

# Burning Down the House: Anglo-Irish Betweenness in the Post-Independence Big House Novel of the 1930s

When discussing Anglo-Irish writing, Elizabeth Bowen and Pamela Hinkson, Anglo-Irish contemporaries of the modern Big House novel tradition, have found their critics attempting to dissect the compound nomenclature used to categorize their writing, emphasizing it as a work of contrasts between the “Anglo” and the “Irish.” Green postulates that perhaps what is most important about the categorization of Anglo-Irish writing is the hyphen that connects the two nationalities that is the most crucial to their status, but this theory still relies on a concrete category that seems to overly stress detachment despite the very real connection to home and homelands that make the torching of the houses such an emotional climax.<sup>1</sup> Kreilkamp further notes that both Hinkson and Bowen wrote their novels set pre-Irish independence from a time post-Irish independence; the foreknowledge of the situation lends a post-colonial lens to the work that forces an overemphasis on the juxtaposition of the two nationalities.<sup>2</sup> Hughes wrote of Bowen’s novels that “Anglo-Irish writers were people who have never shared the Irish national memory, and are therefore just as unIrish as it is possible for them to be,” and a not-insubstantial amount of both writers’ work appears to support the notion of chafing nations.<sup>3</sup> Bowen writes of the ‘unloving countryside’ on which the Big Houses of these families were built, and Hinkson wrote that the “ghosts of the dispossessed Irish had their revenge...when [Irish Republicans] made torches of the houses of...Cromwellian settlers.”<sup>4</sup> The focus on the contrast is instead the illumination needed to explore the nature of betweenness; it is not the hyphen alone but “Anglo-Irish” that is a word of liminality, occupying a threshold separate from both of its parts and further seen to be a condition of constant flux in each of these works.

Hinkson and Bowen both position the Anglo-Irish Big House as central to this identity of betweenness in their novels, with Hinkson proclaiming that “these Irish country houses deserve a book to themselves,” a description that Green has paraphrased and extended to Bowen’s

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<sup>1</sup> Green, Laura, “Living on the Hyphen: How Elizabeth Bowen Portrays the Predicament of the Anglo-Irish in *The Last September*,” *Studies in Arts and Humanities*, Vol 1.1, (2015), pg. 37

<sup>2</sup> Kreilkamp, Vera, *The Anglo-Irish Novel and the Big House*, 1998, pg 147

<sup>3</sup> Hughes, George “The Problem of the Anglo-Irish Expatriate: Elizabeth Bowen and Louis MacNeice,” *The Harp*, Vol 9. (1994). pg. 59

<sup>4</sup> Hinkson, Pamela, *The Light on Ireland*, London: Frederick Muller, 1935, pg. 76

novels.<sup>5</sup> Bowen acknowledges this physical separation with the mounting political tension, describing Danielstown as “pressing down in apprehension on...the unloving countryside, the unwilling bosom on which it was set.”<sup>6</sup> She personifies both the house and the countryside to represent the tension between the factions of Ireland; and the house seems an intrusion onto the country, very clearly delineating a sense of not belonging to the reader.<sup>7</sup> Hinkson further encourages this way of approaching the Big House as a breach of Ireland, for “the native Irish are not builders...[but] the Norman Irish and the Anglo Irish were.”<sup>8</sup> But the dialogue between the English, the Irish, and the Anglo-Irish in these novels illustrates that in spite of the rife political tension, the Big House and the “unloving countryside” are fleshed out as both this thematic conflict of nation against nation as well as a porous relationship with its surroundings beyond being set upon them, mimicking the curious state of betweenness that its residents found themselves occupying in the 1920s.

Hinkson believes that the fundamental essence of the Irish is their embracing of “a country way of living,” a sentiment reinforced in Cappagh and Danielstown, where the “country lay unaffected” beyond the grounds of the mansions. However, the boundaries of what is “country” and what is “house” are continually blurred throughout the novel. Descriptions of the interiors of the house almost always suggest grave disuse, with Lois describing “two locked bookcases of which the keys had been lost” and Edmund noticing that “[the books] were never touched, except...to be dusted.”<sup>9</sup> Hinkson makes it very clear that for the Irish, the house is “a place into which a man goes to sleep, not one in which he lives.”<sup>10</sup> By placing the emphasis not on the interiors of these grand houses but rather on the tennis grounds, the Anglo-Irish are seen to reach a kind of compromise between the “luxurious London houses” and the Irish country life.<sup>11</sup> Edmund tries to encompass this sentiment as he looks out over the tennis lawns, pointing out that “this wasn’t Ireland and yet had the indefinable magic of the country about it.”<sup>12</sup> Edmund acknowledges that it is apart from Ireland while simultaneously acknowledging that which it shares with the “[country] he had come to”; further, as he is physically set apart from the tennis matches going on below, Hinkson also clarifies that in his observation she is not declaring the Big Houses to be English, either. Bowen elaborates on this British foreignness to tennis parties, clarifying that the playing of tennis is very much a unique Anglo-Irish custom, as Doreen remarks that “we have never been to tennis parties in England”; additionally, they are also shown to have difficulty with the game, especially “Gerald, who played badly,”<sup>13</sup> indicating his English unfamiliarity.

The retrieval of the tennis balls also shows the breaking down of the betweenness of the Anglo-Irish. Although there is extra netting to separate the tennis courts from “the woods all

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<sup>5</sup> Hinkson, *Light*, 74

<sup>6</sup> Bowen, Elizabeth, *The Last September*, Dublin: Constable and Robin, 1929, pg.66

<sup>7</sup> Ingman, Heather, *Twentieth-Century Fiction by Irish Women: Nation and Gender*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007, pg. 32

<sup>8</sup> Hinkson, Pamela, *Irish Gold*, London : Collins, 1939, pg.10

<sup>9</sup> Bowen, *September*, 17; Hinkson, Pamela, *The Ladies’ Road*, London: V. Gollancz, 1932 pg.22

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 12

<sup>11</sup> Bowen, *The House in Paris*, London: V. Gollancz, 1935, pg. 33

<sup>12</sup> Hinkson, *Ladies’ Road*, 21

<sup>13</sup> Bowen, *September*, 54

around [it],” “it was full of rents...these balls discovered unerringly<sup>14</sup>.” The barrier that kept their land separate from the woods of the rebels is disintegrating, and the tennis playing residents often spend “a large part of their afternoon” fetching them back from the shrubbery and woods beyond the disintegrating boundary. As the tennis parties were something uniquely Anglo-Irish, the quest for the balls that rolled away into the wilderness also evokes the image of the ascendants trying to keep a grip on their big houses in response to the rebel territory encroaching on their land. Additionally, the tennis balls gathered are “never the one just lost-always the one before that or the one before that again.”<sup>15</sup> Likewise, the residents of Danielstown find “the one you lost with...poor John Trent in the summer of '06.”<sup>16</sup> John Trent, however, is dead, and the summer of '06 is over a decade prior to the events of the novel; as Hinkson’s Stella points out, the quest to retrieve what is Anglo-Irish always takes them further back into the past, implying that their lifestyle is a dying one. Furthermore, the boundaries also make significant use of Great War imagery to show the changing status of betweenness of the Big House; Phillips writes that “the writers of Big House literature create a nation inside a nation,” but during a time when Irish and English were at conflict in Ireland, the nature of the Big House instead became a kind of No Man’s Land, paralleling that of the First World War.<sup>17</sup> The tennis balls are seen to go “through the wire or over it” and are “lost in a green sea,” echoing the “rain...and barbed wire” Philip and Edmund encounter on the front of the Great War.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, Laurence finds himself stumbling over “old divots” and instructing Hercules to “put [the oldest tennis ball] back in the rabbit hole for the children to find” much like soldiers in WWI might have hidden in trenches<sup>19</sup>. Stella acknowledges the death of their time period when she and Irene return to Cappagh after the war and Dora continues to bring them “tennis balls that had been lost by dead players before the War.”<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, in her saying that it is “no good now” and throwing it back to where it might “lie hidden forever,” Stella and Irene in some way recognise the fundamental shift in their circumstances, and that it is of no use trying to claim their tennis balls or lifestyle back from the rebels’ woods. Likewise, Lois comes to a similar conclusion of her own at the close of Act II in *September*, that “the summer was over; there might not be more tennis parties.”<sup>21</sup> Karen notes that “Ireland always bends one back on oneself,” as with the constant finding of old tennis balls, but here is where the loop ends.<sup>22</sup>

Bryant notes that the players scrambling in their tennis whites between the wires not only echo soldiers moving between barbed wire into the territory between enemy trenches, but they will later be the “dead players” that Irene and Stella discuss<sup>23</sup>. Much like the tennis balls of the past, they become a kind of foreshadowed ghost; they come back only after they, and the tennis parties that symbolised the Anglo-Irish, have become a thing of the past. Their

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<sup>14</sup> Bowen, *September*, 60

<sup>15</sup> Hinkson, *Ladies’ Road*, 20

<sup>16</sup> Bowen, *September*, 62

<sup>17</sup> Phillips, Terry, *No Man’s Land: Irish Women Writers of the First World War*, 265

<sup>18</sup> Hinkson, *Ladies’ Road*, 29

<sup>19</sup> Bowen, *September*, 61

<sup>20</sup> Hinkson, *Ladies’ Road*, 279

<sup>21</sup> Bowen, *September*, 264

<sup>22</sup> Bowen, *Paris*, 89

<sup>23</sup> Bryant, Karen, *Ireland and the Cultural Impact of the First World War: Reclaiming Expurgated Narratives in Irish Art and Literature, 1915-1939*. Cincinnati: Union Institute and University Press, 2015, pg. 207

ghostliness is another kind of betweenness; they not only died in No Man's Land, as characters whose social circumstances were parallel with such territory, but also as characters who straddle the boundary between living and dead over the course of the novel. Additionally, the juxtaposition of these two "No Man's Lands" show a transformation in the political alignment of Ireland and England on an international scale, outside of the Big House. "No Man's Land" is a term reserved for the neutral territory between two enemy forces, and we see it here mirrored with the No Man's Land of the First World War. However, although Philip and Edmund fight together in "England's War," Stella is left "in a No Man's Land...with a country on either side that was not hers"<sup>24</sup>. But the point in the novel at which she says that she is still within the boundaries of Ireland, on the grounds of the Big House. The Big House can be read as then both an independent nation and a territory disputed over by two others, making it a place not just between countries, but also between states of independence.

The tennis lawns themselves also seem to blur the lines between "Anglo-Irish" and "Irish" grounds. Hinkson describes how the "tennis balls were always getting lost in the long grass" and how the unevenness of the ground led to "impossible serves."<sup>25</sup> Bowen uses a similar depiction of "long grass" in *Last September*, only she uses it to describe the wild grass "beyond the fence." The choice, however, seems to be a deliberate one; Edmund, an Englishman, questions why "doesn't someone cut the grass," suggesting that the inhabitants have left it that way as a matter of choice, showing an embracement of the country life over the manicured. The role of the trees, too, occupies this strange sort of hybrid state. The "blackened" woods, and their danger of rebels, are sometimes portrayed as wild territory; the Montmorencys are not "sure that [they] won't be shot at," and Stella feels that it is only with the presence of soldier-like men, a foreshadowing of the rebel soldiers that will haunt them that "the woods about the house ceased to be terrifying."<sup>26</sup> But the forest is also seen as part of the Big House, as a kind of protective border; Bowen notes that Danielstown "gathered its trees close" when the rebels grow more vocal about the unwelcomeness of the Anglo-Irish, and Hinkson mentions that houses like Cappagh and Cooperstown are surrounded by a "barrier of trees with which to shut out Ireland."<sup>27</sup> The trees, then, like the house's inhabitants, continue the theme of uncertain political positioning.

The woods are innately tied to the Irish rebels and the Irish wilderness. Bowen and Hinkson both use words that connote unkemptness to describe the lands beyond the lawns of the estates, emphasising the "long grass," "wilderness," and "wild woods" of these mansions' surroundings. Further, they both draw heavy correlations between these woods and darkness, with Bowen describing the "long shadows" and Hinkson describing a rabbit just outside the boundary line as "a tiny shadow hidden among many shadows." This darkness is also connected to the Irish Republicans, a third nationality and social class discussed in the novel, although the two authors' word choices carry distinctly different connotations in their parallels. Hinkson's rebels are described as having "soil black faces," with the allusion to the darkness of the woods suggesting belonging to the physical as well as to the political Ireland. Bowen's rebels, by contrast, have "blackened" faces, and the trees in her woods have "blackened bark." Blackened defines a darkness not innate, but made by some kind of action, with the additional

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<sup>24</sup> Hinkson, *Ladies Road*, 313

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 29

<sup>26</sup> Bowen, *September*, 35; Hinkson, *Ladies' Road*, 22

<sup>27</sup> —, *Light*, 75

specific definition of “blackened by flames; burnt, charred.”<sup>28</sup> The woods and the rebels, for Bowen, lie dark because of their connection to the burning of the Big Houses.

The darkness of the woods also contrasts the manicured tennis courts and grounds of these houses, with *The Ladies Road* describing a sunset in which “lawns in the light of the summer evening” exist in a simultaneously with these shadows. However, although the contrast between lit lawns and dark woods, especially when told from the perspective of Edmund would seem to suggest an emphasis on a contrast between ‘English mansion’ and ‘Irish countryside,’ the essential descriptions of Danielstown and Cappagh often take place at dusk or daybreak, instead suggesting an existence on the cusp, yet still separate, from both day and night. Edmund notes that the room “could only have been in an Irish country house” as he watches the sun slowly rise and “the room hesitate like a sleeper, awake between two worlds” in the same way that Lois watches the grounds come to life as the “sky shone...but was being steadily drained by the dark below.”<sup>29</sup> Although the houses and the lawns “part in light and part in shadow,” dusk and dawn are also depicted as actions as well as times; the light “seeps in” and “drains away,” implying that during these moments the houses’s light is varying, another kind of betweenness, a reflection on the varying attitudes of the Anglo-Irish that they house.

The play between the dark woods and the bright big houses is played with again at the climax and conclusion of both novels, when the Anglo-Irish houses are burnt down by Republican rebels. “Danielstown, Castle Trent, [and] Mount Isabel had...a fearful scarlet [eat] up the hard spring darkness,” and “Cappagh...burnt against the darkness of the woods,” while their surrounding trees sit in “unnatural dark.”<sup>30</sup> The light of the now-burning houses sets them apart from the shadows of the rebel’s woods; however, the reader can still see echoes and acknowledgements of the houses’s Irishness. The “grey dawn over where Cappagh lay,” reflects the light of daybreak that suggested a house “between two worlds” to Edmund, and when Danielstown burns Bowen writes “that the country itself was burning,” which complements Hinkson’s view that for the “native Irish...the country holds his life.”<sup>31</sup>

Both Bowen and Hinkson experiment with the historicity of their works; their Big House novels are set during the Troubles, but the novels were written and published in the 1930s, after an independent Ireland had already been secured. This bears a similarity to the anachronism of Leopold’s existence in *The House in Paris*; Karen knows of her conception far earlier than should be medically possible, as “you, Leopold, began to be present with her” immediately after she questions “what have I done.”<sup>32</sup> However, the child is already, to the reader, more than just “the idea of” Leopold, as this potential conception takes place in “The Past.” Palko also observes that Leopold is conceived of twice over; his existence is brought about in the novel both when Karen and Max sexually conceive him and when Karen conceives the idea of him.<sup>33</sup> Leopold therefore occupies multiple states, or is between two states, throughout much of the novel; he is both an idea and a character at once, and he is in the present before he has been

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<sup>28</sup> “blackened, adj.”. OED Online. Third Edition, June 2017. Oxford University Press.

<sup>29</sup> Hinkson, *Ladies’ Road*, 22; Bowen, *September*, 17

<sup>30</sup> Bowen, Elizabeth, *The Last September*, 282

<sup>31</sup> Hinkson, *Ladies Road*, 320; Bowen, *September*, 282; Hinkson, *Gold*, 12

<sup>32</sup> Bowen, *Paris*, 151

<sup>33</sup> Palko, Abigail, *Colonial modernism’s thwarted maternity: Elizabeth*

*Bowen’s The House in Paris and Jean Rhys’s Voyage in the Dark*, *Textual Practice*, 27:1, 81

conceived in the past. His introduction occurring sequentially before his conception allows the pregnancy to seem a foregone conclusion, similar to the burning of both Danielstown and Cappagh taking place after the Troubles. Further consider the change in skyline seen through the window of the house, as “behind the trees the orange sky crept and smoldered.”<sup>34</sup> The image of “smoldering” conjures smoke, which mirrors the “sky tall with scarlet” at the conclusion of the novel with the burning of Danielstown.<sup>35</sup> Genet notes that where in other novels this might be read merely as foreshadowing, the historicity of the novel in that it is fictionalising Irish independence and the burning of the Ascendent’s houses after the historic events had already taken place makes the destruction of the characters’ homes seem a certain conclusion.<sup>36</sup>

There is a subtle distinction between the orange and scarlet of the foreshadowing and the actualization. Orange is traditionally associated with Irish Unionist Protestantism, has been popularly understood by prominent critics like McCormack to foreshadow violence between Unionist and Republican Ireland from the position of the 1930s.<sup>37</sup> However, Menmuir suggests that instead it shows an violent end to the political virtues of a united Ireland and a pivot to religiously based allegiances under de Valera, much how Yeats mourned the slander of once-glorified Republican Protestants like Parnell in his lectures.<sup>38</sup> Both of these forms of critical analysis rely on the knowledge that the authors had when composing the novels, compared to internally based foreshadowing imagery. The Anglo-Irish characters in the novel, if the reader is to consider Morson and look at what he calls ‘sideshadowing’, have before them many possible futures; in the chronology of their world, the Irish Civil War has not yet been fought.<sup>39</sup> The characters at the end of the novel are not just between wars but between many possible futures.

Despite that, Hinkson implies in her conclusion of *Ladies Road* that without the Big House, there would be as a certainty no Anglo-Irish, proclaiming that “for the next generation, no world between two worlds, but only one Ireland.” *House in Paris* subverts that notion, however, by paralleling the Parisian environment with that of Ireland in some ways.<sup>40</sup> Henrietta’s journey to Paris is similar in language to Karen’s journey to Ireland; the “sun never quite shone” on Karen’s journey, and Henrietta’s takes place on a “dark greasy February morning.”<sup>41</sup> The image of water and water transport also features in both passages, with the “wet light” and “light water”

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<sup>34</sup> Bowen, *September*, 29

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 284

<sup>36</sup> Genet, Jacqueline, *The Big House in Ireland: Reality and Representation*. Lanham, USA: Rowman & Littlefield, 1991, pg. 144

<sup>37</sup> McCormack, W.J, *From Burke to Beckett: Ascendancy Tradition and Betrayal in Literary History*. Cork: Cork University Press, 1994, pg. 59

<sup>38</sup> Menmuir, Alasdair, *The Socially Real Edge of Modernism: Political Agency in British Literature 1914-1939*, 2013; Yeats, W.B, *Modern Ireland: An Address to American Audiences, 1932-1933*, *The Massachusetts Review*, Volume 5: Issue 2, 1964

<sup>39</sup> Morson, Gary Saul, “Sideshadowing and Tempics”, *New Literary History*, Vol. 29, No. 4, 1998, pg. 600

<sup>40</sup> Ellmann, Maud, *Elizabeth Bowen: The Shadow Across the Page*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004. pg. 30

<sup>41</sup> Bowen, *Paris*, 22; 71-72

reflecting the “melting light” and contrast of the “dark wake” of the boat against the river lending the same blurry, ethereal feel to each of their journeys<sup>42</sup>. The reflexive phrasing of “light” and “wet” suggest a blurring of boundaries in the betweenness of physical national boundaries that comes with travel, similar to how “melting” encompasses the movement from one state of matter to another; but its gerund state again connotes betweenness. The recurring imagery of Henrietta’s travels and to parallels her with Karen, suggesting that the dual nature of the Anglo-Irish survives in some ways. Furthermore, the idea of ‘liquid light’ is associated with Ireland itself; Hinkson wrote that “Irish light floods and drenches like water,” and that this changing light is quintessential to the nation<sup>43</sup>. In the mirroring of these images, we then see the prolonging of the Anglo-Irish limbo, suggesting that despite Irish independence and torching houses, the “world between two worlds” exists anyway.

Furthermore, the titular house mirrors Ireland and the Anglo-Irish past in its physicality much in the way that the journey does. Bachelard points out that “in Paris there are no houses,” and yet Madame Fisher’s home still stands.<sup>44</sup> Its defiance of cultural norm is twofold. The house does harken back to the contrast between Big House and empty countryside, as echoed in Fisher’s later remark that it can be found “only now in the provinces,” similar to the Anglo-Irish countryside setting. However, it could also serve as a symbolic reminder that the Big Houses of Ireland have been “put to the torch,” and that even in France their way of life is rapidly becoming part of the past.<sup>45</sup> The Big House in *HiP* therefore occupies a space both as a marker of loss and a continuation of temporal behaviour; the Anglo-Irish life has outlived the end of the physical representation of their culture. Madame Fisher furthers the parallel by remarking that “I prefer to die here,” mirroring Hinkson’s sentiment that “Anglo-Irish, Norman-Irish, and Celt...would all, if we might, return to Ireland to die<sup>46</sup>.” Additionally, though the physical homes of the Anglo-Irish may have been destroyed, that is a very different sentiment than their never existing; the Big House also lives on in *HiP* through the ghostly echoes of its memorabilia. A photograph of the first chronological Big House of the novel, Montebello, which “burnt down in the troubles” is kept in the second house in Queenstown, or Cobh. The photograph itself serves in some ways as an allegory for the Anglo-Irish in *HiP*; the photograph is filled with visual cues tied to death, reflecting the house “as it looked in winter,” the season of death, surrounded by “skeleton trees.”<sup>47</sup> Additionally, the photograph is kept in the physical location that in the chronology of the novel happens only in the past. But the photograph of the old home being kept in the new is a subversion of this death of the way of life; for though it has been given a new Irish name, it remains unburnt. Furthermore, the part of the novel that takes place in the *titular* house is actually the section of the book that takes place in the present.

The Big House of *HiP* also bolsters the continuation of Anglo-Irish duality by playing with language the way that the other houses played with physical symbolism. Rarely does Bowen not juxtapose “Queenstown” and “Cobh” within the work, drawing attention to the play

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<sup>42</sup> Wells-Lassagne Shannon. “Town and Country : Juxtaposing Ireland's Big House and Europe's Capitals in Bowen's The House in Paris and The Heat of the Day,” *Études irlandaises*, Vol. 30 No. 2, 2005. pg. 55

<sup>43</sup> Hinkson, *Light*, pg 1

<sup>44</sup> Bowen, *Paris*, 26

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 50

<sup>46</sup> Hinkson, *Light*, 69

<sup>47</sup> Bowen, *Paris*, 75

between the Irish and English names. Hinkson also acknowledges this liminal phase in the understanding of the wider country when she notes that it is “Queenstown, now called by its name of Cobh.”<sup>48</sup> The language she uses here is very telling; she lists the English name first, but uses the possessive for its Irish title, placing a stress on both names, an inversion of the Old Irish cleft sentence structure.<sup>49</sup> In this way she linguistically acknowledges that the nation’s Anglo-Irish are still embracing their betweenness even after Irish independence and the torching of the ancestral strongholds.

Furthermore, Aunt Violet is Karen’s window into the world of the Anglo-Irish in a subversion of the usual dynamic-as Lois is for Gerald and Philip is for Edmund-for Violet is born English.<sup>50</sup> She embodies several of the qualities of duality shared by the big houses, though; she has had two husbands, two ancestral homes, and provides the English counterpoint perspective on the idea of “foreignness” and “rootlessness” that Lady Naylor expresses to Gerald. She believes that all of his Surrey-originating relatives being “scattered about...seems exceedingly restless,” while Aunt Violet’s family believed that her moving to Ireland seemed “insecure and pointless...like settling on a raft.”<sup>51</sup> Her journey to Ireland, in many ways, also mimics the original integration of the Anglo-Irish into Ireland, with Hinkson noting that while many Irish-born live in ‘cabins,’ the “descendants of some Cromwellian adventurer live in the big house”; Violet’s journey as an Englishwoman moving straight into an ancestral home after the previous one had been burnt down by Irish rebels seems a repetition of the cycle. But Violet is also the only named character to die in Ireland, an echo of the sentiment that “would all, if we might, return to Ireland to die,” “Irish of all classes and creeds.”<sup>52</sup> By using the broadest possible national term, Hinkson acknowledges the Irishness of the Anglo-Irish, thus making Violet, whose transformation takes place in the past of the section *The Past*, a new and recent embodiment of Anglo-Irish perspective.

The reader can then clearly see that Anglo-Irishness is neither static nor a monolith; Lady Naylor and Lady Montmorency’s dialogues indicate that they believe a strong heritage and traditional association with Ireland is a necessity for Anglo-Irishness, but Hinkson and Bowen’s narration contradict that with Aunt Violet’s transformation and allusion to cyclicity. Much as Edmund notes that the Big House ‘is not Ireland,’ the characters, conversely, seem certain only that its residents are not English. Sir Richard proclaims that Francie is “getting very English” when she expresses too much worry over their being a target for the rebels when sitting out on the steps, and Mrs. Vermont exclaims over “the Irish turning out so disloyal-I mean, of course, the lower classes!”<sup>53</sup> For Mrs. Vermont, the distinction between the Irish and the Anglo-Irish is primarily a class concern; and yet although the house’s residents very much fear being

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 69

<sup>49</sup> Lehmann, R. P. M., *An Introduction to Old Irish*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1975; a sentence structure used not only to separate old information from new information, but also to provide emphasis and importance for a particular word or phrase.

<sup>50</sup> Artso, Kathryn, *Transatlantic Renaissances: Literature of Ireland and the American South*, 2013, pg.99

<sup>51</sup> Bowen, Elizabeth, *September* 245; —, *Paris*, 75

<sup>52</sup> Hinkson, Pamela, *Light*, 69

<sup>53</sup> Bowen, Elizabeth, *September*, 35; 67

mistaken for English, they also know that there is a cultural as well as a class difference, or else Stella would not have said that “if she was Irish...she’d be a rebel” and Lady Naylor would not have commented that “the English had all gotten very common after the war.”<sup>54</sup> *House in Paris* additionally complicates matters by taking a more performative approach, remarking that “where would the Irish be without someone to Irish at?”<sup>55</sup> The nature of the Anglo-Irishness in each individual is much like the boundary between the woods and the tennis lawns; in some places it is more intact, and in others it is full of holes, but they all occupy a space of betweenness.

Lois, occupies betweenness in her relationships, both real and imaginary; In one of her fantasies about the forest’s rebels, she imagines that she might shout “Up Dublin!” or another pro-rebel sentiment, but she is having an affair with English soldier Gerald. Their affair also greatly mimics the national relationship between Ireland and England at the dawn of the revolution, with Gerald professing that “I’m not giving you up, I could never have done that” mirroring England’s resistance to Ireland’s independence.<sup>56</sup> Bowen’s foreknowledge shows again, for just as the burning of the houses was a foregone conclusion, despite his vows to the contrary Gerald leaves at the end of the act, symbolising a closing of the curtain on Ireland and England’s relationship.<sup>57</sup> The political nature of her liminality is additionally reflected in her personal presence within the estate; Sir Richard notes that “Lois [was] dancing up and down the road...with English soldiers.”<sup>58</sup> Just as the trees and lawns serve not only as a threshold between house and rebel wilderness but also as a space in their own right, Lois becomes a threshold between English and Irish herself, serving as dancing partner and barrier between the road situated in Republican territory and the British soldiers.

Additionally, Lois’s affair with Gerald despite her initial fantasies of rebel sympathies also finds a mirror in the similar liminality of her cousin, Laurence. Laurence, too, occupies a personal sense of betweenness; he is the first to volunteer when help is needed to go “into the laurels and heather” beyond the netting of the tennis court, physically occupying the blurry threshold.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, out of all the *September* Anglo-Irish characters, he is the most vocally pro-Republican and pro-Independence, serving as a foil to his cousin’s relationship with Gerald when he tells the English soldier that he would “like to be a gunner.”<sup>60</sup> While his cousin is falling in love, Laurence instead empathises with the people Gerald is shooting at. Laurence’s strongest barrier between him and the rebels is ironically what his family blames his sympathies for them on; Lois claims that Laurence’s political views are skewed because “the ones he brings back from Oxford are all wrong,” blaming his exposure to the English and English education for his empathy for the IRA.<sup>61</sup> Hinkson addresses this kind of relationship, noting that the Anglo-Irish almost always send their children to “English schools [and] English Universities,”

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 68; Hinkson, Pamela, *Ladies’ Road*, 28

<sup>55</sup> Bowen, Elizabeth, *Paris*, 93

<sup>56</sup> —, *September*, 264

<sup>57</sup> Kreilkamp, Vera, *The Anglo-Irish Novel and the Big House*. Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1998. pg. 148

<sup>58</sup> Bowen, Elizabeth, *Paris*, 35

<sup>59</sup> Bowen, Elizabeth, *September*, 61

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 23

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 21

and yet they “became Irish even in their speech...and no one was more lost than they away from [Ireland].”<sup>62</sup> Hinkson’s words also serve as a reinforcement of the of the physicality of the Anglo-Irish; as their liminal identity is so heavily conveyed through their estates, away from the physical grounding of their identity, they become more lost.

Mirroring the flirtations of Gerald and Lois is the love triangle between Edmund Urqhart, Irene, and Philip in *The Ladies Road*; their relationships and physical placements within the novel offer greater insight into Hinkson’s thoughts on their senses of national identity. Both Edmund and Philip are shown to have a degree of feeling for Irene, although both believe in her suitability for the other; Edmund believes that “she should have married Philip,” as they both share the “troublesome Irish blood”; Philip once entertains whether she would suit Edmund, as they are “outsiders” at Cappagh.” However, Philip and Edmund play a homoerotic third connection in the triangle, as Edmund thinks “only of Philip” the same way that Irene thinks “only of George,” her husband, when they are deployed together.<sup>63</sup> Edmund is quite clearly an English character and is therefore not expected to occupy a physical liminality; he comments that the “Irish flies bit him more...perhaps they knew he was English.”<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, he is often shown physically apart from the others, watching from upstairs and contemplating the dampness and disuse of the house’s books. Similarly, Philip’s physical liminality is limited in a way that other Anglo-Irish characters are not shown to be, for although Edmund tries to persuade him to “be a landlord,” Philip only wants to “be a soldier” in the Irish service.<sup>65</sup> Although Anglo-Irish by blood, Philip may be, in his refusal of estate land, the most developed character either Hinkson or Bowen gives to represent the Irish Republic. However, although neither alone occupies a physical threshold, when they come together and consummate the love triangle-‘Philip in Edmund, Edmund in Philip,’-they are in No Man’s Land, a liminal space; they also become a ghostly kind of physically liminal, as by the time the reader discovers via letter of their deaths, they were already dead, yet still upon the page. Contrastingly, Irene, as the unconsummated part of the love triangle, must be physically liminal in her own right. She is paralleled with her ancestral home, Cooperstown, “a great grey square house, dropped down on the land which Cromwell had taken from the Irish,” a sentiment that would be echoed in Hinkson’s later *The Light on Ireland* that the Anglo-Irish “have never really given up the mentality of their ancestors, conquerors that came with William or Cromwell.”<sup>66</sup> Irene’s position is by far the most fluid of the three members of the triangle, and Irene’s Cooperstown is the only Big House left unburnt at the end of the novel. If the reader also take Philip as Irish, Irene’s betweenness is additionally mirrored by her entanglement in a love triangle between two men that represent the ‘country on either side’ that she belongs to neither of.

Philip and Edmund also both parallel and subvert the disagreement between Lois and Gerald before his parting; their relationship also ends with their deaths on the front of the Great War. Their relationship, however, does not end in personal conflict; Philip’s mother even remarks that with “Phillip in Edmund, Edmund in Phillip...each had supplied something the other lacked,” a

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<sup>62</sup> Hinkson, Pamela, *Light*, 76

<sup>63</sup> —, *Ladies’ Road*, 53

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 21

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-5

<sup>66</sup> —, *Light*, 75; *Ibid.*, 57

seemingly balanced and romantic partnership.<sup>67</sup> However, Lois and Gerald's separation occurs some years later, during the years where England and Ireland were already in the first Troubles; Philip and Edmund's relationship is cut short during WWI, the last cooperation between the two nations before the independence conflict erupts. Their deaths symbolise the death of relations between Ireland and England and serve as the catalyst for "No Man's Land" to travel to Cappagh. It is only after their deaths that Stella and Irene begin to see the "barbed wire" of the trenches in the "silver wire" around the tennis courts; the conflict of boundaries and territory becomes domestic after its international conclusion.<sup>68</sup>

Although Hughes contends that the Big House novel in the 1930s is one of shifting boundaries from English Ireland, of which the Anglo-Irish were a part, Hinkson and Bowen show that the boundaries—neither physical, national, nor temporal—were ever very set in the first place. Instead, the authors create a world both of and on the boundary, voicing Anglo-Irish characters in a way that shows that their very physical betweenness is an existence beyond a hyphen that stretches them between two countries, "neither of which were [their] own."

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<sup>67</sup> —, *Ladies' Road*, 67

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 29