

# Introductory Note



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This section contains selected essays that resulted from presentations and follow-up debates of the 34<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Portuguese Association for English and American Studies (APEAA – Associação Portuguesa de Estudos Anglo-Americanos). This international gathering was held at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of May, 2013, under the theme “Academy and Community: English and American Studies in Portugal and Europe.”

The tradition of English and American studies in Portugal has long been supported by the dynamics of academic associations, in which APEAA’s peer network stands out, involving national and international institutions, and establishing continued interactions with research centers. At a time when political and cultural paradigms are on the verge of a crisis and/or change, the scientific committee of this 34<sup>th</sup> Meeting launched a call to revisit the theoretical and pragmatic frameworks sustaining (and constraining) our research practices. Indeed, the Humanities continue to brave the challenges caused by the increasing encroachment of a utilitarian scientific discourse based on evidence and logics, at the cost of musing and creativity, and under the menace of the austerity politics that undervalue the investment in culture and memory. Therefore, some of the essays here selected, including the two from the national plenary speakers (Teresa -F. A. Alves and Fátima Vieira) result from passionate, though rigorous, reflections and discussions on how Anglo-American scholarship, with its vocation for plurality and innovative interdisciplinarity, might progress. Other essays, such as the contribution from international keynote speaker Heinz Ickstadt, address themes of our traditional and ongoing research, which are reexamined through innovative angles and often-competing ideologies, thus dignifying our contribution to the interpretation and

fruition of meaning(s) that thrive in a plurality of cultural and aesthetic manifestations.

The Conference was sponsored by the University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies (ULICES), the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon and its Department of English Studies (DEA), and it was supported by FCT (Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology) and by the American Corner at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon. Bringing together not only senior international scholars, academics who have been committed to building networks of collaborative action in this research field, but also younger researchers, the meeting had a diverse structure, including a roundtable on “Associations and the Humanities,” and another on “Past and Present Methodologies in English and American Studies,” and also a session of poster presentations. This gathering managed to highlight the plurality of ways in which our interpretative engagement might touch communities at local, national and international levels.

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(on behalf of the Organizers)