PREFACE

This volume presents a collection of papers read at the first Easter Conference on Anglo-Irish Literature at the University of Antwerp on April 9, 1986. All papers have been expanded and updated for publication, with the exception of Brendan Kennelly's keynote speech which has been printed with very few editorial revisions so as to keep its original flavour as a performance. The last contribution was not delivered at the conference, but its inclusion is justified by the fact that W.J. McCormack was associated with the University of Antwerp in the Fall term of 1987.

The name "Easter Conference" was chosen only for the pedestrian reason that it was scheduled during the Easter vacation, but also with a view to commemorating the seventieth anniversary of the Easter Rising, while refraining from giving the conference the character of a political celebration. The task set was rather to clarify working assumptions and complex issues in dealing with the relationship of history, violence and literature.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following publishers and persons for their gracious permission to quote from books published or written by them: to Oxford University Press for quotations from Derek Mahon's poems ("Courtyards in Delft" from The Hunt by Night and lines from "A Disused Shed in Co. Wexford" from Poems 1962-1978); to Faber and Faber for quotations from The Collected Poems of Louis MacNeice and from Brian Friel's The Communication Cord and Selected Plays; to the Dolmen Press for quotations from Poems, 1956-1973 and The Táin; to Michael Longley for the quotation of "Wounds" and to James Simmons for the quotation of "Claudy"; to Secker and Warburg for the quotations from The Newton Letter, Birchwood and Kepler.

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