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‘Our identity is our own instability’: Intercultural exchanges and the redefinition of identity in

Hugo Hamilton’s *Disguise* and *Hand in the Fire*¹

Carmen Zamorano Llena

In 1995 the then President of Ireland Mary Robinson gave an address entitled ‘Cherishing the Irish diaspora’ to the Houses of the Oireachtas in order to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Great Irish Famine. This historical event, which has been reworked as one of the founding traumas of the Irish nation, also marked a dramatic increase in the Irish exodus that made Ireland the only country in Europe to experience a decline in population growth in the second half of the nineteenth century (Kuhling and Keohane, 2007: 53). Significantly, Mary Robinson’s speech did not delve into the representation of the Great Irish Famine and its consequences as being caused by the British indifference to its neighbouring island, an argument characteristic of the postcolonial discourse on which the twentieth-century construct of Irish national identity was highly dependent.² On the contrary, Robinson took the commemoration as an opportunity to show how the national ‘great narrative of dispossession and belonging’ could be transformed ‘with a certain amount of historic irony [into] one of the treasures of [Irish] society,’ from which the Irish people could learn ‘values of diversity, tolerance and fair-mindedness’ (Robinson, 1995). As Richard Kearney notes, Robinson’s definition of the Irish nation came under the rubric of the ‘*migrant* nation,’ where ‘the nation remains partially ethnic, but is enlarged to embrace all those emigrants and exiles who live beyond the territory of the nation-state *per se*’ (original emphasis; Kearney, 1997: 5). Thus, Robinson proposed a broadening of the definition of the phrase ‘the Irish people,’ making it inclusive of the Irish diaspora, as a way to redefine past constructs of Irish identity. Similarly, in his seminal work

Postnationalist Ireland (1997), Richard Kearney – who, incidentally, was Mary Robinson’s speechwriter in the early times of her first term in power – also suggested the need to redefine the construct of the Irish nation by revising the cultural and politico-philosophical founding national narratives. Kearney’s analysis suggests that traditional definitions of Irishness are overcome through an internationalisation of the cultural and political discourses. Thus, the ‘obsession with an exclusive identity is abandoned’ by bringing to the fore the ‘network of relations extending from local communities at home to migrant communities abroad’ (Kearney, 1997: 100). Through this globalisation of Irishness, Kearney and Robinson set the premises for a redefinition of the ‘new Ireland’ of the mid 1990s. However, their discourse was still flawed in that it persisted in maintaining an ethnocultural base to definitions of Irish identity. The dramatic socio-economic changes that Ireland underwent since the mid-1990s added a new meaning to the internationalisation of ‘the Irish people’ and to the concept of the ‘migrant nation’ as defined by Robinson and Kearney, thus forcing a redefinition of traditionally ethnocultural definitions of Irish national identity.

The short-lived economic boom experienced by Ireland between 1995 and 2007 radically changed the social fabric of Ireland by attracting great numbers of Irish returnees, migrant workers, asylum-seekers, and refugees. This turned Ireland, for the second time in its history since the Famine, into a country of net inward migration (Immigrant Council of Ireland, 2005). By 2007 about 10 per cent of the Irish population had been born outside Ireland (Central Statistics Office, 2007), and according to a study by the National University of Ireland there are over 167 languages spoken by 160 different nationalities in the Republic of Ireland (O’Brien, 2006). The speed and intensity of these changes have led some analysts to claim that ‘Ireland, north and south, has had a crash course in cultural diversity’ (Wilson, 2008). Consequently, as

Fintan O'Toole already suggested in 1999, the traditional definition of Irishness would necessarily have to be redefined under this radical multiculturalisation of Ireland. As several scholars have argued (Lentin, 2001; Hickman, 2007), one of the main contributions of this arguably 'new' multiculturalism is that it has forced a re-examination of the monocultural representation of Irish society, which already existed in pre-Celtic Tiger Ireland. This monocultural construct found its roots in the nation-building project of nineteenth-century Ireland, and was largely dependent on a 'falsely homogenising Irish culture and [on] excising cultural forms deemed to be Other' (Kuhling and Keohane, 2007: 67). It is precisely to this pre-Celtic Tiger multicultural Ireland that Irish-born writer Hugo Hamilton belongs.

In his article 'The loneliness of being German,' Hamilton recalls a talk, while on a reading tour in Germany, where he discussed the topic of national pride with the students of a secondary school in Otterberg, a southern German town. To this audience Hamilton explained how his German-Irish background in an Irish socio-historical context where nationalism and its consequences were still predominant provided him with the literary language that dominates his writing:

my German-Irish childhood in Dublin had been plagued by these questions of nationalism, the ebbing Irish nationalism on my father's side and the legacy of German nationalism which my mother experienced under Nazism. I had outlined [to the students] the language war into which I had been conscripted as a child, forced to speak only Irish and German, wearing Aran Sweaters and Lederhosen, forbidden from speaking English. (Hamilton, 2004)

This hybrid identity, though ridden with difficulties at a personal level, locates Hamilton in a strategically advantageous position from which to exert what Ronit Lentin, with reference to the Irish case, calls a ‘politics of interrogation’ of monological understandings of collective identity (2001). The main aim of this chapter is to analyse how in his two latest works of fiction, *Disguise* (2008) and *Hand in the Fire* (2010), Hamilton explores the limitations that monological, especially ethnocultural, constructs of collective identity impose on individuals, and how these are contested in a contemporary context of increased globalisation and intercultural exchanges. By examining this issue in the two different national contexts that influence his sense of identity, namely Germany and Ireland, Hamilton redefines Kearney’s ethnocultural definition of the internationalisation of Irishness in postnationalist Ireland,³ and suggests rather a civic-based understanding of collective identity that allows individuals to locate ‘the others of our selves’ (Bhabha, 1994: 56).

In his review of *Hand in the Fire* for the *Irish Times*, literary critic Liam Harte claims that ‘a preoccupation with history’s secrets [and] the mood of *heimatlos*,’ or homelessness, are two of the main themes that pervade Hamilton’s oeuvre (2010). To a certain extent, this is also true of the two novels under study. *Disguise* and *Hand in the Fire* are thematically more closely interrelated than his other works. This close interrelationship is observed in that both novels analyse how individual characters negotiate and try to overcome traditionally ethnocultural definitions of the national *Heimat*, thus exposing the damaging effects of such homogenising identity constructs on collective and individual identities.

In *Disguise*, the relevance of memory in the construction of individual and collective identities is underscored by the narrative structure, which moves between the events of a single day at the end of September 2008 in a farm outside the former East German town of Jüterborg,

and the post-Second World War Germany that was utterly changed in the aftermath of the war. The process of remembrance and forgetting that this pendular movement between different times highlights serves to explore the identity formation of the main character Gregor Liedmannn, a man in his sixties in 2008, who as a two-year-old orphaned refugee from the East was given to a German woman by her father to replace the son that had just been killed during one of the last bombings of Berlin. The mother, whose husband is still fighting in the Russian front at the end of the Second World War, is made to promise that she will never tell anybody about the replacement of her dead son, not even her husband, a promise that she maintains against all odds. Gregor's chance discovery of this event in his young adulthood makes him question his sense of identity, as it had been given to him, and forces him to reconstruct it on half-suspected truths.

The German political philosopher Jürgen Habermas argues that individual identity and collective identity cannot be equated, but that they exist in a 'complementary relationship' (1988: 9). Similarly, in the literary realm of *Disguise*, Gregor's individual narrative of identity formation bears a metonymic relationship with the identity (re)formation of the German national identity after the Holocaust. As critics generally agree (Habermas, 1988; Fullbrook, 2002), Auschwitz put an end to the German myth of national identity which, finding its roots in the romantic definition of *Heimat*, assumed its more strident ethnic overtones in the first half of the twentieth century and culminated with what Mary Fullbrook terms 'Hitler's conception of a "racially pure" ethnic community, or *Volksgemeinschaft*' (2002: 22). As Habermas remarks, 'Auschwitz altered the conditions for the continuation of historical life' (1988: 4); it rendered the historiographical work, which had been one of the founding pillars in the nineteenth-century construct of the German nation, unreliable, exposing the horrific consequences that the selection and interpretation of history from a specifically racist perspective could lead to. This,

consequently, caused the loss of the traditional sense of *Heimat*, and the problematisation of definitions of collective identity in the post-Auschwitz German context, which left its people with an intense sense of *heimatlos* and with the need to redefine the basis on which a common sense of identity could be reconstructed.

In a similar sense, Gregor's *heimatlos* is a consequence of the disasters of the war. The war has left him without a *Heimat* in the broadest sense of this German term, namely, without his natural family, without a clear identification with his place of birth and origins, which are unclear, and, consequently, without a sense of belonging to a community that shares a common history, culture, and traditions. In this context, and after accidentally discovering his homeless condition, Gregor decides to reconstruct his sense of identity as a Jew in the German Federal Republic, based on traces of memory and hearsay. As a consequence, in his late adulthood Gregor comes to realise the unstable grounds of his identity, as the narrator notes recalling an early memory of Gregor's childhood as a surrogate child: 'Sometimes he cannot distinguish between his memory and what he has been told, between what he experienced and what he has read in books. He is made up of all those things that he has heard about and read about' (Hamilton, 2008: 23). In his young adulthood, however, living in 1960s Berlin, Gregor reimagines his identity reproducing the mistakes of the past, namely, trying to adopt those cultural traits that are associated with a traditionally ethnocentric understanding of collective identity, in this case, a Jewish identity. Thus, he decides to be circumcised and 'marked down his religion as Jewish on official documents. Dues were deducted from his pay packet each month which went directly to the Jewish community' (59). He also tries to join the Jewish synagogue, not because 'he had [any] great wish to attend the synagogue or to go through any religious customs. He merely wanted to belong to the Jewish community in Berlin' (60). However, he is

denied access to this community precisely because of the impossibility to find ‘solid evidence’ of his Jewish parentage (*ibid.*). Thus, in an ironic historical reversal, the Jewish community denies him access due to their limited ethnocultural and racial interpretation of communal belonging.

Gregor’s existence is doubly plagued, firstly by the state of homelessness caused by the war, and secondly by the traumatic impossibility of reconstructing his sense of identity on the terms that had been used before the war to define what Benedict Anderson termed ‘imagined communities’ (1991).⁴ Thus, Gregor reproduces the mistakes of the past, just as East and West Germany, turned *heimatlos* by the war, fell back again into the selective use of history to reconstruct a sense of collective identity. As Fullbrook states, both East and West Germany ‘sought to define and to anchor new partial identities ... in differing reinterpretations of selected aspects of a common past. ... The interpretation and presentation of the past became an integral and often hotly contested element of the present’ (2002: 3). This obsession with the past hindered the healing of the open wounds of Germany’s traumatic history and of its collective sense of identity. Similarly, Gregor’s obsession with this old sense of belongingness, based on ‘solid evidence’ of his origins in the bygone past (Hamilton, 2008: 60), bars him from establishing significant relationships in the present with his adoptive parents, with his wife Mara and with his son Daniel. It is only by the end of a late summer day outside Jüterborg, when he realises the damage that this obsession with a fixed form of identity has caused not only to him but also to those around him, that he gains a new insight into what composes his sense of identity: ‘His identity is not what he was or what the Nazis thought he was. His identity is the people he’s been living with, but he’s denied them each time. He always ran away from anyone who gave him any sense of identity’ (216).

Gregor's damaged sense of identity can only be healed in the context of contemporary Berlin, a city that, since the fall of the Wall in 1989, has been transformed from a symbol of confrontation to a contested symbol of cultural diversity and intercultural relations.⁵ As Gregor reflects in his description of contemporary Berlin, '[m]any of the people around here have also travelled a lot, collecting cultural idiosyncrasies from around the world before returning to live in this semi-eccentric, semi-chic and ethnically mixed suburb of Berlin' (20). This new circumstance of interculturalism, facilitated by the current process of globalisation, makes him realise that the old obsessions with the past and fixed constructs of identity have been replaced by the utterly mobile population and the shrinking of time and space allowed by new technologies and low-cost flights:

He has become part of this late-night shrine of rock himself now, the hall of has-beens, the place in which everything has gone by, eclipsed by cultural innovation accelerating into the future. The world has rushed on into a new set of obsessions. When Gregor was growing up, the planet seemed like an enormous place, full of sections all devoted to staying apart with their own culture and their own separate identities. North America was far away. Peru was unimaginably remote. The past was close behind, was the phrase from a song which described how everyone felt. Nowhere is far away now. Even the most distant places in Alaska are on everyone's doorstep. (250-1)

In this context of the new, post-1989 Berlin, Gregor's development becomes more clearly defined. The war had made Gregor a *heimatlos*, an eternal exile who 'had turned his life into a search for belonging,' which, initially, he could only find in pre-war definitions of collective

identity (218). However, that traditional understanding of the sense of pertaining to an imagined community is replaced by the new generation represented by his son Daniel, whose identity, as Gregor reflects, 'was not so much inherited any more. It had little to do with religion, with history or with geography, even less with his place of birth or his ancestors. His identity was something in the making' (175). Daniel's identity is not based on the old national topoi of shared culture, language and history, but on current symbols of collective identity, such as popular sports like football, which can unite individuals living in the same locale, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, and which can bring them a 'feeling of belonging in the city, a family of inhabitants, a spooling of emotions into one large unlikely commune' (175).⁶

Like Gregor Liedmann in *Disguise*, the Serbian migrant Vid Ćosić, the main character and narrative voice in *Hand in the Fire* (2010), has been deprived of a sense of *Heimat* by tragic historical and private events in his country of origin. The theme of immigration in contemporary Ireland and the experiences of the so-called 'New Irish' in the Celtic and post-Celtic Tiger context are themes that have attracted the attention of a number of contemporary Irish writers, including Roddy Doyle, Patrick McCabe, and Hugo Hamilton. A number of their fictional texts focus on the changes that Ireland has undergone under the influence of globalisation and mass migration. Thematically, their work can be considered to have begun in Ireland a new literary subgenre, namely migration literature. Recent literary criticism has outlined migration literature as distinct from migrant literature (Rösch, 2006; Frank, 2010). Whereas the latter placed the emphasis on the migrant origins of the author writing on issues of migration, the former is defined by intratextual features, such as the thematic focus on the migrant experience and the narrative perspective (Rösch, 2006), as well as the interest in analysing the changes that the host

society undergoes under the influence of migration. It is in this sense that Hamilton's *Hand in the Fire* can be regarded as a noticeable contribution to this subgenre in the Irish context.⁷

Vid is a Serbian migrant who arrives in Ireland trying to escape from the trauma of the ethnocultural conflict and subsequent fratricide war in former Yugoslavia, and the private trauma of losing his parents in a car accident, which he survived, sometime after the end of the war. His conscious desire to leave behind the past unconsciously blocks his capacity to recall previous events, and impels him to embrace an assimilationist approach to his new life in Ireland. As Anne Enright observes in her review of Hamilton's novel, 'Vid is slow to form opinions. An opinion is a form of ownership, and as a stranger both in the country and in the language, he owns very little' (2010). As a migrant, Vid does not feel entitled to form opinions in his new country, and the safest way for him to adapt to his new home is to adapt and adopt the ways of the host society, a choice that, as the novel progresses, proves to be sterile.

As Philip Watt states in his analysis of interculturalism and migration in Ireland, in socio-political discourses, the assimilationist approach 'promoted the absorption of minorities into a "shared" value system that was viewed as the only way forward' (2006: 155). In a similar manner, Vid dislikes being asked about his country of origin because this reminds him of his outsider status in the host country, and tries to mimic the language, manners and cultural values of the new country of residence, as suggested by his reflections after his first encounter with the Irish lawyer Kevin Concannon:

What does it matter where you come from? You could say it's irrelevant. I wanted to forget about my own country and start again. I wanted to get a foothold here, get to know the place and the people. I already knew some of the most famous names, like James Joyce

and George Best and Bono and Bobby Sands. I knew the most important landmarks, like the GPO ... I was beginning to understand the way things are done here, the way you have of saying 'how's the man?' and 'what's the craic?' I was starting to pick up the jokes, trying not to take everything so seriously. I was working on the accent, learning all the clichés. (2010: 2)

Like Gregor Liedmann, Vid's life is governed by his desire to belong, and he also initially aims to meet this objective by unquestioningly ascribing to the ethnocultural features that define the traditional Irish sense of communal identity, classically summarised by what the Irish poet Seamus Heaney has defined as a 'sense of place.'

As Heaney defines it, the sense of identity with the land and its community can only be achieved by exploring the 'silent ancestry' that is engraved in the geographical spaces of the country where the individual is born, thus attaining 'a marriage between the geographical country and the country of the mind,' where the latter 'takes its tone unconsciously from a shared oral inherited culture' (1980: 132). Through the immigrant character in *Hand in the Fire*, Hamilton challenges this conservative understanding of the sense of place and outlines the manner in which it is to be redefined in the current globalised and intercultural Ireland. Through his troublesome friendship with Kevin Concannon, Vid gains access to Kevin's life story and to a dark family legend of discrimination and exclusion linked to the symbolically charged Aran Islands off the west coast of Ireland. Thus, Kevin's life story and the family's 'silent [or, rather, silenced] ancestry' are the two narratives that will enable Vid to find a different sense of place in his host country. By emphasising the connecting points between Kevin's and Vid's experiences of estrangement in Ireland, the novel fosters what Ronit Lentin has called a 'politics of

interrogation' of the Irish 'we' instead of a "'politics of recognition"' of new ethnic minorities, integrating them into an unquestioned existing Irish society (2001).

Kevin's life story provides Vid with some insight into the diversity and complex social reality of pre-Celtic Tiger Ireland. Kevin confides in Vid 'as an outsider who could be trusted' (Hamilton, 2010: 42), and tells him about how he was born in England of Irish émigrés. He confesses the difficulties that he underwent when his mother moved to Dublin with him and his two younger sisters when he was nine, and how he had struggled to eliminate his English accent so as 'to be Irish': 'At school, he learned what it was like to be excluded and tried to mix in and camouflage himself. He did his best to be Irish' (*ibid.*). Like Vid, Kevin opted to escape from the difficulties of the past and the sense of displacement derived from not quite belonging to the traditional Irish sense of place. Impelled by his motto 'never to look back' (*ibid.*), Kevin has suppressed the negative elements in the narrative of his life story, in the same manner as his family has suppressed the tragic family story of an aunt on his father's side that was found drowned in the sea after the priest in the local community in Inishmore, the biggest of the Aran Islands, denounced her from the altar for becoming pregnant out of wedlock. As Kevin recalls: 'He said that if the men in the area were not men enough to drown her, then perhaps she would have the decency to drown herself' (88). The actual causes of her death remained a mystery, but this action became inscribed in the 'memory of the landscape' (89), giving the name *Bean Bháite*, Irish for drowned woman, to the place where her body was found.

The secret story in the family provides Vid with another point of identification, since the inaction of the community towards the repressive power of the Catholic Church reminds him of 'the way the secret police operated in [his] own country and the paralysis that people felt in the face of authority' (Hamilton, 2010: 89). This Joycean paralysis also characterises Vid's attitude

as a 'New Irish' in contemporary Dublin. He acts like a spectator of other people's lives and even of his own life, and does not take action when he intuitively feels that Kevin has used him to cover up a physical aggression that may cost him his career as a lawyer. Vid's sense of unbelonging makes him withdraw from active participation in the life of his new country of residence. However, his awareness of the similarities between his migrant experience and that of Kevin and his father, as well as his own insights as a victim of racial discrimination, eventually shake him into action. Thus, when Ellis, Kevin's youngest sister and drug addict, is pressurised by her family to make the decision of having an abortion against her will – which resembles the secret family story repeating itself – Vid decides to come out of his paralysis as a migrant and help Ellis to overcome her life crisis. It is precisely his active involvement in what he perceives as an act of civic responsibility that turns Vid into an Irish citizen *de facto*:

This was where I entered into the story of the country at last. I became a participant, a player, an insider taking action. Not letting things happen around me as if I was still only an immigrant and it was none of my business. I was not trying to make a name for myself or anything like that, but I was entitled to play my role as an ordinary inhabitant who belonged here. (261)

In this manner, Vid abandons the assimilationist approach to multiculturalism that he adopts at the beginning of the narrative. This approach initially relegates him into a passive, non-participatory existence in his host country, which in turn perpetuates his sense of *heimatlos*. As Hamilton's narrative shows, it is only by engaging actively and critically in the life and history of the adoptive country that Vid finds a sense of belonging and is able to transform Ireland into

his own *Heimat*. This process suggests the need to overcome inherited nationalist and postnational ethnocultural definitions of Irishness so as to make them more inclusive of the Other communities existing in pre- and post-Celtic Tiger Ireland.

To conclude, Gregor Liedmann's and Vic Čosić's life narratives expose the limitations of traditionally ethnocultural definitions of collective identities. History, a crucial tool in the selection of founding traumas with which to construct a sense of common origins, becomes for both a haunting presence to which they react in different ways. While Gregor identifies belongingness and a sense of *Heimat* with a past that the war has denied him, Vid, in his migrant condition, tries to elude his own past and assimilate into the host country. Despite their disparate reactions to the heavy weight of history and its traumas, both of them initially revert to past forms of defining their own identity and liberating themselves from their imposed *heimatlos*. They try to artificially adopt those cultural features that are identified with a specifically ethnocultural sense of collective identity. However, the globalised and intercultural context in which they attempt to carry out this enterprise contributes to making them realise that collective and individual identities are characterised not by fixity, but by their own instability, as Gregor concludes in *Disguise* (258-59). This new understanding of identities currently requires new definitions that ensure the transformation from a culture of identification with a common culture, ancestry and history into a culture of diversity, where its members are united by symbols and actions that enable their active participation into their community regardless of their origins. The diversity of historical and cultural differences is not erased, as in the assimilationist approach, but incorporated so as to change contemporary understandings of the nation. Thus, as Hamilton's works suggest, the internationalisation of Irishness that former President Robinson and Richard Kearney fostered is transformed from its ethnic base, looking for Irish descendants abroad, into a

process of acknowledging the Other within one's own community and making them active participants of the national *Heimat*.

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Notes

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² See, for example, Máire ní Fhlathúin's essay 'The British empire' in *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, where she states that 'British laissez-faire economic policies were widely blamed for the catastrophic effects of the Irish famine of 1845-51, which caused the loss of a large part of the population through death and emigration' (2007: 28-9). In *Daniel O'Connell, The British Press and the Irish Famine: Killing Remarks*, Leslie Williams analyses what he terms 'the violence that was done to the Irish people during the Famine' in the British press through a pejorative, stereotyped representation of the Irish (2003: 4). Williams's choice of words is representative of the Irish nationalist discourse in which the Irish Famine was incorporated.

³ In the 1990s, and for almost two decades, postnationalism was a concept that dominated politico-philosophical discourses, especially in the Western context. This was a highly debated concept, with its detractors considering it an 'assault' on national citizenship and the nation-state (Hansen, 2009) and its advocates arguing for the advantages of the postnational discourse, in which the pressures of globalisation forced 'a redefinition of the nation-state and the concept of social solidarity based on the cultural, historical and political constraints of national citizenship' (Gilsenan Nordin and Zamorano Llena, 2010: 2). Richard Kearney's use of postnationalism in the Irish context adheres to the latter understanding of this term. Thus, Kearney sees postnationalism as a discourse that enables the analyst 'to step back in order to rethink some of the prevailing ideas that have shaped the political understanding of most modern Irish citizens,' characterised by monological nationalist understandings of Irish identity. As Kearney states, the

aim of his text is ‘not to denounce nationalism ... but to reinterrogate its critical implications’ (1997: 1).

⁴ In his seminal work *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Benedict Anderson used the title phrase to describe his understanding of what characterises nations. According to his definition, the nation is ‘an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign,’ whose existence is possible because ‘in the minds of each [of its members] lives the image of their communion’ (1991: 6). Anderson’s phrase is especially useful, since it underscores the constructed nature of nations, where the sense of collective identity is not inalterable, but socio-culturally determined and, therefore, varying depending on the changes experienced by the national community.

⁵ In any case, as argued by Bloomfield, there is still a clash between the cultural policies that present Berlin as a multicultural city, open to international influences, and a ‘high cultural metropolis,’ and the difficulties that these policies have to recognise and promote the cultural diversity of the city and its ‘intercultural mix’ (2003: 167).

⁶ The role of popular sports as symbols of intercultural mediation is often present in contemporary Irish literary works, such as Dermot Bolger’s play *In High Germany* (1990) and Joseph O’Neill’s *Netherland* (2008).

⁷ With regard to migrant literature in Ireland, it can be argued that it is a subgenre that started to develop recently with the new multiculturalism fostered by the socio-economic phenomenon of the Celtic Tiger. Some of the works that can be counted in this emergent subgenre are Cauvery Madhavan’s *Paddy Indian* (2001) and Marsha Mehran’s *The Pomegranate Soup* (2006) and *Rosewater and Soda Bread* (2008). It will be interesting to observe how this subgenre will

develop in Ireland in the coming years, when the recent changes in the social fabric of the country become consolidated.