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Here be monsters: the Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853 and the growth of Dublin department stores

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This article explores the juxtaposition of the 1853 Irish Industrial Exhibition in Dublin and the dramatic rise of department stores in the city during the same decade. It analyses the aims, structure and reception of the 1853 Exhibition within the context of the Irish industrial movement, the economic modernity of the post-Famine era and the dramatic changes to consumer culture which were occurring during the 1850s. The article takes as its focus the hitherto neglected ‘monster house’ controversy – conducted in pamphlets and public lectures – regarding the growth of Dublin’s department stores. Coinciding with the 1853 Exhibition, the controversy rehearsed many of the same concerns regarding economic and social structures in Irish urban society in the wake of the Famine. Consideration of the ‘monster house’ controversy alongside the issues raised by the 1853 Exhibition allows a new perspective on the development of middle-class urban life in Dublin during the mid-nineteenth century.

Keywords: monster house; department store; Dublin; Ireland; Industrial Exhibition; consumption

This article seeks to explore certain aspects of urban middle-class professional and commercial life in Dublin during the 1850s, through an examination of two related events which took place during that decade. The first of these events is the ‘monster house’ controversy which raged in a war of pamphlets, speeches and newspaper articles in the city over much of the decade; a debate about new experiences of commerce which in many ways reflected broader contests over Ireland’s class structures and economy. The second event is the staging of the Irish Industrial Exhibition in 1853; a conscious attempt to emulate the industrial success of Britain as it had been displayed at London’s ‘Great Exhibition’ in the Crystal Palace in 1851. These two events, which overlap and are historically intertwined, yet never explicitly reference each other, in fact both serve as clear examples of the strident forms of economic and cultural modernity thrust upon Ireland as a result, in large part, of the Famine.

‘Monster house’ was a deliberately denigrating term used in both Ireland and Britain during the mid-nineteenth century to describe the new retailing formations which would eventually come to be known as department stores. Their perceived ‘monstrousness’ was a function of their size and, more specifically, their ever-increasing numbers of ‘departments’, the feature which separated them from the older tradition of small and specialised shops. These ‘monster houses’ began to appear in cities throughout Western Europe and the USA from the 1840s, and were one of the recognised wonders of urban life by the time of their fullest development in the 1870s and 1880s. There is a well-developed field of international scholarship tracing the history of these department stores, as well as the profound ways in which they both created and reflected nineteenth-century customs of consumer culture, spectacle and display, gender roles, patterns of work and urban design.¹ Within this field, the cities of Paris, London and New York are the most

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widely discussed, although the equally early development of department stores in provincial cities, especially in Britain, is also recognised.²

Very little attention has been paid by Irish scholars, however, to the development of department stores in Dublin. In part this may be a result of the subordinate role of urban and social history in the Irish academy, but even within that area of research, the city's consumer culture may have been presumed to be 'backward' by comparison to Dublin's neighbouring European cities as a result of Ireland's economic difficulties during the nineteenth century. What actually emerges from the evidence of the 1850s, however, is that Dublin 'monster houses' were not only of easily comparable size and growth to those of other cities, but that the implications of their existence prompted a debate about consumer culture, patterns of trading and theories of political economy which may actually pre-date similar debates in other European cities.



Figure 1. The Official Opening of the Irish Industrial Exhibition in Dublin, 1853. *Illustrated London News*, 4 June 1853, 456.

More scholarly attention has been paid to the staging of the Irish Industrial Exhibition in Dublin in 1853. Much of this attention, unsurprisingly, has focused upon the Exhibition's relationship to London's 'Great Exhibition' of 1851, and the ways in which the Dublin event was a self-conscious attempt to stage both Ireland's supposed recovery from the devastation of the Famine and the hoped-for dawning of a new era of industrial progress which would qualify Ireland as an equal economic partner in the Union with the UK.³ Other scholars have examined the Dublin Exhibition's position within a 'South Kensington school' of thinking in Ireland after the Famine, focused upon industrial and artistic training which it was hoped would create economic benefits – a movement which did eventually result in the founding of the National Gallery, National Library, National Museum and Natural History Museum (if not the much-advocated industrial training college) in the grounds of Leinster House where the 1853 Exhibition had been staged.⁴

Certainly, the 1853 Exhibition organisers and promoters placed great emphasis upon the development of industrial production in Ireland, perceived to be both newly possible and the only viable way to prevent a reoccurrence of the economic and social devastations of the Famine. However, the evidence suggests that its primary influence was upon patterns of consumption rather than production, especially within Dublin itself, where even as early as the 1850s it is clear that there was a significant and growing middle-class who were already acquiring the habits of Victorian consumer culture. As the following discussion will show, the 1853 Exhibition and the 'monster houses' had many features in common, especially with regard to developing concepts of free trade, leisure consumerism, spectacle and display, and even urban architecture.

The 'monster house' controversy

As early as 1851, there emerged a vigorous and wide-ranging debate, exercised through speeches, public meetings, pamphlets and newspaper correspondence, concerning the economic and moral effects of the now well-developed 'monster houses' in Dublin. Written as explicit challenges and ripostes to each other, not all of the contributions to the debate still appear to be extant, but the ways in which they quote each other (usually for the purposes of refutation) allow the threads of the debate to be followed fairly closely through the surviving texts. The arguments against the 'monsters', as well as replies defending these larger stores, range freely across economic, social and moral grounds, each side adducing supposed facts about the retailing trade of the city to support their claims. As a result, the debate provides us with one of the best sources of information about the early development of modern consumer culture in Dublin, even while a considerable degree of caution has to be maintained regarding the claims made by either side.

The controversy appears to have been begun by a group of smaller, more traditional shopkeepers who formed themselves into an organisation known as the Dublin Traders' Association, for the express purpose of attacking the nascent department stores of the city. Their initial criticisms of these stores do not appear to be extant, but in February 1851, while they were still being published, a riposte appeared in print under the pseudonym of 'Censor' (the author's true identity never being revealed). From this publication, it is clear that the Dublin Traders' Association had been basing its attacks on 'monster houses' primarily upon economic arguments. Specifically, they charged that these establishments were putting smaller shopkeepers out of business through the economies of scale in their trading which allowed them to undercut the prices of smaller stores. Throughout this acrimonious exchange of arguments, both sides dispute the allegations of the other with regard to economic theory, the degree of impact of the bigger stores upon Dublin's retail trade and, of course, the moral and social implications of this new form of consumer culture. Some of the more basic descriptions of the 'monster house' phenomenon, however, are not disputed, suggesting a degree of agreement regarding the number, size and employment practices of the new stores.

At this point, in early 1851, there were generally agreed to be four developing department stores in Dublin, all of which had begun as drapers' stores, but which were now expanding into other areas connected to clothing, fabrics and women's fashion. 'Censor', quoting from the Dublin Traders' Association – but not disputing their claims in this respect – mentions that each of these four 'monsters' contained thirty departments. He did, however, dispute their further claim that each of these departments is '... doing enough business to support two respectable shops ...', also claiming as 'unbelievable' that the combined profits of the four larger stores amount to £233,250 per annum.⁵ It is no longer possible for us to judge the profits made by these shops, but the fact that they were each agreed to contain thirty individual departments is striking evidence of the scale of their operations, even by the standards of much larger and richer cities such as Paris or London at this time.⁶

The exact identities of these 'monster houses' can only be deduced from largely coded references in the pamphlet debate, along with an examination of the Dublin directories of the time, based upon the rateable value given for individual addresses as an indication of the size of the businesses occupying them. The only shop ever mentioned by name during the course of the 'monster house' controversy is Todd, Burns and Co., although there are several other revealing references to some of the larger stores being owned by 'Scotch' proprietors.⁷ In the *Thom's Directory* of 1850, Todd, Burns and Co. has several addresses in the city, the largest of which is at 24 Jervis Street, which has a rateable value of £360. Using this as a guideline, several other contenders – all of them to become well-established department stores during the later nineteenth century – for 'monster' status become identifiable. These include McBirney, Collis and Co., of 16 and 17 Aston's Quay, with a rateable value of £300, Cannock, White and Co. (later to become Arnotts'), of 13 and 14 Henry Street, with a rateable value of £270, and, most dramatically, Pim Brothers of 75–83 South Great George's Street, with a rateable value of £543.⁸

Returning to the Dublin Traders' Association's claims that the larger shops were putting smaller establishments out of business in what they asserted amounted to unfair trading practices, 'Censor' himself resorts to *Thom's Directory* in his refutation. He claims to have identified the specialisation of each of the thirty departments of the 'monster houses', and then gone through the *Thom's Directory* of 1851 and established that '... the Directory gives about 1025 individuals and firms actually engaged in the very same branches of trade!' (original emphasis).⁹

Other defenders of the 'monsters' do not attempt to deny claims that the smaller, specialist shops were closing in the wake of the larger stores' wider range and lower prices. In August 1851, W. Neilson Hancock, then professor of political economy at Trinity College, gave a lecture intervening in the 'monster house' controversy, in which he insisted that the development of larger retailers was a sign of greater economic efficiency and attention to customer demands. As such, he argued, the 'monster houses' (a term he deplores as an 'abuse of language') were a beneficial outcome of free trade and greater competition in the Irish economy. After outlining some of the principles of the liberal economic theories he propounded, Hancock declared that

[Political Economy] teaches that buyers are the best judges of their own interests ... It teaches that competition is the natural and the only effectual security which buyers have for being fairly treated ... It teaches further that the plan of the Traders' Association, and every plan for getting rid of competition, is, however disguised, really socialism.¹⁰

Hancock's intervention in the debate is a particularly clear signal that the rapid development of the department stores in Dublin, as well as the Traders' Association's objections to them, were recognised at the time as being symptomatic of the economic modernity in which Ireland found itself during and immediately after the Famine. Hancock, like Richard Whately after whom his

chair at Trinity was named, was at this time a fervent advocate of laissez-faire economics as the only possible solution to Ireland's economic difficulties. Indeed, he had defended the principles of free trade even in the face of the Famine itself, on the grounds that it was precisely the high level of 'interference' with the operation of the market (in the form of the remains of what he described as a feudal land-holding system) which had not allowed free trade to alleviate Famine conditions. Summarising Hancock and other Irish liberal economists' positions during and immediately after the Famine, McDonagh, Slater, and Boylan have argued that they believed that 'Irish economic difference was something to be cured through the application of the standard remedies. The lack of confluence between Irish field systems and British structures was thought to merely underline the need for the more vigorous application of metropolitan political economy.'¹¹ It is worth noting that another contributor to the Dublin Statistical Society, founded by Hancock, and advocating similar adherence to the principles of private enterprise and free trade, was Jonathan Pim, owner of the Greenmount Mills, which produced poplin and other cotton fabrics, and also of Pim Brothers' department store, at this point in the early 1850s the largest 'monster house' in Dublin.¹²

As well as their demonstration of the 'survival of the fittest' principles of liberal economics, Hancock also applauded the larger stores in Dublin for their adherence to cash transactions based upon a fixed and clearly marked pricing system. This system was, he argued, more efficient, a fairer transaction for the customer, and allowed the shops themselves to buy in whatever stock they thought would best meet demand, rather than being beholden to particular suppliers who were holding their lines of credit. Using imagery which reflected the widespread contemporary belief that Ireland's economic regeneration must come about through laissez-faire industrialisation, Hancock advocated this greater efficiency in trading on the grounds that '... the substitution of quick for slow transactions is precisely like an improvement in machinery which cheapens the cost of production'.¹³

The Dublin Traders' Association, of course, saw the situation rather differently. Their series of attacks on the 'monster houses', made during 1851, are now largely lost. However, one contribution, published by 'Anon' shortly after Hancock's lecture on the subject, does survive. Again, 'Anon's' real identity is not revealed, although he does make reference at the end of the pamphlet to '... our feelings as a trader', thereby suggesting that he is a small trader himself.¹⁴ In the course of his tirade against the 'monster houses', 'Anon' also takes direct issue with the political economy of Hancock's publication, arguing that

We cannot, however, pass unnoticed the self-complacency, and more than Newtonian confidence, with which the learned Professor propounds his economic laws – laws not deduced from observing the world as it is, but learned in the bright and too often fanciful region of political economy ... and like the inventors of Ptolemaic theory, where they don't fit the world, he would make the world fit them.¹⁵

'Anon' offered his own interpretation of the political economy of the mid-nineteenth century in the early pages of his pamphlet. He argued that the 'monster houses' are, in his view, '... rather the symptoms, than the cause ...' of small traders' economic difficulties, and goes on to complain, among other things, of what he termed the 'fictitious capital' created by the banking and financial system.¹⁶ A few years later, in a speech supporting Dublin's smaller traders, Sir Isaac Butt would refer to '... the tyranny of capital in the shape of monster houses'.¹⁷ These references to the advent of large-scale capitalism are highly revealing of the schism opening up at this time within the commercial middle classes, the significance of which will be discussed below.

As well as these objections to the claims of laissez-faire economics for Dublin department stores, opponents of the 'monster houses' also attacked their social effects, with particular reference to the moral development of their workers. In Dublin, as elsewhere until very late in the

nineteenth century, almost all shop assistants were men, and although there are references in the ‘monster house’ pamphlets to women workers attached to these stores, it is most likely that at this time these were seamstresses working behind the scenes rather than serving customers on the shop floor.¹⁸ Despite their gender, however, even these male workers were, it was claimed, vulnerable to the evil effects of the large-scale and relatively anonymous structures of the ‘monster houses’. ‘Anon’ discusses at some length the benefits to shop-men of learning their trade whilst working in a small, family-run business, in which they would live with the family, thus allowing them to ‘... enjoy the comforts, and observe the proprieties of domestic society’.¹⁹ By contrast, he describes in sensational terms the pitfalls of the ‘living in’ system instituted by department stores in Dublin, as in other cities. Not only is the shop assistant forced to ‘... scramble for his meals, at a table, among a hundred like himself’, he is also then left unsupervised in the city after the stores have closed:

Shall we attempt a description of how they spend the hours between the closing and opening of the Monster Concern? Dare we expose to view the haunts they frequent; the deeds which the darkness of night conceals – the moral effect of these deeds upon our citizens – the moral and physical effects upon themselves? Or, dare we peep into that crowded dormitory where, after the revels of the evening, they return, to beds touching each other, and reveal the trophies of the smoking, gambling, and drinking saloon, and the still fouler trophies of the brothel, as they strip off the garments that hide them during the day ...²⁰

Perhaps overestimating the amount of revelry available to an 1850s shop assistant on an average night, ‘Anon’ nevertheless here provides revealing information about both the extent and structures of Dublin department stores during this period. Earlier in the pamphlet he asserts that the ‘family’ of these stores typically consisted of between 150 and 200 workers, and in the passage above he makes reference to the stores providing in-house meals for a hundred employees at a time.²¹ Along with the suggestive phrase ‘beds touching each other’, he also provides evidence that the living-in system was by the early 1850s fully developed in Dublin stores. ‘Anon’s’ overheated concerns regarding the lack of moral guidance available to these workers are combined with an estimate of their wages, which he suggests would typically have been £20 per year, along with a further £25 worth of board and lodging. He is not using these figures to allege poor remuneration – indeed, it is striking that none of the surviving attacks on the ‘monster houses’ allege economic exploitation of their workers, which suggests that they were paying at least as well as the smaller stores, and probably better – and they can therefore be presumed to be relatively accurate.²² The picture of early department stores in Dublin which therefore emerges from this series of pamphlets is easily comparable to that in other large European cities. Consisting of up to thirty different departments, displaying a wide range of goods for fixed and clearly displayed prices, they were employing up to two hundred workers, most of whom were living in dormitory accommodation attached or near to the shop, and receiving above-average wages for their profession. And whether or not they were putting smaller traders out of business – it seems clear that they were, though to what extent it is impossible to gauge – undoubtedly prospering, which indicates that even so soon after the Famine as 1851, Dublin contained a professional and commercial middle class with sufficient disposable income to have acquired the habits of modern consumer culture.

It is not clear whether the ‘monster house’ controversy continued uninterrupted after 1851 – the next surviving record of it appears in 1857, but the positions of both sides in the debate are unchanged. In January of 1857, the Dublin Traders’ Alliance, as it had now become known, held a meeting in the Music Hall, which was addressed by the secretaries of that organisation, James Cardwell and Edmund Barnes, along with the invited speakers Alderman Reynolds and Sir Isaac Butt, whose comments that night were excerpted later that year in a pamphlet attacking their views, published by Frederic Evelyn.

The Dublin Traders' Alliance alleged, at this meeting, that the number of 'monster houses' in the city had now grown to five or six, which, they claimed, had '... monopolized the business of hundreds of respectable shop keepers'.²³ Again, it is possible to deduce from other evidence that by far the most significant addition to the category of 'monsters' was McSwiney, Delany & Co., whose purpose-built 'New Mart' on Sackville Street will be discussed below in relation to the Irish Industrial Exhibition, and whose rateable value was, by the mid-1850s, £660.²⁴

The Dublin Traders' Alliance, and their supporters such as Reynolds and Butt, centre their complaints against the larger stores on two principal economic and political arguments. The first of these, repeated from the 1851 series, is that the 'monster houses' are putting many smaller traders out of business, thereby reducing the rents of buildings in Dublin and threatening the incomes of the large landlord class of the city. Indeed, they went so far as to claim that the city's 'best streets' already '... look like dead walls, from the number of houses closed, and "to let" staring from nearly every other window ...'.²⁵

The second complaint against the department stores was a complex accusation grounded in both economics and politics. These large stores, it was claimed, not only sold goods which were typically inferior to those of the smaller stores (thus allowing them to charge lower prices), but also imported most of these 'slop productions' from England. Alderman Reynolds made reference in his speech to the '... ruinous importation of foreign furniture', which he insisted was destroying the trade of Irish cabinet-makers. By contrast, Frederic Evelyn argued in his *laissez-faire* dismissal of the Traders' Alliance that '... if chairs and tables, such as the Irish public approve of, can be imported more cheaply than they can be made at home, let not a single chair or table be made in Ireland'.²⁶ This reference to cheap imported furniture is significant in a number of respects, some of which are connected to the 1853 Exhibition and will be discussed below. One significance of the complaints about furniture imports, however, is their evidence that by 1857, the 'monster houses' had expanded their trading beyond even the most extended aspects of drapery where their businesses had begun. By this point they had therefore become fully established department stores in the sense in which this term would come to be widely understood by the later decades of the nineteenth century. Evelyn himself, far from downplaying their scope and influence in his defence of their trade, commented that 'never has the Monster House system been brought to such complete development and activity as during the last five or six years', therefore suggesting that the department stores had indeed been prospering and growing since the beginnings of the campaign against them in 1851 – further evidence that the city's middle-class consumers were eagerly embracing the new styles of shopping.²⁷

Supporters of the department stores, such as Hancock and Evelyn, in fact specifically adduced the growth of an urban middle class as evidence that these new retailing formations were servicing a growing market, rather than merely plundering the business of existing traders. In 1851, in attempting to refute claims that the 'monster houses' had by definition been reducing the trade of smaller shops, Hancock had insisted:

It is assumed that there has been no increase in the shop keeping business of Dublin since the first large shop was established twenty years ago; that railways have done nothing to increase shopping business in Dublin; that Dublin and its suburbs have not increased in size ... that there has been no improvement in the habits of the people leading them to consume clothes and articles of ornament instead of ardent spirits.²⁸

Hancock's claims that these changes account for the business of the larger stores without diminishing that of the smaller ones are, of course, dubious to say the least. Nevertheless, what is striking about his comments is their recognition of the growth in both numbers and consumer spending of an urban middle class in Dublin even during the era of the Famine and its immediate aftermath. What he is actually enumerating in the section cited above are most of the key indicators of the development of a Victorian middle-class consumer culture – increased

disposable income for certain sections of the population, access to the distribution network for both individuals and, crucially, consumer goods created by the railway age, and a recognition among middle-class populations that their class identity was increasingly to be defined through acts of consumption of precisely the kinds of goods sold by the 'monster houses'. This final point will also be discussed below, in relation to the 1853 Exhibition.

In Evelyn's 1857 contribution to the debate about consumer culture in Dublin, he also draws attention to the growing middle-class population of the city. In this instance, it is the suburbanisation of this social group to which he draws attention, demanding:

Is it not notorious that for years past there has been a movement outwards, on the part of the citizens of Dublin, into the suburbs? How numerous are the *ci-devant* residents of Dublin who now reside at Kingstown, Dalkey, Killiney, Rathmines, Ranelagh and Dunderum? Do you not see streets and terraces constantly rising in these localities? Has not this emigration from Dublin been powerfully stimulated, of late years, by the increased facility of communication between town and country afforded by the railways?²⁹

What Evelyn is identifying here, albeit for his own partisan reasons, is the development of the necessary conditions for the expansion of department store trading into areas such as furniture and other home furnishings, as the middle classes began to create their own suburban style and culture through the relatively cheap acquisition of such goods from retailers like the 'monster houses', whose economies of scale, wide range of choice and fixed prices all appealed to middle-class consumers.

One final feature of this developing urban middle-class consumer culture which is, significantly, referenced and appealed to by both opponents and supporters of the new department stores is the role of women as the primary customers of these new style of shops. As early as 1851, Hancock had defended the 'monster houses'' claims to genuinely lower prices – against allegations from the Traders' Association that these were illusory – by insisting that 'ladies', along with servants, were the 'principal supporters of the large shops', and that their judgement in consumer matters was trustworthy because they constituted '... the class who have the most time to go from shop to shop to compare prices'.³⁰

Hancock's designation of women shoppers as assiduous and skilful in making consumer decisions is especially striking given his own dramatic ideological shift in political-economic thought during the 1850s. Although an upholder of purist liberal economics during his intervention into the early stages of the 'monster house' series, he had experienced a change of heart by 1855, when he began to attack industrial capitalism on specifically gendered grounds. His growing unease with the ideology he had once supported so vigorously was grounded in the increasing numbers of women being drawn into industrial employment, a process he saw as having profoundly negative social effects. This led him, during the late 1850s and early 1860s, to formulate a new theory of political economy in which he promoted the family unit rather than the individual as the natural basis for both social and economic organisation. He argued that '... women are, and must in general be, supported by men, their employment being absorbed in the domestic work, on which so much of the health, comfort, and moral well being of society depends'.³¹ In light of his later focus upon the issue of women's role in industrial capitalist societies, it is perhaps possible to read his passing reference to their role as skilful shoppers as being a part of the 'domestic work' which he saw as so essential to family and social happiness. This would, of course, be entirely congruent with the ideology of shopping as middle-class women's 'work', which developed in all Western societies parallel to the development of department stores and other aspects of modern consumer culture in the nineteenth century.³²

Other contributors to the 'monster house' controversy also referred to women's roles as shoppers, however. In his defence of the larger stores, Evelyn makes the tongue-in-cheek suggestion that one reason why they may have been thriving at the expense of smaller traders

is their provision of larger spaces to accommodate the current fashion for crinolines. He pointed out that

In these days of hoops and crinoline, it is not every door-way that a lady can enter, nor is it every shop in which she can move gracefully along, with unruffled plumage. Ladies, now-adays, require no inconsiderable space for their evolutions: and, therefore, the more spacious the shop, the greater its convenience. Thus, the hoops and crinolines constitute a formidable outwork which 'the Traders' Alliance' must carry before they can hope successfully to assault the Monster Houses.³³

However whimsical Evelyn is being here, he is nevertheless recognising a central feature of the success of the nascent department stores. The full crinoline of the kind Evelyn is referring to here – and which could reach diameters of six feet across – was a high-fashion style only affordable or practicable for middle- or upper-class women who were not participating in the workforce, and whose 'job' was increasingly defined as the demonstration and maintenance of class tastes and identities through consumption of the kind provided by the department stores.

And finally, the Dublin Traders' Alliance, in their attempts to turn popular opinion against the 'monster houses', made explicit appeals to middle-class women shoppers to boycott these stores. In the published accounts of their meeting held at the Music Hall in 1857, their effort specifically identified the women of professional and commercial families, when it declared:

Let the ladies, who lay out hundreds of thousands a year in these houses, reflect – if wives or daughters of men possessing house property in this city – that they are contributing to support a system that has already reduced rents nearly one-half ... If of professional men, they should ask themselves where are the patients or clients to be found? If of bankers or brokers, where the depositors or discounters? And if men of business, where the customers?³⁴

At the same meeting, Alderman Reynolds also claimed that the proposed boycott was 'doubly imperative' on women shoppers, 'as they were laying out the surplus of their husbands' earnings, and by incapacitating them they incapacitated themselves'.³⁵

The debate in Dublin during the 1850s on the phenomenon of the 'monster houses' therefore encompassed all of the issues raised by the development of modern consumer culture. Ranging from political economy to social morality, it reveals a dynamic urban middle class who were negotiating the changing landscape of Irish society and the consequent changes to their expression of class identities. Far from being an impoverished backwater within the Union with Britain, Dublin is revealed within this debate as having been exposed to a strikingly rapid and large-scale development of consumption as a modern social practice. The 1853 Irish Industrial Exhibition, held in the capital while these developments in consumer practice were occurring, therefore needs to be considered from the perspective of consumption, as well as the industrial production its organisers were so hopeful of promoting.

1853 Irish Industrial Exhibition

Held during the period of the 'monster house' controversy, the Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853 aimed to stimulate Irish industrial production in an effort to emulate Britain's success in this field. Underwritten by William Dargan, one of Ireland's few industrial magnates, who had constructed three-fifths of Ireland's railway lines by the early 1850s, the Exhibition opened in May 1853 and closed at the end of October the same year.³⁶ It was held on the lawns of Leinster House – then belonging to the Royal Dublin Society – and housed in a large complex of specially built temporary exhibition buildings. The central hall was 425 feet long, 100 feet wide, and 105 feet high, dimensions which the organisers were keen to point out were greater than those of the main hall of the Crystal Palace in London where the 1851 Great Exhibition had been held.³⁷

There is no doubt that the organisers and supporters of the Industrial Exhibition hoped that it would serve to stimulate Irish manufacturers to establish and expand their production, and also that they believed this approach was Ireland's best hope of gaining economic stability. There are many references in its official publications, some rather oblique, to the Famine, and it is clear that the Exhibition was intended to simultaneously demonstrate that this period of Irish history was over, and at the same time provide solutions to the remaining economic difficulties. In his retrospective guide to and account of the Exhibition, John Sproule claimed that it was of especial significance because of '... the peculiar position of the country at the time, just recovering from the effects of a degree of prostration almost unparalleled in history ...', a sentiment echoed by many contemporary discussions of the event.³⁸

The 1853 Exhibition was deliberately international in scope, and the organisers went to great lengths to obtain exhibits from British and European manufacturers – including obtaining an exemption from import duties for foreign exhibits – although how successful these efforts were with European producers is open to question.³⁹ Certainly, however, British manufacturers eagerly embraced the opportunity to expand into the Irish market, an indication in itself of their objective belief that that market existed, despite the recent experience of the Famine. As was mentioned above, several scholarly examinations of the Exhibition have been made, focusing mainly upon its notable failure to achieve its stated aims of stimulating Irish industry. Of these assessments, perhaps the most succinct summation of Dublin's fruitless emulation of London's Exhibition has been Alun C. Davies' argument that 'such a simple notion confused cause with effect ... country after country acted as host to international exhibitions ... partly in the hope that an exhibition would prove the magic first step on the ladder of industrialization. Ireland was early in the race.'⁴⁰

Davies also suggests that the Exhibition may even have been counter-productive to its stated aims in that it '... probably hastened the decline of some rural industries by exposing their vulnerability to competition from imports'.⁴¹ The possibility that the 1853 Exhibition, far from stimulating production, as had been hoped, actually stimulated consumption instead – and much of it of British imports – has not yet been fully explored, however. This seems a particularly relevant issue when the Exhibition is considered within the larger arena of the development of an urban consumer culture in Dublin.

The 1853 Exhibition had a number of stylistic features which point towards its important – however unintentional – contribution to a culture of consumption rather than production. Firstly, although it was clearly modelled very closely upon the 1851 Exhibition in London, some small but significant differences in organisation and display of goods were decided upon by the organisers. Where price-labels had been specifically proscribed for the goods displayed in London, the Dublin organisers did allow exhibitors to display prices for their goods and to agree sales with visitors – the only proviso being that the visitors had to be supplied with goods they bought from a different stock, leaving the Exhibition displays intact. In his 1854 retrospective on the Exhibition, John Sproule described this Dublin variation on the Crystal Palace scheme as '... an arrangement which, we believe, met with universal approbation'.⁴² The display of fixed prices on goods for sale was, as was discussed above, an innovation of department stores worldwide, and the Exhibition organisers must, to some extent, have been influenced by their example. There is, for example, evidence that France's answer to the 1851 Great Exhibition of London, the Grand Exposition held in Paris in 1855, was influenced by the Parisian stores' use of price labels, as they, like the Dublin Exhibition organisers before them, adopted this policy for exhibitors' goods.⁴³

Secondly, the theoretically thematic layout of the Exhibition into categories of raw materials and industrial products, similar to that of the 1851 Exhibition in London, appears in practice to have been overridden by different display systems. Very soon after the opening, the *Exhibition*



Figure 2. The Woollens Court, Irish Industrial Exhibition in Dublin, 1853. *Illustrated London News*, 4 June 1853, 452.

Expositor and Advertiser – a special newspaper dedicated to coverage of the Exhibition and printed on the premises, where it could be purchased literally off the presses – was complaining that the goods were being displayed according to contributor, rather than by category. The *Expositor* complained that this meant ‘it is therefore really difficult to judge of a class, as a whole, under such circumstances’.⁴⁴ The combined effect of displays according to contributor, along with fixed prices displayed on labels, must have made significant sections of the Exhibition bear a strong resemblance to the ‘monster houses’ in operation in nearby streets of Dublin.

Another reason for a marked resemblance of the Exhibition to the ‘monster houses’ in neighbouring streets was the presence of many of those ‘monsters’ as major exhibitors. The Pim

Brothers' interlinked businesses of poplin mills and their Dublin department store contributed displays, as did Todd, Burns and Co., one of whose display signs is clearly visible in a contemporary lithograph of the Centre Hall.⁴⁵ Indeed, at the close of the Exhibition, Todd, Burns and Co. were advertising a 'sale' of their display goods, which included Axminster carpets decorated with the arms of four Irish cities, ribbons, Irish linen, lace, curtains and cornices, as well as their display case itself, which was described as being 'so constructed that it will divide into four complete smaller ones ... and it contains Fourteen Large Panes, all of the finest British Plate Glass'.⁴⁶ In addition to these displays, the department stores are the most frequent and often the most extravagant advertisers in all publications relating to the Exhibition, from newspapers to official catalogues. The close connections between the Exhibition and the city's retailing – as opposed to manufacturing – businesses can also be seen in an announcement in the *Expositor* early in June 1853. The *Expositor* had been complaining, almost since the Exhibition opened, that too few working-class men and women were attending. Continuing that complaint, it did allow that '... we may notice the very spirited example that has been set by the firm of Todd, Burns and Co., of this city, who have purchased 400 admission tickets, to be presented to the persons in their employment ... Messrs Pim and Co. have also taken 400 tickets ...'.⁴⁷ Whether or not these employers felt that attending the Exhibition would be useful for their employees is open to doubt. What seems more likely is that they understood the public relations benefits to themselves with the middle classes who were both supporters of the Exhibition and their own primary customers. Such civic-minded displays may even have been part of the stores' defence against their opponents' accusations against them. Similar motivations may have been behind Todd, Burns and Co.'s donation of £200 towards the founding of the Assistant Drapers' Provident Association and Institute in October 1853. The Association provided medical and death insurance for shop assistants and their families, and used the money it raised from members and their employers in 1853 to buy a building for its Institute in central Dublin. This was intended to offer '... all the advantages of a home with spacious coffee and reading-rooms, library, etc., where members may meet for social and profitable employment of their unoccupied time'.⁴⁸

Outside of the Exhibition buildings, 1853 saw a growth in the size and spectacle of the Dublin 'monster houses' which must have been horrifying to the Dublin Traders' Alliance. Indeed, the expansion of the city's department stores in this year is so marked and so spectacular that its coincidence with the Exhibition cannot have been accidental. Most dramatic of these expansions is that of McSwiney, Delany & Co. (later to become Clerys'), who opened their new premises, known as 'The New Mart', on Sackville Street in May 1853.⁴⁹ This magnificent five-storey building, with a grand stone frontage and large ground-floor display windows, was one of the first purpose-built department stores in the world – certainly, its scale and size was easily on a par with competitors across Europe and the USA.⁵⁰ Other 'monsters' to announce expansions to coincide with the opening of the Exhibition were McBirney, Colles and Co. of Aston Quay, who advertised in the first edition of the *Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser* that they '... in a few days, will have completed their New Premises, the addition rendering their Establishment, already the most central in Dublin, one of the Largest and Most Complete in the Three Kingdoms'.⁵¹ Todd, Burns and Co. also advertised in the same edition of the *Expositor* that they

respectfully invite attention to the very Important Alterations and Additions they have made to their Premises, which are now increased to so great an extent as to form, without exception, the Largest Establishment of the Kind in Existence. Todd, Burns and Co., in these additions, have made it their close study to afford pre-eminently superior accommodation and convenience to their customers by enlarging the various Departments of their House, and bring each under the influence of a clear, bright light.⁵²

Clearly, by this stage, the ‘monster houses’ were explicitly competing with each other for degrees of ‘monstrousness’. Their owners and investors undoubtedly saw the 1853 Exhibition, with its influx of overseas visitors and spectacular emphasis upon commodity displays, as an opportunity for an expansion and extension of their customer base. The evidence of the post-Exhibition debates about the city’s department stores suggests that they were right in this judgement. The references in the 1857 pamphlets to cheap, imported furniture being sold in yet more new departments within the stores have an echo in one of the contemporary complaints about the Irish exhibits of furniture in the Exhibition. The *Expositor*, while praising their high standard of design and workmanship, objected that

however elaborate and expensive articles of any kind are to be admired, it is to be recollected that their use is confined to the few; and in an educational and utilitarian point of view we are disposed to attach much more importance to an illustration of improved and tasteful construction in the articles coming within the reach of the middle-classes.⁵³

In light of this, it is tempting to speculate that in the aftermath of the Exhibition, the ‘monster houses’ took up this challenge to provide household furnishings as well as clothing to the Dublin middle classes, and that they did so by importing relatively cheaper British furniture.

The Exhibition’s clear resemblance to the thriving department stores, as well as the belief, as stated in the *Expositor*, that ‘... education of the taste of the consumer must at all times exercise an important influence on manufacturing industry, by leading to a demand for a superior class of articles’, may help to explain a feature of the 1853 Exhibition’s audience which even its organisers found puzzling at the time.⁵⁴ This was the preponderance of female visitors to the Exhibition – among the middle- and upper-class season ticket holders, at least. Reflecting on this the year after the Exhibition, John Sproule commented that ‘... in London [at the 1851 Exhibition] it will be seen, that among the holders of these tickets, the gentlemen had a considerable majority; but here the ladies had nearly two to one. This is certainly a singular circumstance.’⁵⁵ It is indeed a striking statistic, given that women can hardly have been the primary intended audience for an event designed to stimulate manufacturing activity and investment. However, if the Exhibition is understood – as I am suggesting it was at the time by many of its visitors – as a spectacular display of consumer goods and an educative process in skilful shopping, then the unexpected levels of attendance by women with enough disposable income to afford a £1. 1s season ticket is easier to understand. For them, it might be presumed, the Exhibition was part of a rapidly expanding urban consumer landscape in Dublin, and one which might assist them in their ever more widely understood ‘work’ as arbiters of middle-class taste and identity through the purchase of clothes, accessories and household furnishings.

Another source of puzzlement – and, in this case, frustration – to the Exhibition’s organisers and promoters also connects its visitors’ motivations to those of department store shoppers. The *Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser*, almost from the opening day, repeatedly complained that visitors, especially the middle- and upper-class season ticket holders, were treating the Exhibition as a place of amusement, spectacle and flâneurism, rather than as a source of education and improvement. Near the Exhibition’s close, it praised ‘... the minds of all thoughtful and discerning men, who regard [the Exhibition] as it ought *alone* to be regarded – not as a grand spectacle to amuse, but a great open book *to teach, to refine, and to elevate* ... [original emphasis]’. One of the attacks upon the ‘monster houses’ during the 1850s insisted that the shopping experience they offered was not preferable to that of smaller stores, complaining of ‘... the bad air, the buzz, the confusion, the pertness, and the indifference we experienced on entering one of these houses ...’, later on maintaining that the public ‘... is averse to the noise, bustle and confusion of a Monster Shop’.⁵⁶ What both the earnest Exhibition promoters and the increasingly desperate opponents of the ‘monster houses’ failed to recognise was that these



THE CHINESE COURT.

Figure 3. The Terracotta Court, Irish Industrial Exhibition in Dublin, 1853. *Illustrated London News*, 4 June 1853.

elements of spectacle, noise, crowds and visibility were precisely the attractions of both ‘great exhibitions’ and department stores to nineteenth-century Dublin audiences.

Conclusion

One of the conceptual issues which the 1853 Exhibition and the controversy over department stores had in common was a concern among those involved with theories of political economy and its connections to an idea of the Irish nation. Most of the contributors to the ‘monster house’ debate, whether supporters or opponents of the new stores, concentrated their arguments upon issues of economic theory.

Opponents of the ‘monster houses’ railed against the economic liberalism of free trade, focusing specifically upon the importation of ‘slop productions’ from Britain into Ireland which,

they claimed, was the foundation of the department stores' success. This, they argued, was ruining entire classes of Irish tradespeople, and insisted that this ruin would spread throughout the Irish economy unless customers came to recognise the 'false economy' of buying cheaper British imports, and 'he [the customer] should remember if the shilling he expends gives employment to his fellow-citizens and countrymen, it may return the next day to give employment to himself; but if he spend it on the product of a foreigner it goes out of the country ...'.⁵⁷ As such, the Dublin Traders' Alliance and its supporters were clear advocates of protectionism as, in their view, the only hope of bolstering the Irish economy in the face of its larger and more industrialised British neighbour.

The 'monster house' supporters, however, defended them largely on the grounds of a belief in free trade and laissez-faire economics. The 'monster houses' were the outcome of a highly competitive market in consumer goods, and were 'monsters' precisely because they were successfully supplying an apparently insatiable demand for the goods they sold. If this drove smaller, more specialist traders out of the market – and for all their claims that the number of small shops closing was being exaggerated, there was usually at least a tacit acknowledgement that the process was occurring – then this was the sign of a healthy market, in which customers' pursuit of enlightened self-interest was leading to an increased competition to meet their demands, leading in turn to lower prices and the elimination of uncompetitive businesses. To oppose the 'monster houses' for what were, in effect, social reasons, and to encourage patronage of the smaller shops on non-economic grounds, as the Dublin Traders' Alliance was proposing, was an interference with the mechanism of the free market which amounted, it was even claimed by one defender of the 'monster houses', to 'rank communism', an endorsement of the views of 'Owen, Louis Blanc, and Cabet', and an approach which would damage the wealth of the Irish nation.⁵⁸ Only a whole-hearted embrace of free trade and competition, they insisted, could guarantee Irish prosperity.

The organisers of the 1853 Exhibition held similar beliefs regarding the best hope for Ireland to escape from the economic devastations of the Famine, and attain a level of prosperity comparable to Britain's. Their hope to stimulate industrial production in Ireland was also based upon a belief that Ireland's economy could only improve if it looked to the British model of international trading. This belief was so strong that it could even cast the recent experience of the Famine as a step along the road to economic modernisation. The *Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser*, for example, referred to the Famine as '... a dreadful ordeal of transition; but it was from a bad to a bettered state'.⁵⁹ Full participation in the imperial structures of international trade was advocated for Ireland, with the *Expositor* again arguing that '... it would be possible for us, by acquiring great skill and industry ... to cause raw material to flow into our workshops and manufactories from other places, where that skill and industry did not exist'.⁶⁰ The Exhibition's organisers saw an overreliance upon agricultural production as the 'outmoded' economic activity which Ireland needed to abandon, where the 'monster house' supporters focused upon the 'problem' of a mercantilist approach to trading, but both groups shared an adherence to laissez-faire economics as the key to Ireland's future success.

The merchants of the Dublin Traders' Alliance, however, rejected this 'modernising' approach, and were openly suspicious of international capital and trade. They saw Ireland as vulnerable, within a free-trade system, to market domination from larger economies, specifically Britain. They complained that the 'monster shops' system, '... after breaking, banishing, and pauperizing the classes that practice and live by [trading] in our own country, vainly promises to bring its products from other countries, to supply the wants of society cheaper than they can be supplied by the industry of its own members'.⁶¹

Both groups' ideological approaches reflect a deep awareness of the economic modernity in which Ireland found itself in the aftermath of the Famine. In particular, the debate about free

trade, competition and industrialisation showed its roots in the recent sea-change of economic structure brought about by the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, as well as the ideologies which had governed the administration of relief projects during the Famine. The concept of economic protectionism, and the extent to which it was being removed, is close to the surface in many of the debates about department stores, and the calls for industrialisation. Evelyn, for example, when attacking the Dublin Traders' Alliance in 1857, complained that

while, in 1846 the demand of the home-producer for *protection* against the competition of foreigners was finally rejected, in 1857 the much more shameless demand of certain home-dealers for *protection* against the competition of their fellow-subjects is noisily preferred ... (Original emphasis)⁶²

The introduction of free-trade policies for food during the course of the mid-1840s had, of course, been one of the most politically charged aspects of the London government's response to the Famine, and had been indicative of the ways in which Ireland had been to some extent a testing-ground for modern theories of political economy.⁶³ Those who supported the free-trade movement in Ireland during the Famine had done so on the grounds that 'free markets could achieve more than any government agency'. Concomitant with this approach to trading structures had been the opposition to many forms of Famine relief for Ireland, much of it structured according to the principles of liberal economics.⁶⁴ In the aftermath of the Famine, the same belief in free markets – now extended beyond the trade in food – was indicated in the 'monster house' controversy by specifically anti-protectionist and anti-mercantilist arguments such as Hancock's insistence that

there is no economic error which has been more injurious to the community, than the common notion that in an exchange whatever one party gains the other loses ... But the economic principle is, that in every prudent and fair exchange both parties gain. Hence the interests of buyers and sellers, however opposed they may appear to be, are really, in the long run, identical.⁶⁵

One of the issues at stake here was, of course, Ireland's relationship to Britain and the British Empire. Christine Kinealy has commented that 'the fact that so much of the detail of the Act of Union was concerned with imports, exports, duties and bounties was indicative of the high priority that trade had within the political relationship'.⁶⁶ However, this focus, prior to and during the Famine, had largely been upon the export of food from Ireland to Britain. While the importance of that trade continued in the aftermath of the Famine, the 'monster house' controversy helps to indicate that from the end of the 1840s, the import of manufactured commodities from Britain to Ireland was also becoming significant, as British industries sought out new markets for their ever-widening range of goods.

The 'monster house' controversy also demonstrates that the responses to the interwoven political and economic relationships between Britain and Ireland in this period are not easily classified according to straightforward demarcations of 'unionist' or 'nationalist' stances. As has frequently been discussed, many Irish citizens of this time maintained a complex identity which allowed them to identify themselves as members of an Irish nation separate in many ways from Britain, while at the same time maintaining a belief in the British imperial project.⁶⁷ The 1853 Exhibition, for example, clearly stated its aim as a 'national' one of economic improvement for Ireland, while also demonstrating 'loyalty' to the Crown and a desire to share in the imperial structures of nineteenth-century industrialisation. The Dublin Traders' Alliance came closer in many respects to a clearer sense of Irish nationalism, but at the same time enlisted the support of Sir Isaac Butt, who in the 1850s was still a Tory and keen supporter of the Union.⁶⁸

The divergent positions expressed during the 'monster house' debate and the 1853 Exhibition are far more determined by a political economy of the Irish class system than by commitments to differing forms of national identity. In this regard they bear many resemblances

to a remarkably similar inter-class conflict which took place more than thirty years later among small Parisian traders and the city's department stores. There had been occasional complaints about the Parisian 'monster houses' as early as the mid-1840s, when the larger stores first began, in a manner similar to their reception in Dublin.⁶⁹ A more heated controversy, however, comparable to that in Dublin in the 1850s, emerged in the 1880s. An association of small traders formed the League for the Defence of Work, Industry, and Commerce in 1888 to protest against the 'monopolies' of the Parisian department stores. Their appeal to the city's shoppers to remain loyal to smaller traders who had been 'good and loyal servants' was couched in identical language to that of the Dublin Traders' Alliance thirty years earlier.⁷⁰

Michael B. Miller, in his acclaimed history of the Parisian department store Bon Marché, argues that this dispute was the playing out of an internecine war within the city's bourgeoisie. He suggests that

The small shopkeepers were the vestiges of an earlier bourgeoisie, one that had set limits on the capitalistic impulse within it. As the century progressed, they came to share less and less in common with the other side of their class, dynamic and expansive in character, that had spawned the factories and the railroads and now the department stores . . . The one saw itself as the victim of change and struck out against what it felt was a conspiracy of big capital . . . The other spoke of progress and material benefits and the immutable laws of development.⁷¹

An almost identical division within the urban middle classes had emerged in Dublin in the 1850s, including the references to 'tyrannical capital' by opponents of the new department stores. Complicated by Ireland's colonial status and lack of industrial development, it would nevertheless appear that this profound shift in class identity, focused upon the growth of a new style of consumer culture, had taken root in Dublin much earlier than in Paris, despite that city's strong historical association with the development of bourgeois culture. This may have been, at least in part, a result of Ireland's traumatically sudden experience of economic modernity from the mid-1840s and the beginning of the Famine. The 'immutable laws of development' had echoed through the rhetoric of Famine relief during that decade, emphasising the view that the 'invisible hand' of the free-trade markets was in effect a part of natural law, and that Ireland must renounce protectionist, mercantilist trading in order to prevent a reoccurrence of the Famine. Ironically, this ideology may well have been furthered by the experience of rising incomes and standards of living experienced from the 1850s by those who did not emigrate. Whether this was entirely due to the population losses (through both death and emigration) of the Famine is still the subject of much debate. Nevertheless, it is clear that from the beginning of the 1850s average wages rose in most employment sectors in Ireland, and there is also evidence of a significant rise in consumption levels for luxury commodities such as tea, sugar and tobacco.⁷² At the same time, bank note circulation increased dramatically during the early 1850s, indicating a parallel increase in economic activity.⁷³ This experience of rising incomes in the Famine's aftermath may well have further embedded, among sections of the urban middle and upper-middle classes, the belief in free trade as the answer to Ireland's economic difficulties.

A consideration of the 1853 Irish Industrial Exhibition within the social, economic and cultural context in which it was staged, especially with regard to its connections to the thriving consumer culture of Dublin, allows a new perspective on both the impact of the Exhibition and the development of an under-examined section of Dublin society. One of the most striking features of the consumer culture of the 1850s is, indeed, how vibrant it was even at the start of the decade, when much of the country had barely begun to recover from the Famine. Clearly, there was a substantial – and growing – class in Dublin which was barely affected by the Famine, at least in terms of access to disposable income during a time of economic crisis.

These were not the landed aristocrats of rural life, nor even the upper classes in Dublin whose lives were centred on the Vice-Regal lodge. Rather, they were the professional and commercial

middle classes, already beginning their inexorable move into suburban developments such as Ranelagh, Rathmines and Dalkey, allowed to do so by the extensive railway network into the city. As doctors, bankers, lawyers, businessmen and their families they would have been overwhelmingly Protestant in the 1850s, but did include Catholics in their number, and would include more and more as the century progressed. Living relatively prosperous lives in the second-largest city in the Union, these urban middle classes may have held a range of political views about their national identity, but their class identity was clearly becoming defined by codes and practices similar to those of their counterparts in other cities in Britain, Europe and the USA. These practices and codes included, at their core, the consumption of an ever-wider range of consumer goods, especially for the home and the female body. If British imports of these goods offered a wider range, at cheaper prices, it seems that they bought them, allowing the 'monster houses' which sold them to prosper.

Notes

1. See Miller, *The Bon Marché*; Adburgham, *Shops and Shopping*; Lancaster, *The Department Store*.
2. See Adburgham, *Shops and Shopping*, 138–40 for a discussion of Bainbridge's of Newcastle's claims to be the world's first department store, opened in 1841.
3. See Saris, 'Imagining Ireland'; Litvak, 'Exhibiting Ireland'; Davies, 'Ireland's Crystal Palace'.
4. See Turpin, 'Exhibitions of Art and Industries'.
5. 'Censor', *A Letter on the 'Monster House' Series*, 1–2.
6. See Adburgham, *Shops and Shopping*, 43. Adburgham points out, as evidence of the advanced stage of development of Bainbridge's store in Newcastle, that by 1849 it had twenty-three departments. This suggests that Dublin department stores were at least as diverse and highly developed as those in other major cities.
7. Evelyn, *The 'Dublin Traders' Alliance'*, 8–9.
8. *Thom's Directory*, 1850, 698, 734, 745, 749.
9. 'Censor', *A Letter on the 'Monster House' Series*, 3.
10. Hancock, *Competition between Large and Small Shops*, 26–7.
11. McDonagh, Slater, and Boylan, 'Irish Political Economy', 218.
12. *Ibid.*, 217; Harrison, 'Pim Brothers', 243.
13. Hancock, *Competition between Large and Small Shops*, 12.
14. Anon, *The 'Monster House' System*, 26.
15. *Ibid.*, 22.
16. *Ibid.*, 4–7.
17. Cited in Evelyn, *The 'Dublin Traders' Alliance'*, 40.
18. 'Censor', *A Letter on the 'Monster House' Series*, 5.
19. Anon, *The 'Monster House' System*, 17.
20. *Ibid.*, 18.
21. *Ibid.*, 9.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Cited in Evelyn, *The 'Dublin Traders' Alliance'*, 37.
24. *Thom's Directory*, 1855, 1013.
25. Cited in Evelyn, *The 'Dublin Traders' Alliance'*, 37.
26. Evelyn, *The 'Dublin Traders' Alliance'*, 19.
27. *Ibid.*, 23–4.
28. Hancock, *Competition between Large and Small Shops*, 19.
29. Evelyn, *The Dublin Traders' Alliance*, 25.
30. Hancock, *Competition between Large and Small Shops*, 22.
31. Cited in Foley, 'Public Sphere and Domestic Circle', 26.
32. Abelson, *When Ladies Go a-Thieving*, 28. Abelson argues that 'shopping became a main work activity of the middle-class woman ... traditional female skills based on home production were replaced by the skills required to purchase factory-produced goods'.
33. Evelyn, *The 'Dublin Traders' Alliance'*, 16.
34. Cited in Evelyn, *The 'Dublin Traders' Alliance'*, 37.
35. Cited in *ibid.*, 39.

36. See Murphy, *Abject Loyalty*, 112–20, for a discussion of William Dargan’s career and involvement with the Irish Industrial Exhibition.
37. Sproule, *The Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853*, 27.
38. *Ibid.*, v.
39. See Davies, ‘Ireland’s Crystal Palace’, 253. Davies suggests that European manufacturers preferred to send their goods to the New York Exhibition also being held in 1853, due to the attractions of the larger and more prosperous American markets this would open for them.
40. *Ibid.*, 249–50.
41. *Ibid.*, 269.
42. Sproule, *The Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853*, 9.
43. Lancaster, *The Department Store*, 17.
44. *The Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser*, 1 June 1853 (Week 4), 2.
45. Sproule, *The Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853*, 34.
46. *The Freeman’s Journal*, 24 October 1853, 1.
47. *The Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser*, 15 June 1853 (Week 6), 1.
48. *The Freeman’s Journal*, 27 October 1853, 1, and *Thom’s Directory*, 1856, 922.
49. *The Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser*, 25 May 1853 (Week 3), 7.
50. See Miller, *The Bon Marché*, 29. Miller describes A.T. Stewart’s ‘Marble Palace’, built in New York in 1846, as the most probable candidate as the first purpose-built department store in the world.
51. *The Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser*, 11 May 1853 (Week 1), 8.
52. *Ibid.*
53. *The Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser*, 11 June 1853 (Week 10), 1.
54. *The Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser*, 29 June 1853 (Week 8), 1.
55. Sproule, *The Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853*, 21.
56. Anon, *The ‘Monster House’ System*, 10, 15.
57. *Ibid.*, 20.
58. Evelyn, *The ‘Dublin Traders’ Alliance’*, 22.
59. *The Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser*, 27 July 1853 (Week 12), 2.
60. *The Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser*, 21 September 1853 (Week 20), 7.
61. Anon, *The ‘Monster House’ System*, 18.
62. Evelyn, *The ‘Dublin Traders’ Alliance’*, 4.
63. See Kinealy, ‘Was Ireland a Colony?’, 48–65; Ó Gráda, *Ireland*, 187–99.
64. Ó Gráda, *Ireland*, 193.
65. Hancock, *Competition between Large and Small Shops*, 9–10.
66. Kinealy, ‘Was Ireland a Colony?’, 53–4.
67. See Ballantyne, ‘The Sinews of Empire’, 145–61; Murphy, *Abject Loyalty*, xi–xxxiv.
68. See Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 328. Even before his political conversion to the Home Rule movement, however, Sir Isaac Butt had supported economic protectionism for Irish industries, having published a pamphlet entitled *Protection of Home Industry* in 1846.
69. Miller, *The Bon Marché*, 26.
70. Miller, cited in *ibid.*, 209.
71. Miller, cited in *ibid.*, 213–14.
72. Ó Gráda, *Ireland*, 239.
73. *Ibid.*, 250–1.

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