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## Nomadic Identities in Marina Carr's *By the Bog of Cats...* and *Anna Karenina*

### ABSTRACT

This paper examines through Rosi Braidotti's theory of nomadism two of Marina Carr's most outstanding female dramatic characters, Hester Swane and Anna Karenina. This critical theoretical approach argues that these nomadic female identities are structurally opposed to fixity. By averting the normative versions of themselves and by engaging in the dynamics of power relations they free themselves from the constraints of phallogocentrism in their different contexts. Hester Swane and Anna Karenina, despite their very different social backgrounds, share the commonality of being nomadic representations. The dramatic works *By the Bog of Cats* (2004) and the stage adaptation *Anna Karenina* (2016) display an array of female characters which conform to social norms. This paper argues that unlike these female characters, Anna and Hester are transgressive women; they are ruthless nomadic female fighters and cannot be considered victims of the social constraints that attempt to define them as sub-beings. The paper further concludes that although their deaths at the end of each play are inescapable, their voluntary suicide eludes them to a freer ontological existence.

**Key words:** Nomadic Identity, Phallogocentrism, *By the Bog of Cats*, *Anna Karenina*, Marina Carr, Rosi Braidotti.

### Introduction

Marina Carr, one of Ireland's most prominent playwrights, stands at the foreground of contemporary Irish dramatists; her theatrical output has garnered numerous awards and critical appreciation for probing the boundaries of everyday female experiences. Carr creates female figures that reject patriarchal hegemony, revolt against traditional representations, and invent new lives for themselves beyond their immediate communities. This reinvention of the female stage figure puts Carr's protagonists in conflict within their contact zone and drives them to annihilation. *By the Bog of Cats ...* (2004) which has contributed to Carr's national and international acclaim and her more recent stage adaptation *Anna Karenina* (2016) depict nomadic female stage figures that disrupt their communities and subvert oppressive social conventions. Hester Swane and Anna Karenina do not yearn for domestic bliss, motherliness, and social decorum. The two central female characters, Hester and Anna "are unable to coexist with normative models" (Chacón 59). According to Jennifer Douglas (2010), these "transgressive women struggle between societal mores and personal agency" (397). This is one way of looking at Hester and Anna. The protagonists' struggle with societal mores is a fight to reveal their composition as nomadic female figures from the moment of their inception. They are decisive over their chosen paths, have no regret for dejecting maternal duties and challenge patriarchal conventions to their deaths.

This paper aims to examine through Rosi Braidotti's theory of nomadism two of Marina Carr's most outstanding female dramatic characters, Hester Swane and Anna Karenina. This critical theoretical approach argues that these nomadic female identities are structurally opposed

to fixity. By averting the normative versions of themselves and by engaging in the dynamics of power relations they free themselves from the constraints of phallogocentrism in their different contexts. Hester Swane and Anna Karenina, despite their very different social backgrounds share the commonality of being nomadic representations. The dramatic works *By the Bog of Cats...*(2004) and the stage adaptation *Anna Karenina* (2016) display an array of female characters which conform to social norms. This paper argues that unlike these female characters, Anna and Hester are ruthless nomadic female fighters and cannot be considered victims of the social constraints that attempt to define them as sub-beings. The paper further concludes that although their deaths at the end of each play are inescapable, their voluntary suicide is an act of power that eventually eludes them to a freer ontological existence.

Nomadism, simply explained, is subverting conventions. It is a notion structurally opposed to fixity. A nomadic identity according to Rosi Braidotti (2011), rests on the practice of estrangement as a way to avert the normative version of the self. Braidotti (1994) defines nomadism as the “move against the settled and the conventional” (4), the state of being in flux, flourishing in change, freedom from the constraints of a dominant hierarchy, intrinsically classified as *other* yet still engaged in the dynamics of power relations. At the same time, Teresa De Lauretis (1990) identifies nomadism as the eccentric or unconventional subject or misappropriated other (146). Nancy Miller (1988) describes it as “being” woman (4). Rosi Braidotti (2011) purports in her book *Nomadic Theory* that nomadism is based on “counter-actualisation” (Boundas 187) that relies on the double bind with the social system that “ties the self to the radical alterity of others” (Braidotti 2011, 31) and the essential process of “defamiliarisation”<sup>1</sup>(33) that aims at “reinventing the self” (33). Accordingly, nomadism relies on freeing the female subject from male dominance and pre-prescribed social conventions. In other words, it is freeing women from being annexed as ‘other’ and from the confinement of “phallogocentrism”<sup>2</sup> (Braidotti 1994, 115). Braidotti (2011) explains that the unfolding of the nomadic identity is nonlinear; it is multilayered; accordingly, the female nomadic identity is constructed as a consequence of being constantly pushed to the limits through encounters with “different others” (35); these others can be the dual self, society, child, or the male figure. A nomadic identity hence, necessitates displacement of the self in response to the constant interaction with stagnant societies and the pushing against boundaries. The nomadic identity is ultimately forced to seek spaces where substitute systems of agency can be prompted such as ontological domains. Braidotti (1994) further extends the definition of nomadism by emphasising that “Not all nomads are world travellers; some of the greatest trips can take place without physically moving from one’s habitat. *It is the subversion of set conventions that defines the nomadic state, not the literal act of traveling*” (5 *my emphasis*).

Relevant to this definition of nomadism is French philosopher Gilles Deleuze’s (1987) notion of becoming. According to Deleuze (1987), a becoming is the demonstration of women’s aspiration to exit from identities constructed around the “phallus” (272). This explanation is in alignment with Rosi Braidotti’s (1994) belief in the need to reverse “the traditional patterns of exclusion and oppression of women” (95). Anupa Batra (2012) further particularises this understanding by pointing out that “a subject would be more likely to undergo a becoming when the experience is [...] uncomfortable or painful, thus providing greater impetus”(69). Women are in this position because they are often displeased with their identity as it has been demarcated in otherness to man. In a world still largely male-dominated, Braidotti’s theory of nomadism evokes unconventional forms of agency away from phallogocentrism. Through this theoretical lens the

female protagonists Hester Swane and Anna Karenina will be explored as representations of nomadism and “female subjectivity” (Braidotti 1994, 3).

There is a plethora of literary criticism on Carr’s *By the Bog of Cats...* (1999) which pays attention to the bogs, domestic violence, wedding dresses, and women’s agency<sup>3</sup>; similarly, there are numerous publications on Leo Tolstoy’s protagonist, Anna; however, to the researcher’s knowledge, there is no published scholarly work on Marina Carr’s stage adaptation of *Anna Karenina* (2016). There are, however, a few online reviews of *Anna Karenina* as a performance. Breffni Cummiskey (2017), an art and culture critic, wrote: Carr’s *Anna Karenina* is a performance about “how to live, how to love and how to die.” Another online theatre review, *Theatre: Abbey’s trashy Anna is Unrecognisable* by Emer O’Kelly (2016) is quite taxing:

It seems to be set in the 1940s, the 1920s, the 1970s, a nod to the 1980s, and a dash of the 21st century, according to the costumes - and all at the same time. The characters talk about travelling between Moscow and their country estates, but according to a good many of the accents, it seems to be set in working-class Dublin, even though these people are princesses and counts.

The absence of scholarly work on Marina Carr’s latest play *Anna Karenina* is a gap in the literature of theatre and Irish drama. This paper will attempt to address this gap as well as add a new perspective on the character of Hester Swane in *By the Bog of Cats*. This paper will additionally argue through the lens of nomadism that Hester Swane and Ann are nomads, not in terms of the representation informed by the experiences and cultures of people that are factually nomadic, but rather, through the nomadism that Rosi Braidotti (1994) refers to as “the kind of critical consciousness that resists settling into socially coded modes of thought and behavior”(5).

## **Nomadic Identities: Hester Swane and Anna Karenina**

A close examination of the stage figures Hester Swane and Anna Karenina discloses that they are marked by similarities as nomadic identities despite their existence in different contexts. Hester is an Irish Tinker Traveller living on the Bogs in Ireland and Anna is a nineteenth century Russian aristocrat. Caught in a “splintered position” (Braidotti 2011, 38) between female agency and social constraints, they are forced to fight against “phallogocentric” (36) systems that classify them as subcategory beings. Both of the dramatic texts under study *By the Bog of Cats...* and *Anna Karenina*, portray an array of female characters which conform to social norms. The female protagonists in these plays, Hester Swane and Anna Karenina, however are juxtaposed against this backdrop of conventional women and are depicted by the playwright as unmotherly, ruthless, and rootless; elements which this paper argues are the fusion that characterises a nomadic identity.

Carr’s protagonists despite being mothers renounce motherhood. Hester and Anna refuse to endure the imposed role of women “who will conceive and bear children” (Mandelker 56). Hester has only one child, seven years old Josie, and Anna, after bearing a son, Seryozha from her husband Karenin, and an illegitimate daughter from Vronsky, takes morphine for birth control. According to Jennifer Douglas (2010), Hester and Anna “challenge feminine ideals of domesticity, motherhood and social propriety” (119). This paper argues against this interpretation; the

protagonists do not simply wish to challenge feminine ideals but decline motherhood which, according to Braidotti (1994), is “a sign of increased freedom for women” (94). Carr has constructed a nomadic style of feminism that allows her female protagonists to negotiate new boundaries for themselves.

To understand Hester and Anna’s composition as nomadic identities, it is essential to explore their backgrounds and contexts. Hester and Anna are motherless characters. This rootlessness is pivotal in unfolding their childhood trauma and in shaping their nomadism. Braidotti (1994) labels motherlessness as a state of being “rootless” (25). Abandoned by her mother as a child, Hester wanders the bogs for years in the hope of regaining her parental figure. She tells Catwoman: “There’s a longin’ in me for her that won’t quell the whole time” (Carr, *By the Bog* 13). This act of waiting consumes her life and exposes her fragile psychology. When Big Josie abandoned Hester as a child, the entirety of Hester’s life stopped. A significant part of Hester’s life is “metaphorically ... frozen in memory” (Finn 95) despite the fact that she took Carthage as a lover and gave birth to a daughter. According to Melissa Sihra (2000), Hester has “never gained a sufficient substitute for the loss of her mother” (257).

As the primary caregiver, a mother influences the way a child is socialised to function in society and has a defining impact on the development of the child’s temperament. Hester is reminded by Xavier, Catwoman, and Monica that her mother was “a harsh auld yoke” (Carr, *By the Bog of Cats*, 60). Carl Jung and Carl Kerényi (1969), in their book *The Myth of the Divine Child and the Mysteries of Eleusis*, point out that “[e]very mother contains her daughter within herself and every daughter her mother”(162); consequently, Hester is called by Xavier and Carthage a “lunatic” and “a five-shillin’ hoor” (Carr, *By the Bog of Cats*, 66). In time, Hester becomes indifferent towards her daughter, Josie. Some critics debate Hester’s motherhood. Riana O’Dwyer (2000), defends Hester arguing that “Hester and Josie are devoted to each other; they play games and have fun. There is no sense of neglect, ...but of deep love and affection” (245). Hester murders Josie in the second half of the play. Bernadette Bourke (2003) and Melissa Sihra (2000) argue that Hester’s infanticide is a profound act of motherhood. Her decision to spare her daughter a painful life that is similar to hers is an indication of the strong bond between mother and child. Moreover, Olwen Fouéré (2003) who played Hester in the first production, interprets Hester’s infanticide as an act of deep love: “It is the loving nature of that gesture from Hester, and something about that “Take me with you” that I find extraordinarily touching” (162). Contrary to these views, this paper argues that Hester is a nomadic female who is ruthless as a result of her rootlessness. Hester has committed two murders. Jealous that her mother abandoned her for her brother, Hester drowns him in the bogs with the help of Carthage, her lover and takes his money. The murderous acts are a revelation of Hester’s dark self.

Similarly, Carr’s Anna is a motherless character. The absence of the mother figure from Anna’s childhood enunciates to audiences that she is unanchored or rootless. We learn that she is under the guardianship of an aunt who marries her off to Karenin, a man twenty years her senior. As a result, Anna is a figure that never quite understood how to be a mother. Trapped in a loveless marriage, she renounces conceiving children, abandons her son, and her domestic duties. John Bowlby (1960), explains in his article *Grief and Mourning in Infancy and Early Childhood* that being abandoned by the mother as a young child has the same effect in adulthood. Anna’s abandonment of her son is a consequence of her own rootlessness, but more significantly, it signifies the start of freeing herself from the subjugated position of being annexed as a sub-being

(Braidotti 1994, 115). Both Anna and Hester abandon their offspring as a consequence of their rootlessness and motherless existence. Michael H. Burnstein (1981) however points out that abandonment can also be an act to “rid oneself of a burden” (214). Hester Swane and Anna Karenina fail to positively relate to their children because the child, in a way, is a reflection of the imperfections of the mother.

Anna and Hester’s nomadic identities stand in stark contrast to the conventional female characters who anticipate the joy of traditional marriage represented by Kitty Sherbatsky, Dolly and Catherine Xavier. Their nomadic identities rely on “erasing and recomposing the former boundaries between [themselves] and others” (Braidotti 2011, 35). Rosi Braidotti (1994) rationalises Hester and Anna’s actions to refigure themselves away from phallogocentric dogmatism by explaining that their actions stem from relinquishing “all idea, desire, or nostalgia for fixity” (22). Their nomadic identity is not so much about being homeless or compulsive displacement, but rather about having an identity that recreates itself and its’ home. Their nomadism relates to the idea of utopia, of belonging to no-where, no one, and no place.

Carr’s protagonists are complex women; their identity is a network of interconnectedness between “subjectivity, and power” (Braidotti 1994, 31). According to Braidotti’s (1994) nomadism, their sense of identity rests on “the living process of transformation of the self” (100). This ferocious female notion of relinquishing fixity within confining communities is signified by the image of the train in both plays. Gary R. Jahn (1981) points out that the railroad and image of the train have repeatedly signified “the destructive, the evil and the powerful” (2). Act One of the play *Anna Karenina* opens with the train scene. Anna and Vronsky’s love affair begins at the train station and ends at the train station. Death permeates Scene Nine with wailing and screaming. Anna associates the tragic death in the train station in Act One with her destiny: “I can’t bear this. I can’t bear it. Cut in half? What a way to die?” (Carr, *Anna Karenina*, 35). As the play progresses, we begin to see how Anna is assimilated to the image of the train. Leo Tolstoy (1962) wrote that “the railroad is to travel as a whore is to love” (96); a description that befits Tolstoy’s Anna. However, Marina Carr’s Anna is not an individual attracted to her destruction; this paper argues that her fighting spirit hungrily challenges nineteenth century Russian social conventions to relinquish fixity “the way one wants a lover – in the flesh” (Braidotti, 2011, 34). This can be easily identified in her relationship with Vronsky. It is a love affair in the traditional sense; but at its core, it is a relationship that enables Anna to establish her notions of nomadism within a conventional society that subjugates women and anchors them to the domestic sphere of motherhood. Similarly, but to a lesser degree, Hester’s identity is eclipsed by the aura of the train. Catwoman, keeper of the bog, a prophetic being in the play, relates her dream to Hester: “Dreamt ya were a black train motorin’ through the Bog of Cats and, oh, the scorch off of this train and it blastin’ by and all the bog was dark in your wake, and I had to run from the burn. Hester Swane, you’ll bring this place down by evenin’” (Carr, *By the Bog of Cats*, 11). The prophecy is eventually fulfilled by the end of the play as Hester relentlessly fights the biased stereotyping of the settled community and the Xavier family who attempt to take away her lover, home and child. The railroad here is significant in its association with the nomadic identity of the protagonists because of its connotations that denote opposition to conventions. While this paper argues that at the core of Hester and Anna’s nomadism is their rootlessness, it needs to be pointed out that their configuration as nomadic identities is inherent in their voluntary rejection of formal codes of social behaviour, including marriage and motherhood.

This paper further argues that Hester and Anna in spite of the shackles of patriarchal hegemony and phallogentrism, they are not victims of society. These nomadic female fighters are depicted as “erotic, foul-mouthed transgressive energy” (Sihra 260). There has always been as Braidotti (1994) points out a strong affiliation between violence and nomadism (Braidotti 5). As Hester attempts to reclaim Carthage, her house and child, she is spurred out of control:

CARTHAGE: The cattle! The calves! Ya burnt them all, they’re roarin’ in the flames! The house in ashes! A’ ya gone mad altogether? ...

HESTER: ... I warned ya, Carthage, ya drove me to it. (Carr, *By the Bog of Cats*, 68)

The same “Mephistophelean” (Douglas 398) power is inherent in Anna’s nomadic identity. Anna is determined to alter her position in society forcefully; she severs her connection with society to gratify her individualism. Olwen Fouéré (2003) believes that according to Marina Carr’s depiction of the character, Anna oscillates between crushing depression and ecstasy: “I love too much, I hate too much, I feel too much, I rage too much” (Carr, *Anna Karenina*, 171). Her temperament is suggested by Fouéré (2003) to be the result of desperation. Gary L. Browning (1986) supports this analysis stating that Hester and Anna’s encounter with hostile environments which oppress women and morbidise their sexuality is what fuels their demonic capacity to “cause immense suffering for all who are near” (Browning 331) and it is this that eventually triggers their “tragic arc” (Douglas 399). Dacia Maraini (1975) similarly believes that these rebellious nomadic female protagonists’ existence in the male-dominated world is a longstanding, agonising type of self-estrangement. Hence, in their attempt to “dis-identify” (Braidotti 2011, 32) themselves from prescribed masculine configurations and male paralyzing structures, Hester and Anna endure the pain of ‘an immense uprooting of origin and belonging’ (Moslund 2).

On the other hand, Amy Mandelker (1990) offers an insightful point of view. Mandelker (1990) ties Hester and Anna’s nomadic rage with the idea that they are characters with dual identities. This duality is mirrored in Anna’s dream of having two husbands called Alexi in Act Three, Scene 9 after giving birth to her illegitimate child. It is a frenzied monologue that denotes the suppression of a possessive force: “the other Anna is watching and waiting and whispering, she was the one who got off the train, the other Anna, not the good wife and the good mother, but the Anna who found her great love” (Carr, *Anna Karenina*, 100). Metaphorically trapped in a dual identity, like Anna, Hester’s nomadic violence is unleashed when confronting Caroline Xavier prior to the wedding scene: “there’s two Hester Swanes, one that is decent... And the other Hester, well, she could slide a knife down your face, carve ya up and not bat an eyelid” (Carr, *By the Bog of Cats*, 22). Mandelker’s (1990) suggestion of the dual self is plausible when linked to what Braidotti (1994) terms as nomadic “war machines” (25). She makes reference to the rebellious subjects who act against the stream and hence are at war with themselves and others. Consequently, this connects with Braidotti’s (1994) previous concept of nomadism and violence. Both Hester and Anna are capable of surges of great violence. Both protagonists understand that to assert their nomadic identity they must perform a purgative act of burning up in flames or carry out a ferocious expression of rage of equal intensity. This paper argues, however, that while society does play a key role in releasing the nomadic violence of the protagonists, it is their nomadic configuration that propels them to assert their distinctiveness as nomadic female fighters in their relevant contexts.

Determined to subvert traditions and social conventions, Hester and Anna according to Gayle Greene (1977), become dangerous. Their communities have “[a] strong incentive for keeping them physically disabled” (Greene 122). In other terms, these heroines are beyond the expectations of the physical world, and hence, do not fit into the prescribed roles outlined by their civil communities. Their transgression is a pursuit of “different structures of subjectivity” (Braidotti 1994, 158). According to Braidotti (1994), it is the “process of becoming-subject” (158) rather than sub-being which is key to their nomadic identity. The protagonists’ non-fixity to boundaries complements the strong female foundation of the plays which is composed of “female narrator, female characters and playwright” (Trench 115). It is Carr who enables her female protagonists Hester Swane and Anna Karenina and frames them as nomadic identities in contrast to the feeble female figures that serve as a backdrop to these female fighters. It is also vital to highlight that Braidotti’s theory of nomadism has often been criticised for disregarding the anthropological regimes the term appropriates. However, this paper does not rest its argument on anthropological roots, but rather on the notion of subverting conventions and avoiding fixity. Hence, Hester Swane’s Tinker Traveller lineage is not a determining factor in her composition as a character of nomadic identity. It is the shared qualities with Anna of motherlessness, rootlessness and ruthlessness that formulate their fiery nature and ultimately fuel their conviction to thwart phallogocentrism.

Carr’s female protagonists are created to function “to different rules and designs” (Braidotti 1994, 32). With the determination to undo the power foundation on which their very identity rests, Hester and Anna choose to fight to their deaths. By committing suicide, Hester and Anna choose to finally settle in “ontological domains” (275). They choose to exist in “no-where-ness” (Braidotti 1994, 32). In the penultimate Act of the play, Anna kills herself on the train tracks; Vronsky is tormented by her death: “all I see is her mangled body, the vindictive sneer, ... I hate her, Stiva” (Carr, *Anna Karenina*, 176). According to Braidotti (1994), “the nomad’s relationship to the earth is one of transitory attachment” (25). In similar circumstances, Hester takes her own life. She tells Carthage:

Ya won’t forget me now, Carthage, and when all of this is over or half remembered and you think you’ve almost forgotten me again, take a walk along the Bog of Cats and wait for a purlin’ wind through your hair or a soft breath be your ear or a rustle behind ya. That’ll be me and Josie ghostin’ ya. (*She walks towards the Ghost Fancier.*) Take me away, take me away from here. (Carr, *By the Bog of Cats*, 77)

Suicide is often interpreted as an act of spite. Kübra Vural (2015), however, explains that “suicide firstly enables Hester [and Anna] to dissolve their maternal bodies, and they are no longer socially entrapped by the identity constructed for them .... Then, suicide as a personal decision makes these women autonomous and assertive because they choose death rather than life and motherhood” (140). This paper agrees with Vural’s interpretation of suicide. Marina Carr uses suicide “as a way of transforming helpless women into empowered figures who, only in death, are able to speak and act for themselves” (Makala 25). Death functions to redeem and inspire those who are bound to the mundane and the banal. It liberates Hester and Anna from social restrictions and places “the life of the individual spirit above the life of the social body” (Mandelker 64). This analysis further cements the concept of “no-where-ness” (Braidotti 1994, 32). Although Hester and Anna fail to assimilate into the conforming strictures of social conventions, they successfully assert their nomadic identities to prove that a nomadic female fighter has no country and knows no boundaries.

Carr gives her protagonists death not as a point of exit, nor as an escape route from the closed communities that reject them, but rather as a leaping stone that helps them implant their rootless existence in new fertile ground. The ellipsis in the title of the play *By the Bog of Cats* is an indication of Hester's continuity. In Act Four in *Anna Karenina*, Seryozha refuses to believe that his mother is dead and states that the people we love do not die.

## Conclusion

The analysis has attempted to prove that in spite of the different social contexts, Marina Carr's dramatic female protagonists Hester Swane and Anna Karenina are nomadic identities. Their unmotherliness, rootlessness, and ruthlessness are elements central to their nomadic identity. This study, through Rosi Braidotti's theory of nomadism has argued that the protagonists have fought through established forms of female exemplifications and deconstructed the phallogocentric stratagems consuming them from within beginning with dethroning the notion of motherhood and ending with their emergence as the defiant female. The theoretical framework highlights the complexity of the conditions in which these protagonists operate. It also encourages audiences to draw multiple connections from a nomadic perspective around the validity of the phallogocentric structures which Hester and Anna subvert. Hester and Anna's "transgressive" identities (Douglas 397) allow them to interrogate the foundations which oppress them; in the process, they show resistance to the hegemonic formations that expound them.

As deviant heroines structured to oppose fixity in their fight to engender the nomadic spirit within them, much is lost: Hester loses her husband, her home, and her child; Anna loses her husband, her son, and her lover. The multiple minor female characters in both works subtly emphasise the complexity of Hester and Anna's nomadic identity and the differences upon which such an identity rests. From the start, Hester and Anna straddle two worlds and finally make the decision in favour of the after-world. Often associated with death, the train image overshadows the lives of the nomadic protagonists symbolising their Mephistophelean energy. Decentered from their communities, Hester and Anna abandon the notion of finding stability within their societies. Their release from fixity and search for no-where-ness is found in their voluntary deaths. Carr uses suicide to empower her female protagonists by freeing them from social constraints and placing the individual above the social. Their self-imposed deaths signify their ability to transgress borders and a strong indicator of the fluidity of their nomadic identity. Thwarting social constraints by transgressive female protagonists has a long history on the theatre stage; what marks the uniqueness of these female fighters is their distinct social backgrounds and configuration as nomadic identities that are unmotherly, ruthless, and rootless.

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<sup>1</sup> Defamiliarisation is defined by Alexandre Christoyannopoulos (2019) as “looking at the familiar as if new – to shake readers into recognising the absurdity of common justifications of violence, admitting their implicit complicity in it, and noticing the process which numbed them into accepting such complicity” (562). This term is used in this research paper in context of Marina Carr’s protagonists’ nomadic identities as familiar yet unrecognized under the constraints of social oppression and marital constraints/motherhood.

<sup>2</sup> Phallogocentrism is to redefine the concept of womanhood and to reconstruct feminine identity. Abdol Hossein Joodaki and Zeinab Elyasi (2015) define phallogocentrism as “to deconstruct the dominant symbolic order and phallogocentric discourse. It is exploring women’s identity in a male dominated atmosphere. Through the break down of phallogocentrism, female subjects are constructed and a new discourse for women is established based on which they can reconstruct and forge their new identities” (165).

<sup>3</sup> Published scholarly research on Marina Carr’s *By the Bog of Cats...* some of the most recent include: Jinan Waheed’s *Medea Revisited: Marina Carr's By the Bog of Cats...* and the *Modern Defiant Mother* (2019), *Contentious Terrains: Boglands, Ireland, Postcolonial Gothic* (2016) by Derek Gladwin; *Violent Mothers in Marina Carr’s Plays: The Mai, Portia Coughlan and By the Bog of Cats...* (2015) by Kübra Vural; *The Daughter-Abuse in Marina Carr’s Plays: By the Bog of Cats...* and *On Raftery’s Hill* (2014) by Mithal Madlool Chelab; *Rewriting of Tragedy and Women's Agency In Marina Carr's By The Bog of Cats ..., Ariel, and Woman and Scarecrow* (2013) by Edna Debebas.