Irish Maturation Narratives

In the *Poblacht na hEireann*, the famous proclamation of independence of the 1916 Easter Rising rebels, it was declared that “Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom”; that same year, James Joyce published his Bildungsroman, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, a depiction of childhood and adolescence foundational to the modern, and Modernist, coming-of-age narrative. The maturation narrative is arguably the dominant twentieth-century fiction genre of Ireland, as the newly-independent nation itself came of age. We will consider the links among discourses of colonial maturation, in which the maturation of the colonial subject is both necessary and impossible; nationalist exhortations to the children of Ireland to come of age; the primacy of the coming-of-age narrative in twentieth-century Irish fiction; the salience of gender to, and in, this most important Irish genre. In this course, then, we will examine the Irish maturation narrative genre, considering each text in its theoretical, historical, social, and political contexts.

*The Wild Irish Girl*, Sydney Owenson  
*Phineas Finn*, Anthony Trollope  
*The Picture of Dorian Gray*  
*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, James Joyce  
*The Land of Spices*, Kate O’Brien  
*The Country Girls*, Edna O’Brien  
*Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*, Roddy Doyle  
*The Butcher Boy*, Patrick McCabe  
*Down By The River*, Edna O’Brien  
*Are You Somebody? The Accidental Memoir of a Dublin Woman*, Nuala O’Faolain  
*The Dancers Dancing*, Eilis Ni Dhuibhne  
*The Dark*, John McGahern  
*The Gathering*, Anne Enright  
*The Last September*, Elizabeth Bowen