

‘Grand Metropolis’ or ‘The Anus of the World’? The Cultural Life of Eighteenth-Century Dublin

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I

LAETITIA PILKINGTON FONDLY RECALLED the society kept by Mrs Philip Perceval in the Dublin of the 1720s. ‘This belle assembly engaged the company of all the learned and polite world; every night was a drawing-room, and the ingenious and curious of both sexes went home delighted and improved.’¹ Another Dublin resident retained similar memories from the 1730s. Thomas Rundle, the bishop of Derry, had installed himself in the same Dublin location as the Percevals: St Stephen’s Green. There he maintained a consciously cultivated establishment. To it came motley types, ‘who bring learning into chit-chat’. ‘Gentlemen and ladies, old and young, rich and poor, soldiers and bishops’ repaired regularly to the prelate’s elegant library, ‘and find something in the conversation pleasing’.² Common to the recollections of both Mrs Pilkington and Bishop Rundle were not just the locale—the smartest square of the city—but the hosts and guests. Mrs Perceval’s husband, younger brother of an absent Irish peer, was a government functionary. Although Philip Perceval owned property outside the city, neither in manner of life nor in source of livelihood can he be regarded primarily as a country gentleman. His world was not bounded by Ireland or, indeed, Britain, but stretched out into continental Europe. Passionate about the arts, he schemed to reform the public performance of

¹ A.C. Elias, ed., *Memoirs of Laetitia Pilkington*, 2 vols (London, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 22–3.

² J. Dallway, ed., *Letters of the late Thomas Rundle, LL.D . . . to Mrs. Barbara Sandys*, 2 vols (Gloucester, 1789), vol. 1, pp. cxliv–cxlv.

music in Dublin.³ At first, he had looked to the viceregal court as the most promising patron. But, disappointed in this hope, he turned instead to a new organisation in which he was active. As a governor of Mercer's Hospital from 1736, he could marry fund-raising to musical entrepreneurship.⁴

Thomas Rundle, the second sponsor of polite sociability in Dublin, had arrived there as an undesirable Arian. He applied the ample revenues of his diocese – perhaps £2,500 or £3,000 per annum—to living well in Dublin.⁵ Perceval and Rundle consciously adopted urban habits and habitations. They lived as *rentiers* and preferred the company of fellow administrators, professionals and the lettered. Their society, according to contemporary accounts, was one to which all of talent were welcomed. Laetitia Pilkington was the daughter of a leading Dublin physician and soon to marry an obscure but pushy clergyman of the established Protestant church. Her testimony suggests that these circles were equally accessible to women and men. Evocations of other polished groups, such as that organised by Patrick and Mary Delany in their suburban villa of Delville, confirm the easy mingling of the sexes. Noteworthy, too, is the choice for these gatherings of the private house, not the public spaces of tavern, coffee-house, theatre or assembly room. To accommodate the polite rituals, appropriate settings were devised. Visitors were to be impressed and charmed through architecture, furnishing and music, as well as by conversation and refreshments. Hosts and guests alike distanced themselves from the uncouth and ignorant, whether in the upper levels of the squirearchy or among the commonalty. Yet, if this kind of cultivated conviviality was prized, it was merely one in an increasingly diversified choice of edifying amusements available in Dublin. The variety there, as will be shown, startled. It helped the city to cultural primacy within the kingdom. It is true that the larger Irish towns were developing similar amenities. By the 1730s and 1740s, assemblies in purpose-built rooms were held regularly as far afield as Belfast, Enniscorthy, Waterford, Cork, Kilkenny and Limerick.⁶ But they tended pallidly to copy Dublin. The habitués of the Dublin drums worried first about how nearly they measured up to English or continental standards. Then, as patriotism swelled during the 1720s and 1750s, the Dubliners strove to differentiate themselves from and surpass the British.⁷

³ BL, Add. MS 46967, fo. 55, P. Perceval to Lord Perceval, 20 April 1716; B. Boydell, *A Dublin musical calendar, 1700–1760* (Dublin, 1988), p. 287; Elias, *Memoirs of Pilkington*, vol. II, p. 382.

⁴ Mercer's Library, College of Surgeons, Dublin, minute book of Mercer's Hospital, 1736–72, s.d. 28 May 1736, 5 July 1736, 10 Feb. 1737[8].

⁵ Lambeth PL, MS 2168, fos. 127–8; S.J. Connolly, *Religion, law and power* (Oxford, 1992), p. 181.

⁶ Belfast: Captain Cobbe in papers of the Physico-Historical Society, Armagh Public Library; Cork: *The Muses flight: reflections on a journey to the County of Cork* (Dublin, 1738), p. 14; Friends' Historical Library, Dublin, Journal of Joseph Wight, p. 185; Enniscorthy: NLI, PC 448, S. Povey to R. Smythe, 18 Dec. 1762; Kilkenny: W.G. Neely, *Kilkenny: an urban history, 1391–1843* (Belfast, 1989), p. 216; Limerick: John Rylands Library, Manchester, B/3/1/3, 6, S. Bagshawe to Mrs. C. Bagshawe, 5 & 12 July 1751; Waterford: Dromana, Co. Waterford, Villiers-Stuart MSS, T. 3131/B/1/19, 22, 27, 34; B5/2 & 9, J. Alcock to H. Aland, etc., 12 May 1738.

⁷ D. Dickson, 'Second city syndrome: reflections on three Irish cases', in S.J. Connolly, ed., *Kingdoms united? Great Britain and Ireland since 1500: integration and diversity* (Dublin, 1999), pp. 95–108.

These anxieties and aspirations sprang from Dublin's ambiguous position. Its dominance over the rest of Ireland derived from its share of trade. The seat of government, it offered a uniquely variegated range of services. A parliament met every second year. A viceregal court intermittently operated. Government departments, such as the Revenue, and semi-state bodies—the Barrack, Inland Navigation and Linen Boards and Turnpike Trusts—were concentrated there. So, too, were the law courts. Unlike London, Dublin was the seat of a flourishing university. All drew provincials regularly into the city. All supported a population which—in size, occupational variety and modest prosperity—could not be matched elsewhere in Ireland. Yet Dublin never achieved the commanding size that London enjoyed. By 1700, London contained perhaps 10 per cent of the English people. In the mid-eighteenth century, Dublin held perhaps 5.3 or 5.4 per cent of Ireland's inhabitants.⁸ Visitors and residents, obliged to pass time in an expensive, crowded and confusing city, alternated between attraction and repulsion. This hardly differed from the responses to other populous cities.

However, the dependent status of Ireland had practical and psychological repercussions for the standing of its capital. London fashions could be slavishly and uncritically adopted, or angrily repudiated. Sometimes the cultural scene in Dublin spoke of a metropolitan dynamism. At other moments, insecurity was uppermost, as inhabitants chafed at a depressed provincial or colonial position. For these reasons, the cultural ambivalences of Budapest or Brussels might furnish a more fitting comparison with Dublin than London. So, too, might parallels with the urban culture of eighteenth-century Edinburgh, Philadelphia or Calcutta. The last, with its philanthropy, amusements and improving societies, paralleled much that developed in Dublin, as in both London and English provincial towns. In Bengal, racial difference was immediately visible, and so the quickest marker of religious divergences.⁹ In comparison, whatever the English of Ireland might claim, neither by physiognomy nor by dress and behaviour could they instantly or accurately be distinguished from the Catholic indigenes. Throughout eighteenth-century Ireland, confessional affiliation was accordingly employed as the index of both political trustworthiness and cultural superiority.

This factor complicated Irish life to a degree rare in Britain. A satirical picture of St Stephen's Green in 1734 placed Catholics on a bench at one end of the park. They were segregated from Protestants on the 'court' bench.¹⁰ In the following decade, a Dublin correspondent explained that one local newspaper, Pue's, was read by Catholics. The Protestants preferred Grierson's rival publication.¹¹ Shortly afterwards, Dublin was transfixed by riots in the Playhouse when the impresario sought to correct the manners

⁸ D. Dickson, 'The place of Dublin in the eighteenth-century Irish economy' in T.M. Devine and D. Dickson, eds, *Ireland and Scotland, 1600–1850* (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 178.

⁹ P.J. Marshall, 'The white town of Calcutta under the rule of the East India Company', *Indo-British Review*, 21 (1996), 42–52. I am grateful to Professor Peter Marshall for help on this point.

¹⁰ D.S., *A description of a Sunday in Dublin* (Dublin, 1734).

¹¹ National Library of Wales, Puleston MS 3577E/28, R. Edwards to F. Price, 4 Aug. 1745.

of some playgoers. An experienced observer immediately concluded, ‘the whole party [of rioters] is either papises [papists], converts or known Jacobites, not four of their party but such’.¹² Charles Lucas, champion of the Dublin freemen against aldermanic oligarchy, concurred.¹³ It could be that analysts turned instinctively to confession to explain multifarious happenings. The culture of the capital, as indeed of the rest of the island, may not have been so polarised along the lines of religious difference as these comments implied. Even so, there was no escaping the religious denominators. The proportion of Catholics in Dublin steadily grew until, probably in the middle of the century, it surpassed that of Protestants.¹⁴ This took visible form, with churches and convents in central sites. The demographic realities meant that most Dublin Protestants were served both in shops and their own houses by Irish Catholics. Such routine contacts widened the gap between the horror of popery in the abstract, or as political and theological system, and the practical coexistence. There are suggestions that—at least in the second half of the century—the proliferation of masonic lodges allowed Protestants and Catholics to mingle in an organisation consciously dedicated to fraternity.¹⁵ More probably, separate lodges catered to distinct vocational, locational and confessional groups.¹⁶ Similarly, the anti-duelling society, the Friendly Brothers of St Patrick, which burgeoned in the 1750s, required of initiates only that they be Christians.¹⁷ Yet, from the little that can be retrieved about this group, Catholics were not enrolled.

These exclusions may have arisen primarily from economic circumstances. By the early eighteenth century, practising Catholics were debarred from the administration, the armed forces and the lettered professions other than medicine. When coupled with the earlier loss of lands and the bans on owning freeholds, few Dublin (or provincial) Catholics had the wherewithal to engage in public and private diversions alongside the affluent Protestants. Through the legal pressures and genetic attrition, the number of Catholic peers residing in Ireland dwindled to eight or nine. A Catholic gentry in the capital able to give cultural leadership was similarly attenuated. Furthermore, some of the recreations open to the middling sort, particularly those centred on the civic year, the guilds and the parish vestry, were either covertly or aggressively anti-Catholic. In so

¹² Irish Architectural Archive, Dublin, Castletown deposit, box 76, K. Conolly to Lady Anne Conolly, 21 Feb. 1746[7]. For a full account of the riots, started by Kelly from Connacht and perhaps orchestrated by John Browne of the Neale: E.K. Sheldon, *Thomas Sheridan of Smock-Alley* (Princeton, 1967), pp. 76–107.

¹³ [C. Lucas], *A second letter to the free citizens of Dublin* (Dublin, 1746[7]), p. 10; *The prophecies of the Book of the prophet Lucas* (Dublin, 1747).

¹⁴ P. Fagan, ‘The population of Dublin in the eighteenth century with particular reference to the proportions of Protestants and Catholics’, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 6 (1991), 121–56; P. Fagan, *Catholics in a Protestant country* (Dublin, 1998), pp. 9–52; D. Dickson, ‘“Centres of Motion”: Irish cities and the origins of popular politics’ in L. Bergeron and L.M. Cullen, eds, *Culture et pratiques politiques en France et en Irlande: XVIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1991), p. 106.

¹⁵ Fagan, *Catholics*, pp. 127–8, 134, 137.

¹⁶ Fagan, *Catholics*, p. 134.

¹⁷ *The fundamental laws, statutes and constitutions of the antient and most benevolent order of the friendly brothers of St. Patrick* (Bath, 1770), p. 15.

far as Catholics might become members, as quarter brothers, of the trading corporations, they were fobbed off with second-class status and markedly inferior hospitality.¹⁸ As yet, the city was not rigidly zoned according either to confession or income. Nevertheless, the Catholics, because generally poor, gravitated to the less salubrious and extramural quarters.¹⁹ The forms of Catholic culture, whether focused on the buildings and calendar of the church, or articulated through the Irish rather than the English language, merit examination.²⁰ But the remainder of this discussion will concentrate on the more accessible evidence about the Protestants. Inevitably it will touch upon, but without offering any definitive answer to, the vexed questions of constitutional dependency and confessional and ethnic divisions, and the extent to which these features gave Dublin culture a colonial rather than a metropolitan aspect. The agenda proposed by Dr Borsay for evaluating London's metropolitan role helps to assess Dublin's functions.²¹ Some features, such as the venue for sexual liberation, are as yet too hidden to be recovered. Others which did reproduce London characteristics are here taken for granted. On the whole, it has been more fruitful to isolate those aspects peculiar to Dublin, with the attendant dangers of exaggerating its idiosyncrasies. So, in turn, the impact of the viceregal arrangements, the sociability generated by philanthropy and voluntary associations and the cultural diversity born of sheer numbers will be considered.

II

The viceroyalty, through which Ireland was nominally ruled, aimed at a cultural as much as political impact. It was designed as an agency through which Ireland could be more completely assimilated to English ways. However, its success in integrating even the loyal and English minority among the Protestants in Ireland was limited. Salons such as those run by the Percevals, Bishop Rundle and the Delanys, or by their wealthier contemporaries like the Conollys and Kildares, sometimes complemented but more often competed against the Court at Dublin Castle. In London, increasingly, the cultural pace was set not by a stingy and reticent Hanoverian Court but by others. Accordingly, it should not surprise when several factors combined to reduce the effect of the king's deputy in Dublin. Kept short of money both by a niggardly English treasury and by an unsympathetic Irish legislature, the incumbent—from 1713 invariably an

¹⁸ Pearse Street Public Library, Dublin, Gilbert MS 68, Monck Mason collections, III, part i, pp. 151–2; C.D.A. Leighton, *Catholicism in a Protestant kingdom: a study of the Irish ancien régime* (London, 1994), pp. 67–85; M. Wall, *Catholic Ireland in the eighteenth century* (Dublin, 1988), esp. pp. 61–72; R. Dudley, 'Dublin's parishes, 1660–1729: the Church of Ireland parishes and their role in the civic administration of the city' (PhD thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 1995), vol. I, pp. 68–96, 125; vol. II, p. 230.

¹⁹ Dudley, 'Dublin's parishes', vol. I, p. 57; vol. II, pp. 297–8.

²⁰ M. Donnelly, *Short histories of Dublin parishes* (Dublin, n.d.), vol. VII, p. 142; vol. VIII, p. 193; vol. IX, p. 224; vol. X, pp. 19–22.

²¹ P. Borsay, above, ch. 10.

imported English peer—had to spend of his own resources. He struggled to keep up appearances among always critical Dubliners. As one attendant on the lord lieutenant remarked in 1741, ‘the generality of the people of this country . . . are known to esteem the patrons and the patronized according to the figure they make’.²²

Successive viceroys, if they varied in their mien, all failed dramatically to improve their quarters. The Castle, cramped and doubling as government offices, could be tricked out by interior decorators for the receptions which punctuated the Dublin year. But these impressive subterfuges at best masked the inadequacy of the fabric. The contempt of Dubliners in 1715 was encapsulated in the quatrain of Thomas Parnell:

This House [*Dublin Castle*] and Inhabitants both well agree
And resemble each other as near as can be;
One half is decay’d, and in want of a prop
The other new built, but not finish’d a-top.²³

Moreover, the English governors lacked an appropriate suburban or rural retreat to which the court could retire from the stinking city. Chapelizod, intended for that function, hardly sufficed. The favoured gratefully accepted the Conollys’ offer of the use of their *palazzo*, twenty miles (32 km) beyond Dublin, in the pastures of the Pale. But in general the country-house circuit which extended the political and cultural life of the capital was denied the visiting lords lieutenant.²⁴

The regimen of the king’s representative was summarised by one of his entourage in 1741. Each Tuesday and Friday, levées enticed the smart and ambitious into the viceregal presence. On the first evening, guests danced; on the second, they played cards. Tuesdays could draw upwards of two hundred ladies; the card parties, in contrast, were ‘soon over and seldom crowded’. For the remainder of the week, on two nights plays were acted in the city theatres. On Wednesdays, a series of subscription concerts was performed. At these Handel was the magnet. He attracted a weekly audience of at least 600. The exhausting week was rounded off by a ball, ‘besides these musical assemblies for charitable uses and others at private houses which would be agreeable enough if they did not vie with one another in expense’.²⁵ The summary

²² John Rylands Library, B2/3/90, S. Bagshawe to W. Bagshawe, 12 Nov. 1743; cf. National Army Museum, London, MS 8808–36–1, Autobiography of J.A. Oughton, p. 65; J. Dunton, *The life and errors*, 2 vols (London, 1818), vol. II, pp. 542, 545.

²³ C. Rawson and F.P. Lock, eds., *Collected poems of Thomas Parnell* (London, 1989), p. 327.

²⁴ NLI, PC 434, K. Conolly to J. Bonnell, 21 Dec. 1739, 15 Jan. 1739[40]; Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, Devonshire letters, May–July 1755, 260.147, 260.153, Hartington to Lady Burlington, 27 June 1755, Hartington to Devonshire, 14 July 1755; T. Pakenham to Hartington, 4 Sep. 1755, *ibid.*, Aug.–Oct. 1755, 420.0; John Rylands Library, B2/3/25, Mrs C. Bagshawe to S. Bagshawe, 23 Sep. 1753. The deficiencies are further explored in T.C. Barnard, ‘The vice-regal court in Dublin in the later seventeenth century’, in E. Cruickshanks, ed., *The Stuart court* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 256–65.

²⁵ A.J. Guy, ed., *Colonel Samuel Bagshawe and the army of George II, 1731–1762* (London, 1990), pp. 39–40. *The prelude to a levee; calculated for the meridian of the Castle of Dublin* (Dublin, 1757) indicates a different regimen. Thrice a week, ‘all the beau monde, in crowds, resort/ ’twixt twelve and one, to pay their court’, p. [9].

revealed how little the city depended for its diversion on the lord lieutenant. Yet, his hospitality was eagerly sought if not always gratefully received. His patronage, especially of charitable events, was seen as vital to success. Nevertheless, neither innovation nor indeed sustained interest in cultural activity originated with the viceroy. Perhaps, in one particular he fashioned the modes of the capital. Women were bidden to the Castle. Emulative display in dress and dancing was thereby stimulated: men and women wished to dazzle at the balls on the royal birthdays.²⁶ One versifier lamented how ‘whole woods must fall’ to pay for a single suit for a country squire.²⁷ The luxury end of the dress-making and tailoring trades certainly benefited. In 1751, £33 17s. 0d. was spent on the outfit which Kitty White wore to the ball on the king’s birthday.²⁸

The drawing rooms and receptions offered an arena for women. This compensated for the lack of outlets within the expanding associational life of Dublin. Much of this conviviality occurred either in the tavern or coffee-house, both of which (except for their servants) were exclusively male preserves. Women, sometimes notably public-spirited and philanthropic, might subscribe to charities, buy tickets for concerts and swell the audiences, but they were not included among the governors of the hospitals or members of the learned societies. They were valued and influential theatre-goers, but seldom shareholders in theatrical enterprises.²⁹ Only in the 1760s did the formidable Lady Arabella Denny direct female concern into the Magdalen Asylum to rescue prostitutes. In 1769, the Dublin Society selected fifteen patronesses of the Hibernian silk and woollen warehouses under its auspices. They were mainly women of title. Shortly afterwards, a gaggle of countesses and wives of the smartest and richest commoners, led by the duchess of Leinster, supported a medical charity which provided baths for the Dublin poor.³⁰ Women were debarred from the rituals of masonic lodges and civic guilds. But, received at the Castle, they were accorded an equality of regard, especially if there was a vicereine in residence. The latter might promote some worthily patriotic pastime or vogue. Needlework with Irish fabrics was a favourite.³¹ But the lord lieutenant was not always accompanied by his lady. Hartington in 1755, otherwise popular among locals, was hampered by the recent death of his wife.³² Other spouses balked at the journey and the notorious inconveniences of their apartments. Thus the tone of the Castle establishment varied with the incumbent from the prosily domestic

²⁶ Elias, *Memoirs of Pilkington*, vol. 1, p. 81; T.C. Barnard, ‘Integration or separation? Hospitality and display in Protestant Ireland, 1660–1800’, in L.W.B. Brockliss and D.S. Eastwood, eds, *A union of multiple identities: the British Isles, c.1750–c.1850* (Manchester, 1997), pp. 130–1.

²⁷ *The prelude to a levee*, p. 14.

²⁸ NLI, MS 116/24.

²⁹ La Tourette Stockwell, *Dublin theatres and theatre customs (1637–1820)* (Kingsport, Tennessee, 1938), pp. 79, 130, 187, 195.

³⁰ R. Raughter, ‘A natural tenderness: the ideal and reality of eighteenth-century female philanthropy’ in M.G. Valiulis and M. O’Dowd, eds, *Women and Irish history: essays in honour of Margaret MacCurtain* (Dublin, 1998), pp. 71–88; *Report of the cases relieved and cured in the baths appropriated for the reception of the poor* (Dublin, 1777), p. 78.

³¹ Barnard, ‘Integration or separation?’, pp. 133–4.

³² John Rylands Library, B2/3/25, Mrs C. Bagshawe to S. Bagshawe, 23 Sep. 1753.

to the austere masculine.³³ Women were, nevertheless, always vital to official ceremonies. But this practice did no more than endorse what already prevailed at private entertainments, such as those attended by Mrs Pilkington. In this particular, as in most others, the Castle hardly led. The *grandes dames* of the town—Katherine Conolly, Anne Trevor, widow of Lord Chancellor Midleton, and the widow of the 19th earl of Kildare—were fixtures and exerted more lasting influence than any transient vicereine over the habits of well-to-do Dubliners.³⁴

More cultural recreations beckoned to men. The gregarious moved contentedly from one pleasure to the next. Few rigid barriers between either public and private or male and female curtailed this pursuit of pleasure. Samuel Bagshawe, an aide-de-camp to Lord Lieutenant Devonshire early in the 1740s, revealed what was on offer. Personable officers were fêted by local Protestants. In provincial towns they offered protection, custom, novelty and possible husbands. Even in a better-stocked capital, the garrison bulked large. Some reprobated the disruptive and dangerous consequences of martial codes. However, the agreeable such as Bagshawe or his contemporary, Adolphus Oughton, were admitted to many circles. These extended from bored and sometimes desultory attendance at the Castle drawing-rooms, the sociability in the mess or Board of Green Cloth which followed official duties to exercising in the riding school, the society of coffee-house and tavern, or the tea- and dinner-tables of hospitable civilians. Another officer quartered in Dublin in 1757 and again about 1770, Lieutenant Nicholas Delacherois, acknowledged that he could dine out every evening, such were the abundance of entertainments and the popularity of the military among the civilian hosts of the capital.³⁵

There was, too, the regular concert or play. As with others of his standing, Bagshawe read. Books helped to rout boredom. They defined the way in which he and his Irish-born wife saw themselves in relation to the world. The church also shaped his week and provided society. As a visitor, he had no strong loyalty to a particular parish, and so could taste at will. Nevertheless, the church which he preferred—that of the French Huguenots at St Peter's—linked with the company which he kept. Bagshawe also went sight-seeing.³⁶ The constant additions of the spectacular and arresting in and around Dublin bewitched locals as well as visitors. Fresh fads, such as bathing in the sea, encouraged the suburban development of the capital, well-situated on Dublin Bay to cater for medical tourism. Raree shows titillated the jaded. Other appetites were satisfied through the brothels, few of which were ever suppressed, and one of which—in the

³³ *HMC, 7th Report*, appendix, p. 769.

³⁴ T. Mooney and F. White, 'The gentry's winter season' in D. Dickson, ed., *The gorgeous mask: Dublin, 1700–1850* (Dublin, 1987), pp. 1–16.

³⁵ National Army Museum, London, MS 7805–63, N. Delacherois to D. Delacherois, 9 Aug. 1757, 26 Dec. 1769, 2 Oct. 1771.

³⁶ John Rylands Library, B15/3/1, S. Bagshawe, fragment of a journal, 1740–2; National Army Museum, MS 8808–36–1, Oughton autobiography, pp. 64–5.

1780s—was memorably patronised by the lord lieutenant, Rutland.³⁷ Again, though, the viceroy simply trailed in the wake of others. To recover from or maybe to continue these delights, *bagnios*—inhabiting a twilight area between restorative baths and sleazy massage parlours—were opened.³⁸ These acquired respectability under the management of Dr Achmet as they became a focus for medical faddism.³⁹ Once more, Dublin, thanks to its size and the relative affluence of some of its inhabitants, afforded a variety unique in the kingdom. In this respect it could reasonably be viewed as ‘our metropolis’.

But the habits of irony and self-deprecation added riders. This ‘metropolis’—for one who had ventured beyond both Ireland and Britain—was belittled as ‘the anus of the world’.⁴⁰ In this same spirit of abnegation, an Irish correspondent of 1760 contrasted ‘our little world here’ with ‘the great world’ of London, which focused on the ‘really important’.⁴¹ This belittling of the Dublin scene went beyond the familiar and perhaps inevitable alternation between liking and hating city life. The increasing number who had seen London (or Paris, Rome, Brussels, Vienna and Amsterdam) viewed their own capital from altered perspectives. Lieutenant Delacherois in 1757 felt that none of the public places in Dublin equalled the equivalents in London. Yet, by 1770, he proudly judged the official celebrations at Dublin Castle on the queen’s birthday more splendid than those of the previous year at St James’s Palace.⁴² Such uncertainties among the denizens of Dublin could be overcome simply by importing what had been admired elsewhere or by fashioning Irish equivalents.

The considerable cultural riches of Dublin were dearly bought. Leisure and pleasure were heavily commercialised. Some of the charges, as at the subscription concerts, were levied to help the needy. But prices rose for other reasons. The effect was to oblige many to scrimp and save if they were to join in the fun. The rents of rooms and houses soared. Owners of well-situated properties retreated into the suburbs and let their city-centre properties.⁴³ By 1754, the practice of fleeing from ‘Hibernia’s grand Metropolis’ into

³⁷ M. Lyons, ed., *The memoirs of Mrs. Leeson, madam, 1727–1797* (Dublin, 1995), pp. 143–7.

³⁸ NLI, MS 1508, Accounts of R. Edgeworth, p. 151; letter of 18 Oct. 1736, Denbighshire Record Office, Ruthin, DD/BK/1/481.

³⁹ ‘Dr. Achmet’, *The theory and uses of baths* (Dublin, 1772); *A report of the cases relieved and cured*.

⁴⁰ Lord Castledurrow to J. Swift, 4 Dec. 1736, in H. Williams, ed., *The correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, 5 vols (Oxford, 1963–5), vol. III, p. 548.

⁴¹ John Rylands Library, B2/3/809, F. Trench to S. Bagshawe, 22 Nov. 1760.

⁴² National Army Museum, MS 7805–63, N. Delacherois to D. Delacherois, 24 July 1757, N. Delacherois to S. Delacherois, 22 Jan. 1770.

⁴³ Southampton Univ. Lib., BR 142/1/11, H. Hatch to Lord Palmerston, 5 Dec. 1741; *ibid.*, BR 2/8, Palmerston to Hatch, 19 Nov. 1741; NLI, PC 449, R. Butterfield to W. Smythe, 12 May 1753; NAI, M. 6810, ‘Portrait of an English lady in Dublin in the late 18th century’, pp. 8–9; H.F. Berry, ed., ‘Notes from the diary of a Dublin lady in the reign of George II’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 5th ser., 8 (1898), 142; M. Luddy, ed., *The diary of Mary Mathew* (Thurles, 1991).

A small, commodious rural seat,
 Enjoys a pleasant, innocent retreat;
 Free from noise and bustle that attends
 A life of business in the nauseous town

benefited adjacent villages like Clontarf, Glasnevin or Monkstown.⁴⁴ Speculators erected buildings suitable to most purses. To take a house even for three months during the parliamentary winter cost anything from £20 to £60.⁴⁵ To the basic rent had then to be added so much else: servants, coach and chair hire, clothes, tickets, tips, food and drink. Even among the apparently censorious, the pull of the city, especially during the hectic autumn and winter, was so strong that it could not be withstood. The genteel practised discreet economies. A spell in the respectable obscurity of a smaller town, such as Drogheda, Enniscorthy, Mountmellick or Portarlinton, allowed resources to be husbanded before a fresh foray into the Dublin scuffle.⁴⁶ Since the effort—in financial terms—was so great, it is perhaps legitimate to ask why so many made it. What could Dublin offer which their own locality did not?

III

Much of the answer lies in the combination of functions, which, akin to London, Dublin alone offered within Ireland. Notable among these was education. The attractive power was embodied in the sole university: Trinity College. It was fed by numerous schools, many of them in the capital. Parents would sometimes take lodgings close to the establishments, to watch over the first faltering steps of their offspring.⁴⁷ A cachet attached to masters and mistresses in Dublin, which suggested that customers discerned a qualitative difference between the teachers of French, fencing or dancing there and in the provinces. Dublin University was not universally admired. But those willing and able to despatch their sons to the alternative institutions in England or to tour the

⁴⁴ *The villa: or Glasnevin, a poem* (Dublin, 1754), pp. 5, 10. Cf. 'Diary of Anne Cooke', *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society*, 8 (1915–16), 118.

⁴⁵ NAI, Wyche Letters, 1st ser., 1/1/168, 172, 173, 174; NLI, PC 447, M. Clarke to W. Smythe, 8 Oct. 1737, 26 Nov. 1737; *ibid.*, PC 446, T. Burgh to W. Smythe, 14 Oct. 1756; Birr Castle, Co. Offaly, MSS Q/2/1 & 2, lease of Parsons' house on St Stephen's Green, and various assignments, 24 July 1736, 28 Sep. 1751; John Rylands Library, B2/3/25, C. Bagshawe to S. Bagshawe, 23 Sep. 1755; *Ibid.*, B2/7/111, receipt of 24 March 1752; NLI, MS 1510, R. Edgeworth account book; NLI, MS 5081, ledger of John Ladeveze, fo. 35; 'Autobiography of Pole Cosby of Stradbally, Queen's County, 1705–1737(?)', *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society*, 5 (1906), 173, 175, 435.

⁴⁶ NLI, PC 448, S. Povey to R. Smythe, 6 Aug. 1748, 28 Sep. 1748, 26 Oct. 1748, 27 Jan. 1753; *ibid.*, PC 448, H. Crofton to W. Smythe, 17 July 1723, 15 Sep. 1729; *ibid.*, PC 436, Mrs F. Crofton to W. Smythe, 8 July 1727; National Library of Wales, Puleston MS 3577E, R. Edwards to F. Price, 4 Aug. 1744; John Rylands Library, B2/3/244a, 247, 249, A. Caldwell to S. Bagshawe, [1751], 25 Feb. 1752, 14 March 1752; James More, manuscript history of the O'More family of Balyna, *circa* 1774, p. 19 (private collection).

⁴⁷ Private collection, Co. Down, S. Waring to D. Waring, 8 Oct. 1723; S. Waring to J. Waring, 11 Sep. 1725; 'Diary of Anne Cooke', p. 210.

continent were few. The college was popular, not least because it was thought to give good value and to be well run.⁴⁸ Its centrality to the lives of many Irish Protestants was aptly embodied in its location and modern buildings, answering across College Green the curving facade of the new Parliament House. The state had contributed to the costs of both. As objects of architectural display, the massive new library of the college and the parliament building contrasted sharply with the antiquated and inadequate accommodation of the English governor. Members of the university, sited in the city centre, interacted constantly with the townspeople. Affrays occasionally resulted. More characteristically, dons and undergraduates enlivened city society. Students, some of whom lived out or even at home, mingled freely with their relations and acquaintances in the city.⁴⁹ The smarter dons, such as Patrick Delany or John Lawson, were regarded as ornaments at any convivial gathering.⁵⁰ Furthermore, fellows gave a cultural lead. It was not chance that saw the genesis of first the Dublin Philosophical Society and then of the Dublin Society (later the Royal Dublin Society) in rooms at the college.

These worthy endeavours, prompted by concern that potential lagged too far behind achievement, were animated by the desire for material and spiritual improvements. Inspired in the 1650s and 1680s by what was happening across the water, by the 1730s the foundation of the Dublin Society more closely reflected local conditions than had the earlier ventures.⁵¹ It belonged to an upsurge of civic activism in the face of both endemic and exceptional poverty during the 1720s. As we shall see, the concern was channelled into a number of other initiatives which gave a distinctive colouring to Dublin's cultural scene. These successive groups derived their sustenance from the interest of those in Dublin as either permanent or temporary sojourners. But like the capital itself, these societies could not cut themselves off from what was happening in the rest of kingdom. Indeed, the Dublin Society exploited and tried to systematise what was being done across the island. Since the country members and correspondents who reported curiosities or sent in bizarre specimens travelled regularly to Dublin as members of parliament or for fun and business, the Society took the world as it was rather than transforming it. The boundaries between capital and provinces were so easily permeated as not to be noticed.

⁴⁸ D. Hannigan, 'The University of Dublin, 1685–1750: a study of matriculation records' (MA thesis, NUI, Maynooth, 1995).

⁴⁹ F.P. Lock, *Edmund Burke: 1. 1730–1784* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 29–61; NLI, PC 446, W. Smythe to R. Smythe, 9, 16 and 23 May 1767, 20 and 24 Oct. 1767, 17 and 21 Nov. 1767.

⁵⁰ For Lawson, M.L. Legg, ed., *The Synge letters: Bishop Edward Synge to his daughter, Alicia, Roscommon to Dublin, 1746–52* (Dublin, 1996), pp. xl, 75, 84, 120, 306, 464, 473.

⁵¹ On the earlier groups, see T.C. Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 213–48; K.T. Hoppen, *The common scientist in the seventeenth century: a study of the Dublin Philosophical Society, 1683–1708* (London, 1970). On the first years of the Dublin Society: H.F. Berry, *A history of the Royal Dublin Society* (Dublin, 1915); D. Clarke, *Thomas Prior, 1681–1751: founder of the Royal Dublin Society* (Dublin, 1951).

The Dublin Society, shadowed from 1744 by the Physico-Historical Society, married a cultivated sociability to utilitarian and benevolent schemes. Unfortunately, like many other metropolitan diversions, both the ideology and the activity proved worryingly evanescent. The Dublin Society, after a first burst of popularity, by the late 1730s was in decline, and looked destined to follow the earlier Hartlib group and Dublin Philosophical Society into oblivion.⁵² In the same way, the Physico-Historical Society failed to sustain the initial zeal. Meetings were meagrely attended, activities relied on a handful of the committed and soon enough the venture petered out.⁵³ As with the work of the medical and musical charities, canny impresarios were needed to hold the attention of those who ran after the latest novelty. By the 1740s, a scheme of premiums or prizes helped popularise practical improvements in agriculture and manufactures and to maintain members' interest in the humdrum work of the Dublin Society.⁵⁴ Membership was limited to 100, so that cultural magpies entranced by the fashion of the moment could be culled. But, notwithstanding the value to its work (and finances) of the country members, the Dublin Society, in common with other public-spirited organisations, was sustained by its Dublin members.⁵⁵ At its meetings, as at those of the Incorporated Society or Mercer's Hospital, subscribers and well-wishers were always welcomed. Grandees, whether from the provinces or the capital, ornamented, but perhaps did not expedite, committees. They turned up when nothing more alluring beckoned or when important business had to be transacted.

But for routine affairs, these organisations relied, to a dangerous degree, on a few. In the Dublin Society and Mercer's Hospital, the most regular attenders lived permanently in Dublin. So far from doing good by stealth, these worthies did it through wealth. It fell to the doctors, clergy, *rentiers* and the rare peer or squire to inspect, audit and animate. The landed from the country sponsored charities of their own, such as the Charter Schools, beneficial to tenants and rentals. In Dublin, they aided philanthropy. They acted as stewards at the events to raise funds for charities such as Mercer's Hospital. By the 1750s numerous organisations competed for funds. Patriotic sentiment simultaneously approved civic duty. In this atmosphere, magnificoes happily served as stewards. Whereas in the early years of concerts for Mercer's, it had been rare for more than a couple of peers to be nominated as stewards, in 1757 twelve were invited to serve.⁵⁶ If this was a shrewd move by the hospital directors, it also revealed how

⁵² Royal Dublin Society, minute book, 1733–41, s.d. 15 Nov. 1739.

⁵³ RIA, MS 24 E 28, minute book of the Physico-Historical Society, s.d. 14 July 1746, 2 Feb. 1746[7]; A. De Valera, 'Antiquarian and historical investigations in Ireland in the eighteenth century' (MA thesis, NUI, Dublin, 1978), pp. 51–93. *An account of the rise and progress of the Physico-Historical Society* [Dublin, 1745] listed 226 members of the society.

⁵⁴ M. Dunlevy, 'Samuel Madden and the scheme for the encouragement of useful manufactures' in A. Bernelle, ed., *Decantations: a tribute to Maurice Craig* (Dublin, 1992), pp. 21–8.

⁵⁵ Royal Dublin Society, minute book, 1733–41, s.d. 25 Oct. 1739, 15 Nov. 1739, 31 Jan. 1739[40], 8 Nov. 1740; BL, Add. MS 47008B, fos. 5–5v, Rev. K. Perceval to Lord Perceval, 9 Jan. 1741[2].

⁵⁶ Mercer's Hospital, minute book of Governors of Mercer's Hospital, 1736–1772, s.d., 1 Dec. 1757.

members of the resident Irish peerage were keen to justify the special claims of their order and used the urban setting to do so. It was a patriotism that, in the heated politics of the mid-1750s, was widely approved.

These groups promoting improvement enriched city culture. To them could be traced another activity. In Dublin, from the 1720s onwards, hospitals were endowed. Whereas other initiatives, such as the creation of Protestant schools or the reformation of manners, showed how English ideas permeated Protestant Ireland, the hospital craze pointed to an avenue that London would soon follow. Equally innovative was one method to raise funds. Music came to the aid of medicine. Seasons of concerts were devised, the proceeds of which would finance the hospitals. It was intended thereby to transform religious and civic obligations into pleasures. The economy of public performances, often in churches and frequently of Handel's oratorios, contributed handsomely to the expenses of Mercer's Hospital and of the foundation of the man-midwife, Bartholomew Mosse.⁵⁷ In the first flush of enthusiasm, the annual concert in aid of Mercer's attracted many notables. In 1739 it was estimated that the audience numbered 800.⁵⁸ Parliament and the law courts were adjourned for the event; the lord mayor of Dublin was requested to supply guards. Coach traffic had to be re-routed in order to lessen the congestion in the streets around St Andrew's Church. Prominent squires and citizens were invited to act as stewards. As the event was embedded in the Dublin calendar, novelties competed for the attention and purses of the smart, and attendance declined. In 1745 the poor showing was blamed on the alarms over the Scottish rebellion.⁵⁹ In a bid to revive interest, the sermon which preceded the music was dropped in 1747, 'that the audience may not be detained too long'.⁶⁰ This stratagem seems not to have succeeded. Only 320 tickets were sold for that year's performance.⁶¹ Thereafter numbers fluctuated, but the trend was downwards. In 1754, 232 tickets were recorded as sold.⁶²

Involving more grandees, at least as stewards, was a device to revitalise the ailing charity. It paralleled the bid by several within the élite, notably the earl of Kildare, to eclipse the imported viceroys and so strengthen their own claims to preferment. This gave a more markedly aristocratic tone to smart Dublin in the second half of the century. The Kildares, lately installed in their massive new town-house on the edge of the fashionable city, consciously aimed for social and cultural as well as political leadership. Another manifestation of this magnificence to which disgruntled locals aspired was the ball mounted at the theatre in Aungier Street in 1752. The *mise en scène* was painted by

⁵⁷ I.C. Ross, 'The early years of the Dublin Lying-In Hospital' in I.C. Ross, ed., *Public virtue, private love: the early years of the Dublin Lying-In Hospital: the Rotunda* (Dublin, 1986), pp. 9–22.

⁵⁸ Minute book, Mercer's Hospital, 14 Feb. 1738[9].

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1 Aug. 1747.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 3 Jan. 1746[7].

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 7 Feb. 1746[7].

⁶² *Ibid.*, 7 Dec. 1754.

Joseph Tudor who had recently provided both the elaborate backdrops for the entertainments of the viceroy, Dorset, in the Castle and for the victory firework display on St Stephen's Green. The whole cost of the ball was estimated at a hefty £1,560, which was then divided between the subscribers.⁶³

Music, associated with fund-raising for the hospitals, acquired a strongly public face. Thanks to Handel and his oratorios, the ethical purpose behind the performances found a perfect musical expression.⁶⁴ Even before this, music had featured in the economies of both viceroy and municipality. Each had musicians permanently on the payroll. In addition, the two Protestant cathedrals of the capital supported choirs generously and achieved high standards, even if the repertoire remained conservative.⁶⁵ But, as with much else in the cultural sphere, the deliberately orchestrated merged into the impromptu and domestic. At masonic lodges, to judge from the published collections, singing featured in the regular rituals. The entertainment staged at the numerous private parties throughout the capital included much song, as well as card-playing and conversation. The repertoire (it has been suggested) sometimes harked back to the past. If, on the one hand, the latest catches from London were eagerly sought; on the other, traditional melodies were played. Where once the chiefs of Gaelic Ireland had kept their hereditary harpers and pipers, now some among their Protestant successors patronised apparently similar music.⁶⁶ Probably these diversions belonged more to the countryside than to the capital. Also, when archaic forms and instruments were preferred, it is often difficult to know whether this spoke of survival or conscious revival. Much of what is known of these performances relates to the prosperous, and strengthens the impression that the demotic had been adopted, and so perverted, by the élite. In annexing what had (perhaps) once been spontaneous and popular, the musical life of Hanoverian Dublin showed the tendencies towards commercialisation and the bifurcation of élite and popular cultures noted elsewhere in Europe. What led the likes of the Edgeworths, Delanys or Percevals to favour indigenous modes of music-making has seldom been explained by anything as simple as delight in melody. Rather, as with other cultural contrivances in the Irish capital, it is regarded as a further artifice through which insecure colonial interlopers entrenched themselves in a hostile environment.⁶⁷ The city certainly offered the best chance for cultural commissars to orchestrate crazes,

⁶³ NLI, MS 25431; Boydell, *Dublin musical calendar*, p. 161; Lady Llanover, ed., *The autobiography and correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs. Delany*, 1st ser., vol. III (London, 1861), pp. 85–6; A. Crookshank and D. Fitzgerald, Knight of Glin, *The painters of Ireland, c.1660–1920* (London, 1978), p. 61.

⁶⁴ H. White, 'Handel in Dublin: a note', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 2 (1987), 182–6.

⁶⁵ B. Boydell, *Music at Christ Church before 1800* (Dublin, 1998). The same was true of the operas offered in Dublin. T.J. Walsh, *Opera in Dublin, 1705–1797: the social scene* (Dublin, 1973).

⁶⁶ NLI, PC 448, B. Smythe to W. Smythe, 17 Oct. 1730; Barnard, 'Integration or separation?', p. 135; T. Barnard, *The abduction of a Limerick heiress: social and political relations in mid-eighteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 1998), p. 38.

⁶⁷ Folk Music Society of Ireland, *Popular music in eighteenth-century Dublin* (Dublin, 1985); H. White, *The keeper's recital: music and cultural history in Ireland, 1770–1970* (Cork, 1998), pp. 13–35.

whether for Handel's oratorios, Italian opera, 'correct' dress, furnishings and manners, or civic activism. Provincial *parvenus* gravitated to cities for work and pleasure. Dublin, because of its size, functioned as a cultural *entrepôt* and incubator. However, its roles were complicated by dependent status and confessional tensions of Ireland.

A pivotal figure in the government of Mercer's Hospital, and so in its programme of public recitals, was John Putland. Among its governors between 1736 and 1756, he was the second most assiduous in attending meetings.⁶⁸ Indeed, there were few facets of life in mid-eighteenth-century Dublin which he did not touch. Brought into the Dublin Society in 1740, he was rapidly elected its treasurer, in which capacity he helped to redirect it. He also joined the apparently complementary but sometimes rival Physico-Historical Society. There too his acumen led to appointment as treasurer. He was also a share-holder in the Smock Alley theatre, deputy grand master of the principal masonic lodge and dedicatee of Rocque's comprehensive map of the city in 1757.⁶⁹ Putland, on the evidence of his voluminous library, was a man profoundly imbued with European culture, although it is not clear how far he had travelled.⁷⁰ The example of Putland, with his multifarious cultural interests, should serve to correct a couple of misapprehensions about the prevailing tone of Dublin life in his time. Putland, although owner of extensive property throughout the island, was deeply rooted in the mercantile world of the city. There his ancestors had originated in the middle of the previous century, and it was there that he continued to live.⁷¹ Essentially a *rentier*, he chose to channel his energies and wealth into the useful and sociable. Through his step-father, Dr Richard Helsham, he was linked with the consciously improving world of professionals, clerics and dons. Yet, for all his civic conscience, he never plunged into the febrile political activity which throughout the 1740s and 1750s convulsed the city. Those excited politics certainly generated a culture: of assembly, print and performance. Alongside, and only occasionally overlapping, was the more subtly partisan culture in which the likes of Putland participated.

Comparable to Putland were two residents of St Stephen's Green: Robert Roberts and James Ware. Roberts, originally an attorney, had scrambled to prosperous respectability as deputy chief remembrancer in the exchequer and a member of

⁶⁸ Mercer's Library, Mercer's Hospital, Dublin, minute book, 1736–72.

⁶⁹ Registry of Deeds, Dublin, 92/122, 64093; Royal Dublin Society, minute book, 1733–41, s.d. 24 April 1740, 15 May 1740; C. Casey, 'Books and builders: a bibliographical approach to Irish eighteenth-century architecture' (PhD thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2 vols, 1991), vol. I, pp. 50, 73–4; Stockwell, *Dublin theatres and theatre customs*, pp. 79, 85–6; The Georgian Society, *Records of eighteenth-century domestic architecture and decoration in Dublin*, 5 vols (Dublin, 1909–13), vol. II, p. 33.

⁷⁰ NLI, MSS 4185–4186, Putland library list.

⁷¹ George Putland was made free of the city as a member of the Dublin Smiths' Company in 1647; Thomas Putland, as a member of the same company, became a freeman in 1671. His son, also Thomas, was a member of the prestigious Merchants' Guild and became a freeman in 1714. Dublin City Archives, G. Thrift, list of freemen of Dublin. For the ramifying interests: *John Putland and others appellants . . . to be heard at the Bar of the House of Lords . . . third day of April. 1725* ([Dublin, 1725]); *To the honourable the knights, citizens and burgesses, in parliament assembled* [Dublin, 1755?]; G.D. Burtchaell and T.U. Sadleir, *Alumni Dublinenses* (Dublin, 1935), p. 687.

parliament. Like other *bons bourgeois*, he and his son joined both the Dublin Society and the Physico-Historical Society. The senior Roberts assembled an impressive library.⁷² Ware's background reached back further than Roberts' into the office-holders of Stuart Dublin. Over the generations, the Wares had assembled lucrative holdings of property both in the capital and midland countryside.⁷³ In addition, Ware's forebears through their writings had memorably characterised Protestant Ireland. Its culture was necessarily anti-Catholic and, as conceived by the Wares, vigorously sectarian. These traits went with a zest for an enlightened European culture in which Catholic territories were ransacked for their treasures.⁷⁴ James Ware used his rents (totalling about £1,000 yearly) to live in central Dublin until the quest for restoratives drove him to Bath.⁷⁵ He, like Putland, abstained from formal bodies like the corporation or parliament. Ware channelled his antiquarian and utilitarian interests into the Physico-Historical Society, which he served as Leinster secretary during the 1740s.⁷⁶ There he worked alongside his brother-in-law, Walter Harris. The latter, the principal animator of the society, gave its public-spirited initiatives for material betterment a markedly anti-Catholic tone.⁷⁷ This orientation was preserved by a smaller group of Protestant enquirers who assumed some functions of the defunct Physico-Historical Society in the 1750s. This gathering protested against designs to vindicate the ancient Irish and secure relief for their contemporary descendants. In 1757, 'the Medico-Political' society censured a recent Catholic history as 'Jesuitical subterfuges'.⁷⁸ Either overtly or unwittingly, the co-operative ventures underlying the Irish Protestant enlightenment were sectarian.

These activities centred on the capital. Yet, in the various organisations, it is often hard to decide who was the more representative figure. In the Royal Dublin Society, the busy Queen's County squire, Thomas Prior, and the affluent Fermanagh squarson, Samuel Madden, have earned more plaudits than the quintessential Dubliner, Putland. Earlier, the Dublin Philosophical Society was clearly driven by the sons of another

⁷² Southampton Univ. Lib., BR 2/8, Lord Palmerston to R. Roberts, 26 Jan. 1737[8]; Dorset County Record Office, D/BLX/B1, Fee book of J. Pickard, fos. 15v–16; *ibid.*, D/BLX/B 18, J. Pickard to R. Roberts, 11 May 1738; Royal Dublin Society, minute book, 1731–3, s.d. 17 Feb. 1731[2]; minute book, 1733–41, s.d. 13 Nov. 1735, 10 Nov. 1737; 1741–6, s.d. 12 March 1744[5], 31 Oct. 1745; RIA, MS 24 E 28, minute book of Physico-Historical Society, s.d. 7 and 14 May 1744; *HMC, Various collections*, vol. vi, p. 59; *An account of the rise and progress of the Physico-Historical Society*; F.E. Ball, *A history of the County of Dublin*, 5 parts (Dublin, 1902–5), vol. 1, p. 11.

⁷³ NLI, MSS 114–116; Dudley, 'Dublin's parishes', vol. ii, p. 350; *Records of eighteenth-century domestic architecture*, vol. ii, pp. 32, 59.

⁷⁴ John Rylands Library, Eng. MS 1028, R. Ware, 'A looking glass for the reformed church and state of Ireland'; Queen's University, Belfast, MS 1/149, R. Ware, 'Rome's monarchical power'; J. Loveday, *Diary of a tour in 1732 through parts of England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1890), p. 49.

⁷⁵ NLI, MS 116, J. Ware to H. Ware or Jodrell, 1760; Trinity College, Dublin, MS 10528, account book of the Ware family.

⁷⁶ RIA, MS 24 E 28, minute book of the Physico-Historical Society, p. 1.

⁷⁷ E. Magennis, "'A beleaguered Protestant": Walter Harris and the writing of *Fiction Unmasked*', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 13 (1998), 86–111.

⁷⁸ RIA, MS 24 K 31, minutes of the Medico-Political-Physico-Classico-Puffical Society, pp. 84–5.

office-holding and professional Dublin family, the Molyneuxs. The successors, such as the Physico-Historical Society or the much more intimate Medico-Physico Society of the 1750s, witnessed collaboration between Dubliners such as Harris or the Quaker doctor, John Ruddy, and an industrious apothecary from Dungarvan in County Waterford, Charles Smith.⁷⁹ Since rigid demarcations between city and countryside scarcely existed, it is best not to seek them in these ventures. The improving societies consciously communicated their doctrines to the provinces. Equally, they gathered information from other localities and depended on local enthusiasts, such as Smith in Dungarvan. In time, however, Smith, in common with other ambitious provincials, was drawn to Dublin. By the late 1750s his links with his home town seem to have loosened as he spent longer in the city.⁸⁰

A fourth Dubliner confirms the impressions of the useful and sociable lives pursued by the well-to-do. Michael Wills had emerged from the aristocracy of labour and expanded his father's business as a carpenter, becoming contractor, architect and overseer of building works. Like most city-dwellers, Wills was linked with the rural hinterlands. But he dwelt in a city-centre establishment with unmarried sisters. His professional skills were utilised by the managers of Dr Steeven's Hospital. By the 1750s he was participating in the clubs, including 'the Select' and 'the Friendlies'. A good deal of his society revolved around the taverns of the town.⁸¹ These habits probably appealed most to bachelors or those temporarily separated from their spouses.⁸² Given Wills' social respectability and his continuing attachment to strict Protestant principles, this masculine conviviality was measured rather than unbridled. By the late 1750s, his companionable instincts were channelled principally into the Friendly Brothers of St Patrick. As treasurer, Wills took on some of the organisation. Although its knots were most numerous in Dublin, they were scattered throughout the garrisons and towns of the kingdom, and were even to be found in those haunts of the companionable Irish: Bath and Gibraltar.

The cultural implications of both the masonic lodges and knots of Friendly Brothers need to be pondered. These, as has been stressed, were gatherings for men. Their non-sectarian and secular ambitions may in practice have been weakened as the initiates sorted themselves according to locale, occupation and confession. The popularity of each was clear from the rapid growth. Fourteen lodges were listed in the capital in 1735; sixteen by 1744. In the 1760s, separate knots were recorded for the city, the liberties of Christ Church, the north side of the river (St Mary's Abbey) and the legal

⁷⁹ RIA, MSS 24 E 28, s.d. 2 July 1744, 6 Aug. 1744, 5 Nov. 1744, 1 April 1745, 3 June 1745, 4 Nov. 1745, 2 Dec. 1745, 2, 9 and 16 June 1746, 14 July 1746, 2 Feb. 1746[7], 4 Aug. 1746, 3 Nov. 1746, 2 Nov. 1747, 6 March 1748[9], 22 March 1752; *ibid.*, MS 24 K 31, *passim*.

⁸⁰ RIA, MSS 24 E 28, 15 and 22 Jan. 1748[9], 8 Jan. 1749[50]; 24 K 31, pp. 151–3, and *passim*; W. Fraher, 'Charles Smith, 1715–1762: pioneer of Irish topography', *Decies*, 53 (1997), pp. 33–44.

⁸¹ Irish Architectural Archive, 81/88, account book of M. Wills, openings 66, 82, and *passim*.

⁸² See also the Edgeworth notebooks, NLI, MSS 1508–9.

quarter (the King's Inns).⁸³ Yet the enthusiasts were fickle. There was a striking lack of continuity between 1735 and 1744 in the places where the masons gathered. This may mean no more than that lodges took their custom from one hostelry to another, and that membership stayed constant. But by 1744, the concerned were seeking to check 'the present decay of free-masonry in the kingdom of Ireland'.⁸⁴ The Friendly Brothers hoped to have a similar if more limited appeal. Sometimes, attendance disappointed. Wills, having bespoken a dinner for twelve brethren in 1774, was mortified when only three came.⁸⁵ These activities were not confined to Dublin. Indeed, in the 1730s and 1740s there were as many lodges noted outside as within the capital. By the 1760s, provincial knots outnumbered those in Dublin. Even so, because of the concentration of masons in the city, lodges there met fortnightly, while the provincial counterparts assembled only monthly. Less clear is whether these associations had originated in the capital and whether they tagged along lamely where England (or Scotland) had led.

The little surviving evidence suggests the spread of freemasonry from south Munster in the 1720s into the Irish capital. Similarly, the revival of the Friendly Brothers after 1750 has been traced to Athenry in County Galway.⁸⁶ Country visitors may have imported these crazes into the city. Once there, the denser population allowed the lodges to thrive and multiply. An important component in the membership, particularly of the masons, was the soldiery. In 1735, five of the thirty-six lodges were based on regiments. Others were set up in places with a strong military presence. As has already been implied, officers were prominent in Irish Protestant society. They introduced habits and tastes from elsewhere. Until the 1760s, Irish Protestants, although numerous in the army, were debarred from serving in Ireland. At least nominally, then, the military stationed in Ireland were visitors who might bring novel diversions. In addition, Irish Protestants who had served outside the kingdom, back in Ireland on furlough or after disbandment, indulged exotic tastes. The soldiery's contributions were not always welcomed. Some rituals of the camp and mess were invested with a 'Gothic barbarism'.⁸⁷ The Friendly Brothers, indeed, had been re-established in order to counter the pernicious martial ethos which encouraged duelling. The Dublin garrison—in the middle of the century perhaps 1,700—dominated local Protestant society less than the soldiers in smaller towns such as Limerick, Athlone, Kinsale or Youghal. Nevertheless, the military were important in inventing and sustaining new cultural amusements.

⁸³ Irish Architectural Archive, 81/88, account book of M. Wills, opening 84.

⁸⁴ F. D'Assigny, *A serious and impartial enquiry into the cause of the present decay of Free-Masonry in the Kingdom of Ireland* (Dublin, 1744).

⁸⁵ Irish Architectural Archive, 81/88, Wills' account book, opening 86.

⁸⁶ J. Kelly, *That Damn'd Thing Called Honour': duelling in Ireland* (Cork, 1995), pp. 65–6; J. Chetwode Crawley, *Caementaria Hibernica, being the public constitutions that have served to hold together the Freemasons of Ireland, 1726–30* (Dublin, 1895), pp. 7–13.

⁸⁷ National Army Museum, MS 8808–36–1, Oughton autobiography, p. 54.

Free-masonry sought to inculcate values of brotherhood and reason. The egalitarian potential of this programme was weakened by the masons' attachment to conventional hierarchies.⁸⁸ Early accounts emphasised the aristocratic and squirearchical participation in the rituals. Moreover, the freemasons' popularity within the army suggested how the movement worked through, rather than subverted, that rigidly hierarchical organisation. Lodges, like the voluntary associations behind the city charities, publicised the notables among their patrons. The names of peers were intended to impress, and draw in the sycophants. Yet, for organisations to survive, the few activists, such as Putland, Ware or Wills, determined success or failure. As in England, so in Ireland, the confluence of professionals in the capital both promoted and sustained the growth of convivial groups.⁸⁹ The dedicated need not be confined to the capital. Samuel Madden, the affluent clergyman crucial to the rejuvenation of the Dublin Society, posted between his Fermanagh estate and the city. Again, though, the sheer size, diversity and wealth of Dublin's Protestant community fostered an abundance of cultural initiatives unknown in the countryside. However, the incentives to participate were not always disinterested. Charles Lucas, generalising perhaps from his experience as a free-man of the barber-surgeons' guild, contended that the ambitious secured 'an interest in some party or club, no matter with how little reason, provided he espouses and defends their principles with a good stock of blind zeal and violence'. This sociability then brought business.⁹⁰

IV

Visitors to the capital, before they were admitted into these intimate gatherings, were struck by what they saw. The look of Protestant Dublin had strong cultural resonances. The same zealots who worked to improve society incorporated architecture into their reforming agenda. Putland, for example, patronised the new classical architecture which Wills practised. However, in diffusing 'correct' architectural styles, the same problems which bedevilled dealings between metropolis, Hibernian hinterlands and the neighbouring kingdoms recurred. Bit by bit the constricted and ramshackle congeries of medieval Dublin, adjacent to the Castle, were encircled and overshadowed by new streets. These developments aspired to regularity and convenience. The masons, at least in theory originating in the craft of building, promoted an ideal architecture, which in its proportions and harmonies reproduced the divine order. Masonic handbooks spread a creed of celestial geometry. Recent additions to the fabric of Dublin were celebrated. From the public buildings of Augustan Rome, through the rediscovery of these

⁸⁸ P. Clark, *British clubs and societies, 1580–1800: the origins of an associational world* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 309–48.

⁸⁹ Clark, *British clubs and societies*, pp. 150–1.

⁹⁰ C. Lucas, *Pharmacomastix* (Dublin, 1741), p. 33.

principles with Brunelleschi, Bramante, Michelangelo, Scamozzi and Palladio, to the adoption of this style by disciples of Inigo Jones in Ireland, the achievements were catalogued. The monuments commended in Dublin included the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham, the Tholsel, the Custom House, the Royal Barracks, the massive library of the College and the grand Parliament House. Together with St Stephen's Green, justly praised as 'the largest in Europe', these glories conspicuously did not include the official seat of British rule: the Castle.⁹¹ For the most part, what had been achieved had been done through local efforts. Some saw the scale both of the Hospital at Kilmainham or the Parliament as excessive. They testified to the wish of the aggrieved Irish to demonstrate superiority over their nominal English rulers. Much of the redevelopment and enlargement of the city was haphazardly planned and implemented. Even those spaces laid out in apparent conformity with the new vogue for the piazza or square, such as St Stephen's Green or Smithfield close to the north bank of the River Liffey and the legal district, were not treated uniformly. Usually, individual proprietors chose their own design.⁹²

Through architecture, some sought to repudiate the humiliating dependency on Britain which, in 1720, had been embodied in law. Yet inadvertently, these buildings may have revealed subservience. Numerous ideas and details were pilfered from the London of Inigo Jones or as rebuilt after the Fire. Belatedly, Dublin may have succumbed to the same metropolitan influences as Northampton, Warwick or Whitehaven.⁹³ The wish for more durable and fire-resistant materials explained the adoption of regulations modelled on those promulgated in London.⁹⁴ Similarly, another ornament to the city scene—new or extended churches—copied what had been done in London, first in the aftermath of the Fire and then with the projected fifty new churches in Queen Anne's reign. Traffic between London and Dublin was brisk and constant. Visitors to Dublin, as to the British counties, used London as the measure by which all else was judged. Occasionally, as with St Stephen's Green, Kilmainham and the Parliament, even the jaundiced allowed that Irish accomplishments equalled and perhaps surpassed London equivalents. However, the almost invariable assumption was that London supplied the standard. This view probably distorted the processes of artistic and architectural diffusion. Ireland relied on England for many commodities and materials: a consequence of the Navigation Acts of the second half of the seventeenth century. Even books and newspapers tended either to come directly from London or to pirate its productions.

⁹¹ E. Scott, *The new book of constitutions* (Dublin, 1751), pp. 9, 53–4, 65–70, 118–20.

⁹² *Records of eighteenth-century domestic architecture*, vol. II, pp. 31–111; plans of the lots in the Smithfield development are in Trinity College, Dublin, MS 8556/ 70, 73; and in an indenture of 28 June 1681 between Sir John Povey and H. Jervis, NLI, PC 438.

⁹³ P. Borsay, 'The London connection: cultural diffusion in the eighteenth-century provincial town', *London Journal*, 19 (1994), 21–35.

⁹⁴ *CSP, Ireland, 1669–70*, p. 248; *Reasons humbly offered against passing an act for the better preventing mischiefs that might happen by fire* (Dublin, 1713).

But ideas and fashions were not always confined to the officially approved routes. Before the 1760s, few British architects were invited to undertake important commissions in Ireland. The locals who executed them, notably William Robinson, Thomas Burgh and Edward Lovett Pearce, architects respectively of Kilmainham, the Barracks and the College Library, and the Houses of Parliament, naturally knew London—and London style.⁹⁵ Yet, although Pearce was shadowily but solidly linked with Vanbrugh, these Irish practitioners did not slavishly copy the latest from England. Independently they could turn to the common sources for even a rudimentary classicism. Travel from Ireland to the continent steadily increased. It allowed Pearce to drink at the pure Italian source.⁹⁶ Others, including Burgh, procured the lavishly illustrated manuals, engravings and drawings from the Low Countries, France and Italy.⁹⁷ Virtuosi were free to make of them what they could without the invariable mediation of the English.⁹⁸ This same ability to go straight to the originals was apparent in another cultural sphere. Under the aegis of the Dublin Society, it was decided that simultaneously the ruinous and demeaning reliance on the imported could be ended and standards of workmanship and design in Ireland raised. To this end, a school of drawing in the capital was taken under the wing of the Society in the 1740s. The training owed more to French than English principles. To its success can be traced some of the distinctiveness in the fashioning of silver, furniture and stucco.⁹⁹

To argue that Protestant Dublin was anything other than overwhelmingly anglophone and orientated towards Britain would be misleading. Dublin had its cosmopolitan elements, like any sizeable port. A long-settled Dutch *émigré* community had by the eighteenth century lost any distinctive cultural coloration but did retain abundant links with the Low Countries. More recently, Huguenots had sought refuge. They, like the smaller band of Palatines uprooted early in the eighteenth century, soon moved beyond the capital. But the French Protestants, unlike the Rhinelanders, did maintain a presence in Dublin, focused primarily on their worship and associated charities.¹⁰⁰ Trade and travel brought the itinerant Irish into often indiscriminate contacts throughout western Europe. These undid the sectarian grid in which much cultural life in Dublin was imprisoned. The Catholic majority in the capital shared access to continental Europe. Going for education and livelihoods, they

⁹⁵ For Robinson, see R. Loeber, *A biographical dictionary of Irish architects in Ireland, 1600–1720* (London, 1981), pp. 88–97.

⁹⁶ E. McParland, 'Edward Lovett Pearce and the Parliament House', *Burlington Magazine*, 131 (1989), 91–100.

⁹⁷ NLI, PC 449, 3 undated letters [1710–11] from W. Smythe to J. Smythe.

⁹⁸ Generally on this theme: E. McParland, 'Eclecticism: the provincial's advantage', *Irish Arts Review Yearbook, 1991–2*, pp. 210–13.

⁹⁹ J. Turpin, *A school of art in Dublin since the eighteenth century* (Dublin, 1995), pp. 1–17; C.P. Curran, *Dublin decorative plasterwork of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (London, 1967); J. McDonnell, *Irish eighteenth-century stuccowork and its European sources* (Dublin, 1991).

¹⁰⁰ I am grateful to Andrew Forrest for allowing me to read his as yet unpublished work on French Protestant charities in Dublin.

gravitated to the predominantly Catholic enclaves of southern and central Europe. Bumping into one another on the continent, Irish Catholics and Protestants stressed what they shared.¹⁰¹ But this solidarity seldom survived the return home. The Catholic religious whose local connections were unashamedly exploited by Protestant tourists were generally shunned back in Ireland. These unresolved tensions, between attraction to or repulsion from Latinate classicism, could invest Dublin culture with strangeness and originality. But they also inhibited social or cultural mingling between confessions.

The facilities on offer in Dublin, throughout the century the second largest city in the Hanoverians' territories, lured visitors from beyond Ireland. For residents of the north-west, especially north Wales, shopping and entertainments were better there. Moreover, if Irish householders had pottery and chairs shipped over from Liverpool and coal from Whitehaven, friends and tradesmen in Dublin could supply many wants to the inhabitants of western Britain. Desiderata ranged from the ubiquitous and always pleasing whiskey to linen, furniture and marble chimney-pieces.¹⁰² Those near the seaboard of Scotland, like the Murrays of Broughton, also found it easier and more satisfactory to order a long list of household wants from Dublin.¹⁰³ Among the Welsh, there existed in addition a venerable tradition of being educated in Dublin University. This attested to the prominence within the Church of Ireland of clergy of Welsh background, which in its turn was strengthened when these Welsh-born Dublin graduates were beneficed in Ireland.¹⁰⁴ These tendencies among westerners to look to Dublin may have meant no more than that the Irish capital retained a traditional role as the dominant city in a region which straddled the Irish Sea. This function, if it confirmed the importance of the services available there, did not necessarily make Dublin a metropolis. Yet the combination of facilities turned it into something more than simply a provincial capital akin to Norwich or Bristol.

V

Central to many of the themes so far sketched was St Stephen's Green. The houses which surrounded it exhibited the grandeur but lack of strict uniformity so characteristic of the building developments of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. No

¹⁰¹ PRONI, D 695/226, 228, notebooks of S. Waring, 1687–8; 'Autobiography of Pole Cosby', pp. 94–8; C. O'Connor, *The pleasing hours: the grand tour of James Caulfield, first earl of Charlemont (1728–1799)* (Cork, 1999), pp. 169–70.

¹⁰² National Library of Wales, Puleston MSS 3584E/3, 3A, 4, 5, 77, 80, 81, 87, 97, 103, 104, T. Kingsbury to F. Price, 19 April 1740, 3 Oct. 1740, 2 April 1741, 24 Nov. 1742, 5 April 1746, 31 Dec. 1746, 24 Feb. 1746[7]; Mrs E. Kingsbury to Mrs A. Price, 17 Nov. 1753, 22 Dec. 1753, 30 Nov. 1754; receipt from G. Gibbins to Mrs E. Kingsbury, 30 Oct. 1753.

¹⁰³ PRONI, D 2860/11/68, Bill of John Comack, 8 Nov. 1730; PRONI D 2860/11/75, 76, F. McMinn to A. Murray, [1730/1]; bill of goods bought of Richard Hardford by J. Comack.

¹⁰⁴ University College of North Wales, Bangor, Dept. of Palaeography and Archives, Penrhos MSS, v, 429, 430, W. Owen to J. Owen, 12 Feb. 1674[5], 13 April 1675.

applied giant order, continuous string-courses, cornices or standardised fenestration unified the whole. Moreover, the cultivation practised by such residents as the Percevals, Bishop Rundle or James Ware was little advertised in the plain exteriors. Yet, the space enclosed by these houses, the Green, served as a model for other urban parks, outside as well as inside Ireland.¹⁰⁵ Its evolution from the 1660s revealed the enlightenment of the municipality as much as of private developers.¹⁰⁶ Its planning, planting and scale were all admired. The corporation regulated it closely. Access was increasingly restricted. In 1713, a time of bitter contention within the municipality, the panoply which rode the city franchises was allowed only a little way into the Green.¹⁰⁷

This restriction may have reflected more careful management of the space, lately levelled and replanted. It coincided with another change whereby, from dining together, the participants dispersed to their separate meals and eventually dispensed with the formal dinners. By 1730, the Green was policed by uniformed keepers.¹⁰⁸ However, the Green remained a favourite location for a variety of rituals. Here, for example, the members of the guilds assembled to assert their own corporate identities and (in 1703) to greet a popular viceroy, Ormonde, the last of the century to be regarded as attached to Ireland.¹⁰⁹ The spectacular fireworks which announced the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1749 were ignited over the Green.¹¹⁰ It was, too, the setting for an equestrian statue of George II. The siting, it has been ingeniously argued, may have owed more to France than to England, as did other aspects of the city's design.¹¹¹ The king's effigy had been sculpted by the foremost local craftsman, the younger van Nost. The name of the last, hardly resoundingly Irish, reminds of the magnetism of Ireland for hopeful immigrants. Particularly in the luxury trades, such as silver-workers or *stuccodores*, they could flourish. Van Nost's statue, like the better-known memorial to William III on College Green, was regularly vandalised. Alarmists could interpret these attacks as politically and ideologically driven, and not just high jinks.

Less contentiously, St Stephen's Green was the favoured venue for new modes of polite recreation, in which elegant attire and consummate horsemanship could be paraded. In all these exhibitions, the fortunate who could cut the requisite dash, buy tickets or swear the oaths which commanded entry to the guilds were separated from

¹⁰⁵ Cardiff Central Library, MS 4.370, journal of J. Verdon, p. 39.

¹⁰⁶ M. Craig, *Dublin, 1660–1860: a social and architectural history* (Dublin and London, 1952), pp. 19–21; N.T. Burke, 'Dublin, 1600–1800: a study in urban morphogenesis' (PhD thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 1972), pp. 138–40, 148–9, 156–8, 185–6, 232–3, 269–71. There is a stimulating survey by L.M. Cullen, 'The growth of Dublin, 1600–1900: character and heritage' in F.H.A. Aalen and K. Whelan, eds, *Dublin, city and county: from prehistory to present* (Dublin, 1992), pp. 252–77.

¹⁰⁷ NAI, M. 2549, Monck Mason's notes on the city of Dublin, p. 7.

¹⁰⁸ Pearse Street Public Library, Dublin, Gilbert MS 62, Monck Mason's collections, 1, part i, pp. 85–88.

¹⁰⁹ Trinity College, Dublin, MS 1447/8/1, fo. 164v, minute book of the Barber–Surgeons, 1703–1757, s.d. 2 Aug. 1703.

¹¹⁰ Pearse St Public Library, Gilbert MS 62, Monck Mason collections, 1, part i, p. 88.

¹¹¹ E. McParland, 'A note on George II and St. Stephen's Green', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 2 (1987), 194–5; McParland, 'Eclecticism', pp. 211–12.

the penurious. The last might still end up on the Green: swinging from the gallows erected there.¹¹² Distinctions of other kinds were exhibited there. The way in which members of the separate confessions confronted each other from their park benches has already been mentioned. On occasion more ominous confrontations occurred. In 1725, the Primate was perturbed by a riot on the Pretender's birthday. 'A very numerous rabble assembled in Stephen's Green as they usually have done'. Quickly enough some householders complained. The lord mayor, sheriffs and constables failed to disperse the crowd. The soldiery—forty each of foot and cavalry—were summoned. Injuries and arrests followed. To observers, the affray was no more than the customary ritual of 'the Popish rabble coming down to fight the Whig mob, as they used to do on that day'.¹¹³

The very familiarity of what unfolded on the Green may have calmed some contemporaries. The mob, whether it be aggrieved journeymen, impoverished weavers, boisterous apprentices or the excluded, often aped the rituals of their nominal superiors. Processions of the be-gowned and resplendent regularly wound their way between the public buildings of the capital. Members of the university, of the parliament and the corporation, freemasons, guild brethren and initiates of other voluntary associations strutted from special sermons to annual binges. In the routes and rituals, these crocodiles frequently recalled those which had threaded their ways through the pre-Reformation city on holy days. Such parades could, then, remind of continuities. More doubtful is whether by the eighteenth century these pageants fostered unity. Institutions dedicated to mutuality regularly dissolved into rancorous disputes. The riding of the city franchises, intended as a public assertion of civic solidarity, excited increasing controversy. Some guilds voted to discontinue it; others limited what their officers could spend on this extravagance.¹¹⁴ Neither the guilds nor the voluntary groups consistently upheld equality. Fraternity was an ideal which recognised seniorities, particularly those based on age.¹¹⁵ Vocational and voluntary organisations usually reproduced the gradations current throughout society. Activists could achieve a prominence beyond their social rank and incomes. But, as has been implied, the likes of Putland, Ware, Wills and

¹¹² *Ensign Edmund Budd's speech who suffered near St. Stephen's Green* (Dublin, 1712); B. Henry, *Dublin hanged: crime, law enforcement and punishment in late eighteenth-century Dublin* (Dublin, 1994), pp. 17–20, 23.

¹¹³ PRO, SP 63/388, 209, 210, Abp H. Boulter to Newcastle, 11 June 1725; the Lords Justice to Carteret, 11 June 1726. Cf. P. Fagan, 'The Dublin Catholic mob (1700–1750)', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 4 (1989), 133–42; S. Murphy, 'Municipal politics and popular disturbances: 1660–1800', in A. Cosgrove, ed., *Dublin through the ages* (Dublin, 1988), pp. 77–92.

¹¹⁴ Pearse St Library, Gilbert MS 67, Monck Mason collections, II, part iii, p. 544; Assay Office, Dublin Castle, minute book of the Goldsmiths' Company, 1731–58, pp. 60, 125, 127, 171, 220–1, 323; Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, Dublin, masters' accounts, Weavers' Company, 1691–1714, s.d. 1701–2, 5 Aug. 1707; Trinity College, Dublin, MS 1447/8/1, fos. 58, 67v–68, 72v, minute book of Barber–Surgeons, 1703–57; Pearse St Library, Gilbert MS 80, extracts from records of the Tailors' Guild, 1296–1753, pp. 82, 86, 87.

¹¹⁵ J.R. Hill, *From patriots to unionists: Dublin civic politics and Irish Protestant patriotism, 1660–1840* (Oxford, 1997).

Madden were able to devote themselves to philanthropic undertakings because of their prosperous leisure.

These fractious and fissiparous urban organisations did not always supply the happiest model for those of the middling and lower ranks. The resulting disorders were not unique to Dublin. However, just as the sheer populousness of the city incubated a richer variety of cultural forms, so too it conjured the spectre of disorder. Within Ireland, despite the resemblances between the capital and smaller boroughs, Dublin was peculiar in the size of its freeman body—perhaps 3,000—the number of guilds and the multiplicity of unofficial outlets for sociability.¹¹⁶ In addition, it has been argued, the guilds survived and retained their regulatory functions longer in Irish towns than in Britain.¹¹⁷ These regular gatherings gave structure and content to the lives of their members. It was an easy step from the public struttings of municipal worthies and guild brethren to the ostentatious assemblies by members of masonic lodges, subscribers to the benefit performances and denizens of the Green. These manifestations taught modes of conduct to the processions of journeymen, artificers and apprentices.

For all the powerful arguments about the community of interest between rulers and ruled, wealthy and poor, and a shared belief in a moral economy, affrays did not invariably follow a predictable or disciplined course. Onlookers at the mêlées on the Green might suddenly become targets. Those who sold or wore imported textiles could be roughly handled.¹¹⁸ It did not altogether reassure when protesters adopted the symbols and rituals of their superiors. In all communities, economic stratification was deepened and perpetuated by legal exclusions. The consequent resentments could bring the excluded onto the streets. In Dublin, these divisions generally followed the lines of ethnicity and confession. There, rightly or wrongly, surging crowds were feared not just because composed of *hoi polloi*, but because ‘papist’. The prevalent culture, and especially the public displays of Dublin, reflected the aspirations and apprehensions of a minority. Even something as seemingly innocuous as the Florists’ Club was not only dedicated to horticultural improvements, with all its ideological ramifications, but also celebrated Protestant and Hanoverian rule. In 1763, its members, who included such

¹¹⁶ J.R. Hill, ‘Corporate values in Hanoverian Edinburgh and Dublin’, in S.J. Connolly, R.A. Houston and R.J. Morris, eds, *Conflict, identity and economic development: Ireland and Scotland, 1600–1939* (Preston, 1995), pp. 114–24.

¹¹⁷ Leighton, *Catholicism in a Protestant kingdom*, pp. 67–85.

¹¹⁸ Bodleian Library, Ballard MS 8, fo. 64v, Bp T. Lindsay to A. Charlet, 4 Oct. 1713; Christ Church, Oxford, Wake MSS 13/242, Bp J. Evans to Abp W. Wake, 8 April 1721; clothiers’ petition to Abp W. King, 6 June 1728; Marsh’s Library, Dublin, MS Z3.1.1, clxiv, case of broadcloth weavers, c.1728; MS Z3.1.1, clxviii, proposal of Benjamin Watts, n.d.; NLI, PC 447, D. Clarke to W. Smythe, 14 May 1734; NAI, Crown entry books, County Dublin, 8 July 1752; H.N., *A new poem on the ancient and loyal Society of Journey-Men Taylors who are to dine at the King’s Inns’ Hall* (Dublin, 1725); *To the honourable the committee appointed to enquire into the cause of the disputes between the masters and journeymen, the reply of the journeymen stocking-makers of the City of Dublin* [Dublin, 1749]; *The case of the journeymen sheermen of the City of Dublin* [Dublin, 1749]; *The memorial of the Master Clothiers* [Dublin, c.1749]; Legg, *Synge letters*, pp. 184, 186, 190.

notables as Putland and James Ware, were commanded to don orange cockades.¹¹⁹ Cultural avatars, privileged as freemen of the city, secure in their properties and posts, and busy in their voluntary associations, exuded confidence.

Early in the eighteenth century, the Protestants of Dublin also took comfort from superior numbers. The more reflective, mindful that duties came with their privileges, devised numerous schemes to aid the less fortunate. Much of this activity was rendered manageable by being directed primarily, if not exclusively, at their own confessional community. In order to be admitted to one of the hospitals, a patron had to be found. Subscribers and governors decided. Places, even to enjoy a subsidised course of baths at Dr Achmet's famed establishment, were awarded in ways which mirrored the distribution of patentee posts, church livings and military commissions. Everywhere in Europe and the Hanoverians' empire, the well-to-do were but a fragment of the total population. But it was less usual for the adherents of the state cult, which in turn controlled access to office and power, to be a minority. This feature distinguished Dublin from Edinburgh, London or Paris. Instead, despite many vital dissimilarities, of size and denominators of difference, Dublin paralleled the white capital of Bengal. Just as Professor Marshall has concluded that 'liberal-minded historians have searched, with very little realistically to show for their efforts, for some evidence of redeeming racial intermixing in eighteenth-century if not in nineteenth-century Calcutta', so in Georgian Dublin, the polite culture recorded here was overwhelmingly that of the conformist Protestants.¹²⁰ As in Calcutta, indigenes furnished much needed for these diversions; on occasion, too, they imitated the ways of those whom they served. Dublin Protestants' awareness of their vulnerability was never as acute as that of the whites of Calcutta. In numbers alone, and ease of access from Britain, the situations differed. Nevertheless, the frequent reminders of confessional distinctions, many of them conveyed through cultural activities, gave an edge to Dublin life. The resultant tensions, so far from being inimical to recreation and association, may have stimulated and enriched collective endeavours. In these ventures—sometimes stridently triumphant, occasionally evangelical, often eleemosynary—the prosperous Protestants of Dublin veered between ignoring and exploiting—and being exploited by—the majority.

¹¹⁹ RIA, MS 24 E 37, minute book of the Dublin Florists' Society, s.d. 17 June 1763; E.C. Nelson, 'The Dublin Florists' Club in the mid-eighteenth century', *Garden History*, 10 (1982), 142–8.

¹²⁰ Marshall, 'The white town of Calcutta', pp. 22–3.

List of Abbreviations

<i>APC</i>	<i>Acts of the Privy Council</i>
BL	British Library
<i>CARD</i>	<i>Calendar of the Ancient Records of Dublin</i> , ed. J.T. and R.M. Gilbert, 19 vols (Dublin, 1889–1944)
CLRO	Corporation of London Record Office
<i>CJ</i>	<i>House of Common Journals, England</i>
<i>CSP</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers</i>
<i>Ec.HR</i>	<i>Economic History Review</i>
<i>HCJI</i>	<i>Journals of the House of Commons of the Kingdom of Ireland</i>
GL	Guildhall Library
<i>HMC</i>	<i>Historical Manuscripts Commission</i>
Lambeth PL	Lambeth Palace Library
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NLI	National Library of Ireland
PP	Parliamentary Papers
PRO	Public Record Office, Kew
PRONI	Public Record Office, Northern Ireland
RCB	Representative Church Body Library, Dublin
RIA	Royal Irish Academy
WAC	Westminster Archives Centre