

Introduction

This issue is partly the result of a selection of contributions from a number of guests and participants at the Fourth Symposium of Irish Studies in South America held in Buenos Aires in last September, and from visitors to other international events that took place in the course of the year, such as the Second International Conference of the Brazilian Association of University Teachers of English (ABRAPUI), hosted at UNESP, in the city of São José do Rio Preto.

We begin with an interview with Roxana Silbert and Tessa Walker, respectively the Artistic Director and Literary Director of Paines Plough, the company that staged Sebastian Barry's *Dallas Sweetman* in Canterbury Cathedral in September 2008. This was the first play to be staged in the cathedral since another specially commissioned play, by John Masefield, battled with the notorious acoustics of the nave in 1928. (It is often forgotten that T. S. Eliot's celebrated *Murder in the Cathedral*, staged seven years later, was not produced in the cathedral itself, but in the more intimate space of the Chapter House, off the cloisters.)

T. S. Eliot provides a link to our second interviewee, Belfast poet Ciaran Carson, who was shortlisted for the prestigious T. S. Eliot Poetry Prize in 2008 for his collection *Second Time Round*, thus consolidating his position as one of Northern Ireland's most highly respected contemporary writers.

Other poets featured in this issue are Eavan Boland and Paula Meehan, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, and Louis MacNeice, in articles by Pilar Villar Argáiz, Luci Collin Lavalle, and Matthew Schultz, respectively. As well as these Irish poets we are also pleased to bring the work of the Brazilian poet Ana Cristina Cesar to the attention of our readers in an article penned by Viviana Bosi.

In addition to Sebastian Barry, other dramatists featured in the current issue of the journal are Enda Walsh, Dermot Bolger and Elizabeth Kutí, in contributions from Linda Gunn, Giovanna Tallone and Charlotte J. Headrick. We are also honoured to be able to reprint the text of the lecture given in São Paulo by the renowned *Irish Times* theatre critic, Fintan O'Toole.

Fiction and issues relating to its translation are covered by Carlos Gamarro and José Roberto O'Shea, who discuss Borges and Joyce, while Tina O'Toole examines writing by George Egerton, and Noriko Ito looks at the theme of childhood in Irish writing. Cultural Studies are covered too, in Malcolm Ballin's article on representations of Ireland in mid-nineteenth-century periodicals. In "Voices from South America" we are delighted to publish an article by the distinguished historian, Angus Mitchell, editor of *The Amazon Journal of Roger Casement*.

The establishment of the W. B. Yeats Chair of Irish Studies at the University of São Paulo was the highlight of this year. Generously funded by the Irish Embassy in Brazil, it promises to stimulate yet further the rich cultural and academic exchange between Ireland and South America.



São Paulo – Largo da Misericórdia, 1915.