

A Prefatory Note

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The current issue of *Via Panoramica* is integral to the aims of the journal, featuring articles by renowned scholars alongside with contributions by younger researchers on a wide range of topics and authors within the field of Anglo-American Studies. A common concern easily identified in the present issue is the juxtaposition between public and private space, as well as individual and collective aspirations.

In “*Houses That Remember: Readings of The Troubles in Edna O’Brien’s Fiction*”, Daniel Floquet examines the novel *The House of Splendid Isolation* (1994) and the short story “Black Flower” - from the collection *Saints and Sinners* (2011) - in search of ruptures and/or continuities regarding the author’s earlier fiction. As Floquet points out, although some critics consider O’Brien’s literary exploration of *The Troubles* as a turning point in her career, by integrating politics in her writing, it can be argued that sex and sexuality, the central core of her former fiction, are equally important political subjects (11).

In his article, titled “*Vertentes Utópicas em The Hobbit*”, Jorge Bastos da Silva departs from J. R. R. Tolkien’s fantasy novel, published in 1937, to analyse the contrast between two utopian paradigms: the quest romance and the ideal city. According to Silva, Tolkien’s protagonist, Bilbo Baggins, is an unexpected hero who, given the opportunity and under very particular circumstances, proves himself capable of heroic behaviour, thus inspiring potential courageous deeds led by real protagonists, whose individual actions could contribute to change the world. As Silva concludes, this was perhaps the author’s ultimate message in a time when the Nazi-fascist threat was already looming in Europe (35).

The artistic representation of fascism in Europe is also evoked by Fátima Vieira’s paper, “*Júlio César, de William Shakespeare: Representando Roma e o Ditador, Moldando o Imaginário Popular Inglês*”, in its opening reference to Orson Welles’s bold yet controversial stage adaptation of Shakespeare’s play, in 1937, at the Mercury Theatre, in New York. Besides this analysis of Welles’ adaptation of the play, Vieira discusses how the representation of Rome and Caesar, in the Shakespearean text, were able to convey a political message to the contemporary audience, thereby

shaping the English popular imagination about the Roman context while intervening in pressing political problems of the turn from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century in the English context (46).

Nuno Ribeiro's contribution to this issue, "Recordando John Milton (1608-1674)", invites the readers to remain in seventeenth-century England to celebrate the life and work of English poet and intellectual John Milton, whom Ribeiro presents as a multi-faceted man. The text, informal in its conspicuous oral matrix, was first devised, in the late nineties, as a TV script for the Universidade Aberta (Open University, Lisbon), unpublished to this date.

The issue is brought into an excellent conclusion with a plunge into American literature and culture. Indeed, the paper entitled "The 'Second Lost Generation': a Reading of Suburban Emptiness in Richard Yates's *Revolutionary Road*", co-signed by Maria Teresa Castilho and Rita Pacheco, departs from Yates 1961 novel to analyse the sense of entrapment caused by the suburban American landscape of the 1950s. The novel, as Castilho and Pacheco point out, reveals the shady boundaries between individual and collective expectations; and the main characters inability to "reinvent themselves" in this context proves them as members of a second generation deemed as "lost" (63).