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PUBLISHER

Palgrave Macmillan

VERSION

AM (Accepted Manuscript)

LICENCE

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REPOSITORY RECORD

O'Byrne, Deirdre. 2019. "Pictures and Places: Enclaves of Illusion in the Life Writings of Elizabeth Bowen and Annabel Goff". figshare. <https://hdl.handle.net/2134/6281>.

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Pictures and Places: Enclaves of illusion in the life-writings of Elizabeth Bowen and Annabel Goff

Deirdre O'Byrne

Elizabeth Bowen, writing in *Seven Winters* of the Dublin home where she spent half the year as a girl, tells us that 'A house where a child no longer is is virtually rolled up and put away' (7), in explanation of her innocent belief that the building exists meaningfully only while she occupies it. This statement has multiple ironies for Bowen's readers today. If we take the sense of 'house' as in dynasty, that too is 'rolled up and put away' when it no longer has a child in it. Bowen, an only child, and childless heir to her ancestral home, records its demolition in the 1963 Afterword to her family history, *Bowen's Court*. This was first published in 1942 (459), the same year as *Seven Winters*. The book is both chronicle and catalogue of Bowen's Court – she describes the rooms and their contents in some detail, and pays particular attention to ancestral portraits, assessing the character of their subjects by their appearance. Bowen presents herself as movie director and camerawoman in her resolution to concentrate on a unity of setting: 'When Bowens leave Bowen's Court they go off the screen' (282). She tells us that she has some male cousins, but there is an air of finality about the Afterword, suggesting that the house of Bowen is being wrapped up and put into storage in Elizabeth's memory and memoir. This article unfurls selected life-writings of Bowen and another Anglo-Irish writer, Annabel Goff, and unpacks some of the metaphors of enclosure and encapsulation that abound in their stories.

Goff, born in 1940s Ireland, calls her 1990 autobiography *Walled Gardens: Scenes from an Anglo-Irish Childhood* (1994). Just as Bowen enfolds her family history in a narrative named for their ancestral house, so

Goff chooses symbols of shelter and conservation for her title. The subtitle notifies us that her life-story has, like Bowen's autobiographical writings, a strongly visual and spatial element. When she died, Bowen was working on an autobiography to be called *Pictures and Conversations*, and one chapter in the published fragment is called 'Places' (1975). Goff recalls two memorable enclosed gardens, one at her first childhood home, Glenville, and the other at her maternal grandparents' house, Ballinacourty. In her text, these two enclosures function as more than mere spaces – they are a crucial part of how she reconstructs her childhood.

The memoir opens with her father's funeral -- which may be a homage to *Bowen's Court*, whose first edition closes with the burial of the author's father (447). After the funeral service, Goff and her sister revisit the site of Glenville. The house itself is gone, but some stables and outbuildings remain, and she writes: 'We should have been able to work out where the house used to stand, since the weeping ash which had once *dominated* the lawn, still remained, but we were unable to' (9; my italics). That weeping ash is one of the many examples of the uncanny ability of the Anglo-Irish to surround themselves with symbols of their own decline, something I will discuss in more detail later. The tree, no longer having a lawn to dominate, has concomitantly lost its power to aid the sisters in the location of their former home. However, it's the absence of significant built structures that Goff finds spatially confusing: 'It was some time afterward that I understood why I couldn't work out where the house used to be. There was not a trace of the greenhouses or the walled garden' (10).¹ The walled garden in her mind acts as an

indispensable *aide-memoire*, enclosing and protecting her childhood memories. Without it, she is unable to situate her younger self.

In both *Bowen's Court* and *Walled Gardens*, the writer chooses past over present, recollected edifices over current empty spaces or replacements. Even though each woman has seen for herself that her childhood home no longer stands, she continues to go there in her mind, validating primary memories and repudiating the over-laying of secondary ones. Goff says she has 'no visual memory of what any of the [site] looked like that afternoon' of her father's funeral:

If I could remember that I would have to stop believing that Glenville still exists. I would have to admit that it is no longer possible to run up those steps, enter the hall ... and go into the library, where the whole family would be waiting for me. (9)

Bowen's *Afterward* is similarly resistant to accepting the obliteration of her home. Her consciousness, like that of Goff, is a preservative, and, furthermore, functions as a conjuror-saviour who can resurrect the dead: 'When I think of Bowen's Court, there it is' (459). Goff overcomes the mere fact of her father's demise by comforting herself with the 'idea that I can still make my father laugh'. She writes about this in terms of re/collecting: 'In some ways, my father's death did not interrupt every aspect of my relationship with him.... The tiny incidents and ironies which I used to collect for my letters to him are no longer committed to paper, but they are still collected (7).

Goff's resourceful mother turns the Anglo-Irish propensities for collecting and capturing their ancestors in portraiture into a successful career. Although her daughter doesn't say so, it's clear that the auctions where she acquires her artefacts are part of the dissolution of the Ascendancy. Pictures, often of military subjects, join the hordes of Catholic Irish being shipped to the

United States. Goff notes dryly that ‘their ultimate purchasers, we were told, often claimed them as ancestors’ (175-6). If we adopt Elizabeth Bowen’s habit of ascribing feelings to painted subjects, we can imagine the uniformed gentry’s emotions on this replanting of the Planters.

As we have seen, Goff attributes considerable cartographical power to the walled garden in her parents’ home, Glenville. Her account of her maternal grandparents’ home, Ballinacourty, attaches even more significance to a similar structure. She describes the garden as consisting of two parts.

Next to the main enclosure is a smaller space, the remains of a building:

The opening to this ruin remained, as did the outer walls.... I still dream of this smaller garden, regularly and undramatically, but vividly enough not to be sure whether what I remember is an accurate picture of a past reality or a gradually developed illusion. The memories of the small garden ... are warm and golden with a sense of well-being and sunshine.... [T]he walls were high enough to keep out the wind and the sound of the wind. (99)

So the walled garden is not just part of her memory, it is a recurring visitor in her current life, albeit to her dreamworld, and she is aware that it is an active agent in the shaping of her memory-bank. Goff the autobiographer is writing in a period when the Anglo-Irish world she inhabited as a girl is already gone, but her dreaming self returns to a womb-like structure in which no winds of change intrude – even their sounds are excluded. As the title of Ken Loach’s film *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* attests, ‘wind’ was a code word for the Irish independence movement, which heralded the end of the Anglo-Irish world inhabited by Bowen and Goff.² Goff’s foregrounding of this encompassing space and its sheltering qualities suggests that her memory and subconscious are nostalgic for a former, privileged existence. Her

sleeping self follows in her paternal grandmother's footsteps; in Grannie (sic) Goff's world, 'Changing times and standards were ignored' (156).

Goff's childhood home Glenville has been replaced by a dairy plant, and the site of Ballinacourty is now occupied by a cement factory, tangible manifestation of progress and re/construction. Goff grew up in post-Independence Ireland, but in her dreams she returns to a prelapsarian space which is, significantly, the remnant of a ruin. Thomas Hyde, a friend of Elizabeth Bowen, visited the site of Bowen's Court with her, and his assessment of the atmosphere of the walled garden, which outlived the house, is equally open to metaphorical interpretation. In a letter he writes that 'Inside the walled garden was like a fantasy world' (Glendinning, 1993, 232). The proposed title of Bowen's unfinished autobiography, *Pictures and Conversations*, is from the opening of Lewis Carroll's absurdist fantasy *Alice in Wonderland* (Glendinning, 1993, 229; Carroll, 1997). Goff differentiates between the Anglo-Irish and their compatriots in their imaginary lives: 'I think that the native Irish could not afford to entertain illusions and that it is very likely that the Anglo-Irish could not afford not to do so' (35).

The concepts of fantasy and a parallel existence are marked in Anglo-Irish fiction, for instance, in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1974), Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1983)³ and Sheridan le Fanu's 'Carmilla' (1987). These texts, like Goff and Bowen's life-writings, challenge the accepted boundaries of life and death. Much of Elizabeth Bowen's fiction is similarly imbued with Gothic tendencies. For instance, her short story 'Hand in Glove' suggests that a character is strangled in the attic by the glove of a deceased aunt (775). So, in virtually haunting and being haunted by their Un-Dead

houses, Goff and Bowen could be said to be fulfilling an Anglo-Irish stereotype.

A prominent motif of Gothic literature is the ruined castle. When Annabel Goff's father moves to Kinsale, the seventeen-year-old feels a strong emotional attachment to one local feature, the ruined Charles Fort: 'It was where I experienced most clearly the call of the past, the sense that I was being told something important which would prove of value to me'. This Anglo-Irish relic, like her grandparents' walled garden, induces in her a 'feeling of well-being' (204). The emotional attachment to ruins is a marked trait of the Anglo-Irish. In Bowen's *The House in Paris*, Uncle Bill displays photographs of the ruined remains of his former home (1941). Grubgeld confirms that this class 'frequently understand their [autobiographical] stories as testimonies to the ruin of one way of life' (xx). Joan de Vere's calls her autobiography *In Ruin Reconciled*, a phrase taken from a poem by her relative Aubrey de Vere (v).⁴

Elizabeth Bowen writes in *Bowen's Court* that 'this is a country of ruins' and 'ruins feature the landscape' (15), implying that, in her estimation, a countryside without ruins is somewhat lacking (15). 'Yes, ruins stand for error or failure [she writes] – but in Ireland we take these as part of life' (17). Nevertheless, she professes to be glad that Bowen's Court is demolished completely and 'never lived to be a ruin' (459), which may be interpreted as a declaration that though 'error and failure' may be a part of others' lives, she, Elizabeth Bowen, has no wish to associate herself with them, despite that all-inclusive 'we'.

Bowen (1899-1973) was born into a world she describes as 'late-Victorian' (*Seven*, 31). The Victorians are well known for their morbid

sensibility, and their influence permeates Bowen's writing. In *Seven Winters* (1943), it is clear that her imagination was actively gothic even in her early years. This is what she tells us about her perceptions on walking around

Dublin:

often I felt a malign temperament at work. *Stories* of gloom would add themselves to the houses, till these shut out the sky. The streets tautened and the distances frowned. Walking down Upper Mount Street or Lower Baggot Street I at once had the feeling of being in the wrong, and Leeson Street became a definite threat. (30, my italics)

She attributes her anxiety to a fear of the unknown: 'No swamp or jungle could hold more threats than the tacitly ruled-out parts of one's own city' (17).

Coming from the descendent of Cromwellian planters (*Court*, 62), this description echoes the fear of the native population that pervades so much colonial writing. But significantly, Bowen presents herself a child who is already making up stories which anthropomorphise architecture. Several of her books contain buildings in the title: *Bowen's Court* (1998), *The Hotel* (1927), *The House in Paris* (1941), or as a central feature, as in *The Last September* (1929).

As adult autobiographer, Bowen rationalises her fears about Dublin's streetscape: 'Perhaps a child smells history without knowing it – I did not *know* I was looking at the tomb of fashion' (*Seven*, 30, italics Bowen's). Note the noun of fatal incarceration. She goes on to qualify her fears: 'In fact, the climatic moodiness of South Dublin ... must have existed only in my eye' (31). This supposition, that her eye/I is the originator of gothic fantasies, claims subjective responsibility for her perceptions. However, her description of the interior décor of her nursery suggest that these fantasies may have their origins precisely in her seeing eye. '[M]y nursery was planned to induce

peace', she writes, but two pictures hanging there belie that intention. Bowen remembers these two pictures 'sharply' as 'they were openings into a second, more threatening reality' – she is sensing the existence of a parallel universe. Her descriptions of the pictures conjure up macabre subjects hilariously inappropriate for a nursery, especially that of an imaginative child:

The first ... [depicted] Casabianca standing against the flames. The boy stood in ecstasy on the burning deck. In the other, a baby in a wooden cradle floated smilingly on an immense flood.... All round, from the lonely expanse of water rose only the tips of gables, chimneys and trees. (13)⁵

Unsurprisingly, these gothic scenes 'induced in [Elizabeth] a secret suspended fear of disasters – fires and floods'. The child Bowen is too young to be conscious of the impending catastrophe facing her Anglo-Irish community, but given how many Big Houses were lost to fire, the Casabianca picture is portentous. With her characteristic dry humour, Bowen posits that the picture of the boy in the fire 'must ... have been chosen for its heroic subject' and was 'there to stimulate courage – for [her] father and mother, like all Anglo-Irish people, saw courage ... as an end in itself' (13). The picture of the child adrift in a flood, and the 'dread of a tidal wave' it induces in the girl Elizabeth, eerily presages not only the loss of her uncle, decades later, on the Titanic (*Pictures*, 48), but, metaphorically, the flood of debt which finally engulfs her class and caste.

Co-incidentally, *The Rising Tide* is the title of a 1937 novel by Molly Keane (1984), another Anglo-Irish writer, and a friend of the adult Bowen.⁶ In fact, the 'rising tide' which the child Elizabeth dreads comes close to swamping some Anglo-Irish, inhabiting homes 'with roofs like sieves' (Bence-Jones, 1987, 287) unable to cope with Irish precipitation. In *Twilight of the*

Ascendancy, Bence-Jones tells us that ‘at Tervoe in County Limerick, ... Lord Emly, smoking innumerable cigars, moved from room to room as the rain came in’(261), displaying Casabiancian aplomb. Bence-Jones goes on to report that ‘The rain came no less abundantly through the leaky roof of Lismehane in County Clare, clattering into enamel jugs and basins put out to catch the drips’, so the owner Colonel George O’Callaghan-Westropp surrounded by his ‘mangy terriers’ (261) could no doubt have sympathised with the cradled infant afloat with its cat.⁷

Bowen names her chief fear in contemplating the Moses-like child: ‘What would become of the cradle in a world in which everyone else was drowned?’ (*Seven*, 13). This question suggests a child who already imagines her world as beset with threatening forces, and who identifies herself as a lone survivor. She lives to experience the reality of being a child of the house of Bowen, trying to keep afloat in Bowen’s Court, effectively the cradle of her dynasty. Her world, Anglo-Ireland, by then contained so few survivors that they might as well all have been drowned.

Critics often see Bowen as the very embodiment of the disappearing Anglo-Irish world, an opinion which may be influenced by her life-writing. For instance, in the autobiographical ‘Origins’, she refers to ‘my more or less synonymous race and family: the Anglo-Irish’ (*Pictures*, 14). Gearóid Cronin dubs her the ‘last heir and chronicler’ of her culture (Cronin, 1991, 160). Victoria Glendinning writes that ‘When [Bowen] died the Anglo-Irish literary tradition died with her’ (Glendinning, 1993, 2). If it did, it rapidly resurrected itself in exemplary texts such as John Banville’s *Birchwood* (1998), Jennifer Johnston’s *Fool’s Sanctuary* (1987), Aidan Higgins’s *Langrishe, Go Down*

(1993) and Molly Keane's *Good Behaviour* (1983), but Glendinning's allegation nevertheless proves that Bowen is not alone in identifying herself as a child inhabiting apocalyptic times. Her editor says 'Courage was something she never lacked' (*Pictures*, xxxvii), so perhaps the nursery pictures did have the desired effect on her psyche.

She retains an interest in art, and studies it as a young woman (Glendinning, 1993, 41), but when she tries to acquire a painting of Bowen's Court to hang in her new home in England, she is informed by the intended artist that the roof has been removed. Soon afterwards, the house is demolished (4). Thus an interest in art prognosticates catastrophe for Bowen in her later years as it did in her early childhood.

Courage and its accompanying attributes are highly commended in Annabel Goff's *Walled Gardens*:

Self-sufficiency and inner resources were what I most admired in my grandmother. Recently I've come to realise that most members of my family who survived ... had these qualities to quite an advanced degree. In a society based on such depths of reserve, if you don't have one or the other, you tend to perish. (158)

She goes on to give her definition of courage 'as understanding that behaving well in adversity is its own reward, and that there is no viable alternative' (159). Bravery is needed in this beleaguered world. Like young Bowen, the child Annabel has an active imagination which is preyed on by what she terms 'morbid fantasies. I was a fearful child and the things I feared came in order. Death, ... poverty [and] ghosts' (42-3). Goff does not mention if the décor of her nursery set off these 'fantasies', but she is specifically 'afraid that [her] parents would die' and remembers experiencing 'rage, confusion and insecurity' when her father makes a 'casual reference ... to his old age' (43).

This is somewhat understandable in light of the fact that her father is fifteen years older than her mother (178), which may make him seem elderly and vulnerable to his young daughter. She later discloses that her parents' marriage is not a happy one, which could explain some of her feelings of insecurity. Marital incompatibility can of course happen in any society, but as Goff and Molly Keane report, suitable suitors are hard to come by in Anglo-Ireland (Goff, 1994, 195; Quinn, 1990, 74-5), and Goff gives a prime example of a 'trapped' wife in her portrait of family friends Scottie and Creed. Annabel eavesdrops on the 'courageous' Scottie, intuiting that she can learn lessons from her fortitude within a wreck of a relationship (30), as she feels she can glean messages from 'ruined Georgian house[s]' (7).

Young Annabel finds her 'fear, rage, confusion, insecurity ... all impossible to communicate'. This reticence has endured: 'Even now I hesitate to say what it is that frightens me' (42). Naming one's fears, the adult Goff tells us, is tempting fate. And yet she names them here in her autobiography, suggesting that her childhood fears no longer have relevance (or that writing is not the same as verbal utterance). Her narrative reveals that her parents eventually divorced, her father is dead at the time of writing, and the important houses of her girlhood are gone, so the worst has already happened in that world of her youth. Those early fears did manifest themselves and she lived through them. Her book functions as a repository of her fear-filled childhood, a means of laying her ghosts to rest by encasing them within covers.

In *Bowen's Court*, Elizabeth Bowen writes: 'It has taken the decline of the Anglo-Irish to open to them the poetry of regret: only dispossessed people know their land in the dark' (132). Anglo-Irish 'poetry of regret' comes in many

forms, including autobiography, though it is a kind of poetic justice that the sometime-dispossessors are experiencing loss for themselves. Bowen, however, does not believe in 'repining', which she regretfully notes as having become a habit among her race: 'in my own day, I hear a good deal too much of it' (*Court*, 187). She copes, like that other famous author-in-exile, James Joyce, by turning her loss into literature. Joyce boasts that Dublin could be rebuilt from his writings (Budgen, 1972, 67-8), and his *opus* functions for us as a literary reconstruction of that now-vanished city scene of the early twentieth century. The exiled Bowen likewise reconstructs her former home in her life-writing, especially in *Bowen's Court*. The house lives within the writer as a source of courage: 'I suppose that everyone, fighting or just enduring, carried within him one private image, one peaceful scene.' (Note that male pronoun, which I'll come back to later.) 'Mine was Bowen's Court. War made me that image out of a house built of anxious history' (457).

Bowen tells us in the 1963 edition of *Bowen's Court* that the original book was written during the second world war. She begins it in the summer of 1939 and finishes it in December 1941 (453, 456-7). Reading of Bowen's early life, it is difficult to escape the notion that the writer as a girl undergoes her own personal wars and 'anxious history'. In the winter of 1905-06 when she is six years old, doctors advise that her brilliant but nervous father Henry Bowen should be separated from his wife Florence and their only daughter – a child to whom he is much attached: 'he constantly wished to be with me, and to take me for walks' (416), Elizabeth's poignantly relates. His wife and child move to England, while Henry stays in Ireland. Echoing that nursery picture mentioned earlier, Grubgeld describes Bowen and her mother

Florence in England as 'unmoored ships, tied together and drifting' (92). The family is reunited after five years, but by that time, Florence has cancer, and she dies when Elizabeth is thirteen. So, by the time she leaves girlhood, Bowen has suffered her own evacuation experience: parted from a parent, home -- and country -- she loves, disorientated, and with no clear idea of the reasons behind the separations. Small wonder that her family home becomes such an anchor for her.

If Bowen's Court, the house, is a psychic presence to its chronicler (Cronin, 1991, 143-4), it also functions as her doppelgänger. In the early days of her parents' marriage, the couple live in Dublin because of her father's career, and their daughter speculates on the attitude of the house to this move: 'It may be said that Bowen's Court met and conquered the challenge of emptiness – but on the house the conquest has left its mark: it is to these first phases of emptiness that I trace the start of the house's strong *own life*' (Court, 403, italics Bowen's). Thus the 'family storyteller', as she dubs herself (69), anthropomorphises the family home, attributing to it the qualities she subsequently had to develop in herself as that challenging couple's daughter: ability to, not just cope with, but conquer, feelings of loss and abandonment, and subsequent self-reliance.

Women who display courage and initiative come forcefully to life in *Bowen's Court*. Mary Crofts, a cousin of the Bowens, is described admiringly as 'a figure to watch' (86), being 'intrepid [and] fearless', an assessment the biographer makes on observing the 'bold bad eyes' captured in Mary's portrait (100). The author provides an amusing example of bold female self-enclosure which gives access to male power. Given alternative versions of an

eavesdropping episode which lead to a Miss St Leger becoming 'the only lady Freemason', Bowen prefers the popular story that reports her hiding in a grandfather clock over the family account which depicts her passively falling asleep on a sofa. Bowen, assessing the 'dogged, impassive look' of Miss St Leger's portrait, 'support[s] the clock version' (6). Incidentally, Bowen's short story 'The Inherited Clock' attaches uncanny powers to an old clock (Bowen, 1983, 623-640), and as Lis Christensen explores, timepieces recur as motifs in her fiction (150-1). Bowen's chosen fable of the female Freemason is interesting in that it depicts a woman being admitted to an exclusively male society through her own agency. The literary world of Bowen's era, and especially, the Anglo-Irish literary canon, is male-dominated, but Bowen is widely recognised as a writer of considerable merit.

As Bowen judges her ancestors and their peers through portraits, so we can draw our conclusions from the photographs included in the book. The author strides purposefully across the lawn towards us in the first, with the house in the background. This is Elizabeth Bowen's 'court', her domain. In other photographs, we see some of the courtiers – like herself, remarkable women of letters: Carson McCullers and Iris Murdoch. As Johannes Wally writes, 'Bowen's Court became an important literary salon' (104), and this can be read as an attribute of the hostess as much as of her homeplace.

In recording the many Roberts and Henrys in her antecedents, the writer turns kingmaker: 'I have, for clearness, numbered my ancestors as though they were kings – and, in a sense, every man's life *is* a reign, a reign over his own powers' (*Court*, 145; italics Bowen's). By that logic, that crowns her, as their heir, Queen Elizabeth. Like the most famous holder of that title,

this Elizabeth arrived where a son was anticipated, in Bowen's case so strongly that the foetus was already christened Robert (404). The later Elizabeth is also attracted to androgyny. In *Bowen's Court*, she records that 'On weekdays I wore a Robert-like, buttoned-up coat, and was gratified by strangers calling me "Sonny"' (406). This incident is more specific in *Seven Winters*; she recalls: 'I had the *triumph* of being called 'Sonny' by a conductor who lifted me off a tram' (16; my italics). Both women, when referring to their professional role, use a male pronoun – Elizabeth Bowen characterises the fighting, enduring (*Court*, 457), and writing self as male (*Pictures*, 36). Neither bears a child, thus precipitating a problematic succession. Apart from the first chapter, which is named for the house, each chapter of *Bowen's Court* is named for the reigning heir. This practice suggests that the house itself is the primary ruler. Elizabeth does not name the final chapter after herself, which might suggest some reticence in crowning herself queen, but she tells us in 'Origins' that "'History" inebriated me' as a teenager (*Pictures*, 26; quotation marks Bowen's), so she cannot fail to see the parallels between herself and the Virgin Queen.

Bowen writes: 'I am not a "regional writer" in the accredited sense' (*Pictures*, 35), but in writing of her family and its heritage, she and other Anglo-Irish writers create a fictional region of their own: that nebulous imaginary territory called 'Anglo-Ireland', which she names as her place of origin in her plans for her autobiography (62). Catholics 'were simply "the others", whose world lay alongside ours and never touched' (*Seven*, 44). She tells us that her parents created, in their marriage, 'a world of their own', and that she too 'began to set up her own' (11), and in this they are a microcosm

of the behaviour of the Anglo-Irish as a community. Peter Somerville-Large quotes Lady Fingall's description of her Anglo-Irish compatriots as inhabiting 'a world of their own, with Ireland outside the gates' (355). This has an echo in the walled gardens that Goff describes – enclaves which exist in the surrounding countryside, but remain sheltered from it and its prevailing winds.

Notes

1. I have written elsewhere about the irony that the Anglo-Irish were skilled gardeners but failed to propagate their own species (O'Byrne, 2008)
2. A poem by Katharine Tynan (Tynan, 1891, 57) and a song by Robert Dwyer Joyce (Lavery, 2006, 33) share the title and Irish-Independence-related theme of Loach's film. Dwyer Joyce's version is sung by a woman in a scene from the film depicting the wake of a young rebel. Tynan was a friend of Yeats, whose championing of the Anglo-Irish way of life is well documented. His book *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1891) endeavours to conserve an even earlier world than theirs, that of ancient Celtic mythology.
3. One of Goff's childhood homes, Ballinaparka, has a gothic quality in common with Dracula's castle – it is frequently visited by bats. She recalls her mother 'valiantly swiping at them with a tennis racket' (166-7), an interesting use of transferable skills; as Bowen depicts in *The Last September*, the Anglo-Irish were very keen on tennis.
4. The title is ironic on several counts. Joan de Vere is clearly not reconciled to the fact that as a female she is excluded from inheriting Curragh Chase,

the family home (de Vere, 1990, 46). The title is from Milton's *Paradise Regained* (iv, 413) and as the house burned down, it never can be regained. Also, despite the 'Anglo-Ireland' of the title, much of the book depicts the author abroad, suggesting that she, like Elizabeth Bowen, inhabits a psychic space called 'Anglo-Ireland', wherever they happen to be physically living.

5. Felicia Hemans, who wrote the poem 'Casabianca', which begins 'The boy stood on the burning deck' (Hemans, c.1890), lived in Dublin from 1831. The figure of Casabianca also appears in Stoker's *Dracula*; the captain who lashed his hands to a mast in order to direct his ship to shore, when he foresees his own death, is compared to him (1983, 80).
6. The title of Keane's novel *Good Behaviour* (1983) also occurs in Bowen's writing: 'In the interest of good manners and good behaviour people learned to subdue their own feelings' (Bowen, 1950, 199). Given the theme of repression in Keane's novel, this is unlikely to be a coincidence.
7. The fact that a cat shares the cradle with the child is hardly reassuring to the girl Elizabeth, who 'was not very fond of animals' and would choose a stuffed dog over a real one (*Seven*, 47) – another instance of fantasy being preferred to reality.

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