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THE BEGGAR OPERA TRADITION

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CURITIBA

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To my mother and father.

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RESUMO

Este estudo examina a peça The Beggar's Opera de John Gay, como sendo o início de uma nova tradição no Drama Inglês - a ópera do mendigo.

A partir da análise de certos elementos seminais, tais quais, entre outros, a sátira social e a paródia de formas teatrais precedentes, foi possível estabelecer que The Beggar's Opera proporcionou o surgimento de uma série de óperas do mendigo como The Threepenny Opera, de Bertolt Brecht, Frank V, de Friedrich Dürrenmatt e a Ópera do Malandro, de Chico Buarque de Hollanda.

Essas peças também são analisadas neste estudo, com a intenção de mostrar como os elementos recorrentes encontrados em The Beggar's Opera são retrabalhados em cada peça, estabelecendo, assim, a fortuna da tradição da ópera do mendigo no Século Vinte.

Na Introdução, começamos por definir os termos paródia e sátira, inerentes à dualidade incongruente do próprio título - The Beggar's Opera - como sendo o ponto de enfoque da discussão da tradição. Continuando, procuramos esclarecer a controvérsia em torno de John Gay como o criador do gênero ópera-balada, através de uma discussão envolvendo uma revisão crítica, assim como a definição do gênero.

Finalmente, tendo definido o que se entende por ópera do mendigo, e tendo estabelecido as peças que compreendem o corpo desta tradição, propomos sua linha de desenvolvimento nos seguintes termos: tendo retrabalhado The Beggar's Opera, enquadrando-a dentro de seu conceito épico de teatro, Bertolt Brecht coloca sua The Threepenny Opera como uma nova linha da qual brotam a anti-brechtiana Frank V e a brechtiana Ópera do Malandro.

A Parte I - John Gay e The Beggar's Opera - trata dos aspectos históricos que conduzem à composição da The Beggar's Opera e da análise textual na qual são colocados os elementos que constituem a base da tradição da opera do mendigo.

A Parte II - Brecht e sua Progenia - é composta da análise de três peças. A análise da The Threepenny Opera como sendo a interpretação épica da The Beggar's Opera, com ênfase em suas alterações em relação à peça de Gay, colocando-a, assim, como uma segunda linha na tradição. É seguida das análises de Frank V e da Ópera do Malandro, cada uma enfatizando seus aspectos anti-brechtianos e brechtianos, respectivamente.

ABSTRACT

This study examines John Gay's The Beggar's Opera as the initiator of a new tradition in English drama - the beggar opera.

From the analysis of certain seminal elements, such as social satire and parody of previous theatrical forms, among others, it has been possible to establish that The Beggar's Opera has given rise to a series of beggar operas, such as Bertolt Brecht's The Threepenny Opera, Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Frank V, and Chico Buarque de Hollanda's Ópera do Malandro.

These plays are also analysed in this study in an attempt to show how the recurrence of the elements found in The Beggar's Opera are reworked in each play, thus establishing the fortune of the beggar opera tradition in the Twentieth Century.

In the Introduction we start by defining the terms parody and satire, inherent in the incongruous duality present in the very title - The Beggar's Opera - as the focus of the discussion of the beggar opera tradition. We go on, then to clear up the controversy around John Gay as the creator of the genre ballad opera, through a discussion encompassing a critical review and the definition of the genre, as well. Finally, having defined what is understood by beggar opera and having established the plays comprising the corpus of the beggar opera tradition, we propose the line of development of the tradition in the following terms: having reworked The Beggar's Opera to fit his epic concept of theatre, Bertolt Brecht has placed his The Threepenny Opera as a new source from which stem the anti-Brechtian Frank V, and the Brechtian Ópera do Malandro.

Part I - John Gay and The Beggar's Opera - deals with the historical aspects leading to the writing of The Beggar's

Opera, and with the textual analysis of the play, in which the basic elements constituting the foundation of the beggar opera tradition are uncovered.

Part II - Brecht and his Progeny - is comprised of the analysis of three plays. The analysis of The Threepenny Opera, as the epic interpretation of The Beggar's Opera, with emphasis on its changes in relation to Gay's play, thus placing it as a second source in the tradition. This is followed by the analysis of both Frank V and the Ópera do Malandro, each emphasizing its anti-Brechtian and Brechtian characteristics, respectively.

INTRODUCTION

Good writing is not done unless there are serious forces at work; and it is not permanent unless it works for readers with opinions different from the author's.

William Empson

In writing The Beggar's Opera , besides having created a new theatrical genre, the ballad opera, John Gay also initiated a new dramatic tradition - the beggar opera.

This opening statement encompasses the main points of interest to be discussed in this study and it also provides the guidelines for its structural organization.

Among the points of interest are the fact that the very title of the play suggests the theoretical approach to the analysis of the play and the tradition it originates; the controversy on whether or not John Gay is indeed the creator of a new genre; the definition of the genre ballad opera and, by implication, of other useful operatic and dramatic terms and the way The Beggar's Opera fits into this terminology; and, finally, the discussion of the beggar opera tradition *per se*. It is convenient at this point to add that this study only partially follows the fortune of the beggar opera tradition in its temporal and spatial transformations ranging as widely as the Eighteenth Century London to the Twentieth Century Brazil.

As for the structural organization of the study, the discussion of the points described above will obey the order in which they are presented.

The breaking down of the opening statement into its constitutive elements takes us initially to the title The Beggar's Opera, the point of departure for the study of the beggar opera tradition, for three fundamental reasons.

First, for the fact that this play constitutes the landmark and origin of a tradition which is taken up by other playwrights who go on employing the same duality in their plays; second, because The Beggar's Opera is indeed a type of opera; and third, because the title of the play becomes

seminal in this study of the beggar opera tradition since the combination of the terms *beggar* and *opera* point simultaneously at the play's parodic and other formal aspects, as well as at its satiric content and other related aspects.¹ Thus the incongruous duality inherent in the title of the play provides us with the device through which we can build up the theoretical basis to support the discussions related to the creation of the new genre, and the questions involving both the establishing and the following up of the new dramatic tradition.

Being that the discussions are centered around the satiric and the parodic components of the genre, we will, at this point, define the terms parody and satire in their main elements and in the way they will be employed throughout this study.

For purposes of the study of the beggar opera tradition, as a tradition, we have chosen to relate the four plays here discussed in terms of their parody. First, parody understood as general parody, as a "literary work perceived by the reader as juxtaposing preformed language material with other linguistic or literary material in an incongruous manner in a new context to produce a comic effect".²

Although this definition is basically formulated in terms of literature, it can be extrapolated to explain the same process within other forms of expression, as is the specific case of the ballad opera in relation to the *opera seria*. Parody defined as such "is not just a specific technique but the mode of the work itself".³ It becomes a form of *staire*, a form of literary criticism within fiction, a metafictional device.⁴

This touches on the second aspect of parody. That of parody in which it "imitates art and reveals something about its basic character (....) the concern of the art for itself",⁵ revealing its aesthetic character under the word *form*.

On a third level, parody is also employed here in its more specific usage, that of a rhetorical device, as a comic quotation in order to "ridicule the work of its target"⁶ - as is the case of some specific scenes in The Beggar's Opera in relation to the Italian opera - in which Gay imitates the operatic formal conventions as close as possible, in order to

satirize. In this sense, parody becomes a satirical weapon, "perhaps the most effective of all satirical devices".⁷

By satire, it is understood the satirist's "practical intention of working upon the mind of the reader or spectator so as to influence his attitudes and beliefs, and ultimately, it may be, his actions"⁸, not a specific form, but rather a quality which infuses a special kind of character to the work. Even though not included in the above definition, the two basic components of satire are criticism and humor in their various degrees from censure to *vituperatio*, and from wit to gallow's humor.⁹

The comic present in parody and satire also plays an important part in the development of the beggar opera tradition, as pointed out throughout the study.

Having presented the importance of the title in its relation to the line of work adopted, the next step is to focus on the controversy surrounding the affirmation that Gay created a new genre in writing his own original ballad opera.

If on one hand some critics are not reluctant in attributing to Gay the creation of a totally new genre, others very clearly deny him this merit, instead, giving him credit and praising him only as a very talented innovator.

On citing the critics who favor Gay as the creator of a new genre, we can observe a crescendo, a progression from what almost seems a casual affirmation under a dictionary entry such as George MARTIN's - who, after giving his definition of ballad opera, speaks of The Beggar's Opera in the following terms: "the most famous was the first: John Gay's The Beggar's Opera."¹⁰

Other critics are more emphatic in their affirmations such as Eric Walter WHITE, who commenting that "(....) The Beggar's Opera exploded on the London theatrical scene of 1728 with all the force of an original work in a novel form (....)".¹¹ He calls our attention to the novelty and originality of a theatrical form without relating it to any specific genre, thus relegating the question of a generic specification to a secondary level, in order to stress Gay's originality and creative talent.

Also Peter Elfed LEWIS, although touching upon the

generic affiliation of the ballad opera to the opera, is still emphatic about the ballad opera as a new form. As stated in the introduction to his edition of The Beggar's Opera, LEWIS considers that, again, at the time it was written (1728), Gay's opera, on account of its popular tunes and low subject matter, constituted a "radically new departure in opera"¹² and furthermore, that the English opera had been revitalized by Gay's "devising of the new form of the ballad opera".¹³

Even more emphatic is William Eben SCHULTZ, who at various points of his famous and widely adopted source book praises Gay as being the founder of not only a new theatrical genre by calling The Beggar's Opera the "first ballad opera"¹⁴ and the "first work of its kind in the history of English drama",¹⁵ but also of a "school" with a very broad scope of influence. Here he is quoted in full for the effect of his enthusiasm:

(....) Gay is not merely a writer of comic opera. He is, of course, the founder of a school of ballad opera, which flourished widely after 1728 and led ultimately to Sheridan, and Gilbert and Sullivan; and anticipates in his features of drill and dance some of the spectacular effects of modern musical comedy.¹⁶

Just as there are great and distinguished sources of support to the idea of Gay as the creator of the genre ballad opera, there is also, on the other hand, distinguished scholars who contend that Gay should be considered an innovator instead of a creator.

An example of such a statement is V.J. GUERINOT's and R.D. JILG's argument that Gay's ballad opera was anticipated in its form by Buckingham's The Rehearsal in the use of broadside ballads,¹⁷ and by the French *comedies en vaudeville* in which "dialogue in prose became generously interspersed with lyrics set to well-known tunes - exactly the form of ballad opera (....)".¹⁸ GUERINOT and JILG become even more categorical on this question of originality when, commenting JOHNSON's statement that Gay is "the author of a new species of composition (....). We owe to Gay the Ballad Opera"¹⁹, they

argue that, however, Gay, not unlike other great artists is a creator only in the sense that he uses what is available in order to produce something new.²⁰

Thus, for the time being, or until we can clear this controversy, the term creator of the ballad opera implied by MARTIN, WHITE and LEWIS and confirmed by SCHULTZ will be maintained, for even if it is not entirely accurate, it does not represent a total misuse.

This question will hopefully be cleared further along as we reach a conclusion at the end of the following exposition, where we trace the origins of the ballad opera as well as try to establish its constitutive elements. Then, the discussion of the controversy creator/innovator will become more meaningful.

This has brought us to the second point of interest of our opening statement, the discussion and definition of the ballad opera as a genre in which to fit The Beggar's Opera, for John Gay's opera, albeit its title, is not an opera in the proper sense of the word.

Even in this respect, the terminology employed by some critics does not always coincide. While E.W. WHITE calls Gay's play an opera and compares it to the English dramatic opera as well as to the Italian opera in its conventions²¹ on one page, on the following he calls it a "comedy with ballads".²² The same play is called by R. DONNINGTON a "typical musical comedy",²³ whereas by GUERINOT and JILG, a ballad opera.²⁴

Before we move on to a definition of the ballad opera it may be useful to start by some considerations on the opera and the various other forms produced by the combination of music and text. As we all know, music, even if in different measures and character, has always been present in theatrical manifestations, from the Greek drama to the medieval religious representations. From the late Fifteenth Century to the end of the Sixteenth, though, such musical participation became increasingly richer and more important.²⁵

In 1600, Firenze, Italy, the first *opera in musica* (work in music) was performed, an event which has been considered as the birth of the opera as a genre,²⁶ even though the opera had had its forerunners in medieval representations.

To the genre we now simply know as opera, there have always been many synonyms, the exact meaning of which depend upon the varying historical contexts. What interests us though, for the moment, are its basic characteristics, which differentiate this genre from the other forms of theatre.

Opera is in English the abbreviation of the Italian phrase *opera in musica*. "It is a theatrical form consisting of a dramatic text (*libretto*) combined with music, usually singing with instrumental accompaniment".²⁷ However, in order to clarify our terminology, this general definition does not suffice, for being too broad in scope, it includes almost all the theatrical forms in which the combination music/word is present. It is necessary to add those basic traits that differentiate the opera from the other theatrical forms: that "its principals sing rather than speak their lines"²⁸, and that music constitutes one of its fundamental elements.²⁹

These characteristics also pinpoint the basic distinction between the *opera seria* (serious opera) and its counterpart the *opera buffa* (comic opera), in which music and spoken dialogue have the same importance, and where the spoken dialogue is interspersed with arias, comic songs, duets, trios, choruses and elaborate finales".³⁰

Due to the nature of the tradition studied here and the special emphasis given to John Gay's The Beggar's Opera, it matters to us the contraposition of the two types of opera mentioned above not only in terms of the distinction music/spoken dialogue, but also in light of some of their other distinctive features.

By *opera seria*, we understand the classic Italian style of opera in which the plot (of little importance) usually consists of historical or mythological themes, where a series of arias are linked tenuously by recitative (passages to advance the plot), which was considered by the audience as moments for relaxation.³¹

The *opera buffa*, born from the custom of introducing two comic interludes between the three customary acts of the *opera seria* is a gayer and lighter form of entertainment. In opposition to the historical or mythological character of the serious opera, it portrays the man of the street (workers,

artisans, businessmen, etc.). The "sumptuous palaces and temples" are replaced by the humble dwellings of the poor; the "solemn declamation" gives way to a vivid and high spirited dialogue; and its actual production becomes very modest".³²

Keeping in mind these definitions and their distinctions, we come back to the ballad opera, and from the elements in the definition of comic opera to the terms which define the ballad opera, we will not have much difficulty in establishing the close relationship between the two types of opera.

In searching for a definition of ballad opera, we have found that in many cases, the title The Beggar's Opera has become synonym with the definition of the ballad opera, and that some music reference books define one for the other. As an instance, the *Larousse Encyclopedia of Music*³³ offers as its definition of ballad opera an entry totally devoted to the description of Gay's play, without any attempt at describing what really constitutes the ballad opera as a genre.

Therefore, for a better understanding of what the English ballad opera really is as a genre, we should adopt a less biased definition, one broad enough to encompass more than just one work.

This broader and more encompassing definition will again provide us with a guideline with which to structure the following discussion. As it has been done previously, we will break this definition down into its main and more revealing elements, in order to comment on them and thus set up a theoretical framework against which to situate John Gay's play as an *opera*.

According to Oscar THOMPSON, ballad opera is a kind of stage entertainment more closely related to comic opera than serious opera; usually produced at the Haymarket or the theatre at Lincoln's Inn Fields, very popular in England during the Eighteenth Century; with spoken dialogue, ballad tunes and also familiar music, in which the lyrics often fitted existing music.³⁴

By using the expression "stage entertainment", THOMPSON highlights a very important characteristic of the ballad opera. It points to its theatricality, to its dramatic nature, as

opposed to the musical nature of serious opera, thus establishing closer ties between the ballad opera and the comic opera. However, by "closely related" to comic opera, we must not understand *descending from* in any direct way, for even though the ballad opera shares with the comic opera the characteristics previously described, it also receives influences from forms reminiscent of the *commedia dell'arte* tradition such as the theatrical masques and pantomimes, in what they have of comic, in ways of dance, recitative and song, and even a little dialogue.³⁵

As THOMPSON mentions the fact that the ballad opera became popular in the Eighteenth Century, and that these were performed at such places as the Haymarket and Lincoln's Inn Fields, especially after having opposed this sort of spectacle to the serious opera, we immediately have to focus our attention on an interesting fact. Although the serious Italian opera was very popular not only in England but all over Europe in the Eighteenth Century, it was fashionable among the higher classes (royalty, nobility, and aristocracy). Nevertheless, this kind of opera had its "poor relations"³⁶ in the other forms of comic opera such as the musical farce and the ballad opera, popular with the lower classes and thus performed at such places as the Haymarket or Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Finally, as THOMPSON mentions the musical aspects, we could add that usually, in the ballad opera-like forms of musicated entertainment that preceded The Beggar's Opera, "practically the whole action was carried on by spoken dialogue, and the music confined almost entirely to the setting of incidental lyrics and various concerted numbers".³⁷

In the above quotation, it is very useful and of great relevance to highlight the incidental character of the music and lyrics in the comic opera forms, for when we speak of John Gay as being the creator of the ballad opera, it is exactly this very point that marks the nature of his innovation, and where the controversy around it can be dissipated.

After some necessary digressions, we have finally reached the point from which to tackle the controversial question of whether or not to consider Gay as the creator of the genre

ballad opera.

In light of all that has been presented so far, it is not too difficult to conclude that by January 29, 1728, the date of The Beggar's Opera's first performance at the Royal Theatre at Lincoln's Inn Fields in London, various forms of musicodramatic theatre had been in existence. Just to stay historically close to The Beggar's Opera we could mention the English dramatic opera, introduced by Purcell in the late Seventeenth Century; the famous *opera seria* (Italian style) as we have already described it and which actually inundated England in the first decades of the Eighteenth Century; and concurrently, the less serious forms, the comic opera, as well as other forms of musical entertainment, such as the musical farces, the *burlettos*, and, of course, the ballad opera, all of lower social prestige.

Indeed, as we have seen, the ballad opera existed prior to The Beggar's Opera, as a type of musical play interspersed by well-known tunes. In that sense, we have to agree with GUERINOT's and JILG's argument presented previously, stating that Gay is a creator only insofar as he employed what was lying at hand. But we have to remember that in these ballad operas the tunes were merely incidental music, and the songs had nothing or little to do with the action. They were sheer musical entertainment, moments of relief within the action.

When John Gay sets out to write The Beggar's Opera, which has come to be known as his best work and also a masterpiece in this genre, in order to convey its biting satire, he chooses to parody the fashionable Italian opera - a form of entertainment much to the taste of the higher social classes he wishes to attack - through the employment of a lower, second-rate genre, the ballad opera.

As a parody of the Italian opera, The Beggar's Opera can be situated as to fit the classical definition of parody, as a direct attack in order to undermine it.

As an innovation of the genre, The Beggar's Opera is a combination of old pre-existing forms into a new one, in which John Gay gives the old type of ballad opera a totally new formal dimension, and furthermore, a totally new socio-

political significance.

It has been pointed out by Sven ARMENS that, as a pastoral poet, Gay shows great talent in revitalizing the genre³⁸ and that he is most successful as he distorts the genre for his own purposes.³⁹

In view of the meaningful changes and innovations, and above all the success of The Beggar's Opera, as a ballad opera, we certainly can extend ARMENS' observation of what Gay does to the pastoral to the realm of the ballad opera as well.

The nature of Gay's distortion of the genre consists in his taking well-known music such as English, Irish, Scottish ballads, plus familiar music by such composers as Purcell, Handel and others, substituting his own new lyrics for the original ones. Not only that, he makes this music, new lyrics and all, and integrated whole with the action of the play.

Thus, even if the first innovation of writing his own lyrics with much talent were not enough, the second, the integration of music and action would have been enough to place him in the hall of the creators, for even *first-rate* musicated genres such as the Italian *opera seria* did not have such a degree of integration between music and plot - if we go back to its definition - let alone the *lesser* genres.

Thus we have to agree with SCHULTZ when he states that The Beggar's Opera "taught England the value of ballad music for stage use; (...) it transferred ballad singing from the streets to the theatre and gave it a new literary, as well as a dramatic significance".⁴⁰

Taking into account the relevance of this type of innovation, we have, up to a certain extent, to share SCHULTZ's enthusiasm and place Gay's The Beggar's Opera as a distant forerunner of the form of the musical comedy of today, the kind so successfully performed on Broadway.⁴¹

Aside this new formal dimension, Gay also gave the ballad opera, and by extension, the comic genre at that particular historical moment, a new significance. By choosing to work with a more or less obscure and forgotten genre of the comic tradition, he accomplishes a twofold political feat, in fact very congruent with his satirical purpose.

On one hand, he redeems a national and markedly popular form (to the taste of the masses), for according to SCHULTZ, at the time THE BEGGAR'S OPERA was written, the Italian style of opera with its affectation, ornamentation and highcost production "had begun to destroy among certain classes high, all taste for native balladry and song".⁴²

On the other hand, Gay elevates the status of the comic traditionally relegated to a secondary level - not only in the operatic world where we have the debased position of the *opera buffa* in relation to the *opera seria*, as mere *intermezzos*, as between-act entertainment, but in most fields of human activity - and in this particular case, of the low ballad opera in opposition to the noble Italian opera.

While the redemption of a popular national form constitutes a more obviously political attitude, the valuation and elevation of a debased genre to the level of a primary one represents a brave and more radically political act, in the sense that Gay is placing himself among those writers who have gone against a powerful ideology prevalent in Western thought, which favors the serious forms, establishing them as the *official* way of expressing the *scientific*, the *mature* and the *responsible*, while antagonizing the comic as "inconsequent, transitory and irrelevant".⁴³ In this, once again we can consider Gay as more than an innovator and as a predecessor, in attitude, of the overwhelming tendency of the Twentieth Century theatre, especially the Post-War, when the privileged position of the serious starts to shift towards the comic, the ridiculous, and even the grotesque.

Summing up, if we cannot in clearcut terms entirely dissipate the controversy originated by the scholarly discussion on whether or not Gay created the genre ballad opera, we can at least illuminate it by conceding to Gay the privilege of being called the creator of the ballad opera in the sense that he brought to light a genre that existed marginally, in literary obscurity (no ballad opera prior to The Beggar's Opera has been named or mentioned by scholars) and placed it among the primary genres. A reiteration of this resides in the fact that The Beggar's Opera has initiated a

dramatic tradition which has reached three of the continents of the world. Taken up by writers such as Bertolt Brecht (1928), Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1956) and Dario F6 (1981)⁴⁴ in Europe and Chico Buarque de Hollanda (1978) in Brazil, it has travelled as far as Bengal, India (1969)⁴⁵. These playwrights have construed their plays not only as ballad operas, but also as beggar operas.

This brings us to the definition of what is broadly understood by beggar opera, and also to the delimitation of this supposedly vast material into the definite corpus comprised by the plays upon which this study is developed.

Generally speaking, as a result of readings and reflexions of a theoretical nature, based upon some of the existing literature on this subject, by beggar opera we understand a specific type of play resulting from the combination of a musical play originally intended for the theatre - much in the same fashion of Gay's ballad opera - having an underworld thematic as the setting for its action, as well as the way of life of its characters, functioning as an entire microcosm.

As a microcosm, this underworld of swarming beggary goes beyond the mere depiction of the conflict between rich and poor to encompass and expose a broader environment of corruption and generalized evil.⁴⁶

In this context, the term beggar acquires a very special significance. From its literal meaning as one who, impoverished, asks for charity, the term suffers transformations throughout the beggar opera tradition, coming to mean almost its opposite.

In the beginning of the tradition, in The Beggar's Opera the term initially refers to the state of poverty of the man who appears on stage in the Introduction, as an actual beggar, fitting its literal meaning. Soon, the term acquires a more symbolic function as the beggar comes to mean the state of poetry (art) within a certain context. As an adjective of opera it still denotes the poverty of the ballad opera in comparison with the richness of the Italian opera.

Within the Beggar's opera itself, the term beggar acquires a second meaning, that of *rogue* or *scoundrel*, since

the play depicts a low-class criminal underworld - as a corrupt marginal one, still in a beggarly position when paralleled with the aristocratic society.

In the The Threepenny Opera, the term beggar shifts to another level of significance. The beggars are real characters and are depicted as the victims of the capitalist and bourgeois exploitation, as a class. As such, at yet another level, they come to represent all the miseries of the world, resulting from this class division.

In the Opera do Malandro the term beggar is substituted for the term *malandro*, as in Gay, meaning a rogue or a scoundrel. The term being applied at first, in a Brechtian way, to depict the oppressed, the victim of a system, as the criminal as the marginal. Later, it comes to signify the *official* criminal. Thus, the actual *malandros*, the equivalent of the beggar becomes the job-holder, while the people in power are described as the *malandros*.

Granted that the term beggar, even if it acquires different connotations, it initially describes the marginal, from the very beginning implicit in the redemption of a marginal genre (ballad opera) to go on to encompass the criticism of society through a marginal perspective, through the eyes of the victimized outcast.

In Frank V, the term beggar reappears but, although keeping its literal meaning of impoverished, it loses its status of victim, coming, on the contrary, to symbolize the free person, the only condition in which man can exercise his freedom of choice free from material necessity. Within the tradition this concept of beggar takes its condition of outcast to its limit, since in this play depicting the world of millionaires, there are no beggars as such. In Frank V, the beggar state is an ideal to be achieved but which is never reached or fulfilled in the play. At another level, the idea of the millionaire substituting the term beggar, in Frank V becomes the theatrical mask behind which hides the rogue, in a world of totally institutionalized corruption.

By beggar opera tradition we understand a definite corpus comprised of four plays including John Gay's The Beggar's Opera.

plus the two plays based on Gay's text - Bertolt Brecht's The Threepenny Opera and Chico Buarque de Hollanda's Opera do Malandro - and a fourth play, Frank V, by Friedrich Dürrenmatt.

It is important to note that it is on account of Brecht's retaking of The Beggar's Opera that the beggar opera tradition takes on a new impulse and is propelled in time. It is Brecht's update of Gay's play that brings it into the Twentieth Century, in a totally new light, giving it a new importance and structure.

Brecht's polemic and distinctive epic imprint generated, on one hand, a series of Brechtian operas such as Dario FÓ's, the Bengali version, and Chico Buarque's in which the plays follow The Threepenny Opera's epic formula very closely. On the other hand, it has generated what we could call an anti-Brechtian play such as Frank V.

Dürrenmatt thus creates another tendency in the tradition, which eventhough epic, is different from Brecht's epic theatre in purpose as well as in form. Although not directly based on Gay's work either, Frank V has also been included in the tradition - even if at first glance it might seem paradoxical. As the subtitle of the play itself suggests, Frank V was originally subtitled, *opera of a private bank*.⁴⁷ already fulfilling one of the requisites of the tradition by sharing with the other plays the same structural characteristics of the ballad opera. In addition, it also shares their satiric intent, accomplished through the use of the thematic of the underworld as a microcosm implicit in the term beggar, even if by a total inversion, becoming, as a millionaire's opera, a parody of the beggar operas.

On the other hand, plays such as Dario FÓ's opera and the Bengali version which could be included in this study once they fit exactly within the category established by the elements of the beggar opera tradition have, nevertheless, been excluded for good reasons. It is not the purpose of this study to trace the complete fortune of the beggar opera tradition throughout the centuries and throughout the world. Less presumptuously, its aim is to show how Gay's typically English innovation

having been reworked by Brecht has become a tradition, which even by having taken other directions has achieved universality. More specifically, this study discusses Brecht's innovations in relation to Gay and the two branches stemming from The Threepenny Opera represented by the anti-Brechtian direction taken by Dürrenmatt and the Brechtian direction followed by Chico Buarque.

The choice of analysing Chico Buarque's play to represent the Brechtian influence and not any other - F6's for one - represents a definite purpose of this study in highlighting the wide international fortune of the beggar opera tradition with its reverberations in the South American continent. It specifically wishes to bring forth the Brazilian treatment of the tradition and the way Chico Buarque's innovations contribute to its development.

Added to the analysis of the plays in their seminal elements of parody and satire establishing their synchrony, other elements in common such as the use of the mask, Pastoral, metatheatre, and songs, bring the plays together also in a diacronic movement, once these elements are discussed as to show an inner evolution in themselves. The recurrence of the elements established in The Beggar's Opera, reworked within the different contexts of the other plays, result in original pieces in their own right. Thus, each play constitutes in itself, simultaneously, an element of change as well as an essential integrating link informing the tradition.

Nevertheless, on account of their being each one a constitutive part of the same tradition and of their being recreations of one another, they share the intertextuality of parody. Thus, as the parody and the parodied text become in a sense one text, the same can be said about these four plays. They are all linked together within a greater text, the beggar opera tradition.

In Part I, entitled JOHN GAY AND THE BEGGAR'S OPERA, John Gay's play is situated as the initiator of the beggar opera tradition, and all the basic elements which give rise to this tradition are foregrounded through an historical framework as well as through a textual analysis of the play, emphasizing its

satiric and parodic aspects.

The central focus of this and the other textual analyses of the plays is the hero, around which the other elements revolve. The reason being that through characterization we get close to the parody and the satire in the plays, and because it also constitutes the most important element of dramatic action. Within characterization itself, the role of the hero is stressed in order to show how, through the analysis of the hero, we unveil the basic view of man in the four plays, and thus become able to assess the satirical intent in a more encompassing way. The setting is also mentioned more often than the other elements on account of its important symbolic function as a microcosm.

As the touchstone of the beggar opera tradition, The Beggar's Opera (and consequently John Gay), has received a

greater emphasis, which accounts for the more detailed and consequently longer analysis of the play in relation to the others.

In Part II, entitled BRECHT AND HIS PROGENY, we present the verification of the way the elements found in Gay's play are reworked, first by Brecht - through a textual analysis of The Threepenny Opera - and later by Dürrenmatt and Chico Buarque de Hollanda, also through the textual analyses of Frank V and the Ópera do Malandro, respectively.

Through this division, the structure of the study fully reveals itself, accentuating the importance of each one of the plays in the development of the beggar opera tradition.

NOTES

¹ Just for purposes of clarification we could artificially separate the two terms as to create two monads: the term beggar, a word describing a specific social condition implying poverty on one end and richness and charity on the other, taken, for purposes of this study, to constitute the nucleus around which revolve the satiric elements; while the term opera, inasmuch as it describes a form of dramatic representation with very distinctive characteristics, taken to constitute the nucleus around which revolve the parodic aspects.

² ROSE, Margaret. Defining Parody. Southern Review, 1 (13):12, 1980

³ ROSE, p.5.

⁴ ROSE, p.8-9.

⁵ KIREMIDJIAN, G.D. The Aesthetics of Parody. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism. 2(28):233, Winter 1969.

⁶ ROSE, p.8.

⁷ KIREMIDJIAN, p.234.

⁸ SUTHERLAND, James. The Nature of Satire. In:———. English Satire. Cambridge, Cambridge University, 1962. p.5.

⁹ PETRO, Peter. Introduction. In:———. Modern Satire, four studies. Amsterdam, Mouton, 1982. p.8.

¹⁰ MARTIN, George. Glossary. In:———. The Opera Companion. New York, Dodd, Mead, 1961. p.162

¹¹ WHITE, E.W. The Emergence of Ballad Opera. In:———. A History of English Opera. Hampshire, Faber & Faber, 1983. p.174.

¹² LEWIS, P.E. Introduction. In: GAY, John. The Beggar's Opera. New York, Barnes & Noble, 1973. p.3.

¹³ LEWIS, p.5.

¹⁴ SHULTZ, W.E. Gay's Beggar's Opera Its Content, Its History and Influence. New Haven, Conn., Yale University, 1923. p.153

¹⁵ SHULTZ, p. 162.

¹⁶ SHULTZ, p. 281.

¹⁷ GUERINOT, J.V. & ILG, R.D. The Beggar's Opera. Hamden, Conn., Archon Books, 1976. p.3.

- ¹⁸ GUERINOT & GILG, p.4.
- ¹⁹ GUERINOT & GILG, p.3.
- ²⁰ GUERINOT & GILG, p.3.
- ²¹ WHITE, p.143.
- ²² WHITE, p.174.
- ²³ DONINGTON, Robert. The Opera. New York, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978, p.2.
- ²⁴ GUERINOT & GILG, p.1.
- ²⁵ DE' PAOLI, Domenico. L'Opera Italiana. Roma, Studium, 1955. p.7.
- ²⁶ DE' PAOLI, p.6.
- ²⁷ THE NEW Encyclopædia Britannica, Macropaedia. 15th ed. Chicago, University of Chicago, 1974. v.13, p.578.
- ²⁸ THE NEW Encyclopedia Britannica, Macropaedia, p.578.
- ²⁹ JACOBS, Arthur. Dicionário de Música. Lisboa, Dom Quixote, 1978. p.390.
- ³⁰ JACOBS, p.390.
- ³¹ HINDLEY, Geoffrey et alii, ed. The Larousse Encyclopedia of Music. London, Hamlyn, 1979. p.208.
- ³² HINDLEY et alii, p.210.
- ³³ HINDLEY et alii, p.217.
- ³⁴ THOMPSON, Oscar. Opera. In: THE INTERNATIONAL Cyclopaedia of Music and Musicians. New York, Dodd, Mead, 1946. p.1302-3.
- ³⁵ WHITE, p.172.
- ³⁶ WHITE, E.W. Poor Relations. In:———. The Rise of English Opera. London, John Lehman, 1951. p.65.
- ³⁷ WHITE, Poor Relations, p.65.
- ³⁸ ARMENS, Sven. Introduction. In:———. John Gay; social critic. New York, Columbia University, 1954. p.2.
- ³⁹ ARMENS, p.6.
- ⁴⁰ SHULTZ, p.162.
- ⁴¹ Although it is not within the scope of this study to develop any further research on this subject, it is important to recognize the popularity of this kind of

entertainment and the enormous power of its influence in other forms of art.

⁴²SCHULTZ, p.133.

⁴³NEVES, Luiz Felipe Baeta. A Ideologia da Seriedade. Revista de Cultura Vozes, Petrópolis, 1:36, 1974.

⁴⁴L'Opera dello Sghignazzo, Dario Fō's and Franca Rame's blending together of Gay's The Beggar's Opera and Brecht's The Threepenny Opera. FELACO, Vittorio. New teeth for an old Shark. In: FUEGI, John et alii. Beyond Brecht. Detroit, Wayne State University, 1983. p.67.

⁴⁵In the Bengali adaptation of Brecht's The Threepenny Opera entitled Tin Poyshar Pala. BHARUCHA, Rustom. The Bengali Brecht. In: FUEGI, John et alii., p.67.

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For purposes of this study, with this assertion we purposefully exclude plays such as Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion, for example, which although a satire of the lower classes, it was not a musical play (My Fair Lady) until much later. Furthermore, its thematic does not revolve around the criminal underworld.

⁴⁷Later, in a 1964 revision of the play, Dürrenmatt changed the subtitle to "comedy of a private bank," according to TIUSANEN, Timo. Freedom Among the Gangsters. In:———. Dürrenmatt; a study in plays, prose, theory. New Jersey, Princeton University, 1977. p.264

PART I

JOHN GAY AND THE BEGGAR'S OPERA:

1. Historical Aspects
2. Textual Analysis

1. HISTORICAL ASPECTS

In order to fully grasp the force of Gay's innovation and to better assess his satiric and parodic intent, we should briefly trace the historical and socio-political development of English drama which is concurrently a history of genre development) until we can establish the proper context from which The Beggar's Opera emerged.

In setting up a historical framework within which to situate John Gay, we should keep in mind the fact that such a framework is necessary insofar as it reveals a confluence of events and changes, which having influenced Gay (directly in his personal life and indirectly through general social attitudes), culminated in his writing The Beggar's Opera.

At the same time, this same historical framework will be useful as we establish connections between the social context from which spring the other plays of the beggar opera tradition.

Along the historical development of the English drama, we can observe an ever growing tendency towards the national, an attempt at minimizing foreign influences. This is, in fact, a natural tendency of all arts and literatures - to become national in character as they mature.

Italy, from ancient Rome through the Renaissance and later periods, has always been considered an important center and a powerful source of influence for all arts in most Western countries. Consequently, England and, more specifically, the history of English drama has been permeated by such Italian influence at various points. The English comedy seems to have received this influence from its very beginning. For example, from Italian drama was borrowed the use of prose as the type of language employed for comedy.

The study and imitation of the classics oriund from ancient and Renaissance Italy resulted in the adoption of foreign models which were mixed with some of the traditionally English comic elements. From this time also dates the Italian Pastoral which helped introduce the stories and figures straight out of classical mythology, a genre of special significance in this study on account of its connections with The Beggar's Opera, for it has often been called a *Newgate Pastoral*.

During the Elizabethan period in the Sixteenth Century, there was a shift of interest from the foreign influence of the classics to the chronicle histories, which expressing the growing taste for the national, provided the English theatre with a new source of themes.

In the Golden Age of the Elizabethan theatre, of course with Shakespeare and especially Ben Jonson, comedy received a great impulse, and even if the foreign influence was still present, it was, nevertheless, counter-balanced by English important and permanent innovations such as the comedy of characters.

With the Civil War, the theatres were closed and drama as of the type of the Golden Age was banned by the Puritans. Nevertheless, some forms of popular dramatization survived, more along the lines of the oral tradition of the minstrels, the circus farces, and the itinerant theatre of the Middle Ages.

In this period, though, between the Civil War (1642) and the Restoration (1660), during what seemed a theatrical limbo, music comes on stronger, filling up the gap left by the banned theatrical representations. At this time, just after Restoration, Sir William Davenant introduces operatic music, the Italian system of decoration and costume, and the use of the orchestra,¹ and thus, the seeds of operatic form are planted in a receptive and fertile soil, and above all, one avid for entertainment.

Eventually, the various surviving forms of native English musical entertainment such as the masque, resulting from a mixed composition of declamation, dialogue, music, and dance, merged into opera, again, a typically Italian form, which also

comprising some popular elements² possibilitated the fusion. In this way we have the beginnings of a type of foreign influence that would last for many decades to come, becoming indeed overwhelming.

Around 1660, with the restoration of monarchy came the restoration of drama. All the Puritan restrictions were counterbalanced and compensated by an "extravagant indulgence of all lawful and unlawful pleasures"³, which led to the creation of a type of comedy known as comedy of manners, which continued into the Eighteenth Century. The comedy of manners, in its aversion against Puritanism, was concerned with manners rather than morals and in manners it found its source of comic effects. Consequently, as "the manners of the court were highly corrupt, and the comedy that the court patronized was unblushing, hard, cynical, and immoral",⁴ laughter and entertainment were the objective of this type of comedy and not moral improvement.⁵ In these plays one was comic when one did not behave accordingly to what was thought to be one's explicit pattern of conduct, in harmony with his/her station in life. Thus, a squire pretending to be a gentleman, or a lady's hypocritical coyness or, conversely, her "blunt remarks about sexual appetites seemed comical".⁶

The type of comedy of manners and the art of writing comedy began to decline as the demand for this type of play fell towards the turn of the century,⁷ due to a new puritanization of society, leading to moral reform as well as to an increasing sentimentality in comedy. So, at this time other types of drama came into demand, such as the heroic tragedy and the sentimental comedy. In heroic drama, "love and valour" became the favorite subject. The already noble "ever-victorious hero" and the "dazzlingly virtuous" heroine - "torn by emotion and by 'cruel circumstance'"⁸ - of the heroic tragedy became excessively idealized in their characteristics in the sentimental comedy. In this mode of comedy, values such as filial duty, or marriage as an affair of love, for example, were turned into sentimental *clichés* causing the audience to "shed honest tears".⁹

From 1656 up to end of the Seventeenth Century, the

English dramatic opera had been very popular, as a genre containing comparatively little singing, consisting mainly of dialogue,¹⁰ - the type introduced by Purcell, again, not entirely sung, but containing *intermezzos* and songs. This might have been the start of a native English opera. This type of opera unlike the Italian style were "literate, well motivated plays with spoken dialogue, graced with the added embellishment of song"¹¹; and had it not faded away with the death of its most talented composer Henry Purcell, it could have become a totally English form, from subject matter to cast.¹²

In the early Eighteenth Century the English dramatic opera gave way to the Italian opera, which brought to the English stages a very exotic form of art, beginning by the use of recitative, which set to music every single word (something that surprised the English audiences, at first); the employment of *castrati* in the main roles; the exaggeration in setting and costumes; thin plots; and to top it all, in a language they did not understand! In spite of all, for half a century the Italian opera dominated the English theatrical scene.

In view of all this, it is easy to conclude with SCHULTZ that in England "it was not in the drama the the Eighteenth Century found itself", and that John Gay's The Beggar's Opera represents a "bright spot in a period of dramatic decline".¹³

On a larger scale, the Eighteenth Century was a period of deep social changes marking the transition between medievalism and modern society, especially in England, where, for the first time, the modern social relations based essentially on possession of goods were created.¹⁴ This, even if it did not eliminate the gap between rich and poor, made it easier for the lower classes to accept a type of class distinction intrinsically more elastic.¹⁵

There was already the beginning of a new public with more regular reading habits, which would eventually grow to become a market, a source of security for writers who could thus survive without compromising their personal integrity. Women were also beginning their literary education, growing to constitute a public which would have a crucial role in the literary life of the Nineteenth Century.

The most popular means of cultural and social expression among the new middle-class reading public were the periodicals. They were the means through which aristocratic standards were diffused. So, at the same time, we can observe a tendency towards "democratization" - in the sense that more people had access to things previously denied, unaccessible to them - there was still an aristocratic way suffusing all these changes.

This semi-courtly, semi-bourgeois culture of a typical transitory nature, created an intellectual class composed of writers such as Swift, Pope and the Wits.¹⁶

This takes us precisely to the times of John Gay (1685-1732) - the time of the Wits, the Augustan Age -- an age that "manifested an almost pathetically innocent faith in the power of reason to solve the problems incidental to human happiness".¹⁷

Gay's association and friendship with Swift and Pope is a known fact, which has frequently caused critics to underrate Gay's talents and originality by means of attributing to his famous friends a part in the composition and writing of The Beggar's Opera which they did not actually take. It is true that Swift suggested that Gay write a *Newgate Pastoral*, but this is as far as his contribution goes.

What concerns us most about such association and friendship, though, is the fact that they shared the same literary as well as political preoccupations, based on a literary preference towards the classic, praising "intellect and spirit, ingenious ideas and technical excellency, clearness of thought and language purity".¹⁸ Added to that, a sense of "life enacted and evaluated in moral terms and with the expectation of moral consistency"¹⁹ implicit in the commonly shared belief (from the Greek ideal) that the role of the poets was to educate rulers. Accordingly, it was a common practice of the time to have the court patronize its writers, not necessarily for their artistic merits, but more often for its own prestige, as servants, employing or dispensing their services at its own convenience.²⁰ Gay was in no different situation and some of his works preceding The Beggar's Opera attest to that, such as the Fables, written to instruct the Duke

of Cumberland.

With the rise of Sir Robert Walpole to power (1721), a whole series of changes begin to occur, altering the general state of affairs, definitely affecting English public life as well as Gay's own. The courtly role of patron changed hands after the Revolution (1688), and it became the privilege of political parties (Tory and Whig). The writers found themselves engaged in a fierce political battle. They then had to obtain their favors from politicians and were forced to take sides. This created in the period a strong literary tendency towards satiric writing, of which the The Beggar's Opera is an example.

Walpole, as a Whig, felt the power of the party as such a consolidated force that he dispensed all political propaganda, thus eliminating that sort of patronage, leaving most literary men in utter poverty. The poet, as a social figure, became less and less a gentleman, reaching the bottom of the social scale, anticipating the modern bohemian figure.²¹

These measures taken by Walpole's Administration affected Gay directly in that he lost his job and finding himself with the status of no more than a beggar, with no obligations towards the court, wrote the work he has become famous for. Among other things, The Beggar's Opera is a biting satire against Walpole and the system of bribery he and his friends perpetrated, a system so corrupt that was reducing the people to beggary, and which not only allowed but actually nurtured the rapacity of its officials. The prison of Newgate as a "recognized institution, quite apart from its function for the housing of criminals"²² was an example of this.

According to PIERCE, in the first half of the Eighteenth Century, to the average Londoner Newgate was an every day presence in some way. With the repression of Jacobitism, the prison was overflowing. There was a weekly procession from the prison to Tyburn, where the condemned were hanged, which actually functioned as a very popular spectacle. Prisoners could be visited any time, and had all sorts of privileges while in jail, as long as they were able to pay for them.²³ The wealthier prisoner, accordingly to what he could afford, could enjoy from tobacco and wine to walking and exercise space, or

even avoid heavy chains and torture. For the poor who had no "garnish" money, was reserved all the squalor of Newgate - "jail-fever, intolerable promiscuity, drunkenness, (....) near or actual starvation ".²⁴

Newgate did not house only political prisoners. It was also the home for the innumerable thieves and smugglers existing in London at that time, for "thieving, smuggling, highway robbery, [were] the fashion of the day".²⁵ The famous highwayman of the day, Jack Sheppard, was the attraction of the masses, and crowds gathered to see the famous thief before he was finally hanged. And Sheppard had the sympathy of the crowds with him, somewhat for his vigor and courage (he made daring escapes from prison), as well as for his defiance of the brutal criminal laws of the times.²⁶ The criminals usually dressed in their best clothes, with white gloves, and as they were driven on a cart to the place of execution they were cheered by the crowds²⁷ as popular heroes.

In this respect, criminals acquired the status of popular actors, who more than the plays themselves attracted the public. The audience went to see a particular actor perform a particular role and at the end of a speech or a scene they enjoyed, they applauded heartily, thus creating an intimate and constant interaction between actor and audience.²⁸ Comparatively speaking, much of this same attitude was transferred from the theatres to these criminal processions in the streets. This whole theatrical atmosphere was furthermore implemented by the current criminal literature, widely read by the public. The life of most of these prisoners was often romanticized in publications which were sold on such occasions. Many of these prisoners were not necessarily thieves or highwaymen. Many were vagrants and drunks, which were often punished with severe cruelty whenever they could not afford their way out of imprisonment.

Newgate then, as a mirror, had two faces. One dark and serious, shadowy, exposing the horrors and atrocities suffered by the common man under a system leveled only against the poor, a system which lawfully sheltered such men as Jonathan Wild, who was "one of the most successful exponents of organised

crime in the first half of the eighteenth century"²⁹. He was a treacherous double-dealer, running a gang of thieves while at the same time, hand-in-hand with the law, acted as a receiver of stolen goods. Above all, he had his own thieves hanged or freed from prison according to his financial needs.

Yet, Newgate offered a bright face reflecting a more amusing side, that of a spectacle, revealing an aspect functioning much in the same way as a carnivalesque celebration.³⁰

Not only Newgate, but the whole London seemed to be infused by this chaotic and carnivalesque spirit - the city abounded with romantic highwaymen; duels took place in the open street as well as in places such as theatres; gambling was as fashionable as duelling, and gin drinking as popular as gambling; and even the watchmen who should be keeping the order took part in tricks and knaveries of all kinds.³¹

This chaotic state of the city of London was also due to the fact that England was already beginning to show signs, even in the first half of the Eighteenth Century, of the transformations she would undergo as the first country to enter the Industrial Revolution. Even that early, the city began to attract the rural populations as a place for opportunities. John Gay himself was an example of this. Born in a contry town, Barnstaple, in Devon, he came to London as apprentice to a mercer.

The town had not yet become the great work camps similar to the uncomfortable and fetid prison that it would eventually become in the following century, but the rural population unrooted from its familiar origins was already beginning to feel the effects of a desorienting environment.³²

All this provided abounding sources from which Gay could draw elements to write his The Beggar's Opera.

First, if Gay chose to construe his play in the already existing form of the ballad opera, he also picked up on the already existing criminal literature for its contents. Second, the political situation of his age also impelled him towards writing a satire of it, both for personal reasons, as well as for a deeper and broader concern, in accordance with the

spirit of the *Augustans*, with the reform of society at large. Third, the underworld created by the institutions of the times proved to be congenial with Gay's own bohemian personality, who shared with Swift and the other Wits a natural attraction for low society, often participating of their activities in their own world.³³ Therefore, Gay's identification with popular elements such as the English balladry; his knowledge of the London underworld; his genteel background as a poet of the court; and even as the writer of an opera *libretto*,³⁴ provided him with all the necessary instruments with which to create a literary masterpiece such as The Beggar's Opera.

Through the balanced fusion of what could be considered as popular manifestations of chaos with the official formula of the Italian opera, Gay creates a dialectic procedure, its literary virtue consisting in the conflict between the form and the formula.³⁵ Furthermore, the very duality suffusing the age - ranging from the decadent state of drama to the ascetic literary efforts of writers such as Swift and Pope; from the debasement of values as a whole to the moralistic tone of the Puritan pulpits; and from the strong grasp of foreign influence to the growing sense of national pride - helps to characterize the times as chaotic, an epoch of carnival in need of social revision.³⁶ This places the Wits, and therefore Gay with the satirical strength of his The Beggar's Opera, in a position to adapt and reform the subversive spirit of the carnivalesque for their serious purposes.

The Beggar's Opera taken as a *Newgate Pastoral* and as a satire of the chaotic London, falls within Sven ARMENS' concept of pastoral, in which he employs the term to encompass its broadest range of connotation. This implies in the "inevitable contrast between town and country, which marks the basis of all pastoral writing".³⁷

The town/country contrast comprises three types of pastoral, being the allegorical, "where the contrast suggests satire on the corruption of an artificial civilization",³⁸ the one which better characterizes The Beggar's Opera.

ARMENS' concept provides another approach to Gay's satire altogether, in which we could approximate what he

describes as being Gay's ideal vision of the real values of rural society to order (by virtue of their providing means of escape from the frustration of an urban milieu), and the "illusions town society cherishes as realities" to chaos, since these realities are "false or illusory in the light of positive, universal values (....)".³⁹ So on one side we could group - country, order, real, and on the other - town, chaos, illusion - unifying ARMENS' concept of pastoral to the moralizing intent underlying satire.

This type of approach will be particularly useful in our discussion of the other three plays, where the town as a chaotic element (promoting false and corrupted values, establishing a social pattern that totally degrades society) becomes gradually more evidenced as the beggar tradition advances toward our own times.

Furthermore, Gay, by distorting the genre, inverting it by substituting beggars for the usual noble shepherd, creates an alienating effect in order to keep the audience alert with a critical mind. The effect of this device will be fully described as we discuss the Introduction of The Beggar's Opera.

So, all these historical elements serve as background references to be kept in mind as we proceed to the analysis of the play itself. They are external evidences of The Beggar's Opera as a social and political satire; a ballad opera; a *Newgate Pastoral*, as well as a parody of both the Italian opera and of some other forms of literature of its time. The textual analysis of the play itself provides us with the internal evidences of The Beggar's Opera as such.

NOTES

- ¹ BATES, Alfred. British Drama. London, Historical, 1906. v.13, p.75.
- ² The priority given to music itself and the opera's appeal as spectacle, with ornate setting, singing and dancing.
- ³ BATES, v.14, p.74.
- ⁴ SHERBURN, George & BOND, Donald F. Restoration Drama; comedy. In:———. The Restoration and Eighteenth Century. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967. p.763.
- ⁵ SHERBURN, G. & BOND, D., p.763. This difference in purpose characterizes comedy and satire, respectively.
- ⁶ SHERBURN, G. & BOND, D., p.763.
- ⁷ BATES, v.15, p.82.
- ⁸ SHERBURN, G. & BOND, D. Restoration Drama; heroic plays and tragedies. In:———. The Restoration and Eighteenth Century. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967. p.753.
- ⁹ SHERBURN, G. & BOND, D. Restoration Drama; the drama. In:———. The Restoration and Eighteenth Century. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967. p.886.
- ¹⁰ LEWIS, P.E. Introduction. In: GAY, John. The Beggar's Opera. New York, Barnes & Noble, 1973. p.3.
- ¹¹ NOBLE, Yvonne. The Beggar's Opera in its own time. In:——— et alii. The Beggar's Opera; a collection of critical essays. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1975. p.11.
- ¹² In terms of redemption of the national character, Gay, as Purcell, can also be considered a mark.
- ¹³ SHULTZ, W.E. Gay's Beggar's Opera, Its Content, History and Influence. New Haven, Conn., Yale University, 1923. p.268.
- ¹⁴ HAUSER, Arnold. História Social da Literatura e da Arte. São Paulo, Mestre Jou, 1972. p.689.
- ¹⁵ HAUSER, p.688.
- ¹⁶ HAUSER, p.693.
- ¹⁷ DOUGHTY, Osvald. Introduction. In: GAY, John. The Beggar's Opera. London, Daniel O'Connor, 1922. p.99.
- ¹⁸ HAUSER, p.693.
- ¹⁹ NOBLE, p.3.
- ²⁰ HAUSER, p.691.

- ²¹HAUSER, p.697-8.
- ²²PEARCE, Charles E. Polly Peachum and the Beggar's Opera. New York, Bretano's, 1913. p. 43.
- ²³PEARCE, p.43.
- ²⁴GUERINOT, J.V. & JILG, R.D. The Beggar's Opera. Hamden, Conn., Archon Books, 1976. p.36
- ²⁵SHERWIN, Oscar. Mr Gay. New York, John Day, 1929. p.97.
- ²⁶PEARCE, p.20.
- ²⁷SHERWIN, p.99.
- ²⁸BROCKET, Oscar G. The Theatre. New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1974. p.217.
- ²⁹LEWIS, p.13.
- ³⁰Understood as "merry feasts controlled by the dialectic of order and chaos". HAYMAN, David. Toward a Mechanics of Mode; Beyond Bakhtin. Novel; a forum on fiction, 2(16):104, Winter 1983.
- ³¹SHERWIN, p.102-8.
- ³²HAUSER, p.705.
- ³³As documented in Pearce's quotation from a periodical of the day: "Custom had established yearly festivals for them ballad singers in the classic regions of St. Giles, which were much frequented by some of the wits of the day — Swift, Gay, etc.(....)". PEARCE, p.26.
- ³⁴Acis and Galatea, music by Handel.
- ³⁵HAYMAN, p.104.
- ³⁶HAYMAN, p.105.
- ³⁷ARMENS, Sven. Introduction. In: —. John Gay; social critic. New York, Columbia University, 1954. p.3.
- ³⁸ARMENS citing W.W. Greg.
- ³⁹ARMENS, p.10.

2. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

As most satirists, Gay, in order to guarantee himself some sort of protection against criticism, and to effectively convey his attack, devises a mask behind which he is able to establish a distance between himself and society, and attain a strategic position from which to accomplish both ends.

His use of the mask is first manifested in the choice of the epigraph: "Nos haec novimus esse nihil"¹, which explained within its own context yields its full and unequivocal meaning.

This quotation from Martial's Epigram's is originally part of an admonition of the poet to a critic (as the title of the poem indicates) advising him not to waste time with this poet's "trifling" effusions, keeping his "venom for those that fancy themselves", for the poet himself realizes his "efforts are nothing worth", and that yet, these efforts may be of some value if approached "with a just ear", and not "too sober".²

In possession of this information we can immediately connect this kind of feeling with Gay's own attempt at avoiding criticism by almost feigning anonymity, under the same pretense of humbleness put up by Martial. He, unlike others, does not take himself too seriously, is not vain, but is rather unworthy of the attention required or dispensed by criticism. With this attitude of seeming not to be taking himself and his art seriously, Gay, behind the mask of naïf, pretends to consider his work worthless, in an attempt to have the value of his work spring up and become apparent by distracting his potential detractors' attentions. Through this attitude, Gay is also mocking the seriousness traditionally attributed to art and somewhat questioning the validity of creating art for posterity. He is thus anticipating the modern tendency of art as a product for immediate consumption, without too much

emphasis on whether or not it will become *immortal*.

Gay's use of a satirical mask becomes more palpable and materializes in the introduction of *The Beggar's Opera*, where we can detect Gay's own voice from behind the Beggar's speeches.

The Introduction consists of the dialogue between the Beggar, who claims to be the owner of the opera (hence the title), and the Player, who is the producer of the spectacle.

The Beggar has two speeches, each with a specific function. In the first, the Beggar introduces himself as a beggar and owner of both the play and the company of beggars. From the comparison of the elements forwarded by the Beggar with some aspects of Gay's biography, we observe certain similarities, which do not seem coincidental, thus leading us to conclude that the Beggar is a theatrical mask worn by Gay.

From the way the Beggar introduces himself in his first speech,

If poverty be a title to poetry, I am sure
nobody can dispute mine. I own myself of the
company of beggars; and I make one at their
weekly festivals at St. Giles.
(Intr., p.5)

he clearly establishes a relationship between poverty and poetry, which in turn leads us to establish the relationship Gay, the poet, as a beggar. Furthermore, if we consider Gay's loss of the courtly favors he once enjoyed attributed to Sir Robert Walpole's rise to power, it is easy to establish the personal character of Gay's choice of the mask of beggar, aside the fact that being a poet, he was automatically included in the category of outcasts and beggars.

Besides the already mentioned connection to poverty, it is possible to establish another type of connection - the relation beggar/bohemian, through their shared characteristics as outcasts of society. So, when the Beggar says he is one with the beggars, it could be read as an allusion to the fact that Gay was very frequently in the company of other poets and ballad singers in taverns, at lower-class districts such as

ballad singers in taverns, at lower-class districts such as St. Giles, which also explains his familiarity with and taste for popular balladry, and in part, his knowledge of low-life.

The Beggar's initial statement is a double-edged commentary, first on Gay's own financial situation and social status at the time he wrote the play, and second, by extrapolation, the exposure of a more general situation faced by the English literary and dramatic worlds, at a time when writers as well as the indigenous dramatic productions held the social status of beggars.

Still in relation to Gay's use of the mask, and particularly the mask of beggar, it is interesting at this point to discuss some aspects presented by David Hayman on the use of the mask in general, but more specifically the differentiation he proposes between the mask of the buffon and the mask of the marginal.

In choosing to hide behind the mask of beggar along with the comic effect resulting from the incongruity of having a beggar on stage and as the owner of an opera, Gay also achieves, as anyone wearing a mask, a distance from reality which liberates him from his social obligations, separates him from his contemporaries and alienates him in time³.

Now, what differentiates Gay's mask from any other traditionally comic mask such as the buffon's is that Gay's is the beggar mask, that is, the marginal mask, including "the poor, the invalid, the criminal, the foreigner, which help identify the social norms"⁴.

So even though the Beggar as a mask has the function of the jester, the clown, the buffon, he is really a marginal who, by his very presence, immediately holds a mirror to the deformities of society as a system. He represents a social segment, which society wants to suppress - an "anticommunity, the social sewer, subversive of the norms (....) a community of outcasts"⁵.

As the Beggar in his first speech voices the socio-economic germs of dissatisfaction on Gay's part, the Player, his interlocutor, makes comments concerning the state of poetry as an art, and by extension, on the arts in general.

When he says that

As we live by the Muses, 'tis but gratitude
in us to encourage poetical merit wherever
we find it (....). The muses contrary to
all other ladies, pay no distinction to
dress (....). Be the author who he will,
we push his play as far as it will go.
(Intr., p.5)

he, who is a professional, a man of the theatre and thus, a man of the arts, is really stating the ideal classless nature of art. The poet, as any artist, should be respected and acquire the social status he deserves through the merits of his own art. So, with this commentary, Gay seems to be wearing the Player's mask as well, already beginning his attack by criticizing the servile attitude of dependency of the arts (extensive to literature) on the whimsicalities of the dominant classes.

This criticism becomes more obvious as the Beggar goes on with his more direct attack on the opera in his second speech. Before moving on to the Beggar's second and very rich speech - in the sense that it contains, in an embryonic stage the various elements to be developed in the inner play, constituting the points of articulation of his satire and parody - a parenthesis to comment on another aspect of the use of the mask.

In the first speeches of the Introduction, it seems that Gay is ascribing to each character a certain kind of discourse, by having the Beggar voice the socio-economic side of the question, while the Player comments on the artistic aspect. In a way, the Player functions as the other side of the mask, an unfolding of the mask Gay puts on in order to raise the problems and set them up as targets for the attack to come. The Beggar, voicing a realistic, demystifying view and the Player voicing the idealizing view of the creator uprooted from the real.

As the dialogue proceeds, though, we have the Beggar mask take over, as both the socio-economic and the artistic comments are reunited again in the Beggar's voice.

In the second speech, the Beggar presents his opera, and the elements he chooses to highlight anticipate the burlesque and the parody of the Italian opera as well as his social and political satire.

The Beggar begins by dedicating his opera to James Chanter and Molly Lay, on their marriage, "two most excellent ballad singers" (Introd. p.5), thus raising low-class people to the status of aristocrats through the honor of this dedication. They become "aristocrats" in their own world.

In this dedication some elements are already foregrounding and preparing the way to what is going to be developed later in the play. First, the names of the people being honored immediately betray their origins - *Chanter* can be associated with *singer* and *lay* suggesting both a *song* (and another connotation apparent for modern readers) the slang *lay* suggesting an exciting woman. With this, Gay is satirizing the usual procedure of the times, being that, since the theatre in most cases was patronized by the nobility, many of the plays were requested and performed in celebration of events such as weddings. Thus, this beggar opera having been written in celebration of the marriage of beggars (and ballad singers were also associated with the "disreputable inhabitants of St. Giles")⁶ points out from the very beginning of the play that it is meant as a satire of social customs of a very specific social class.

The fact that this piece was written in celebration of a wedding also introduces one of the main themes and target of Gay's satire throughout the development of the play - the theme of love and marriage.

As the Beggar states that

Excepting this, as I have consented to have
neither prologue nor epilogue, it must be
allowed an opera in all its forms.
(Intr., p.6).

he is setting the Italian opera as the target of his attack which he will accomplish through burlesque and parody.

Indeed, other lines in the Beggar's speech reinforce Gay's satiric and parodic intent. For example, as he says:

I have introduced the similes that are in all
your celebrated operas: the swallow, the moth,
the bee, the ship, the flower, etc.
(Intr., p.5)

in the expression "your celebrated operas" we are able to detect the satiric tone in the way the Beggar manages to establish the implicit social gap existing between his type of opera and the more fashionable one. At the same time, through the presentation of such detailed similarity with the same figures used in conventional opera, he is parodying it in the sense that he is keeping the form while changing the content, that is, employing certain operatic conventions, such as the similes, and distorting them according to his purposes.

Gay even keeps, among others, just to stay with the one mentioned by the Beggar, one of the typical and most widely appreciated conventions of the opera, the prison scene. According to Bertrand BRONSON, "there is hardly an opera in which someone does not suffer duress [in prison] for a time, and later makes his escape by force or stratagem"⁷. So, when the Beggar says that he even has a prison scene to offer the ladies, he realizes the effect his parody of such a well-known operatic convention will have on his audience, particularly among the ladies, who would find it "charmingly pathetic" (Intr. p.5). Once again we can detect the satiric tone implicit in such an expression.

By mentioning the prison motif, the Beggar is demystifying it, by using the convention with full consciousness of it as a convention.

He is also anticipating what is going to be developed in the opera as the setting for half of the action of the play. Furthermore, the scenes in the prison of Newgate reveal to us only the *tip of the iceberg* of what Gay's audiences knew about the horrid prison-life conditions created by a prison and judiciary systems that needed to be revised, which accounted for the necessary non-literary background knowledge which

audiences must have in order to be able to recognize the satiric tone.

Still, in his criticism of the Italian opera, in the Beggar's lines concerning the leading female roles

As to the parts, I have observed such a nice impartiality to our two ladies that it is impossible for either of them to take offense
(Intr., p.6)

we can perfectly see the allusion to the frequent quarrelling of the *prima-donas* in those days, specifically the one made public between Faustina and Cuzzoni who, in one occasion even came to blows on stage, on account of their personal rivalry over operatic roles.⁸ As the crowning of this attack, the Beggar asks forgiveness (satiric) for not having made his opera exactly along the lines of the operatic formula of the day "throughout unnatural, like those in vogue" (Intr.p.6).

Gay is thus attacking the Italian opera in its form, in its conventions as well as in its content. As we have seen in the beginning of this study, the Italian opera at that time would employ anything in terms of plot just as long as it served as a pretext for stringing a series of arias together. Furthermore, the term *unnatural* also expresses the uneasy feeling of the exotic and outlandish infused in the English audiences by the Italian opera with its odd conventions, such as the employment of *castrati* and recitative, just to mention a couple.

In the Beggar's lines,

The piece indeed hath been heretore frequently represented by ourselves in our great room at St. Giles's, so that I cannot too often acknowledge your charity in bringing it now on the stage.
(Intr., p.6)

we are able to detect new embryonic elements in terms of the satire to be developed in the opera.

First, as he mentions that this opera has frequently been performed by the company of beggars in their "great room at St.

Giles", he is actually establishing St. Giles (like Newgate) - a famous "haunt of beggars, thieves and prostitutes" - as a microcosm. This is their small universe, in the sense that they live there, they constitute a society parallel to the greater society as a whole, which has its own hierarchy, its own way of thought and expression through their own art, specifically their own theatrical company, performing their own plays. Of course, as it has been done previously, if we have taken the beggar to represent the English poet and artist, what is said about St. Giles can be extrapolated to a higher level, having St. Giles stand for England, a country trying to establish its own national character in the arts, probably looked down as a beggar by countries such as France or Italy, which at that time dictated the artistic norms.

The last thought in the Beggar's speech seems to corroborate what has just been stated above. So, when he adds:

I cannot too often acknowledge your charity
in bringing it the piece now on the stage.
(Intr., pg.6)

it can be said that the same act of charity dispensed by the higher classes in allowing the beggar opera to come on stage alludes to the fact for the first time in many years, an original English play has been allowed on - why not - the Europeanized stage.

Dwelling on this idea of the world as a stage, if we remember what has been said previously about Newgate life as being similar to a stage in that "the prison was regarded as a show-place by the public"⁹ and that the figures which inhabited this world like Jonathan Wild and Jack Sheppard were aware of their *star-like* qualities among the public, we could go ahead and say that Gay's The Beggar's Opera is one of those plays Lionel ABEL describes as being "works of metatheatre".¹⁰

Precisely on account of the theatrical qualities presented above, The Beggar's Opera shares with other plays described by ABEL a "common character: all of them are theatre pieces about life seen as already theatricalized".¹¹ In

fulfillment of a pre-requisite established by ABEL, what dramatized The Beggar's Opera originally was exactly the awareness on the part of the people appearing in the play of "their own theatricality".¹² They knew they were myth legend, even literature, and on the other hand the playwright acknowledges the fact that they produce "the effect of dramatic imagination".¹³

Moving along in ABEL's ideas, "the playwright has the obligation to acknowledge in the very structure of his play that it was his imagination which controlled the event from beginning to end".¹⁴ To this corresponds the fact that The Beggar's Opera has been structured by Gay as a playwright imbued with this kind of conscience, for he construes his play employing the play-within-the-play device. Gay puts the Beggar in control of his opera, but places himself, at a distance, as the imagination controlling the event. Thus, in terms of structure, the Introduction plus the interruption of the beggar's opera (Act III, scene XVI) constitute the outer play framing the actual opera, creating the effect of a play-within-a-play. The use of this device reinforces the alienation intended by Gay as a mask, intensifying the Beggar's ownership.

Ivonne NOBLE makes an interesting point as she suggests the division of The Beggar's Opera into two plays. One the Beggar's - the inner play, the opera itself - and the other, Gay's - the entire play, including the frame play created by the Introduction and the Reprieve scene. This alone does not constitute a novelty. What attracts our attention is the fact that she presents the Beggar, the author of the opera (the inner play) as the parodist of the Italian opera and as an innocent, a primitive, who creates his opera out of admiration for its fashionableness, and out of the innocent belief of "everything pertaining to the mode and purpose of high heroic art".¹⁵ He is at the same time a good poet, in the sense that he knows how to use the conventions he adopts, but he is made a bad artist as "one who dismisses the moral integrity of his work for fashion"¹⁶ - the reprieve at the end of the play. In this sense she considers the Beggar's opera as just a parody,

"a slave to its model", a failure.¹⁷

On the other hand, NOBLE presents Gay as the true artist, and the satirist as his opera dominates its model - he manages to keep the Italian opera in the minds of the audience as a constant referent, as he draws upon it at his own convenience, to achieve certain effects.¹⁸ While the characters created by the Beggar sort of mimic the attitudes of certain historical figures such as Walpole, Wild, Faustina and Cuzzoni, and Sheppard, functioning at the parodic level, Gay's characters acquire a wider human proportion as characters by functioning at the level of satire.

By turning the Beggar into a bad artist Gay is criticizing the literary corruption of the times, and thus he cannot avoid self-criticism for he once was that kind of a poet, working under patronage.

This idea of self-criticism takes us to another aspect of Gay's mask of beggar - reflexive satire.

We will accept NOBLE's division of the play for it accurately explains the structure of The Beggar's Opera as a play, thus providing a good point of departure for its textual analysis division emphasizes the Beggar as a character, delineating him more palpably, adding a new dimension other than the view of the Beggar as a function, as Gay's mask. The Beggar is thus considered the author of his own play, responsible for the presentation of his own world through the depiction of what happens at Newgate, responsible for the burlesque and parody of opera, comedy of manners, heroic tragedy and sentimental comedy (in some of their conventions), and for the creation of characters conceived as anti-types at the burlesque level.

The story line of The Beggar's Opera is simple. It tells of how Captain Macheath, the head of a gang of highwaymen falls into trouble for having secretly married Polly Peachum, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peachum. Peachum, himself the owner of a gang thieves, accumulating the double function of receiver of stolen goods and official thief-taker, captures Macheath for the reward. In prison, Macheath is harassed by Lucy (one of his former mistresses), who is Lockit's (the

prison keeper) daughter, but who nevertheless, deceived by Macheath's false promises helps him escape. Macheath is then retaken (betrayed by his women), condemned, reprieved and, at last, obliged to choose and keep only one wife, Polly. The story-line is the traditional conflict created by a secret unwanted marriage, involving powerful families, generating potentially dangerous situations.

As a parody and satire on the dramatic forms of its time, the play revitalizes plot as an important element of drama, keeping in mind the little importance given to this element by the other forms. Furthermore, as a satire it also imbues the plot with a renewed social significance.

Just as The Beggar's Opera had other forms of musical entertainment as its forerunners in form, it also had a sources of inspiration for its subject-matter the popular criminal literature of its time. In conception, some of its characters are certainly inspired on the well-known criminals of the day.

Peachum, for one, is said to have been modelled on the infamous Jonathan Wild, who we have already described previously, especially on account of his double-dealings. His very name is descriptive of his activity - Peachum -, i.e., *peach them*.¹⁹ Macheath had Jack Sheppard as source of inspiration, as the likeable villain-hero acclaimed by the crowds. His name, meaning *son of the heath* immediately establishes a connection with the country, hinting at the Pastoral hero. Peachum's associates, Lockit and Filch also bear obviously suggestive names. Lockit as the prison keeper, and Filch, who is in his conditions of a mere thief at Peachum's mercy, becomes no more than filth.

This is the case of most names in the Beggar's opera. Besides being a convenient borrowing from the Morality play tradition retaken by the Restoration comedians, of "identifying a character by the name of his quality"²⁰, some of the thieves and vagabonds of those days in London seemed to have had "superb literary names"²¹ which did just that. The choice of such names for some of the characters in the play, especially the members of Macheath's gang (Matt of the Mint,

Mint = sanctuary for outlaws, or Jemmy Twitcher, *twitcher* = a pickpocket) and the *women of the town* (Dolly Trull, *trull* = prostitute, or Mrs. Slammekin, *slammekin* = a slattern = a slob, and untidy person) joins linguistic devices typical of satire, such as the word play, the pun, within a fictional procedure with something existing in reality, corroborating the idea of Gay's London bearing some characteristics of life seen as already dramatized.

Polly's and Lucy's names, not quite so obviously, nevertheless, can be related to either qualities they possess or the lack of them, respectively. Polly is the typical name usually given to parrots, and the choice could allude to the fact that most of the ideas she expresses, particularly on love and marriage, seem as simple parrot-like repetitions of ideas she has read in romances, and not out of her own experience. So, when she states that her own life depends on her husband's life as she sings

Oh, ponder well! Be not severe;
So save a wretched wife!
For on the rope that hangs my dear
Depends poor Polly's life.
(Air XII, Act I, Sc.10, p.25)

she is behaving much in the same way as the heroines portrayed in the romances of the times, putting love before personal interests, when we know very well from a previous speech that Polly, in reality, accordingly to the fashionable custom among the ladies,

(....) know[s] as well as any of the fine
ladies how to make the most of [herself]
and of her man too.
(Act I, Sc.7, p.17)

Mrs. Peachum's own speech confirms this romanticizing influence:

Those cursed playbooks she reads have been
her ruin. One word more, hussy, and I shall
knock your brains out, if you have any!
(Act I, Sc.10, p.25)

This speech reveals the intended satire on some contemporary forms of literature, adding a satire on the poor taste and lack of intelligence on the part of women in choosing this kind of reading, thus corroborating the Beggar's satire on women, begun in the Introduction, related to the historical fact that women are a growing part of the reading public. Furthermore, the satire on women is intensified as Polly goes on saying that

A woman knows how to be mercenary, though
she hath never been in court or at an assembly.
We have it in our natures, Papa.
(Act I, Sc.7, p.17)

These lines then portray women as naturally mercenary, exchanging their love for goods. This is aimed not only at high class women, explicitly, nor only at low class women trying to imitate fine ladies as is the case of Polly (implicit in her use of the refined treatment "Papa"), but at women in general, as the female of the species. The satire on women is generalized, as they are portrayed as the causes and agents of all corruption, as it becomes clear in Filch's singing:

'Tis woman that seduces all mankind,
By her we were first taught the wheedling arts;
Her very eyes can cheat; when most she's kind,
She tricks us of our money with our hearts.
For her, like wolves by night, we roam for prey,
And practice ev'ry fraud to bribe her charms
(.....)
(Air II, Act I, Sc.2, p.8)

Lucy, differently from Polly, her name originally meaning *light* usually associated with purity and brightness, could be an ironic allusion to the qualities she does not possess, since her character reveals the opposite qualities. She is vile and a more somber character as opposed to the somewhat more innocent and brighter Polly. This contrast is evidenced in the scene where Lucy feigning friendship plans to poison Polly, who, innocently does not fully realize her rival's intentions:

POLLY: (....) by pouring strong waters down
my throat, she thinks to pump some secrets
out of me.
(Drops the glass of liquor on the ground.)
(Act III, sc.9, p.74)

whereas Lucy, upon knowing that Macheath has not gone back to Polly, for he has just been retaken to prison, displays her vindictive character, after having tried to poison Polly, in the aside:

Since things are thus, I'm glad the wench
Polly has escaped, for by this event,
'tis plain she was not happy enough to
deserve to be poisoned.
(Act III, Sc.9, p.74-5)

Much within the traditional procedure for characterization of the Eighteenth Century dramatic forms, such as the comedy of manners, for example, the characters in the Beggar's opera embody each one a form of behavior - Peachum, the villain; Macheath, the amorous hero; Polly, the innocent heroine; Lucy, the treacherous rival - "and are arranged almost as if to present a pattern or microcosm of society".²² Disconsidering for a moment the author's parodic and satiric intent, these characters behave with propriety of style, and live by their artificial manners as their parodied counterparts do, considering that they see themselves as high-class people. What makes them parodical and satirical is that in fact they are not the fine gentlemen and ladies they pretend to be. They become caricatures of these upper-class figures, for their proper behavior is not so proper in relation to their milieu. Thus while the comedy of manners approves of society, its parody consequently implies a satire, the criticism of the values of this same society, as is the case of The Beggar's Opera.

So, as the curtain rises and we have "Peachum sitting at a table with a large book of accounts before him" (stage direction, Act I, p.6) singing the first air of the *opera* in which he describes his employment, as honest as a lawyer's, acting in a "double capacity both against rogues and for 'em" (Act I, sc.1, p.6), the original audiences immediately recognize him as Jonathan Wild. The same happens with Macheath, who conceived as a sort of villain/hero very popular with women, with a flamboyant personality and who is successful at escaping

from prison, immediately strikes the audience as some sort of Jack Sheppard.

Now, it is through Gay's manipulation of the two characters, through his involvement in the play deciding the inner conflicts, through the utilization of the beggar mask as a voice, creating a second narrator, that the audiences are able to understand the satirical intent, that these two characters, together, are representative of certain "qualities" of the man Gay wants to attack, to satirize - Sir Robert Walpole.

If we take the transition from scene 3 to 4 in Act I as an example, we have Peachum reviewing the work done by each of the thieves under his command in a controlling position, as the head of a gang, comparable to that of a statesman with his cabinet. Just as he is mentioning "Robin of Bagshot, alias Gorgon, alias Bluff Bob, alias Carbuncle, alias Bob Booty" (Act I, sc.3, p.10), enters Mrs. Peachum, who interrupting him initiates the following dialogue:

MRS. PECHUM: What of Bob Booty, husband?
 I hope nothing bad hath betided him. You know, my dear, he's a favorite customer of mine (....)
 PEACHUM: I have set his name down in the black-list, that's all, my dear; he spends his life among women, and as soon as his money is gone, one or other of the ladies will hang him for the reward, and there's forty pounds lost to us forever.
 (Act I, sc. 4, p.10)

As a theatrical device, the fact that a new character is introduced as she comes in interrupting the Peachum's speech just as he is referring to somebody's name highlights the relevance of this name, something that is enforced by Peachum's funny enumeration of all the character's aliases in itself a way of foregrounding its importance. Adding to all this, Mrs. Peachum retaking the name and devoting her first speech to the exposition of the nature of her relationship with him, gives too much importance to a secondary character. Furthermore,, considering that this is not even a character for he never appear on stage, definetly confirms the attack.

Again, Peachum's referring to the character's conviviality with women reinforces the allusion to Sir Robert Walpole as a womanizer thief like Sheppard, leaving little doubt on the first audience's mind of the nature of the attack intended. Besides the name references (Bob, Robin), there was also the well publicized fact that Walpole had an affair with Molly Skerit whom he later married, after his wife's death.

Although theoretically speaking we can attribute the parody of the genres to the Beggar and the satire as ideological content to Gay, in reality, the two narrators are one, and consequently, both discourses belong at the same time to one as well as to the other, moving constantly, interchangeably. So, though it is the Beggar who speaks, to Gay is left a silence of a manipulative and suggestive kind. Therefore, even to more modern audiences, distant from the topicality of the initial satire, the delineation of such characters has remained strong and universal enough to have been successfully performed at later epochs, as well as to have generated its counterparts in the other plays of the beggar opera tradition.

Macheath as the villain/hero is one of such strong characterizations around which revolve the other elements of the play.

First of all, the same duality suffusing this study - parody and satire - inherent in the title of the play is also present in the figure of Macheath as a hero. Although he is a hero in the sense that he succeeds at the end, he is a parody of the traditional hero of serious forms of drama, be it tragedy or pastoral.

Through the parodic characterization of the hero, Gay again effects the satire of the higher classes, by debasing the type of hero they admire and, consequently, the type of drama that commends this kind of hero. Still, in its function as a beggar-hero, he brings up and exposes the existence of a world of beggars (and social injustice) as a parallel society, as the microcosm previously mentioned.

Therefore, unlike the noble Aristotelian hero, belonging to the higher ranks of society, of god-like qualities, superior

to the common man, with a higher status within the social community, Macheath is a hero *manquē*. Contrary, to the traditional hero, Macheath is a highwayman, a thief (not a common one, but, nevertheless, a criminal potentially violent, false and hypocritical, as we have him part with Polly in the following mood,

MACHEATH: My hand, my heart, my dear, is so riveted to thine, that I cannot unloose my hold.

.....
POLLY: And will not absence change your love?

MACHEATH: If you doubt it, let me stay, and be hanged.

(Act I, Sc.13, p.29)

only to, hours later, express his real unfaithful character;

What a fool is a fond wench. Polly is most confoundedly bit. I love the sex. And a man who loves money might as well be contented with one guinea as I with one woman.

(Act II, Sc.3, p.35)

His being unable to be away from prostitutes shows at the same time his moral weakness (opposed to the virtues characteristic to the noble tragic hero) as well as his incorrigibility. He is once and twice taken to prison, taken away from the arms of his women friends.

What accredits him as a popular hero is the fact that he fulfills his role as the smart hero of the comic tradition, as well as the role of the rebel, within the tradition of the villain-hero of the Robin Hood type: villain in the eyes of the higher classes, hero for the destitute.

He is bold in his defiance of powerful Peachum by marrying Polly, as well as of Lockit in dishonoring Lucy. His defiance becomes even more teasing as he escapes from prison *under the nose* of both Peachum and Lockit, as they discuss his fate, in another part of the prison. Macheath is also free-spirited and carefree, enjoying life with gusto.

His love for wine and dance, and his luxuriant attitude towards the pleasures of life are fully expressed in the

following song, typically Epicurist in tone, tinging Macheath's characterization as the hero of the seventeenth century *Carpe Diem*:

Let us drink and sport today;
 Ours is not tomorrow.
 Love with youth flies swift away;
 Age is nought but sorrow.
 Dance and sing;
 Time is on the wing;
 Life never knows the return of spring.
 Let us drink, etc.
 (Air XXII, Act II, Sc.4, p.37)

His love for women is expressed in verses which describe women as sweet "roses and liles" whose kisses "dissolve us in pleasure, and soft repose". (Air XXI, Act II, sc.3, p.35).

Here we have the depiction of love as a more natural and instinctive feeling characteristic of the comedy and other popular types of drama, especially in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, opposing the formality and rules imposed by courtly love, characteristic of the serious and aristocratic forms.

Despite his unfaithfulness to women, derived from his gusto for life, Macheath proves to be extremely loyal to the members of his gang, adding an important asset to his configuration as a hero. His leadership is assured by the fact that the gang looks up to him involving him with a general atmosphere of admiration for his personal qualities as expressed in the following dialogue, where Matt of the Mint speaks for the rest of the gang:

MACHEATH: Is there any man who suspects my
 courage?
 MATT: We have all been witnesses of it.
 MACHEATH: My honor and truth to the gang?
 MATT: I'll be aswerable for it.
 MACHEATH: In the division of our booty, have
 I ever shown the least marks of avarice or
 injustice? (....)
 (Act II, sc.2, p.33)

As the answer for this last question, we have Matt change the subject. This comic device points at Macheath's questionable honorability as well as shows the power of laughter as a critical device.

This array of qualities places Macheath as the kind of figure the public in general admires and can identify with, for while he is a common man in his weakness and faults, he is at the same time capable of daring prowesses, causing people to identify with him in these contradictory aspects as well as in his ability to defy an oppressive system, and better still, in his victory over it.

Macheath is the typical hero in the sense that he seems to be sufficiently independent of his society to criticize it.

As the basis for such a statement we could take William EMPSON's argument that "one of the traditional ideas at the back of the hero was that he was half outside morality, because he must be half outside his tribe in order to mediate between it and God, or it and Nature. (In the same way the swain of pastoral is half Man half *Natural*).²³ In light of this, Macheath, as the *son of the heath* , as the highwayman who hides and robs in the woods (still within the characterization of the villain-hero) comes to represent a mockery of the rustic as the hero of pastoral.

Such a mock-hero is not only an object of satire, but he himself becomes a sort of satirist, for he is, nevertheless, a hero in the sense that he functions as the mediator mentioned above. He is strong and independent enough of his society, so that through this distance he is able to criticize it, as Macheath indeed does.

Within this idea of Macheath as a pastoral hero, lies the implication that although a villain-hero, the man from the country, the natural, represents the ideal, the orderly as real values, in opposition to the chaotic and illusory values offered by the city, in a way to be embodied in the figure of the villain (*strictu sensu*), in this case, Peachum.

In the role of the hero, Macheath becomes the centre of the action, the agent, the generator of conflicts. Again, these conflicts belong to the category of the traditional. Throughout

the rapid succession of the play's numerous scenes (13 in Act I; 15 in Act II, and 17 in Act III) which keeps the action changing constantly, at a fast pace, Macheath antagonizes himself dangerously, through his secret marriage to Polly, with Peachum who then becomes his archrival, the typical villain.

Peachum is a sordid individual, a sort of "prince of knaves, living on a slightly higher plane than his associates",²⁴ for he has made good money (we should say evil money) through his unmerciful trade on human lives. As the villain (literally meaning inhabitant of the town), Peachum is the perfect embodiment of the corruption of the urban society through his submission to false values represented by his greed for money and power. He is a parasite, "who preys upon the other characters frequently, inveighing against the evil of which he himself is guilty, and always attempting to preserve respectability".²⁵ We can verify this living upon preying on others when Peachum himself states that

(....) for 'tis but fitting that we should
protect and encourage cheats, since we live
by them

(Act I, Sc.1, p.7)

and the degree of his respectability, as he compares himself to a statesman:

(...)and the statesman, because he's so great,
Thinks his trade as honest as mine.

(Air I, Act I, Sc.1, p.6)

or when Lockit speaks of both his and Peachum's activities:

Depend upon it. We will deal like men of
honor.

(Act III, Sc.6, p.70)

Macheath finds another antagonist in Lockit, Lucy's father. Lockit, as the prison keeper and Peachum's associate, also partakes some of his traits of villainy, and even though

his part is not as long as some of the other main characters', his role is very important. His is the observation that

Of all animals of prey, man is the only sociable one. Everyone of us preys upon his neighbor, and yet we herd together.
(Act III, Sc.2, p.61)

He should know, for as the prison keeper he preys upon the bad luck of prisoners, making a lot of money through their exploitation at Newgate, under the conditions described elsewhere in this study. Lockit's liaison with Peachum is what keeps the system going. So even if one cannot trust the other, of what we have an example in their fighting over business, when after all they must agree and find a reconciliation in the name of their "mutual interest" and "for the interest of the world" (Act II, sc.10, p.50). Nevertheless, this does not prevent Lockit from trying to double-cross his friend Peachum to get the reward for Macheath's hanging, and ironically, he uses his friendship as a means through which accomplish his ends, using as an excuse the fact that this is the way things are, "according to the custom of the world" (Act III, sc.2, p.61).

Through his marriage to Polly, Macheath also creates an adulterous trio, since he keeps Lucy as a mistress. With the establishment of this trio, the antagonism Polly/Lucy flourishes. As they fight (Act II, sc.13, p.52-6) the contrast between their natures is fully revealed. While both start out putting on airs of fine ladies even minding their language as they quarrel, calling one another *madam* and using expressions such as "behave yourself with some reserve" or "I shall be obliged" or even "you force me to be ill-bred" (Act II, sc.13, p.55) we are able to detect the satire and burlesque intended against aristocratic women, lowering them to the level of fighting prison cats. At the same time, the first audience could clearly visualize the spoof against the Italian *prima-donas*. Their rivalry goes on in Act III, sc.7 through 10, along the lines of the traditional poison scene, especially in Italian operas. At the same time this type of scene is used as

a theatrical convention to resolve a conflict, it is also used as a parody of this kind of procedure, which had become an overused trademark of the opera. While Polly maintains basically the same behaved attitude of a fine lady, in her innocence of romanticized heroine, Lucy's fiery and villanous character is revealed through a mixture of emotions such as "Jealousy, rage, love and fear" which "tearing her to pieces", can only find appeasement through "revenge, revenge, revenge (Air XLVII, Act III, sc.7, p.70-71).

Lucy and Polly, despite their basic antagonism on account of their jealousy over Macheath are, nevertheless, his adjuvants, in that each one tries to save him separately, as well as together, after they find out he has been taken again. Each one pleads for his life with Peachum and Lockit, respectively, kneeling before their fathers, begging:

POLLY: (....) Dear, dear sir, sink the
material evidence, and bring him off at
his trial. [Kneeling.] Polly upon her
knees begs it of you.
(Act III, Sc.11, p.76)

This emphasizes the parody on the romantic literature of the times; establishes Macheath as the kind of lover women will do anything for; and the two as just the kind of women that let themselves be blinded by the love of such in idealized hero, to the point of making them beg on their knees for his polygamous life. As pointed out by SCHULTZ, "the changing relations of Polly and Lucy (....) provides one of the funniest things in the play. Their hatred for each other turns to spite, fear, respect, and sympathy as the action deepens and their mutual husband faces his fate".²⁶

Another conflict resulting from the marriage is the conflict between daughters and parents, which reveals the materialistic way the parents view their daughters. This is expressed in its extreme in Peachum's treating Polly as his property. The traditional paternal jealousy and fear of losing his daughter's love as she marries and devotes it to another man, here is distorted to be extent the paternal love becomes

materialistic possession:

Married! If the wench does not know her own profit (....) my daughter to me should be, like a court lady to a minister of state, a key to the whole gang. Married!
(Act I, sc.4, p.13-4)

Here are reiterated, too, the attack on high society, just as materialistic, and also his considering himself at the same level of a minister of state through comparison. Not only the character considers himself as such, but also the author in his satire. So, as we have seen, through only one action on the part of Macheath, a whole series of reactions is released as if in a chain-effect.

The series of conflicts, double-crossings and revenge, going on in The Beggar's Opera points at the satire of a society which, in general, behaves this way. Thus we have Polly betraying her parents' trust by marrying Macheath; the Peachums, in turn, scheming to have Macheath hanged, betray Polly, and at the same time try to convince her to betray her husband; Macheath, on his part, betrays Polly's love by going back to his prostitutes, who, in turn, betray him by turning him in to Peachum. Filch reveals Polly's secret (marriage) to her mother, thus betraying her trust. Lockit plots to double-cross Peachum in Macheath's affair, at the same time that we know they have cheated one another on previous occasions. Lucy under false pretenses plans to poison Polly, thus betraying her confidence on what seems Lucy's act of friendliness. Lucy also betrays her father's trust by helping Macheath escape. Macheath betrays Lucy in her belief that he will come back to her, and finally Macheath is betrayed by one of his own gang, Jemmy Twitcher, which causes him to express his loss of faith in the world:

That Jemmy Twitcher should peach me, I own surprised me. 'Tis a plain proof that the world is all alike, and that even our gang can no more trust one another than other people.
(Act III, sc.14, p.80)

The very use of the expression "peach me" gives the final proof that all men are alike in their *Peachumness*, confirming the depiction of society as a herd of animals preying on each other. This final realization is particularly shocking, considering that Macheath had in his gang a bulwark against the wretchedness of the world,

I have a fixed confidence, gentlemen, in you all, as men of honor, and as such I value and respect you.

(Act II, sc.2, p.33)

and he, on his part, devoted to them a loyal behavior hard to match as the scene at the gaming house proves it. Even with the police after him, he comes to his friends:

(....) When my friends are in difficulties, I am always glad that my fortune can be serviceable to them (gives them money). You see, gentlemen, I am not a mere court friend, who professes everything and will do nothing.

(Act III, sc.4, p.63)

Besides proving his loyalty, through the last line, he is attacking the court and its gentlemen.

The satire against the gentlemen of the court is thus accomplished through burlesque, by the lowering of courtiers to the level of gangsters, as well as by the inverse attitude of raising the gang of thieves to a higher level. To the gang are attributed qualities such as honorability, trustworthiness, truthfulness and courage, traditionally reserved for aristocrats and other higher members of society, but we can detect the satiric tone, for we know very well that even if the gang is able to behave according to this code of honorability, they are also capable of treachery and other demeaning actions, not to mention violence. Not that aristocrats are not guilty of similar and often times the same crimes. On the contrary, one of the roles of the gang is exactly to point out that only they, and never the rich, are punished for their crimes. Thus we have Jemmy Twitcher ask at their gathering, at a tavern in Newgate:

Why are the laws leveled at us? Are we more
dishonest than the rest of mankind?
(Act II, sc.1, p.31)

For this very reason, the gang goes on in their efforts of equating themselves to gentlemen, creating through a series of self-compliments, a very ironic scene:

Sound men, and true!
Of tried courage and indefatigable industry.
Who is there here that would not die for his
friend?
Who is there here that would betray him for
his interest?
Show me a gang of courtiers that can say as
much.
(Act II, sc.1, p.31-2)

These lines come close to the level of jargons, which accounts for much of the scene's comicality, also revealing a certain aspect of language used to mask a reality - trying to hide the antagonism existing within the criminal class, making them pass for aristocrats, - once again serving the satirical purpose of equating the gang with courtiers.

The use of high-style language, through peaks of exaggeration at specific scenes, purposefully highlights and stresses the satire even further stretching it almost to the point of ridicule.

Thus, aside the contents of the speeches and the heroic actions, language constitutes in itself another aspect contributing to the depiction of Macheath both as a hero as well as a mock one. An excellent example of this linguistic display is the dialogue between Macheath and his men:

MACHEAT: Gentlemen, well met. My heart
hath been with you this hour; but an
unexpected affair hath detained me.
No ceremony, I beg you.
(Act II, sc.2, p.32)

to which Matt of the Mint, equally in a high style, answers with the deference he deserves:

MATT: (....) Am I to have the honor of
 taking the air with you, sir, this
 evening upon the heath?
 (Act II, sc.2, p.33)

The ridicule becomes more apparent when considering that the affectation of "taking the air" means literally robbing in the woods.

Besides the comic function of language as a critical device and its satiric aspect of mask, not considering the musical element, the arias interspersing the dialogues become basically poetic passages, original verses tightly knit into the plot. Thus, as a literary text, the poetic passages different in form and tone from the rest of the text, take on the function of music as an element of relief and entertainment, as well as an element of differentiation, also functioning as a device through which to obtain critical distance.

In their diversity, the arias also serve specific purposes. They introduce characters and help delineate them more precisely, allowing a closer, more intimate approach to them as characters rather than types, exposing their more personal facets, of which Lucy's Air XLII is a good example. They also convey beliefs, or what in the play is considered as general truths, such as the satire on women as the corruptors of the world (Air III), or Mrs. Peachum's ideas on the role of the married woman (Air V); they illustrate ideas (Air III); praise romantic love in the proper courtly fashion through the constant use of euphemisms and similes (Air XV, and here we find all the similes pointed out by the Beggar in the Introduction). At the same time that they add a *saucy*, sensuous flavor to love through direct references to the pleasures of the flesh (Air XXI), they further the social satire by attacking liberal professions such as lawyers (Air XI), doctors (Air XXIV), as well as gentlemen and courtiers (Airs XLVI and XXX), and especially the institution of marriage (Air LIII).

The arias thus conceived provide a very successful theatrical solution to the often difficult task of exposing the

inner aspects of the characters narrating what the characters in action cannot always reveal, without having to resort to traditional devices such as the soliloquy and asides. The arias take on their function in a much more entertaining way.

Although displaying such a diversity, the arias almost always constitute one of the main vehicules of satire, sometimes directly through their satiric content, as we have already seen, culminating in Macheath's singing the critical attack on the current social system that could be considered as the *moral* of the play

Since laws were made for every degree,
To curb vice in others, as well as me,
I wonder we han't better company
 Upon Tyburn tree!
But gold from law can take out the sting;
And if rich men, like us, were to swing,
'Twould thin the land, such members to string
 Upon Tyburn tree!
(Act III, sc.8, p.79)

sometimes by the mere fact that they are sung by one specific character at a specific moment; and sometimes formally, through direct parody.

A specific example of the latter is found in "March in 'Rinaldo'" which, being an air taken straight out of Handel's opera of the same name, constitutes a direct parody on the opera Italian style. The lyrics reinforce the satire on the higher classes, as the gang views itself as *brave boys*, almost in an allusion to the bravery of leaving for battle for some honorable cause, when in reality they are going off to rob and attack coaches. The *mise-en-scène*, which is very much like an operatic scene as we have "the gang, ranged in the front of the stage, load their pistols, and stick them under their girdles; then go off singing the first part in chorus" (Air XX, Act II, sc.2, p.34), also corroborates both the parody and the satire.

The gang of thieves is paralleled in its satiric function by the group of prostitutes who, in turn, parody the fine ladies of the court in their affected behavior. Thus, we have dialogues like this one in which we have Jenny Diver excuse

herself for not accepting some gin from Macheath:

JENNY - Indeed, sir, I never drink strong waters, but when I have the colic.

MACHEAT - Just the excuse of the fine ladies.

Why, a lady of quality is never without the colic.

(Act II, sc.4, p.37)

The satire becomes even more blatant in the scene where all the prostitutes are gathered after having betrayed Macheath, disputing the reward money with an over exaggerated politeness, (which only prostitutes feigning respectability could achieve), culminating in their *Exeunt* with great ceremony" (Act II, sc. 6, p.42)

It is interesting to note in relation to the prostitutes, the observation made by their *madam* that "'tis not youth or beauty that fixes their price. The gentlemen always pay according to their dress (....)" (Act III, sc.6, p.69), reflecting the high level of superficiality of the gentlemen customers, preferring youth and beauty (already superficial traits when compared to real values) in favor of the even greater emptiness represented by a well-dressed prostitute. And Macheath, in his role as a gentleman-thief is no different from the others: "I have taken a great deal of the Captain's money (....) for he always loved to have his ladies well-dressed" (Act III, sc.6, p.70)

Macheath's attitude of trust and friendship toward his gang and prostitute friends seems almost to be an effect of linguistic display rather than a solid relationship. In terms of plot, the tavern (and brothel) scenes prepare the betrayal of Macheath, placing him as a Christ figure (in Christian terms) or a scapegoat of society, still in the same role of the hero as a mediator.

Macheath, as a villain hero, goes against the prevalent ideology of society, rebelling against it, finding its approval offensive. Thus, his defiant attitude in relation to the Peachums and Lockit, who represent and act according to the "customs of the world". They, in turn, stand as symbols of

society at large, in its values and beliefs, presented in the The Beggar's Opera, for purposes of satire, as a parallel society.

As such, we have what could be called the high class society, composed of the aristocracy - ladies and gentlemen -, and ascending bourgeoisie represented by the liberal professionals who aspire at the values of the aristocracy, thus constituting and homogeneous group, a world of their own. This society, although cherishing and preaching values such as honor, courage, honesty, marriage as the consecration of romantic love, politeness and refinement in women, including a cultivated intellect, nevertheless not always behaves or acts accordingly, thus becoming an easy target of satire. Consequently, the heroes venerated by such a society are of the type consecrated by tradition and therefore celebrated and perpetuated by main-stream literature and other forms of art such as the opera.

Parallel to this world, The Beggar's Opera presents a society of rogues, constituted of an aristocracy as well, represented by the Peachums and Lockits, businessmen and women - thieves and prostitutes - who actually live by values in direct contradiction to the ones presented above, but who talk about these values as ideals to be cherished, clearly establishing their satiric role. Thus we have the Peachums abhor marriage - "If she had only an intrigue with the fellow, why the best families have excused and huddled up a frailty of that sort. 'Tis marriage, husband, that makes it a blemish." (Act I, sc.9, p.22), and yet have Mrs. Peachum satirically complain:

How the mother is to be pitied who hath
handsome daughters! Locks, bolts, bars, and
lectures of morality are nothing to them;
they break through them all.
(Act I, sc.8, p.19)

In their eyes, the one reasonable explanation for Polly's foolish decision of marrying Macheath can only reside in her desire to act as the fine ladies, as explained by Mrs. Peachum:

(....) and now the wench hath played the fool and married, because forsooth she would do like the gentry.
(Act I, sc.8, p.18)

Lockit too, reprimends Lucy as she says that a woman needs no other "bribe" than "a kind look, a tender word", when in love, by stating that:

Thou wilt always be a vulgar slut, Lucy.
(....) you should never do anything but upon the foot of interest. Those that act otherwise are their own bubbles.
(Act III, sc.1, p.60)

In the same way, virtue gives way to the necessity, placing money and richness as the only true values, extremely well put by Peachum:

But money, wife, is the true fuller's earth for reputations; there is not a spot or stain but what it can take out. A rich rogue nowadays is fit company for any gentlemen; and the world, my dear, hath not such a contempt for roguery as you imagine.
(Act I, sc.9, p.22)

Macheath, within this context, in the eyes of his fellows is the traditional hero, respected even by his rival Peachum, who concedes that "it grieves one's heart to take off a great man (....) consider[ing] his personal bravery, his fine stratagem" (Act I, sc.11, p.26).

As he ventures to go against what has been set as the rules of the game, by defying Peachum, who holds so much power as to come close to divinity, Macheath is guilty of a sort of hybris, and has to be punished accordingly, thus becoming a scapegoat, assuming a role of sacrificial significance.

He seems to be conscious of this role and accept his fate with a Christian resignation,

I go, undismayed, for death is a debt,
A debt on demand, so take what I owe.
(....) Contented I die.
(Act III, sc.11, p.77)

but, faithful to his mock-heroic role, he finds his courage solely in drinking, not in the strength of his own *virtuous* character:

So I drink off this bumper. - And now I can
stand the test,
And my comrades shall see that I die as
brave as the best.
(Act III, sc.8, p.79)

Just as we come to the climax of the play in which Macheath will be hanged, in come the Beggar and the Player, completing the frame-play effect initiated by the Beggar's Introduction. As the Beggar suggests that Macheath not only be saved, but be treated like a regular hero, we have the confirmation that even the Beggar views him as such:

So you rabble there, run and cry a reprieve
Let the prisoner be brought back to his
wives in triumph.
(Act III, sc.16, p.82)

Furthermore, in this scene we have all the metatheatrical aspects spring up again and fully develop.

Retaking NOBLE's considerations on the inner play as being a parody of the opera (page 41 of this paper) we have in the dialogue between the Beggar and the Player leading to the alteration of the end, a definite confirmation of both the parodic and the satiric intents in attacking the opera as an "unnatural" dramatic form:

PLAYER - (...)an opera must end happily.
BEGGAR - Your objection, sir, is very just,
and is easily removed. For you must
allow that in this kind of drama
opera 'tis no matter how absurdly
things are brought about.
(Act III, sc.16, p.82)

The metatheatrical quality of this scene is also manifested in the statement that what really constitutes a "perfect piece", the ideal art piece is its intrinsic

NOTES

¹Book XIII, poem 2, entitled "To a Detractor", line 8 meaning "we know these things to be nothing". See GAY, John. The Beggar's Opera. In: ROBERTS, Edgar, ed. The Beggar's Opera. Lincoln, University of Nebraska, 1969. p.2. This and all quotations of The Beggar's Opera are from this edition.

²ROBERTS, p.2.

³HAYMAN, David. Toward a Mechanics of Mode. Novel; a forum on fiction. 2(16):110, Winter 1983.

⁴HAYMAN, D. Mas allá de Bajtin. Revista Espiral. Madrid, 7:93, 1980.

⁵HAYMAN, Mas allá ... p.98.

⁶LEWIS, P.E. Commentary. In: GAY, John. The Beggar's Opera. New York, Barnes & Noble, 1973. p.120.

⁷BRONSON, Bertrand. The Beggar's Opera. In: LOFTIS, John. Restoration Drama; modern essays in criticism. Oxford, Oxford University, 1970. p.311.

⁸LEWIS, p.120.

⁹PEARCE, Charles E. Polly Peachum and The Beggar's Opera. New York, Bretano's, 1913. p.27.

¹⁰ABEL, Lionel. Metatheatre. New York, Hill & Wang, 1963. p.61.

¹¹ABEL, p.60.

¹²ABEL, p.60.

¹³ABEL, p.60.

¹⁴ABEL, p.61.

¹⁵NOBLE, Yvonne et alii. The Beggar's Opera; a collection of critical essays. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1975. p.10.

¹⁶NOBLE, p.10.

¹⁷NOBLE, p.10.

¹⁸NOBLE, p.10.

¹⁹Peach, colloquial for impeach, i.e., to accuse and prosecute for felony and treason. See ROBERTS, p.3.

²⁰STYAN, J.L. The Dramatic Experience. Cambridge,

Cambridge University, 1975. p.60.

²¹SHERWIN, Oscar. Mr. Gay. New York, John Day, 1929.
p.110.

²²STYAN, p.63.

²³EMPSON, William. The Beggar's Opera; mock pastoral
and the cult of independence. In: NOBLE, Yvonne et alii., p.16.

²⁴SCHULTZ, W.E. Gay's Beggar's Opera, Its Content,
History and Influence. New Haven, Conn., Yale University, 1923.
p.275.

²⁵ROBERTS, Introduction, p.xix.

²⁶SCHULTZ, p.279.

PART II

BERTOLD BRECHT AND HIS PROGENY:

1. Bertolt Brecht:

The Threepenny Opera

2. Friedrich Dürrenmatt:

Frank V

3. Chico Buarque de Hollanda:

Ópera do Malandro

1. Bertolt Brecht: The Threepenny Opera

The analysis of The Beggar's Opera revealed that, inspite of its parody and literary criticism of previous forms of theatre in some of their devices and conventions, the play is still in harmony with the conventions of the times, still within the Aristotelian model. Despite Gay's satirical attack against the aristocratic and rising middle-class values, the Beggar's play still complies with the "taste of the town";¹ given its happy end. Gay, through the involvement of the audience in his lively ballad opera by the use of popular songs and dances, helps create among them a sense of community around a spirit of nationalism. Through a well constructed action and plot both in the sense of a well-made play (with exposition, complication, climax and denouement) as well as in the sense that they entrawl the public, Gay totally involves his audience and engages it into joining him in his social criticism and debauch. The atmosphere created by a spectacle of such gaiety (no pun intended) makes it almost impossible to resist its grasp.

This kind of involvement of the audience with what is happening on the stage is in direct opposition to the Brechtian concept of the role of the theatre in society. So, through the analysis of Brecht's The Threepenny Opera, we will be able to verify that with his re-creation of Gay's The Beggar's Opera, the beggar opera tradition indeed takes a new direction. From the Aristotelian dramatic form, it veers towards the epic theatre, on account of the changes made by Brecht, according to his didactic and dialectic purposes.

Although, basically, The Beggar's Opera follows the Aristotelian form, it already anticipates the Brechtian epic

theatre in many of its devices, and besides the strong pull of its satire, this might have been another reason for Brecht's reworking of Gay's text.

As Gay parodied the Italian opera and some other theatrical forms of his time in order to satirize them, Brecht's reworking of Gay's text also results in parody and satire. By keeping some of Gay's operatic traces such as introduction, recitations, arias, and ensembles, The Threepenny Opera also specifically parodies the German Wagnerian opera through the use of anti-literary sources such as the "popular songs, the music-hall, Kipling's barrack-room, ballads, doggerel verse, Villon, Wedekind".² The act of having chosen an Aristotelian type of play as a model, and having changed it to fit his epic model, already evokes the aesthetic criticism implied by parody.

The nature of Brecht's parodic intent is primarily that of intertextuality, in order to obtain an even further alienating effect. Parody thus conceived creates a larger gap between the text and reality, being that its first connection is with the parodied text, a fictional reality, thus achieving a two-degree distance from the real. Being two times removed from reality, the text more clearly exposes illusion as illusion.

As we have already pointed out, Brecht's influence on the beggar opera tradition left a definite mark. Both Chico Buarque's Ópera do Malandro as well as Dürrenmatt's Frank V are touched by it. More so, the Ópera do Malandro, which reflects a direct affiliation with the Brechtian epic theatre.³ Chico Buarque in an introductory page to his play openly reveals that the text of his opera is based both on Gay's and Brecht's plays, as well as Pabst's film version of The Threepenny Opera, and the epic devices used by the Brazilian playwright reinforce this confessed Brechtian influence.

Friedrich Dürrenmatt, on the other hand, does not consider his Frank V as having any connections with Brecht's play. He even vehemently denies such a notion, as he states in an interview that "It [Frank V] 'll have to sail a long time yet under the false colors of The Threepenny Opera - that's its

fate".⁴ And even though Dürrenmatt adds that he had Shakespeare in mind when he wrote Frank V and that it is modelled after the chronical play, he cannot deny that it can be considered the progeny of The Threepenny Opera since its protagonist is a bank president. Nevertheless, Dürrenmatt's play, as we will see later, can indeed be considered an anti-Brechtian play. Furthermore, it can therefore be said that with Frank V, the beggar opera tradition, after having become eminently epic, goes a few steps back towards the Aristotelian type of drama, almost in a circular return to Gay's The Beggar's Opera. So, in order to delineate this circle, we will proceed by studying the innovations introduced by Brecht in relation to the pattern established by Gay.

It is very hard to establish exactly how much Bertolt Brecht knew about John Gay's way of life, at the time he decided to rework The Beggar's Opera into his The Threepenny Opera. The fact is, though, that there are too many interesting coincidences in both poets' backgrounds around the times they wrote their plays.

We have already described the kind of bohemian scene frequented by Gay, in essence, not too different from the cabaret tradition which influences Brecht. As the first half of the Eighteenth Century, Germany post-First World War was a time fertile for satiric writing and Berlin, especially, was very comparable to Gay's London as a city in a chaotic state. According to Christopher ISHERWOOD, "Berlin was a complete contrast. Outwardly it was graver, stiffer and more formal; inwardly it was far more lurid and depraved (....). It recognized vice, and cultivated it in all forms (....)"⁵

This age - also known as the Roaring Twenties - was, in all its excitement, "encapsulated in the minor form of the cabaret".⁶ The cabaret stage allowed the theatre to become less academic, and through its extremely popular take-offs against the traditional theatre, the cabaret's "literary parody quickly developed into social and political comment".⁷

Through Wedekind and his influence, "this class of German writing [satirical poems] came to establish itself quite unpretentiously in the theatre; and a whole new group of

satirists later arouse around the cabarets (....).⁸ Brecht fitted in this background of stinging satire as the best means of attack and within the cabaret tradition of the French *chansonnier* with the *chanson* or song as the medium of his satire.

Not unlike Gay, Brecht himself had acquired a taste for and knowledge of popular balladry, and in The Threepenny Opera he keeps the strong popular flavor of the "old ballads sung at Bavarian fairs (....) and in the street-singer's moritat (....)".⁹ Furthermore, according to WILLET, it was not the "apocalyptic confusion of the expressionists"¹⁰ in their destructive furor against the illusionism in art that provided the setting for the creation of The Threepenny Opera, but the "cabaret-cum-dance tune style"¹¹, because for Brecht the "chief formal significance (....) lay in the singing and the music; the play itself was Gay's".¹²

With so many aspects in common, it is not hard to understand the force of Brecht's attraction to The Beggar's Opera. Gay's text is extremely rich in terms of devices which could be reworked and employed by Brecht in his epic theatre. In the first place there is the social satire, which being moralistic by nature, in the sense that it aims at social reform, is very congruent with Brecht's didactic drama.

Although the targets of both Gay's and Brecht's satire seem different, they have points in common. Gay attacks the aristocratic class and a corrupt system, which by favoring this economically strong class, punishes only the poor, despite the recognition that gentlemen and criminals are the same in essence and behave in the same way. Brecht attacks the bourgeoisie, which, enveloped in its conventions and hypocrisy assumes a passive role in maintaining a social order of class division, which, by the exploitation of the lower classes, perpetuates poverty and allows the dehumanization of the poor. Both attack a social system, believing that it is responsible for the degrading of man. But while Gay aims at social reform, Brecht finds solution only in revolution.

In Gay's Augustan view of the world, the higher classes are responsible for the setting of models in a society. If they are corrupt, the whole of society becomes deformed and the

common man degraded. For Brecht, man is determined by the role society attributes to him and therefore, only by changing society entirely can man achieve his well being. Thus, within the above context, by naming one of his beggars Robert the Saw and by referring to him as "a petty thief without a trace of genius [who] won't end on the gallows [nor] ever come to anything" (Act II, sc.1, p.43), Brecht seems to be criticizing Gay's view of man and the world by implying that like his petty Robert, Sir Robert Walpole is not, as an individual, responsible for the state of affairs. Brecht's villain is the social system with all its manipulative power. Thus, Brecht substitutes the bourgeois for Gay's aristocrat as the target of his social satire.

In the use they make of parody - Gay in trying to ridicule the Italian opera out of the dominant place it has acquired; and Brecht by reworking an Aristotelian type of play such as The Beggar's Opera, trying to undermine the theatre as a bourgeois form of entertainment, creator of pleasant illusions - both aim at the satire of these previous forms in an attempt to awake a public critical awareness, in order to accomplish their satiric intents.

The difference in their satire evolves initially from the differences that the substitution aristocrat/bourgeois requires such as different customs and behaviors; beliefs and attitudes; and, of course, the differences resulting from the shift in historical moments and ideological affiliation. Secondly, the attack on the high-classes takes on a different perspective in Brecht on account of his use of the epic theatre with its specific epic devices. Even though Gay's play, as a frame-play, constitutes an alienation device and makes use of other such devices, it still effects its satire through the eyes of a somewhat naïve narrator, the Beggar, through a narrative (the beggar's opera) within the Aristotelian mode.

In accordance with his adoption of the Marxist doctrine, Brecht sees the human being as "the sum of all social circumstances (....) and can only be embraced through those processes by which and in course of which he exists".¹³ Therefore, through the use of alienation devices, he wants the

audience to realize that what matters is not its emotional involvement with the actions of the hero and his fortune as an individual, but his interrelations with the other characters in their socio-historical significance. Thus, the same story-line taken from Gay's The Beggar's Opera will not suffer changes in terms of story but the plot as the organization of events into meaningful scenes will be altered in order to highlight the characters' interrelations.

If we take Mackie the Knife as the hero and the center around which the other elements of the play revolve, as we have previously done in the analysis of The Beggar's Opera, we will verify that unlike Gay's Macheath - who possesses the qualities of the traditional hero as an outstanding member of his social community, acquiring a superior status above the common man - Brecht's Mackie is a hero only in the sense that he is the perfect example of his society. He is a commendable model, acting precisely according to what is expected of him in terms of behavior.

This view of Mackie is supported by Brecht's own statement: "The gangster Mackie should be presented by the actor as a bourgeois phenomenon".¹⁴ Mackie's qualities or faults do not result from his individual character. They stem from his socio-historical circumstance. This historical moment in The Threepenny Opera is the London of the Victorian Age, chosen by Brecht with the purpose of satirizing the decadent Weimar Republic. The Victorian Age came to symbolize the golden age for the bourgeoisie, the times where the bourgeois values seemed to be at its highest point, and Mackie's characterization exposes precisely these values. He is depicted as the quintessential bourgeois - the businessman.

Brecht himself gives a succinct delineation of the bourgeois profile, pointing out characteristics such as cowardice, rationalization, aversion to violence and disorder (especially public), a praise for reputation, valorization of domestic comfort as well as a good comfortable social position, dignity and sobriety, respectability, safety, moderation, regularity and pedantic punctuality. But towering over them all are *habits*, almost the main objective of bourgeois life to

cultivate and increase.¹⁵

These are the qualities which guide Macheath's characterization, also constituting the means through which Brecht attacks the bourgeois spirit. So, if Mackie is the killer sung in the Moritat, he is a killer in disguise. Here we have the bourgeois values functioning as a mask hiding the criminal activities of an entire class. The singer of the Moritat,¹⁶ as a street-singer acquires the function of Gay's Beggar, adding to his role a new element - the grotesque. These criminal actions repulsive to the bourgeois are only performed in the name of *necessity*, when business unavoidably requires it, and are always perpetrated in such a concealed way that no one can prove anything against him. Mackie's gloves are the symbol of his hypocritical respectability verifiable at two different moments which mark his characterization as such, also exposing society's acceptance of this sort of value, in a silent acquiescence expressed in the last verse:

When the shark has had his dinner
There is blood upon his fins.
But Macheath he has his gloves on:
They say nothing of his sins.
(Prologue, p.3)

Mackie's physical description provided by the Peachums results in a grotesque figure, a composition of familiar bourgeois elements made unfamiliar by a set of characteristics from a different, opposite *world*. This description places Mackie exactly at the point where the bourgeois and the criminal converge:

PEACHUM: Ah! White Kid gloves and a stick
with an ivory handle and spats over his
patent leather shoes and a nice polite
manner and a car ...
MRS. PEACHUM: On his neck. (....)
(Act I, sc.1, p.12)

What contributes to much of the grotesque aspect of this description is the discrepancy between the scar, revealing of his underworld activities and the purity of his gloves, which, besides being white, - for many cultures the color representing

purity - are the type children wear. Again we have the contrast between the innocence usually attributed to children, in opposition to Mackie's evilness as a murderer. This fact, besides corroborating the hypocritical nature of his behavior, also alludes to the grotesque position of the bourgeois in society, at the same time condemning and condoning criminal acts.

Besides the difference in their depiction of man and the consequent difference in hero characterization, as previously stated, there are also some structural differences between The Threepenny Opera and The Beggar's Opera.

From the start, we observe that Brecht has chosen to decline the use of an introduction modelled on the Beggar's frame-play-like Introduction. He begins by bluntly throwing the audience right into the middle of the action: "Beggars are begging, thieves thieving, whores whoring. A ballad singer sings a Moritat" (Prol., p.3). Already amidst this action, the Peachum family, decorously "stroll across the stage" (Prol., p.3) while, at the end of the song which describes Mackie's murderours deeds, he himself "steps out from among them the whores and walks quickly across the stage and *exit*" (Prol., p.4).

This Prologue functions as a quick cinematographic flash, which analyzed in its essence already reveals Soho as a microcosm (much like Newgate). There, a ballad singer (representing the artist) and figures of the *bas-fond*, as well as the bourgeois element (represented by the Peachum family) live congenially.

This blunt *mise-en-scène* destructs the function of the Moritat singer as Brecht's satirist mask. In this respect, unlike most satirists, Brecht does not create a mask from behind which to attack. On the contrary, his epic theatre aims at taking off the theatre's mask as illusion. Everything must be seen as clearly as possible, in a critical attitude as an alterable reality. For such, Brecht uses the conflict between culture and religion, sexual morality and changing social circumstances in a diturbing way as to show them as susceptible to change. This explaining the further structural changes in

The Threepenny Opera in relation to The Beggar's Opera.

Another such difference is that in Gay's play the actual wedding scene between Macheath and Polly never takes place on stage, whereas in Brecht's, an entire scene has been dedicated to it. The main purpose of the scene is to explicitly show the nature of the interrelation between the characters, within the framework of marriage. This is the praxis of one of Brecht's theoretical concepts:

The proper way to explore humanity's new mutual relationships is via the exploration of the new subject-matter. (Marriage, disease, money, war, etc.).¹⁷

In this scene celebrating marriage, we have Mackie marry Polly, first because it is the bourgeois thing to do, to wed to acquire the respectability of a family man, to eventually constitute a family - the bulwark against society's deterioration, the guardian of the bourgeois values. Secondly, his marriage provides him with a "means of safe-guarding his business"¹⁸, as well as providing him with the comforts of a domestic life, as he clearly explains to the audience:

Today, in this stable, my marriage to Miss Polly Peachum will be celebrated; she has followed me for love, in order to share the rest of my life with me.
(Act I, sc.2, p.14)

Here we can also note the egotistical tone apparent in the use of the first person possessive pronoun, clearly revealing that this marriage is for his personal benefit. Again, we have the hypocritical bourgeois pretense of marriage for love, and an example of the type of linguistic jargons which are employed throughout the entire play, to which we will come back later.

In this same scene, other bourgeois values are satirized, such as the notion of property, of proper appearances, of the religious marriage ceremony, and of marriage as an idealization of happiness, followed by another example of bourgeois linguistic jargon:

POLLY: But you're not thinking of having our marriage here? It's just a nasty, common stable. You can't invite the clergyman here. And besides, it isn't even ours. We really ought not to begin our new life with a burglary, Mac. This is the happiest day of our lives!
(Act II, sc.2, p.14)

The above also reveals the bourgeois type of relationship between Mackie and Polly. Polly, the gentle wife, displaying a very thin and unrealistic touch with reality, and Mackie, the husband, the provider, making sure the house is well furnished with the proper furniture (Act II, sc.2, p.16-7). The petty discussion about furniture styles, taking on the greatest importance, overshadows the fact that the gang, in order of obtain this furniture to decorate the stable, had to kill three people. These killings demonstrate the difference between Mackie and his gang. In Mackie's view, these killings would be acceptable only if justifiable as business, since for a typical bourgeois violence is, in principle, repugnant:

MACHEATH: My orders were: bloodshed to be avoided. It makes me sick when I think of it. You'll never make businessmen. Cannibals — but never businessmen!
(Act II, sc.2, p.15)

Polly's reaction to this is the typically bourgeois innocuous sense of pity:

POLLY (crying): All those poor people, just for a few bits of furniture!
(Act II, sc.2, p.16)

Another aspect of the bourgeois husband/wife relationship is apparent in terms of the husband's domination, dictating the wife's behavior, as we have Macheath say to Polly in the second part of his speech after she has sung "Pirate Jenny":

MACHEATH: What d'you mean: nice? That's art, not nice. You did it wonderfully, Polly. But before such swine — pardon me, your

REVEREND: There's no point, it's wasted.
 (In an undertone to Polly:) Anyway, I don't
 approve of your doing this play-acting,
 kindly drop it in future.
 (Act II, sc. 2, p.26)

This is also a critical allusion to the fact that the typical bourgeois has a very dim view of acting, considering the actor/actress as morally decadent, and therefore a very improper behavior for a decent wife to copy. We can also observe here the satire on bourgeois decorous respect for the religious figure of the Reverend, as Mackie asks an exaggerated forgiveness for his swearing, considering he has used a very mild term.

At another level, opening a parenthesis to consider the very revolutionary content of the song itself

And the ship with eight sails and
 With fifty great cannon
 Will shoot up the town.

 Will sail off with me.
 (Act I, sc.2, p.25)

we have Pirate Jenny represent the proletariat who will be rescued from the exploitation of the dominant classes and will sail away in total freedom, on the armed ship of Revolution. So, in connection to Mackie's statement that the song is not "nice", but "art", we can also interpret this as Brecht's own voice commenting on the didactic role of art in a revolutionary society, for we cannot forget that The Threepenny Opera was written just as Brecht had initiated his Marxist studies.

The tone of friendship and trust existing between Gay's Macheath and his gang is substituted for a tone denoting a strictly business relationship in Brecht. Mackie is the boss, and the gang his employees. This is clear and they themselves understand that their relationship is not personal but, instead, based on exploitation. Mackie always takes the credits for all that the gang does, and on top of it, treats them very roughly (Act II, sc.2, p.22).

The polite manners and the high style of language found

in Gay have also vanished, but there is always the attempt at covering this up. Someone is always trying to remedy the situation and trying to put things back to a polite level. This becomes a sort of repetitious game, creating a very comic effect. We have the contrast of the low and high styles alternated by funny gestures and looks criss-crossing the scene, interspersed by comments which clearly satirize the bourgeois manners. For example, during the wedding banquet, their appreciation of the high quality of the food they are eating is counterbalanced by the fact that the food is stolen, and by the fact that the gang members usually have "an empty belly" (Act II, sc. 2, p.20).

This scene also furthers the satire on religion by making fun at the wedding as a religious ceremony. When Reverend Kimball comes in to officiate the ceremony, his arrival is celebrated by the gang singing a dirty song. Added to that, the gang goes on making fun of him lowering him down to their own level. A scene of complete debauch.

Interrupting all this, in comes Tiger Brown, the sheriff, the equivalent of Gay's Lockit. Unlike Lockit, though, Brown is Mackie's longtime friend. They have served in India as soldiers, and as they sing the "Song of the Heavy Cannon", they describe the bloody business of war and foreign army campaigns, probably an allusion and attack on the exploitation and carnage of other peoples perpetrated by the British Empire in its colonies, expressed in a very graphically violent song (Act I, sc. 2, p.29). This can also be extrapolated as a criticism of all carnages perpetrated by all peoples on similar grounds. This takes us to the consideration that while Gay's criticism is topical, of a certain social group in London, Brecht's criticism is international, proposing a revolutionary dialectic. It encompasses a wider range of social disturbances, as described in the song above.

As pointed out by Brecht himself, Brown is constantly tortured by a duality in his being. Because he is a bourgeois sheriff, "he conceals within himself two persons - the private individual being entirely different from the official".¹⁹ In his private life, he is Macheath's friend and "his affection for

Macheath is thoroughly genuine".²⁰ He really suffers when Macheath is caught and imprisoned:

BROWN: Mac, I didn't do it...I did everything
I could...don't look at me like that, Mac...
I can't bear it...Your silence is terrible!
(Act II, sc.3, p.55)

His weeping is both on account of his guilty feelings as the betrayer of his friend, as well as for his own suffering on account of an inner conflict which he, as an individual, cannot resolve. As the sheriff, society demands that he imprisons his friend and that he acts in a way totally incongruent with his "peaceful" bourgeois feelings. This, in a Marxist view, is a conflict which the individual, alone, cannot resolve, thus his fear and cowardice. This conflict can only be solved through the transformation of society, which in turn will reshape the individual.

The relationship between Brown and his constable again reveals the tone of animosity and clash in the relationship employer/employee, as Brown shouting calls him "swine".

Still concerning Mackie as the bourgeois hero, we can understand Brecht's satiric intent towards some of his bourgeois traits by the way he relates to the prostitutes, in the brothel scene.

Differently from Gay, where we have the aristocratic Macheath have his whores come to him, Brecht's Mackie himself goes to his brothel in Wapping, in itself a very bourgeois setting, described in the following manner:

An ordinary evening. The whores, mostly
in their shifts, are quietly ironing,
playing draughts, washing themselves: a
middle-class idyll.
(Act II, sc.2, p.49)

The very fact that Mackie goes to the brothel does not so much represent an act of unfaithfulness towards Polly, nor does it necessarily represent an act of individual moral weakness. He does so out of habit. He is used to these regular visits, and cannot avoid them. He is not driven, like Gay's Macheath towards pleasure, out of epicurism, out of enjoyment for

enjoyment's sake, for his love of sex. He cannot even save his life because he cannot overcome his habit. This is evidenced in the following lines, where even his entrance in the brothel seems totally devoid of excitement. As he hangs his hat and sits, we can feel the routine implicit in this act. Macheath comes in as Jacob and the whores wonder on whether Mackie will come, as usual, or not. They are very surprised indeed that he does come, acting as if nothing had happened, as if his life were not in danger:

Enter Macheath. He hangs his hat on a nail and sits on the sofa behind the table.

MACHEATH: My coffe, please!

VIXEN:(repeats astounded): My coffee, please!

JACOB:(horrified): Why aren't you in Highgate?

MACHEATH: Today is Thursday. I cannot let such trifles disturb my habits. (He throws his charge-sheet on the floor.) Besides, it's raining.

(Act II, sc.2, p.50)

As we can see, he is "pedantically punctual" in his habits.

The prostitutes themselves, in their conversations and habitual actions, are also a clear allusion to the middle-class bourgeois taste. They understand, as commodities that they are, that men such as Mackie enjoy the feeling of being at home when they go to a brothel. Men cannot even break loose from familiarity, as revealed by the conversation between Mackie and the *ladies*. The talk is about the important role of underwear in their sexual activities, pointing out that men prefer the familiarity, the homeness of plain linen to silk (Act II, sc.2, p. 5).

In this context, "The Ballad of Sexual Submissiveness" is the culmination of the behavior exemplified by Mackie, in his imprisoning habitual obligation towards sex as a necessity which eventually causes his downfall. This is also meant as a broader attack on the general bourgeois mentality: "What gets him down? What gets'em all down? Women".(Act II, Interlude, p.48)

This submission to the physical necessity, on a more

symbolic level, represents the overpowering strength of emotion over rationality, the fatal cause of man's downfall.

In this scene we can also observe that the juxtaposition of events in Brecht becomes a theatrical device in which plot functions in connection with the ideological purpose of showing the actions of people in their interrelation, opposite to Gay, where the action is more linear, since what matters is the advancement of the story-line. Consequently, in this same scene, which prepares Macheath's betrayal, many activities are going on at the same time. While the whores go about their domestic duties of washing and ironing, Jacob sits and reads, oblivious to what is happening, Ginny Jenny goes out, and as Macheath dances (a typical cabaret hat-and-cane dance), the following is taking place outside, as described in the stage directions:

As Macheath sings, Ginny Jenny stands outside the window right and beckons to Constable Smith. Then Mrs. Peachum joins her. All three stand under the street lamp and look into the house.

(Act II, sc.2, p.52)

Ginny Jenny's betrayal is again a satire on religion, this time in a more subtle way, a parody of Jesus's betrayal by Judas, which besides criticizing the bourgeois religious values, corroborates Macheath's characterization as a scapegoat, as a Christ *manquē*. We have seen the same parallel in The Beggar's Opera, but in The Threepenny Opera the purpose of this identification of Macheath with Christ is different. Brecht intentionally demystifies the figure of Christ by presenting him as a common man, a product of his circumstances.

Other evidences that place Macheath as a Christ *manquē* can be found in Act III: Mackie's hanging will be on a Friday, as Christ's; he prays in a clear parallel to Jesus's night of agony at Gethsemane. Purposefully, as we can see from the stage directions, Macheath prays, but at the same time, he does it quickly, in an attitude between accepting and rejecting:

Hark to the voice that pleads for pity, hark!
 Macheath lies here — beneath no hawthorn tree
 Nor under elms but in a dungeon dark.
 (Act III, sc.3, pg.85)

Besides the content, making his agony seem worse than Christ's, as he says that he is in no garden, but on a "dungeon dark" (which can also be extended to mean life on earth as "the vale of tears"), Mackie also lectures the audience, asking them to take some action to change the state of affairs, in the very epic device of speaking directly to the audience and making them think critically - "do you not ask, my friends, (identification device) where he hath strayed?" (Act III, sc.3, p.85).

The gang, through some of their names (Jacob, James and Mathew) is also a way of establishing the connection Macheath/Christ, and Macheath's final speech before the reprieve (Act III, sc.3, p.92-3) the "Ballad in which Macheath begs pardon of all" (Act III, sc. 3, p.93-4) confirms the parody of Christ's final words on the cross.

Mackie's antagonist is, of course, as in Gay, Peachum. but again in the two plays the nature of their relationship is different. In The Beggar's Opera Peachum respects Macheath as a gentleman, as a man of individual merits. In The Threepenny Opera, on the contrary, Peachum's relation with Macheath, determining his taking any action against him, is the fact that Mackie has deprived him of Polly (one of his employees), has threatened his personal material security. Mackie's other crimes and deeds as an individual only matter as a means through which Peachum can have him put in jail.

Brecht's Peachum, even though a villain and who, according to Brecht himself, should be characterized as the "villain in the convention of the old-fashioned theatre"²¹, is a more somber and pitiful character than Gay's Peachum.

In The Beggar's Opera, Peachum is powerful, almost unlimitedly so, for he can dispose of people's lives and does so legally. He can manage the system which has created him and allows him to exist. He dominates the system. In The Threepenny Opera, Peachum is a prisoner of his class, as the exploiter

capitalist that he is. He is at the top of the social scale, and through his understanding (Brecht's Marxist view) that there are only oppressors and oppressed, he has to keep his position, regardless. This makes him a frightened and desperate man. To him, even money does not matter, for "to him, who mistrusts everything which might arouse hope, even money appears to be a wholly inadequate defense".²² He does not even work, he just makes sure his business keeps running smoothly. "No truly frightened person works".²³ The things of this world are of no use to him, except the "tiny fraction which might possibly save a foundering man"²⁴, and this tiny fraction is religion.

As we have seen so far, the attack on religion as a bourgeois value is felt at many points in the play. Nevertheless, it is in relation to the Peachums as a family, guardians of moral and religious values that this attack becomes an unrelenting constancy. Beginning by Peachum's name - Jonathan Jeremiah, the name of two prophets. In his "morning anthem" Peachum approaches man as a religious being, "you old Image of Gawd" (Act I, sc. 1, p. 1) and this is the *soft spot* he will exploit, since his business is to exploit bourgeois pity: "My business is to arouse human pity". Brecht criticizes here the easy way the passive bourgeois rationalizes his inactivity, as if misery were an unalterable and inevitable part of human condition.

In Brecht, we have the idea of charity expanded and brought to another level. In Gay, we have the charity of the higher classes in allowing the performance of the Beggar's opera on a regular stage presented as a satiric but, nevertheless, positive factor. For Brecht, on the contrary, charity is always a negative attitude, and is expanded to constitute one of the main themes of the play, and one of the main targets of criticism.

Peachum owns an Establishment for Beggars, where he dresses them up to look more miserable and thus, by arousing pity, make more money. So, he is exploiting both the bourgeois society as well as the beggars. Very capitalistically, by using religious slogans (which he calls "spiritual weapons") straight

out of the Bible such as: "It is more blessed to give than to receive", or "Give and shall be given unto you", Peachum is really creating a market for his goods, the beggars, who as the prostitutes, are nothing more than commodities. A clear example of this is the appearance of Filch, who is treated by Brecht differently from Gay. In Gay, Filch, as a member of Peachum's gang, is treated as an individual, Mrs. Peachum even invites him to her room for a glass of "cordial". In The Threepenny Opera he becomes "Number 314", losing his worth as an individual, becoming part of the community of beggars.

In this scene Peachum describes the kinds of misery which affect the world in terms of outfits, as garments worn by his beggars, stressing the importance of the proper way of dressing in the exploitation of human feelings in order to obtain money. This whole business of Peachum owning a wardrobe room for beggars is a development of the embryonic statement in The Beggar's Opera where prostitutes were worth more for the way they were dressed than for their physical attributes or professional abilities:

The sight of them miseries induces that unnatural state of mind in which a man is actually willing to give money away.
 Outfit A - Victim of the Progress of Modern Traffic. The cheerful Cripple, always good tempered (....). Outfit B: Victim of the Art of War. The Troublesome Twitcher, annoys passers-by, his job is to arouse disgust — (....) modified by medals. Outfit C: Victim of the Industrial Boom. The Pitiable Blind, or the High School of the Art of Begging (....). Outfit E: Young man who's seen better days, preferably one who "never thought he would come down to this".
 (Act I, sc.1, p.9-10)

In view of this, we could even establish a direct parallel between the prostitutes and the miseries in their shared function as means of exploitation, a parallel which also includes the beggars.

It is important to notice at this point, too, that while The Beggar's Opera, as a beggar opera, depicts a low-class world enacted by beggar-actors, the characters themselves could be considered as aristocrat-beggars, in the sense that they act as

high-class people, even if for the effect of parody. In The threepenny Opera, the beggars are actually beggars in the strict sense of the word.

In Gay, Filch attributes his downfall to one woman, who initiated him in crime. In Brecht, as Filch talks about his upbringing, his bad luck of not having had "a father's care or the blessings of a contented home", he "sank deeper and deeper into the morass of the great city", he is making a statement against society, not against individuals. As he goes on saying that he is "completely distitute, a prey to his own desires" (Act I, sc. 1. p.6-7), he is also alluding to himself as a victim of materialistic determinism.²⁵

Peachum's relationship with Brown is also of a different nature form Gay's play, where we have Peachum and Lockit quarrel about honor, at the same social level. In The Threepenny Opera, Peachum threatens Brown, who he does not even know personally, as the voice of bourgeois society, which considers the police only as another force employed by the capitalist ruling classes to keep order essential to the maintenance of the system. There is nothing strictly personal in this relationship.

Also very typical of the epic theatre and of the emphasis on historic relations of the Marxist doctrine, the threat Peachum poses to Brown is illustrated by an historic event describing how an Egyptian chief of police "guilty of some petty injustice toward the lower classes" was punished by having "snakes (....) nourished at his bosom" (Act II, sc. 3, p.66).

Structurally speaking, the preoccupation with history in Brecht's epic theatre takes on further applications. The very text - Gay's opera - is reworked as an old story which, through its non-familiarity to the more modern audiences for having occurred in a past time, can function more effectively as an epic past, with a greater alienatory potential. The isolated, narrated story makes it easier for the audience to be critical and to reflect, by not identifying themselves with the action. As a requirement of the Brechtian theatre, this critical attitude is the key to the realization that the world

is made by man and that learning from history he can alter the world. Thus, the historical past is an essential element in the shaping of the future.

Another important element of the tradition changed for purposes of alienation and strangement is the use of music, the song, accompanied as they are by setting and lighting devices. Differently from Gay's use of the arias, the songs in The Threepenny Opera are used to break the flow of the action in order to keep the audience in a constant state of critical alertness. These interruptions are also effected with the aid of devices such as titles and boards, which anticipate the content of the songs; by the actor's stepping to the front of the curtain; by the special song illumination by a golden light; by the lit up organ which accompanies the singing; and by three lights coming down on a bar from above. All these devices prevent the spectators from being spellbound.

Aside the theatrical devices, the very content of the songs reveals this same purpose. A good example is "The Song of Solomon" (Act III, sc.1, p.78), which, in a way, takes what has been sung in "The Song of the Futility of all Human Endeavor" (Act III, sc.1, p.75) to a historically analytical perspective. In "The song of the Futility", man is presented as not being smart enough to accomplish any of his plans, for he can be blinded by "any rogue (....) with a clever lie". In the Song of Solomon", the wise king, the universal archetype of wisdom declares that "all is vanity": wisdom means nothing, neither does Cleopatra's beauty, nor Julius Caesar's bravery, nor Bertolt Brecht's inquisitiveness nor "our friend Macheath's emotion. all these qualities "a man is better off without". the only attribute man cannot dispense is rationality:

So long as he was rational
And took whate'er there was to take
His fame was international.
(Act III, sc.1, p.79)

So, besides the content praising rationality as a critical ability and as the guide for actions, the structural organization of the song itself establishes the important role

of fiction (in this case the theatre) as a means of achieving this type of awareness. This is obtained through the internal shift of the song from allusions to historical figures of the past to the author's present, through the allusion to himself, to finally reach a fictional level through the allusion to Macheath, a fictional character. In this song, Brecht reunites his concept of the role of history and of the role of the theatre (art) as means available to man in his rational task of reshaping the future.

Included in the use of songs as alienation devices are the "Threepenny Finales" which, consisting of three songs, synthesize and explicitly convey three important messages. The *threepenny* of the title of the play significantly corresponds to the structural division of the play into three acts (containing three scenes each), each one ending with a *threepenny lesson*, given from the proscenium:
the first,

The world is poor and men are bad
There is of course no more to add.
(Act I, sc.3, p.41)

the second,

So gentlemen, do not be taken in:
Men live exclusively by mortal sin.
(Act II, sc.3, p.68)

the third, in a very ironic tone, leading to critical alienation:

Combat injustice but in moderation:
Such things will freeze to death if left alone.
Remember: this whole vale of tribulation
Is black as pitch and cold as any stone.
(Act III, sc.3, p.96)

Here we have the coming together of the constant duality light/darkness presented throughout the play, in terms of content as well as of theatrical devices.

The third "Threepenny Finale" is "The Arrival of the

Mounted Messenger". This very short scene provides us with the essence of The Threepenny Opera in all its levels. As a parody, it most clearly criticizes the dramatic Aristotelian theatre by having a chorus announce the entrance of the Mounted Messenger, emphasized by an Elizabethan tone through language style,

CHORUS: Hark, who comes?
The Royal Messenger riding comes!
(Act III, sc.3, p.95)

and the chorus ending the play, delivering the final message, echoing of Greek Tragedy. The happy-ending itself, the possibility of rescue given by a royal pardon parodies the traditional type of play where the hero is always saved at the last minute, including, of course, the opera.

In this sudden reversal of the hero's luck, or in Aristotelian terms, *peripeteia* through the use of a messenger functioning as a *deus-ex-machina*, the parody of the Aristotelian traditional kind of theatre reaches its peak.

In terms of epic alienation devices, we have the use of the boards explaining the action; in terms of the action itself, all the characters leave the stage and come back carrying "hurricane lamps", in a symbolic gesture of bringing lights as understanding; and Peachum addresses the audience, thus highlighting the epic content of his speech:

So, now the whole thing has a happy end!
How calm and peaceful would our life be
always if a messenger came from the king
whenever we wanted.
(Act III, sc.3, p.95)

In terms of satire, through parody and the epic devices, we have the clear attack on the bourgeois society, which "has, for its part, produced a bourgeois order of the world, and therefore has quite a distinct *Weltanschauung* (....)"²⁶, as Peachum goes on explaining that what has been shown is the situation of the poorest of the poor, whose end in reality is usually bad, for a queenly pardon is very rare.

In this "finale" it is again implicit another attack on religion since since the Mounted Messenger can also take on

religious connotations.

Through repentance, charity and the obedience of Christian values, there is always the hope that, inspite of all, at the end salvation is possible. Thus, the Coronation scene, which at first seems an element of disorder, becomes, in fact, a means through which the bourgeois order is fully achieved.

The happy ending of the play reinforces the parody on the traditional dramatic theatre:

Macheath will not be hanged till he is dead.
 We have devised another end instead.

 This is an opera, and we mean to do you proud.
 (Act III, sc.3, p.95)

This comment, as in Gay, also points at a certain metatheatricity on Brecht's part. As he stops the play in order to remind the audience that they are in the theatre, he is presenting "the reality in his play as that of theatre and not that of life".²⁷

Having established the main points of difference between Gay's Aristotelian theatre and Brecht's epic innovations, we go on to discuss Friedrich Dürrenmatt's Frank V as yet another different trend in the beggar opera tradition, even though directly linked to Brecht. The following quotation from The Threepenny Opera:

We bourgeois artisans, who work with honest
 jimmies on the cash boxes of small
 shopkeepers, are being swallowed up by large
 concerns backed by banks(....)
 What is the burgling of a bank to the
 founding of a bank?
 (Act III, sc.3, p.92)

mostly clearly establishes Frank V as a progeny of the Brechtian theme. Consequently, Dürrenmatt, by taking up this idea, expands it and updates it much in the same way Brecht himself reworked The Beggar's Opera.

NOTES

¹GAY, John. The Beggar's Opera. In: ROBERTS, Edgar V., ed. The Beggar's Opera. Lincoln, University of Nebraska, 1969. p.82

²RICHTIE, J.M. Brecht and Cabaret. In: BARTRAM, G. & WAINE, A. Brecht in Perspective. New York, Longman, 1982. p.169.

³See RODRIGUES, Selma Calasans. O teatro épico de Bertolt Brecht. Revista Tempo Brasileiro, Rio, 72:133, jan./mar. 1983.

⁴WAGER, Walter. Friedrich Dürrenmatt. In:———. The Playwrights Speak. New York, Delacorte, 1967. p.79.

⁵Cited in RICHTIE, J.M., p.161.

⁶RICHTIE, p.161.

⁷RICHTIE, p.164.

⁸WILLET, John. The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht; a study from eight aspects. Norfolk, Conn., New Directions, 1959. p.88.

⁹WILLET, p.89.

¹⁰WILLET, p.89.

¹¹WILLET, p.93.

¹²WILLET, p.115.

¹³BRECHT, Bertolt. The Literarization of the Theatre. In:———. WILLET; John. Brecht on Theatre; the development of an aesthetic. New York, Hill & Wang, 1977. p.46.

¹⁴BRECHT, Bertolt. Notes to the Threepenny Opera. In:———. The Threepenny Opera. New York, Grove, 1964. p.101. This and all quotations of The Threepenny Opera are from this version.

¹⁵BRECHT, Notes...., p.103.

¹⁶The Moritat was a "moralizing horror-ballad sung (....) by street singers and beggars in backyards, at fairs and the like". RICHTIE, p.166.

¹⁷BRECHT, The Literarization...., p.29

¹⁸BRECHT, Notes...., p.102.

¹⁹BRECHT, Notes...., p.102.

²⁰BRECHT, Notes...., p.103.

²¹BRECHT, Notes...., p.100.

²²BRECHT, Notes...., p.100.

²³BRECHT, Notes...., p.100.

²⁴BRECHT, Notes...., p.100.

²⁵Furthermore, again we have the allusion to the big city as the place of corruption, which substitutes the real and orderly values as the rural environment for chaotic and illusory ones, according to ARMENS.

²⁶BRECHT, Notes...., p.109.

²⁷ABEL, Lionel. Brecht and Metatheatre. In:———. Metatheatre. New York, Hill & Wang, 1963. p.105.

2. Friedrich Dürrenmatt: Frank V

Granted that Frank V updates the beggar opera tradition, the following discussion of the play is developed mainly in relation to Brecht's The Threepenny Opera and of Gay's The Beggar's Opera, purposefully avoiding references to Chico Buarque's Opera do Malandro, considering that it had not been created by the time Frank V appeared in Zurich.

Yet, for purposes of emphasis in placing Frank V as the epitome of the beggar opera tradition as a whole, pushing some of its basic elements to their limits, artificial connections between the two plays are later established, bearing in mind, though, that the two plays are in no real way connected.

As it has been previously stated, Friedrich Dürrenmatt prefers to attribute the sources of inspiration for writing Frank V: The Opera of a Private Bank (1959) to the Shakespearean tradition rather than to Brecht's The Threepenny Opera, as it has been commonly accepted. Perhaps in defense of the widespread accusations of plagiarism in relation to Brecht's opera, Dürrenmatt has had to frequently and overtly discuss his play in terms of its influences probably more often than he would have liked to.

More precisely, Dürrenmatt cites the English 1958 production of Titus Andronicus, "a horror play"¹ as the point of departure for his Frank V.

Indeed, Shakespeare's influence can be felt, especially in the structuring of the play, and more so in relation to Frank V as a parody of the Shakespearean type of tragedy.

Besides other influences, such as the detective story with its elements of suspense and dynamism, and even the tint of Greek tragedy, in Frank V the epic tone of Thornton Wilder can also be foregrounded. Dürrenmatt himself admits that source of

influence based on his admiration toward the work of the American playwright, which he carefully studied years before he started his own career as a playwright.² We can indeed pick out parts of Böckmann's epic speech as an example of this similarity with Wilder's style, especially in the use of the epic device of narrative, as a means of creating an atmosphere out of an almost bare stage. The example bellow is particularly reminiscent of the Stage Manager's role of narrator in Our Town:

L'endroit où je me trouve est la salle des guichets. Le petit café que est d'habitude au milieu de la scène, vous le trouverez évoqué à gauche par une table et deux chaises. La première est occupée par M.Schlumpf, un des nos fidèles clients. Il est plongé dans la lecture de notre petite feuille locale, universellement connue.

(Sc. VI, p.12)³

Such an assessment of influences in Dürrenmatt's Frank V is of particular importance in this study, since we want to establish his opera as having taken the beggar opera tradition to a new direction in relation to Brecht's strong epic influence. Nevertheless, it would be unfair and even erroneous to overlook the still strong ties which link Frank V to The Threepenny Opera.

For one thing, it would be extremely coincidental the fact that Bertolt Brecht himself had expressed his desire to write a bank play, an intention which he partially fulfilled in writing the Threepenny Novel (1934) in which he "reveals the crime latent in business"⁴, depicting the "truth about the relationship between bourgeois legality and crime".⁵ Furthermore, this whole idea can be found in an embryonic stage in The Threepenny Opera itself as Macheath explains that:

Between ourselves, it's only a question of weeks before I switch to banking exclusively. It's safer and more profitable.
(Act II, Sc. 1, p.44)⁶

Naturally, by this we do not intend to have Dürrenmatt's words sound deceitful. By denying any Brechtian influence,

Dürrenmatt is mostly rejecting that Marxist connections be established concerning his play, as expressed by the playwright himself:

I'm not representing a capitalistic society,
but rather an authoritarian system. (....)
Freedom is the real problem of the play.⁷

And right enough, the above constitutes precisely the fundamental difference between the two plays in question.

It has been said that "the closeness of Frank V to Dreigroschenoper tends to lessen the value of Dürrenmatt's play".⁸ On the contrary, this study intends to show that as a parody of the other plays of the beggar opera tradition (excepting Buarque's) and as a continuation and development of its themes, the closeness of Frank V to Brecht's and Gay's plays not only becomes indispensable as well as very enriching. The closer these plays get to one another, the more they become a whole unified text under the effect of the intertextuality of parody, and the more they contribute to the dialectic and satiric role of their tradition as social criticism, the axis upon which they exist.

Despite the similarities between The Threepenny Opera and Frank V, we insist on saying that the latter is not a Brechtian play in the sense most critics like to judge it. Instead of plagiarism, we would like to consider it a parody in the sense of critical revision, where Brechtian themes are retaken by Dürrenmatt as "sounding boards from which his own ideas give back new resonances".⁹

In this light, Frank V is shown as the purposeful retaking of Brecht's play in order to repudiate some of the ideas it implies, to function, in turn, as a demonstration of what could be done with the theme, in a non-didactic, less naïve view of man, a more realistic and humanistic Dürrenmattian approach, in harmony with the playwright's *Weltanschauung*. At the same time, his parody effects a kind of revision, postulating a new theatrical grammar, as well as forwards a different reading of a same truth, considering it is a spin-off of Brecht's already formulated relation robber/banker.

It follows that the textual analysis of Frank V tries to establish how the above elements interact with the various elements common to the other *operas*, and the way they are reworked, resulting in the unified whole which constitutes the play. Furthermore, the pertinent connections are established between this play and the other plays of the tradition both as an original play in itself as well as its role as an integrated element within the tradition but which, nevertheless, as an element of change, opens up yet a new direction in the fortune of the beggar opera tradition.

Much like The Beggar's Opera, Frank V begins with an Overture, in which Richard Egli, the bank's chief of personnel, before closed curtains, explains what the play to come is all about, already foregrounding the embryonic elements to be developed in the play.

Unlike Gay's play, though, this opening speech does not function, along with the final scene, as a frame-play. Frank V does not give the impression of being a play-within-a-play. Rather, this speech, in its direct appeal to the audience "Public! Aie le courage de te reconnaître dans les actes que nous accomplirons" (Sc. 1, p.8), resembles more closely an epic call in the Brechtian style. The speech shares another similarity with Gay's work in that it also establishes the generic nature of the play through metatheatrical comments such as:

Moitié tragédie, moitié buffonnerie,
L'opéra d'une banque privée
(Sc. I, p.8)

It is precisely this half-way between tragedy and comedy that better defines the nature of Dürrenmatt's theatre in general, and consequently Frank V as an example of it. Heretofore in this study, we have seen that the comic has played a vital part within this tradition in more ways than one. First, there is the impossibility of dissociating the comic elements inherent in satire and of overlooking the ridicule element implicit in some types of parody. Furthermore, as it has been previously stated, Gay, with The Beggar's Opera,

could be considered one of the precursors in raising the status of the comic traditionally relegated to a secondary level in relation to the tragedy and other *serious* forms of theatre.

For Brecht, the comic element in the theatre was essential not only as another device for creating critical distance, but also as a "general theatrical spirit incorporated in the idea that theatre should be fun!"¹⁰ Of course, fun here is dissociated from its meaning of sheer amusement. Rather, it should be understood as "the pleasure at working things out, the joy of a logical solution",¹¹ in compliance with Brecht's view of reason as the most positive and powerful quality of man.

For Dürrenmatt, the comic, especially in the form of the tragicomedy, becomes the only way out for the modern theatre, its sole mode of existence, since in his view pure tragedy is no more possible. The concept of tragicomedy springs from the possibility of achieving the tragic only out of comedy, comedy as "a frightening moment, as an abyss that opens suddenly",¹² as the only way through which modern man can still be reached in his loss of contact with himself. Man can see himself only through comedy's power of creating distance. In this use of the comic to achieve critical distance, both Brecht's and Dürrenmatt's theatrical theories come together, even if ideologically their purposes vary greatly.

At another level, the function of Dürrenmatt's comedy is of reestablishing order to "a world about to fold like ours".¹³ Comedy thus conceived goes beyond the topicality of the mere "satire of a particular society"¹⁴, and of "what the public understands by humour, which is a cosiness that is now sentimental and now frivolous".¹⁵ Instead, it reaches out for the universal, achieving an unsettling effect and the preciseness of the grotesque. In his conception of comedy, the grotesque is "one of the great possibilities of being precise" through which "the weakness and limitations of man are demonstrated".¹⁶

Whereas for Brecht the use of epic devices, such as the comic to achieve critical distance, aims at bringing the spectator to reason in order to act in a revolutionary way toward the change of a certain social situation according to a

specific ideology, Dürrenmatt's theatre, by warning, by showing a possible world, leaves to the spectator the task of finding his own solutions. His theatre is not intent on prescribing ideologies.

From Egli's definition of the play as the opera of a private bank, the basic duality inherent in the title of the plays belonging to the beggar opera tradition elicits two sorts of considerations. The first having to do with the operatic form, and the second with all the possible connections implied by the idea of a private bank as a microcosm.

Taken as an opera, Frank V differs in purpose from the other two plays. While Gay and Brecht purposefully choose to parody the operatic form in order to satirize the classes which patronize it, in Dürrenmatt this sort of parodic intent seems not to be a prevalent one, since later Dürrenmatt himself rewrote the play, cutting down the musical numbers considerably and changed its subtitle from *opera* to *comedy with music*.¹⁷ Rather, according to most critics, including TIUSANEN, the use of songs in Frank V seems to "soften rather than accentuate the total effect; they create a kind of poetic, pure theatricalistic dimension; they are subservient to the word".¹⁸ Thus considered, the music element in Frank V also differs from Brecht's epic use, since the songs are not generally employed to interrupt the flow of the action nor to comment on it, functioning as indoctrination devices. As stated by Dürrenmatt himself, "the songs don't generalize the play, the way they do in The Threepenny Opera".¹⁹

Even if the operatic structure of Frank V does not purport parody of the opera as a genre, we can detect, on another level, an implied parodic intention in its closely dangerous approximation with the beggar opera tradition. And the word dangerous is used here on account of Dürrenmatt's denial of influence, for denial or no denial, intentionally or not, Frank V, as a millionaire's opera, parodies the preceding beggar operas, by virtue of its inversion in point of view.

This inversion is pointed out early in the chief of personnel's speech as he explains that the opera is about a bank because:

Quand on vous montre de sans le sou,
 Vous pleurez tous,

 Vous n'êtes objectifs qu'en face de gens de
 notre espèce:
 Il n'y a d'art classique qu'a partir d'n
 milliard!
 (Sc. I, p.8)

So, if on one hand in The Beggar's Opera Gay satirizes the higher classes by depicting a beggarly and miserable world in an attempt to make them realize that these two worlds are indeed alike, and if in The Threepenny Opera Brecht shows the miseries of the lower classes as the consequences of the exploitation perpetrated by the higher classes, also through the point of view of the poor, Dürrenmatt, inversely, depicts the world of the rich in order to expose the miseries of our times. In Frank V the rich are shown as pitiful and miserable creatures, in order to make the satire more effective through the presentation of shocking reversals that seem, at first, paradoxical and absurd.

Thus, with Frank V's reversal of the satirical equation from Gay's criminals acting as aristocrats and Brecht's criminals acting as bourgeois, to Dürrenmatt's millionaires acting as criminals, we are confronted with a type of parody which functions as a critical revision, as the adaptation of an already existing theme to a new context. In a sense, what Dürrenmatt did to the tradition in the fifties is the same Brecht had done to Gay's play in the twenties.

This development in the tradition well exemplifies the concept of parody as intertextuality, also confirming the tradition's crucial role as satire.

Egli's quotation also implies an attack on the Marxist view attributing the evils of society to its class division, based on the premise that "unos están en la sombra y los otros al sol"²⁰, which corroborates the idea that Frank V is not a Brechtian play at the ideological level. For Dürrenmatt this reflects a naïve belief in the power of man in controlling his

social environment, and therefore, the flow of history. As reflected in Frank V, it is Dürrenmatt's point of view that "man turns history into a record of accidents and vain attempts to experiment with himself and his environment".²¹ Consequently, this idea goes directly against the Brechtian concept of history presented previously, and as it will be seen in the play, it is behind Dürrenmatt's "never allow [ing] (...) grandiose human efforts to end in success".²²

Considered as a comment on art, Egli's words reflect Dürrenmatt's criticism on the current situation of art. Contrary to Gay, who states that poverty is almost a title to poetry in order to convey that the ideal of all arts is to be classless, in Frank V Dürrenmatt points at the same ideal, but inversely stating that, in our times, art has become an affair of the rich, like everything else in a society, where nothing exists other than in terms of money (millions).

To this idea, we can relate another one of Egli's verses in which he concedes that in the cruel and cold world depicted by the play "(...) l'antique gloire des vers s'est perdue" (Sc. I, p. 8) and that to recover this loss, in the play what is left are the solemn moments in which the characters sing realizing that "Cela sera notre façon à nous d'être poètes" (Sc. I, p.8).

This idea anticipates one of the aspects to be developed as the satire on a society or a world which, among other things, by relegating poetry (art), has become totally pragmatic and materialistic to the point of becoming unbearable.

Still in terms of structure, as an Aristotelian type of play (opposed to Brecht's epic theatre), Frank V is similar to The Beggar's Opera, in the way the scenes are arranged. The play is not divided into acts, and its fourteen scenes remind us of the Gayan type of division. This fact, plus Dürrenmatt's confessed Shakespearean sources of influence leads us to consider Frank V also as a parody of the Shakespearean as well as the classic forms of tragedy.

Again in Egli's speech this type of parody is suggested as he states that:

Nous les stratèges de la Bourse,
 Nous les comtes, les rois, les empereurs et
 les papes

De la finance

.....
 Nous nous dressons devant toi,
 Terribles,
 Assassins sans doute, mais presque semblables
 aux dieux,
 Ni moins grands, ni moins sanglants,
 Que les héros de Shakespeare.
 (Sc. I, p.8)

In these lines we have the reference to a new type of tragic hero. The hero of our days, of a new order, of our chaotic world, but which are, nevertheless, semigods and heroes and therefore worthy enough of being depicted as such in a new type of tragedy. But as we will see - especially through the characterization of Gottfried Frank (Frank V) - this new type of play, in which these heroes are presented, parodies its classic models, in accordance with Dürrenmatt's theories about the impossibility of the classic type of tragedy in our world.

This brings us to the considerations implied by the idea of a private bank as a microcosm and, again, Egli's words anticipate what is going to be developed in the play in terms of social satire, as he states that:

C'est une banque que vous allez voir.
 Réchauffez-vous au soleil de sa gloire,
 Puis prenez part à sa ruine.
 (Sc. I, p.8)

Similarly to Newgate and Soho, the Frank Bank is virtually the world (or we should say the underworld, since many of its scenes are actually in its gothic basement and cemetery), in which the action takes place. Although some scenes are at the café "Chez Guillome" (named in honor of William Shakespeare) or by the lake near the bank or even the palace of the president of the republic, they are all within the boundaries of this possible world, through which Dürrenmatt wants to convey not a specific place, but rather an institution as the model of the world. Consequently, the behavior of its employees is made an example of human behavior.

This bank as well as its employees are in the beginning of

the play described by one of the characters, Heini Zurmühl, who had been observing them for quite some time, as

(....) un établissement tout ce qu'il y a de riche, foncièrement honnête.

.....
Officiel.

(Sc. II, p.8)

In this, we have the first of many aspects of the play establishing the assumption that what seems official and apparently honest is not necessarily so. This apparent honesty is only a mask behind which the crookedness of the financial world operates. The same can be said about each one of the characters of the play, beginning with the two "naïfs" or country boys Pauli Neukomm and Heini Zurmühl, who seem to be just casually having a drink and talking at the café in front of the bank. We soon discover that behind this innocent attitude they mask the intent to robbing the bank as a solution to their financial problems. This is not only a solution, but as according to Heini himself, it is *the* solution.

The other characters are the employees of the bank and we watch them pretend to one another that they are only waiting for the time when they will start leading an honest life, a time which never comes. They all wear the mask of good intentions to hide their cowardice and personal corruption.

Viewed as such, the personal mask of beggar worn by Gay in order to better satirize his vicious society, in Frank V assumes a totally different and terrifying connotation. The mask of beggar viewed as the marginal, as the outcast, according to a previous statement in this study, functions as a mirror in which society can come face to face with its deformities. Instead, it transforms it self into the mask of decency and honesty, which has the exactly opposite function - that of allowing society to hide its aberrations, and worse even, to go on perpetrating them.

Dürrenmatt's satire is aimed at this chaotic state of our world, in which greed passes for morality, depravity for honesty and good, and mechanical rationality as a substitute

for passion and responsibility. A world where money and material necessity have indeed become the only guides in man's life in general and of the characters of the play in particular.

It is in the name of material necessity that the bank, as Newgate, resembles a prison. It's employees are obliged to give up all their possessions for the sake fo the bank, but not only that, they give up all their dreams and ultimately their dignity so that the bank, as an institution can survive, as the provider of their security and physical comfort.

Thus we have Gaston Schmalz forced to exchange his old car for a brand new Buick which will leave him nearly bankrupt; or Théo Kappeler, who cannot marry and has to force his fiancée to have an abortion, for the employees of the bank are not allowed to have children since, the Franks do not have any; or Häberlin, who has to give up going to church on Sundays least he should become an honest man. In fact, they all have to give up their good intentions because, as Egli points out, "(....) vous êtes en grand danger de devenir honnêtes" (Sc. V, p.12).

Life as a prison without bars becomes so unbearable that the characters even long to go to a real prison as is the extreme case of Häberlin, who dreams with:

Les soirées tranquilles dans la cellule,
l'extinction de feux de très bonne heure, le
ciel qui s'assombrit dans la lucarne, les
premières étoiles, la calme, le sommeil
paisible!
(Sc. V, p.11)

This type of reversal, by presenting us with situations that seem so absurd and yet imbued with such deadly seriousness, creates a comic effect, but one that generates uneasiness, that elicits a nervous kind of laughter, as we see our faces grotesquely reflected on the stage.

A yet sill greater reversal seems to turn the world upside down revealing the amplitude of Dürrenmatt's satire. Differently from Gay, who attributed the corruption of a system, to a type of power circumscribed to a party and therefore limited to a relatively small group of people; also

differently from Brecht who, according to his Marxist beliefs, attributed corruption to a specific class (capitalists) still limiting power to a relatively small sector of society; Dürrenmatt perceives power in a more pervasive way. The bank, as an official institution, represents the type of institutionalization of power which dominates our society by creating a sort of inescapable net. This, in turn, is satirized in Frank V by Dürrenmatt' dissection of the world of finance only to reveal an underworld that is equally subjacent to all other institutions of our society, an underworld of corruption disguised by "l'honêteté, la plus pure, la plus brutale", a veritable "état policé" totally lacking "des facilités que nous offrirait une corruption générale, ou un déséquilibre social" (Sc. VI, p.12).

The bank, as a microcosm, as a possible world revealing this tension between order and chaos somewhat resembles Newgate in yet another aspect - that of a world in need of social revision. Still within the duality order/chaos, we can approximate Frank V to The Beggar's Opera in relation to the aspect of Pastoral, as conceived by Sven ARMENS.

As we have already seen, ARMENS couples rural society with real values and urban society with illusory, corrupt values. This antithesis is also apparent in Frank V in the initial scene, where we have Pauli and Heini (two country boys) coming to the city and, fascinated by its illusory values, become totally corrupted. Pauli's words are symbolic of what has happened to him,

Un coeur pur, au matin, se retrouve, le soir
 Dans l'abîme effrayant des ténèbres du Mal!....
 (Sc. VIII, p.17)

in confirmation of Frank V preliminary suspicions:

Deux faineants sortis de leur village qui
 viennent échouer dans notre belle capital.
 La vue de ma banque vous a inspiré de vilaines
 pensées.
 (Sc. II. p.9)

Within this general framework reflecting a specific

Weltanschauung and consistent with its author's theoretical writings on theatre, the characterization in Frank V functions less in terms of an individual and rounded profile of each character than in terms of a typology through which some aspects of the world depicted are highlighted.

According to Dürrenmatt himself "It's a silly prejudice to say that plays have to live from plots. They live from characters. Writing a play means putting characters on the stage; of course, then they develop plots among themselves (.....)".²³

In conformity with these ideas, Frank V is composed in a way as to, with a minimum plot, let the characters create and develop the action through their "relationships, opposites and reversals".²⁴

The storyline is simple, but with the twists and suspense of a detective story. Gottfried Frank and his wife Otilie, the owners of the Frank Bank, want to close the bank in order to live an honest life with their two children Franziska and Herbert. They have managed throughout the years to maintain their children's existence a secret and, in turn, to hide their corrupt life at the bank by leading a normal and honest parallel life with them. At the moment, the bank is in financial troubles which they hope to resolve through dishonest deals and by forcing the employees to give back the money they have dishonestly been subtracting from the bank year after year. The bank must have its funds before it can definitely close its doors. Meanwhile, someone has somehow discovered all about the bank's criminal affairs and is threatening to blackmail. At the end of the play, the blackmailers reveal themselves: Herbert and Franziska Frank, which decide to take over and continue the banking business.

Although a different story when compared to Gay's initial storyline, the structure and plot of Frank V convey the basic elements found in the other plays such as the Overture, the reprieve scene (the royal pardon), and the prison motive, the gang of thieves, the prostitute, and marriage and love, among others.

Around this plot, the characterization is limited to

express "only relationships germane to the situation"²⁵ where the complexity of the individual is only painted in "broad, satiric strokes".²⁶ In this context, the names of the characters acquire a special significance as symbolic of the ideas they represent. Thus, among others, we have names such as Gaston Schmalz, with its funny connotations of fat and grease to fit a slimy and corrupted character, or obviously well known names such as Piaget for a watch manufacturer, employed as a device to establish a more direct connection between fiction and reality.

At a more symbolic level, there are names such as Pauli Neukomm (newcomer), significantly representing the new uncorrupted element, who newly arrived in the city and upon entering in contact with the bank, as its newest acquisition, becomes gradually corrupted by the system.

More symbolic still is the name Traugott von Friedemann, the President of the Republic. His role is small, but nevertheless revealing of an idea prevailing throughout the play. The President is providentially blind, who defining himself as "unmerciful" (Sc, XIV, p.28), preserves a neutral attitude. He does not interfere, leaving man at the mercy of his own conscience.

Another one of these highly symbolic names is that of Frieda Fürst, literally meaning "Prince of Peace" bearing parody as the name of a prostitute. And there is, of course, the title figure of the play, Gottfried Frank - the owner of the bank - whose name not only reveals a contradiction between frank as a monetary denomination as a term describing honesty, but carries within the first name Gottfried (Peace of God), a great symbolism as a name given to a man, who masqueraded as a priest, perpetrates horrible crimes in the name of a religious-like devotion to money making. This idea has its full development in the scene where Otilie asks Gottfried (dressed as a priest) to sing while she murders Bökman:

Chante, Gottfried. Donne-lui la paix, donne-lui
le repos. (Elle remplit soigneusement la
seringue).
(Sc. XI, p.22)

In Frank V, as the central character of the play, we have the blatant demystification of the hero as the demi-god of classical tragedy. Gottfried Frank is not a hero in the classical way, for even though we have him at first depicted as an omnipotent man, we watch his decline and ultimately his death. His first appearance fits the one of a traditional hero, but in a mock way for just as Heini says: "Que la justice divine se manifeste", a sound of thunder is heard and Gottfried appears like a Jupiter, but a comically displaced one which offers the astonished onlookers "des hors-d'oeuvre sur canapés et du whisky Jonny [sic] Walker" (Sc. II, p. 9).

Furthermore, he is also depicted as omniscient, being that without knowing the two men, he knows exactly what their plans are. He has had an "intuition metaphysique" (Sc. II, p.9). He is benevolent, as he decides to "accomplir une dernière bonne action" and, to complete this picture, he is recognized by Pauli and Heini as "une puissante intervention de la justice divine" (Sc. II, p.9).

From this scene we can sense Dürrenmatt's parody in relation to the hero of the classical Aristotelian tragedy. Later on, we are able to sense the same type of parody in relation to the Shakespearean type of hero as we have Frank V and his wife bare great similarities with Macbeth and his Lady.

As the Macbeths, they have killed to obtain power and go on killing in order to keep it. Otilie, when her husband seems reluctant and starts to demonstrate weakness, "J'ai été un incapable, un incapable total", she reprimands him: "Ne dis pas de betises (.....) Ne t'énerve pas". (Sc. VII, p.14), in an attitude similar to Lady Macbeth's as she pushed Macbeth into committing his crimes.

Still within this parodic function of Frank V as a hero 'manqué', he, as a descendant of a family tradition implied by the dynastic "V" in his name, Frank V exemplifies the fall of the hero as a super qualified being occupying the place of the most powerful person within his own society. Thus, as the owner of the bank, he keeps this position, but within the society of successful and ruthless entrepreneurs and the descendant of a likewise lineage, Frank V is a failure.

We learn about the deeds of his ancestors from a song of praise. Frank I was the "roi de négriers"; Frank II, "Majesté financière", counselor to kings and princes "conseill[ait] des guerres" in order to sell arms; Frank III, created the bank of Hong Kong, exploited opium and smuggled goods; Frank IV, by ruining others, reigned in Wall Street (Sc. VII, p.14-15). Frank V, in turn, bitterly admits to being a failure:

Je n'ai rien d'un directeur de banque!
Je suis foncièrement honnête.
(Sc. VII, p.14)

He also contrasts his ancestors' times and his times by saying that his ancestors were utterly evil, "ils ruinaient des peuples entiers para leur machinations", but that their employees were all honest people while he, Frank V, is totally honest, while his employees totally dishonest (Sc.VII, p.14).

Trough this view, we have to conclude that by depicting this possible world as such, Dürrenmatt is satirizing the type of society in which dishonesty and corruption have become so widespread and generalized that even criminal acts such as Frank V's seem mild in comparison and that crime does pay as long as it is big scale crime.

To enhance Frank V's frailty as compared to his ancestors' ruthlessness, he is depicted as a humanist, as an idealist who reads Goethe and Mörike and as the founder of institutions such as the satiric "L'Union des Spéculateurs idéalistes" and "L'Entraide ecclésiastique", and who describes himself as "Frank le Philantrope (....) Je suis idéaliste et je crois aux valeurs spirituelles" (Sc.II, p.9). On the other hand, this idealism and humanism is another aspect of the mask of honesty, also apparent in Frank V's characterization.

His failure as an entrepreneur, as well as his mask, are reinforced by his false death and burial. In order to collect insurance money to help the bank, out of material necessity, he symbolically sacrifices his life having to live disguised as a priest, hiding away from people, feeling "terriblement seul, complètement perdue"(Sc.VII, p.14). This personal sacrifice in the name of necessity culminates in his real death, in a total

sacrifice for the sake of the continuation of the bank as a family tradition. His death is thus a kind of martyrdom as he himself puts it:

Ce n'est pas un fin... C'est un martyre!
(Sc. XIII, p. 26)

This living and dying by the laws of material necessity, in relation to the other plays of the tradition, pushes this common characteristic to its limit, making of Frank V a sacrificial victim.

As we have seen, the Peachums of both The Beggar's Opera as well as The Threepenny Opera live by the same laws, but in those plays the outcomes are not so final. As villains, they are successful and have a happy end. They seem to belong to the same *old* type of world mentioned by Frank V, the same one his ancestors had lived in. Thus, in more ways than one, the preceding Peachums are Frank V's ancestors.

Gottfried Frank, as the title figure and as the owner of the Frank Bank, also does not fulfill the traditional role of the hero as the centre of the action around which conflicts revolve. This place has been taken by the bank as an institution. It is the bank that having once been glorious now faces ruin, only to be saved at the end. Thus, Frank V, his wife, and the employees become adjuvants as well as opponents in the sense that although they are there working for the glory of the bank, as it has already been pointed out, they have also been undermining the bank's resources collaborating with its ruin.

Differently from the other plays in the tradition, in their relationship the characters are totally devoid of passion. Among them there is neither love nor hatred. All the characters go on acting out of their own necessity, surviving within a cold and cruel system which they dislike but which they cannot overcome.

The entire staff of the bank as a group functions in relation to the tradition as the gang of thieves. In opposition to the gang in The Beggar's Opera which usually got together

at a tavern in a merry celebration of life with much drinking and singing, in order to praise their bravery, loyalty and camaraderie (even if false), the gang in Frank V gets together to sing about how their lives have been affected by their horrible deeds.

Not only that, in none of the characters we find the vitality of Macheath and his band as in the other plays of the tradition. On the contrary, that type of epicurism, of life celebrated with gusto, found in Gay's play is a thing of the past, as explained by Häberlin:

Autrefois, vous l'obteniez cet équilibre, par
le vin, les femmes et les chansons.
(Sc. V, p.11)

The gang scene in Frank V graphically describes crimes in a coupling of cause/consequence in a crescendo, creating a grotesquely comic effect, a sort of disquieting black humor, since it is interspersed by funny consequences. Beginning with Pauli's insomnia caused by his having murdered a client; through Otilie's murder/morphine addiction; Kappeler's murder by poisoning/constipation; Egli's murder/heart attack; Frieda's having been raped/electroshocks; Schmalz's murder/impotency; Bockmann's murder/cancer; to culminate in Frank V's drama:

Mon drama est plus pathétique
Quand je lis Goethe et Mörke
Je n'y vois plus que des mots!
(Sc. IX, p.19)

Thus, in this scene we have the parody of the classic heroes' songs of glory; the parody of the *Carpe Diem* of The Beggar's Opera; the intensification of what was already a parody in Brecht, depicting a rasher relationship among the gang but which, in spite of the higher aggressiveness between its members, they stick together as a class in order to emphasize the relationship exploiter/exploited. In Frank V, the gang members mock one another, displaying a generalized lack of solidarity, emphasizing Dürrenmatt's description of a cold and

material relationship in which the individual is totally on his own.

As a parenthesis, this description of what has been happening to the characters in song, if it softens the action infusing it with a poetic atmosphere, it does so only on account of its poetic form alone. The songs are indeed moments of relief in the action only because they are poetry set to music, for as it has been pointed out, the contents are ugly in essence, underscoring, through contrast, the characters's false intentions in dialogue.

Concerning the nature of Frank's drama, the fact that it is given more importance than death even, reinforces the idea that in Dürrenmatt's view, the loss of poetry, lyricism, and the humanitarianism, they represent stand as one of the main causes, if not the main one, responsible for the cruel, cold and materialistic state of affairs, the target of its satire.

If in the other plays of the tradition the role of the prostitutes as a group paralleled the satiric and parodic roles of the gang of thieves, in Frank V we have this entire group reduced to one woman, Frieda Fürst, the official prostitute of the Frank Bank. Developing the theme initiated by Gay placing women as the corruptors of man, for whom man thrives in crime; continued by Brecht in his exposure of Man's downfall on account of his sexual appetites, Dürrenmatt takes this theme to its apex by having the prostitute symbolize not only the depravity of the whole society, but its aridity brought about by the lack of real love and its fecundity.

Frieda Fürst became a prostitute after having been raped, but she has chosen to continue to be raped in the name of material necessity, submerging into conformity. As a prostitute, she is incapable of real love. Her love is only physical but most of all commercial, although she, as the other characters, wears the mask of good intentions as the romantic scene between herself and Egli reveals. In this scene, they sing about the day in which they will be married and have many children in a beautiful house in the country, underscored by the refrain: "Mais un jour, tout changera!..." (Sc.V, p.11).

Interestingly, the theme of marriage which in the other

plays of the traditional reveals marriage as an inter-relationship based on mutual material interest, it reappears in Frank V as a reversal which places marriage as an ideal, a relationship based on real love, being crowned by the happiness of being able to bring children into the world. And children, in Frank V, represent the utmost purity and innocence, as stated by Böckmann: "Il n'y a rien de plus beau, de plus pur, de plus innocent que les enfants" (Sc. VII, p.16). But in the reality of the play, this ideal is materialized in its opposite. First, there is the Frank couple's loveless and passionless relationship. Worse even, there is the hope of a purer life and a better society, which placed on their children, totally collapses and crumbles as we have Herbert and Franziska arrive to replace the old order with a new and even worse one.

The appearance of Franziska as a whore and topping it all, as the new official prostitute of the bank, constitutes precisely the climax of the idea of the entire world having been prostituted in its greed for money. As she herself states

En amour, j'ai du savoir-faire!

 Mais sans argent, l'amour est triste!

 Seul l'Argent me met en émoi!
 (Sc. X, p.11)

Coming back to considerations on the hero in terms of action, we have Egli and Böckmann come closer to fulfilling this role, pointing at what could be considered as the shattering of the roles of both the hero as well as of the villain in Frank V. These roles seem not to be concentrated in any character in particular, but rather to be fragmented and dispersed in all characters, in harmony with the idea that characterization functions as a means of materialization on the stage of the basic ideas the play wants to convey, as well as in accordance with Dürrenmatt's belief that there can be no heroes in our society, only victims.

On account of their positions within the hierarchy of the bank, as members of the board of directors, they relate to the other employees as the human connection between institution and human beings.

They generate most of the conflicts, antagonizing the others in name of professionalism. Egli, especially, becomes the embodiment of the professional conscience:

Quand on aura liquidé la banque (....) vous
pourrez tous entrer à L'Armée du Salut (....);
mais d'ici là, vous resterez des gangsters. J'en
appelle à votre conscience.
(Sc. V. p.12)

Thus here, besides the inversion of values implied by this type of professional conscience, we also have the chief of personnel exerting a sort of power over the employees which Frank V, as the title figure (and supposedly the villain/hero by inversion), has lost. This, of course, again pointing at the decentralization of the role traditionally attributed to the hero. Thus, in this sense, Egli comes closer to being a Peachum than Frank V.

Whereas Egli assumes in great part the role of the villain, Böckmann partly assumes the role of the hero as the only character who questions and defies the system. Although he dies and is not able to change anything in terms of the outcome of the play (meaning, to change the order of things in the world), he comes out as the embodiment of the courageous man, in a way the only type of heroism possible. According to Dürrenmatt views, the only act of freedom is to break loose from the enslavement dictated by the unquestioned adherence to guidelines imposed by heritage. This is expressed by the agonizing Böckmann in his last dialogue:

FRANK: (....) L'héritage était trop lourd (....)
Tu sais que nous n'avions pas le choix, il
fallait continuer, tromper, assassiner. Rien
d'autre.

BOCKMANN: Tu mens. A toute heure nous pouvons nous
ressaisir, à chaque seconde de notre chienne de
vie. Il n'est pas d'héritage qu'on ne puisse
refuser, pas de crime qu'on soit obligé de
commettre. Nous étions libres, faux prêtre, libres.
(Sc. XI, p.21)

Having recognized his only freedom in the right to choose, Böckmann wants to die in peace with himself and God, to be set

free by confessing his sins to a priest. The Franks do not allow it in order not to set a precedent and, instead, murder him. In this context, the word Bock (goat) in this character's name perfectly fits his role as a sort of scapegoat.

At the other extremity of this tenet - "Nothing we do is truly moral unless we are free to do otherwise"²⁷ - we have Egli, who also exercising his right to choose, when finding himself at a turning point, decides to go on living by the standards imposed by the venal tradition. Instead of saving Frank V from his death he sings:

Le délivrer, mon vieux Frank Cinq...., tu penses!
Je veux rester, moi, du côté du manche!
(Sc. XIII, p.26)

Although Egli survives within the system by deciding to comply with it, it does not mean that he has become victorious, for his end, even if not explicit in the play itself, is comparable to Ottilie's defeat, that is, not to be pardoned nor punished, but, instead, be left in the "winter night", where

Tous est glacé dans le vieil univers!
Nous avons fait appel à la Justice
Sans obtenir le moindre jugement!
(Sc. XIV, p.28)

With this we come to the final scene, the equivalent to the scene of reprieve in the other plays, in which the hero is saved by a royal pardon. Again, conversely, in Frank V there is no *deus-ex-machina* device. As we have seen, God is invoked in the name of Traugott, but the pardon of The Beggar's Opera and the The Threepenny Opera never comes. There is, in fact, a sort of pardon in which the President presents Ottilie with a check with which she can reconstitute the money robbed from the bank, and thus close it. But, knowing that she will not even through this action, escape the grasp of the evil inherited from the bank's tradition (continued by Herbert as Frank VI), she refuses the check and rejoins the heritage:

Je voulais l'impossible,
 Mais le monde me l'a refuse!
 Ma volonté est brisée, ma confession était
 inutile.
 Prenez-mois donc dans votre alliance, monstres.
 (Sc. XIV, p.28)

In this scene we also have the demonstration of what has been stated previously, concerning man's incapacity to perform grandiose efforts and succeed. The impossibility of realizing the grandiose act of changing the course of their own history is clearly demonstrated in the Franks' futile attempt at substituting total corruption for honesty. By an act of Chance, which allowed their son to find out all about his corrupt heritage, the Franks' belief that they could indeed change the order of things is destroyed, confirming Dürrenmatt's view that man cannot alter and control history. As he himself states,

We are all collectively guilty, collectively
 bogged down in the sins of our fathers and
 of our forefathers. ²⁸

Amidst what seems a totally negative and pessimistic view of the human condition, Dürrenmatt, again, through another basic reversal in the tradition, presents the beggar as the privileged state for freedom. Through this depiction of the beggar, he inverts the belief running through the beggar opera tradition that poverty imprisons. Dürrenmatt's view of man's loss of freedom through affluence finds its poetic expression in the refrain:

O toi, Liberté!
 Tu es le privilège
 Des Pouvres, des gueux
 Mais pour nous, c'est trop tard!
 Qui touche au lard
 Referme le piège!
 Dès lors c'en est fait! Adieu, Liberté!
 (Sc. IX, p.18)

As we have been able to observe through the textual analysis of Frank V, although a direct progeny of The

Threepenny Opera, Dürrenmatt's play can also be considered as having taken the beggar opera tradition towards an anti-Brechtian direction. Implicit in Frank V, we find an anti-didactic purpose, in the sense that the playwright warns without prescribing solutions; an anti-message attitude, without being meaningless theatre; an anti-revolutionary kind of theatre through which the playwright, although attacking, is not engaged in any specific ideology; and, to sum it up, we are confronted with an anti-Marxist view of the world.

Dürrenmatt continues the beggar opera tradition in another direction, by utilizing the tragicomic, the grotesque, and the paradoxical as means of producing a type of theatre which wants to be, first of all, theatre.

The following analysis of the Opera do Malandro places it as the other branch of the tradition, stemming from Brecht's The Threepenny Opera, thus completing the bifurcated picture of the beggar opera tradition after Brecht.

Like Frank V, the Opera do Malandro also evolves from Brecht's statement in The Threepenny Opera depicting the extinction of the small bourgeois artisan and equating the founding of a bank to its robbery. But this time the emphasis falls on what follows those remarks:

What is the murder of a man to the employment
a man?
(Act III, Sc. 3. p.92) ²⁹

an idea developed by Chico Buarque in close connection with the death of the *malandro* in his play.

NOTES

- ¹WAGER, Walter. Friedrich Dürrenmatt. In:———. The Playwrights Speak. New York, Delacorte, 1967. p.77.
- ²DIAMANTE, Julio. Dürrenmatt, el Nihilista. In: DÜRRENMATT, F. Frank V. Barcelona, Aymá, 1965. p.26.
- ³This and all quotations from Frank V are from DÜRRENMATT, F. Frank V; comédie d'une banque privée. L'Avant-Scene du Theatre. Paris, 285:8-29, Avril 1963. The French version has been used in this study due to my unfamiliarity with the original German language of Frank V, and also due to the unavailability of an English version.
- ⁴BENJAMIN, Walter. Brecht's Threepenny Novel. In:———. Understanding Brecht. London, NLB, 1963. p.83.
- ⁵BENJAMIN, p.83.
- ⁶BRECHT, Bertolt. The Threepenny Opera. New York, Grove, 1960. p.44.
- ⁷WAGER, p.79.
- ⁸TIUSANEN, Timo. Freedom Among the Gangsters. In:———. Dürrenmatt; a study in plays, prose, theory. New Jersey, Princeton University, 1977. p.261.
- ⁹WHITTON, Kenneth. Friedrich Dürrenmatt and the Legacy of Bertolt Brecht. Forum for Modern Language Studies. 1(12):65, January 1976.
- ¹⁰RICHTIE, J.M. Brecht and Cabaret. In:BARTRAM, G. & WAINE, A. Brecht in Perspective. New York, Longman, 1982. p.172.
- ¹¹RICHTIE, p.172.
- ¹²DÜRRENMATT, Friedrich. Problems of the Theatre. In: SANDER, Volkmar. Friedrich Dürrenmatt; plays and essays. New York, Continuum, 1982. p.255.
- ¹³DÜRRENMATT, p.253.
- ¹⁴DÜRRENMATT, p.253.
- ¹⁵DÜRRENMATT, F. Note on Comedy. In:———. Writings on Theatre and Drama. London, Jonathan Cape, 1975. p.58.
- ¹⁶DÜRRENMATT, Note on p.58.
- ¹⁷TIUSANEN, p.264.
- ¹⁸TIUSANEN, p.260.
- ¹⁹WAGER, p.78.

²⁰DIAMANTE, p.12.

²¹DILLER, E. Dürrenmatt's Theological Concept of History. The German Quarterly, 3(40):364, May 1967.

²²DILLER, p.367.

²³WAGER, p.69.

²⁴WAGER, p.69.

²⁵FICKERT, Kurt J. Wit and Wisdom in Dürrenmatt's names. Contemporary Literature, 3(11):383, Summer 1970.

²⁶FICKERT, p.383.

²⁷FICKERT, K. In the Absence of Love. In:———. To Heaven and Back; the new morality in the plays of Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Lexington, Kent., The University of Kentucky, 1972. p.45.

²⁸DÜRRENMATT, Problems of p.254.

²⁹BRECHT, The Threepenny p.92.

3. Chico Buarque de Hollanda: Ópera do Malandro

As we have seen, Brecht's The Threepenny Opera brings the beggar opera tradition to the Twentieth Century, at the same time reviving it and imprinting on it an epic and Marxist mark. As the representative of the Brechtian branch of the beggar opera tradition, as opposed to the anti-Brechtian direction taken by Dürrenmatt, Chico Buarque de Hollanda's Ópera do Malandro (1978) threads the same route as he engages in this dialectic and didactic form of theatre.

This play, despite the topical differences, maintains the basic tone of parody and satire characteristic of the beggar opera tradition. Similar to Gay's attack on the Italian opera and on the blatant corruption of the court and aristocrats, aiming directly at Sir Robert Walpole; to Brecht's attack on bourgeois society in its world view and behavior, via the epic theatre and Dürrenmatt's tragicomic opera attacking the enslavement of the materialistic morality, Chico Buarque's opera is, in turn, a musical comedy parodying the American form of entertainment - the glittering musical - as a vehicle of the American ideology. Its satire is congruously aimed at the widespread American infiltration in the Brazilian social, economic and political spheres, draining the country of its indigenous characteristic, resulting in loss of national character.

The Ópera do Malandro is a well balanced mix of The Beggar's Opera and The Threepenny Opera. Structurally it is composed of two acts, being the first comprised of three scenes, as Brecht's, and the second of seven scenes plus an *Intermezzo*, one *Epílogo ditoso*, one *Epílogo do Epílogo*, where we can observe a closer similarity to Gay's innumerable scenes. The play begins with an Introduction (as in Gay) and a

Prologue (as in Brecht) and throughout the whole play, and at all levels, we can verify this alternating shift of borrowings.

Initially, we can establish a similarity in content with Gay's The Beggar's Opera, approximating both plays through the preoccupation with the valorization of the spirit of nationality, both at the socio-political and literary levels. Thus we have the Ópera do Malandro significantly set in the 1940's and the Producer's pride in presenting a national play, very much within the nationalistic spirit of the times.

The Nationalism of the fourties was marked by the strong influence of the Integralist Action which, among other objectives, wanted "to reassert national independence and liberate Brazil from external economic and cultural domination (....).¹ On the other hand, this type of nationalism bordered Fascism in its anti-Communism and anti-Semitism, bearing a close resemblance to Nazism in some aspects.²

The Vargas regime of the mid-thirties and fourties while embracing the political use of nationalism "(....) removed the two strongest bases of Integralist appeal: the communist threat and liberal democracy".³

This became an era which marked the radical shift from and old order constituted by a form of liberalism practiced by an agro-exporter oligarchy, to a new authoritarian modernization highly influenced by an Americanist ideal, and the Vargas dictatorial regime facilitated this transition from the old order to the new by cristalizing a kind of nationalism based on the principles of order and progress. Within this context, "Opportunity for free intellectual and cultural expression declined sharply after 1935, when scores of persons considered enemies of the government were silenced or arrested for subversion (....) censorship of the theatre, radio, and cinema dominated Brazilian cultural life between 1937 and 1945".⁴ Thus, where there was the threat of conflict and the possibility of social desintegration posed by the new emerging sector - the middle class, the military, the industrial bourgeoisie and the working classes, authoritarianism intervenes to establish peace and cooperation.⁵ The working class exchanged its freedom

and sindical rights of the elementary working rights, becoming an inert labor force, which has consequently been preyed upon and mercilessly exploited by what has become one of the most savage forms of capitalism.⁶ This new order guaranteed its survival among the more educated classes through a politics of high salaries and the dissemination of the imported American Puritan Ethics.⁷

Americanism came to accommodate those new emerging sectors as capitalist modernization, as *progress* and even as an aesthetics and praxis which transformed the country.⁸ It is precisely this passion for the modern and this persistent embracing of the ideology of progress which spilled over to the 1970's that constitutes the main target of Chico Buarque's satire. The 1970's seemed to reproduce the 40's in its authoritarianism and repression; praise of order and cooperation; economic development at any cost; and the overvalorization of those Americanist ideals introduced in the 40's. Thus, in the Ópera do Malandro what is said about the 40's can be extrapolated to the 70's, thus creating a double-edged satire.

This preoccupation with the spirit of nationality is also manifested in relation to the status of the national writer, as well as the national actor and theatre in general. Thus we have the Producer say that:

Acredito que é tempo de abriremos os olhos para a realidade que nos cerca, que nos toca tão de perto e que às vezes relutamos em reconhecer. (...) é chegada a hora e a vez do autor nacional, esse profissional sempre às voltas com intrincados problemas que o impedem de se comunicar mais amiúde com seus conterrâneos e, não raro de viver dignamente do ofício que um dia resolveu abraçar.⁹

(Intr., p.19)

In this speech we have the epic call to the audience to wake up to a national reality, alluding to the socio-political situation presented through theatre, a Brechtian device different only in the topicality of its content. We have the

reevaluation of the national playwright presented as someone who cannot live by his work for economic and political reasons, where the "intrincados problemas" could be interpreted as an allusion to the difficulty of having Brazilian plays performed and to the problem of censorship, if we keep in mind the repressive years in which this play was written and the fictional times in which it is set. The fact that the playwright cannot live "dignamente" from his profession being reminiscent of Gay's beggar-poet.

Chico Buarque's criticism of his times is veiled by a temporal mask, much in the same way Gay uses the beggar mask. Both Gay and Chico Buarque have to disguise their social attacks behind masks, in order to try to minimize censorship problems and mitigate potential retaliation, unlike Brecht, who seems to have had less to worry about at the time he wrote his opera. Similar in objective, Chico's use of the mask goes a step beyond Gay's adding to the personal function of the beggar mask of trying to dodge personal criticism by the use of a temporal mask. This other type of mask represents a graver preoccupation on the author's part in dissimulating the satire of his own contemporary times, by satirizing situations long past.

Much within the epic tradition, this reworking of a past situation into a new context also constitutes the employment of the Brechtian device of the epic past used in order to achieve critical distance.

From The Beggar's Opera then comes Chico Buarque's use of the beggar mask, being that in Chico's play the term *beggar* is changed to *malandro*,¹⁰ which basically comes to mean the same thing in terms of his social status as an artist. Thus, as the Producer introduces the author of the play as someone who "goza de palpável prestígio nas chamadas rodas de malandragem da noite carioca" (Intr., p.19), we immediately tend to identify him with that kind of *malandro* stereotyped as a figure of the lower class, at the bottom of the social scale.

Chico presents the *malandro* at many levels. First, there is João Alegre, whose name at first seems just another typically Brazilian samba composer's pseudonym, but which is really the literal translation of John Gay to Portuguese. Dressed to fit the typical stereotype of the *malandro*, a

figure of widespread national popularity, he takes on the function of the Beggar, as the author of the opera, reinforcing the idea of the *malandro* as the mask worn by Chico.

At another level, he speaks of Brecht as a *malandro*, a thief who steals Gay's idea to write his own play, implicitly considering himself a *malandro* too for having done the same (and his picture dressed in a typical *malandro* outfit on the back cover of the book reinforces this idea). So, in the lines

E Beltolt Brecht. Ele também não é ladrão?
 Me disseram que esse Brecht rouba tudo dos
 outros e faz coisas maravilhosas. Então,
 ninguém quer saber de onde vem a riqueza
 das pessoas. Importa é o que as pessoas vão
 fazer com essa riqueza.
 (Act I, sc.2, p.81)

we have Chico, while *excusing* Brecht for his *borrowing* at the same time *excuse* himself for having *borrowed* both Brecht's and Gay's texts and, in a way, for having used them as a mask from behind which to convey his own satire. By this he is also picking up on Gay's reflexive satire.

This apologetic attitude also implies a more general defense of literary borrowings as a general practice, especially the epic *borrowings*, or the reworking of previous texts which, by creating critical distance, also maintains the dialectic function of the theatre at work, in a very Brechtian attitude. This attitude is also closely related to the function of parody as a means through which to comment on art itself. In the Ópera do Malandro, this specific aspect of parody achieves a high degree of metatheatricality, in the sense applied to Brecht's use of the device, in order to shatter the theatrical illusion.

Coming back to the term *malandro*, at yet another level, Max Overseas and Duran are presented as the old-fashioned *malandro*, still operating under the old order ones. They are going to be substituted by the new order *malandro*, in the same way that the lower classes, the traditional *malandro*, Duran's prostitutes and Max's gang of thieves, who, exploited under the

guise of working rights, will become job-holders. Thus, the concept of *malandro* shifts from the lower classes, once the *malandragem* is institutionalized to qualify entrepreneurs, politicians, the higher classes, and the elite that has sold the country.

Chico keeps from Gay the Introduction, similarly presenting the Ópera do Malandro as the work of a beggar. But unlike the Beggar's opera, the Ópera do Malandro's Introduction presents the Producer as the owner of the play, who pointing out that this is a benefit show, introduces the Malandro, as well as the Patronesse, Vitória de Duran.

The Introduction being in the proscenium, curtains down, allied to the fact that the Producer and Vitória de Duran are initially presented in the frame-play, outside the opera itself, places them in a position closer to reality, when compared to the more fictional nature of the roles they play in the opera itself.

The Producer turns out to be Duran (Peachum), an enormously successful pimp, while Vitória, first introduced as a socialite - as the virtuous president of the "Morada da Mãe Solteira" (....) . uma organização que vem prestando inestimáveis serviços a nossa sociedade" (Intr., p.20), - moments later plays herself "em pessoa e ao vivo" (Intr., p.20) as the *madam* in her husband's chain of brothels. The Introduction thus functions as a mediator between fiction and reality, establishing a more direct link between the non-fictional world of the audience through the presentation of respectable members of society, with whom they can identify themselves, and the corrupt fictional world of Lapa inhabited by the Durans and their likes.

The equation non-fictional/fictional also points to that important element in ABEL's theory of the metatheatre in which life is seen as already theatricalized as a pre-theatrical matter. Furthermore, devised as a frame-play like The Beggar's Opera, the Ópera do Malandro also fits the second important element in ABEL's theory, since we have Chico as the overall conscious author, in a dominant position and in control over the Malandro's play.

This takes us back to Noble's division of The Beggar's Opera into two plays, a device that can also be applied to the Opera do Malandro, once in its function as a play-within-a-play it establishes an almost perfect parallel with The Beggar's Opera. Like the Beggar, the Malandro is also a bad artist, and his corruption becomes even more blatant in Act II, scene 7, where we have the interruption which creates the frame-play effect, as we will see later.

Another important aspect in relation to the beggar opera tradition present in the Introduction is the concept of charity. This idea is an integrating component of the beggar opera tradition from its very beginning, since it is inherent in the very notion of beggar.

As we have seen, the idea of charity appears first in The Beggar's Opera as the audience's attitude towards the Beggar's play, to be developed into a theme of utmost importance in The Threepenny Opera, and to acquire yet a third level of significance in the Opera do Malandro, where we have the performance of the play become a benefit show.

The implications of this choice result from Chico's satirical intent in attacking the benefit show as an institution, as a way the bourgeois society thinks it can mitigate the suffering of the less privileged layers of society, and thus expiate its guilt. In this context, the fact that this benefit is in favor of the unwed mother becomes very ironic, since the Durans, producers of the show, are also responsible for the *production* of this type of condition, being the owners of a prostitute ring. There it is also implicit a satirical comment on the bourgeois view of motherhood outside the sacred wedding vows as an offense to the also bourgeois belief in the family as the "pillar" of society (to use an Ibsenian expression).

In its shift of borrowings between Gay and Brecht, we have the Introduction of the Opera do Malandro structured to keep similarities to both. The existence of a Producer who introduces the play by explaining what is to come - although stating that:

(....) quando o artista sente a necessidade de explicar sua arte ao público, um dos dois é burro.

(Intr., p.19)

is reminiscent of Gay's Introduction, even if Gay's dialogue between the Beggar and the Player gives way to the Producer's monologue in Chico. On the other hand, as a device, this comment seems to point at a conscious will to explain, to teach, suffusing the play, approximating the Opera do Malandro to the Brechtian *Lehrstück*, in its didactic function. This difference from the The Threepenny Opera created by the inclusion of the Producer is compensated in the Opera do Malandro, by the inclusion of a prologue in which the Malandro sings the song "O Malandro", describing the full cycle of corruption. The cycle begins with a petty criminal act, which achieving greater international proportions comes back down to the Malandro's small theft, ending in his being

(....) Autuado
É julgado e condenado culpado
pela situação.
(Prol., p.23)

already hinting at the role of the old-fashioned *malandro* as the scapegoat, an idea to be developed later.

This Prologue is in a way reminiscent of Brecht's own prologue and Moritat, considering that the lyrics are set to Kurt Weill's tune "Mackie the Knife".

Here we could add that Chico parodies Brecht directly, using the same form altering its content, in a kind of respectful parody, where this universally known song is used to bring Brecht's text into one's mind, producing an intertextual effect. This way, Brecht's play becomes a constant, let us say, subliminal point of reference suffusing Chico's play. This also constituting an act of masking a Brechtian/Marxist intention, perhaps in another attempt to dodge censorship problems.

Going into the *opera* itself, we have Chico follow Brecht's structure more closely than Gay's pattern, but nevertheless, introducing alterations and innovations of his

own, in order to convey his own parody and satire through the adjusting of the elements received by the tradition to a new and totally different context.

The Ópera do Malandro is thus discussed in terms of its innovations and the aspects contributing to the development of the beggar opera tradition. Nonetheless, attention is also given to the other aspects maintaining their pertinent connections to the other *operas* as well.

Following the natural succession of scenes and their events, beginning in Act I, we have the substitution of Gay's and Brecht's *Filch* by the prostitute *Fichinha* in *Chico*. In this scene, the Durans are getting *Fichinha* ready to to work for them, by providing her with all the necessary accessories to make her more attractive. This constitutes a continuation of the idea forwarded by Gay on the value of good clothing in the prostitution business, as well as a parallel to Brecht's retaking of the theme. As Brecht's *Peachum* dresses his beggars in order to arouse pity in their fellow men, Duran's prostitutes are designed, of course, to arouse desire, to seduce. In Duran's words,

É por isso que o meu ofício está cada dia
mais ingrato. E ao mesmo tempo mais fasci-
nante, porque tem que estar sempre crian-
do um novo apelo que desperte o sexo exaus-
to da humanidade!
(Act I, sc.1, p.32)

we have a parody of Brecht's *Peachum*'s words, displacing them to another context. Duran's business is to provide satisfaction to the working man who comes from work very tired and who, fed up with his wife and kids, goes to a brothel in order to have his sexual desires awakened, to be seduced. At the same time, in this we have the theme of seduction in an embryonic stage, which will be developed all along the play, at different levels. Still related to this theme of seduction, this scene begins an approximation made between people and prostitutes which will grow to become a definite association, reaching the point of total identification.

This approximation is initially established through the allusion implied in the name of Duran's prostitute ring, called

"Agência de Empregos 'A Brasileira'" (Act I, sc.1, p.28). Advancing this idea, we have him refer to his prostitutes as "funcionárias com carteira assinada, salário mínimo, assistência médica e oito horas de trabalho." (Act I, sc.1, p.28). In this, we can also feel the satire on the labor system begun in the *Estado Novo* by Getúlio Vargas. The satire on this period can also be detected in Fichinhas's description of what happened to her in jail, when she was taken for a communist and put in a cell "cheia duns sujeitos tudo de bigodinho e que ficavam gritando um negócio chamado anauê dentro do meu ouvido." (Act I, sc.1, p.30). Thus we have a clear allusion to the fascism of the 40's in Fichinha's description of the Integralists.

The scene with Fichinha also contains the idea of Pastoral begun by Gay, retaken by Brecht, to a certain extent, and by Dürrenmatt in the corruption of the country boys Pauli and Heini. Fichinha is also a country girl who having lost her virginity is forced to migrate to the city, to become a prostitute.

This theme acquires in Chico a multileveled significance. At the topical level, it represents a comment on the Brazilian social problem created by the constant migration of the poor classes of the Northeast to the South after better life conditions, often resulting in the opposite. Coming to the big cities of the South, they only encounter more poverty and degradation, becoming easy preys ready to be exploited.

In terms of Pastoral, in ARMENS' concept, the shift from the rural, real and ideal values to the illusory and corrupted ones of the town is furthered in Chico who, by depicting the consequences of this type of rural exodus also establishes a parallel with the transition of the so-called underdeveloped countries to a state of an illusory and false development.

Another innovation in this scene is the appearance of a new character created with basis on the fusion of the characters Filch and Ginny Jenny (Brecht), resulting in the character Geni.

Geni is in fact Genivaldo, a homosexual, which thus being perfectly reunites the basic characteristics of the two

mentioned above. Furthermore, as a synthesis of these character's aspects of thief, prostitute and traitor, Geni is elevated from the level of a secondary character to that of an important one. In the Ópera do Malandro Geni is the embodiment of another aspect of seduction, and the mouthpiece of the humiliation and degradation involved in becoming prostituted by yielding to a seducer worse than any other, as expressed in the song "Geni e o Zepelin". This song is a direct parody of Brecht's "Pirate Jenny", but it is treated differently by Chico. In the Ópera do Malandro the song is not infused with the direct call to revolution as in Brecht's version. Instead, it conveys a strong *lesson* through the identification of Geni with the Brazilian people, who can observe the way it is abused and exploited by a foreign power, symbolically described as:

O guerreiro tão vistoso
 Tão temido e poderoso

 (...) homem tão nobre
 Tão cheirando a brilho e cobre.
 (Act II, sc.4, p.162)

Thus in this song Chico explains what is happening to the country without really overtly suggesting the possible solution.

This scene also introduces Duran and Vitória as characters of the *opera* itself. As the typical villains of the beggar opera tradition, they are both depicted as the corrupt chiefs of the criminal underworld they help create, bearing similarities to both Gay's and Brecht's depiction of them. Like the characters in The Beggar's Opera, they are shown as the example of the bourgeois mentality.

Duran, in the Ópera do Malandro, in harmony with his name suggesting the *stiffness* of the Portuguese word *durão*, represents the old order with its old-fashioned methods of forceful authoritarianism that will later be substituted by the more flexible new order in which force is replaced by ways of seduction.

The name Vitória is suggestive of the victory she

achieves at the end of the play over the author's good intentions, and also as an allusion to the victorious substitution of the old order by the new one.

The next innovation comes with Teresinha and Max Overseas' wedding at his hideout, a scene taken from Brecht's play. Again, Chico reworks it with great topicality. This, as most changes effected by Chico, adjusting almost every single comment to the Brazilian reality he wants to criticize, reveals his very didactic intention.

In this scene we are introduced to Max Overseas and his gang, and Teresinha, who are Chico's version of the familiar Macheath and Polly. In harmony with the satire on Americanism, beginning with the names, in this scene everything is described as *imported* (that is, smuggled), as having come from the United States. Max Overseas's real name is Sebastião Pinto, being that both fit him perfectly. Overseas, with its obvious connotations with foreigner and with sea becomes very appropriate as a business name, since he is a *captain* who performs his smuggling operations at sea. As Sebastião Pinto, his last name bearing anatomical connotations fits him well as the womanizer he is.

In the Ópera do Malandro, Max fulfills the role of the hero more in the way Gay's Macheath does, with gusto for life and more vitality than Brecht's. Even his relations with the members of his gang, although sometimes harsh, is not quite as aggressive as in The Threepenny Opera

The gang in the Ópera do Malandro is presented in an already satiric way. Each one is introduced by his business name, as they dance with Teresinha almost like in a debutant's ball. Their names also underscore the satire on Americanism, this time a direct allusion to the foreign capital of the multinational corporations operating in the country.

In this, we have the nature of Chico's satire come closer to Brecht's attack on capitalism. Therefore, Joãozinho Pedestre, who is the greatest whisky falsifier, is introduced as Johnny Walker; Benê Mesbla, who sells bad watches, becomes Big Ben; Geraldino Elétrico, dealer of electric goods, becomes General Electric; and Filipinho Mata-Rato, dealer of tobacco goods, as Phillip Morris. The only exception in this list of

names is Barrabás, but whose name is also significant of the role he plays as the public enemy number two, in relation to Max, who is the enemy number one.

The fact that only Max has been chosen to be eliminated as in the other plays places him as the scapegoat, as a Christ figure, corroborated by the choice of Barrabás' name. In a scene more personal than the executions in The Beggar's Opera or The Threepenny Opera, Chaves, the chief of police and Max' friend, is anxious to kill him. With the gun ready to fire, Chaves imposes his conditions to Duran:

Eu tenho o maior prazer em executar o meu amigo. Mas tem que desmanchar a passeata antes.

(Act II, sc.6, p.173)

The betrayal of Max by his close friend Chaves is stressed in this same wedding scene, where the bond of their friendship is overtly exposed. They had been childhood friends, as underscored by the song "Doze Anos", parodying the well known Brazilian poem by Casemiro de Abreu.

Still in this scene, Teresinha is introduced, innocent at first, but gradually becoming aware of the possibilities of great success latent in her husband's business. She comes to represent the more educated classes which supported and guaranteed the survival of the new emerging order, which she herself comes to embody as the other side of the progressist seduction, its glittering aspect. Her transformation begins as we watch her take over Max's business and subjugate his gang, in the very innovative "English lesson", created by Chico.

In this highly comic scene, we have Polly assume the role of the elementary teacher (in itself a satire of the bourgeois ideal of having daughters attend the *Escola Normal*), and a class behaving like elementary students, acting as brats, (also a parody of the typical attitude which has come to be a stereotype of the Brazilian student). This initial picture already criticizes the state of education in the country and the prevalence of the teaching of English over the teaching of the national language.

Teresinha begins the class but faces resistance on the part of the gang, who "assobiam, fazem barulho, atiram bolas de papel, etc.", and defied by Barrabás dismisses him by slapping him on the face. She then resumes the lesson by asking them to repeat in unisson,

TEREZINHA - John is Mary's brother.
 TODOS - Dijon is Méris brózer.
 (Act II, sc.1, p.115)

the correction brother/brózer being repeated *ad infinitum* until the scene ends.

As Teresinha becomes able to control the class through a ruthlessness not encountered in the previous Pollys of the beggar opera tradition, already pointing at the way she is going to conduct her husband's business, establishes her as an almost symbolic character (not yet as in Dürrenmatt) as the seduction of the country in relation to the new order she has come to represent.

The fact that during the lesson the students are utterly unable to pronounce the *th* sound, only highlights the inappropriateness and artificiality of such an imposed influence. The English lesson seems to take to an apex (not in terms of content, but in terms of form) the didactic purpose of the play begun by the *necessary* explanations of the Introduction and the treatment given to the songs, especifcally "Geni e o Zepelin", in terms of content.

All these elements seem to confirm the interpretation of the THE ÓPERA DO MALANDRO as a means used by Chico to reach the public in order to create critical awareness through a Brechtian didactic influence. Compared to Brecht, Chico seems to be threading the first steps of a preliminary conscientization process, not engaging into a revolutionary call.

Another innovation by Chico is the introduction of two prostitute scenes. One, the scene in which Max is betrayed and imprisoned established by the tradition since Gay, and the other, the original confrotation between the prostitutes and Duran, in which the total exploitation of the prostitutes is depicted.

In Max and the prostitutes, a scene modelled on Brecht's, the parody on the American musical takes full form, as we have Max and the *ladies* sing the song "Ai, se eles me pegam agora", a parody on the famous American song "If They Could See Me Now". Furthermore, the singing is accompanied by a tap-dance solo by Max, where the prostitutes function as the chorus line, typical of the Broadway musical (Act II, sc.2, p.123-125).

In the Duran and the prostitutes scene, we have Duran identify himself to the tecnocrats, an allusion to the industrial Brazilian reality in which technocrats are seen as gods manipulating the working classes with their graphics, statistics and calculations, aiming at profit alone.

Psicopata não, Vitória! Tecnocrata. Eu trabalho com gráficos e estatísticas. Aqui tá tudo calculado e computado. Agora, o que há de imponderável é o elemento humano. Se vocês falham, atrapalham todas as minhas contas. Vocês são artistas ou não? Pra trabalhar comigo, só grandes artistas. (...) E principalmente, grandes ilusionistas!

(Act I, sc.3, p.95)

Due to Duran's dual role as the pimp/Producer, the comment on the theatrical qualities of the prostitutes as "great artists" acquires a double meaning. In one, the prostitutes, obliged to pay for the mistakes of their pimp, establish a parallel with the situation of the Brazilian people in relation to its government. They have to master the art of survival and still comfort themselves with false illusions about their actual conditon (Act I, sc.3, pp.88-100).

This entire scene, in fact touches on many important social and political landmarks of the age (40's) like women's voting rights, the creation of labor legislation, and the various institutions for social wellfare, in a very ironic tone, praising order and progress in order to satirize them.

Still within the context of the prostitutes as "great artists" it is possible to interpret this comment as an anticipation of the *Intermezzo*, where we have the prostitutes step out of character and discuss the poor situation of the

actors. In order to go ahead in their careers, they have to *sell* themselves to the system, represented by the TV conglomerate, as pointed out by the following dialogue:

PHILLIP:(....) Enquanto artista depender de autor e produtor, tã ferrado !

DORIS: (....) A melhor coisa que pode acontecer pra gente, (....) coisa de sonho (....) de shangri-la, é ter um cara da TV Globo na platéia e chamar a gente pra novela das oito. (Intermezzo, p.179)

Once again, we have the theme of the seduction of modernization being highlighted, through a blatant metatheatrical device.

Another important scene in terms of innovations is the prison scene. It shows Barrabás as the newest police inspector, another sign of the transformation from the old order to the new. Aside the traditional fight between Lucy and Polly, Chico includes a second scene at the prison where Teresinha comes in to explain to Max the situation of their firm, now called "Maxtertext Ltda.". The firm now very successful, paradoxically, owes thousands of dollars to banks which have financed its growth, all part of a huge modernization process:

Tem que abrir avenidas largas, tem que levantar muitos arranha-céus, tem que inventar anúncios luminosos, e a Maxtertext faz parte do grande projeto.

(Act II, sc.5, p.170)

Teresinha depicts and represents a new order which in the name of *progress* comes to substitute the old order, represented by the way business was conducted by Duran and Max himself, all part of a time long dead:

Papai, inspetor Chaves, a Lapa, as falcatruas, todo esse mundo já tã morto e caído aos pedaços.

(Act II, sc.5, p.169)

Thus, Duran, Max, and the gang as the old type of low class and petty criminals, the typical *malandros* are going to be

replaced:

É claro que os malandrinhos, os bandidinhos e os que acham que sempre dá-se um jeitinho, esses vão apodrecer debaixo da ponte.
(Act II, sc.5, p.170)

This idea of substitution of the old *malandro* for the new institutionalized type is also put in evidence in the second Prologue introducing the second Act, another innovation in Chico, in which the author João Alegre sings the song "Homenagem ao Malandro". The song depicts the new type of *malandro* as "regular, professional,

Malandro com aparato
De malandro oficial
Malandro candidato
A malandro federal
Malandro com retrato
Na coluna social
Malandro com contrato
Com gravata e capital
Que nunca se dá mal.
(2º Pról., p.103)

At this point we can establish a parallel with Dürrenmatt's depiction of a similar type of new order institutionalizing corruption, in which what happens to a country in Chico is amplified to represent the state of the world in Dürrenmatt.

The final and greatest innovation in the Ópera do Malandro of the *passseata*, significantly prepared in celebration of Labor Day. This scene is the equivalent to the reprieve scene in the beggar opera tradition, where Macheath is pardoned and his life spared. The idea of the *passseata* is closer to Brecht's Coronation scene. The *passseata* is Duran's concoction, devised by him to threaten Chaves into eliminating Max. Otherwise, Chaves will be exposed and judged by his fascists crimes, like his contemporary European peers. Chave's characterization as a petty dictator, parodying the European dictators of the time, allows the open satire on

Fascism - Integralist and Nazi. Called by Duran "Hitlerzinho da Lapa", embodying Nazi-fascism, he is threatened by Duran, in a scene very similar of that of The Threepenny Opera in which Brown is threatened by Peachum. While Brecht uses past history (Egyptian) to create alienation in order to produce critical alertness, Chico obtains alienation and dialectic by directly presenting very similar contexts, again in harmony with his explanatory purpose.

As it turns out, the *passseata* becomes a way for the prostitutes and the lower classes in general to protest. Thus, while Teresinha explains to Max the irreversible need for change from the old order to the new, Max, oblivious to what she is saying, talks about his death in terms of what will happen to his body. This seemingly incongruous dialogue creates a violent effect placing the dying body of the *malandro* as a metaphore of the death of the national character.

The violence of this transformation is emphasized by the song "Pedaco de Mim", about amputation, pain death and *saudade*. (Act II, sc.5. p.171-2)

Teresinha 's role as the embodiment of the new order finally places herself as the symbol of seduction as she states:

E vai demorar meio século pra essa gente se
juntar de novo e levantar a voz. Porque a
multidão não vai estar abafada, nem encurra-
lada, nem tiranizada, nem nada. Sabe o quê?
a multidão vai estar é seduzida.
(Act II, sc.5, p.171)

As the *passseata* begins, uncontrollable, Vitória stops it by interrupting the play, in a very definite Brechtian epic attitude, completely shattering the theatrical illusion:

Ei, vocês aí em cima na técnica!
Para tudo! Acende a platéia!
(Act II, sc.7, p.174)

This interrupts João Alegre's *opera* and brings the audience into the frame-play (in Noble's words). Vitória and Duran - as

the Producer - demand that the author complies to the happy ending they had approved during dress rehearsal. João Alegre refuses and goes into the Producer's office to formalize the breach of contract. As the three leave, talks of Hollywood and the Oscar can be overheard.

The metatheatricality of the play-within-the play device is explored even further by Chico, through the inclusion of the *Intermezzo*.

At this point, all the theatre lights flooded - stage and audience - the characters step out of character to comment on their actual situation as actors and actresses, but at the same time assuming the role of the characters they had been playing thus far, achieving a *Pirandellian* effect. In fact, concerning the ability of the theatre to comment on and even alter itself, Chico's play is the most metatheatrical of the four plays chosen to represent this tradition.

The *Intermezzo*, as a Brechtian alienation device establishes the connection between the socio-political satire of the 40's - presented in João Alegre's play - and the satire of the 70's. Furthermore, through its overt allusions to the audience's actual context it brings together the socio-political satire of the Malandro's opera - the inner play - and the satire on the poor situation of theatre in Brazil, the subject of the frame-play.

The *Intermezzo* is followed by the *Epílogo Ditoso* in which we have the capitulation of João Alegre, who has been entirely coopted by the system, coming on stage in a beautiful convertible Cadillac. Here we have the parody of Brecht's *Mounted Messenger*, added to the metatheatrical placing of the author in the position of granting the royal pardon.

The happy end is general, sung in an opera-like chorus, in which all sing together praising the coming of a new day for the people who have always lived on coffee and bananas. They welcome progress and success, the arrival of TV, shampoo, Shazam, ray-Ban, and other consumer products brought in by foreign capital, confirming that the population has indeed been seduced (Ep. p.181-9).

The Opera do Malandro ends with the *Epílogo do Epílogo*,

where we have João Alegre singing another Moritat, the song "O Malandro nº 2", describing the dead body of the *malandro*:

O cadáver/ do indigente
 É evidente/que morreu
 E no entanto / Ele se move
 Como prova / o galileu.
 (Ep., p.192)

Summing up, we come to the conclusion that in its satirical function, the Ópera do Malandro can be interpreted as an attack to a new order imposed by ways of seduction. The seduction of a nation by the progressive and modern ideal model of development sold by the so-called developed nations. If this ideal has not been able to create a better way of living for the majority of the people, it has, in terms of consumerism, surely created a more glittering one. The theme of seduction can be traced throughout the play from the very nature of Duran's business, the exploitation of seduction, through Teresinha's fascination with the imported goods, and as a climax, with her becoming the agent of the seduction of an entire generation, as the symbol of the authoritarian modernization that has shaped the nation.

As a parody of Gay's and Brecht's beggar operas, the Ópera do Malandro is closer to The Threepenny Opera, revealing an attitude of admiration towards the Brechtian type of theatre, as well as its ideology. Chico Buarque closely follows the pattern, keeping the form, effecting a respectful type of classical parody. In relation to Dürrenmatt's play, despite the similarity in the presentation of the individual as the fatal victim of the greed of a institutionalized world, the Ópera do Malandro contraposes Frank V inasmuch as it is an ideologically engaged play, with a clear didactic function.

Having come to the end of the fourth analysis of the plays comprising the corpus of the beggar opera tradition, we have reached the point in which to forward some general conclusions.

NOTES

¹LEVINE, Robert. The Integralists. In:———. The Vargas Regime; the critical years 1934-1938. New York, Columbia University, 1970. p.98.

²For example, "all Integralists offered stiff armed salutes, hailing each other with an anauê, an oath of greeting Salgado created from the Tupi Indian dialect." LEVINE, R., p.85.

³LEVINE, R., p.85.

⁴LEVINE, R., p.98.

⁵VIANNA, Luis Werneck. O Americanismo; da pirataria à modernização autoritária. In: HOLLANDA, Chico Buarque. Opera do Malandro. São Paulo, Cultura, 1980. p.5.

⁶VIANNA, p.11.

⁷VIANNA, p.10.

⁸VIANNA, p.5.

⁹This and all quotations of the Opera do Malandro are from HOLLANDA, Chico Buarque. Opera do Malandro. São Paulo, Cultura, 1980.

¹⁰I keep the Portuguese word malandro on account of the difficulty of finding an English word to accurately describe a cultural figure of such national proportion. The malandro's physical appearance is very similar to the typical pimp in America. He is a swindler, and a rascal, for despite being unprincipled, low, and tricky, he still gets the sympathy of the public, mainly for his anti-establishment nature.

CONCLUSION

Having established the main elements linking the four plays studied into a unified corpus - the beggar opera tradition - we can conclude that by writing his The Beggar's Opera in the novel form of ballad opera, parodying the Italian opera in order to satirize a system which he found irrational, John Gay indeed initiated a new dramatic tradition.

Through the study of the three plays included as part of this tradition on account of their sharing the same unifying basic elements found in Gay's play, we have also been able to confirm the establishing of the beggar opera type of play as a definite tradition in drama, as well as its temporal and contextual fortune, assessing the transformations it has suffered in its way from its birth in the Eighteenth Century England to the Twentieth Century Brazil.

As a result of the partial comparative analysis of the four plays, we have come to conclude that all of them have kept the basic duality pointed out by the incongruous combination of the terms *beggar* and *opera* with their satiric and parodic implications.

All the four playwrights have chosen to attack their contemporary systems and respective dominant ideologies by making use of the subversive power of the comic, inherent in parody and satire, and have chosen to do so by means of a musical play, even if the use of music has acquired for each one a slightly different function. As we have seen, Gay chose the ballad opera form mainly as a way of parodying and ridiculing the Italian opera. Not only that, he also employed music in order to appeal to the audience's national pride, to raise the status of balladry and other forms of indigenously English music and theatrical entertainment. In

Brecht's The Threepenny Opera, the musical element, the employment of songs acquired the definite role of the epic alienation device, functioning as a means of breaking the flow of the action, a means of keeping the audience in a critically distant attitude, as well as constituting a vehicle of indoctrination. When singing, the characters convey the truth they are unable to express in their dialogues, involved as they are in their daily lying and cheating.

In the Opera do Malandro, Chico retains Brecht's epic use of music as an alienation device, but at the same time, much like Gay, he lets come through his use of the musical element as the parody of the American musical, in line with the nature of his political and social satire. In Frank V, the musical element is used to infuse the play with poetic moments, to offer some lyrical relief, since the characters sing when they are lying, and the lies are the bearable moments in the cruel world depicted in the play. Thus, in Dürrenmatt, the musical element flows with the action, much like in Gay, where the music serves a more entertaining purpose, keeping in mind the topical differences.

Another fundamental characteristic kept by all the four playwrights is the use of the underworld as the setting for the plays, enlarging it to achieve a microcosmic proportion and function. Thus, as the conventions of the opera became emblematic of the kind of entertainment deserving to be parodied (the opera itself in Gay; the Aristotelian cathartic play in Brecht and Chico; and, in a way the epic play in Dürrenmatt), the underworld, as the place inhabited by beggars portrayed as victims of corrupt and evil systems, becomes the target of their satire, except for Dürrenmatt's inversion. Keeping the proper distinctions, roughly speaking, we can conclude that, philosophically, the tradition performs a circular movement.

The social reform preached by Gay in his belief that society can improve provided that its leaders be good (implicit in his vehement attack against Walpole as a corrupt individual) gives way to the Marxist view embraced by Brecht as well as by Chico, that society, as resulting from the interrelations among

individual forging the individual's values and behavior, can only be altered through revolutionary action. Dürrenmatt, on the other hand, presents freedom and free-will as the forces shaping the individual, and the only means through which to acquire human dignity, thus, in a way, coming around back to Gay's view of the individual. Therefore, the underworld as a microcosm varies in each play to properly fit these four different world views, respectively.

Naturally, in close relationship to these different *Weltanschauung*, it follows that each play presents a very different set of *same* characters. That is, the same characters initially created by Gay to represent the hero or the villain, as the tradition evolves, maintain their heroicity or villainess within a very different delineation.

As we have seen, Macheath's characterization as a hero ranges from the burlesque of the operatic (Aristotelian semi-god) hero in Gay, through Brecht's and Chico's commonly bourgeois successful protagonist, to finally come down to the common man, totally defeated in Dürrenmatt. On the other hand, Gay's initial depiction of Peachum as, again, the typical villain of the traditional theatre, embodiment of evil and responsible for the evil actions perpetrated against the hero, in Brecht and Chico retains this traditional aspect, but also acquiring another social connotation. He himself becomes a victim of an all-embracing system. In Dürrenmatt, Frank V is depicted as an unsuccessful villain weakened by the evergrowing villainy of human beings, represented in his own killing by his son. Even having raised his children away from an evil environment, he could not prevent them from becoming evil. As we have seen, evil can only be defeated by the individual's own free will.

A similar transformation occurs with Polly, who from the role of a secondary character, from her supporting role in Gay's play, gradually evolves within the tradition, gaining more independence in Brecht, growing to acquire the importance of almost a protagonist role in Chico, and a certain transcendence in Dürrenmatt.

In The Beggar's Opera, Polly represents the mock-

heroine, a target upon which to inflict the criticism of feminine participation in society, of woman as a frivolous being. Woman is also presented as the seducer of mankind. Brecht's Polly takes on a more participant role, being in charge of her husband's business responsibilities. In Chico, Teresinha not only takes on her husband's business responsibilities but actually takes complete hold of them, transforming the entire business to make it fit the new economic order. Again, as in Gay, she becomes the embodiment of seduction. Terezinha comes to represent the seduction of a whole country in relation to the new emerging order. In Dürrenmatt, this new order is represented by Frank V's two children. We do not have one feminine character represent the institutionalized corruption of society anymore, but an unfolding of this corrupted element to encompass both the masculine and feminine, thus resulting in the view of man, as a whole being embodying this corruption, becoming responsible for it.

Concerning the metatheatrical aspect of the plays, as we have used the term in its two different aspects - one the referential capacity of the theatre to comment on and even to alter itself found in parody, and the other as the staging of life as something already theatricalized in reality - we could say that The Beggar's Opera operates with both senses, the same happening in the Ópera do Malandro, whereas in The Threepenny Opera these metatheatrical aspects become less apparent as metatheatrical devices in themselves, to become epic alienation devices. In Frank V, we have less of this metatheatricality in terms of theatre commenting on itself as a form, but we can observe the same referentiality in terms of its content.

In its trajectory from Gay to Dürrenmatt, we can observe that the beggar opera tradition changed from the depiction of the underworld considered as being only a segment of society, to become in Frank V, the normal state of the world. Consequently, we have the characterization shift in view from the part to the whole, that what started out as being a comedy becomes a tragicomedy, infused by laughter, but a much more tragic and serious kind of laughter, nervous and frightened,

provoked by the grotesque.

Finally, viewed as a whole, the beggar opera tradition travels in space and time, picking up different tones and hues, according to the socio-historical changes it encounters within different contexts. Nevertheless, it has not lost its initial attraction as biting social satire, aspiring for more human dignity. The four original pieces studied constitute then variations of a same ideal, and should be considered as one text. Thus considered, one play does not destroy the other or render it obsolete, but rather, read as parts of one large encompassing text, they enrich one another through their differences, providing an endless number of possible readings and thus much contributing to our understanding of literature and its producer, Man.

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