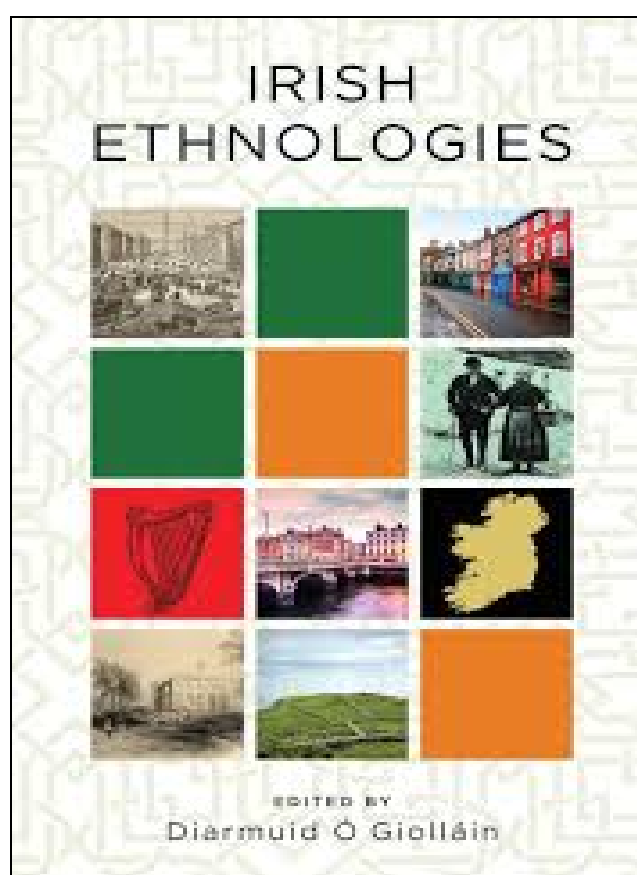


**BOOKS**

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**Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, *Irish Ethnologies*, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017, 238 p.**

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*Irish Ethnologies* was published in 2011, under the editorship of Diarmuid Ó. Giolláin, as the English counterpart to the volume *Irlande après Arensberg et O Duilearga*, which appeared first in the second issue of the *Ethnologie française*, vol. 41 (2011). The volume comprises a series of essays, pieced together seamless-

ly into a collection that cross-examines issues of Irish anthropology and folklore. This anthology opens new lines of inquiry into matters of nationalism, colonialism, or folklore and fosters a greater understanding of all the adjacent fields to ethnology. The volume also stands testament to Ireland's coming-of-age in anthropology and

## BOOKS

folklore studies. The generous corpus of texts accumulated in the last few decades prove that Ireland is not only a gold mine of folkloric resources but also a fertile ground for exploring topics of contemporary interest, ranging from post-colonialism, political ideology, national identity, to environmental concerns.

Out of the original French collection, only the articles that remained relevant to current affairs found their way into the present volume. The collected essays touch on specific aspects of Irish ethnology and reconcile two main approaches to the discipline: one that goes solely by way of anthropology, and another that relies on folkloric discourse, a more recent adoption. Irish ethnology goes back as far as the eighteenth century, however, folklore studies only gained traction and official status in 1927, when the Gaelic League founded the Folklore of Ireland Society. From that moment onwards, folklore distanced itself from the peasantry and became the scaffold of a newly institutionalised national tradition.

The topics discussed in the span of the 200 pages are far-reaching and insightful, but a few articles take the spotlight, particularly those that tackle issues of ethnicity and political colour, understood through the lens of ethnocultural and ethnoreligious studies. For instance, Joseph Ruane's *Pluralism and Silence* provides an overview of the relationship between Protestant and Catholics in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The rise of secularism has dampened the religious impact, and current tensions stem from ethnicity issues, e.g., competing narratives,

identities or national symbols. The author insists on the two different approaches for anticipating and diffusing potential ethnic conflicts, noticing that Northern Ireland assumes a formal attitude, relying on institutional support, whereas the Republic opts for an informal take, sporting a pluralist bent. Ruane also offers a brief historical account of the Irish conflict and points out the ingredients that created an environment ripe for friction. In the Republic, economic and political changes triggered a mindset shift, and along with it, a more lax attitude which Ruane dubs as pluralism and silence. He invites readers to consider whether this approach can work as a functional model for Northern Ireland too.

Also dealing with ethnicity issues in Northern Ireland is Dominic Bryan, whose essay traces the newly drawn boundaries of civic space in Belfast. Bryan discusses the interaction between power and identity and its role in defining public space. His ethnographic overview includes parades, murals, flags, but rather than insisting on spaces of segregation, the author emphasises shared spaces, suitable for multiethnic activities and describes the carnival, as the epitome of shared space in Belfast. He concludes that the city has become equally more shared and more divided and there no apparent solution in sight for creating a more congruent public space.

This book will peak the interest of scholars and students of anthropology, folklore studies, history, and Irish Studies. This interdisciplinary collection will also inspire general readers to take stock of the history of Ireland and its complexities, contextualised through ethnological findings.

**ALEXANDRA POP**

Email: alexandra.florica.pop@gmail.com