

Writing the Colonial Past in Postcolonial Ireland: an Anglo-Irish Response

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ABSTRACT: Whilst colonialism has left very visible impacts on Ireland's landscapes, people, culture and identity, it has also left a significant imprint on Irish historical imaginations and on scholarship. One of the legacies of colonialism in Ireland and elsewhere is its effect on how we understand and approach the past. In the Irish context one dominant narrative has been that which has painted the colonial community (the Anglo-Irish) as a class of alien Others who lived parasitically off Irish land and labour and were out-of-place in the Irish landscape both during colonialism and after it. In this paper I explore one mid-twentieth Anglo-Irish response to this narrative, Elizabeth Bowen's *Bowen's Court* (1942). In doing so, I trace the evolving relationships that members of a colonial family had with Ireland as documented within the spaces of the text to reveal a more spatially nuanced view of the position of the Anglo-Irish in the Irish landscape.

Whilst colonialism has left very visible impacts on Ireland's landscapes, people, culture and identity, it has also left a significant imprint on Irish historical imaginations and on scholarship. One of the legacies of colonialism in Ireland and elsewhere is its effect on how we understand and approach the past. In many instances post-independence histories have been as pointed and positioned in their anti-colonial agendas as those produced under colonialism.¹ Attempting to move beyond the kind of oppositional either/or stalemate that such histories produce, postcolonial approaches seek to bring the messiness of the colonial encounter and its legacy to the surface by delving into subjective and localized experiences so as to highlight nuances and contradictions that disrupt dominant historical narratives. In the Irish context, one dominant narrative has been that which has painted the colonial community (the Anglo-Irish) – as a class of exploitative alien Others who lived parasitically off Irish land and labor and remained out of place in the Irish landscape from their arrival in the seventeenth century until their decline in the early-twentieth century.² This image has circulated in history books as well as in art, literature, and the popular press; and while this view has been challenged by revisionist historians, debates between revisionists, anti-revisionists and post-revisionists in which scholars attempt to definitively explain the position of the colonial community in the national past have continued and stereotypes still circulate.³

Whilst there may be many ways in which such stereotypes can be challenged, one way, this paper argues, is through the examination of the imaginative geographies embedded in Anglo-Irish family history writing. Imaginative geographies, as representations of people and place through which authors document their relationships with place and with Others, are a useful lens for exploring the positions of communities who don't easily fit in or whose positions have been contested for a number of reasons. Firstly, imaginative geographies provide perspective on the various and often overlapping contexts in which people live (be they personal, local, regional, national, or international) and in which they experience different senses of identity. It

is well recognized that identities are not fixed but vary across space and time and that senses of identity are negotiated as people move through the spaces, places, and contexts in which lives are lived. The Anglo-Irish were not a homogenous spatial group.⁴ Families, with varied amounts of land and wealth, were scattered across the island and had complex entanglements with Ireland through a medley of social spaces from houses and parks to stable-yards and estate offices, from village fairs, local hunts and race-meetings, to courtrooms, political organizations and social clubs, some of which were exclusive but many of which were hybrid.⁵ Their money and status made them mobile and their connections with England and with empire meant that they had broad social networks and that many were in the habit of travelling. Moreover, given the long history of such families in Ireland, during which fortunes were lost and won, estates expanded and contracted, and people moved and married; the geographies of different generations varied with time, wealth, and fashion. Imaginative geographies, and in particular those embedded in family history and autobiography, capture these varied and shifting spaces.

Secondly, seen as expressions of identity through which groups articulate relationships with selves and Others, affiliating with some groups and spaces and distancing themselves from other groups and other spaces, imaginative geographies provide perspectives on the complicated and often contradictory kinds of relationships that people have with the places they occupy and the people they live among. The structuring impulse that underpins imaginative geographies, therefore, can enable us to trace the connections that the Anglo-Irish had with Ireland through the varied spaces that constituted their world. This is important because while historical scholarship has positioned the Anglo-Irish as a distinct class of Others who were either out-of-place in the Irish landscape or else but “shallowly grounded in the soil,” an analysis of their imaginative geographies can reveal more complex kinds of embeddedness and the different spaces in which embeddedness took place.⁶

Finally, as expressions of identity produced by communities themselves, imaginative geographies provide perspective on the ways in which groups see their own position in particular contexts and the relationships they think they have with those around them as opposed to the ways in which historians, sociologists, or anthropologists have written about them. Much of the writing on the position of the Anglo-Irish in Ireland has come from scholarship that has looked at that position from the perspective of Irish historical research and interpretation.⁷ Exploring Anglo-Ireland from an imaginative geographies perspective allows us to examine that positionality from within.⁸

However, as a perspective on the past written from within and written from the present, the historical geographer must also interrogate the seeming objectivity of such descriptions. As Derek Gregory has written, imaginative geographies “articulate the desires, fantasies, and fears of their authors and the grids of power between them and their ‘Others’” that emanate from and reflect those feelings.⁹ Reading Anglo-Irish autobiography and family texts as imaginative geographies, therefore, enables us to consider them not only as accounts of the past within which relationships are articulated, but as accounts which also tell us something of the contexts in which they were produced. This sense of an imaginative geography is recognized by the author of the Anglo-Irish family history that is the subject of this paper, Elizabeth Bowen (1899-1975), who acknowledged that “[i]n making the past their subject, writers respond instinctively to a general wish – they react to, voice, what is in the air around them.”¹⁰ Reading historical texts as imaginative geographies, therefore, enables us to consider how articulations of territorial identity reflect the contemporary concerns of their authors.¹¹

Attempts to identify and reveal such positionality have been at the heart of most imaginative geographies research. Early work in the field noted that texts about colonial societies had always been produced from particular vantage points, served specific agendas, and were imbued with

the ideologies of those that produced them. Such texts tended to represent colonial societies as Other, inferior, and often as wild, uncivilized, and in need of taming.¹² Later postcolonial writers, also recognizing the positionality of any text, examined more complicated colonial relationships that were documented in subjective forms of writing such as diaries and journals as well as imaginative literature.¹³ Such sources elucidated the local nuances in colonial experiences. Autobiographical and family history writing is another form of subjective and located story telling that documents the intersection of life-worlds and broader social processes.¹⁴ Historical scholarship has traditionally been somewhat suspicious of the autobiographical account as an objective record. However, more recent work by historians, as well as geographers, recognizes the importance of autobiographical texts as sources that follow the connections between biography, locality, and history and articulate relationships with place.¹⁵ Less work has been done on family history writing as either imaginative geographies or records of evolving territorial identities.

In this paper I examine one family history, Elizabeth Bowen's *Bowen's Court* (1942), as an expression of territorial identity.¹⁶ Written by Anglo-Irish novelist and commentator on Irish affairs, Elizabeth Bowen, this text documents the history of successive generations of the Bowen family in Ireland from the time of their first arrival as part of the seventeenth-century Cromwellian conquest to the author's own time in the early-twentieth century. As a writer of critical acclaim, Bowen has received significant attention from scholars.¹⁷ Whilst much work focuses on her fiction, her factual work on Anglo-Ireland, including *Bowen's Court*, has also been explored by those interested in her craft and in her relationship to and treatment of the Anglo-Irish past.¹⁸ Thus, while the nature of her Irishness has been much debated by those who have studied her work, most critics regard her as an authoritative voice on and from Anglo-Ireland.¹⁹ Centered on the family's ancestral home from which the text takes its title, *Bowen's Court* is a history of a house and a place as well as that of a family set within a wider history of a region, a country, and a colonial project that expanded across the Irish landscape, shaped it, but was resisted by it. As a set of local stories narrated as part of a wider story about colonization, anti-colonial resistance and decolonization, it is a useful text for exploring the local spaces in which those processes happened and the particular parts played by members of the Anglo-Irish community in that unfolding history. Written between 1939 and 1941, at a time when the Anglo-Irish had been "relegated within the national cultural imaginary to remnants of an historically disliked order, linked to dominant national constructions of rack-renting landlords and subjugated tenants," most contemporary analyses see the text as a response to the on-going animosity that existed in Ireland towards the Big House (a term used in Ireland to refer to the country houses of the gentry) and all that it represented.²⁰ Certainly Bowen was concerned about the position of Anglo-Ireland in post-independence Ireland, particularly in terms of how it fitted in with contemporary Irish culture as well as how it was perceived in Irish historical imaginations. She was also deeply aware of how these two issues were related. This is documented most explicitly in her essay "The Big House" published in *The New Statesman* (1940). Here she argued that while the old myths of the Anglo-Irish as "the heartless rich" had been broken down "from the point of view of the outside Irish world" the house, its occupants and its history were still seen in hostile terms.²¹ Bowen's response was to explore her own family's position in the Irish past, and to document their unfolding relationships with the landscape, history, and people of the new place in which they had settled. In doing so, Bowen has left us with a family history, consciously told as part of a wider colonial history of Ireland, and imbued with its own interpretations, embellishments, and absences, but through which evolving relationships with people and place are recorded. *Bowen's Court* is therefore not just a story within a story or a story about the past, but a conscious expression of territorial identity told to counteract the suspicion that surrounded the Irishness of the Anglo-Irish and their place in Ireland that prevailed in the post-independence period.

In this analysis of *Bowen's Court* as a record of evolving territorial identities I examine the spaces depicted within the text and the kinds of relationships with Ireland that are articulated therein. As a narrative that recounts ten generations of family experiences and the three hundred years of colonial history in which their lives were enmeshed, the analysis traces the expanding and contracting spaces of family members and their intersections with the wider historical landscape that the text depicts through an examination of five narrative themes: colonial origins, settler integration, the impacts of colonial policy, Irish resistance to colonialism, and Anglo-Irish alienation. Using these themes, I examine the particular territoriality of this Anglo-Irish family and the way in which the text comments on the shifting position of the Anglo-Irish community in Ireland throughout the colonial period and after it.

The geography of colonial origins

The text opens with an almost cartographic survey of the northeast corner of County Cork in which Bowen's Court is set and through which she describes its natural and built landscape of hills, valleys and rivers, towns, villages and roads, castles, demesnes, churches, and graveyards before settling in on her own house, eight miles from Shanballymore, thirteen miles from Mallow, twelve miles from Fermoy, eight miles from Mitchelstown and seven from Doneraile. In doing so Elizabeth presents a view of a peaceful and picturesque landscape best seen, she suggested, from the air. However, her references to a number of ruined castles, demesnes, abbeys, and barracks destroyed during Ireland's numerous wars illustrate that this was a country much fought over and while the survival of Bowen's Court—coupled with its distance from these other places—separates it from them and their history, her text acknowledges the relationship between her family and the colonial project by which they first came to Ireland. Their house, she tells the reader, was "imposed on seized" land and "built in the rulers' ruling tradition," as were other colonial houses in the vicinity.²² This opening chapter sets the scene for a family story that begins as part of the history of seventeenth-century conquest and colonization but which, once established, went its own way. The first of the Bowens to arrive in Ireland (Henry I) came in 1652 to serve with the Cromwellian occupying army and for this service he received eight hundred acres in Farahy, north Cork. This grant was produced by the dispossession of a previous occupant and the establishment of the Bowens in the Irish landscape. Elizabeth acknowledged the particularly aggressive nature of the Cromwellian settlement and its impact on the Irish people and landscape, both in this text and in her other writings on Ireland.²³ Here she argued that they were "hired toughs" who had come "fresh, and eager for Irish blood" and that theirs was a story that had "no moral."²⁴

However, while Bowen presented an account of her family's history as part of the Cromwellian conquest, confiscation, displacement, and plantation; part of a history that she presented as turbulent, violent and unjust; her telling of the more particular history and geography of her own family within that project complicates the narrative. Unlike his fellow Cromwellians who were Englishmen, Henry Bowen came from the Gower Peninsula in Wales and as a Celt he was ethnically different from them and closer to the Irish. Wales, she argued, was much like Ireland. However, Gower had grown overpopulated and as a result Henry moved to England where he joined the King's forces. Being "careless and sensual", with an "unruly and desperate spirit," and having loyalties that were deemed questionable, Henry was sent to Ireland, where, it was thought, that his temperament would be better suited.²⁵ In Ireland, however, Henry did not integrate with his fellow Cromwellians. Not only was he ethnically different from those around him who were soon "showing the Irish what was what," but he also distanced himself from them physically, living isolated and aloof and "in a beggarly way" on his estate.²⁶ Moreover, unlike them he did not bring his wife and family to Ireland and when they followed him there

he shunned them, after which they returned to Gower. He did, however, have a propensity for hawking and he brought his own birds over from Wales. This caused further conflict between him and his Cromwellian neighbors who considered hawking to be “ungodly and frivolous” and discouraged it due to the fact that it might result in fraternizing with the local population.²⁷

Henry’s geography, explained in terms of his origins as a Welshman, his out-of-placeness in England, his precarious loyalties to the crown, his eventual self-imposed isolation in Ireland, and his possible interaction with local people, distances him from the phase of colonial history that brought him to, and provided him with property in, Ireland. However, Henry was followed to Ireland by his son John (John I), who came with a second wave of Cromwellian soldiers. This Bowen did not receive lands for his services but he did inherit his father’s property, which he expanded by marrying into a neighboring Cromwellian family. In doing so, John extended the Bowen territorial foothold in Ireland and consolidated the Cromwellian connection. However, this was not a happy marriage of families and it may have been one that was forced upon John by his father who stipulated in his will that his son would be disinherited if he married Elizabeth Cushin, the daughter of the dispossessed Catholic on whose lands the Bowens had settled. Thus, in spite of his disregard for Cromwellian society and supposed own interaction with the Irish, Henry I knew how and where to draw the line. John’s Cromwellian wife, however, died unexpectedly. This freed John from his entanglements and allowed him to move to Limerick where he took up residence with a woman of unspecified origin and with whom he had a daughter. To do so he had to relinquish his hold over the estate, which became the responsibility of his first wife’s family until his sons were of inheritable age.

In telling the story of two generations of Bowens in Ireland, Elizabeth presented her family as very much part of the colonial project, through which they received and extended their land and their lines in Ireland. Her account of their Welsh origins, however, and of the particular kinds of engagements they had in Ireland, are shown as distancing them from the broader Cromwellian and English colonial program. These Welsh origins and their general difference from their wider society with whom they arrived is a repeated theme throughout the text. As Elizabeth explained, it was from “a certain independence and cynicism brought with them from Wales” that her family had always remained somewhat apart from colonial society.²⁸ Unlike others, they did not receive peerages as rewards for supporting the Union of 1800. They were, she argued, too isolated from society, politically inactive and not showy enough.²⁹ Moreover, their loyalty to the colonial authority was different to that of the wider Anglo-Irish community because while they had received their land “through England” they did not have other ties of loyalty there.³⁰ Therefore, whilst a portrait of Olivier Cromwell was to hang on the walls of Bowen’s Court for generations to come, a reminder of the manner of their arrival, and an acknowledged sense of Cromwellian origin and entitlement in Ireland would continue to characterize the family spirit, symbols of their other origins could be seen on family artefacts. The household silver was embellished with hawks, a reminder that Henry’s birds came from Wales, or stags, an emblem that was on the original Bowen family crest before they came to Ireland, while the house itself took its name from Court House, the family’s Gower Residence.

The geography of settler integration

Parallel to the narrative of Bowen hybridity and deviation from the colonial norm is a story of the family’s increasing Irishness. Bowen developed this theme by showing the ways members of her family gradually began to engage with and feel part of the landscape in which they had settled. As roots deepened, family lines extended and as the geographies of the protagonists in this story expanded, so too did their sense of belonging in Ireland. John II was the first Bowen born in Ireland and he and his siblings “felt indigenous.”³¹ This generation married

into neighboring families thereby extending the family network and possessions. It is the Henry of the next generation, Henry III, however, who becomes the most deeply Irish. This child was born "delicate" and, following the Irish custom in such crises, the local people sent out for the skin of a newly slaughtered sheep in whose "life-heat" they could wrap the "half-living child."³² Having saved him, they proceeded to call him "Cooleen" and Elizabeth informs her reader that "in spite of his ancestry" they had for him a respect that they generally reserved only for their own "natural lords."³³ Moreover, having lost both his parents in infancy, he spent significant time in the houses of his extended family that had settled in neighboring counties. By adulthood he "felt as Irish as Lord Muskerry," and as such was regarded as the "the first Irish Bowen to come to full bloom."³⁴ Thus within four generations, the Bowens both felt Irish and appeared Irish and when Henry IV went to England to be educated in 1799 Elizabeth suggests that he was probably by then easily identifiable as Other by his Irish brogue.

Settler integration can also be traced through their relationship with the landscape. Early in the text Elizabeth imagines the relationship between Henry I and his newly acquired land. "[U]nlike some of the settlers around him" Henry, she argued, was "not new to the possession of land" and may even have had "a physical love of it."³⁵ This love he invested into his estate as he traversed it on horseback and beat out his boundaries himself. John I, in spite of extending the property, was less preoccupied with his land. By contrast, his children, however, under the direction of their grandfather, had horses and hounds, and through them came to know their own land and the neighboring places they were to marry into. Such was Cooleen's involvement with his Cork estate that he choose not to flee the country in the late-eighteenth-century, despite the provincialism of the society in which he lived and the increasing political instability of the period. With many Anglo-Irish families abandoning their estates to live as absentees in England, he was too closely connected with his region to leave: "[H]e was Henry Cole Bowen of Kilbolane, Ballymackey and Farahy. . . . He was too proud to spend his rents being just less showy than the gentlemen of Dublin, London or Bath. . . . He posed himself here in Mallow, in the rich positiveness of a provincial society."³⁶

The most significant achievement of this "full bloom" Irish Bowen was his building of Bowen's Court. The construction of the house, as told by Elizabeth, marks an important moment in the Bowen history in Ireland. In spite of having been "[i]mposed on seized land [and] built in the rulers ruling tradition,"³⁷ it was not only built by the first Irish Bowen but it was also constructed of local rock by local laborers. Moreover, the foundation stone of the house, she tells the reader, was laid in 1775, the same year that settler Henry Grattan entered the Patriot Party to lobby for the establishment of an Irish parliament in Ireland. Her history of the house, therefore, positions both it and her family in a very particular way as part of the Irish landscape and as part of the settler story in Ireland. For Bowen, this story was as much architectural, intellectual and aesthetic as it was political. While the Anglo-Irish began "rather roughly" once settled they began to ornament:

[T]hese new settlers who had been imposed on Ireland began to wish to add something to life. The security that they had, by the eighteenth century, however ignobly gained, they did not use quite ignobly.³⁸

In doing so they built fine houses, in which they stocked libraries, hung paintings, ornamented ceilings and mantelpieces, and around which they planned and planted parks and demesnes and as they did their earlier "harsh, individual enterprise" gave way to a more refined protestant nationalism.³⁹

The Bowen house was, as described by Elizabeth, particularly Irish. When built, the house absorbed and reflected the atmosphere of the surrounding landscape. The rooms, she said, took their character “chiefly from the views from their windows,” whilst outside the sheds had “the same grey gleam” one sees over the wider countryside.⁴⁰ Those who came to occupy the house were infused with its character. As a result, the house that “made all the succeeding Bowens.”⁴¹ Thus while Bowen integration had begun in the seventeenth century, the building of the house marked a point of much more profound integration where people and place become one. Moreover, laying the foundation at the moment when patriot politics was taking root, Bowen could present the history of her house as part of the wider history of growing Anglo-Irish political commitment and aesthetic contribution to Ireland.

Evidence of this commitment shines through her account of those subsequent Bowen patriarchs and matriarchs who displayed staying power comparable to that of Henry III. Henry V remained in Mallow to become a Justice of the Peace and a road builder despite the fact that, as Elizabeth imagined it, he may have been more suited to Paris than to Cork. Similarly, an Aunt Sarah was described as one who was deeply attached to her locality: “[A] person born to *se faire valoir*, and though, like Henry III, she lived and died in the provinces, she could raise to a high level her own world.”⁴² Even those who chose to leave Bowen’s Court retained an attachment to its surrounding landscape. Henry VI, Elizabeth’s father, was one such character. He was not interested in many of the practices that characterized the life of a late-nineteenth-century country gentleman such as farming, horses, servants, showiness, or social discrimination. Yet his attachment to the Bowen landscape could not be questioned: “His love of the country, his Ballyhoura country, was too deeply innate to be emotional – he had no contact with it through farming or sport, but all the same this was an informed love, for Henry knew about rocks and trees.”⁴³ When trouble erupted in Ireland in 1916, this Henry, distressed over being out of “his own country,” returned to join the Four Courts division of the Veteran Corps to help put down the republican revolt.⁴⁴

Involvement, resilience, and durability in Ireland were presented as Bowen characteristics and were used to illustrate the extent to which this family had become rooted in the Irish landscape. Thus while they may have originated from the interweaving strands of Welsh and English colonial histories in Ireland, as the text progresses their increasing integration into the country and landscape becomes apparent. However, according to Elizabeth, it was not just the Bowens who had come to affiliate with Ireland, but rather that, post-1770 settler loyalties in general were now with their new country:

This new wish in the new Irish to see Ireland autonomous was in more than the head and the conscious will. Ireland had worked on them, through their senses, their nerves, their loves. They had come to share with the people round them sentiments, memories, interests, affinities. The grafting-on had been, at least where *they* were concerned, complete.⁴⁵

The local geographies traced in Bowen’s story then are ones which illustrate the ways in which her family members extended their personal orbits across the Irish landscape, came to know and love their territory, and began to make their mark on the countryside. As such it is a particular account of settler integration and of the spaces in which that happened. However, told as a story within a story it is one which suggests a wider narrative of settler integration and while she suggested that her family had more staying power than other Anglo-Irish families, the text did not suggest that settler commitment was unique to them.

The impacts of English colonial policy

A third narrative threading through Bowen's history recounts the impacts of English colonial policy on Ireland. Her story began with the seventeenth century and was told largely at the abstract national scale because, and with a few exceptions, she made little comment upon the ways that the Bowens experienced, interpreted, negotiated, or resisted English colonial policy of that period of "greed, roughness and panic."⁴⁶ The reasons for this stem from the fact that in spite of receiving their lands through colonization, Bowen difference meant that, in the novelist's view, they were always to some extent outsiders in that system. Her overview of the colonial period began with the death of Elizabeth I (1603) and the flight of the earls (1607) which she argues brought to an end what had been "a gallant era" in "both countries."⁴⁷ As the century progressed, the situation in Ireland, which, according to Bowen, was already "painful and dangerous" became "more complicated" as "[n]ew elements came in" and as they did "in Ireland as well as in England the new English middle class policy began to make itself felt."⁴⁸ This policy, designed to serve the interests of the burghess class, was based on "solicitude for investment" and was, wrote Bowen, predicated on the "complete subjugation and exploitation of Ireland."⁴⁹ As a result, Ireland, which was "already dense with her own sorrows" came to reflect "English changes as a cloud reflects distant changing light."⁵⁰ In such an account, Ireland is presented as a place embroiled within a wave of wider social forces that had enveloped England and were now spilling over onto the sister isle. This theme is maintained through her account of the later-seventeenth century when again she saw Ireland as a territory on which English political struggles were fought out. Her account of the 1641 rebellion represented that war as a conflict between English royalist and English confederate forces entangled with local factions that displayed various and often shifting objectives rather than as a war of anti-colonial resistance. The aftermath was that the country was left "prostrate" and ready for confiscation, division, and redistribution in a manner amenable to commercial interests.⁵¹ However, while Henry was a participant in that conquest and a receiver of its spoils, very little is said of his involvements other than that he was an idiosyncratic character and liked to live in isolation. Similarly, nothing of John I's role in the Cromwellian conquest, confiscation, or redistribution is disclosed other than the fact that he did not receive land for his services.

While the seventeenth-century colonial landscape was characterized by successive waves of conquest and confiscation, the eighteenth-century terrain was presented as a place controlled from across the channel through a system of legislation that was "restrictive and disabling" for the majority population.⁵² Catholics could not hold office in either state or army, were not allowed to act as grand jurors or to vote, and were not entitled to purchase land or to obtain leases for more than thirty-one years. Such restrictions made it impossible for the indigenous gentry to recover territorial power while a law which stipulated that Catholic estates be divided among all male heirs unless the eldest "conformed," had the effect of "shredding up" Irish estates and reducing families to the "small-holder way of life."⁵³ Bowen suggested that the impacts of this kind of legislation were felt across the Irish social spectrum: "The same system [of restrictions] that denied the Catholic gentry their status pushed the poor right under - they suffered atrociously."⁵⁴ Repeated reference to the poverty and the suppressed position of the broader Irish population reinforced Bowen's depiction of an island crippled by colonial rule. However, while sympathetic to the position of the mass of population and critical of colonialism, it was a criticism directed at the English government rather than at the Anglo-Irish community in Ireland, who she also identified as victims of this system and themselves powerless to effect change. Feeling "the brunt of restrictive English laws," eighteenth-century landlords, she argued, were forced to bear down

on tenants already burdened by the government's Hearth Tax and, to whatever extent social discrimination was recognized, "under England's aegis, everything was being done to keep the Anglo-Irish tied to the status quo."⁵⁵ This was primarily maintained through bribery. Peerages were issued in response to successive crises which, as Bowen reported, led some to argue that there were more peers in Ireland than sense. As outlined above, the Bowens did not participate in the peerage system, they being too "remote" and too "inactive in public life" to be "worth buying."⁵⁶

This situation worsened in the nineteenth century. In response to the downturn in the economy that followed England's war with revolutionary France, Irish landlords were, according to Bowen, encouraged to break up small holdings, evict tenants and consolidate estates for grazing. The results were poverty, landless distress and rural chaos. However, while Bowen recognized that Protestant prosperity was achieved at "native Catholic expense" and that the "untouchability of ruling interests in Ireland" was an obstacle to reform, colonialism was presented largely as an externally imposed system rather than the outcome of the activities of individuals living in Ireland.⁵⁷ Repeatedly it is England that is blamed for the worsening situation in Ireland. For example, in the eighteenth century: "Ireland was knit to England, and checked by England, inside a system that, because it impeded growth, had become not only corrupt but damaging."⁵⁸ Bowen concluded that the English government failed to recognize the need for reform, in part because it was unable to see the Irish as anything other than "aliens" or as "subhuman - potato eaters, worshippers of the Pope's toe."⁵⁹ Gladstone was particularly singled out as a symbol of English mismanagement, for despite his reforming intentions, she argued that he had an "incomplete grasp of Irish realities," that he was "loath to consult Irish opinion," and that consequently he carried out his reforms in the "in the dark."⁶⁰ These problems, she saw, as the "ills of too-distant government."⁶¹ In Bowen's view, further problems arose from the fact that Irish revenues were not spent in Ireland but were used to meet imperial expenditure abroad.

Thus it can be seen that Bowen documented the largely negative impacts of three centuries of English colonial policy in Ireland as a broad and sweeping history that almost blows in from across the channel. In doing so, her account distanced herself, her family, and her community from a project with which they were in fact deeply implicated. Charting initial seventeenth-century conquest and confiscation, the restrictive and disabling legislation of the eighteenth century, and nineteenth-century exploitation and mismanagement, she condemned English colonial policy and managed to separate herself from it ideologically. Moreover, presenting colonial policy as a product of distant governance, which had a negative impact on Anglo-Irish families and as such undermined their loyalty to a government that increasingly made their position in Ireland vulnerable, she also distanced her community from it. Finally while there was very little detail on the interactions of the Bowens with the system, what there was suggests that the Bowen propensity for independent lifestyles, their ambiguous loyalty to England that came with their Welsh origins, their detachment from public life, and the fact that they were not well-off, meant that they were always outsiders to that system. Recounting the views of nineteenth-century Robert Bowen and his wife Eliza she stated that:

Though they were from now on to call themselves Unionists, to be England's dependents appealed to them no more than it ever had. Robert and Eliza, for their parts, had no time in which to be devoutly grateful to England for keeping Bowens Court where it stood—they were too busy keeping it there themselves.⁶²

Landscapes of resistance

A fourth theme in the Bowen story is one of on-going Irish anti-colonial resistance. Resistance against the colonial settler community had been present from the time of Henry I for although Cromwell had left the countryside "prostrate" in 1652, by the time of the restoration of Charles II in 1665, "all over Ireland the drums and trappings were to begin again," as the "[u]nrestored Catholics kept their eyes on lost land."⁶³ Bowen reported that at this time settler families lived in fear of the dispossessed Irish. Henry I had stipulated in his will that his son John should not marry Elizabeth Cushin and in his later years he suffered from hallucinations that the native Irish were coming to retake their land. While the eighteenth century was primarily a period of peace and prosperity for settler families, towards the end of the century there was increasing agitation against Munster landlords. These however, she argued, were primarily a response to problems that were caused by England and not always the landlord's fault. Bowen's Court itself was a target of attack in 1798 and this she blamed on the fact that the "Englishified airs" of Henry IV (the one Bowen who had rejected his Irish identity for what he saw as a more sophisticated Englishness) caused antagonism among the local community.⁶⁴ This is not to deny that violence against landlords was not always justified: "Disaffection was in the air of those poisoned days; there were a dozen reasons to strike at the Big House."⁶⁵

Despite the failures of 1798 and 1803, violence against the landed community continued and by 1820 it was felt that "the entire country was in arms and plotting to slay its betters."⁶⁶ However, while there were significant threats made against Anglo-Irish houses and families, Bowen's history also showed that more complex relations between landed and non-landed communities existed. It was, she reported, the servant of a local clergyman who had acted in the family's interests and saved Bowen's Court from attack in 1798; and the account of the Doneraile Conspiracy of 1821, where a Cork landlord was accused of harboring Whiteboy criminals, suggests that relations between the landed gentry and resistance movements were not always oppositional. As the century progressed, the situation in the countryside worsened. By the 1870s, as Bowen noted, resistance against landlords was so great that the Bowen family, along with other landed families in the area, had to barricade themselves into their house and by 1918, the north Cork settler landscape was again under attack: "North of the Galtees, south of the Galtees, familiar military movement was to announce itself; and that landscape, known to so many generals, was soon mapped for other campaigns. Once more the old positions were fought for: once more, bridges were blown up."⁶⁷

This was the period in which violence against the Big House was most intensive and many in the Bowen's Court neighborhood were burnt. Bowen's Court however, while targeted, was not attacked. This Elizabeth attributed to the fact that her father had maintained positive relations with the community despite the fact that their politics differed. Consequently, as in 1798, a member of the local community acted in support of the family. But, as the civil war followed the Anglo-Irish war, the Big Houses that did survive were commandeered by republican forces. Mitchelstown Castle and neighboring Anne's Grove were taken, as was Bowen's Court. However, while Mitchelstown Castle was burnt to the ground and while those who occupied Bowen's Court made preparations to destroy the house, no real damage was caused. All the valuables had been moved to safety in a neighboring cottage before the republicans had arrived and all that was found missing after their departure was a pair of leather gaiters. Moreover, from Aunt Sarah's account of the manner in which they had left the house, it appears that the republicans had spent much of their time reading volumes of Kipling.

Bowen's history of resistance therefore can be seen to illustrate that while the landscape was largely settled and peaceful, the threat of violence against landlords was always present

during the colonial period. When speaking of Ireland, she argues, one does not say “that war began again, but that war resumed.”⁶⁸ Moreover, while violence always threatened the position of the landed class, Bowen made it clear that landlord-community relations were more complex than traditional oppositional narratives might suggest. Bowen’s Court was saved on two occasions by members of the local community and the fact that valuables were hidden in a local cottage during the civil war suggests that there was significant loyalty between the Bowens and some of the Irish families that surrounded them. Moreover, Bowen’s narrative showed sympathy for all sides who suffered during the troubled decades of early-twentieth century, including the neighboring Sinn Féin families, “some of whom had had been our family’s friends.”⁶⁹

Anglo-Irish alienation

A final theme that permeates Bowen’s text is that of Anglo-Irish alienation. Despite her attempts to locate her community in Ireland, to connect their histories with that of the wider island and to document their attachment to its landscape, her repeated references to the isolation of the house, the self-contained nature of family life, their physical and psychological distance from people, and their unawareness of the realities of Irish life capture the extent to which they always were to some extent out-of-place in the Irish landscape.⁷⁰ The opening chapter provides a picturesque survey of the landscape that captures her love of the region but also her distance from it. While “lights burn late in cottages” and “music gives the darkness a pulse,” for Bowen “the country conceals its pattern of life.” However, while she felt that the landscape had “an inherent emptiness of its own,” her depictions of gentry homes set “deep in trees at the end of long avenues,” accessed through gate lodges and surrounded by high walls illustrate that her community was intentionally detached from the wider community.⁷¹ From these spaces, she argued, one could feel “the beat and air of light . . . see the plastic emptiness of the fields . . . and hear nothing but the humming telegraph wires.” From her own house, “tucked rather deeply into a crease of trees,” all one could see were “lawns up to the skyline.”⁷² As a result, on wet days, she said “the steady sough of rain in demesne tress induces by day a timeless and rather soothing melancholy,” whilst the “penetrating surrounding silence” made it a good house to sleep and wake up in.⁷³ The cut-off timelessness and purposelessness that one experienced at Bowen’s Court is also captured in her fiction and used to exemplify Anglo-Irish experience. Characters in *The Last September*, for example, repeatedly express their frustration at not having anything to do and Bowen depicts the family as flowers preserved in a glass paperweight.⁷⁴ Thus, while settler society had come to “ornament” the country in the eighteenth century, by the end of the nineteenth century such families had become primarily ornamental.

Furthering the cut-off-ness of life in the Big House as explained by Bowen is the fact that depictions or accounts of local people rarely feature in her chronicle and when they do, their appearance is vague and nondescript. Bowen’s failure to make the local inhabitants visible has been recognized as a feature of both her biographical and fictional work on Ireland, reflecting her own alienation from the wider population amongst whom she lived intermittently.⁷⁵ Having left Ireland at the age of seven, Bowen’s experience of being Anglo-Irish in Ireland was unique. Unlike others of her class who lived permanently in Ireland, she shuttled back and forth across the Irish Sea and much of her time in Ireland was spent in Dublin. However, the kind of isolation that Bowen depicts in her work, she argued, was both typically Bowen, and therefore part familial, and also typically Anglo-Irish and as such part cultural inheritance. The idiosyncratic colonel (Henry I) had shut himself up in his castle and he had forbid John I to marry into the indigenous community. This might suggest that there were initial lines of interaction but that they were quickly cut off, for to “have married a papist, at that time, would have spelled ruin.”⁷⁶ Thus, despite the extent to which Henry I or subsequent Bowens deviated from the Cromwellian or

colonial norm, they nonetheless had a religious belief in their own right to possess. "They were" she says, "conquering Protestants, whether they knew it or not". The "Cromwellian justification" was in the family fiber and "innate conviction was at the root of their zest."⁷⁷

Subsequent Bowens mixed and married within their own class as did their neighbors. Elizabeth's mother was also Anglo-Irish. Her family settled with the Elizabethan conquest. That seventh generation settler families should continue to marry into other protestant families of colonial origin provides a sense of the strength of a connectedness maintained by tradition despite the three hundred years that intervened.

However, while long avenues maintained the physical distance between settler and indigenous communities, attitudes of superiority and territorial right also served to reinforce it ideologically. This kind of self-sustaining isolation was passed from generation to generation as children were socialized into these isolated and centripetal worlds. The extracts from the children's diaries from 1867 that she includes with the text provide clear indication that visiting and being visited by neighboring Big Houses was a ritual of Anglo-Irish existence. However, life for the children she argued was "congested and isolated."⁷⁸ As a child Bowen experienced this isolation herself, albeit unknowingly and uncaringly. In her childhood memoir, *Seven Winters: Memories of a Dublin Childhood* (1942), she recalls that she did not realize until she was seven that she was part of a minority religion and that, while she knew that Catholics existed, she met few of them. They, she says, were "'the others,' whose world lay alongside ours but never touched."⁷⁹ Scarcely mixing with children or adults from the majority population she knew nothing of Irish fairy stories and her young geographical imagination was occupied with England, South-Africa, and the Russo-Japanese war.

The Bowens also maintained their distance from the Ireland outside their gates by not engaging in wider contemporary politics. Henry Bowen III had been a member of the Protestant Yeomanry in Mallow in the late-eighteenth century. However, Henry was shy and in general the Bowens were inactive in public life. This inactivity, she explains, was in part due to their remoteness in north Cork, the often precariousness of their finances, and on that familial "independence and cynicism" that they had brought from Wales.⁸⁰ When trouble erupted in the region in 1829, the family further withdrew from local activities after which "Ireland, beyond their property's bounds, offered them no opening or function."⁸¹ As outlined above, Robert and Eliza focused all their energies on the running of their own house with little time for outside concerns. In the spring of 1844, during a period of intense political unrest, they took a trip to the capital. As Bowen records it they "treaded their way unnoticed through the tensed-up city: they made no impact on it, it made no impact on them."⁸² Similarly, the Parnell scandal of the 1890s and the Irish Celtic Revival were events to which the family were largely indifferent.

However, whatever the particularity of Bowen isolation, the more general Anglo-Irish isolation that her work documents was also "an affair of origin" and the Bowens too were subject to this. As an "imposed" class they had to maintain their apartness from the wider community and this, she argues, was facilitated by focusing inwards on their own worlds as opposed to outwards on the Irish landscape.⁸³ As she explained it:

The upkeep of the place takes its tax not only of physical energy but of psychic energies people hardly know that they give. Each of these houses, with its intense, centripetal life, is isolated by something very much more lasting than the physical fact of space: the isolation is innate; it is an affair of origin.⁸⁴

This isolation was an inevitable outcome of being colonial. New settlers had to subdue any personal emotions they may have had on the project that gave them their positions and their

authority in Ireland or on the people who had been dispossessed in the processes. As Bowen explains it:

I have said of the Ascendancy of the seventeen-fifties that feeling might have been fatal to it. The structure of the great Anglo-Irish society was raised over a country in martyrdom. To enjoy prosperity one had to exclude feeling, or keep it within the prescribed bounds.⁸⁵

Bowen's text therefore chronicles Anglo-Irish isolation, explains it as an inevitable outcome of colonialism and argued that once established it was self-sustaining. Like the characters in *The Last September* outlined above, the Anglo-Irish of *Bowen's Court* were also trapped in a paperweight. Many saw their predicament as inevitable. Commenting on the exploitative nature of landlord behavior in Ireland in the 1880s, George Moore argued that while he recognized it as unjust, it was "impossible" for him, as it was for the rest of his class "to do otherwise."⁸⁶

However, to whatever extent this isolation was an inevitable outcome of colonialism, a definite and enduring outcome of their coloniality was their social and cultural isolation from the Irish population. While neither commented on nor lamented directly in *Bowen's Court*, their distance from the life-worlds of the Irish people is evident. Bowen knew that in the eighteenth century an underground Gaelic culture lay hidden in the "untouched country the settlers did not know". There, through the "ceaseless poetry of lament" the Irish grieved over lost land.⁸⁷ Embedded in this ballad history of Ireland was an alternative imaginative geography which told the story of the Irish landscape as one of occupation and displacement in which the landed class were depicted as exploitative foreign Others regardless of their own sense of integration, their contribution to Irish politics, or their ornamentation of the landscape. Anglo-Irish writers Somerville and Ross, who had more direct interaction with Irish culture than did Bowen, but who were also very much aware of the inability of the Anglo-Irish to comprehend it, capture the frustration that many felt towards this other antagonistic Ireland. Judith Talbot-Lowry, whilst attending a Catholic concert in *Mount Music* (1919), discerned "a sort of lyrical geography" through which Ireland was imagined and grievances remembered. She observed and remarked:

[T]he map of Ireland set to music! Bantry Bay, Killarney, the Mountains of Somewhere, the Waters of Somewhere else, all Irish, of course! I get so sick of Ireland and her endearing young charms—and all the entreaties to Erin to remember! As if she ever forgot!⁸⁸

"Dispossessed people," Bowen argued, knew their land in the dark recesses of their own imaginations. Recording lost territory and the history of dispossession through poetry and song was a strategy for remembering that lost land. However, it was also one that perpetuated historical animosity between the two communities right through the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Some chose to be oblivious to this animosity. With regard to her eighteenth-century ancestors, Bowen argued: "If Ireland did not accept them, they did not know it" and this she saw as one of the major weakness of her class:

[I]t is in that unawareness of final rejection, unawareness of being looked out at from some secretive, opposed life, that the Anglo-Irish naive dignity and, even, tragedy seems to me to stand.⁸⁹

If writing was a medium through which animosity, however justified or however fantastic, was to be maintained it might also be a medium through which that animosity might be broken down. The retelling of the story of a house, along with the stories of its many inhabitants, their adventures,

idiosyncrasies, fears, phobias, avoidances and regrets, and their varied entanglements with those with whom they had arrived as well as with those among whom they lived was Bowen's attempt to record the history of this particular Anglo-Irish family in the Irish landscape so as to facilitate a better understanding of that class for posterity. In her essay on the Big House Bowen had called for a more inclusive and integrated Ireland in which the doors of the house might be opened, where the past "with its bitterness and barriers" might be rejected and where Irish and Anglo-Irish could "all meet."⁹⁰

Conclusion

A legacy of colonialism has been the way in which we write Irish history. Post-independence historiography has represented the colonial classes as alien Others and not properly part of the Irish landscape. Recent work on the Anglo-Irish has shown how members of this community who live in the Bowen region today remember the manner in which colonial heritage was largely ignored in scholarship throughout the twentieth century, as it was in heritage policy, and that they still feel the dominant view is one in which those of Anglo-Irish origin are seen as not quite Irish.⁹¹ Revisionist historians have taken a more inclusive approach to the colonial past, although this has been criticized for downplaying the exploitative nature of settlement, established and maintained by colonial conquest and policy. In an attempt to interrogate the position of the Anglo-Irish in the Irish past and to examine its relationship with Ireland, this paper has examined the imaginative geography embedded in one Anglo-Irish family history. In doing so, this analysis has traced an evolving territorial identity of a colonial family as woven through the spaces of the text. As such it presents a more spatially nuanced view of the position of the Anglo-Irish in the Irish landscape and the kinds of relationships they had with Ireland. In doing so, Bowen's geography may be seen as a form of ideological self-justification that employs a set of spatial strategies to write her community into the Irish landscape: depicting growing distance from the colonial project, claiming the friendship of local people, presenting themselves as inert when it came to acting upon their lives and livelihoods and placing agency with a colonial government from whom they had always been somewhat removed and with whose policies they did not agree. As such her text can be read as an expression of territorial identity in which the spatial nuances of Anglo-Irish experience and their impacts on Anglo-Irish identity are recorded. Analysis of other Anglo-Irish family history writing, of which there is much,⁹² reveal similar local nuances. Anglo-Irish cousins Somerville and Ross, for example, provide perspectives on the varied ways in which family members engaged with historical events and processes. In their account of the Fenian rebellion of the 1860s, they tell how Somerville's father provided lunch in the house for crown soldiers as well as a space on the lawn on which to carry out maneuvers, whilst at the same time a Somerville uncle, who was on amicable terms with Skibbereen Fenian O'Donovan Rossa, tended to the rebel forces in the outer fields of the estate.⁹³ Excavating this body of work as spatially nuanced accounts of the past through which territorial identities are articulated might therefore contribute to the problem of placing the Anglo-Irish in the Irish historical landscape.

Nash has argued that postcolonial geographers need to attend to colonialism "as general and global, and particular and local" and to critically engage with the grand narratives of colonialism as well as the "political implications of complex, untidy, differentiated and ambiguous local stories."⁹⁴ Those stories, in turn, can alert us to the spatial strategies of identity formation which legitimate the position of a community in a place, be they genuine, fantastical or politically motivated. In the case of *Bowen's Court*, we find an emphasis placed by Elizabeth Bowen on the distinctiveness of her family's trajectory which allows her to present them as atypical colonists, as curiously detached settlers, as almost subject to the very same colonial policies that maintained their privilege, as curiously unmoved by anticolonial ideology while also claiming a set of

personal ties to the local people and a deep sense of belonging in the Irish landscape. At the same time however, in reflecting upon her continuing status as an outsider, Bowen was conscious of the kind of anti-Anglo-Irish sentiment that persisted in post-independence Ireland and the manner in which it was rooted in the Irish historical imagination. *Bowen's Court* captures that wider sentiment that saw the Anglo-Irish as Other but at the same time challenges it.

Acknowledgements

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NOTES

- 1 Roy Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch: Connections in Irish and English History* (London: Penguin, 1995); George D. Boyce and Alan O'Day, *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy* (London: Routledge, 1996); Hugh Kearney, *Ireland: Contested Ideas of Nationalism and History* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2007); [Nicolas Canny, "Historians, Moral Judgement and National Communities: the Irish Dilemma", *European Review* 14 \(2006\): 401-410](#); Ronan Fanning, "'The great enchantment': uses and abuses of modern Irish history" in *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism*, ed. Ciaran Brady (Dublin, 1994); Stephen Howe, "Historiography" in *Ireland and the British empire*, ed. Kevin Kenny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 220-50; David Lloyd, "After History: Historicism and Irish Postcolonial Studies" in *Ireland and postcolonial theory*, eds. Claire Carroll and Patricia King (Cork: Cork University, 2003), 46-62.
- 2 For an analysis of the position of the Anglo-Irish in Irish historiography see: Geoffrey Curgenven Bolton, "The Anglo-Irish and the Historians" in *Irish Culture and Nationalism, 1750- 1950*, eds. Oliver MacDonagh, William Frederick Mandle, and Pauric Travers (London: Macmillan, 1983), 239-57; Declan Kiberd, *Anglo-Irish Attitudes* (Derry: Field Day, 1984); Lewis Perry Curtis, "Demonising the Irish Landlords since the Famine" in *Defying the Law of the Land: Agrarian Radicals in Irish History*, ed. Brian Casey (Dublin : History Press, 2013), 20-43; Karen Lysaght, "[Living in a Nation, a State or a Place?: The Protestant Gentry of County Cork,](#)" *National Identities* 11, no. 1 (2009): 59 - 71; Roy Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*.
- 3 A recent example of the stereotype can be seen in the 2007 film *The Wind the Shakes the Barley* which is set in early 1920s Ireland. In this movie the local landlord is depicted as the oppressive foreign Other in accent, and outlook as well as in his harsh treatment of his tenants. His execution by Irish rebels eventually removes him from the Irish landscape. Another example can be seen on the cover of the *Atlas of the Great Irish Famine* (2012) which displays the nineteenth-century painting "The Eviction" by Daniel MacDonal. In this painting the commanding and smartly dressed landlord is juxtaposed against his impoverished and pleading tenants as he takes the keys to the house of those being ejected. See John Crowley, William J Smith, and Mike Murphy, eds., *Atlas of the Great Irish Famine* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2012). Both these images illustrate the prevalence of the historical stereotype of the landed class s cruel and exploitative Others who are out-of-place in the Irish landscape and the way in which they continue to circulate in popular as well as academic representations.
- 4 Terence Dooley, *The Big Houses and Landed Estates of Ireland: a Research Guide*. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007); Patrick J. Duffy, "Colonial Spaces and Sites of Resistance: Landed Estates in Nineteenth Century Ireland" in *(Dis)placing empire : renegotiating British colonial*

- geographies*, eds. Lindsey Proudfoot and Michael Roche (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 15–40; Tom Dunne “A Gentleman’s Estate Should be a Moral School: Edgeworthstown in Fact and Fiction, 1760-1840” in *Longford: Essays in County History*, eds. Raymond Gillespie and Gerald Moran (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), 95–122; David Griffin, “Country Houses of County Laois” in *Laois History and Society: Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, eds. Padraig Lane and William Nolan (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1999), 563–585. Liam Kennedy, Kirby Miller, and Mark Graham, “The Long Retreat: Protestant Economy and Society 1660-1926” in *Longford: Essays in County History*, eds. Raymond Gillespie and Gerald Moran (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1991), 13–61; Anthony Malcomson, “The Erne Family, Estate and Archive c.1650 - c.1950” in *Fermanagh History and Society: Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, eds. Eileen Murphy and William Roulston (Dublin: Geography Publications, 2004), 203–240; [Lindsey Proudfoot, “Hybrid Space? Self and Other in Narratives of Landownership in Nineteenth Century Ireland,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 26, no. 2 \(2000\): 303–221](#); Lindsay Proudfoot, “Placing the Imaginary: Gosford Castle and the Gosford Estate c.1820-1900” in *Armagh History and Society: Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, eds. Art Hughes and William Nolan (Dublin: Geography Publications, 2001), 881–916; William Roulston, “Landlordism and Unionism in Tyrone 1868–1910” in *Tyrone History and Society: Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of and Irish County*, eds. William Nolan and Henry Jefferies (Dublin: Geography Publications, 2000), 267–290.
- 5 [Lindsay Proudfoot, “Hybrid space;”](#) Patrick J Duffy, “Colonial Spaces.”
 - 6 Toby Barnard, *Irish Protestant Ascents and Descents, 1641-1770* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 35
 - 7 See note 2 and 3 above. Also James Camlin Beckett, *The Anglo-Irish tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976); Patrick Buckland, *The Anglo-Irish and the New Ireland* (Dublin: 1972) Oliver MacDonagh, *States of Mind: a Study of Anglo-Irish Conflict, 1780-1980* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1983); David Valone and Jill Marie Bradbury, *Anglo-Irish Identities 1571-1845*, (New Jersey: Associated University Press, 2008); William Edward Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
 - 8 Anglo-Irish specific histories have been written by historians of Anglo-Irish heritage. These include Peter Somerville-Large, *The Irish Country House: a Social History* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995); Mark Bence-Jones, *Twilight of the Ascendancy* (London: Constable, 1995); Mark Bence-Jones, *Life in an Irish Country House* (London: Constable, 1996). Whilst writing from their own vantage points and presenting the Anglo-Irish in a different light to the border histories of Ireland, they are written as histories rather than as autobiography or family history writing.
 - 9 Derek Gregory, “Imaginative Geographies” in *Dictionary of Human Geography*, eds. Derek Gregory, Ron Johnston, Geraldine Pratt, Michael J. Watts, and Sarah Whatmore (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 370.
 - 10 Elizabeth Bowen, “The Bend Back” [1950], in *Mulberry Tree: Writings of Elizabeth Bowen*, ed. Hermione Lee (London: Virago, 1986), 54.
 - 11 This resonates with Joe Lee’s argument that each generation of historians produces the kind of history that that generation needs. See Joe Lee, “The Famine as History” in *Famine 150: Commemorative Lectures*, ed. Cormac O’Gráda (Dublin: Teagasc/University College Dublin, 1997), 159 – 175.
 - 12 Anne Godlewska and Neil Smith, eds., *Geography and Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).
 - 13 Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose, eds., *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies* (London: Guilford,

- 1994); Gerry Kearns, "The imperial subject: Geography and Travel Writing in the Work of Halford Mackinder and Mary Kingsley," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* NS 22 (1997): 450–72;; James Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997); Alison Blunt and Cheryl McEwan, eds., *Postcolonial Geographies* (New York: Continuum, 2002).
- 14 Caren Kaplan, "Resisting autobiography: Outlaw Genres and Transnational Feminist Subjects," in *The Politics of Gender in Women's Autobiography*, eds. Sidonie Smith and Julie Watson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 115–35; Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Life-Writing: Culture, Politics and Self-Representation* (London: Routledge, 2009).
- 15 [Stephen Daniels and Catherine Nash, "Lifepaths: Geography and Biography," *Journal of Historical Geography* 30, no. 1 \(2004\): 449–58;](#) Pamela Moss, ed., *Placing Autobiography in Geography* (Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001); Gerri Reaves, *Mapping the Private Geography: Autobiography, Identity, and America* (Jefferson NC: McFarland, 2001).
- 16 Elizabeth Bowen, *Bowen's Court* (London: Longmans Green and Co, 1942).
- 17 *Elizabeth Bowen: a Reputation in Writing*, (New York: NYU Press, 2012); Susan Osborne, *Elizabeth Bowen: new Critical Perspectives*. (Cork: Cork University Press, 2010); Eibhear Walshe, *Elizabeth Bowen: visions and revisions*. (London; Irish Academic Press, 2008); Neil Corcoran, *Elizabeth Bowen: The Enforced Return* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Patricia Craig, *Elizabeth Bowen* (New York: Penguin, 1986); Hermione Lee, *Elizabeth Bowen: an Estimation* (London: Vision Press, 1981); Victoria Glendinning, *Elizabeth Bowen: Portrait of a Writer* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977).
- 18 Maude Ellmann, *Elizabeth Bowen: The Shadow across the Page*; Gerald Cronin, "The Big House and the Irish Landscape in the Work of Elizabeth Bowen" in *The Big House in Ireland: Reality and Representation*, Jacqueline Genet (Dingle: Brandon Savage MD G, 1991); Roy Foster, "Irish and Regional: Locale in Elizabeth Bowen's writing" in *Elizabeth Bowen Remembered: The Farahy Address*, ed. Eibhear Walshe (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 21–27; Mary Kelly, "[When Things were 'Closing-in' and 'Rolling up': the Imaginative Geography of Elizabeth Bowen's Anglo-Irish War Novel The Last September](#)," *Journal of Historical Geography* 38, no. 3 (2012): 282–293; Charles Travis, *Literary Landscapes of Ireland: Geographies of Irish Stories, 1929-1946* (New York: Mellen Press, 2006).
- 19 For discussion see Roy Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch*.
- 20 Karen Lysaght, "Living in a nation, a state or a place?", 61; Contemporary interpretations recognize that it is a text within which family biography and colonial history are interwoven. However views on what the text says about the Anglo-Irish past vary. Eatough has called it "one of the most sophisticated midcentury defences of Anglo-Ireland" in that while it presents the Anglo-Irish as a decaying class welded to tradition, it also documents their developing sense of individualism, professionalism, and enterprise. See Matt Eatough, "Bowen's Court and the Anglo-Irish World-System," *Modern Language Quarterly*, 73, no. 1 (2012): 69–94. By contrast, Ellmann sees it as a "funerary monument" to a house and a class that had by 1940 lost its significance in the landscape and their cultural capital in independent Ireland, Ellmann, *Elizabeth Bowen: The Shadow across the Page*, 42.
- 21 Elizabeth Bowen, "The Big House" [1940], in *Mulberry Tree: Writings of Elizabeth Bowen*, ed. Hermione Lee (London: Virago, 1986), 29.
- 22 Elizabeth Bowen, *Bowen's Court*, 22.
- 23 Elizabeth Bowen, "The Big House", 27.
- 24 Elizabeth Bowen, *Bowen's Court*, 44; 64; 49.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 31; 40.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 54.

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- 27 Ibid., 50.
 - 28 Ibid., 203.
 - 29 As Bowen explains it “they were very remote gentry, inactive in public life, not in a big way, not, in short, worth buying. But offices, sinecures, pensions and, above all, peerages did shower on those who were more important, more active or nearer the capital” Ibid., 153.
 - 30 Ibid., 203.
 - 31 Ibid., 66.
 - 32 Ibid., 88.
 - 33 Ibid., 88; 92.
 - 34 Ibid., 92; 106.
 - 35 Ibid., 55.
 - 36 Ibid., 106.
 - 37 Ibid., 22.
 - 38 Ibid., 12; Elizabeth Bowen, “The Big House,” 27.
 - 39 Elizabeth Bowen, review of “The Anglo-Irish” [1952], in *Mulberry Tree: Writings of Elizabeth Bowen*, ed. Hermione Lee (London: Virago, 1986), 175.
 - 40 Elizabeth Bowen, *Bowen’s Court*, 20; 22.
 - 41 Ibid., 23.
 - 42 Ibid., 280.
 - 43 Ibid., 271.
 - 44 Ibid., 325.
 - 45 Ibid., 117.
 - 46 Elizabeth Bowen, “The Big House,” 27.
 - 47 Elizabeth Bowen, *Bowen’s Court*, 35–6.
 - 48 Ibid.
 - 49 Ibid.
 - 50 Ibid.
 - 51 Ibid.
 - 52 Ibid., 95.
 - 53 Ibid.
 - 54 Ibid.
 - 55 Ibid., 117; 153.
 - 56 Ibid., 153.
 - 57 Ibid., 95; 229.
 - 58 Ibid., 116.
 - 59 Ibid., 194.
 - 60 Ibid., 266; 263.
 - 61 Ibid., 229.
 - 62 Ibid., 205.
 - 63 Ibid., 66; 67.
 - 64 Ibid., 158.
 - 65 Ibid.
 - 66 Ibid., 197.
 - 67 Ibid., 324.
 - 68 Ibid.
 - 69 Ibid., 326.
 - 70 Ibid., 12.
 - 71 Ibid., 12-13.

- 72 Ibid., 9, 13.
- 73 Ibid., 13, 20.
- 74 Elizabeth Bowen, *The Last September* (London: Vintage, 1998), 33.
- 75 Robert Tracy, *The Unappeasable Host: Studies in Irish Identities* (Dublin: University College Dublin, 1998); Gearoid Cronin, "The Big House and the Irish landscape;" Maude Ellmann, *Elizabeth Bowen: The Shadow Across the Page*.
- 76 Elizabeth Bowen, *Bowen's Court*, 57
- 77 Ibid., 182; 95.
- 78 Ibid., 240.
- 79 Elizabeth Bowen, *Bowen's Court and Seven Winters: Memories of a Dublin Childhood*, (London: Virago, 1984), 508.
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