

A Queer Approach to the National Irish Identity during 'The Troubles' in Belfast in Paul McVeigh's 'The Good Son'

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Abstract : This paper focuses on how Mickey – the 10-year-old main character and narrator in Paul McVeigh’s novel *The Good Son* (2015) – becomes aware of his own queerness and its implications in a conflicting place and time such as Belfast during ‘The Troubles’ in the 1980s. Queer theory allows a comparative reading of identity issues such as national and gender discourses. As opposed to some other excluding social constructs that classify identities in an Us-Others binomial, queer has become a sort of umbrella term where there is room for more identities other than LGBTQ. Therefore, it offers some relevant tools to read this highly awarded novel by focusing on the intersectional construction of Mickey’s identity in progress within the social and familiar realms. The aim of this paper is to offer a queer reading of the *The Good Son*, which was awarded with the Polari First Book Prize in 2016, by showing the key role of Mickey’s conflictive realization of his own queerness in the polarized society of Northern Ireland in the 1980s, where there is no shade of grey. Within such a polarized context, Mickey’s perception of his own internal and external identity conflicts he is exposed to will show how necessary a certain touch of pink is as a potential escape to those conflicts.

Keywords : conflict, national identity, Northern Ireland, queer identity

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