

conflicts regarding authenticity within the genre. The chapter also examines the issues of identity, boundary and taste and discusses the discourse of the Ulster-Scots tradition as well as this particular band's adaptation to a more respectable habitus during the 1990s, due to pressure from within the blood-and-thunder community.

While Ramsey includes listed documentation of band repertoire and there are many online sources available, I found myself referring to Hastings' (2003) *With Fife and Drum*, to find some of the tunes mentioned. Perhaps the work would have been enhanced by the addition of transcriptions and/or some audio samples.

Ramsey's key questions concern identity formation, its relation to musical practices and how these processes are mediated by emotion and aesthetics. He addresses these questions successfully throughout the work, reiterating the richness of this communal music tradition in Ulster. These bands form the basis for their respective communities' performance of shared identity and Ramsey justly places the genre in a significant position within the discourse of ethnomusicology.

AOIFE GRANVILLE  
University College, Cork.

### References

- Bryan, D., 2000. *Orange Parades: The Politics of Ritual, Tradition and Control*. London: Pluto Press.
- Hastings, G., 2003 *With Fife and Drum: Music, Memories and Customs of an Irish Tradition*. Belfast: Blackstaff.

### **Marta Kempny. *Polish Migrants in Belfast: border crossing and identity construction*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2010 (220 pp.)**

Reading Marta Kempny's new book on Polish migrants in Belfast took me back to 2005 when I participated in a series of RTE radio discussions with the well known commentator John Waters and Trevor Philips, then chair of the UK's Commission for Racial Equality. The debate began by Waters arguing that the 1998 Belfast Agreement briefly opened a space for multiculturalism to be debated in Ireland, north and south, a space, he felt, which had shrunk away over the years. Instead of looking to pluralism anew in 1998, cultural identities in Northern Ireland were allowed to harden into their own particularities; and, south of the border, the 2004 citizenship referendum signposted a future of immigrant securitization rather than multiculturalism

or pluralism. For Waters, then, the Belfast Agreement represented a moment during which he might have asked a big question: what does it mean to be Irish?

On the surface, Waters seemed to have little in common with Trevor Philips, who argued that Britain, insensible because of 'failed multicultural policies,' was sleepwalking towards segregation. Britain should wake up before her values were lost forever, Trevor Philips said. But, curiously, values and identities – what it means to be Irish – was also what was keeping John Waters up at night. For a brief moment, as if experiencing *déjà vu*, they both seemed to realize that the debate existed in an edge-less intellectual space of values without people and institutions without life. And, when we turned towards what was known about the lives of immigrants and ethnic minorities in the UK and Ireland, there was a noticeable shift in tone and style. Hitherto ignored complexities entered into the discussion. Identity categories such as 'immigrants,' 'British,' and 'Irish,' which proved so handy just moments before, now seemed shop-worn and ill-suited for the tasks of describing actual people and their everyday lives.

Pundits and policy makers are usually happy to make use of generalizations in order to skate across the smooth surface of debates. And, perhaps this is the obvious challenge to anthropology: how to go beyond mere words and images and instead attend to voices and actually lived lives? 'We have got onto slippery ice where there is no friction and so in a certain sense the conditions are ideal,' said Ludwig Wittgenstein. But the smooth surface is not where lives are lived – 'Back to the rough ground!' Indeed, one might say that the rough ground is the context for many leading anthropologists these days. Take for example Michael Jackson's *The Politics of Storytelling* (2002) wherein he tells us that there is enormous power in the stories that come from everyday and meaningful lifeworlds, 'For in telling stories we testify to the very diversity, ambiguity, and interconnectedness of experiences that abstract thought seeks to reduce, tease apart, regulate, and contain in the name of administrative order and control' (Jackson, 2002: 253). Marta Kempny's *Polish Migrants in Belfast* is an effort to tell people's stories, to investigate identities and everyday lives. Her book represents an important and welcome contribution to the still small scholarly literature on immigration in Ireland. But does this book provide new insights?

Between May 2004 and December 2008, approximately six hundred thousand Polish persons applied for the UK Worker Registration Scheme. During that period, Polish people became the largest immigrant ethnic group in Northern Ireland. Each chapter of Kempny's book contributes to building a detailed portrait of Polish identities in Belfast. Beginning with a literature review chapter and sections devoted to the Polish emigration context and Belfast as an immigration context, *Polish Migrants in Belfast* offers detailed discussions of the everyday

lived experiences, such as religious holidays, Saturday schools, Catholicism, and ethnic festivals.

The book clearly began life as a doctoral thesis and it does not drift especially far from its academic home. Indeed, sections that aim to situate her study within anthropology will be the least satisfying to readers, especially because 'the literature' is strangely old. For example, the long section on identities in chapter 1 (pp. 3-11) draws almost exclusively from work published during or prior to the 1990s. This may seem like a minor criticism, but by the end of the text one is still waiting for a new way of framing the wealth of ethnographic data.

Kempny is a good ethnographer: she writes well and rarely is a question left unanswered or hanging. Indeed, midway through the book one is sure of one's ground, and she begins to elicit the complex identities of Polish migrants in Belfast via interview data, identities that are often scaled from references to local landscapes and home towns to national, European and cosmopolitan senses of belonging. Indeed, by the beginning of chapter 5 one is convinced by Kempny's thesis that Polish migrants in Belfast show multilayered and contextual identities. But what of their voices as opposed to their words; and what of migrants' everyday lives? Her research participants speak Polish each day (though they speak English at work, and sometimes 'Pol-English'); they use new media to keep relationships with distant friends and relatives alive and strong. But while a transnational ecumene is available so too are practices that root and bespeak 'tradition,' such as everyday practices that involve Polish cuisine. Again, Kempny draws our gaze towards multilayered and contextual identities, and polyphonic voices emanating from individuals. She hammers home her argument about fluid and malleable identities in chapter 6, which focuses on 'culture,' from 'ethnic' holidays to the ethnicity inc. of organized multicultural events. Her analysis of the latter events is fascinating: during organized multicultural picnics 'culture,' objectified as traditional, is consumed, especially by people from Northern Ireland! A variety of scholars, from Sahlins to the Comaroffs have attended to these issues, and recently the Irish billionaire Dermot Desmond began encouraging the 'monetarization' of culture as an economic advantage, and Kempny's treatment leaves one wanting to know more.

Arguably, the most interesting chapter (7) is on Polish migrants' everyday lives amid the sectarianism and racism on the streets. One must recall that six Polish people died in a sectarian arson attack in 2006. According to one research participant, 'the Protestants discovered that the Polish people are Catholics and for the Protestants the Catholics are Republicans' (p. 146). But racism and the identity-responses it engenders are also fluid in Kempny's analysis. Many migrants draw distinctions on the basis of class and education levels, racist graffiti is ascribed to 'morons,' and workplaces are regarded as open to immigrants, and even 'Queen's graduates' (p. 148).

With *Polish Migrants in Belfast*, Kempny has made an important anthropological contribution to migration studies in Ireland. This book will appeal to anyone interested in Polish migration, one of the largest migration flows in post-WWII Europe<sup>1</sup>. This book will also appeal to those interested in the changing ethnic geographies of Belfast and Northern Ireland in general. Instead of a Northern Ireland composed of two communities, Kempny leaves us in no doubt that Belfast is home to great diversity – fluid, malleable and always-emergent identities. But where the ethnography is richest, on embodiment, structures of feeling, the imponderabilia of the everyday, this book could have offered a little more. Today, many leading anthropologists are turning to the same issues that Kempny is evidently fascinated by, from the everyday to embodiment and affect. *Polish Migrants in Belfast* would have benefited from a greater level of dialogue with contemporary anthropology. However, as it stands, it is a wonderful contribution to this area of research. There are no simple categorizations or superficial ideas in this book: this is the rough ground of people's lived lives described with great clarity by a promising scholar.

MARK MAGUIRE

Department of Anthropology, NUI Maynooth

### References

- Maguire, M., 2005. 'Multicultural Ireland: with Mark Maguire, Hebah Nashat, Trevor Philips, and John Waters.' *The Marian Finucane Show*, RTE Radio 1, **April 18**.
- Maguire M., 2005. 'Multicultural Ireland: with Mark Maguire and John Waters.' *The Marian Finucane Show*, RTE Radio 1, **April 14**.
- Wittgenstein, L., 1968. *Philosophical Investigations*, third edition, translated by G. Anscombe, New York: Macmillan.
- Jackson, M., 2002. *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression, and Inter-subjectivity*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>Another research centre on migration which focuses its interest on Polish migrants is CRONEM. The projects launched by this centre are mostly survey-based and large scale, aiming at the identification of social policy issues, such as the survey for Institute of Public Policy Research 2008 (CRONEM 2008), the survey commissioned by borough council of Hammersmith and Fulham 2008 (CRONEM 2008a), the survey commissioned by BBC Newsnight 2006 (CRONEM 2006). Among the studies done by CRONEM, the project entitled 'Class and Ethnicity: Polish Migrants in London', carried out by John Eade, Stephen Drinkwater and Michał Garapich is of particular interest.