

# Introductory Note



The Irish Literature Festival, whose proceedings are gathered in the present volume, derived from the activities of Research Group 4 of ULICES – University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies, a group aimed at connecting the traditions of English-speaking Literatures in Great Britain and Ireland with writings by authors belonging to non-European and/or non-British cultural traditions emphasising an innovative Inter-art and Intercultural dialogue without ignoring post-colonial perspectives. It was within this project that we started a continued relationship with the Irish Embassy in Lisbon whose commitment and support led to the organisation of the Irish Literature Festival, which took place during three days in November 2007, at the Faculty of Letters.

Apart from the invaluable support of the Embassy, greatly due to the indefatigable commitment, trust and encouragement of Ambassador James Brennan, a word of thanks is here in order to those other institutions and persons, who were directly involved in the organisation of the event, and especially the Centre for Theatre Studies, in the persons of Maria Helena Serôdio and Rui Pina Coelho. As had happened back in 1991, when she promoted the Irish Culture Week, Professor Serôdio was first among the organisers in enthusiastically endorsing this new initiative; her energy and devotion were contagious to the rest of the team, greatly contributing to overcome the unavoidable obstacles and difficulties. The event also counted on the support of the Department of English Studies and the General Library of the Faculty.

Externally, we owe a lot to the collaboration of Casa Fernando Pessoa (that hosted a poetry reading with Derek Mahon and an unforgettable musical evening), Museu Nacional do Traje (that made possible the photo exhibition on “Irish Writers in the Portuguese Theatre”), Artistas Unidos (that staged *Disco Pigs*, at Sociedade de Instrução Guilherme Cossul), and this company’s director, Jorge Silva Melo, who agreed to interview Enda

Walsh on the spot and allowed us to use the text of the interview in this issue.

The event brought together some of the leading artists in today's Irish cultural scene. Special thanks also to the writers Jennifer Johnston, Derek Mahon and Enda Walsh and to our Irish guest scholar, Professor Nicholas Grene who shared stage with some of the Portuguese leading scholars in the field of Irish Studies, as was the case with Rui Carvalho Homem, Teresa Casal and Paulo Eduardo Carvalho. João de Almeida Flor, Scientific Coordinator of ULICES at the time, also gave us the privilege of listening to his reflections on James Joyce, as well as to his excellent translations of poems from *Chamber Music*.

Last but not least, our thanks go to our main sponsor, Culture Ireland. Without its financial support, nothing would have been possible.

The academic year 2007/2008 in which the Festival took place was of particular significance for the history of Irish Studies at the University of Lisbon since it witnessed the emergence of a newly created course unit: Irish Literature and Culture, which was lectured for the first time in the Department of English Studies, thus granting a new status and visibility to what was previously subsumed under the label of English Literature. This was, indeed, something to celebrate and this certainly was one of the reasons for calling this event: *Irish Literature Festival*, since the root meaning of Festival is precisely feast, the idea of celebration being inherent in the word's etymology. This spirit of joyful celebration led us to make this occasion the opportunity for bringing together different arts forms, namely literature, theatre, music and cinema (we screened two films based on Jennifer Johnston's writings), and also for encouraging our students to participate by dramatising excerpts from Irish literary texts and thus making our working sessions more lively and enjoyable. Thanks are due to André Pais Leme for directing them and to Luísa Falcão and Joana Frazão for the translation work. Our thanks go also to Mário Jorge Torres for having chaired the debate on the films.

Unfortunately in the written pages of a scholarly periodical like *Anglo-Saxónica* these aspects of the Festival are hardly manifest, but even so, we hope that the inclusion of some of the photographs of our exhibition as well as some other photos from the *Disco Pigs* performance may give the reader a sense of what the actual experience was like.

We also decided to take this opportunity to make this issue of *Anglo-Saxónica* a thematic one, in the sense of its being entirely devoted to Irish Culture, and thus ended up by including essays, reviews and other material not originally presented at the *Festival* or in anyway connected to it, but having to do with things Irish. This is the case of Adriana Bebian's essay on Emma Donoghue's short stories, Gisele Giandoni Wolkoff's essay on Eavan Boland's poetry and Ana Raquel Fernandes's essay on Iris Murdoch's *Under the Net*. During one of the Festival's sessions, Jennifer Johnston read her unpublished monologue *Seventeen Trees*, which she has generously allowed us to publish now; it is featured alongside *I Have Desired to Go*, a thematically related monologue that the author contributed to the commemoration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights in 2008. We feel deeply grateful and honoured by such permission. This volume also includes the so far unpublished Portuguese translation of two earlier and interconnected monologues by Jennifer Johnston, *Mustn't Forget High Noon* and *O Ananias, Azarias and Misesal*, translated by Teresa Casal and staged as *Billy e Christine* by the Oporto-based theatre company ASSÉDIO. A discussion of this 2004 stage production is to be found in Paulo Eduardo Carvalho's essay.

A last word of thanks to Maria Helena Paiva Correia, the Principal Investigator of our Research Team, for her trust in our work and support to this project.

Lastly, my heartfelt gratitude to the Organising Committee of this Conference: Angélica Varandas, Catherine Cotter, Maria Helena Serôdio, Mick Greer, Rui Pina Coelho, Teresa Casal and Vincent Herlihy. Working together with such a group of devoted, enthusiastic and imaginative people made this experience not only rewarding but enriching and unforgettable.



While this issue was in the final stages of proofreading we received the brutal news of the premature tragic death of our colleague Paulo Eduardo de Carvalho (7.7.1964 - 20.05.2010), one of our guest-speakers at the Irish Literature Festival and a contributor to this volume. We therefore decided to dedicate this issue of *Anglo-saxónica* to the memory of this distinguished scholar in the fields of Irish and Theatre Studies. The author of *Ricardo Pais: Actos e Variedades* (2006), a monograph on the Portuguese

theatre director, and of *Identidades Reescritas: Figurações da Irlanda no Teatro Português / Rewritten Identities: Figuring Ireland in Portuguese Theatre* (2009), Paulo Eduardo Carvalho was also a remarkable translator of Samuel Beckett, Brian Friel, Tom Murphy, Caryl Churchill, Martin Crimp, and Harold Pinter, among many others. An actor in his youth, and a co-founder of the theatre company Assédio in 1998, he ventured into new terrain in 2009, when he both translated and directed Friel's play *Cartas Íntimas* (*Performances* in the original). In human terms, Paulo Eduardo was a truly generous person and will be missed by those of us who had the privilege to know him.

*Isabel Fernandes*