The Deafening Defiance of Miss Deevy: Feminism and Disability on the Irish Stage

Teresa Deevy was one of the most promising and prolific playwrights of her generation. From 1930 to 1936, six of her plays were produced at the illustrious Irish National Theatre on Abbey Street in Dublin. One was awarded the institution’s best play award, and another toured with the company in America. Why, then, did Deevy fall into literary obscurity by the end of the decade? Professor Sarah Townsend explores the archives at Maynooth University in search of answers. Combing through correspondence, notebooks, and manuscripts, she situates the playwright’s brief career within the shifting artistic and political landscape of 1930s Ireland. Deevy’s unapologetic feminism onstage, her criticism of state censorship offstage, and her status as a deaf unmarried woman all contributed to her marginalization. But the story does not end there. Townsend also discusses the recent resurrection of Deevy’s work by a group of women playwrights, actors, directors, and theatre professionals who have resumed the call for a more equitable Irish stage.

Dr. Sarah Townsend
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