

# The Literary Tradition of Ireland



Ireland is popularly known as a nation of scholars and saints. Its literary tradition can be dated back to over a thousand years when monks began transcribing the Bible. Ireland is also one of the first nations that excelled in vernacular writing. It is the birth place of many legends and mythological stories. Ireland got actively twined into world

literature by the 18th century.

It was the Trinity College, Dublin that produced some of the greatest writers of literature the world has ever seen. The college is worth a visit and shelters the book of Durrow and Kells. Jonathan Swift, the author of Gulliver's travels is one of the first writers recognized internationally. He belonged to Dublin. Other prominent writers from Dublin include Oliver Goldsmith, Oscar Wilde and Clontarf. While Oliver Goldsmith dominated the theatre of the time, Clontarf specialized in horror stories. It was also during the age that Gaelic literature was revived.

Thomas Moore's poems greatly inspired many writers. 19th century was the golden era in Ireland literature. The period saw the birth and glory of writers like Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw. Shaw won the Nobel Prize for literature in the year 1925. He was a very prominent writer of the age and produced hilarious and thought provoking works. Oscar Wilde was recognized as the greatest satirist of the Victorian age. His works were known for their sparkling wit and dialogue. His characters attained life through his characterization.

His important works include The Importance of being Earnest, An Ideal Husband, and The Picture of Dorian Gray. Irish literature was taken to even greater heights by WB Yeats and Lady Gregory by opening the Abbey Theatre. JM Synge was another prominent writer of the period who realistically portrayed the life and times of ancient Ireland. His play 'Playboy of the Western World' gained rave reviews from critics. WB Yeats, the Nobel Prize Winner for literature in 1923, was one of the most famous poets of the day.

His poems truly touch upon the themes of nationalism and liberty. He was one of the dreamers of the period who craved for Irish Independence and voiced his views on liberty. Sean O' Casey was another prominent dramatist and poet of the period who took the matter of liberty to heart and developed ideas on it. James Joyce, the son of Dublin, is known for his works 'Ulysses' and 'Dubliners'.



On the 16th of June every year, Dublin celebrates the Blooms day, named after a character in his novel Ulysses. Other prominent writers of Ireland include Samuel Beckett and Flann O'Brien. The former is known for his absurd plays. His theories and views on existentialism are still held close to heart. His famous play 'Waiting for Godot' earned him the reputation of an absurdist writer. He also won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969. Another poet to have won the Nobel Prize is Seamus Heaney. He won the award in 1995. All these famous writers from Ireland have not just brought pride to their nation but have also gifted unique literary pieces to English literature.

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