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The New Urbanity of Laroon's *Cryes of the City of London*

Sean Shesgreen

WHEN Marcellus Laroon's *Cryes of the City of London Drawne after the Life* appeared in November 1687, it changed dramatically the way street hawkers were pictured in British art. Prints of street sellers appeared in England in the early 1600s. The first engravings of London hawkers (hereafter called "Cries") were executed on copper by anonymous craftsmen and printed on sheets measuring about seven inches by ten. The untitled *Cries of London*, published about the time of James I (1603–1625), is typical of broadsheets from the early seventeenth century.¹ This sheet and virtually all other examples of the first English Cries follow a simple formula. They show four rows of vendors, each housed in a niche about the size of a small fingernail. All of the Lilliputian vendors in these early prints are type figures, representatives of their class and profession with no real individuality or human distinction. Because of the postage-stamp scale of the designs, the tiny criers are difficult to tell apart.

The first English broadsheets stand as a census of London's hawkers: the fig vendor, the water bearer, the damson seller, the flower peddler flourishing his "fine bowpot" with such panache, even the bear baiter is here with his great, lumbering beast. Executed in a stiff, wooden style, these broadsheets also define and offer stereotypes of street criers. They romanticize London hawkers, perhaps with a view to making these legendary folk more intelligible and more palatable to seventeenth-century audiences who feared them as boogeymen and did not always distinguish them from the rogues,

¹ Karen F. Beall, *Kaufleute und Strassenbändler Cries and Itinerant Trades* (Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1975), pp. 118-119; L. A. Lawrence, "On a Portion of a Set of Silver Counters Exhibiting London Criers and their Cries," *British Numismatic Journal*, 2d ser., 14 (1918), 54-55. For a somewhat later (but unspecified) date, see Margery Corbett and Michael Norton, *Engraving in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Part III, *The Reign of Charles I* (Cambridge: University Press, 1964), 366-367.

vagrants, and "masterless" men and women so troublesome to Tudor and Stuart authorities.²

Prints showing little hawkers in honeycombed alcoves appeared over and over again throughout the seventeenth century. The artisans and mechanics who copied these broadsheets did vary their form and content. But the changes they introduced were small, and the gridiron formula to which they clung dominated the depiction of street hawkers until Laroon's *The Cryes of the City of London* broke with these images in scale, format, subject matter, and technique.³

Laroon magnified many times over the size of the primitive broadsheets' stick figures.⁴ The space which the Jacobean sheets devoted to thirty-six hawkers now houses a single street vendor such as "The merry Milk Maid."⁵ The maid, wearing a fancy May Day garland on her head, appears at full length, framed by a rectangle measuring six by eight inches. Defined by three fine lines set closely together, the frame around her is the most self-conscious pictorial device of its kind in prints of London criers. It leads the eye to the dancing milkmaid and sets her off from outside distractions. It unifies all the lively designs, harmonizing seventy-four subjects that would otherwise strike the viewer as different and unequal. The frame also elevates the artistic status of the images, giving the impression that they have

² John Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy in Tudor England* (London: Longman, 1971), pp. 3-5.

³ Laroon's influence on subsequent English Cries will be spelled out in my edition, *The Cryes of the City of London: Engravings and Drawings by Marcellus Laroon*, to be published in the winter of 1988 by the Scolar Press in the United Kingdom and Stanford University Press in America.

⁴ Marcellus Laroon was born in Holland about 1649, the son of a French face painter and landscapist. He was christened Marcellus Lauron, but after he came to England, he found his name anglicized as Laroon, the spelling Horace Walpole used. Some modern writers call him Laroon, others Lauron, the name with which he signed his *Cryes*. His artist son, born in London in 1679, was christened Marcellus Laroon, creating the potential for confusion. The father and son are sometimes distinguished by referring to the father as Marcellus Laroon the Elder and calling the son Marcellus Laroon the Younger, when potential for confusion exists. More famous than his father, Marcellus Laroon the Younger is also identified as Captain Laroon because of his military career.

⁵ Twelve of Laroon's *Cryes* are reproduced here, in numerical order, according to the original number in the series (in parentheses) which appears at the lower right of each print: The merry Milk Maid (23), Clark the English Posture Master (68), Oliver C: Porter (72), Colly Molly Puffe (45), The famous Dutch Woman (64), The famous Dutch Woman (66), London Curtezian (51), Frater Mendicans (74), A Nonconformist Minister (73), The London Beggar (69), The Squire of Alsatia (50), Any Old Iron take money for (58). All are reproduced from copies in the Kress Library of Business and Economics, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University.

been put in mats to be framed and hung on walls alongside other pictures.⁶

Because Laroon abandoned the diminutive scale and format of earlier Cries, he was free to draw upon new pictorial techniques and conventions. For these he turned to formal portraiture, then becoming the most popular kind of painting in England in a renaissance unheralded since the time of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. Laroon, who had executed likenesses under Sir Godfrey Kneller and as an independent limner, advertised his allegiance to the traditions of portraiture on his title page with the words, "Drawne after the Life."⁷ The well-known phrase suggests that Laroon, living in Covent Garden since 1675, made his sketches in the physical presence of his subjects, whom he must have seen and come to know personally as they passed his doorstep every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, for ten years, on their way to London's busiest market to buy their fruits and vegetables.⁸ The seventy-four likenesses making up the completed fifth edition of *The Cries of the City of London* (1689) are compelling evidence that the artist from The Hague was true to his word about sketching from life.⁹

But Laroon did more than draw "realistic" images of the hawkers passing before the door of his atelier in Bow Street in 1687. Opening up his *Cries* to the social currents of Covent Garden and the entire City of London, he gave the phrase "Drawne after the Life" a clever new meaning filled with resonance for his contemporaries but perhaps lost on us today. Laroon sketched likenesses of lowly street criers and

⁶ *The London Gazette* of 22 November 1708 offers a clue to how and where prints like Laroon's were displayed at this time: "The twelve Half-length Figures of Sir Anthony Vandyke, curiously engraved by the late Mr. Peter Lombart, being one of the best Performances in Graving, and very proper to adorn any Rooms Closets, &c, are Sold by S. Gribelin, living at the corner House of Banbury court in Long Acre; also by Mr. Ch. Mather near Temple bar in Fleet-street; and by most Print shops in London and Westminster. Price one Guinea."

⁷ Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, 4th ed., 5 vols. (London, 1787), III, 238-239.

⁸ The fact that Laroon claims his images are "Drawne after the Life" does not necessarily mean that he ignored artistic sources. In this essay, my primary interest is not in these sources.

⁹ The complex publication history of Laroon's *Cries*, extending from 1687 to 1821, has never been fully established. For a recent contribution to this fascinating history, see my article, "The Editions, Imitations, and the Influence of Marcellus Laroon's *Cries of the City of London*," *Studies in Bibliography*, 35 (1982), 258-271.

certain city types well-known or notorious during their lifetimes, mixing these portraits with images of anonymous figures. The artist called attention to these likenesses in the prints' captions, naming five of his seventy-four criers and types by their family names or given names. The people so identified are Madam Creswell, Oliver C. Porter, John the Quaker, and Joseph Clark, who appears in two portraits, first as "Josephus Clericus Posture Master" and second as "Clark the English Posture Master."

All of these seventeenth-century men and women were familiar to Laroon's contemporaries: Madam Creswell, as the most famous procuress in London between the Restoration and the Revolution, and John the Quaker, as John Kelsey, the half-mad fanatic who journeyed to Turkey with no less a design than to convert the Grande Signior of Constantinople to Quakerism.¹⁰ Joseph Clark was probably the most celebrated and Oliver C. Porter the most reviled. In his own age, "Posture Clark" was reputed to be the most extraordinary contortionist who ever existed, though he had lots of competition, most notably from a fellow calling himself "the surprizing Mr. Higgins."¹¹ Even those who followed Clark after his death (1696?) felt compelled to measure their performances by his. The self-styled "famous Posture-Master of Europe," appearing at the Duke of Marlborough's Head in Fleet Street in 1711, described himself as one "who far exceeds the deceased Posture Masters Clark and Higgins."¹²

John Evelyn put Clark in the class of "Impostors, Heresiarchs and Heterodoxi" along with such other freaks as Lazarus the Italian, whose brother grew out of his side, and the twin Scotch Monsters. The diarist described him as "*Proteus Clark*, who tho' gross enough of Body, was of so flexible and subtile a Texture, as to contort his Members into several disfigurations, and to put out of joynt almost any Bone or *Vertebra* of his Body and to re-place it again."¹³ In an age that loved hoaxes and practical jokes, Clark was a prankster by inclination as well as by profession. Once he dislocated the vertebrae of his back and then visited a famous London surgeon seeking a cure.

¹⁰ James Granger, *A Biographical History of England*, 5th ed., 6 vols. (London, 1824), VI, 19-20.

¹¹ *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), I, 128.

¹² *Ibid.*, I, 128.

¹³ John Evelyn, *Numismata: A Discourse of Medals, Antient and Modern* (London, 1697), p. 277.

The surgeon, James Mullins by name, was so shocked at the sight of the counterfeit deformity that he despaired of taking on the trickster's case.¹⁴

In his natural state, Clark was a handsome, well-proportioned man a little inclined to stoutness. But he could twist his body into every deformity imaginable, from pigeon breast to hunchback to pot belly. He appears here as a gymnast of extraordinary elasticity; putting his foot where his arm should be, he even outdoes the little monkey that vies with him. His feat is expressed capriciously by the way his finger invades the picture frame, a playful mannerist conceit. He loved to plague tailors and, upon a whim, would call an unsuspecting victim to his home in Pall Mall to order a suit of clothes. When the tailor arrived to take Clark's measurements, he would find a hump in his customer's left shoulder. Returning with the suit made up, the unfortunate tradesman would discover, to his horror, that the hump was actually in Clark's right shoulder. Begging pardon for his embarrassing mistake, he would scurry home to mend the suit only to find, upon his return, that his customer was a perfectly straight-shouldered man.¹⁵

The most hated character in this group of figures with names was the stern-faced fellow with the enigmatic title, Oliver C: Porter. This man was none other than Oliver Cromwell's gate keeper; Laroon dared not spell out the Protector's name in 1687, because he was still the object of deep animosity. The porter, whom Laroon listed under Cromwell's first name but who was actually known as Daniel, was a servant in the Protector's court, where he learned to cant in the Puritan style. According to James Caulfield, the man "was remarkably tall; which perhaps, was the reason for his being selected as porter to the Protector; it having been the fashion, in the preceding reigns, to have beings of such magnitude attending the royal gates, *Oliver*, it may be presumed, affected this customary appendage of royalty. The measurement of his height is preserved by a large O, on the back of the terrace, at Windsor-Castle."¹⁶ At the Restoration, the porter turned preacher, gathering a few converts about him. A plodder in books, he turned to the serious study of divinity, especially

¹⁴ Granger, *A Biographical History* (note 10), VI, 170-171.

¹⁵ *The Guardian*, No. 102, Wednesday, 8 July 1713.

¹⁶ James Caulfield, *Portraits, Memoirs, and Characters of Remarkable Persons from the Reign of Edward the Third to the Revolution*, 3 vols. (London, 1813), III, 190.

mysticism, which his contemporaries claimed generated an "enthusiastic madness" in him. He was committed to Bedlam and never released.¹⁷

Dressed in a cape and a hooded tunic belted unfashionably high across his chest, the porter is pictured in the act of proselytizing; he holds out an immense Bible (given to him by Nell Gwyn, the celebrated Restoration actress and *femme fatale*) to show us a particular text on a particular page in order to drive home a point he makes in his sermon.¹⁸ His combative stance of thrusting his Bible at us underscores his zealotry; and his rigid countenance, a prized possession among Puritans, testifies to his ethical purity. His head is shaved to express his religious opposition to long hair, an emblem of pride, sensuality, and, of course, Royalist sympathies.

In addition to the people he mentions by name, Laroon identifies by well-known sobriquets the figures in three other portraits, Colly Molly Puffe and the so-called "famous Dutch Woman," who appears in two different portraits (both bearing the same title). Of these two celebrated public figures, the fragile, melancholy Colly Molly Puffe, who lived in the reign of James II, was perhaps the best known and certainly the most beloved. The tiny, humpbacked vendor got his nickname from the cry he sang to advertise his meat pies, jam tarts, and puff pastries.¹⁹ He lived into the eighteenth century to be celebrated by Joseph Addison in *The Spectator* as one of those hawkers who "have invented particular Songs and Tunes of their own: Such as was, not many Years since, the Pastry-man, commonly known by the Name of the Colly-Molly-Puff; and such as is at this Day the Vendor of Powder and Washballs, who, if I am rightly inform'd, goes under the Name of *Powder-Watt*."²⁰

No record remains to tell us about the life and fortunes of the once-famous Dutch rope dancer, whom people beheld "with pleasure mixed with pain; as she seemed every moment in danger of breaking her neck."²¹ She was undoubtedly one of the many foreigners who flocked to England around the time of the Restoration when rope dancing became intensely popular, winning audiences among all

¹⁷ Granger, *A Biographical History* (note 10), VI, 12-13.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, VI, 12.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, VI, 173.

²⁰ *The Spectator* (note 11), II, 477.

²¹ Granger, *A Biographical History* (note 10), VI, 171.

classes with performances at court, at fairs, and in the theater (where jealous actors hated and despised these flashy acrobats).

The famous Dutch woman appears in two prints to illustrate the different tricks rope dancers did. In the first, she carries a balance beam and dances on a taut rope slung dangerously high. In the second, she vaults and tumbles on a slack rope hung low — the leering clown gesturing obscenely toward her shows that she is no more than ten feet from the ground. Despite the fact that she grips it in two places with her full weight, the slack rope does not bend or lose its half-moon shape, evidence that Laroon preferred formal values to a thoroughgoing realism.

Compared with her contemporaries' performances, hers are dull and commonplace. Dancers fought to outdo one another with daring, new feats. The astonishing Mr. Barnes, wearing boots and spurs, walked on a rope with two children tied to his feet. At Bartholomew Fair (famous — not for buying and selling — but for its wondrous spectacles and shows), the "Italian Scaramouch" danced with a duck on his head while he pushed a wheelbarrow containing two children and a dog. As he trundled along, he serenaded his audience.²² Another foreigner, the self-styled "Funamble Turk," performed still more awesome feats. John Evelyn saw his show in London in 1657. "Going to *Lond*: with some Company, who would needes step in to see a famous *Rope-danuser* call'd the *Turk*, I saw even to astonishment the agilities he perform'd, one was his walking bare foote, & taking hold by his toes onely, of a rope almost perpendicular & without so much as touching it with his hands: also dauncing blindfold on the high-roope: & with a boy of 12 yeares old, tyed to one of his feete about 20 foote beneath him dangling as he daunced, & yet moved as nimbly, as it had ben but a feather: Lastly he [stoode] on his head, upon the very top of a very high mast, daunced on a small roope that was very slack, & finally flew downe the perpendicular, with his head foreward on his breast, his legs & armes extended: with divers other activitics, to the admiration of all the Spectators."²³

In addition to the eight hawkers and city types Laroon named in his captions, the artist sketched many other living individuals without

²² Henry Morley, *Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair* (London, 1880), p. 280.

²³ John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E. S. de Beer, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), III, 197-198.

identifying them as such. The first owners of *The Cryes of London* must have taken special pleasure in thumbing through their prints to give names to the hawkers they recognized as real men and women. Happily, two such owners troubled to jot down in their personal copies the identities of the vendors they knew. The first was Samuel Pepys (1633–1703), diarist and Secretary to the Admiralty; the second was an anonymous commentator whose volume was seen by George Steevens (1736–1800), antiquarian and man of letters.²⁴ The annotated *Cryes* seen by Steevens apparently has been lost. But Pepys's volume passed into the hands of James Granger (1723–1776), who used it in his *Biographical History of England* to identify twenty-two of Laroon's criers as historical people. "I have described as many of them [Laroon's vendors] in this work," Granger wrote in his *Biographical History*, "as Mr. Secretary Pepys has taken into his collection. We are beholden to that gentleman for the names of several persons, which are written under the portraits."²⁵

Granger's identifications differ from one another in length, value, and believability. Some are a sentence long, others several paragraphs. Some simply record the family and given names of the criers; others offer considerable information about hawkers' lives. Of the London Quaker the biographer says only, "This woman was known by the name of 'Rachel of Covent-garden.' I have seen her portrait in one of Hemskirk's Quakers' meetings."²⁶ Granger identifies the London courtesan as a Mrs. Russel, about whom he says nothing at all biographical. Instead he launches into a harangue against prostitutes notable for its high moralistic tone and overheated rhetoric: "Oblivion is entailed on the obscene practices of these creatures, as well as rottenness on their bones. Their whole biography is contained in the six prints published by Mr. Hogarth.²⁷ *Few and evil* are the *days*, or, to speak with precision, the *nights* of harlots. These harpies in borrowed plumes are birds of darkness, and appear at the same time with bats and owls. They were dispersed through every quarter of

²⁴ Caulfield writes of this copy, "I have been informed by the late George Steevens, Esq. that he had seen a copy of Tempest's Cries of London, with many more of the names inserted than are generally known, among which he remembered to have seen the Squire of Alsatia, called Bully Dawson, notorious gambler of this time" (III, 259).

²⁵ Granger, *A Biographical History* (note 10), VI, 10.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, VI, 11.

²⁷ A reference to Hogarth's *A Harlot's Progress*.



The merry Milkmaid
La Femme au Lait
Allegro Giuocella

Maurice delin.

J. T. Kempster sculp.
Amstelredamum

23



*Colly Nolly Puffe
 Bonne Patisserie a vendre
 Tortes & Pasticci la vendere*

At. Lauer delin.

*F. Tenard sculp.
 Paris 1785*



The Squire of Alfatia
Badaux de Londres
Prouccie di Londra

W. G. ...

Tempus ...



London Courtizan
 La Putain de Londres
 Cortigiana di Londra

M. Laurin del.

J. Bonnet sculp.
 chez G. Cailleux



Any Old Iron take money for
 Qui a de Vieilles ferrailles a vendre
 Stracci Piume Ferrucci de vendere

M. Mason del. sculp.

277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300.



The famous Dutch Woman
 La fameuse Hollandoise Danseuse de Corde
 Françoise Dorra Thelisco

M. sur. en. delin.

*P. Temp. et. exc.
 Cum. Privilegio*

63



The famous Dutch Woman
La fameuse Hollandoise
Famisa donna Tedesca

Mason delin.

*Printed at the
Lion Press*



CLARK the English Posture Master
 Le Maître des Postures Anglois
 Postura de Mistracini Inglesi

Magnus delin.

*J. Timpner sculp.
 Guss. P. de. 1848*



The London Begger
Le Gueux de Londres
La povera di Londra

Maurice Delisle

J. T. Smith del.
Wm. Woodcut sculp.



Oliver C. Porter
Un insense pour la Religion
Homme imparfait & la Religion

Mauron delins

*F. Tempore ecci
 Cant. Invidio.*



A Nonconformist Minister
Le Ministre Nonconformiste
Ministre e Sacerdote Gloriosa

Allauro delint.

*L'Empereur
Cum Privilegio.*



Frater Mendicans

Maurice delin.

J. Tappan sculp.

the town; but Moorfields, Whetstone's-park, Lukener's-lane, and Dog and Bitchyard, were their capital seraglios."²⁸

Of Frater Mendicans Granger says, "This plump Franciscan went begging about the streets in the reign of James."²⁹ The boyish, stereotypically fat monk, who seems to be selling indulgences, is not a Franciscan; his habit is generic and does not identify him as a member of any particular order. Friars did not roam the streets of London in their cowls and tunics in the seventeenth century. Anti-Catholic sentiment and legislation prevented such public appearances, though a Benedictine monk named Father Corker was reputed to have had an audience in his religious habit with James II in July 1688.³⁰

By far the most intriguing of Granger's biographies is his finding on the nonconformist minister, one of Laroon's most complicated likenesses. The minister, Granger reveals, was actually a portrait of Laroon's employer, Pearce Tempest, *The Cryes's* first publisher. "There are very few who knew, or even supposed," Granger wrote, "that this was the portrait of Tempest. A man, whose face is familiar to us, may easily escape us unknown in masquerade."³¹ In addition to being a likeness of Tempest, the portrait is a popular allegory of sincerity or honesty, one of a number of such portraits in which criers personify virtues and vices. The man argues his general piety by his religious calling and priestly dress with its sacerdotal bands. He proclaims his forthrightness and sincerity (a particular obsession with nonconformists) by ostentatiously covering his heart with his hand as if to swear upon an oath, "I am a man of truth and honesty."

But is the dapper fellow's hand really on his heart? Definitely not. The dissenter gestures with his wrong hand; his left palm, not his right, rests on his breast.³² The substitution of the left hand for the right in the taking of an oath was a sign that a person was about to tell a lie. In William Hogarth's "Industrious 'Prentice Alderman of London, the Idle One Brought before him and Impeach'd by his Accomplice," the rogue about to perjure himself places his left hand

²⁸ Granger, *A Biographical History* (note 10), VI, 21.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, VI, 110.

³⁰ Narcissus Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs*, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1857), I, 43.

³¹ Granger, *A Biographical History* (note 10), VI, 147.

³² I am indebted to Howard Weinbrot of the University of Wisconsin (Madison) who brought this detail to my attention.

on the Bible while the clerk administering the oath takes a bribe not to notice the substitution.³³ The nonconformist minister's gesture is bogus, and he himself, the very opposite of what he seems, personifies hypocrisy. The worldly cut of his coat with its fashionably low pockets and its ornamental silk handkerchief confirms his pharisaic character. So do his elegant, gauntlet gloves, the kind usually perfumed with civet, cloves, nutmeg, or cinnamon.³⁴ But his true nature reveals itself most nakedly in his half-averted face with its shifty eyes turning away to avoid our scrutiny. Was Laroon attacking Tempest or nonconformity? Or both? And what were the artist's motives? Was Tempest a co-conspirator or a victim? If he was a victim, did he notice the satire before *The Cryes of London* went to press or only afterwards? Or did the assault, if such it was, pass him by entirely? Unfortunately, we have no answers to these questions beyond our own speculations, though we do know that publishers did not pay generous wages to artists and engravers in 1687.

The nonconformist minister, the begging friar, and a handful of Laroon's other characters are not street criers in any ordinary sense of that term. Rather they are city types. The number of characters who are types rather than true street vendors stands at sixteen or seventeen, depending on whether the London beggar is counted as a crier or a type. These folk may be classified into three groups. The first group is composed of petty criminals and includes the London courtesan, Madam Creswell, the courtesan's bawd, the Squire of Alsatia, a con artist and gambler, and the London beggar, also a con artist, since she probably rented her ragged children to play upon

³³ Since this image and all others in *The Cryes* were drawn from sketches which would have been reversed when converted into prints, it is possible that the nonconformist's gesture is not ironic but erroneous and that Laroon (or the engraver who served him) was sloppy here. Such an explanation, while it does have a commonsensical appeal, does not withstand scrutiny, however. In no other case has Laroon or his professional engraver made this kind of error. Indeed, artist and engraver appear to have been very careful on precisely this point. "The merry Fiddler" (24) and "Merry Andrew on the Stage" (63) depict musicians holding the bows to their instruments in their right hands, for example. Beyond that, Laroon has sandwiched the nonconformist minister between a Catholic friar and Oliver Cromwell's porter in a group of religious fanatics which seventeenth-century audiences generally regarded as consummate rogues and charlatans.

³⁴ C. Willett Cunnington and Phillis Cunnington, *Handbook of English Costume in the Seventeenth Century* (Boston: Plays, 1972), pp. 74-76.

the feelings of the people she supplicated.³⁵ The second group of characters comprises popular entertainers of the kind haunting Bartholomew Fair. They are Merry Andrew, Merry Andrew on the stage, the famous Dutch rope dancer, the mountebank, and Clark the contortionist. The third group is composed of religious fanatics, most of whom peddled their mad piety about London's streets. They are the man and woman Quakers, Oliver Cromwell's porter, the nonconformist divine, and the begging friar.

Laroon was the first artist to include city types such as the friar and the nonconformist priest in suites of London hawkers. From the time of the Jacobean broadsheets to the publication of *The Cryes* in 1687, the face of England's capital city had changed, its population mushrooming from about a hundred thousand souls to almost twice that number.³⁶ Concerned to give his ensemble a topical flavor and deepen its local color, Laroon reflected London's newly unfolding urbanity in some of its gaudier *arrivistes*. The racy characters appearing in *The Cryes* for the first time mirrored not simply the presence of more people but different kinds of people. As Tom Brown expressed this new phenomenon in *Amusements, Serious and Comical*: "London is a world by itself; we daily discover in it more new countries and surprising singularities than in all the universe besides. There are among the Londoners so many nations differing in manners, customs, and religions, that the inhabitants themselves don't know a quarter of 'em."³⁷ The milkmaid now shared the street with folk carrying on new and unusual "trades" — the mountebank, the beggar, the Merry Andrew, the priest — and even with people from different countries — the Savoyard from France, the "Spanish" Don, and the Dutch rope dancer.³⁸ Within this new diversity, there was

³⁵ Of the London beggar, Caulfield says, "Among her other deceptions, it would not be surprising (or unprecedented, in the annals of beggary) if she had stolen or hired the children she dragged about with her, to extort charity; as this has been practiced with success by vagrant females, who never had a child of their own" (III, 279).

³⁶ *An Encyclopaedia of London*, ed. William Kent, rev. ed. Godfrey Thompson (London: Dent, 1970), p. 402.

³⁷ Tom Brown, *Amusements Serious and Comical Calculated for the Meridian of London* (1700; rpt. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1927), p. 10.

³⁸ The Savoyard's cry is "Oh Rare Shoe" (i.e. Oh Rare Show) to indicate that the man's pronunciation is foreign. The "Spanish" Don may be a true Spaniard doing business in London or an English fop back from the continent dressed in the latest Spanish mode. Most likely he is a con artist wearing a Spanish disguise.

deeper diversity yet. The streets were thronged not just with one new kind of religious fanatic, but with many: Quakers, Puritans, nonconformists, and maybe even Roman Catholic friars in mufti.

The city types debuting in Laroon's ensemble also revealed a dark side to the new face of London. The courtesan, Mrs. Creswell, and the Squire of Alsatia belonged to an underworld well-known through the lurid accounts of Ned Ward's *London Spy* (1698-1700) and the lighter, satirical narratives of Brown's *Amusements, Serious and Comical*. In the mountebank, the beggar, and others of their ilk, Laroon exposed the city's rogues with their "cozenages" and showed how difficult it was becoming to tell the knave from the upright man or woman in seventeenth-century London. To all the world, the Squire of Alsatia looks like a fine gentleman. The only clue that he is not everything he seems lies in a single shoddy detail about his wardrobe. The thread unravelling from the elegant fringe of the glove he wears on his right hand warns us that this denizen of Alsatia (a sanctuary for criminals and a depressed "theater of sin" abolished in 1697) is a con artist, probably a card shark specializing in the fleecing of naive folk from the country.³⁹

In this brief analysis of Laroon's images, I do not wish to exaggerate the local and the topical at the expense of the universal and the representative nor to propose a part of his suite as the whole. Most of the artist's seventy-four figures are not city types but common street vendors who had been appearing over and over again in London Cries since the Jacobean period. In addition, most of his figures are not portraits of real people but lifelike evocations of seventeenth-century street hawkers. As a counterpoint to the portraits of living people and the prints of city types just examined, it may be instructive to conclude with a look at a more representative hawker in the image of the man crying "Any Old Iron take money for."

The ironmonger is unknown and unknowable. Unknown, he is an archetype of his trade, an anonymous cipher of an anonymous profession practiced by society's vagabonds, itinerants, and outcasts. Unknowable, the man stands in vivid contrast to the criers from real life whose names identify them in the captions beneath their likenesses. His is an anti-portrait, an iconoclastic image that turns

³⁹ J. T. Smith, *The Streets of London*, rev. edition, ed. Charles Mackay (London, 1861), p. 253.

away from limning by denying access to the focus of all likenesses and to the source of human identity, the face.

And yet this image, whose power lies precisely in its anonymity, has a mute eloquence. The life and character of the faceless man do emerge from the likeness. His tattered clothes and patched sack tell the tale of his grinding poverty. The chilling orthopedic device he wears speaks of a serious injury to his right leg. Because his right leg is as muscular and well-developed as his left, the deformity was not congenital. The compensatory droop of his right shoulder and the walking stick he carries show that the lesion occurred many years ago. The iron buyer probably suffers from an old fracture badly treated, causing a foreshortening of the limb. Is he an old soldier, wounded in the Third Dutch War (1672–1674), turned ironmonger upon his dismissal from the army or navy?⁴⁰

Laroon was the first artist to introduce deformed hawkers into suites of English criers. Previous artists did not picture the maimed, even though street trades were refuges for the deformed and crippled. Perhaps the craftsmen engraving the earliest London Cryes did not "see" cripples because they took them to be an aspect of the normal and part of the *comédie humaine*, a view that led Velasquez and other artists to include dwarfs in group portraits such as *Las Meninas*, showing them at ease with the Spanish royal family. Laroon, on the other hand, seems to have found them fascinating. After his *Cryes* featuring cripples, hunchbacks, and dwarfs, more and more handicapped people drifted into ensembles of hawkers. And in the early nineteenth century, maimed hawkers showed up in London Cryes with dramatic frequency, when Victorians defined vendors as different, marginal, even freakish, and prints of street criers took a voyeuristic turn.

⁴⁰ I am indebted to Dr. Lester S. King and Dr. Thomas R. Forbes (Yale University School of Medicine) for their generous and helpful responses to my inquiries about the ironmonger's medical condition.

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