

# SECA NEWS



Message from HOS  
and Deputy HOS



Research



News and Events

## MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the second issue of the SECA Newsletter! Thank you to all our contributors for sending us such stimulating and inspiring material for this publication. It has been a uniquely challenging academic year for everyone, so it's especially important to record the many ways colleagues have continued to teach, research, and create exciting opportunities for students and the wider community to engage with our work. Our hope is that you find this newsletter to be a thought-provoking, valuable snapshot of SECA activity over the past semester. Contributions for future editions, including photos, posters, blurbs, and articles, are most welcome and should be sent to [karenm.walsh@nuigalway.ie](mailto:karenm.walsh@nuigalway.ie) and/or [dermot.burns@nuigalway.ie](mailto:dermot.burns@nuigalway.ie) by email or the school's SharePoint link. Wishing you all a very happy, healthy, summer!

**Karen and Dermot**

## Message from Sean—Head of School

As we reach the end of a very unusual and difficult year, I want to thank everyone for rising to the challenges with such creativity, collegiality and good will. We had to quickly adapt to online teaching and re-imagine the way we connect with our students; we have had to curtail many of our usual professional contacts with colleagues here and elsewhere that energise our projects and research; and we have had to work largely from home, with all the challenges that produces. And yet this newsletter is a remarkable testament to how much the School continues to accomplish despite these circumstances - and in some cases, even because of them! Well done to everyone, and best wishes for an enjoyable summer.



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## Special points of interest

- **Two RTE Brainstorm Articles**— discussing the Film *Promising Young Woman* on the theme of sexual violence, and one on the experience of Drama Students rehearing during the pandemic . (page 12)
- **Canon and Curriculum** Webinar Series was a great success. (page 12)
- **Annual Lecture** given by Prof Marie-Louise Coolahan to the **Renaissance Society of America** virtual conference. (page 11)

## LECTURING IN LOCKDOWN



*“The potential of the technology, we have not even begun to understand”.*

*Dr Tony Tracy*

Dr Tony Tracy, Huston School of Film & Digital Media had a blog post last semester in [The Moore Institute](#) on lecturing in the lockdown

which sparked a lot of interest and discussion. A follow up video reflecting on experiences so far is also now available.

Congratulations to **Elaine Feeney** who teaches on our Creative Writing Programmes and whose novel *As You Were*, was longlisted for the prestigious Rathbones Folio Prize!

### Student Performance to mark St Patrick's Day

With green spotlights on the Quad for the day that was in it, Mary Duggan, First Year Music student and Peter O'Brien, Final Year Drama student performed the poem [The Seed](#) by Paula Meehan.

### NEW WORKS BY DRUID ARTIST IN RESIDENCE—Dr Mairead Ní Chroinín

**Inland Radius:** A self-guided walking tour and zine, as part of Cúirt International Festival of Literature. April 21<sup>st</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> 2021. Available after April 25<sup>th</sup> at [The Lighthouse Project](#) website.

Created in collaboration with artists Sarah Maria Griffin and Shane O'Malley and producer Dani Gill.

Commissioned by The Lighthouse Project and **Cúirt** International Festival of Literature.

**Mona:** A work-in-progress presentation of a self-guided soundwalk, as part of Galway Theatre Festival. May 9th 2021.

Co-created with James Riordan. In collaboration with Anna Mullarkey, Jenny O'Malley, and Zita Monahan-McGowan.

## Message from Charlotte — Deputy—Head of School



On the occasion of the SECA's second newsletter, what I am most struck by reflecting on the last

semester and year, are the dynamic collaborations across the School and between staff and students that have found life despite the difficult working, teaching and research conditions we find ourselves in. In addition to the SECA Research Seminar, the Curriculum and Canon Project's Speaker Series and Festival of New Work (as led by Patrick Lonergan and Ciara L. Murphy with contributions from across the SECA) have foregrounded the voice of students and featured content cutting across and between our disciplines, with the added bonus of being able to

watch back on sessions and content on their comprehensive [YouTube channel](#).

As interim artistic director of *Arts in Action* this year, we also completed our run welcoming in recent weeks Music for Galway (who are in a partnership with both *Arts in Action* and Music) and being able to premiere an original work by Mike McCormack and EL Putnam with sound by David Stalling among other internationally recognised artists and scholars. And there is of course our by turns haunting and hilarious Flash February Fiction experiment at Twitterature led by Emily Ridge.

In a semester where we all remained on lockdown for the duration, these members of our school, from staff to students, and guests who drive forward our work, nevertheless opened up new horizons of creation.

Moving into planning for our next year, I am interested to see what we can take forward from being forced to go "digital" and accept certain limits (which often yielded unexpected possibilities) on our art forms, our methods, our pedagogy. And I hope that as we process and plan to make use of these unexpected aptitudes learned under duress, we turn to each as colleagues across disciplinary or programme boundaries, across staff or student designations, to build on the work our colleagues have inspired us with, in this year of all years. To the future.

CONGRATULATIONS TO

DR LINDSAY REID

WINNER

PRESIDENT'S TEACHING  
AWARD!





**FLASH  
FICTION  
FEBRUARY  
@SchoolENCA  
'Beginning Again'**

**Flash Fiction  
February: A  
Twitterature  
Experiment!**

The School of English and Creative Arts twitter account was established by the Outreach/Communication Working Group at the end of 2020 in order to offer a supplementary platform for the promotion of various School initiatives, achievements and events. As with any new platform, it takes some time to build up an active following. In order to accelerate this process and to create interest, we came up with the idea of a **flash fiction series**. We invited submissions across all levels of the School in response to the theme of 'Beginning Again'. We also envisaged the series as a collective project that would generate some light relief for staff and students in the middle of a very difficult academic year. We received a wide range of thoughtful submissions, from reflections on the multiple realities of lockdown to evocations of more ephemeral forms of escape. Over the course of February, these micro stories were tweet-ed from the @SchoolENCA twitter account. For those who missed the series (or, indeed, those who have the good sense to avoid social media!), we have reproduced the stories below. The @SchoolENCA twitter account now has 432 followers and growing. Get in touch with

Emily Ridge if there is anything you would like to promote or share from the School account. Some examples of our Flash Fiction series submission below!

40 minutes to go. Lockdown looms. A massive word, almost bigger than the thing itself. It's now midnight. The world is different, I felt the shift. Played a wrong note, my hands numb, too big for a second. The flat, strained "E" echoed, happy birthday to me, and something began.

~ **Alana Donovan**

Over tea and sandwiches in the bar after the church she said 'your father and his 5 brothers; the Daly Boys, they were all good looking when they were young, but Bernard..... Bernard he was the Brad Pitt of Cappamore'.

~ **Ella Daly**

Our night bus pulls in. The door opening alarms the tired air. Unashamedly, we go to the chain-boulangerie that is in every station in France —we're not fussy. Coffee and pain-au-choc on uneasy up-early stomachs. Then to an old port maybe, or a museum with shelter from the rain.

~ **Ruth Flynn**

My dog is lounging on the porch, which normally would be okay but I'm a little concerned because we buried him yesterday. Said a few words. Anyone know what to do? Would love this sorted, I have an Amazon coming at two.

~ **Finian O'Gorman**

I carefully reach my hand to the back. I don't want anyone to see me doing this. 10,12,14. No luck, too big. Perhaps next time something will be there for me. I gaze over at my friends as they load their arms with dresses and tops to try on as I stand staring at socks and bags.

~ **Pollyanna Joyce**

Lying in bed in the first minutes of 2021, I urge for a draft of fresh air, overcome. I yearn to feel the night at the start of a new year, bathe in the moonlight, and begin without fear. In the dark, pyjamas on, I crack open the window...oops! I accidentally sound the alarm.

~ **Heidi Schoenenberger**



Ursula Rani Sarma

**NEW DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES ALUMNI NETWORK** established this academic year, with over 120 members registered.

They have had 2 online events: the first a talk with leading **Irish playwright Ursula Rani Sarma** in Feb 2021, and the second a talk with **ANU productions** in April 2021



ANU Productions

## NOCHTAITHE (UNVEILED) - 3rd Year Drama Student Performance

Directed and produced by **Dr Miriam Haughton** as part of the Tuam Oral History Project, Nochtaithe will premiere on 1 May in the Bealtaine Festival. Performed by third year Drama BA students, it is a creative response to the oral histories provided by survivors of the institution, which are currently being digitised by the Hardiman Library.



[Bealtaine Festival](#)

# RESEARCH

## CREATIVE WRITING PUBLICATIONS

All three levels of our **Creative Writing programmes** have been represented in recent student successes with the launch this spring of three first books:

**Una Mannion's** novel ***A Crooked Tree*** (Faber & Faber) was published in the UK/Irl and the USA in February. Una is a graduate of our MA in Writing.

**John McHugh's** short story collection ***Pure Gold*** (New Island) was launched in March. John is a graduate of our BA with Creative Writing, and his collection has subsequently been taken up also by 4<sup>th</sup> Estate in the UK who will publish it in autumn.

Also in March, **Ryan Dennis** launched his novel ***The Beasts They Turned Away*** (Epoque Press). Ryan is a graduate of our MA in Writing and was also recently conferred here with his (practice-led) PhD in English/Creative Writing, for which his novel was originally written.

Congratulations to all on their success!

(John McHugh—Pure Gold)

The **SECA Research Seminar Series** continued with even more speakers this semester beginning with the internationally acclaimed ANU Productions (NUI Galway Theatre Artists-in-Residence) in conversation with Dr Miriam Haughton (Drama and Theatre Studies) reflecting on productions over the last ten years. This was followed by fascinating presentations by Dr Adrian Paterson (English), Dr EL Putnam (Film and Digital Media), Dr Conn Holohan (Film and Digital Media) and PhD student and playwright Shirley-Anne Godfrey (Drama and Theatre Studies).

Topics covered included music and madness in Yeats's Crazy Jane poems, digital performances exploring motherhood, the conceptualisation of the home place in 1940s Hollywood melodramas and the benefits of teaching the plays of Augusta Gregory to schoolchildren. Our postgraduate community were also involved in the series with Phd students Ciara Glasscott (English) and Heidi Schoenenberger (Drama and Theatre studies) chairing sessions.

Thank you to all who presented, chaired and attended the seminar this year. It has been a joy to learn about the research conducted in the School and to get to know each other better through these presentations. The series will continue next year and if interested in presenting or chairing please

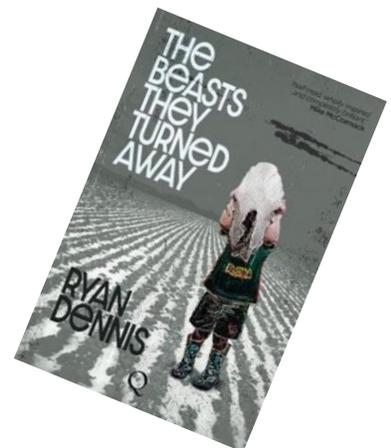
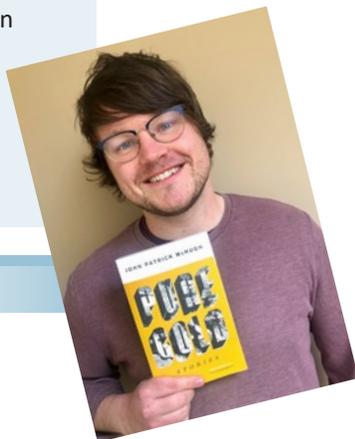
contact [ian.walsh@nuigalway.ie](mailto:ian.walsh@nuigalway.ie).

The Research Committee also devised and approved a new mentoring system in the school. This sees Professors and Senior Lecturers providing one-to-one mentorship to Lecturers Below and Above the bar. It also will include a series of career talks on promotion, publication strategies, advise on funding applications and other relevant topics. The Moore Institute will also offer advice and mentorship on CVs and research funding. A sub-committee has also been formed to develop a School Handbook for PhD students and it is hoped this will be ready for the next academic year.

Finally, this semester also saw Dr Adrian Paterson and Dr EL Putnam featured on our [Spotlight on Research](#) page on the School website. Previous profiles have been [archived](#) and are also available to view. If you wish to be featured in the Spotlight on Research section please contact [ian.walsh@nuigalway.ie](mailto:ian.walsh@nuigalway.ie). Special thanks to Karen Walsh for all her hard work in creating and updating this and all other research sections on the website.

**Dr Ian R. Walsh, Chair of SECA Research Committee.**

## Proud of our graduates achievements!



## HUSTON—MEDIA CAREERS WEBINAR SERIES



Director of *Normal People* **Lenny Abrahamson** featured in the Huston Media careers series.

The Huston School of Film & Digital Media hosted a Media Careers webinar series this semester in collaboration with the Moore Institute. The Director of the Huston, Dr Conn Holohan, hosted a series of conversations with high-profile guests from the film and media industries, discussing the development of their careers and the day-to-day requirements and realities of their jobs.

Participants from the film and television industries included Oscar nominated film director Lenny Abrahamson, BAFTA winning television director Neasa Hardiman, cinematographer Kate McCullough, and twice Oscar nominated screenwriter, and graduate of the Huston School, Will Collins. In addition we were joined by film podcaster Adam Roche, who offered insights into the development and promotion of podcasts and outlined how the success of his “Secret History of Hollywood” podcast enabled him to quit his job as a chef to produce content full-time. Finally film author and journalist Helen O’Hara discussed her work as a critic for Empire Magazine and her recently published book, *Women Vs Hollywood*, on the ongoing and inglorious history of discrimination against women in the film industry.

Each conversation finished with the same two questions, asking the guests what constituted an average day in their work life and what qualities were needed to pursue their profession. Answers were fascinating and varied but emphasised the diversity of daily life in media content production and, above all, the need to be curious, tenacious and collaborative in everything you do if you want to forge a career in the media industry. The webinars are available to view on the [Huston School YouTube channel](#).

*Twice Oscar nominated screenwriter, and graduate of the Huston School, Will Collins also participated in the series!*

### MAY 13TH - ENGLISH DEPARTMENT ONLINE RESEARCH AFTERNOON

Doctoral students and members of staff in English presented their research and creative writing in short (10 minute) sessions.

**CIARA GLASSCOTT** ‘Childhood and motherhood in Anne Brontë's poetry’

**TOMÁS LALLY** (English and Philosophy) ‘But How does One Begin... (Again)?’

**LIZ QUIRKE**, Poems from *How We Arrive in Winter* (to be published this autumn by Salmon Press)

**LIONEL PILKINGTON** ‘Dyer and Dwyer: imperial legacies and Irish citizenship’

**SIOBHÁN MORRISSEY** ‘The modernisation of Enid Blyton's 20th century children's fiction’

**COLETTE HUGHES** ‘David Hughes, art and poetry’

**ADRIAN PATERSON** ‘Rent and Excrement: Reading Yeats's Crazy Jane’

**MUIREANN O’CINNEIDE** ‘Undisciplining the White Man's Burden: On Teaching Rudyard Kipling in the Twenty-First Century’

## PUBLICATION OF *ephemeral* 29th EDITION OF ROPES

The **ROPES Literary Journal** has recently published its 29th edition, *ephemeral*.

Buy your copy at our [website](#).

The MA in Literature and Publishing students faced new challenges while collating the journal this year but faced them head-on and looked at the pandemic as a way to test their creativity. With never having met as a class group there were some obvious hurdles to get over initially such as deciding on roles, organising advertising and distribution, as well as the ever-present issues like wondering if the journal would receive any submissions at all. Through clever marketing, headed up by sales and marketing team lead Lorna Browne, the journal received more than 600 submissions this year, a number none of us ever expected. A number that seemed completely ridiculous to even imagine when we began planning out how the editorial process would be timetabled at the beginning of the year.

Without on-campus teaching, the team decided against traditional methods of advertising to publicise the journal, instead focusing their attention to social media. The production and design team, under

the leadership of Mary Louise Ryan, created beautiful graphics on an almost weekly basis. Their beautiful work always ensuring our posts stood out on the newsfeed.



Submission calls, open mics, competitions, and launch graphics were no issue to this team that was brimming with creativity. Check out our social media @ROPESLitJournal to see their handiwork.

Excel sheets and Teams meetings were the bread and butter of ROPES this year, especially when deciding on our final pieces. The editorial team met weekly to begin with but as the submissions flowed in this eventually had to be upped to three meetings a week. Their dedication to reading every

submission and committing to discussion was amazing to be a part of. The pieces that made it to publication went through a very intense process of being picked apart and stitched back together again and again until the team was satisfied. There was no room for 'meh', each piece is a testament to the high quality that ROPES continues to attract every year.

All proceeds raised from the selling of *ephemeral*, are going to COPE Galway, which offers services for those experiencing homelessness as well as women and children experiencing domestic abuse. They also offer senior support services for the elderly in the community. Be sure to buy a copy of ROPES to help this fantastic charity. You can find out more about their domestic abuse services on our blog.

*Ephemeral* launched on April 21st during the Cúirt International Festival of Literature. Kevin Higgins spoke to members of the ROPES team about creativity as well as reading his poem, 'Sensualist Resolutions'. We also had readings from some of our contributors, Fiona McShane, winner of our inaugural school competition, Tim Dwyer, Sophie Furlong Tighe, Demi Anter, Ella Gaynor, and Nuala O'Connor. **(Continued on page 9)**



Congratulations to Dr Charlotte McIvor,  
Mr Mike O'Halloran, Dr Dermot Burns and  
Dr Frances McCormack on their nominations for the  
*Teaching Heroes Awards!*

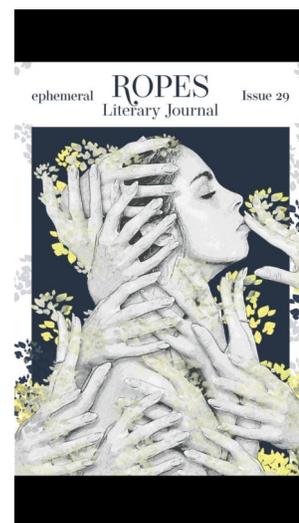


*ephemeral 29th EDITION OF ROPES*

**(continued from page 8)**

We also had members of the team answer questions that were sent in through social media. Fans of the journal were able to find out more about the process of putting together a literary journal, especially in the strange predicament we found ourselves in of the team never having met in person. The launch event was pre-recorded and so the entire ROPES team was able to enjoy the celebrations together, albeit over Teams. The launch was a massive success, praise flowed in over social

media and orders began to flood in. It was an incredible end (of sorts) to a very intense process, finally being able to share our hard work with the world was incredibly rewarding.



## NEW EUROPEAN PROJECT—COMPUTATIONAL LITERARY STUDIES

The School of English and Creative Arts is a participant in a new European project on the topic of Computational Literary Studies.

Having begun in March 2021, Computational Literary Studies

Infrastructure (CLS INFRA) is a pan-European endeavour which seeks to change the way that literature is studied in the digital age. **Dr Justin Tonra, Lecturer in English,** is the Principal Investigator in NUI Galway and will lead a working group which will focus on bridging the gap between computational and traditional literary studies.

Computational Literary Studies is a collective term for a range of methods which involve computers in the study of literary data. For instance, this big-data approach to the study of culture can enable scholars to detect patterns which show what literary genres were prevalent at certain times; if and how gender manifests in the language of writers; or whether the movement of literary style can be mapped across time and space. CLS INFRA plans to open up the best data mining

resources Europe has to offer within this growing field. The four-year project is being supported with €5 million funding from the European Commission's Horizon 2020



Image of the interior of the public library stadsbiblioteket in Stockholm Credit Shutterstock.

funding programme, under a scheme which funds integrating activities for starting communities. The aim of the scheme is to bring together, integrate on European scale, and open up key national and regional research infrastructures to all European researchers, from both academia and industry, ensuring their optimal use and joint development. To fulfil this task, CLS INFRA will bring together and develop efforts to build a shared and sustainable infrastructure, including high-quality data, tools, and knowledge, needed to undertake

computer-assisted and computer-driven literary studies. The project will identify and map the specific requirements of people who wish to study literature with computers,

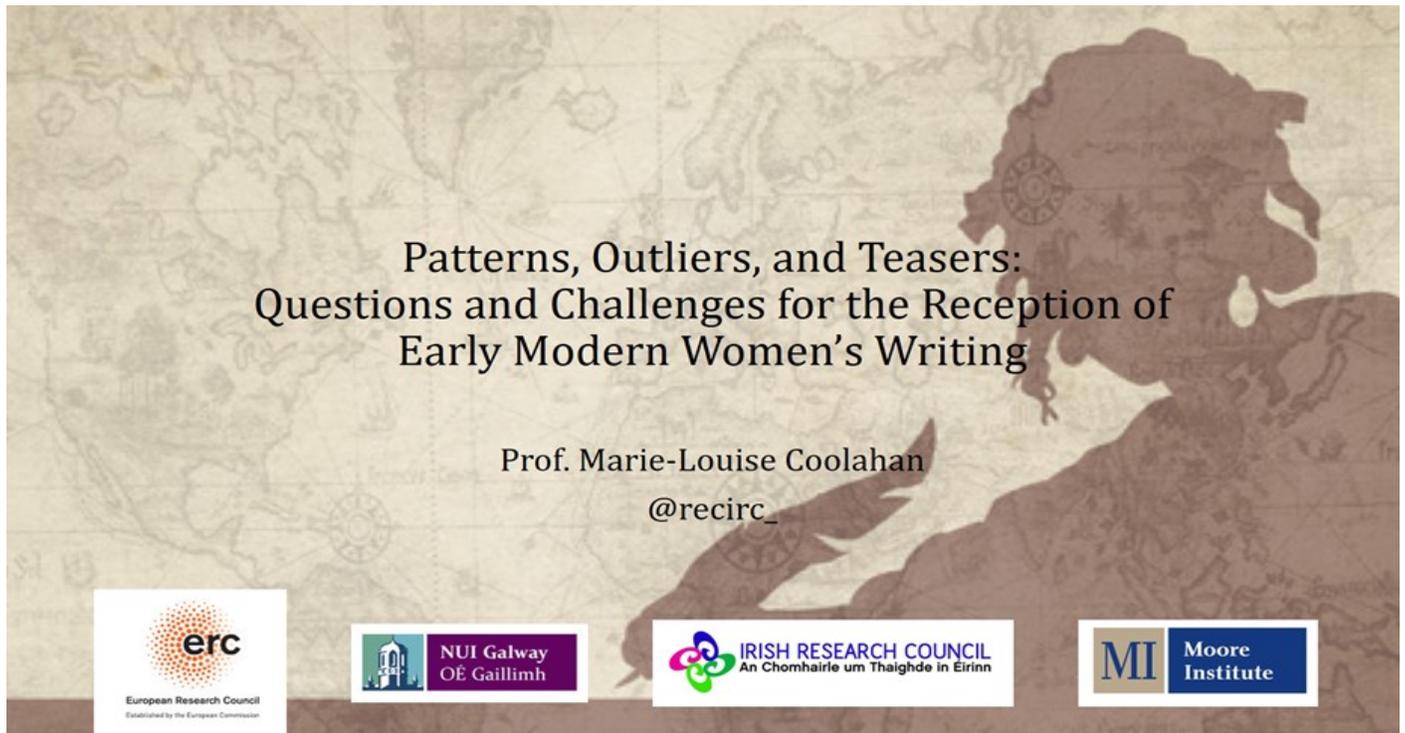
before consolidating existing CLS resources and developing new tools, services, and literary corpora to aid that study. The project also aims to increase the userbase for CLS by providing support services and training for new users and facilitating participation of scholars from underrepresented regions and languages, and non-academic users.

As part of the project, the Moore Institute will host a number of Transnational Access Fellows. These are researchers who undertake visits to participating CLS INFRA institutions to gain knowledge and expertise from experts within that research community. NUI Galway, whose funding amounts to €325,000, is one of thirteen partners in the project, joining institutions from Poland, Germany, Austria, Spain, France, Czech Republic, Belgium, Netherlands, and Serbia.

### OPEN ACCESS AND THE HUMANITIES

The Irish Humanities Alliance has just published a position paper, 'Open Access and the Humanities', which is available in the Policy section of their website: <https://www.irishhumanities.com/>. It feeds into debates around the current National Open Research Forum (<https://norf.ie/>).

## Society for the Study of Early Modern Women & Gender Annual Lecture—Prof Marie-Louise Coolahan



Professor Marie-Louise Coolahan delivered the above lecture at the **Renaissance Society of America virtual conference**, 22 April 2021.

She also presented at the **Huntington Library, California, virtual conference**, ' "The Reading of Books is a Pernicious Thing": Restoration Women Writers and their Readers', 15-16 April 2021. Her paper title was 'Late Seventeenth-Century Book Owners and Women's Writing'.

Joint NUI, Galway/ Queens Belfast/  
UNC Chapel Hill course on [Theatre  
and Pandemic](#) , an exciting  
collaboration!

**CANON AND  
CURRICULUM  
WEBINAR SERIES  
HOSTED BY  
DRAMA**

Watch back all of  
the series on our  
[You Tube  
Channel](#).

## IN THE MEDIA

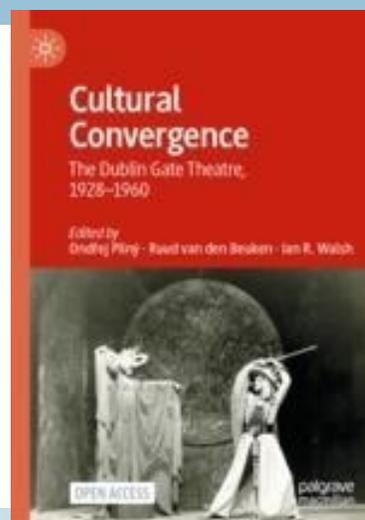
Dr Charlotte McIvor (Drama) features in [RTE's brainstorm discussing the impact of sexual violence](#) and Emerald Fennell's film *Promising Young Woman*.

"As *Promising Young Woman* animates so gruesomely, the impact and roots of the conditions for sexual violence extend far beyond survivor and perpetrator, and we need to face up to the ways language we may commonly use compounds trauma."

Dr Justin Tonra (English) is PI at NUI, Galway on the European CLS INFRA Project. [Read news article about the project here](#).

[Rehearsal during lockdown—RTE brainstorm](#) Drama MA student—  
Laura Brincat.

The book *Cultural Convergence: The Dublin Gate Theatre, 1928—1960* Edited by Dr Ian Walsh got a great review in [The Irish Times](#).



## ITEMS FOR FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

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Special thanks to  
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all his work on  
outreach for SECA  
this past year!