Abstract
In a paper published in 2007, Beth Wightman argued for the dual operation of geographical space and Irish subjectivity in Elizabeth Bowen’s *The Last September* (1929). Wightman locates Bowen’s often-contested literary Irish identity at the intersection of the Island as geographic actuality and Ireland as a concept denoting national unity. Wightman’s focus on the spatiality of Bowen’s construction of Irish identity in *The Last September* highlights the complex operation of abstract and material space in the novel. This paper identifies the spaces of Bowen’s work as central to the understanding of her “Irishness,” as well as detailing her significant contribution to transnational modernism. It builds on, yet departs from, current critical debate on space in Bowen’s work by moving away from viewing her construction of Irish nationalism as contingent only on geography; this is achieved by highlighting the material manifestation of a distinct Architectural Irish subject. This subject, I will argue, is produced as a result of its relation to the discourse laden domestic space of “Danielstown,” the Irish country house which is arguably the central character of *The Last September*.

*The Last September* is perhaps Bowen’s most speculated Big House work. Critical discussion of it tends to position its central feature, the “blistered” and ragged big country house, as a synecdoche for the decay and ultimate fall of the Anglo-Irish Ascendancy. This paper re-examines and takes issue with this claim by illustrating that the material manifestation of place and space exemplified by the Big House in *The Last September* exists as a site for identity formation, transgression and ultimately, of the rebirth and reinvigoration of a form of individual nationalism. This paper argues that Bowen’s characteristic development of a material, architectural aesthetic is central to her nationalist consideration as well as her contribution to a modernism beyond the boundaries of national literature.

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