

New Guests of the Irish Nation

By Bryan Fanning

(Irish Academic Press)

A COLLECTION of essays dealing with questions of immigration and ethnicity, *New Guests of the Irish Nation* is a dry, scholarly work which most might think is better suited for the academic library than the nightstand.

But it is precisely the unambiguous writing style and dispassionately conveyed facts that make this book such a welcome contribution to the all-too-often emotionally charged immigration debate.

Added to this is a depth of insight and maturity of reflection not often found in similar works.

Author Bryan Fanning has the clarity of vision to avoid the easy answers and get to the bottom of issues, which makes *New Guests of the Irish Nation* well worth a look, whether your family has been Irish since the dawn of time or you only arrived last week.

As a non-Irish national, I found the opening chapters – which largely focus on the Travelling community – particularly interesting, as my previous attempts to ask others about the Travellers' history and



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way of life were met with such invective that I was afraid to ask any more. So it was refreshing to get a neutral perspective.

Elsewhere, Fanning explores the issues of direct provision for asylum seekers, citizenship, and in particular the 2004 referendum regarding the nationality of Irish-born children. In doing so, he focuses on the role played by the media in public discourse, pointing out that ill-researched polemics sometimes take the place of documented facts in newspapers and magazines, where they are unfortunately accepted as God-given truth by much of the readership.

Fanning also permits himself a head-on attack of the seemingly innocuous but potentially brutal consequences of so-called 'Fortress Europe' immigration policies, exploring the entrenched differentiation between worthy (EU) and unworthy (non-EU) immigrants – a differentiation bound to be all too familiar to many of the readers of this paper.



Roslyn Fuller is the author of political thriller ISAK.

More information about the Canadian, her work and the

Irish Writers' Exchange can be found at www.irishwriters-exchange.com