passing statue after statue - all those bronze, gesturing patriots with their plaques. It wasn't that I didn't feel drawn to the enterprise of trying to be a nation or a people because in some ways I did. It's just that this theatre is so hierarchical (296).

She feels suppressed in her country and has no place to her even the statues are better than her because they have distinctive position between Irish people while she is barely recognized or sometimes unrecognizable as Irish citizen.

Mostly I went home. I got my coat and walked bare-headed to the river past the wet, bronze and unbroken skin of those who learned their time and knew their country.(29-32)

Boland also introduces different images to show her suffering. She puts this image by portraying herself as "bare-headed" in contrast to people who know everything about their country, their culture and their history as "bronze and unbroken skin". She is bare from knowledge and information which specify her country. She feels she is

less from those who know every detail about their country. Boland feels as she is "Other" from the English in England and the same feeling comes to her in Ireland among the Irish, since they are wealthier than her in their knowledge, sense of belonging, and patriotism, while she lacks all of these.

How do I know my country?
Let me tell you it has been hard to do. And when I do go back to difficult knowledge, it is not to that street or those men raised high above the certainties they stood on -Ireland hero history - but how I went behind the linen room and up the stone stairs and climbed to the top. And stood for a moment there, concealed by shadows. In a hiding place. Waiting to see. Wanting to look again. Into the patient face of the unhealed.(33-43)

Boland asks question about the way that she could know her country, it is shameful question because every citizen must know everything about his\her country but Boland as a stranger she is considered as foreigner she wants something which can guide her to be on the right way. These are the sequences of immigration which can be described in Bhabha's words as:

Gatherings of exiles and émigrés and refugees;

gathering on the edge of 'for- eign' cultures; gathering at the frontiers; gatherings in the ghettos or cafés of city centres; gathering in the half-life, half- light of foreign tongues, or in the uncanny fluency of another's language; gathering the signs of approval and acceptance, degrees, discourses, disciplines; gathering the memories of underdevelopment, of other worlds lived retroactively; gather- ing the past in a ritual of revival; gathering the present(199).

Boland lives a half-life in Irish. She is not fully Irish rather she is mixed between England and Ireland. As she spent her early life in England, she may know information about England more than about Ireland and this is her problem which faces in her native country. She is in situation of gathering, gathering of information, knowledge and identity. Then, Boland discovers it is not easy matter and simple thing as she visualizes "it has been hard to do"(34). It is something complicated and it is not limited in wandering in streets and looks closer to statues to get story about her nation like a disoriented tourist rather, it is something more deeper than that.

"but how /I went behind the linen room and up /the stone stairs and climbed to the top"(39,40).It begins in childhood,

when the kid grows gradually, like ascending the stairs, and starts absorbing information about his/her culture, and the history of his or her country; The closer the child gets to the nation, the more knowledge and sense of patriotism he or she develops inside him/her. Boland as a child has been a way from Ireland for a long way, so she would not get that knowledge and feel as one of the Irish citizen immediately and this is her big problem. Boland has the colonial identity which puts her in a hide place and exile from Irish people. She tries hardly to reconstruct her identity because, she feels she is nothing and no one could recognize her as an Irish. She is unknowable and that puts her in case of continuous struggling also, she attempts in many ways to approve her position to herself as well as to people who surround her but she fails in that matter.

It seems that Boland is professional poet in using images and put them in parallel way to reveal her feelings and make her experience as much as clear to the readers. In "Whose" from *The Lost Land* (1998), this poem builds on two images, the first image of patriot figure and the second image of her case:

Beautiful land the patriot
said and rinsed it with his
blood. And the sun rose.
And the river burned. The
earth leaned
towards him. Shadows grew
long. Ran red.

Beautiful land I whispered.
But the roads
stayed put. Stars froze over
the suburb
Shadows iced up. Nothing
moved.
Except my hand across the
page. And these words.(1-8)

The poem begins with the image of a brave patriot who sacrifices his life for his country without feeling remorse; Rather, he is proud of his actions. He describes his country as a "beautiful land" with a "burned river" and a "red shadow", and he incites the land to rebel, so the land responds to him and "leaned" for him; This is evidence of obedience and high regard for his life, which he donates to the country. This patriot is recognized as an Irish hero who is known to all people and places. He is well-known and would be immortalized as a symbol of bravery and audacity. This nationalist has a strong and firm identity.

The contrary image of this patriot which is presented by Boland and the reaction of land toward her. As in "Heroic" when the patriot's lips "were still speaking" and the girl only "whispered" in this poem the same thing is happened when the figurative language of the patriot that "says" while the weak language of Boland who only can "whisper" her quiet and low voice contracts the determination and raucous speech of the nationalist tradition (Viller 182). The land does not make any reaction toward Boland's whispering as if there is no one speaks "nothing moved". Boland is invisible in her nation and she is

unnoticed by people as well as lands. This reflects the fluid identity of her, her land denies her and does not regard her as one of its citizens. She is treated as outsider and foreigner who does not have any stature on the land who lives on it.

Boland argues in her interview with Viller that “identity is not conferred in fixed notions such as nation and gender, but is itself composed of contradictory pulls and ‘fragmentations’”(115). She feels disappointed from the neglecting of land to her, she thinks that her land would welcome and greet her as one of its citizen but this not happen because the problem is in Boland herself, the sense of “irishness” does not exist inside her, she has no sense of belonging to this land so it is normally to be rejected by the land.

She is being “unhomed”, according to Bhabha “to be unhomed is to feel not at home even in your own home because you are not at home in yourself : your cultural identity crisis has made you a psychological refuge , so to speak”(Tyson 403). This is the best description to Boland’s state. She is alienated even from herself not only from the society, and does not know herself well. She is victim of hybrid culture since she is raised between two different cultures so her sense about herself and her native culture would not be fully recognized also her identity would not never be stable because the sense of self and stable identity is not determined by the borders of the nation rather it is something interlinked with what one is felt.

Boland ends the poem with distressing line “Nothing moved./Except my hand across the page. And these word”(8). As if she is a ghost, there is no any reaction toward her speech. Further, no one could recognize her existence nor response to her, only her hand and “these words” have left a movement. Boland means of “these words” her poetry, she uses her poetry as a tool to reveal her feeling as well as her difficult moments she is passed by. Also she uses her poetry as a voice that could reach to all to show the whole society what kind of trouble she has and to approve her existence because she is not no one rather she has place in Irish but she is still in journey to find her suitable place.

In “Anne Liffey” from *New Collected Poems*(2008), in which Boland is concerned of searching and defining her identity. The title of the poem refers to famous river in Dublin which passes through most lands of Ireland. Boland is not using this title arbitrary rather it is intentional; She tries to cling to it in order to give her true identification for herself as one of the citizen of Ireland. The poem begins by recounting Liffey's legendary origins, engaging in “the type of etymological inquiry that is fundamental to the *dinnseanchas* poetry”, a place-lore poem(Batten 361).

A woman in the doorway of a house. A river in the city of her birth. There, in the hills above my house, The river Liffey rises, is a source. It rises in rush and ling heather

and Black peat and bracken
and strengthens
To claim the city it narrated.
Swans. Steep falls. Small
towns. The smudged air and
bridges of Dublin.(9-17)

Boland speaks about herself by saying “A woman” even she does not use the article “the”, she sees herself as a unknown person which is identified by the house, the hills, the river and the bridge of Dublin. Boland calls Ireland as “city of her birth”. This is indicated that Boland lacks sense of patriotism, her feeling to Ireland is just as the city which is born in it and nothing more. The sense of place does not exist in Boland’s heart, the feeling of unhomed has a total control upon her and this is feeling does not come suddenly but according to Bhabha “the unhomely moment relates the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence”(15).

Because of spending all her childhood in England, Boland sees herself in an ambivalence attitude. As a child should obtain an cultural information about his/her country, Boland ingests fully information about England. As it is mentioned earlier she could list the names of the kings and also she has fully knowledge about the wars that England goes through but when it comes to Ireland it is identified by Boland tongue just “city of her birth.”

If I could see myself
I would see A woman in a
doorway Wearing the

colours that go with red
hair. Although my hair is no
longer red.(20-24)

“If I could see myself ” it seems that Boland is unsinkable to herself as well, she has doubtful about her existence, and even if she sees herself she would see an image of unknown woman. She loses control upon her words, she is not sure whether her hair is red or not she is not only excluded from her country but from her language too(Alderson et al 153). Boland in this poem, lives a sense of growing in alienation. She could not move on from this feeling throughout her life, she has double alienation from herself as well as from her society.

Maker of Places,
remembrances, Narrate such
fragments for me: One body.
One spirit. One place. One
name. The city where I was
born. The river that runs
through it. The nation which
eludes me. Fractions of a life
It has taken me a lifetime To
claim.(42-52)

Boland in these lines uses repetition; She repeats the word “one” more than one time to describe her life as kind of fragmentation and displacement. Boland attempts hardly to understand and explore her identity. Again she calls her country as “the city where I was born”(47), she is an outsider from this city and it is just a place of birth nothing more. She explains what this city does to her “The nation which

eludes me”(49), this line is regarded a significant, in normal cases the nation must grant a sense of “place” , “home” , “warmth” and “restful” to its citizens , the nation is treated like a mother and when her child gets tired will run immediately to her lap to get comfort and peace thus, Boland’s nation “eludes” her.

Boland is treated harshly from her nation, she does not find comfort in her nation rather she finds misery, curse and misbehaving. She has neither nation nor identity besides she is lost and dispersed. Boland does not expect to be treated like that, she imagines that she would be welcomed by her nation and finally would get sense of “returning to my sweet home which is full of comfortable” and would get resting after way full of bitters’ and exhaustion but all what find is dismissal and expulsion, She is frustrated and dispirited.

Bhabha in his essay “The World and the Home”(1992), claims the “unhomely” condition is neither a state of not having a home or the inverse of having a house, but rather the increasing consciousness that the barrier between the world and the home is blurring. In that dislocation, the border between home and world gets unclear; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a perspective that is as split as it is unsettling (culturalstudiesnow.blogspot.com).

Boland’s relationship with her country is creeping gradually to breakdown without any intimacy link such as the

familiarity between the citizen and his/her country.

I came here in a cold winter.
I had no children. No
country.
I did not know the name for
my own life.
My country took hold of me.
My children were born.
I walked out in summer dusk
To call them in.
One name. Then the other
one.
The beautiful vowels
sounding out home.(43-51)

Boland depicts her position when she returns to her nation; It is winter and the weather is bleak when she returns, she finds herself lonely, equals nothing and owns nothing, neither family nor country. Boland is psychologically and emotionally exhausted, and she is unable to identify what life is or what she possesses; She has lost all happy sensations and she is surrounded by only bad ones. She lives in a state of constant inner struggle and constant endeavor to validate her identity in a country that refuses and avoids her. Then Boland claims that her country admits in her existence only when she becomes a mother so her identity is defined only through her children, her country is regarding her just a mother no more than that so Boland’s feeling of Irishness is linked only with her as a mother not as she is Boland. Boland as a lady is ulterior but visible as a mother.

“I walked out in a summer dusk/to call them”(48/49). There is changing in the mood of the poem, the weather is changed to summer which brings with it the sensation of happiness and comfortable even her voice when she is a mother becomes hearable. Her house is full of life and “beautiful vowels”, the sense of home creates inside her and her identity gains stability thus, all these sensations are temporary and begin deconstructed again when her children move away from her and the sense of home begins lost :

I feel it change. My children
are Growing up, getting
older.

My country holds on To its
own pain. I turn off The
harsh yellow Porch light and
Stand in the hall. Where is
home now?(160-169)

Again, her nation turns its back on her since it acknowledges her existence as a citizen under the condition of motherhood; nevertheless, when she loses this role, her country rejects and demises her. The environment around her is dark and she is in a bad mood. So she inquires about her house, "Where is home now?" She could not find her home, her feeling of “home” “hold” and “place” vanished, and she was powerless to act. Boland is completely lost and, as Bhabha claims, has a “unhomely presence” (19).

She can be defined in Ireland as nothing; She has no appreciation at all and this effects on her psychological mental and

leads her to doubt about her real identity. When the country of someone rejects him/her that will lead to unlimited questions inside him/her such as if this one does not belong to this country so to which country would be belong , if one's country denies him/her so which country would welcome him/her. Boland's identity does not construct well rather it is smashed because her country refuses to give her Irish identity so that will lead her to question and suspicion about her real identity. The consequences of all these bad events would make Boland have crisis in her identity. Boland describes her life as “suffered life”, she has not healthy childhood nor beautiful adult hood. She lives in circle of struggling and lost.

Follow the rain
Out to the Dublin hills.
Let it become the river.
Let the spirit of place be
A lost soul again.(170-174)

Boland is in center of Dublin but she is exile and displacement. Further, her sensation that she is “lost soul”, living without soul means deadly life , because the soul is the essence of the human and without it he/she would be metaphorically dead. It is important to mention that this is not the first time that Boland lives this feeling because she mentions the word “again”. She experiences this feeling in England once and again as she experiences it in her country. Boland is victim of immigration, she does not have normal life nor normal feeling, she spends most of her life in state of anxious and disturbance. Her life can be defined as journey to look for

the self. Unhomeliness, according to Bhabha, is the point at which one can move beyond the binary opposition of homeness and homelessness (108). It can be observed that Boland here is stuck in between homeness and homelessness, she considers her life as someone moving on the threshold of being and non being.

Boland describes herself as “An aging woman finds no shelter in language”(111,112). In spite of her old age, Boland does not feel safe and after all these years she fails to find place for her own, even her language fails to build protective shelter to her. Neither her country nor her language succeeds to help her or to make her own identity rather it becomes feudal and hostile with her and does not give her chance and space to reveal her feeling as one of the citizen of this country. It is not just Boland fizzles out to reconstruct stable identity also her country flunks to give her the protection and inclusion in order to help her in her search for identity.

In the end Everything that
burdened and distinguished
me Will be lost in this:

I was a voice.(200-203)

Boland concludes this poem with these challenging lines; Despite of all that stands in her way of approving herself, she can tell everyone what is going on with her. She defines herself as “voice” which can reach to most of people and can be heard by them to express the suppression and to be pin throughout the history. In spite of her unstable state, all obstacles that surround her and her unsuccessful steps she could

speak and give excuses to her failure. Fulford greets Boland for her inability to solve her problem about identity, forcing readers to recognize how "authentic concepts of the “real” are part of the falsification of history. In reality, Boland's disintegrating self creates a space for future possibilities where new identities, not predicated on concepts of authenticity this time, might arise (Viller 187).

“The Lost Land” from *The Lost Land* (1988) is regarded as a complement to the previous poem in which Boland reveals her suppressed desires and what she wants or pursuits to. The title of the poem reveals something; the lost land may mean the land that she belongs to. Boland begins the poem by powerful lines:

I have two daughters. They
are all I ever wanted from
the earth.Or almost all.I also
wanted one piece of ground:
One city trapped by hills.
One urban river.An island in
its element.So I could say
mine. My own.And mean
it.(1-8)

As it is said in “Anne Liffey” Boland is identified in her country by her role as a mother for Irish children not for herself as an Irish woman because as it is said before, she is rejected by her country as one of its citizens. There is a recurring image in this poem; Boland has two girls and she is recognized as their mother, therefore her sense of having solid ground that she can claim as her own is not existed. All her dreams to have place that could call it as

one of her possessions. Boland lacks sense of “home” and “place” she feels that she belongs to nowhere or specifically to the lost land, the situation of Boland in this poem can be explained better by Bhabha’s words:

To live in the unhomely world, to find its ambivalences and ambiguities enacted in the house of fiction, or its sundering and splitting performed in the work of art, is also to affirm a profound desire for social solidarity: ‘I am looking for the join . . . I want to join . . . I want to join.(27)

As Boland in her country is surrounded by Irish and all of them are regarded as one and have sense of unity except her who feels she is living in uncomely world and she wishes to feel like them. She wants to join them and be one of them but she is unable because most of her life is spent in England so when she returns to Ireland she would be treated as an outsider and it is impossible to belong to them and feel like them.

Now they are grown up and far away and memory itself has become an emigrant, wandering in a place where love dissembles itself as landscape:
Where the hills are the colours of a child's eyes,

where my children are distances, horizons: (9-16)

Again, as in “Anne Liffey”, when her daughters grow up and leave her, her nation takes back the identity that is given because of her function as a mother then she is returned as an unknown person who is alienated from his/her country. Boland views the nation through her children's eyes, but after they depart, she begins her voyage of wandering about her lost country. Ian G. Kennedy says in his article that Boland and “her notion of Irishness is filtered through the prism of emigration” (2).

I imagine myself at the landward rail of that boat searching for the last sight of a hand.

I see myself on the underworld side of that water, the darkness coming in fast, saying all the names I know for a lost land(28-34).

Boland’s reality seems very miserable and hopeless so she heads for a world of imagination. She begins imagining that she belongs to this land and can move in it freely as it is her home. She struggles to have her own place and dreams to repossess the Irish identity. Boland’s state as Bhabha says “others disrupted the homes they had struggled to sustain. For most of them there was no return, no going back to the ‘good old days’ ”(40). Boland in her country is regarded from the “Others” who struggle to restore their national identity that they have lost through many conditions such as

emigration like Boland herself who experiences emigration and its consequences. They feel nostalgic to sense of belonging to their country. In the last lines, the darkness is personified when he informs Boland about the lost land to which she belongs; She is likewise an unknown person who belongs to an unknown land that is lost. Boland fails in finding place for her own and she decides to settle in the lost land that the most suitable land for excluded people like her.

In "Outside history" from *Outside History* (1990), Boland uses new technique to declare her existence in Ireland. The title looks attractive through looking to it everything would be revealed. Boland regards herself as outside from Irish history and this is very difficult to every citizen to feel such feeling that his/her country does not want him/her or does not care about him/her. These sensations would create a negative affection on Boland subsequently would be in the "liminal space".

These are outsiders, always.
 These stars—these iron
 inklings of an Irish January,
 whose light happened
 thousands of years before
 our pain did; they are, they
 have always been
 outside history.(1-6)

Boland begins the poem by speaking about the stars; She portrays them as outsiders and always not for specific time. They would be always outsider no matter what they are done or when they are exist,

this characterization would stuck with them forever. These stars are very beneficial because they give light to all over the earth but they are forgotten and omitted from the history especially the Irish history. Then Boland mentions the history of these stars and their existence in the universe as before "thousands of years" which is beyond human limit thus that would not be recommended for them they would be always in the mind of people as "outsiders". Boland in this sense is like those stars; She is just not outside from the country and language as it is mentioned in the previous poems she is outside from the Irish history and forever; When the Irish history would be written she would not be mentioned because she is unrecognizable and invisible to Ireland. Whatever Boland would do or make for her country, she would not be treated like one of its citizens rather she would always be outsider specifically like stars which give light to all universe thus they are still outsiders.

Roland Barthes investigates cultural space as "outside the sentence" (Bhabha 257). This is the finest description for Boland, the consequences of her movement between two distinct cultures that cause her to become outside of both of them; She cannot be called totally Irish or fully English; She has this cultural space that takes her out of the sentences of Irish history. Boland continues to speak about the stars, but with a new focus, portraying them as "they keep their distance" (7). Those stars are exiled and they have their distance, which is distant from the entire cosmos, much as Boland, who is exiled and

constantly has a distance from her surroundings due to the harsh treatment she has experienced from the nation that places her in exile.

Out of myth in history I
 move to be part of that
 ordeal who darkness is only
 now reaching me from those
 fields, those rivers, those
 roads clotted as firmaments
 with the dead. How slowly
 they die as we kneel beside
 them, whisper in their ear.
 And we are too late. We are
 always too late. (13-21)

Boland says that she is also out from the myth which has enormous part in Irish history and Irish culture. She portrays the place which is located in it as "darkness", this description refers to hell because it is darkness too, Boland as it is said before metaphorically dead who lives in hell because she is displaced in her country so her country is according to her as a hell and she is tortured in it. Boland is too hopeless to account herself with a live people, rather she is regarded herself as a part from the deadly world with dead who suffered before her from the toughness of their country.

This this the normal feeling to a girl who is suffered from rejection and exclusion from her mother country, living without having sense of home and inclusion would be exactly like hell. Finally she describes the dead people before her as their death was slowly, they are tormented a

lot before their death and when she joins them she has the ability to communicate with them not like when she is in the earth she lacks communication with people on the earth. Here, she finds the chance to speak with exile people like her and reveal her suppressed feelings, she tells her partners as "we are too late, We are always too late"(21). Those suppressed people besides Boland would always be out the circle of Irish citizen, further they would be late in everything ;They are regarded as Bhabha claims "othering", the same way Europeans look to the eastern as others and less than them, the Irish citizens look to those exile people as others and they would always be late. This is ideology imposed on them by their nation and Boland is affected by this ideology and she believes that she would be always "too late" whatever she does. Boland ends this poem with gloomy image which refers to unstable sense of self and negative self-image she sketches on herself.

In "A false Spring" from *Outside History* (1990), Boland draws a very gloomy atmosphere as she uses to be in previous poem, the title itself looks gloomy. She is in a fake spring, or perhaps it is not just spring that is false, but she is also in a false place and nation, as she does not fit in with her current location.

From my window I
 can see the College gardens,
 crocuses stammering
 in pools of rain, plum blossom
 on the branches. I want to
 find her, the woman I once

was, who came out of that reading room in a hard January, after studying Aeneas in the underworld, how his old battle-foes spotted him there—how they called and called and called only to have it be

a yell of shadows, an O vanishing in the polished waters and the topsy-turvy seasons of hell;(3-16)

The setting of the poem is in Boland's room; From her window, she looks to the college she studied in it, she sees everything normal and in its place except her. "I want to find her , the woman I once was"(7,8). Boland, the speaker attempts to find her old version she wishes to meet her old self and comfort her. Boland is totally lost and alienated from herself; Bhabha glimpses to the alienation which some one experiences in the "unhomely" moment , presents self-denial as well as deficiency of reconstructing stable and solid identity. Boland here in this moment of "unhomely feeling" could not find herself nor her identity, she is stranger from herself.

Boland uses allusion to Latin epic poem which is written by Virgil under the title of Aeneid that tells the story of mythical hero of Troy and Rome who is Aeneas, son of the goddess Aphrodite and Anchises. Aeneas is a member of the royal line via Troy and plays an important role in the Trojan War by defending against the Greeks. Following the destruction of his city by the Greeks, Aeneas and his fellow

Trojans travel to Italy in search of a new home. After seven years in Rome, Aeneas decides to pay a visit to the famed oracle, the Sibyl of Cumae, and asks her to prophesy the future with her own words (www.Britannica.com).

He also requests her to enter the underworld, but she emphasizes that entering the realm of the dead was not a simple affair. Only a few heroes could claim to have entered the underworld alive, and even fewer could claim to have returned unscathed. Before embarking on such a journey, Aeneas is obliged to fulfill a few responsibilities. After completing all of the challenges, he demonstrates that he is selected by the gods to enter the underworld, and he proceeds with Sibyl. He is astonished by what they see, which is included terror, danger, darkness, despair, and the ghosts of dead beasts, It is a depressing place (Ibid).

They had a lengthy voyage in the underworld, and Aeneas is astounded by what he had seen. Finally, Aeneas and Sibyl exits the underworld through the ivory gate (www.Litcharts.com). Boland utilizes this traditional narrative for her own purposes. Ireland, according to Boland, is like the underworld, a place full of darkness, gloom, and sadness. Her voyage back to her homeland, like Aeneas' journey to the underworld, is devoid of joy and repose, but rather full of anguish and torment. Boland is uprooted and psychologically exhausted; She believes that she is in a place like hell, not her original country, and this is a common feeling for a person who believes

he or she has been rejected and excluded from the lap of his or her mother nation.

her mind so frail her body was its ghost. I want to tell her she can rest, she is embodied now. But narcissi, opening too early, are all I find. I hear the bad sound of these south winds, the rain coming from some region which has lost sight of our futures, leaving us nothing to look forward to except what one serious frost can accomplish. (16-27)

There appear to be two Bolands in the poem; The speaker and the lost version of her who is lost and the speaker seeks to locate her. The speaker describes the second as “her mind so frail her body was its ghost”(16). Implying that she is frail and easily broken, even she does belong to the underworld. “I want to tell her she can rest / she is embodied now”(17,18). The speaker declaims her old version comforting now because she is identified with Aeneas for belonging to the same world. After gazing into her history and seeking for the lady she once was, the speaker finds only "narcissi / opening too early"(19,20). In the college garden from which she now stares out, the flower represents the speaker's own activities throughout the poem, her looking at or seeking for herself (Thurston 239).

It is doomed, since hell is not the only place where the seasons have become “topsy-turvy”. In the poem's concluding strophe, the south winds make a “foul

sound” promising rain “from some region that has lost sight of / our futures”(22,23). After this fake spring, winter will return, killing the narcissi and irises, as well as the crocuses and plum blooms. Hell rises and penetrates the college garden, reversing Aeneas' decline. However, the speaker's garden references, as well as the goal of her quest, a younger version of herself suggest another classical reference, the goddess Ceres' search for her lost daughter, Proserpine. Ceres, of course, was the goddess of agriculture, and all of the greenery in “A False Spring” fits within her mythical mandate. And Ceres famously sets out to locate her daughter, whom we may consider of as her younger self (who has been out gathering the flowers with which the college garden here is filled). Even Proserpine's destiny is reflected by the speaker's student-self; snatched by the king of underworld. She likes the old version of Boland, is taken off to the underworld after getting rejection and expulsion from her country (Ibid).

Boland's speaker appears to discover the girl she wants, but, like Ceres, she is eventually unable to bring her back. The spring is a false; Proserpine must constantly return to underworld, and her mother withdraws each year, leaving the ground barren once more. Similarly, the speaker is unable to locate or reassure her old self. She seemed to be aware of this. "I want to find," she says, "I want to tell," recognizing the possibility of failure. After what Boland experiences it is hard to find her old version nor her identity as an Irish citizen, she has received trauma which makes her

psychology unstable and continuous failure of gathering herself and establishing her identity from the beginning.

Conclusion

Boland's identity can be regarded as unhomey identity; Boland in her poems sheds the light on her crisis in identity. Boland's cultural identity dilemma may be seen in her behaviour in her own country once she returns, she is always in ambivalence attitude as it was seen in her poems. The culture is served to give identity to the person but she was a way for years from her country and its culture so she is derived from this service. Cultural identity is characterized as understanding of the one's identity in connection and relation with others who have the same identity. Boland is ignorant in understanding this notion because she was away from her cultural group for long time and has no idea how to deal with that and that is presented in her wandering in Dublin's street looking for her identity as she has a hope to get some information from stones. That leads her to be more diasporic and lost, she misses the right way or the right solution for her problem.

Bhabha comments that "This image of human identity and, indeed, human identity as image – both familiar frames or mirrors of selfhood"(72) .The identity of someone is constructed as a result of how the person sees him/herself, Boland does not have pure or full vision about herself .In "False spring", she tries hard to have vision about herself but she is be unsuccessful in that because she sees herself as between two cultures and even when she decides to

get closer from her culture she could not manage it. So she has confused sight to herself and she is alienated from herself. Culture can be regarded as part from the self-concept if she lacks information and knowledge about her culture how do she reaches to self-concept and self-sense for realizing her real identity. The individual has no ability to construct a personal definition about him/herself , he/ she should be motivated by to identify with such culture and social group because identifying with specific culture and social group would reduce identity problem but Boland does not have this identification , she lives in continuous alienation and that leads her to the identity crisis.

Further her country as well refuses to give her credit to construct authentic identity which is Irish identity. She has always sensation of dislocation, anxiety, isolation through alien country, like in "Anne Liffey" when she admits that her country "elude" from her, whenever she goes she is treated like an outsider and enemy .Also she becomes outside the history and Irish myth in "Outside history" poem. She does not get English identity nor Irish identity.

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