

An Exploration of the Irish Presence in the Published Record

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Cover image:

“Lemuel Gulliver waking up as a prisoner of the Lilliputians.” Chromolithograph from an edition of Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*, New York, 1911. Illustration by Albert Edward Jackson. Getty Images.

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CORRIGENDUM

Page 27, paragraph 3

An error in data compilation resulted in *The Tripartite Life of St. Patrick, With Other Documents Relating to that Saint*, Parts 1 & 2, being incorrectly listed as the first and second most widely held Irish language publications in the Irish presence in the published record. The paragraph has been revised so that this error has been corrected, and some clarification of the analysis has been added.

The authors thank Nicholas Wolf for spotting the error, and Aedín Clements for advice in preparing the revision.

Page 34. The following endnote has been added:

32b. Ebooks can present a special problem in regard to popularity rankings based on library holdings, in that they are often acquired as a collection, rather than individually selected. This problem can arise with other types of material as well, but is particularly apparent with ebooks. So the high ranking of the Irish language translation of Gujarati poetry—seemingly incongruous with its rather specialized subject matter—may reflect more the popularity of the ebook collection in which it is bundled, than the individual ebook itself. Nevertheless, whether its acquisition was intentional or accidental, it is a widely held Irish-language publication.

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INTRODUCTION

Dracula, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *The Vicar of Wakefield* are all classic works of literature written by Irish authors. But what is the *most popular* work by an Irish author? And how can this question be answered?

Jonathan Swift, Oscar Wilde, and George Bernard Shaw are all eminent Irish authors whose work has been translated into many languages. But which Irish author is the *most translated*? And how can this question be answered?

The published record includes many works published in Ireland, created by Irish people, and/or about Ireland. But precisely *how many* Ireland-related works are there in the published record? And how can this question be answered?

The answers to the specific questions posed above are: *Gulliver's Travels*, Oscar Wilde, and 892,814. The answer to the general question—how can these questions be answered?—is through a computational analysis of the published record as it is represented in library bibliographic and holdings data.

A country projects its culture, its intellectual, literary, and musical traditions, its sentiments in many ways, but few equal the importance of published materials. Books, periodicals, musical recordings, films, and other publications are convenient vessels for the global diffusion of the national creative output. As the published materials linked to a particular country accumulate over time, a *national presence* of sorts forms and expands within the published record—a corpus of publications associated with that country and its people.

With the aid of library collections data, a national presence can be separated out of the broader published record for study, to gain a better understanding of a country's contributions and influence in literature, scholarship, and ideas. WorldCat¹ is the world's most comprehensive database of information about library collections, registering the holdings of more than 16,000 libraries around the globe. This massive aggregation of metadata is the best approximation available of the published record, as well as a unique source of intelligence about world literature as it is collected and stewarded in library collections.

Ireland's global cultural profile, and the widespread interest in "Irishness," can be partially understood through the island's manifestation in the published record. Using WorldCat, this publication offers reflections on the Irish presence in the published record, including its size and salient characteristics, evolving trends, and patterns of global diffusion. While our exploration of the Irish presence is not exhaustive, it does sketch out the contours of this important piece of the overall published record, and hopefully inspires ideas for new modes of inquiry into Ireland's distinctive cultural influence around the world. Not incidentally, this study also highlights the indispensable role of libraries as repositories and caretakers of the creative outputs of Ireland and all nations.

This publication is part of OCLC Research's continuing work using library data to explore cultural patterns and trends. Previous work includes studies of the Scottish and New Zealand presences in the published

record, as well as a brief examination of popular Polish authors and works.² Global interest in Ireland and Irishness inspires curiosity about the Irish presence in world literature and other types of creative output. Using library data, we can lift this Irish presence out of the published record, and examine it as a distinct, well-defined body of materials.

Some preliminary results from the present study were reported in an article in *The Irish Times* by OCLC's Lorcan Dempsey.³

Definitions, Data, and Caveats

The concept of the published record is open to many interpretations; for our purposes, we take it to mean the totality of information resources of any description, in any medium, that have been formally published or otherwise made available for use. Given the data sources used in the study (more on these below), we can clarify our definition slightly by noting that the materials comprising the published record share the characteristic of having been collected by at least one library.

A *work* is a distinct intellectual creation, for example, *A Bridge Too Far*, by the Irish journalist and military historian Cornelius Ryan. A *publication* is a distinct edition or imprint of a work, for example:

- Ryan, Cornelius. 1974. *A Bridge Too Far*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Ryan, Cornelius. 2007. *A Bridge Too Far*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

While the Simon & Schuster and Hodder & Stoughton editions represent two distinct publications, they would be subsumed under one work.

The primary data source for this study is WorldCat, a database of library catalogs describing the collections of libraries around the world. A snapshot of the database from July 2016 was used, containing more than 375,000,000 bibliographic records (descriptions of publications held by libraries) and nearly 2.5 billion holdings (indicators that a library holds a particular publication in its collection).⁴ WorldCat is the most comprehensive database of information about library collections, and as such, it is the closest approximation of the published record available.

While WorldCat is the best single data source for exploring the Irish national presence in the published record, it is not without limitations. Although WorldCat's coverage of global library collections is unmatched, it is not complete: not all library collections are registered in WorldCat. Moreover, the more than 16,000 libraries whose collections are registered in WorldCat tend to be skewed toward those located in North America. Finally, it is unlikely that the entirety of the published record has found its way into library collections; to the extent this is so, the materials described in WorldCat will represent a subset of all published materials.

In addition to WorldCat, publicly available data sets provided by DBpedia⁵ were used to compile a list of Irish authors. DBpedia is an initiative to transform the information in Wikipedia into structured data sets, allowing detailed machine-based queries of the millions of Wikipedia pages. These data sets were used to identify all Irish-born individuals represented in Wikipedia, which were then mapped to WorldCat to identify all publications authored or otherwise created by these individuals. For a detailed description of this methodology, see the report *Not Scotch, But Rum: The Scope and Diffusion of the Scottish National Presence in the Published Record*,⁶ where it is used to assemble a list of Scottish-born authors. Although

Wikipedia is an excellent single data source for identifying individuals of a particular nationality, it suffers from an inherent notoriety threshold: a person must achieve a certain level of public renown to be included in Wikipedia. Because of this, some lesser-known individuals will be excluded from the analysis.

For the purposes of this study, *Ireland* is taken to mean the island of Ireland, i.e., both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. By extension, an *Irish* person is taken to be someone born on the island of Ireland.⁷

The Irish Presence in the Published Record: How Many, What, When

The island of Ireland, though geographically small, enjoys an outsized global profile. Manifestations of “Irishness” are found around the world in many guises and varying degrees of authenticity, from Irish pubs to Irish festivals; from iconic brands like Guinness and Waterford Crystal to green-hued Saint Patrick’s Day celebrations; from Irish folk bands to Irish dancing. According to Wikipedia, there are 20 towns and communities named Dublin in the United States,⁸ stretching across the country from California to North Carolina. A Dublin can also be found in Australia, Canada, and Belarus.⁹

Both historic and contemporary emigration patterns contribute to the diffusion, and global interest, in Irishness. The Irish diaspora, in its most expansive definition—everyone with Irish ancestors—is thought to number more than 100 million people.¹⁰ In the United States, more than 10 percent of the population claim Irish ancestry.¹¹ The Irish diaspora, noted *The Irish Times*, “is a unique reservoir of goodwill, support, and ‘soft power.’”¹² In 2014, the Republic of Ireland installed its first Minister for Diaspora Affairs, in recognition of the “special affinity with people of Irish ancestry living abroad who share [Irish] cultural identity and heritage.”¹³

The global interest in Ireland and Irishness inspires curiosity about the Irish presence in world literature and other types of creative output. We know that Ireland is the birthplace of many celebrated authors like Oliver Goldsmith, Oscar Wilde, and James Joyce. We know that interest in Ireland and Ireland-related topics has resulted in a profusion of books, films, and other materials featuring Ireland as setting or subject. And we know that Ireland is the home to a small yet vibrant publishing industry, including large publishers like Gill, and small independent publishers like Tramp Press. A distinctly Irish presence, therefore, exists within the published record, extending across books, films, music, and other forms of cultural and scholarly expression. Using library data, we can lift this Irish presence out of the published record, and examine it as a distinct, well-defined body of materials.

Let’s begin by sketching out the size and salient characteristics of the Irish presence in the published record. As discussed in the previous section, OCLC’s WorldCat database serves as our approximation of the published record. The scale of WorldCat is key in establishing the plausibility of this approximation. A single library collection will cover only a fraction of the published record; combining the collections of two libraries will cover a bit more. But combine the collections of thousands of libraries from around the world—as WorldCat does—and the result is an aggregate library collection that approximates the length and breadth of the published record.

With WorldCat as our representation of the published record, the next step is to carve out the Irish presence in this corpus of materials. As we define it, the Irish presence in the published record consists of materials published *in* Ireland, materials authored or otherwise created *by* Irish people,¹⁴ and materials that are *about* Ireland. This definition tracks closely to the stated collecting responsibilities of many national libraries, which are often tasked with stewarding a nation’s cultural heritage.¹⁵ Of course,

the three classes of materials are not mutually exclusive; for example, a publication can be authored by an Irish person, published in Ireland, and treat an Ireland-related subject. The point is that any publication falling into *at least one* of these classes would be considered part of the Irish presence in the published record.

Employing a methodology developed by OCLC Research and utilized in several previous studies,¹⁶ the Irish presence was isolated within the published record represented by WorldCat. Nearly 900,000 works were identified, accounting for more than 1.6 million distinct publications. About three-quarters of these publications are books, highlighting the enduring importance of text as a conveyor of culture and scholarship. But a wide range of other materials are also represented, including 65,549 films, 50,647 musical recordings, 50,188 serials, 46,123 computer files, 41,747 musical scores, and 34,115 theses and dissertations.

The age profile of the Irish presence in the published record skews toward relatively recent times, with about half the publications appearing after 1970.¹⁷ This is likely attributable to both the general spike in global publishing activity after World War II, as well as the tendency for library collecting activity to focus on current publications. However, some interesting variation can be seen across the materials comprising the three components of the Irish presence. Materials about Ireland exhibit the “youngest” profile of the three, with about two-thirds of the publications appearing after 1970, compared to 55 percent of those published in Ireland, and 46 percent of those attributable to Irish people.



We can see these patterns from another perspective in figure 1, which shows the growth in publications since 1900 for materials attributable to Irish people, materials published about Ireland, and materials published in Ireland. Materials authored or created by Irish people represent the aspect of the Irish presence that exhibits the earliest “take-off” within the published record, evidenced by the relatively thick tail of their distribution over time, while trend lines show that materials about Ireland exhibit the fastest growth over the period. Taken together, these findings suggest that publications treating Ireland and Irish-related topics as a subject or setting have burgeoned only recently within the Irish presence, while the contributions of Ireland’s authors and other creators have deeper roots in time.

**Growth of the Irish presence in the published record:
Publications by Irish authors/creators, about Ireland, and published in Ireland**

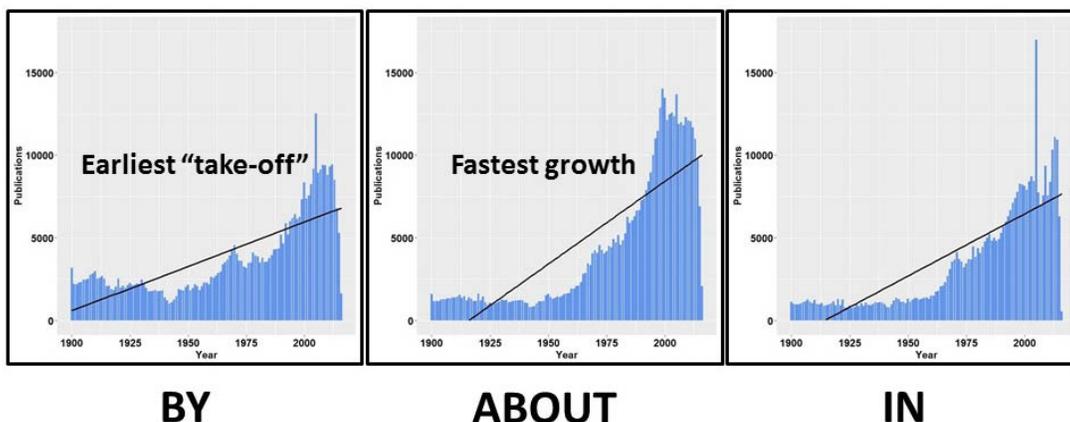


Figure 1. Growth of the Irish Presence in the Published Record: “By,” “About,” and “In”¹⁸

League Tables

The ability to explore the materials constituting a national presence in the published record naturally sparks interest in rankings. Who is the most popular author? What is the most popular work? Crafting workable data-driven definitions of “popularity” can be challenging, and there is no single popularity metric that is superior to all others. However, library data provides a useful perspective on popularity, where popularity is defined by the number of global library holdings attached to a work or author. As Lorcan Dempsey has noted, library collections are a reflection of popular interest, and are the place where the published record is gathered, stewarded, and accessed.¹⁹

Earlier, we identified *Gulliver’s Travels* (Jonathan Swift) as the most popular work by an Irish author. Rounding out the top five (table 1), we find familiar classics such as *Dracula* (Bram Stoker), *The Vicar of Wakefield* (Goldsmith), and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Wilde), as well as a more contemporary work in the form of Eoin Colfer’s young adult fantasy novel *Artemis Fowl*.

It is worth noting that the children’s book *Guess How Much I Love You*, published in 1994 by Sam McBratney, and a staple of toddler bookshelves, is the 13th most popular work by an Irish author—ranked just ahead of Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot!*

Table 1. Top 5 Most Popular Works By An Irish Author

Work	Global Holdings
<i>Gulliver’s Travels</i>	40,835
<i>Dracula</i>	35,323
<i>The Vicar of Wakefield</i>	29,521
<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i>	26,464
<i>Artemis Fowl</i>	20,983

In addition to penning the most popular Irish work, Swift tops the list of the most popular Irish authors, followed by Wilde, Eve Bunting, George Bernard Shaw, and Goldsmith (table 2). Like the most popular works, the most popular authors also include a contemporary entry: Bunting, an award-winning Northern Irish-born author of more than 250 books, mainly for children.

Table 2. Top 5 Most Popular Irish Authors

Author	Global Holdings
Jonathan Swift	239,621
Oscar Wilde	223,830
Eve Bunting	222,327
George Bernard Shaw	217,220
Oliver Goldsmith	160,604

Table 3. Top 5 Most Popular Contemporary* Irish Authors

Author	Global Holdings
Eoin Colfer	97,206
Darren Shan	87,056
Alister McGrath	59,676
John Connolly	51,046
Roddy Doyle	40,585

* Born after 1945

Popularity measured according to library holdings tends to elevate authors with multiple works of high prominence, and therefore more likely to be included in library collections. For example, note that Stoker, creator of *Dracula*—the second most popular work and a literary classic—does not appear among the top five most popular authors. While it would be unfair to label Stoker a “one-hit wonder,” *Dracula*’s popularity eclipses that of any of his other works, pushing him down the list. Library holdings also tend to elevate works that endure over time—usually, the “classics”—achieving wide dissemination as well as generating multiple editions and translations.

“Classic” authors tend to dominate in any national presence; in the case of Ireland, we see Swift, Wilde, Shaw, and Goldsmith at the top of rankings. However, Ireland’s contributions to the published record continue to the present day, and the works of contemporary authors are important to highlight. If we confine our attention to authors born after 1945 (table 3), the most popular Irish authors include the previously mentioned Colfer, as well as Darren Shan (pen name of Darren O’Shaughnessy), Alister McGrath, John Connolly, and Roddy Doyle.

Fiction occupies a prominent place in the Irish presence: for example, the top five most popular works by an Irish author (table 1) are works of fiction; and the top five most popular Irish authors (table 2) are known primarily for their work in fiction. Of course, non-fiction writers and works also figure in the Irish presence, but we must look a little further down the rankings to spot them. The most popular *non-fiction* work by an Irish author, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ranks 11th overall; its creator, Edmund Burke, is the most popular Irish author known primarily for non-fiction, ranking ninth overall. We can contrast this with findings from other countries: for example, Scotland’s top five most popular works include four works of fiction alongside Adam Smith’s Scottish Enlightenment classic *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*,²⁰ while New Zealand’s top five works are all classed as non-fiction, including four works on linguistics and lexicography.²¹

Returning to fiction, many popular Irish authors and works, both classic and contemporary, have specialized in settings and themes that evoke Irish culture and the Irish experience. For example, the novels of Maeve Binchy (the sixth most popular Irish author, just missing the ranking in table 2) are usually set in Ireland, as are the major works of Joyce (seventh most popular Irish author). Doyle’s Barrytown Pentology, including such works as *The Commitments* and *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*, explores life in working-class Dublin. Recent novels from Colm Tóibín (eighth most popular contemporary Irish author), such as *The Heather Blazing* and *Brooklyn*, explore a range of Irish themes.

Although evocation of Ireland and Irishness is a vibrant and continuing aspect of the Irish literary tradition, it is certainly not the only one. For example, several contemporary Irish writers have become leading figures in the young adult fantasy fiction genre, including Colfer and Shan, as well as Michael Scott (sixth most popular contemporary Irish author)

We have been focusing on library holdings as a measure of popularity. Another metric that provides perspective on the global popularity of an author is the number of translations of their works. Although one might expect this ranking to track closely to the list in table 1, it is in fact quite different. Wilde leads the ranking as the most translated Irish author (table 4), followed by Swift and Shaw, and then two new entries: Beckett and Joyce. How to account for the differences in the two rankings? The most likely explanation is that the ranking of Irish authors by number of translations is a better measure for assessing their popularity in the non-English-speaking world—evidenced by the manifestation of their works in the languages of other nations and cultures. We will return to the topic of translations later in the report in our discussion of the global diffusion of the Irish presence in the published record.

Table 4. Top 5 Most Translated Irish Authors

Author	Translations*
Oscar Wilde	10,907
Jonathan Swift	6,600
George Bernard Shaw	5,515
Samuel Beckett	4,654
James Joyce	3,290

* Number of distinct publications

As we have seen in the rankings so far, “book-based” works and creators dominate. However, the Irish presence manifests in other media as well. For example, what is the most popular musical work by an Irish artist? The answer: Van Morrison’s *Astral Weeks* album, released in 1968 (table 5). The albums *Watermark* and *A Day Without Rain*, both by Enya, are the second and third most popular musical works, followed by another Van Morrison album—*Moondance*—and U2’s *How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb*.

Table 5. Top 5 Most Popular Musical Works By An Irish Artist

Work	Global Holdings
<i>Astral Weeks</i> (Van Morrison)	1,301
<i>Watermark</i> (Enya)	1,179
<i>A Day Without Rain</i> (Enya)	1,136
<i>Moondance</i> (Van Morrison)	1,026
<i>How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb</i> (U2)	965

Table 6. Top 5 Most Popular Films Set In Ireland

Film	Global Holdings
<i>The Quiet Man</i>	3,130
<i>Philomena</i>	2,635
<i>My Left Foot</i>	2,255
<i>The Crying Game</i>	2,108
<i>Once</i>	2,069

Films are another common way for Ireland and Irishness to be conveyed through published materials. The most popular movie set in Ireland (table 6) is the 1952 classic *The Quiet Man*, starring John Wayne and the Irish-born Maureen O'Hara. The second most popular film is *Philomena*, a 2013 production which received multiple Oscar, British Academy of Film and Television Arts awards, and Golden Globe Awards nominations. *My Left Foot*, the 1989 biographic film of Dublin writer Christy Brown, is third, followed by *The Crying Game* (1992)²² and *Once* (2007). An interesting feature of these results is that, with the exception of *The Quiet Man*, all of the top five films were produced in the last 30 years; two appeared within the last ten years. A possible explanation for this skew may be that libraries (or by extension, patrons) favor newer films in their collections. All of the entries are award-winning films as well.

Patterns

The Irish presence in the published record is not static. Beyond the obvious fact that it grows continuously over time as new works are added, it also embodies shifting patterns within its corpus of materials, reflecting ever changing tides of popular interest, as well as the influence of external events. In this section, we explore some of the dynamics of the Irish presence, focusing on patterns unfolding over time in materials created by Irish people, materials about Ireland, and materials published in Ireland.

The Vicissitudes of Popularity

The previous section documented the most popular Irish authors (table 4) as measured by total library holdings. But this approach obscures the dynamics of popularity, as the stars of certain authors burn brightly for a period of time, before fading into obscurity. For every Swift, Wilde, and Goldsmith whose fame endures, there are many more with much more transient popularity. We can use library data to sketch a picture of how particular Irish authors slip in and out of fashion.

More specifically, let's explore the ebb and flow of Irish authors over the twentieth century. We begin by identifying a series of five-year intervals spaced 25 years apart over this period: 1900–04, 1925–29, 1950–54, 1975–79, and 2000–04. For each interval, we can identify the most published Irish authors or creators, in other words, those that had the most publications appear during this period. For example, for the period 1900–04, Shaw was the most published Irish person (table 7), followed by Goldsmith and Wilde. James Bryce—a jurist and historian—is next, then the poet W. B. Yeats. L. T. Meade (pseudonym for Elizabeth Thomasina Meade Smith) was an indefatigable writer of mostly children's stories, authoring more than 300 books. After Swift, we then have Charles Lever, a novelist; Justin McCarthy, an historian and novelist; and Charles Villiers Stanford, a composer.

Table 7. Most Published Irish Authors/Creators, 1900–04

Author/Creator	Publications
George Bernard Shaw	372
Oliver Goldsmith	357
Oscar Wilde	337
James Bryce	330
WB Yeats	322
LT Meade	274
Jonathan Swift	262
Charles Lever	221
Justin McCarthy	201
Charles Villiers Stanford	199

In the next period, 25 years later (1925–29), we see that Shaw, Wilde, Yeats, Swift, and Goldsmith once again make the list (table 8). Joyce makes his first appearance, along with George Moore, a novelist; J. B. Bury, an historian; James Stephens, a novelist and poet; and Edward Plunkett, a writer and playwright. We see that a number of the entries from the previous list have disappeared: for example, publications by Lever were still appearing at a robust rate in the period 1900–04—30 years after his death—but, by 1925, his popularity had apparently ebbed. Meade, so prolific in her output over her lifetime, also seems to have missed enduring popularity.

Table 8. Most Published Irish Authors/Creators, 1925–29

Author/Creator	Publications
George Bernard Shaw	1,238
Oscar Wilde	582
WB Yeats	283
Jonathan Swift	253
Oliver Goldsmith	223
George Moore	217
JB Bury	200
James Joyce	196
James Stephens	180
Edward Plunkett	176

Table 9. Most Published Irish Authors/Creators, 1950–54

Author/Creator	Publications
George Bernard Shaw	827
Oscar Wilde	522
Jonathan Swift	375
Joyce Cary	279
Jimmy Kennedy	185
James Joyce	181
WB Yeats	178
Cecil Day-Lewis	146
Elizabeth Bowen	131
Oliver Goldsmith	120

Moving ahead another 25 years to 1950–54 (table 9), we see that the list of the most published Irish authors and creators has been shuffled again. Shaw, Wilde, Swift, Joyce, Yeats, and Goldsmith once again appear, joined by a new set of entries: Joyce Cary, a novelist; Jimmy Kennedy, a prolific songwriter and lyricist; Cecil Day-Lewis, a poet and novelist (and father of actor Daniel); and Elizabeth Bowen, a novelist and short story writer. Once again, various names have slipped off the list from the previous period, while others endure.

The three-quarter mark of the 20th century, 1975–79 (table 10), finds the continued presence of Joyce (now topping the list), Shaw, Wilde, Swift, and Yeats. The novelist, poet, and playwright Samuel Beckett makes his first appearance, as well as the Dublin-born novelist Iris Murdoch; flute player Sir James Galway; mystery and horror writer Sheridan Le Fanu; and soprano Norma Burrowes. Le Fanu is particularly interesting, in that his first appearance on our lists of most published Irish authors and creators occurs about 100 years after his death. Here is an example of an author who was active in the late 19th century, had his work subsequently ebb in popularity, but was then “re-discovered” in the latter part of the 20th century.

Table 10. Most Published Irish Authors/Creators, 1975–79

Author/Creator	Publications
James Joyce	816
Samuel Beckett	661
George Bernard Shaw	621
Oscar Wilde	605
Jonathan Swift	399
Iris Murdoch	326
WB Yeats	314
James Galway	205
Sheridan Le Fanu	185
Norma Burrowes	173

Finally, at the end of the 20th century we find that Wilde is the most published author for the period 2000–04 (table 11), joined by Shaw, Swift, Beckett, Joyce, and Yeats. Newcomers to the list include novelists Maeve Binchy, Colfer, Stoker, and Marian Keyes. Stoker presents an interesting case: despite the publication of his now iconic and enduring work *Dracula* more than a century ago, this is the first appearance on our lists of one of most recognizable names in world literature. What explains Stoker’s previous absence? As mentioned earlier, none of his other works achieved the same enduring renown as *Dracula*, perhaps limiting the number of publications in print related to his work at any given time. Why does Stoker make a sudden appearance on the list at the end of the 20th century? One possible reason is that several big-budget *Dracula* films were released around that time, most notably, *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* (1992), directed by Francis Ford Coppola; perhaps this sparked interest in the original source material, as well as other Stoker works.

Table 11. Most Published Irish Authors/Creators, 2000–04²³

Author/Creator	Publications
Oscar Wilde	1,661
Maeve Binchy	787
George Bernard Shaw	609
Jonathan Swift	527
Samuel Beckett	524
Eoin Colfer	485
James Joyce	483
WB Yeats	443
Bram Stoker	418
Marian Keyes	414

Taken together, the rankings in tables 7–11 yield insight into the shifting patterns of popularity surrounding Irish authors and creators. We see a small cohort of Irish authors whose work has sustained strong interest over time: Shaw, Wilde, Swift, and Yeats appear in all five rankings. Joyce enters the rankings during the period 1925–29 and remains throughout the remainder of the century. In contrast, interest in Goldsmith’s works appears to steadily dip: he is the second most published Irish author in the 1900–04 period, before dropping to fifth place in the 1925–29 ranking, tenth in the next, and then out of the lists entirely.

We see examples of authors fading into obscurity before being re-discovered by later audiences, like Le Fanu, and to some degree, Stoker. And we see authors who enjoyed enormous popularity with contemporaneous readers become all but forgotten by future generations, like Meade, who appears in the first ranking but not again, and of whom *The Irish Times* commented: “Imagine if JK Rowling’s name rang no bells in people’s minds 100 years from now. Rowling: so ubiquitous, influential and popular—the thought seems absurd. But this is exactly what happened to the Cork-born writer LT Meade ... who was the JK Rowling of her day.”²⁴ In general, the rankings of the most published Irish authors and creators suggest a core set of “classic” Irish authors like Shaw or Wilde whose popularity endures alongside more dynamic patterns of interest in other, often contemporary, writers.

About Ireland

Just as particular authors and creators wax and wane in terms of their profile in the Irish presence, the subject matter of materials published about Ireland also fluctuates over time. Library data—in particular, bibliographic descriptions of individual publications—is helpful in exploring patterns of interest in topics related to Ireland, as they manifest in the published record.

Data about the distribution of publication dates within the Irish presence in the published record can be used to illustrate how publication patterns interweave with events or trends occurring in the broader societal context. For example, consider the distribution over time of publications about the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin (figure 2). A prominent spike in publications occurs over the years 1916 and 1917, coinciding with the event itself. Publication activity then tapers down to minimal levels before spiking again in 1936 at the time of the Rising's 20th anniversary. Additional spikes are seen around other years marking significant anniversaries of the Rising, including 1966 (50th anniversary), 2006 (90th anniversary), and 2016 (100th anniversary).²⁵ Moreover, interest in the Easter Rising, as measured by the number of publications about this topic, clearly trends upward beginning in the latter part of the 20th century, mirroring the increase in overall interest in publications about Ireland noted above.

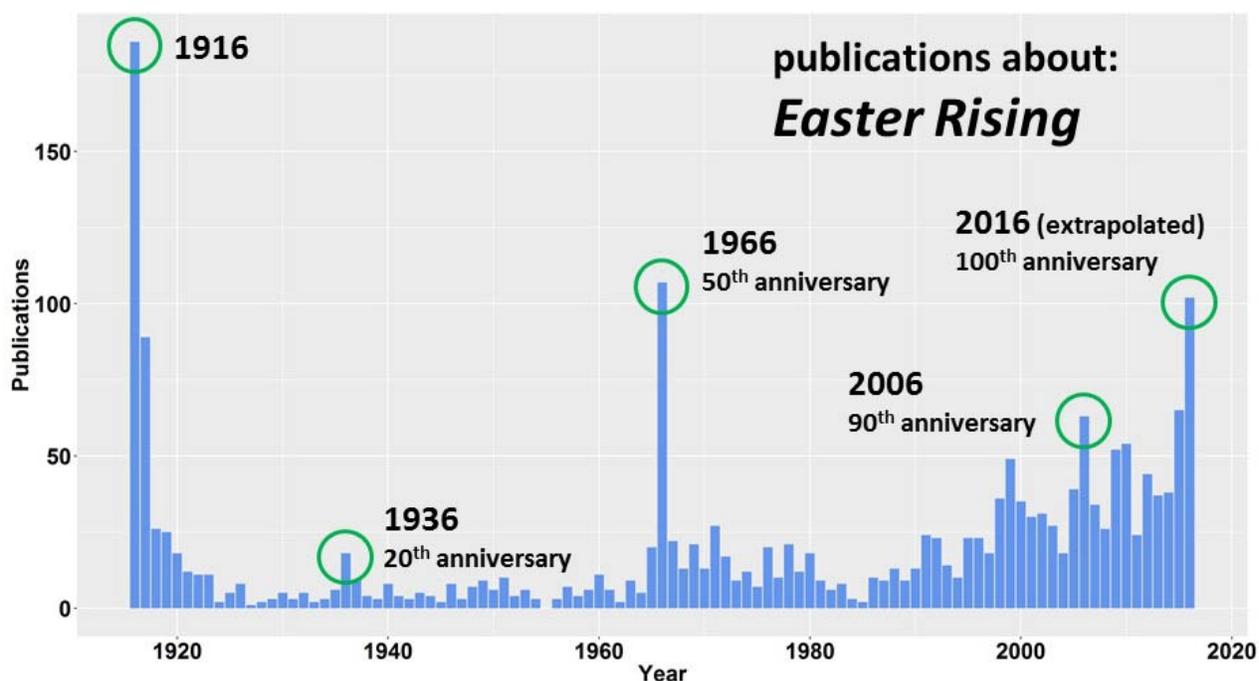


Figure 2. Patterns in Publication Activity on the Easter Rising, 1900 to the Present²⁶

Publications about Irish folk dancing also exhibit an interesting pattern over time (figure 3). From 1900 until the mid-1990s, appearance of publications on this topic was decidedly sporadic. However, beginning in 1994, we see a surge in interest that happens to coincide with the debut of Michael Flatley’s *Riverdance* show featuring Irish dancing in the Eurovision Song Contest, followed by the opening of the *Riverdance* stage show in 1995. This precedes an even higher spike in publications about Irish dancing in 1996, which was the year Flatley’s follow-up show, *Lord of the Dance*, opened. As with the Easter Rising example, publication activity around this topic blossoms beginning in the latter part of the 20th century, catalyzed perhaps by the popular *Riverdance* show, and contributing to the higher levels of publication activity on Ireland-related topics observed during that period.

The great Irish writer James Joyce, treated as subject matter, provides an illustration of how publication patterns *about* an author mark growth in interest in that individual as the subject of biography, interpretation, and literary criticism. As figure 4 shows, publications about Joyce coalesce into a discernable pattern in 1922, coinciding with—whether by happenstance or not—the first complete publication of Joyce’s masterpiece *Ulysses*. Interest in Joyce as a subject ebbs and flows at a relatively low level until the late 1950s, when the number of publications about Joyce begins to climb steadily. One reason for this may be the release in 1957 of the first volume of Joyce’s letters, which likely catalyzed new scholarship on his life and works.

Two spikes that appear in the publication activity about Joyce tie to important anniversaries. The first, in 1982, corresponds to the centenary of Joyce’s birth. The second, in 2004, is more whimsical: it marks the 100th anniversary of Bloomsday, an annual celebration of Joyce’s life that also commemorates the day—June 16, 1904—when the fictitious events of *Ulysses* took place.²⁷

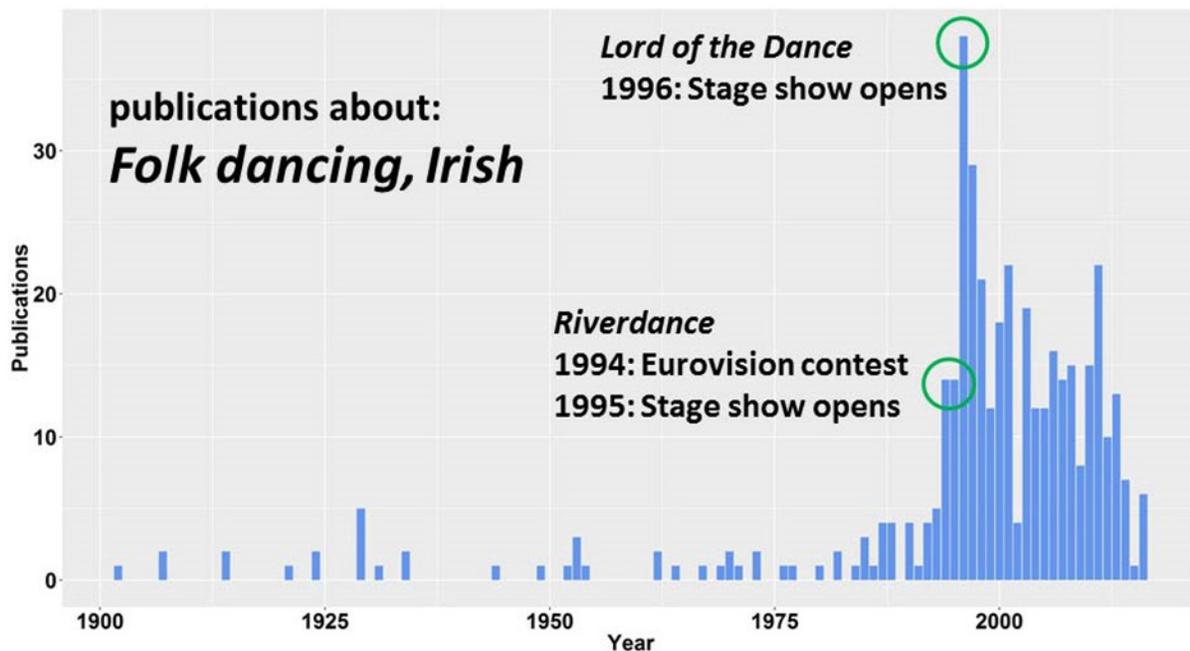


Figure 3. Patterns in Publication Activity on Irish Folk Dancing, 1900 to the Present

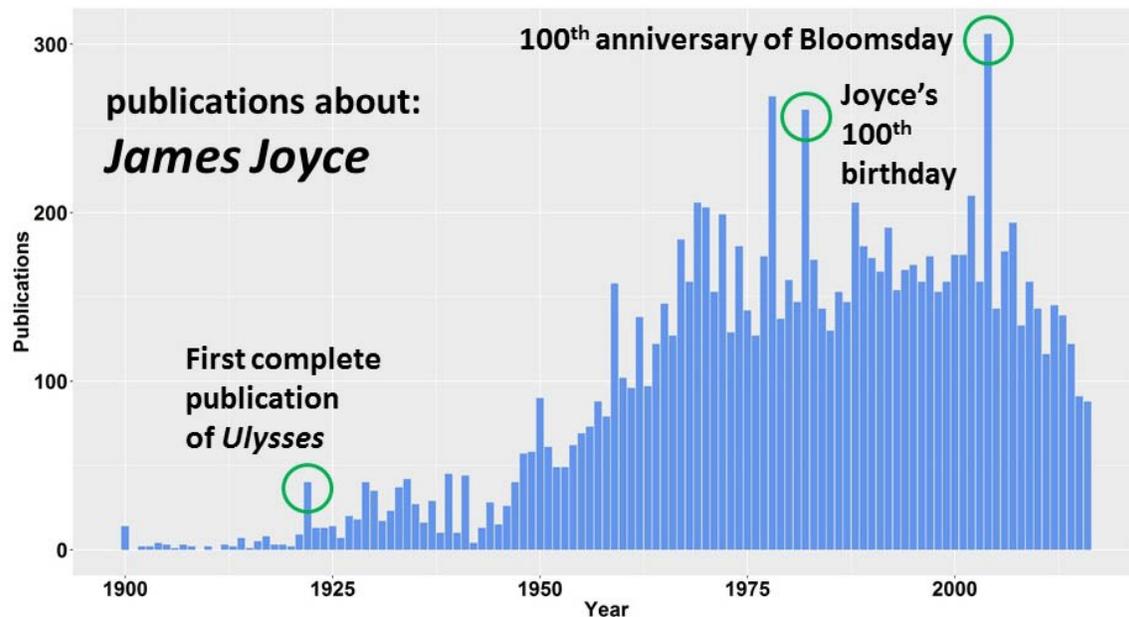


Figure 4. Patterns in Publication Activity on James Joyce, 1900 to the Present

As the Easter Rising, Irish folk dancing, and James Joyce examples show, the Irish presence in the published record—especially as it is constituted by materials about Ireland—does not exist in a vacuum but instead is connected to a broader societal context. This creates interesting patterns in publishing activity, which, in turn, reveal the ebb and flow of interest in Irish-related events and aspects of Irish culture.

Made in Ireland

As with materials by Irish people or about Ireland, materials published in Ireland—i.e., the output of the Irish domestic publishing industry—also exhibit interesting patterns over time. We illustrate this by exploring the composition of Irish-published materials, broken down into three categories: materials published in Ireland that are 1) by Irish authors/creators, 2) about Ireland, and 3) neither by Irish authors/creators nor about Ireland. Note that while the first and second categories are mutually exclusive of the third, they are not mutually exclusive of each other: a publication can be both by an Irish person and about Ireland.

Given this characterization of materials published *in* Ireland, we can observe the pattern of activity in each category—documented at five-year intervals—over the course of the 20th century (figure 5). Here we see several interesting trends. First, we note that the percentage of materials published in Ireland that are attributable to an Irish author or creator declines at a fairly steady pace over the course of the century, dropping from 31 percent in 1915 to only 6 percent by 2000. Some caution must be exercised in interpreting this result: it is possible that Irish publishers have an extensive catalogue of materials by Irish people who have not reached a sufficient level of renown to warrant an entry in Wikipedia, and therefore would not be included in the data for this study. If that is the case, it would be better to say that the trend shows relatively well-known Irish authors and creators have increasingly published their works outside of Ireland. In either interpretation, the trend is quite pronounced.

Characterizing Irish Publishing Output, 1900–2000

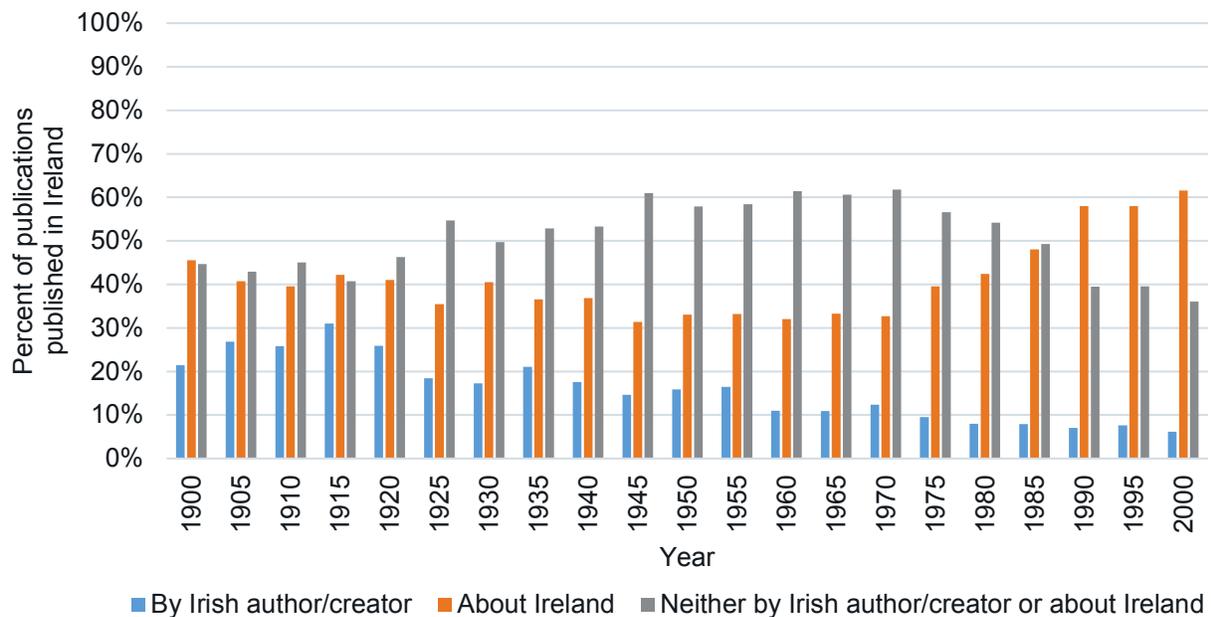


Figure 5. Characterizing Irish Publishing Output, 1900–2000

The second trend discernable in figure 5 is that the proportion of materials published in Ireland that are *about* Ireland has increased markedly since the latter part of the 20th century, rising from a third of publications in 1970 to 62 percent by 2000. Indeed, the overall surge in Irish-published materials seen during the same period in figure 1 is largely accounted for by the sustained increase in domestically published materials about Ireland. These publications include both fiction and non-fiction works that are about some aspect of Ireland, as well as fiction works, such as novels or films, that utilize Ireland as a setting.

The juxtaposition of these two trends is striking: on the one hand, Irish-born authors and creators looking *beyond* Ireland to publish their works, while at the same time, authors/creators publishing in Ireland looking *within* Ireland for the subject matter of their works. What explains these findings? What factors incentivize, or dis-incentivize, Irish authors/creators to publish domestically? What events or trends in the broader cultural context may have led Ireland’s publishing output to become more “self-reflective” in regard to its topical focus?²⁸ The answers are surely beyond the scope of this study, but the question is indicative of the interesting topics that can be exposed for further study through an exploration of a national presence in the published record.

The patterns we have discussed in this section underscore the point that the Irish presence is not static, but instead evolves over time: not just in size, but in its internal contours as well. We see shifting patterns in the popularity of Irish authors, shifting patterns in the subject matter of publications about Ireland, and shifting patterns in the composition of materials published domestically. These findings illustrate the importance of viewing the Irish presence not just as a snapshot in time, but also as an ever-changing, dynamic element within the published record.

Diffusion

Materials about Ireland, by Irish people, and published in Ireland are distributed across library collections throughout the world. This suggests another interesting aspect of the Irish presence in the published record to explore: the pattern of diffusion by which these materials have spread beyond Ireland’s shores. In doing so, we can track one of the principal channels through which Ireland and Irishness is shared with the rest of the world.

One way to assess the global diffusion of the Irish presence in the published record is to identify the countries outside of Ireland in which it tends to concentrate. The metric we will use for this purpose is the total number of library holdings in each country attributable to the Irish presence. In this context, a library holding indicates that a particular library possesses at least one copy of a particular publication from the Irish presence. The United States is far and away the leader in this ranking, with nearly 22 million holdings attributable to the Irish presence (table 12). The United Kingdom²⁹ and Canada are next, followed by Germany—the highest ranked non-English-speaking country. The top ten countries in the ranking are evenly split between those which are predominantly English-speaking and those which are not.

Table 12. Global Diffusion of the Irish Presence, by Total Library Holdings

Country	Total holdings
United States	21,751,548
United Kingdom	1,976,960
Canada	1,837,025
Germany	1,089,415
Australia	732,397
Netherlands	330,612
New Zealand	260,070
France	228,600
China	142,509
Switzerland	134,895

Caution is needed in interpreting these results, in that they undoubtedly reflect some skewness inherent to the data source: as noted earlier, WorldCat’s coverage is particularly extensive for North American libraries. Nonetheless, the ranking in table 12 correlates quite closely to a recent ranking of top Irish diaspora locations (bottom right image), with seven out of ten countries overlapping both lists. Two of the countries in table 12 that are missing from the diaspora list—Switzerland and the Netherlands—have nevertheless witnessed significant increases in their Irish-born populations in recent years.³¹

COUNTRIES WITH MOST IRISH IMMIGRANTS³⁰

1. UK
2. USA
3. Australia
4. Canada
5. Spain
6. South Africa
7. Germany
8. France
9. New Zealand
10. Poland

The diffusion of the Irish presence can also be tracked at a more granular level. Our view of Ireland-related publications is derived from data about library collections, which suggests an obvious question: which library collections contain the greatest concentrations of materials from the Irish presence? For this analysis, we focus on academic and public libraries. An Irish university, Trinity College Dublin, leads the ranking as the institution with the highest number of publications from the Irish presence in the world (table 13). Two other Irish institutions place on the list—University College Dublin and University College Cork—as well as two UK universities, University of Oxford and University of Cambridge. The US leads with four institutions, including three universities and one public library, and Canada’s McGill University rounds out a strong North American presence on the list.

Academic libraries crowd the list in table 13, with New York Public Library (NYPL) representing a significant exception. Although academic libraries continue to dominate the rankings well beyond the top ten collections, two additional public libraries—Boston Public Library and Cleveland Public Library – join NYPL with relatively high rankings, at 24th and 29th, respectively.

Table 13. Top 10 Largest Concentrations of Ireland-Related Publications in Library Collections

Institution	Total holdings
Trinity College Dublin	191,703
University of Oxford	135,701
University College Dublin	120,309
University of Cambridge	100,045
New York Public Library	99,398
Cornell University	89,566
University College Cork	84,706
University of Michigan	77,825
McGill University	75,869
Yale University	75,134

More insight into the global concentration of Ireland-related publications in library collections can be obtained by decomposing the Irish presence into its component parts (table 14). When the scope is limited to materials *about* Ireland, Trinity still tops the list, but the rankings now include Boston College, the University of Notre Dame, and Harvard University. Boston College has deep Irish roots: the school was founded in the mid-19th century to educate the city’s Irish Catholic immigrants.³² Both Boston College and Notre Dame are home to top Irish Studies programs and extensive library collections of Irish materials. Further shifts in the rankings are seen when the focus is publications by Irish people: in this case, an American institution, NYPL, moves to the top of the rankings, while Columbia University and Harvard University move onto the list.

Table 14. Top 10 Largest Concentrations of Publications About Ireland and By Irish People

About Ireland	Total Holdings	By Irish People	Total Holdings
Trinity College Dublin	125,548	New York Public Library	40,813
University of Oxford	81,109	University of Oxford	40,690
University College Dublin	66,781	Trinity College Dublin	38,590
New York Public Library	56,393	Cornell University	36,527
University of Cambridge	56,249	University of Michigan	34,527
Boston College	55,936	University of Cambridge	33,916
University College Cork	54,659	Yale University	32,486
University of Notre Dame	48,974	McGill University	32,204
Harvard University	47,565	Columbia University	30,750
Cornell University	47,548	Harvard University	29,095

Earlier we looked at the global diffusion of the Irish presence in the published record; we can also explore the diffusion of Irish materials at national and sub-national scales. We saw, for example, that Swift was the most popular Irish author globally (table 2). We also saw that the US holds the largest concentration of materials in the world related to the Irish presence, in terms of library holdings (table 12). Do patterns of interest in the US regarding the Irish presence duplicate those observed at the global level? For example, who is the most popular Irish author in the US, where we again measure popularity in terms of library holdings? Is it Swift?

Our findings (table 15) indicate that Bunting, born in Maghera, Northern Ireland, and the author of more than 250 books, is the most popular Irish author in the US. Swift ends up second, followed by Shaw, Wilde, and Goldsmith. The authors in table 15 are exactly those featured in table 2—the top five most popular Irish authors globally—however, the ranking order is shuffled.

Table 15. Most Popular Irish Authors, US

Author	Total US holdings
Eve Bunting	211,824
Jonathan Swift	158,911
George Bernard Shaw	154,697
Oscar Wilde	153,864
Oliver Goldsmith	111,458

We can dig deeper into the US data and seek patterns of interest at more granular scales. While Bunting is the most widely held Irish author overall in the US, we cannot assume that her popularity is the same throughout the country—different libraries in different places will collect different kinds of Irish-related materials. To see this, we can pose an additional question: who is the most popular Irish author in each of the 50 US states?

It turns out that Bunting’s popularity is quite pervasive throughout the US, although not uniformly so, as she ends up as the most popular Irish author in 29 out of 50 states. Swift is a distant second as the most popular Irish author in 12 states, with Shaw capturing six states and Wilde two. Delaware was the lone state that preferred Goldsmith above all others.

We can speculate on why Bunting’s work is so popular across much of the US—her books are well-received and in some cases award-winning, which increases the incentive for libraries to collect them. Moreover, Bunting was prolific in her output: prominent authors with large *oeuvres* will tend to have proportionately more library holdings associated with them. Bunting has been based in the US during her writing career, and so is perhaps particularly well-known there. We could also consider each state’s relative mix of academic and public library holdings: public libraries are probably more likely to collect Bunting’s work—aimed chiefly at children—than academics.

Most Popular Irish Author, by US State

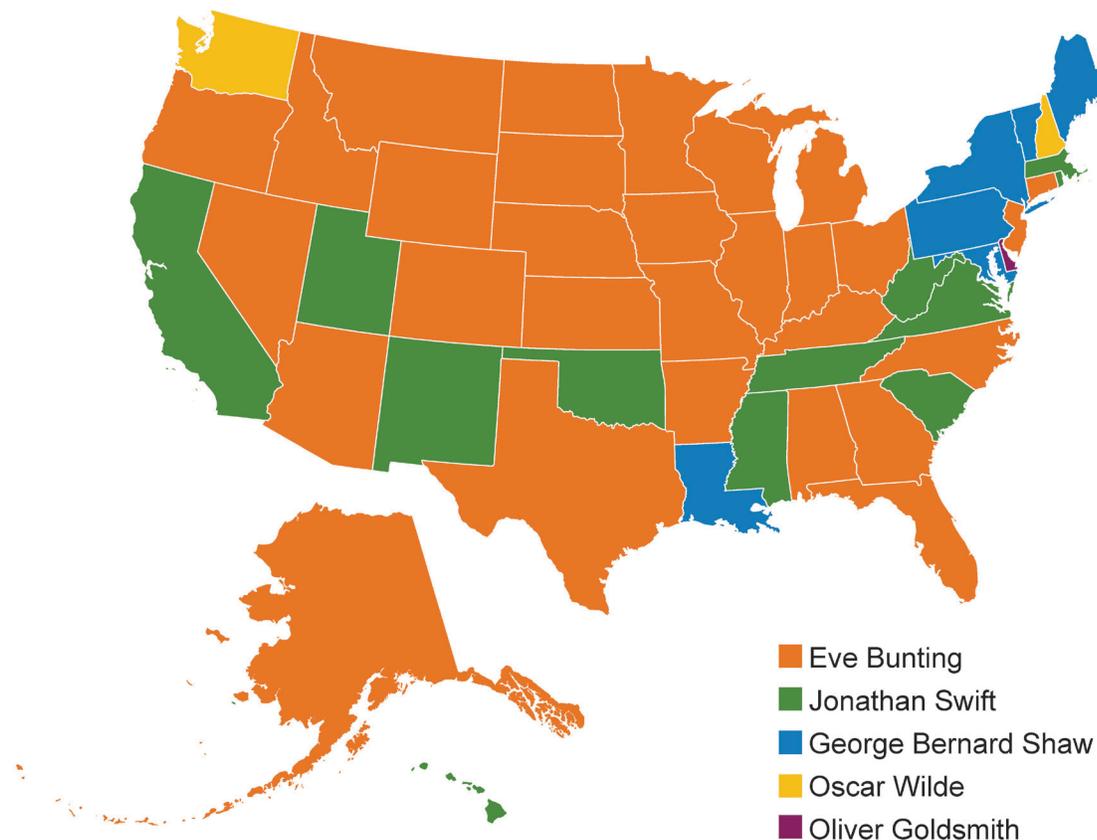


Figure 6. Most Popular Irish Authors, by US State

All of this is speculation, of course, but nevertheless suggests forms of analysis that can flow from a high-level exploration of a national presence in the published record. The key point here, however, is that patterns of interest in the Irish presence can shift and re-configure as the scale of analysis becomes more granular—as we see with popular Irish authors when the level of magnification is increased from global (table 2) to national (table 15) to individual US states (figure 6).

Finally, we can trace the global diffusion of the Irish presence not just through the physical locations across which it is dispersed, but also through the languages in which it is expressed. The vast majority of the language-based publications in the Irish presence are in English, but the Irish presence manifests in a variety of other languages as well: 241 languages, to be precise. French and German are the most common languages other than English found within the Irish presence (table 16). Nearly 30,000 publications are expressed in Irish, which is enshrined as the national language of the Republic of Ireland. Latin also features prominently in the Irish presence, perhaps owing to the Roman Catholic Church's deep roots in Ireland.

Returning to the Irish language publications, we find that the most popular publication in Irish—and here we are speaking only of Irish language materials in the Irish presence: that is, by an Irish person, about Ireland, or published in Ireland—is *Foclóir Gaedhilge agus Béarla: An Irish-English Dictionary: Being a Thesaurus of the Words, Phrases and Idioms of the Modern Irish Language* by Patrick S. Dinneen, published in 1927—perhaps stretching the definition of an Irish language publication, but nevertheless cataloged as such. Dinneen was an eminent Irish lexicographer, whose work in the early twentieth century contributed to the Gaelic Revival—a resurgence of interest in the Irish language and Irish Gaelic culture. Dinneen's dictionary is followed by *Briathar á Dhéanamh as Anáil: Filíocht Chomhaimseartha na Gúisearáitise*, a collection of Gujarati poetry translated into Irish, and published as an ebook.^{32b} Next is *Irish: The Short Course*, which as its name suggests, is a tutorial on the Irish language, in the form of an audiobook on CD-ROM. Fourth in the ranking is another Irish-English dictionary, *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla*, the most well-known work of the Irish lexicographer Niall Ó Dónaill, published in 1977. Rounding out the top five is *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, an electronic reproduction of a nineteenth century text, including both original Gaelic (Irish)-language materials with English translation.³³

Table 16. Most Common Languages other than English in the Irish Presence

Language	Publications
French	41,691
German	40,986
Irish	28,992
Spanish	15,748
Latin	13,486
Italian	9,031
Dutch	7,127
Japanese	3,760
Chinese	3,616
Danish	3,437

We noted earlier that Wilde is the most translated Irish author, and the 241 languages represented in the Irish presence give a sense of the wide diversity of languages in which the works of Wilde and other prominent Irish authors are expressed worldwide. Yet, we should not assume that all non-English publications are translations of works originally composed in English—especially, perhaps, those published in Irish and Latin. Irish-language publications are particularly interesting: as a language native to Ireland, one might expect that most of the publications expressed in that language would originate from Irish publishers. And indeed, the data shows that nearly all of the Irish-language publications are published in Ireland; moreover, Irish is the top language besides English for materials published in Ireland (table 17). Latin also moves up in the rankings to third. It is interesting to see another Celtic language—Scottish Gaelic—enter the ranking, accounting for nearly 300 publications, and somewhat surprising to find Ancient Greek on the list. Spot-checking examples of the latter reveals that these consist mostly of re-prints of texts from antiquity, as well as the New Testament in the original Greek.

Table 17. Most Common Languages other than English for Materials Published in Ireland

Language	Publications
Irish	26,472
French	7,052
Latin	3,297
German	1,970
Spanish	923
Italian	462
Dutch	358
Danish	310
Scottish Gaelic	290
Ancient Greek	232

CONCLUSION

What has our computational analysis of the Irish presence in the published record revealed? Among other things, we learned:

- Jonathan Swift is the most popular Irish author, and *Gulliver's Travels* is the most popular work by an Irish author, where popularity is measured by library holdings.
- Publication patterns reveal emerging interest in Irish-related events (like the Easter Rising) and aspects of Irish culture (like folk dancing).
- Classic Irish authors like George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde endure alongside dynamic patterns of interest in contemporary authors.
- Works of fiction feature prominently in the Irish published record.
- Fantasy fiction and the Irish experience are popular topics for today's Irish authors.
- The percentage of materials published in Ireland that are attributable to an Irish author or creator has declined over time, while the proportion of materials published in Ireland that are about Ireland has increased.
- Top destinations for the global diffusion of Irish materials include countries in North America, Europe, and Asia/Pacific.
- Patterns of interest in the Irish presence shift and re-configure as the scale of analysis changes: for example, moving from global, to national, to sub-national.

While these findings are interesting in their own right, they also serve as *entrée* to more detailed future analyses around these topics, all contributing toward a thorough and nuanced understanding of the Irish presence in the published record.

Overarching the findings specific to the Irish presence is another, more general one:

The Irish or any other national presence in the published record is encapsulated in and distributed across library collections worldwide.

The published record in all its manifold expressions is scattered across a vast global network of libraries. Computational analysis of the Irish presence—or any national presence—is made possible by bibliographic and holdings data produced by libraries, and in particular, by the massive aggregation of this data in the WorldCat database. WorldCat is the closest approximation of the published record available, and is a unique and powerful source of intelligence about world literature and other forms of creative expression. The Irish presence can be circumscribed and lifted out of this library data–driven view of the published record, and explored as a distinct collection of materials.

The analysis in this study touches on only a fraction of Ireland's rich cultural, literary, and artistic legacy. Our findings remind us of the classic contributors and contributions to that legacy, as well as highlighting others with which we are perhaps not so familiar. The Irish poet John Boyle O'Reilly once described Ireland as "a fruitful mother of genius."³⁴ Our exploration of materials that feature Ireland as publisher, creator, and/or subject captures some of the features of this genius, through the use of library data as a window into the published record.

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NOTES

1. <http://www.oclc.org/en/worldcat.html>.
2. **Scotland:** Lavoie, Brian. 2013. *Not Scotch, but Rum: The Scope and Diffusion of the Scottish Presence in the Published Record*. Dublin, Ohio: OCLC Research. <http://www.oclc.org/research/publications/library/2013/2013-07r.html>;
New Zealand: Lavoie, Brian. 2014. *Kiwis in the Collection: The New Zealand Presence in the Published Record*. Dublin, Ohio: OCLC <http://www.oclc.org/research/publications/library/2014/oclcresearch-new-zealand-presence-2014-overview.html>;
Poland: Lavoie, Brian. 2017. "From Wrocław to Munich to Chicago—how Polish Materials are reflected in the World's Libraries." *Next* (blog). *Posted 21 August 2017*. <http://www.oclc.org/blog/main/from-wroclaw-to-munich-to-chicago-how-polish-materials-are-reflected-in-the-worlds-libraries/>.
3. Dempsey, Lorcan. 2017. "What is the Most Popular Irish Book?" *The Irish Times*. Posted 29 June 2017. <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/what-is-the-most-popular-irish-book-1.3136544>.
4. A library holding indicates that a library holds at least one copy of the publication in question in its collection. The library may have multiple copies of the publication, but these would all be represented by a single library holding.
5. <http://wiki.dbpedia.org/>.
6. See note 2. Lavoie, *Not Scotch But Rum*.
7. While birth on the island of Ireland is the general rule for establishing Irishness in this study, there are some exceptional cases where a person was born elsewhere, but nevertheless is identified as Irish. For example, the author Darren Shan (pen name for Darren O'Shaughnessy) was born in London, yet moved to Ireland at the age of six. He is identified as an Irish writer in Wikipedia. See "Darren Shan." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation. Last modified 7 February 2018, 18:50. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darren_Shan.
8. Including Dublin, Ohio, where the author works!
9. "Dublin (Disambiguation)." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation. Last modified 8 March 2016, 20:54. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dublin_\(disambiguation\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dublin_(disambiguation)).
10. "Irish Diaspora." Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation. Last modified 8 February 2018, 15:28. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_diaspora.
11. Kliff, Sarah. 2013. "The Irish-American Population is Seven Times Larger than Ireland." *Wonkblog*. *Washington Post*, 17 March 2013. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/03/17/the-irish-american-population-is-seven-times-larger-than-ireland/?utm_term=.28f7caa4b1a5.
12. Delaney, Enda. 2016. "Ireland is Finally Recognising the Potential of its Diaspora." *The Irish Times*, 12 April 2016, Life & Style. <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/abroad/generation-emigration/ireland-is-finally-recognising-the-potential-of-its-diaspora-1.2607655>.
13. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 2015. *Global Irish: Ireland's Diaspora Policy*. Government of Ireland, 3. <https://www.dfa.ie/media/globalirish/global-irish-irelands-diaspora-policy.pdf>.

14. Although we refer to Irish authors/creators as individuals or people for expositional ease, Irish-based corporate bodies (e.g., organizations, government agencies, businesses, etc.) sometimes occupy this role as well.
15. See, for example, the National Library of Australia's Service Charter: <http://www.nla.gov.au/service-charter>; the Swiss National Library's focus on Helvetica: <https://www.nb.admin.ch/snl/en/home/the-swiss-national-library---all-about-switzerland/mandate.html>; and the National Library of Poland's mission: <http://www.bn.org.pl/en/about-us/>.
16. For more information on the methodology for identifying a national presence in the published record, see our report on the Scottish national presence (See note 2. Lavoie, *Not Scotch But Rum*, 9-15.)
17. Note that publication dates do not always mark the first appearance of a new work; they could, for example, indicate a new edition of an existing work.
18. We examined the spike in 2005 of materials published in Ireland (and seen less prominently for materials published about Ireland and materials by Irish authors/creators). It does not appear to represent any significant publishing event or trend, and instead is likely the result of unusual cataloging activity.
19. See note 3.
20. Ibid., 26.
21. See note 2. Lavoie, *Kiwis in the Collection*, 11.
22. Admittedly, only a small part of this film is set in Northern Ireland, with the rest taking place in London.
23. Several Irish-born actors, known primarily for their film work, appeared in the ranking for 2000-2004. After some deliberation, we decided to exclude them: our thinking was that films are usually the collective creative expression of many contributors from both cast and crew. In this sense, the link between library holdings and popularity for individuals connected to films is more tenuous than say, the author of a novel. We acknowledge that an argument can also be made for their inclusion, so we note that if left in, Kenneth Branagh ranks fourth; Sam Neill ranks ninth, and Pierce Brosnan ranks tenth.
24. Rodgers, Beth. 2014. "LT Meade, the JK Rowling of her day, remembered 100 years on." *The Irish Times*, 26 October 2014, Culture. <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/lt-meade-the-jk-rowling-of-her-day-remembered-100-years-on-1.1977221>. It is worth mentioning that the 1970s British mystery series *The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes* included an episode featuring a character—Dixon Druce—co-created by Meade and her occasional collaborator Robert Eustace.
25. Results for 2016 are extrapolated from the number of publications in WorldCat as of July 2016.
26. Please note that the 2016 publication totals in figures 2, 3, and 4 are extrapolations from the six months of data available in the July 2016 WorldCat snapshot. The extrapolations were calculated by doubling the 2016 WorldCat results in order to produce a rough estimate of the total for the full year.

27. The spike in publications about James Joyce in 1978 is a mystery. We note that 1978 almost coincides with the 40th anniversary of the publication of Joyce's last novel, *Finnegan's Wake*, which was first published in 1939. We do see a large number of publications in 1978 pertaining to *Finnegan's Wake*—perhaps the approaching anniversary catalyzed additional scholarship about Joyce's last work. Admittedly, this is just speculation—perhaps a reader of this report can solve the puzzle!
28. On a related theme, Fintan O'Toole, writing in 2001, offers some interesting reflections on Irish fiction writers writing about Ireland, observing that the economic boom of the late 20th/early 21st century led to "the emergence of a frantic, globalized, dislocated Ireland that has deprived fiction writers of some of their traditional tools." O'Toole suggests that the traditional "national narrative" of "revival, revolution, repression and collapse" has been overtaken by events, but without an adequate replacement: "These days, it is by no means clear what the big story of Ireland actually is, or indeed that the whole notion of Ireland as a single framework has any validity." See "Writing the Boom." *The Irish Times*, 25 January 2001, 00:00. <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/writing-the-boom-1.273557>.
29. Although this table focuses on library holdings outside the island of Ireland, we note that the total holdings for the UK includes those for libraries located in Northern Ireland.
30. See Haynie, Devon. 2016. "10 Countries With the Most Irish Emigrants" *US News*, 17 March 2017, 08:30, Best Countries. <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2016-03-17/10-countries-with-the-most-irish-emigrants>.
31. Kenny, Ciara. 2015. "The Global Irish: Where do they Live?" *The Irish Times*, updated 4 February 2015, 14:04, Life & Style. <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/generation-emigration/the-global-irish-where-do-they-live-1.2089347>.
32. <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/about/mission.html>.
- 32b. Ebooks can present a special problem in regard to popularity rankings based on library holdings, in that they are often acquired as a collection, rather than individually selected. This problem can arise with other types of material as well, but is particularly apparent with ebooks. So the high ranking of the Irish language translation of Gujarati poetry—seemingly incongruous with its rather specialized subject matter—may reflect more the popularity of the ebook *collection* in which it is bundled, than the individual ebook itself. Nevertheless, whether its acquisition was intentional or accidental, it is a widely held Irish-language publication.
33. Irish language publications also include musical works featuring songs with Irish lyrics, often alongside other songs sung in English. The most popular work of this kind is the 1992 album *The Best of the Chieftains*, a compilation of songs by the Dublin-based Irish folk band—an interesting result in that the Chieftains' songs are mainly instrumentals! This is likely a cataloging quirk, perhaps related to the fact that several songs on the album have Irish titles.
34. The complete quote from O'Reilly is: "Poor Ireland is a fruitful mother of genius, but a barren nurse." See Jeffrey Roche, James, and Mary Murphy O'Reilly. 1891. *Life of John Boyle O'Reilly, Together with his Complete Poems and Speeches*. New York, NY: Cassell Publishing Company, 297. https://books.google.com/books/about/Life_of_John_Boyle_O_Reilly_Together_wit.html?id=SsgLAQAAIAAJ. The second part of the quote is interesting in light of the finding mentioned earlier that Irish authors seem to be less and less apt to publish domestically.



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