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broader cultural orientation appropriate to the eclecticism of Murphy's own interests. These papers combine scholarly erudition and substance with depth of understanding of the tensions and complexities of Irish society and history. Perhaps one of the most evocative essays, in part because it is the one least focused explicitly on Ireland, is Lawrence McCaffrey's exposition of the dilemmas faced by American Catholics in reconciling their adhesion to a stubbornly antiquated ecclesiastical institution with the realities of their lives in a modern secular and pluralist society. The resonances between this more distant story and the issues faced in John A. Murphy's Ireland speak for themselves.

This volume is a worthy testimony to a good scholar, a great public figure, and a man deeply engaged with both the past and the present of his country.

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PHILIP BULL


This book attempts to take the pulse of Irish Studies worldwide, which has rather more vivid vital signs than one would expect. It gives a grainy snapshot of the operations of Irish Studies, its anxieties and hopes for the future, as well as a sense of how it has changed and is changing. It is replete with lots of 'musts' and 'shoulds', mainly directed at the Irish government, and some ripostes from that quarter too, which have an inevitably managerialist feel to them, with demands to quantify the benefits. The report also gives an historic sense of how Irish Studies - there are debates in the book about whether that moniker is acceptable - has evolved. What is particularly interesting is the information on the Irish language, and I was surprised by the extent to which it, more than any other discipline, is supported by government, and how uncompromisingly. Most interesting are the anxieties the report reveals:
Although a multi-disciplinary field of study, Irish Studies has only recently incorporated the social sciences and popular culture studies;

- the challenges of modernity to its identity and form, and especially the Irish language;

- concerns about how central the language is and should be to its operations and academic operatives;

- the risks posed by parochialism and narcissism;

- the challenges to its identity posed by the theoretical turn, and especially post-colonial studies, and the worry that Irish Studies may be under theorised;

- the significance to its development of diaspora studies, and the, sometimes testy, relations between the centre and the margins;

- a desire to reach out beyond the Anglophone community, and a focus on English/Irish histories, to a richer form of multilateralism;

- a more insistent call for comparative studies - there were Japanese, Danish, French, Brazilian, Polish, Hungarian, Italian and Spanish delegates;

- and whether it is reasonable and economically feasible for the Irish government to meet the needs of Irish Studies, or whether the EU is a more appropriate funding source.

It is a book which gives a central place to a very dispersed and much more numerous diaspora than exists in a modernising home country, and which outnumbers it by a staggering 42 to 1. It also, by indirect means, looks for workable models which suggest how this may be done: two papers on Canadian Studies and Danish Studies make very compelling reading, partly because in the former of these countries, studies have revealed that expenditure on cultural capital more than repays itself in economic benefits. The Danish example makes interesting reading because it is a country of comparable size to Ireland which has gone down a similar path to the Canadians.

The forum has generated a long list of rather meaty recommendations which will take a long time to digest. Perhaps the most do-able and important is the idea of a digital hub for Irish-related matters worldwide. I'm sure it will happen, though it would take a brave person/multinational committee to sit at the control centre. It will be interesting to see from where it originates.

Would that the Australian government could host such a debate and that such navel-gazing into the state of Australian Studies worldwide could produce such a commitment to genuine cultural analysis and scepticism about the shortcomings of spin and propaganda. Australian
Studies has a long way to go in the cultural maturity stakes, and much to learn from Irish Studies.

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