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**Exploring Crimes in John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and their
Correspondence to the Social Conditions of the Eighteenth Century**

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Dedication

This humble work is dedicated to:

My mother who always wishes us the highest degrees and diplomas

My father who always provides us with his care and advice

My lovely brothers: Anouar, Ameer and Chames El-Eddine.

My family, Friends and teachers

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Abstract

This thesis is historical-literary work. It treats one of the most significant subjects “Exploring crimes in John Gay *The Beggar’s Opera* and their correspondence to the social condition of the eighteenth century”. This work deals with crimes which considered as a dark phenomenon in the history of the world and especially in England. Throughout history, England society was suffered from several social problems such as corruption, crimes, poverty, filthy living condition and insecurity...etc. John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera* was one of the literary works that deals with the concept of crime, which was a clear in his play. This work explains the main reasons that contributed to the rise of criminality, the nature of different crimes and harsh punishments during the eighteenth century. It also attempts to highlight how crimes in *The Beggar’s Opera* are closely connected to the real historical events. The fictional names of Gay’s play indicated the kind of crimes that the character committed. There are also such events that are highly significant and had a relation with real one such as the correspondence of the depiction of criminal activities between Macheath and the famous criminal Edward Dalton also the close connection between Peachum and Jonathan wild. This thesis, also, provides us, with origin of the idea of Gay’s play *The Beggar’s Opera* and source of its musical tunes.

Key Words

The Beggar’s Opera, John Gay, crimes, exploring crimes, correspondence to the social condition, real historical events, Macheath, Edward Dalton, Peachum, Jonathan wild, criminal activities, harsh punishments, musical tunes and the eighteenth century.

ملخص

تعالج هذه الأطروحة احد اهم المواضيع و المتمثلة في اكتشاف الجريمة في جون غاي من خلال مسرحيته "أوبرا المتسول" وما يطبقها في الحياة الاجتماعية في القرن الثامن عشر. تتناول هذه الدراسة موضوع الجريمة الذي يعتبر اسوء ظاهرة في تاريخ العالم عامة و انجلترا خاصة. على مر التاريخ , عان المجتمع الإنجليزي من مشاكل اجتماعية جمة على سبيل المثال : فساد و فقر وانعدام الامنالخ. تعتبر مسرحية غاي احد الاعمال الادبية التي تعالج هذه المشاكل والتي تتطرق الى موضوع الجريمة الذي كان منتشر في ذلك الوقت. تشرح هذه الدراسة الاسباب الرئيسية التي ادت الى انتشار الجريمة و كذلك انواع الجرائم المختلفة و العقوبات القاسية التي طبقت خلال القرن الثامن عشر. تسعى دراستنا لتوضيح العلاقة بين ترابط الجريمة في مسرحية غاي بالأحداث التاريخية الحقيقية. الاسماء الممثلين في مسرحية غاي تدل على نوع الجريمة المرتكبة. هناك بعض الاحداث لها علاقة بالإحداث الحقيقية كتطابق وصف الاعمال الاجرامية بين ماكهيث واشهر مجرم ادوارد دالتن وايضا بين بيتشم و جوننتان وايد. وهذا البحث كذلك يدرس اصل فكرة مسرحية غاي و مصدر ألحانه الموسيقية.

الكلمات المفتاحية

أوبرا المتسول ، جون غاي، اكتشاف الجرائم ، الجرائم ، تطابقها بالحياة الاجتماعية ، الأحداث التاريخية الحقيقية، ماكهيث، ادوارد دالتن، بيتشم، جوننتان وايد، الاعمال الاجرامية، العقوبات القاسية، الألحان الموسيقية و القرن الثامن عشر.

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General Introduction

The Neoclassical period of English literature was one of the most outstanding periods in the eighteenth century. It has deep influence on playwrights and it was marked by several classical writers including Horace, Ovid and others. Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope were considered as well known writers of Augustan period. A significant contribution was marked by the publication of the first novel by Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and *Pamela* by Samuel Richardson.

During the eighteenth century, London society suffered from several social political problems such as corruption, crimes, execution, injustice system, debtors, filthy living condition, insecurity and others. In contrast, the early eighteenth century was an era of satire, verse, prose and novel. Drama too was an age of transition which treated a realistic observation and truth. This period witnessed the flourishing of theatre. One of the most successful shows on London was ballad opera, John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. This play described the harshness of life and dealt with political and social issues that faced London during this period. Gay was an eye witness of criminal society during the eighteenth century; his play is, thus, more realistic portrayal of how the English society had been living.

The idea of *the Beggar's Opera* was proposed by Jonathan Swift. At the beginning, the Drury Lane theatre refused and rejected to stage it because Cibber Colley, the manager of theatre, felt that it would be unwise to stage a play which equated courtiers, politicians and lawyers with thieves. But later, it was opened at Lincoln infield in London in 1728 by John Rich. *The Beggar's Opera* is composed of three acts written in prose. At the beginning, the play was introduced by the Beggar and the player. In the opening scene Peachum entered and spoke with his wife. They worried about their daughter Polly because she has love relation with one of the most famous thief. Mrs. and Mr. Peachum discovered that their daughter married Macheath secretary. After that they started to prepare a plan to arrest him. On the

other hand Polly told Macheath in order to save himself. The second act started with Macheath at the tavern. Suddenly, he was arrested for his dancing and drunks. Macheath was sent to Newgate. In jail, he promised Lucy to marry her if she helped him to escape. Lucy stole the key from her father. In the act three when Macheath was free, Lockit and Peachum discussed how to arrest him. A woman called Dianna Trapes entered and gave them information about Macheath. Finally, he was caught and punished by hanging. The play ended by Macheath singing and admitted that he married Polly. Gay in this exciting piece of theatre used both dialogues and traditional songs. John Gay established English drama at the front of theatre's audience. He also presented to the world one of the most successful piece of theatre and most brilliant social satire of English during the eighteenth century.

In the light of the above discussion, this research put forward the following major research questions: what was the social life like in London in the eighteenth century? What are the main reasons that contributed to the rise of criminality during this era? What were crimes portrayed in *The Beggar's Opera*? Are crimes portrayed in *The Beggar's Opera* closely connected to the ones committed in real life?

In order to answer the questions discussed above, the collection of data occurs through an extensive library research searching for references that are relevant to the subjects such as books, encyclopedia, articles as well as dealing with the play events. So the method which followed in this study is eclectic.

The main purpose of this humble work is to find out whether crimes in John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* are related to the historical records or not. Parallel to this objective; this study gives an overview and deep understanding of the problems that faced England generally and London practically during the eighteenth century. In so doing, it seeks also to describe the criminal behavior of politicians and courtiers during this period and their harsh punishments.

This thesis studied the play of John Gay *The Beggar's Opera* and it also shed the light only on a number of crimes because characters of *The Beggar's Opera* were involved only on a certain crimes.

Dianne Dugaw, in his excellent book "Deep Play" *John Gay and the Invention of Modernity*, emphasizes that John Gay especially in his work *The Beggar's Opera* gave a general idea about his society in order to treat the theme of poverty and corruption (31). He noticed that the plot of *The Beggar's opera* was established an imaginative structure while it described the real truth of the society (32). Dugaw also points out that John Gay considered the moral and aesthetic value as features of his period (71). David Dabydeen states that Gay described a city of London as "corrupt, putrid and anarchy to the point of insanity. London is depicted as gigantic bedlam riddled with crime and diseases" (qtd. in Böker, Detiners and Giovanopoulos 13). *A Companion to Satire Ancient and Modern*, edited by Roben Quintero emphasizes that Gay used beggars and thieves to state parallels between low and high life in London (168). Uwe Boker, Ines Detiners And Anna Christina Giovanopoulos believe, in *John Gay's The Beggar's Opera 1728-2004 Adaptation and Rewrings*, that Gay imitated the event to state similarities between "the common Robber" and "the Robber of the public" they also add that rewriting *The Beggar's Opera* is considered as a reaction to discover correlation within societies (19-20).

In order to tackle the issues of this study, I deliberately divided my work into three chapters. The first entitled "England's Life in the Eighteenth Century ". This chapter gives a general overview about the situation of England during this era concerning its major social issues; it introduces statistics about crimes and criminals and describes the nature of punishments, courtrooms and the judicial system in London during the eighteenth century. This chapter also states the main reasons that lead to increase in the rate of criminality. The second chapter entitled "Gay and *The Beggar's Opera*" deals with three sections, the first one

discussed the life John Gay and his works .The second one deals with the origin of the idea of this play. The third section highlights the sources of the music that he used in his play. The third chapter entitled “The Depiction of Crimes in *The Beggar’s Opera* and its Corresponding to The Social Conditions of The Eighteenth Century”. This chapter analyses how crimes in *The Beggar’s Opera* are connected to the historical events. In the first section of it, deals with kind of crimes that the characters committed like highways Robbers, the activities of the gang, female criminals and their roles. It also compares the major real criminal figures of the eighteenth century with the fictional character of the play. The second section deals with criminal justice system concerning prisoners, trials, punishments and lawyers.

Chapter One: England's life in the Eighteenth Century

1.1. Introduction

The period of the eighteenth century witnessed the widespread of serious political and social ills. One of the most outstanding issues was the rising in the amount of crimes and particularly the violent one. In attempting to portray these problems that was marked the history England during the eighteenth century. This chapter will highlight the social and political problems of this age such as: poverty, crimes, harsh punishments and execution. It will also discuss the main factors that contributed to the rise of criminality and types of crimes in England at this era.

1.2. The Social and Political Issues in England during the 18th Century

England was divided into three groups the upper, the middle and the lower class. The Aristocracy included Dukes, Marquises, Earl's and Baronets. The middle class were businessmen professionals also Shopkeepers and Tradesmen. Lower class composed of different occupational (Day and Keegan 38-39).

The year of 1660 marked the history of London. It was known as a great fire of the 1660. J.M Beattie agreed that the great fire of 1660 destroyed London (4). The dangerous fire has several bad effects on society. It damaged the medieval city. As a result, there were approximately 13.200 houses, 90 churches, 5 chapels and four prisons were completely destroyed ("Great Fire of London"). After that citizens started to rebuild of what had been destroyed without paying attention to structure of planning and orders of building. Houses and shops were close to each other. The absence of security leads to the increase of criminals in London ("London Its Daily Life and Hazards"). In *Gender and Petty Violence in London, 1680-1720*, Jemine Hurl-Emon has stated that the growing of the population was one of the characteristics of London. It was estimated 200.000 in 1600 to 400.000 in 1650 and 575.000 in 1750 and 575.000 by the end of the century but 675.000 in 1800 (7).

Much ink has flown on discussing the germ of London's society during the eighteenth century. The dark side of the city was described in the article, *London Its Daily Life and Hazard, as* dirty and miserable. Most people of that city witnessed a complex and difficult situation and they lived in oppressed condition. At that time, its air was unsupported because of the widespread of ugly smell of wet horses and unwanted materials. Water the main source of life was also filthy due to raw sewage. Its streets were full of garbage of people who through it everywhere. Parl Langford stressed that during the reign of George 2 and especially in his first years 1727 was marked by the spread of diseases mainly small pox and influenza. In 1731 the total populations were about 52.000 inhabitants (18-19).

In other hand Kristina Straub illustrated that the relation between "servants" and "master" was appeared through different historical phases and geographical position with the concept of love and hate. She added that the appearance of social awareness of those conflicts was considered as specific reason especially in the eighteenth century (2). Henry Fielding believed that the social division is in the concept of a potential conflict between worker and jobless (qtd. in Day and Keegan 38). The book *Daily life in the eighteenth century*, edited by Kriston Olson, noted that the upper and middle class take all the quantity of food especially meat and liquor. But the poor class was neglected and lived in starvation, hunger and with low wages. He also added that the houses of the poor family in the cities were miserable. They lived in underground crowd rooms that did not suitable as a living places and other poor families lived in weak slums. This latter was known as "Rookeries". Living quarter's areas in the country were built with turf or wattles. The great landowners took the control over the local forests and they also reserved all the wood for their lives whereas the others left without firewood which they used it for heating and cooking. The poor class died from starvation because of filthy houses and dirty condition and lack of source of sanitation made them target to a variety kinds of diseases such as small pox and fevers. Also during this period hospitals

were concentrated to look after those who were extremely poor. The high and middle classes were nursed at their homes and they also benefited from high value of hygiene. They lived a better life. High quality and a good health were significant factors that made the rate of morality decreased and they lived longer. He also pointed out that “drunkenness, criminality, ignorance, carelessness” were terms presented the poor class. Rural labors were named as Perverse, stupid and illiterate whereas urban workers were known by “debanche –ill-mannered” (18-19). John Wesley described the bad and miserable life of citizens:

I found some in their cells, other in their garrets, half-starved with cold and hunger, added to weakness and pain. But I found more one of them unemployed who were able to crawl about room, so wickedly. So devilishly false, is that common objection, they are poor because they are Idle (qtd in. Kristin 22).

Behind this problems and misery that characterized the social side of London during the eighteenth century was drinking alcohol. Consuming alcohol in the eighteenth century contributed to the appearance of “the disease concept” of alcohol (Andrew 70). Roy Porter also insisted that this concept became an addictive during the eighteenth century (qtd. in Andrew 70). In the same book Porter suggested that drinking was personal and temporary issue (qtd. in Andrew 72). *In Drinking, Crime and Women in the Eighteenth Century London*, edited by Elise Skinner, suggested that the eighteenth century was depicted as “Gin Drinking”. It had a negative aspect on human being and the main reasons that lead to the expansion of this epidemic were urbanization, economic and political factors. The emergence of this habit in that city was considered as a new drug. This phase was witnessed no rules to control it. She also emphasized that many London journals reported that gin was the main reason that created crimes like events of assaults and murder. Consuming gin in England flourished in the eighteenth century and particularly when the government permitted its production. At that time it was cheaper than beer and it became the most preferred product

between the lower class and it was the source for many social issues (Chiffols and Hesse 331). Gin became more respectable especially during the nineteenth century. The origin name of the Gin was “jeniever” or “jenever” and in some situations it could found it under the name of “Genever” or “Geneva” after that it took the term of Gin when drinking get its direction to England (Chiffols and Hesse 331). Seanp Hier said that the appearance of Gin craze was dated back to the beginning of the eighteenth century and it was flourished between 1720 to 1751. Gin was bought in England with low prices and offered to all classes. At the end of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth century government passed special laws to reduce the production of this spirit (172). He also added that the term gin originated from Holland .Every years the quantity of gin drinking increased to reach 1/2 gallons in 1690, in 1740 it was approximately from 7 to 8 million. In 1720 it was about 2.5 million but after that it was reduced. Gin was known as “Madam Geneva” or with another term “Mother Gin”. Most of the spirit gin consumers were female. In 1728 newspaper article the chairman of the west minister branch justice denied that gin has a big effect on the society like the widespread of bad language and behavior. In order to reduce and diminished the excessive conception of drinking, the parliament passed eight harsh acts to control it (173-174). In 1751 Gin simply referred to crimes. Parliaments put a simple solution to ban this bad spirit. The act reduced it by more than fifty percent and stopped selling it in prisons and other location especially in the streets. The average wages were depressed and the prices of bread were increased, this obliged the poor people to stop this habit. The reasons behind crimes were poverty due to its great role in flourishing of alcohol consumption in London. She agreed that most people who drank an excessive amount were poor citizens, in 1740 newspaper headline announced that more than 84.000 children were died and majority of them suffered from infectious diseases (Skinner).

London Mob: Violence and Disorder in the Eighteenth Century England, edited by Rorbert Brink Shoemaker, reported most reporters and analysts of the news for radio television or a newspaper on the social life London in the eighteenth century stated that London streets in its alleys were overcrowded and discorded (2). He also wrote at that time and in that city they were approximately 447 taverns and 531 coffeehouses. Gin was very cheap and sold in shops, wheelbarrows on the streets and even in houses. The majority of houses could buy it (7). Drinking alcohol was so famous especially between women and lower class. Shoemaker declared that “gin was frequently sold and sword fights and duel often occurred.” (8).

It is, without a shadow of doubt, behind the excessive amount of drinking, poverty insecurity and other bad living condition that rose particularly in London slums was crimes. J.M Beattie stated that the central issue of crimes in London were robbery, burglary and several kind of thieves (1-2). Judy Stove declared that gin shops were a place of making different crimes and it worked all day and night (3). While J.M Beattie, a social historian, noted that robbery was frequent violence in all roads of London. Beattie also insisted that burglary was the heart of danger that contributed to the increase in the number felonies at that time. It caused psychological problems like fear of hazard (22).

The article *Crime and Punishment in Islington* informed that the eighteenth century was a period of highway robbery, theft, burglary and forgery. They were also the most popular criminal patterns in that period. This article mentioned that crimes of passion and drunken assaults reached the highest percent and many people believed that the only method to solve their daily problems was occurred by committing a crime.

Robert shoemaker illustrated that the main dangerous felony in England during the eighteenth century was theft (1). While Philip Rawlings emphasized that committing crimes

were considered as daily life activity and became as habitual work because it observed on all days of the week, all hours of the day and all seasons of the year (7).

In some places of the country, prisoners were remained months before holding the court session. At that period Trials in England could be hold for seven years. In the same book he added that criminal were arrested for several numbers of offences as minor and major. Minor offences could be one kind of following crimes: destroying fences, forgery, murder, perjury breach of promise, swearing, trading on Sunday, keeping unlicensed alehouse, homosexuality, very minor thefts, failing to support one's family or leaving them in the district (Olson 212-213). Kristin Olsen emphasized that Between 1689 and 1800 capital crimes increased from 50 to 200 and this could include stealing, counterfeiting, stealing a sheep, killing a cow, stolen goods, theft or robbery was like pickpocketing and goods more than 1s. The value of shoplifting was 5s but housebreaking was valued 40s. The case of gypsies as entering a land with target to kill a rabbit and also the case of breaking a stone from west minister bridge (213).

Many crimes were punished by death and during the eighteenth century execution were in a large numbers. They were approximately 1200 citizens of London at the end of the century and probably 20 people a year in the late of the century in Middlesex and London together. It was also 200 a year in England and wales. During the eighteenth century, they were a lack of administration of law who were specialized to catch and punish the criminals while the enforcement was random. This was a real truth that considered Britain as a free society. Judicial, royal forgiveness and reduction of harshness of legal penalty were suspended outside for different factors related to politics. In the eighteenth century capital punishments had a difficult examination. Every one during this period share the point that some executions was considered as warning since the number of crimes increased and

dominated the city, highwaymen whether stealing in groups on the roads or alone practiced their activities as a habitual job and most thieves were robbed in dark streets (Olson 213).

During the eighteenth century jails were places of keeping the accusers before their trials. There were only a small number of people who rejected debtors. Two or three percent were a rate of prison's punishment from Old Bailey in 1770. The same year also witnessed the primary hard labor prison ships. The majority of prisons remained to carry on its works on ancient. Women and men prisoners were mixed during all the day (Olsen 214).

For minor crimes, judges were unwilling to pass judgment of prison without emotional penalty. In fact, they used a public pain. Sometimes as public punishment they exercised the pillory which was a frame made up of wood and contained holes. The heads and hands were protected. Those people were tormented by crows and the main aim was to make the accuser a shamed, distressed them or just for entertainment. In some situations, the ridicule person was pelted with stones, food, dirt, dead animals and even garbage. Another punishment was known as "public flogging". This type of penalty was concerned women. Many and many people were gathered to see these women whipped cruelty to their waist (Olsen 216).

Kristen Olsen informed that the holiday wood was only set up were hanging was programmed. Every six weeks, the secession started in London with the convict. The majority of them were younger under twenty one (216). Larry Siegel stated that at the end of the eighteenth century there were 350 categories of felonies in England were punished by death. Even though; people who were judged to penalty of death of insignificant offences were protected. In England and especially in the mid of the eighteenth century the use of capital punishment were popular. This era was also urged by the great use of physical and capital penalty. He also insisted that the legal philosopher asserted that physical sentence should be exchanged by the phases of determination and weakness. Jails were common places to keep criminals. Larry also suggested that the only solution was to save criminals in a fixed

abandoned ship in rivers everywhere in England (490-491). The beginning of the eighteenth century was characterized by a “moral crusade” in contrast to prostitutes, drunkard and alehouses. The eighteenth century was the era which witnessed the appearance of law, order in general and it was also a topic of public discussion (Muncie and Cloughlin 112).

Capital offences were largely used and it was estimated fifty in 1689, and about 240 in 1820 Most of the trial finishing in capital condemnation. In reality, it was progressed underneath the large numbers of crimes including robbery, burglary, housebreaking, rape, picket-poking, and murder. On the other hand new capital offences remained to be established at the end of the years of the eighteenth century. He also reported that some of the major enforced capital offences often created after 1688 such as in 1699 was the emergence of theft from shops, 1713 was marked by theft from houses, 1741 was witnessed the theft of sheep and cattle was in 1742, the year 1746 was for smuggling and theft from mails were in 1756 (Lemmings 86).

David Lemmings believed Forgery was without doubt, the most noticeable and recently kind of capital crime. Counterfeiting a seal or records of the bank of England was considered as capital crime in 1697, also counterfeiting of difficult stamps in 1711. while, the conclusive change entered with the passage of short but general law in 1729. Recently definite sorts of forgery stayed to increase in 1820. Despite the fact, the act 1830 excluded the function of capital punishments but forty two forms stayed capital crimes for in other two years (86). Clive Emsley observed that criminal aggression against women and children was not commonly recognized as a category of work connected with ordinary offenders causing ordinary felony (29).

John Marchell in 1832 addressed that from 1690 to 1730 thirty six people were wounded and twenty two were died by using the sword (qtd. in Malcolm 82). Erick Monkkonen supported that not all those who died by shooting were homicides, even though

the majority of them were wounding (qtd. in Malcolm 82). Over the course of the eighteenth century it was trusted that killing would be a typical category of morality (Smith and Nathalie 18).

Robert Fischer declared that without any doubt, the offences which took control over the Old Bailey session papers during the second half of the eighteenth century were in particularly those crimes that associated with theft (61). And he also added that the mid eighteenth century was a significant era where several felonies were punished by death (62). Inwood Stephen highlighted that proportion of crimes in England over the course of the eighteenth century were made overpowering fear between people and those who settled there. The rates of felonies especially in London were higher than the amounts in England. The distinction in rates of crimes could be attributed to the population of London during this period. A great number of people who lived in London were suffered from poverty. Male and female have some difficulties especially in founding a suitable job to save their families and to satisfy their needs. Confined streets and huge number of shacks helped many thieves to practice their activities like smuggling and stealing because they benefited from their situation to hidden there and they moved easily between in houses and alley (372).

In England there were more than two hundred types of felonies some of them were sentenced by death, a crime could be a treason, rape, robbery and animal theft (Tobias 140). Inwood said that the rise of the use of capital punishment especially at the end of 1700 the rate of executions in London demonstrated that the high practice of capital punishment from 1701 to 1750 were increased to reach 281 people who were executed in London, in 1760 they were approximately 246 people were executed and about 801 people in 1780. But between 1791 and 1815 the practice of capital punishments were reduced on the other hand these quantity were started to rise again especially between 1816 and 1820. Most people who were

executed between 1700 and 1800 were burglars, thieves robbers and forgery and the majority of those punished by death were lower than the age of twenty-one (371-372).

The article *Gin and Authority in The Eighteenth Century England law Enforcement on the Local Level* confirmed that the concept of social crimes represented a kind of behavior including smuggling. The state was insisted that this sort of felony as illegitimate while the lower class considered it as a legal (Oberwiltler 4). He also observed that they were significant different between two sorts of property crimes for example: theft, burglary, robbery and fraud. This kind of offences was named as "felonies property crime". In so many words, robberies of animals like poaching, theft of wood or even theft of vegetable. This latter would not call it felony but it should consider them "misdemeanors ". The majority part of the population believed that these previous mentioned were not consider them as criminals (Oberwiltler 15). During the half of the century the alleyways and streets were full of dust "the streets were dirtied not only by horses manure but also by human waste, particularly from beggar's and children who urinated and cracked next to the buildings" (Olsen 58).

the state of prison in London during the eighteenth century was illustrated with several alternative expression and words including misery, despair, death and the word Newgate itself was enormous "terror " to the popularity. Most medical doctors refused to join or even to enter the Newgate. In point of fact they cautioned that several diseases could affect them from the prison because these diseases could spread rapidly and might destroy the city like goal fever, "virulent" is one form of typhus. In fact, in May 1750 this kind influenced the Old Bailey sessions Cockburn (229).

1.3. Conclusion

The history of England during the eighteenth century was marked it as disorder state and out of control. Its streets were filled by dirt and noise, violence, slums...etc. This period was characterized the bad moment because of public execution, widespread of poverty,

diseases, crimes and taxes. The eighteenth century was noticed by emergence of criminals in all streets of the city like beggars, highwaymen, whores and thieves while their attacks on the society were reached its highest point.

Chapter Two: John Gay and *The Beggar's Opera*

2.1. Introduction

It was, without doubt, the significant factors that made the popularity of play of Gay's play *The Beggar's Opera* was its musical features during the eighteenth century and even the present time. Behind the appealing of this watershed play was its exciting use of the old, famous and native tunes. This chapter will focus on life of the poet and dramatist John Gay and his works. The second section will discuss the origin of *The Beggar's Opera* and the third one dealt with source of this successful piece of theatre.

2.2. Life of John Gay and his Works

Lewis Melville, in his book *Life and Letters of John Gay (1685- 1732)*, mentioned that the Gay' family was belonged to the one of the most outstanding and old British families. They choose Devonshire place to settle. William Gay was his father and born at Barnstaple. He was lived in the Red Cross. This later was a large house at the corner at Joy Street and it faced Holland Street. He married the daughter of Hammer, she was a leading non-conformist divine of the town .William by her had five children. The youngest child was John Gay (1). He was born in the West Country in Devonshire market town of Barnstaple (Gay xii). At the age of ten, Gay was orphaned. He moved to live with his uncle, The Reverend John Hammer (Gay xiii). Lewis Melville stated that John Gay was educated at Barnstaple grammar school (3). He got a perfect education at Barnstaple grammar school as well as he focused more on Latin and Geek literature in 1702. In his seventeen, he moved to London and he became an apprentice to John Willet Draper but unfortunately Gay disliked this job with a silk servant. Latter, he came back to Devon but the death of his uncle was forced him to return again to London. In 1707, Gay started to look for a job in London and he was worked as a secretary to Aaron Hill. He was his friend as well as a wealthy man who helped him to present his literary works. Thanks to Aaron Hill, Gay was published his first significant poem *Wine* (9). In 1712

Gay became a secretary to the Duchess of Monmouth and worked as a secretary to Lord Clarendon. During these few years, Gay was very intelligent and made several relationships with many people of London. The publication of the poem *Wine* was the main reason that took the attention of Alexander Pope who later became a lifelong best friend. Gay also became the closest friend of Jonathan Swift. Both Pope and Swift encouraged Gay to flourish his capacity of writing and to publish more literary works. After a few years, he came back again to London and started to present his literary career. In 1711 he emerged with a poem *The Present State of Wit*, In a Letter to a Friend in the Country. It was available in most houses since it was cheap and sold with economical prices (Melville 11). Samuel Johnson said that in 1713 Gay published *Rural Sports* and a play, *The Wife of Bath*, and the following years he published the mock pictorial picture. Through these different images he presented to the world a realistic event of the time *The Shepherd's Weeks* (204). In 1713 also he produced a comedy named *The Wife of Bath* but seven years later it was changed (Johnson 205). During 1713 he wrote another work *Reproof and Flattery and Dress*. It was printed in "the Guardian" also Gay wrote some verses *Panthea, Araminda, a Thought on Eternity and a Contemplation on Night*. All these were emerged in *Poetical Miscellany*. At that time the most magnificent work was *The Fan* Gay put most of his significant power and a great attention on this work (Melville 21). Lewis Melville introduced that Gay's publication or performance was disappeared for three years. *The What D'ye Call It* was one of the most successive forms of the theatrical work which perceived a great interest and it was performed at Drury Lane theatre in February, 1715. During the same year, in March 19th, 1715 Pope included to it *A Tragi-Comic Political Farce*. This piece attracted the attention and pleased most of the spectators and considered Gay as a great dramatist (36-37). He also added that in 1715 Gay moved to Devonshire where he started to write *Trivia, Or the Art of Walking the Streets of London*. It was published in this literary best circle on January 26th, 1716 and in 1717 he wrote

another play *Three Hours after Marriage*. It was a comedy written in collaboration with his best friends Pope and Arbuthnot. This play was produced at Duruy Lane (Melville 40-41). Peter Elfed Lewis informed that in 1719 Gay wrote *Acis and Galatea*. It was considered an English pastoral opera, *Acis and Galatea* was staged at Canons, the seat of The Duke of Chandos (1). In 1720 the job of Gay as a dramatist was failed to be achieve his popularity in the world. At that time his work *The Wife of Bath* was new and his play *The What D'ye It* and *Three Hours After Marriage* was famous. His poem *Trivia* and *The Shepherd's Week* were not enough. After that Gay thought that to collect all his poems even unpublished one. They were published in two quarto volume during the first years of 1720 with the help of Jacob Jonson and Bernard Linlott while William Kent made the illustration. So, this poem was named *On Several Occasions* (Melville 50). During 1723 Gay Wrote a tragedy named as *Captives*. It was produced and published at Duruy Lane in January 1724 (Melville 65). Frank Kidson added that his literary works take the attention of Caroline, the princess of wales, and Gay offered his *Fable* in 1727 to her (39). *Fable* supported John Gay to be so famous and helped him to return his success (Kidson 50). At the same year George 1 was died and the new queen did not ignore or neglected Gay but in fact she gave him only the post of gentleman Usher to princess Louis and with salary approximately 200£ a year but he quickly rejected her offer in 1727 (Melville 70). Through *The Beggar's Opera* Gay earned his fame (Melville 80). Frank Kidson stated that when Gay published *The Beggar's Opera*, he wrote a sequel to it. This dramatic production was known as *Polly* in 1729(42). In *The Beggar's Opera* and *Polly*, John Gay stated that the publication of *The Beggar's Opera* and *Polly* helped Gay to flourish and made him a wealthy man (Gay XV). *Cambridge Guide to Literature in English* highlighted that most his works and especially *Fables* still read even after his death .Gay was not suffered as most Scriblerian. He was serious, lovely and sociable person (Ousby 365). Ian Ousby declared that *Polly* was ballad opera by John Gay was added

as sequel to *The Beggar's Opera*. It portrayed the visit of Polly Peachum to the West Indies to look for Macheach (747). Peter Elfed Lewis wrote in 1730 *The Wife of Bath* was changed in 1732 *Acis And Galatea* was published but in 1733 *Achilles* was produced at Covent Garsden but in 1734 *The Distresse'd Wife* also was produced at Covent Garden (1). John gay was died in December 1732 (Melville 133) .

2.3. Origin of the idea of *The Beggar's Opera*

Lewis Melville, in his famous book *Life and Letters of John Gay (1685-1732)*, said that the suggestion of *The Beggar's Opera* was originated from Jonathan swift in a letters to Alexander Pope on August 30th, 1716 when he said " Dr. Swift had been observing once to Mr. Gay , what an odd pretting sort" (78). "Of thing a Newgate Pastoral might made". On October 22nd, 1727 Gay wrote : "you were advising me to go into Newgate to finish my scene the more correctly .i now think I shall ,for I have no attendance to hinder me ;but my opera is already finished" (80). The Literary work *The Beggar's Opera* was an example of ballad opera which introduced a new form of English drama. At that time (1685-1732) Gay was a member in the Tory Scriblerus club. The beginning of *The Beggar's Opera* started when Swift suggested to Pope that Gay wrote "Newgate Pastoral among the whores and thieves there ". Most scholars suggested this play as a great success that leads to the development of new traditional music because it contained sixty nine familiar and traditional tunes (Booker 75). *The Southern Magazine and Monthly Review* illustrated that at the time of *The Beggar's Opera*, John Gay, Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift were among the opponents to the court (127). Harsh condition that faced Gay and the bad situation of the city were serious reason which affected Gay to write such literary work called as *A Newgate Pastoral*, this plan was firstly discussed at Queensbury house but it failed. Eventually, it was decided to write *The Beggar's Opera*. At the end it was accepted and performed at Lincoln's Inn Field, at the beginning, it was suggested to Fleet Wood and his partners at Drury lane theatre but it refused

to stage it because they thought that this kind of literary work would not be accepted by spectators and could cause problems. In fact, it was strongly rejected. The achievement of *The Beggar's Opera* was influenced by the parts who were opposed to the Italian opera and other groups who were against the court (128).

Donald Jay Grout and Herline Weigel Williams portrayed that *The Beggar's Opera* was a well-known play written by John Gay and published at London's Lincoln Inn Field in 1728, its music was arranged by Johann Christoph Pepusch 1667-1752 and focused on characters who were thieves and prisoners. The germ idea was politics and society. The play was full of both dialogues and traditional songs and it was filled with satire. Spoken dialogues were from familiar ballad tunes and its songs were from different traditional sources concerning the works of famous men Purcell, Bononcini, and Handel in his *March From Rinaldo*. The different use of this music has a great effect and represented one of the characteristics of English comic drama (292).

Over the course of the eighteenth century, a new form was appeared in English. It was based on the combination of English Italian expression which earlier many people failed to introduce this type and they understand it half of the work. But after the coming of Handel everything was changed and gave more attention to this type of hybrid work (Streatfield 359, ch. xvi). When Gay borrowed the idea and formulated it. The result was a play based on a highwayman called Macheach. The Dr. Pepusch set up its music which was a traditional English and Scotch melodies and shaped the successful popular tunes of that day. The flourishing of *The Beggar's Opera* was noticed in every areas of the country and it was performed sixty two times in the first period. In 1920 Frederic Aust rearranged it to be Three and half years at lyric theatre, Hammel Smith at the end of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century the English ballad opera were extremely famous generally in England and particularly in London (Streatfield 360, ch. xvi).

Petter Elfed Lewis thought that this kind of plays which included a serious satire of the court and Sir Robert Walpole, king's chief minister of the state. After the rejection of *The Beggar's Opera* from Cibber Coley, The Duchess of Queensbury tried to convince John Rich, the manager of theatre royal in Lincoln's Inn Fields, in order to stage *the Beggar's Opera* .on January 29th, 1728 a friend of Gay especially swift and pope concerned about the acceptance of the play (2). After that the Congreve announced that "it would be either take greatly, or damned confoundedly." in the other hand Pope wrote to Swift that "it will make a great noise, but whether of claps or hisses I know not". The first night of its performance, most of the audiences were interested to this new form of the ballad opera and they found it very excitement. Between 1727 and 1728 the play were staged sixty two times this latter made it so amazing and extraordinary success. It was repeated several times in the following theatrical years. It was given fifty-nine performances, sixteen of them by a company of child actors were known as Lilliputians. The success of *The Beggar's Opera* was quickly expanded during the first year. This play firstly performed in the provinces and Dublin but the following years it was performed every year (3). The major characters of *The Beggar's Opera* were Lockitt, Polly, Macheach, Peachum and Lucy. *The Beggar's Opera* was a difficult work in which Gay made his best to attained balance between comedy and tragedy like the situation where Lucy Lockitt played both roles comic and a tragic character (4).

Lewis Melville presented that when *The Beggar's Opera* was staged on January 29th, 1728. It was based on the following characters:

Peachum.....	Mr. Hippisley
Lockitt	Mr. Hall
Macheath.....	Mr. Walker
Filch	Mr. Clark
Jemmy Twitcher.....	Mr. H Bullock

Mrs. Peachum	Mr. Martin
Polly	Miss Fenton
Lucy Lockitt	Mrs. Egleton
Diana Trapes.....	Mrs. Martin (80).

2.4. The Music of John Gay and its Source

The prologue of *The Beggar's Opera* which was written was to inform that the opera used to celebrate the marriage of the two brilliant singers: James Chaunter and Moll Lay (Kidson 64). Edgar V. Roberts informed that the use of this new form "ballad opera" was flourished English drama (xv). It also leads to the development of English drama (Gay 163).

The following will give brief overview about the nature of each tune that used in this exiting literary work:

1- *Through all the Employments of Life*

Air: 'An Old Woman Clothed in Gray'. It was the initial tune .The unique song started as

An old woman clothed in gray
 whose daughter was charming and young,
 but changed to be once led astray
 by roger's false flattering tongue.

This music was set up on the first years of the eighteenth century. The last line 'roger' was known in the dancing master as 'un constant roger' (kidson 67).

2 -'A Tis Woman that Seduces All Mankind

Air: 'The Bonny Grey-Ey'd Morn'. It was originated from Anglo Scottish songs. This air was first produced by Jeremiah Clark and it mentioned in volume three of Pills in 1719 (Kidson 67).

3- *If Any Wench Venu's Girdle Wears*

Air: “*Cold and Raw*”. It was also Anglo-scotch song. There many version of it stated in the volume three of pills in 1719. Before it was named as “The Farmer’s Daughter” the story was presented by Hawkins which was connected to the Queen Mary in order to requested Mrs. Arrabella Hunt. The great famous songs were introduced by Purcell (Kidson 67).

4- *If Love the Virgin’s Heart Invade*

Air: *Why is Your Faithful Slave Disdained*. This tune was written in unconcerned form and indicated in pill volume three (kidson 68).

5- *A Maid is Like the Golden Ore*

Air: *Of All the Simple Things We Do*. The source of this song was originated by D’urfey for Thoma’s Doggett’s in 1696 in the comedy the country wake and it was tilled “The Mouse Trap or the Marriage” the tune is stated in *The Dancing Master* in volume 2 and in 1719 (Gay 164).

6- *Virgins Like the Fair Flower*

Air: ‘*What Shall I Do To Show How Much I Love Her?*’ It was written by Henry Purcell from his *History of Dioclesian* in 1690 (Kidson 68).

7- *Our Polly is sad slut*

Air: ‘*Oh London is a Fine Town*’. This tune was a very popular tune it was from the beginning of the seventeenth century. It has several names one example of its famous version was under the name *Written Town’s End* (Gay 165).

8- *Can Love Be Controlled by Advice*

Air: *Grim King of the Ghosts*. The starting lines of this tune were started in *the Frantick Lover*. It was intended for Nicholas Rowe and it was a melody of Collin’s Complaint (Gay 165).

9- *Oh Polly, You Might Have Toyed and Kissed*

Air: *oh jenny, oh jenny, where hast thou been?* It was called the *Willoughby whim* it and also it was known as *Mary Fair*. All the student recognized the tune as *Golden slumbers kiss your eyes* (Kidson69).

10- *I Like the Ship in the Storms was Tost*

Air: *Thomas, I Cannot*. It was originated from *Virginals* it was also famous with the name *Thomas you cannot* which was mentioned in *The Dancing Master* in 1670 (Kidson 69).

11- *A Fox May Steal Your Hens, Sir*.

Air: *A Soldier and Sailor*. It was originated by John Eccles for the song of Congreve. This latter, its lyric was concerned a completion between a soldier sailor thinker and tailor for love of buxom Joan (Gay166).

12- *Oh Ponder Well, Benot Severe*.

Air: *Now ponder well*. It was an attractive tune and its initial line were *children wood* it was also an old ballad opera dating back to the sixteenth and described one most wonderful stories of two children who were left alone in the forest by their uncle (Gay166).

13 - *The Turtle Thus With Plaintive Crying*

Air: *Le Printemps Rappelle aux Armes*. The emergence of this song was stated in French song collection took the name of *La Chefdes Chansonnier* which was published in 1717 and after that in *Pill* 1719-1720. It was believed that Gay took the name from unnamed version called *The bird fancyers delight* (Gay166).

14 - *Perty Polly, Say*

Air: *Pretty parrot, Say*. It believed that it has another name *Pretty Poll*. This tune was stated by John Freeman and it was translated from French (Kidson 69).

15- *May heart was so free*

Air: *Pray, Fair One, Be Kind*. It said that this tune was not "Traced" (Kidson 70).

16- *Were I Laid on Green Land Coast*

Air: *Over the Hills and Far Away*. The origin of this tune was Scottish. It was employed in the play *The Recruiting Officers* in 1706 and it mentioned in pills 1709. The name of the early Scottish version was *The wind has blawn my paid away* (Kidson 70).

17- *Oh What Pain is to Part*

Air: *Gin Thou Wert Mine Awn Thing*. It was named as *An Thou My Ain Thing*, asserted in *Orpheus Caledonus* between 1725 and 1726 (Kidson70).

18- *The Miser Thus a Shilling See*

Air: *O the Bromm*. It was founded in *Orpheus Caledonuis* (Kidson70).

19- *Fill Every Glass, For Wine Inspires Us.*

Air: *For Every Glass*. The tune comes from a French song. It was illustrated in pills in 1719 (Kidson 70).

20- *Let Us Take the Road*

Air: *March in Rinaldo*. This music was from Handel's opera and it was noted in act three in 1711 (Kidson70).

21- *If the Heart of a Men is Deprest With Cares*

Air: *Would You Have a Young Virgin of Fifteen Years*. The early air was known as *Poor Robin Magoot*. During this time the term were used for a dance tune. At the beginning it was written for D'urfey's 1709; *Comedy the Modern Prophets* (Gay168).

22- *Youth's the Season Made the Joy*

Air: *Cotillon* the term Cotillon or Cotillion was a French dance. It entered England during 1720. Gay used it from alian –rené le sage's play *télémaque* in 1715 (Gay168).

23- *Before the Barn Door Crowing*

Air: *Allin a Misery Morning*. It was under the name of *Wiltshire Wedding*. It was descended from an older ballad that took the name of the friar and nun (Gay168).

24- *The Gamesters and Lawyers*

Air: *when once I lay*. It was from *the Benefit of Marriage* and it stated in *The King's Delight*.

This latter was an old song and the most common tune in the restoration era (Gay168).

25 -*At The Tree I Shall Suffer With Pleasure*.

Air: *When first I laid Siege to My Chloris*. The words of this tone come back to Sir Charles sedley and from his funny play *Billamona* (Gay168).

26- *Man escaped from rope and gun*.

Air: *Courtiers, Courtiers Think It No Harm*. The original words of this tune were based on an old half sheet music (Kidson72).

27- *Thus When a Good Housewife Sees a Rat*

Air: *A Lovely Lass to a Fiar Came*. This song was stated in *Watts Musical Miscellany* in 1731.

28- *How Cruel Are The Traitors* (Kidson72).

Air: *Twas when the sea was roaring*. This song was from Gay's play named *The What D'ye Call It*" (Kidson72).

29- *The First Time at the Looking Glass*.

Air: *The Sun Had Loosed His Weary Team*. It was originated from *Winchester Christening*. This latter was mentioned in a third collection of new song. The words by Mr. D'urfey in 1685. On the other hand in Scotland in *Deil's awa wi the Exercise Man* (Kidson72).

30- *When You Censure the Age*

Air: *How Happy Are We Who From Thinking Are Free*. It was written by John Barrett. But it sung and played by Mr. Pack (Kidson72).

31- *Is Then His Fate Decreed, Sir?*

Air: *Of a Noble Race Was Shenkin*. The emergence of this song was in the play of D'urfey. He gave the name of *The Richmond Heiress* in 1693. The music was composed by John Eccles and Henry Purcell (Kidson73).

32- *You'll Think E'er Many Days Ensue*.

It was said that the air was not given a name and the air was connected with Ophelia's song, *How Should I True Love Know* (Kidson73).

33- *If You at an Office Solicit Your Due.*

Air: *London Ladies*. It was called *Advice to the ladies* and it was also introduced by *D'urfey*. Its first publication was in 1687 (Gay 170). Frank added that the tune was illustrated in the dancing master and in many versions of pills .this song started as "ladies of London born wealthy and fair..." (Kidson 73).

34- *Thus When the Swallow, Seeking Prey*

Air: *All in the Downs*. Barlow titled it as *Charming Billy* and it was also took the name of *Constan Billy*. The original starting line was "when the hills and lofty mountains...." (Gay170).

35- *How Happy Could I Be With Either*

Air: *Have Heard of Frolicsome Ditty or The Rant*. It has another title for the tune was *The City Ramble* (Kidson74).

36- *I'm Bubbled*

Air: *Irish Trot*. It was founded in pills an alternative tune on the hide park frolic.

37- *Cease Your Funning*

It also did not have a title. The tune was from the seventeenth century.it named as *Lofty Mountains*. The air was emerged as *Condtant Billy* in the dancing master (Kidson74).

38- *Why How Now, Madam Flirt*

Air: *Gossip Joan*. It appeared in the late years of the seventeenth century and its song started "Good Morrow, *Gossip Joan*" (Kidson74).

39- *Now Power On Earth Can E'er Divide.*

Air: *Irish Howl*. The tune could be founded in the third volume of dancing master (Kidson74).

40- *I Liked the Fox Shall Grieve*

Air: *The Lass of Patie's Mill*. Its kind was a love song. It was composed by Ramsay. It was also documented in the seventeenth century (Gay 171). Frank Kidson emphasized that the air was stated in *Orpheus Caledonus* with the title *Peggy's Mill* (Kidson 75).

41- *When Young at the Bar You First Taught Me to Score*

Air: *If Love's a Sweet Passion, How Can It Used ?* The air was composed by Henry Purcell in 1692 and it was mentioned in *Fairy Queen*. It focused on midsummer night's dreamed Shakespeare. The lyric of Gay was highlighted the association between sex and commerce (Gay171).

42- *My love is all Madness and Folly*

Air: *South Sea Ballad*. There were various ballad under thus name.it founded in the final version of *The Dancing Master*. The first publication of the collection was done by John Plyford (Kidson75).

43 -*Thus Gamesters United In Friendship Are Found*

Air: *Packing's Pound* .The first lines were took the name of Sir John Packing. It was founded in the Ftizwilliam Virginal manuscript (Kidson 75).

44- *The Modes of The Court So Common Are Grown*

Air: *Lillibulero*. The name was come back from the ballad "Lero, Ler, Lilliburlero: Lilli Burlero, Bullen A La". It was considered by number of Irish catholic throughout a1641 massacre of Protestants as a code word. Many people who accepted it, they used it against the anti- Stuart glorious revolution of 1688. The tune was arranged by Henry Purcell in 1686. The only reason behind the use of this tune by Gay was it simple and attractive melody (Gay 172).

45- *What Gudgeons Are Men*

Air: *Down in the North Country*. It was dated back to the seventeenth century and it had many names and different songs. The song that used in *The Beggar's Opera* was "farmer's daughter of Merry Wakefield (Kidson 76).

46- *In the Days of My Youth*

Air: *A Shepherd Kept Sheep*. This song was in Pill (Kidson76).

47- *I'm Like a Skiff on The Ocean Tossed*

Air: *One evening, having lost my way*. The original title of this song was *The Happy Clown*. It was also recognized under the name wallpoole (Gay172).

48- *When a Wife's in Her Pout*

Air: *Now Roger, I'll Tell Thee Because Thou'rt My Son*. The words of this tune did not sourced but Jemery Barlow proposed that this tune was originated to the sixteenth century (Gay 172). According to Frank Kidson the traditional version of it started with the following lines:

And Now my dear Robin, since thou art my son,
I'll give you good counsel in life,
Go haste thee away and make no delay
And I'll arrant I'll get thee a wife (Kidson76).

49- *A Curse Attends That Women's Love*

Air: *Bessy Bell*. Gay state that this tune was originated by Ramsay Belly Bell and Mary Gay (Gay173). Frank mentioned that it was from a Scottish tune and it founded in *Orpheus Caledonius* (Kidson 77).

50- *Among the Man Coquets We Find*

Air: *Would Fate Tome Belinda Give*. It was written by John Wildford (Gay 173).

51- *Come Sweet Lass*

Air: *Come Sweet Lass, This Bonny Weather*. It was originated under the title *An Excellent New Scotch Song, Cald, Jockey's Complant For His Beloved Moggy*. And it was also called *Greenwich Park* (Gay173).

52- *Hither, Dear Husband, Turn Your Eyes*

Air: *The Last Time I Went O'er the Moor*. It was done by Ramsay .it was an earlier Scottish song in *Orpheus Caledonius* (Gay173).

53- *Which Way Shall I Turn Me*

Air: *Tom Tinker's My True Love*. This song was very harsh. It was first written down in 1714 (Gay 173). It founded in Pills. There is also a tune named *Tom Thinker* occurred in the *Dancing Master* (Kidson77).

54- *When My Hero in the Court Appears*

Air: *I am a Poor Shepherd Undone*. The first name of this tune was *Hey Ho, My Honey*. The song occurred in the pills 1720 (Kidson77).

55-*When He Hold Up His Hand*

Air: *Ianthe the Lovely*. The music was written by John Barrett and the words were done by John Glanville. The first lines were known as *the Happy Pain's* (Gay 173).

56- *Bonny Dundee*

Air: *The Charge Is Prepared*. It was a Scottish tune. It could found in *Orpheus Caledonius* and in several others places (Kidson 78).

57- Macheath sung different continuous piece of music consisting Happy Groves was written by John Barrett. *Of All The Girls That Are So Smart, Sally In Our Alley, Brittons Strike Home* by Purcell in *Bonduca, Chevey Chase, To Old Simon the King*, and others (Kidson 78).

58- *Would I Might Be Hanged*

Air: *All You Must Take A Leap In The Dark*. The song and its air were like *A Hymn Upon the Excution of Two Criminals by Mr. Ramondon* (Kidson 78).

59- *Thus I Stand Like The Turk With His Doxies Aound*

Air: *Lumps of pudding*. The song and air were in Pills (1720) and the tune occurred in *Dancing Master* 1703 (Kidson 78).

60- *Ourselves, Like the Great, To Secure A Retreat*

Air: A Cobbler There Was. Frank Kidson confirmed that The song of this air did not exist in the first editions of the opera but it take a place in several other edition like the second or the third and...etc. There was several publication of this song among them *The Cobbler's End* and it was dated back to the seventeenth century (79).

2.5. Conclusion:

Through this amazing play, Gay tried to create a feeling of patriotism on the readers. In fact, Gay made this play different from the Italian opera and introduced all this wealth song and kept them closely to the original. The source of music of *The Beggar's Opera* are varied and composed of famous English, Scottish and French ballad during this age.

Chapter Three: The Depiction of Crimes in *The Beggar's Opera* and its Correspondence to The Social Conditions of The Eighteenth Century

3.1. Introduction

In the eighteenth century many people viewed criminals as heroic of the century. Stories of those criminals were filled the papers of Pamphlets, Books, and newspapers. Gay's play *The Beggar's Opera* was widely read throughout the world because it examined London society and most of its major themes were crime and corruption. The main focus point of this chapter is to present how crimes in *The Beggar's Opera* are closely related to the historical events. So, this chapter will discuss crimes and criminals. And second section will deal with criminal justice system including imprisonment, lawyers and punishments.

3.2. Crimes and criminals

3.2.1. Highway robbery

One of the most significant crimes especially in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries were Highwaymen or as they had been known Gentlemen of the road. The fictional names of the characters in *The Beggar's Opera* indicated their activities. *The Columbia Encyclopedia* stated that the meaning of the name Macheath was descended from Irish and Scottish Gaelic patronymics. Mac in scots Gaelic referred to "Son of". The name Macheath was indicated "son of heath". Act one from *The Beggar's Opera*, scene IV, described the place where Macheath emerged to steal people. It was frequently on Bagshot Heath. At the beginning Peachum said to her husband if he arrived from Bagshot earlier, he had assured to spend time with Polly and Bob Booty at a party of Quadrill (8). Gay explained in his earlier works that Bagshot heath was considered as a place where most highway burglars might gathered and planned their activities. Gay for example, in his *Epistle To The Right Honorable the Earl of Burlington* Gay wrote "now Bagshot heath, we cross broken gamesters oft' rapair their loss"(fable 153). Some historians highlighted that the repetition of

the same place Bagshot heath might have a relation to his life. One of them was Mclynn who insisted that the Earl of Burlington depicted a voyage from London to Exeter. This latter was near Barnstaple where John Gay was born (68-69). In the same book Mclynn believed that this might a reason which leads Gay to locate Bargshot rather than several places or areas in London including Woolwich, Blackhead, Epping Forest, Hounslow heath and others (68).

Murry Pittock who insisted that John Gay and especially in his play *The Beggar's Opera* illustrated in his character, Macheath, a Scottish picture whereas he was also presented as mirror image to corruption and fraud (72). Macheath was the leader of the highwaymen and one of the most heroic characters of mythology and it was clear in act two ,scene two when he warned his criminals in “ I beg you ,gentlemen, act with conduct and discretion a Pistol's is your last resort “(25). Whereas his warning has a slight influence on the group especially in air XX, *Let Us Take the Road. Air: March in Rinaldo* “our fire their fire surpasses, and turns all our lead to Gold, load their pistols and stick them under their gridles“(25).

In reality, Edward Dalton was one excellent example highwaymen during the eighteenth century. Gregory j. Durston, in his best book, *whores and highwaymen* said that Edward Dalton who was the brother of James Dalton. Edward was considered as one of the prominent figures of highway robbery over the course of the eighteenth century (226). The Proceeding informed that at the trial, Edward Dalton was recognized as the violent thief at the Old Bailey. Edward was arrested because he was attacked John Dennis on the road as well as he stole his expensive hat which was estimated at that time five shilling. John Dennis insisted that Edward Dalton was the person who robbed his hat and harshly bitted him. At the end of the trial the court made a decision stated that Dalton Edward should arrest.

Frank Mclynn emphasized that England during the eighteenth century was filled with highwaymen and also added that their activities included smuggling and other different kind

of serious social crime that was prepared in different external countries and away from London. In this case they tried were outside the Old Bailey (56-82). Marry Pittock, *Poerty and Jacobite Politics in The Eighteenth Century Britain and Ireland* focused that there was no doubt about the fact that highwaymen belonged to the higher social order as well as they were more cultivated and more trained comparing to the other offenders (72).

Mclynn illustrated that trail were carried out in the court where they accused the crimes (56-82). The Proceeding reported that they were approximately 241 highway robber who were tried at the Old Bailey and among them they were 120 persons who were found guilty, from them they 108 were convicted and the others people were judged by several punishments: five were imprisoned while others were transported to foreign places or adjourned or were fined ...etc.

John Gay in his play *the Beggar's Opera* illustrated several allusions to famous and significant people of the eighteenth century. Like for example in the Introduction of this play. Gay made an allusion to Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni. When the beggar said:” 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 offence” Another different case when Gay made an allusion to Walpole. This case was clear when Peachum in Act one, scene three said that:” Robin of Bagshot, alias Gorgon, alias Bluff Bob, alias arbuncle, alias Bob Booty”. *The Beggar's Opera* had an allegorical connotation between Whig government which was represented by Robert Walpole and criminal society. The heart idea of this literary work linked with the idea of criminality. Robert Walpole was a significant person who shared The British Economy after the overflowing of the *South Sea Bubble* in 1720. In piece of *the Beggar's Opera* he was characterized by Peachum and highwaymen Macheath (Booker 75).

Another comic character was Peachum. He was focused on Jonathan Wild. Gay barrowed the major activities from the real character wild. The name of Peachum was defined

by *the Oxford English dictionary*” to peach” was to “inform against an accomplice”. There are similarities between the activities of Peachum and Wild. ”Wild is to inform or to impeach upon his criminal acquaintance for the sake of reward” (Reggiero 4). In the article *London’s First Organized Crime Lord* suggested that Jonathan Wild was the most outstanding thief taker in the history of London. His gangs were in several districts and each one had a specific job such as group of criminals was focused only on stealing churches. He had also a large store to keep these stolen goods. The significant thing was that this gang governed themselves while Wild only organized them. This latter was clear in *The Beggar’s Opera* in Act one, scene two that Macheath gang ordering themselves Macheath:” Business cannot go on without him. He is a man who knows the world, and is a necessary Agent to us ... You must continue to Act under his direction, for the moment we break loose from him, one gang is rui’d” (25).

3.2.2. Macheath and Gang.

The names of the gang indicated the meaning of different activities. Macheath gangs were a group of criminals as Filch, Jemmy Twitcher, Nimming Ned, Harry Paddington, Matt of the Mint and Ben Budge. The names of each member of the Gang explained the sort of crimes that have been committed for example: according to *The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* stated that the meaning of the Filch referred to “steal something, particularly something small or not very available “.While the *Oxford English Dictionary* said that Filch was depicted as “a staff with a hook at one end, used to steal articles from hedges, open windows...etc.” the term “Jemmy “was defined by the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* as “short heavy metal bar used by thieves to force open doors and windows. Nim means “to steal or pilfer” (“Oxford English Dictionary”).

When Peachum called Harry in the act one, scene three,” a poor petty –larceny, without the least genius...” (6). Lucy Moore considered in *The Thieve’s Opera: the*

Mesmerizing Story of Two Notorious Criminals in Eighteenth century that the name Mint was indicated “shelter where most debtors were met” (128). And the name Matt had a relation with robbing money (Mclynn xii). Budge was defined as “to move slightly” (“Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary”). But the *Oxford English Dictionary* defined it “was a person who went to houses in order to steal.

According to Proceeding, gang was in most of the streets like one of the most significant gang John Hawkins. Ralph Wilson informed the robbing of eight stage coaches:

One morning we robb’d the *Cirencester*, the *Worcester*, the *glocester*, the *Oxford*, and *Bristol stage coache*, all to getherr; the next morning the *Ipswich* and the *Colchester*, and a third morning perhaps the *Portsmouth coach*. The *bury coach* has been our constant customer; I think we have touch’d that coach ten times (qtd. in Beattie, 157-158).

According to Beattie, there were many legal solution to help people in a different situation like the case of being informed the authorities about the plans of burglars, they would gave them an offer estimated 400s (156).

At that period there were other several cases happened at the Old Bailey trails .The proceeding insisted that John Hawking was very dangerous. He attacked Francis Rethor on the road and took from him a watch made from gold and valued 81,10s as well as an amount of money 10s. Another case was when John Hawking and George Simpson stole Thomas Green “black gelding”. It was horse priced at that time 10.two mail valued 41.and 50.leather bags valued 51. All this previous named were goods of Charles party. After that they equally shared all the money between them “they had three 20.bills, one of 25.half 50.half, and 2 halves of 25.each”

The date17 August 1728 noticed another crime happened near the new church. Two robbers come to Mr. Chaubers who was a painter and ordered him to put his hand together.

They threatened him to give them money or they beat him. So, in order to rescue his life he gave them about 15s and he saved his watch (Norton).

3.2.3. Female Criminals

Among women who played a great role on *The Beggar's Opera* were Mrs. Peachum, Polly Peachum, Lucy Lockitt, Diana Trapes, Mrs. Coaxer, Dolly Trill, Mrs. Vixen, Sukey Tawdrey and Molly Brazen.

The names of women in Gay's play *The Beggar's Opera* also reflected the nature of crimes that they had committed like the term Trapes meant "an opprobrious term for women or girl slovenly in person or habits; 'a dangling slattern'" ("Oxford English Dictionary") and the word Trull means "low prostitute or concubine, a drab strumpet, trollop" ("Oxford English Dictionary"). Vixen means "ill-tempered quarrelling women, a shrew, a termagant" ("Oxford English Dictionary"). The word Doxy was defined by *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* as "women of somebody lover", Slammenkin intended to be as *The Oxford English Dictionary* defined it as "a slovenly female, a sloven, a slattern". Tawdry means "ungraceful" ("Oxford English Dictionary"). Jenny Diver differed from the others, the term Diver means "pickpocket" ("Oxford English Dictionary"). According to *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Brazen means "open without shame usually about something that people sound shocking and Oxford English Dictionary the term Molly referred to "an effeminate man". Those females were involving in a certain crimes like act two in *The Beggar's Opera*, scene IV, Mrs. Vixen was the most thieves and was known by stealing cords. Betty Coaxer stole pockets and bags from both male and female. Jenny Diver was also a famous thief and pickpocket. Molly Brazen was the great bargain in the play and they robbed the clothes (28-29). In act two, scene three; they were contributed in catching Macheath (26-31). But in the same act, scene VI, Macheath was arrested by the help of Mr.

Trapes (51-53) .Through the act three, they were 2248 accused women, 398 were guilty, and 1032 were innocent.

Another point was highlighted the dress and the works of some characters for example the depiction of some ladies as correspondence to high class. This latter was clear in conversation between Mrs. Slammekin and Dolly Trull in Act two, scene six.

Mrs. Slammekin: Dear madam

Dolly Trull: I would not for the world.

Mrs. Slammekin: 'Tis impossible for me

Dolly Trull: As I hope to be saved, madam

Mrs. Slammekin: Nay, then I must stay here all night

Dolly Trull: Since you command me.

In the first act, scene one stated that pregnant women avoid punishment and it was in the dialogue between Filch and Peachum. Filch:” Sir, black Moll hath sent word her trial comes on in the afternoon, and she hopes you will order Matters so as to bring her off”. Peachum:” Why, she may plead her belly at worst; to my knowledge she hath taken care of that security” (4). The Proceeding reported that at the time of *The Beggar’s Opera* there were about 53 women who were rescued from death due to pregnancy.

According to Mclynn, the women’s who killed her husband or betrayed him “peaty treason”, their punished was burning (121). The earlier years, hanging penalty was occurred before burning. Like the famous case of Catherine Hayes. The executer was more powerless to hang her and Catherine directly sentenced by burning (Newgate 30-40). Catherine Hayes was accused and sent to Newgate for petty treason. She killed John Hayes. His head was found in west minister and she stole about 26 guineas, 6 pence and 9 king George’s shilling. Catherine Hayes was moved to Tyburn (Norton).

3.3. The criminal justice system

3.3.1. Imprisonment

During the eighteenth century imprisonment was considered as the first stage at the Newgate. This situation was clear in the second act, scene V, *The Gentlemen, Ladies, Logges In Newgate*, when Macheath, the captain of highwaymen was arrested, he was directly put in the prison "Newgate" to wait his trial ("The Beggar's Opera" 31). In the same act, scene IX stated that Lucy come to see Macheath (33-35) but in scene xii they mentioned both of them (39-42). Scene xiv stated that Macheath escaped and he recaptured (62). In act two, scene vii Macheath prepared himself to pay Lockitt who was the prison officer. He offered him ten guineas in order to hold him a soft pair of shackles (32). Anthony Babbington insisted that the only reason that leads to discuss one of the most truly events that happened behind the door of the Newgate was the ghost of bribe. It became a usual habit in the prisons in order to convince the officers to use a light shackles, was the extreme visit (72). He also suggested the story of a Jacobite prisoner who described the difficult structure of the building of the Newgate. This prisoner portrayed that walls and the grounds of the Newgate were built by hard stone (72). He also added that the prisoners should give at least twenty guineas to enter special and different places (73). The air was fresh as well as there were lighted rooms (78). Jacobite prisoners emphasized that the nature of life in the prisons was awful practically its night were like taverns due to the large number of drinkers (78).

Jack Shephard was another typical case, he was escaped for a short time and he was caught and as a punishment he was put in place was named as Castle. He fastened by numerous iron shackles. So, in order to not escape, he was fixed to the ground ("Newgate calendar" 7).

3.3.2. Lawyers

Prisoners could read the first sacred song or it was known as a poem of praise or "Neck Verse". They read it as an evidence of "clerical". Particularly this poem was used by

several illiterate thieves because they learned it by heart in order to protect themselves (Olsen 213). One literary example from the play was mentioned in act one, scene two, air two Filch songs that “*Suit Of Love Like Law, are Won by Pay*” (5) and another case” in act one scene ix air xi was when Peachum sing that *A Fox may steal your Hens* “if ever was decreed, Sir, If laywer’s Hand is fee’d Sir, He steals your whole Estate. They don’t care that any Body should get a Clandestine livelihood but themselves” (“The Beggar’s Opera “16-17).

Macheath insisted the present of the lawyers in act three, scene xi,” the charge is prepar’d; the lawyer met, the judges all rang’d...” (59).

The book, *the Origin of Adversary Criminal Trail*, edited by Langbein, highlighted that in 1690 in any harsh crime and particularly in the case of treason it was not permitted to contact a defense council. The only unique aim of making a trail was to offer time to the defender in order to give a conclusive argument to establish whether it was true or wrong. During the sixteenth and seventeenth century trials were prepared without the present of lawyers and they were also without a police (2).

3.3.3. Trials and Punishments

The Proceeding asserted that the early years of the eighteenth century criminal trials which were passed at the Old Bailey were about 6453. They found that the majority of them were left because they were innocent and they did not find any reason to sentence them while 87 people failed to testify against the defendant also 7 people were suffered from psychological problems especially the case of being crazy and other for unknown reasons.

Clive Emsley, Tim Hichcock and Robert Shoemaker mentioned that the last years of the seventeenth century and the early of the eighteenth century the English criminal trials were very harsh and differ from the recent years. The historical years and especially in the modern sense illustrated that London did not own a police force and the describing of the event was based only on the victim. But over the course of the eighteenth century lawyers

were accused with several names. Some people said that they had no relation with law and had bad manners while this allegation had no value. Before 1730, they were a few numbers of lawyers who appeared in the trial at the Old Bailey.

The Proceeding discussed the strategies that were followed by the juries to reach their activities and also some of ways that was used by the accuser. Between 1716 and 1717 there were several that was held at the Old Bailey. At that period they were 28 prisoners among them were female and male. Some examples about those criminals were John keys who was 19 years old. He was born in parish of “Newgate –Buts”. He was arrested for robbing the pocket of Mrs. Francis. Another famous case was the killing of Nicholas Moore. The incident of this crime was started when Giles Hill and Moore went to a bar fight The Duke of or Mond’s Mark. Nicholas Moore had asked some musicians to song. Hill was taken the sword and killed him. The death of Hill was widespread on September, 1720. In fact, Hill was though about the removal of Edward Jarman. At that period they were three persons who were presented before the committing of these crimes. Two witnessed the struggle that happened but no one saw how he was killed but those people testified that they found the sword behind the victim. At trial, Hill did all the possible ways the save himself. He was testified that he want to prove his life” self- defense”. Seven others were introduced to the trail. Each one of them testified that he did not see the sword or how he was killed but later they proved that they were a lying. The prospection called two others people and they stated that they were not present during the time of this cruel crime. At the end, it was declared that Hill was punished by burning.

One of the most characteristics that should take the attention of the readers in *The Beggar’s Opera* was the absence of any law enforcement. In the eighteenth century London enforcement of law was corrupted and weak and trial means death. In order to decrease the amount the crimes, the authority applied a harsh punishments including hanging, burning,

killing, and others. The proceeding reported the harsh penalties for those who convicted crimes:

Ebenezer Dun was hanged for breaking and entering the Sarah Loyzada, and stealing 4 pewter-dishes, a stew pan, a sauce pan, and a coffee-pot .About an hour of one in the night. Josef Fretwell was hanged for putting Henry Madding in Fear on the highway and taking from him 3d.-Halfpenny.At the end of those sessions 87 prisoners had been tried - 6 were hanged, 2 burnt at the hand, 40 transported,2 sentenced to small fines and imprisonment, and Bartholomew Harnet.”

After renewing the death penalty, most members of gang of Macheath preferred the punishment of execution and this idea was stated by Peachum in act one, scene vi for young child ”Poor Lad! how little does he know yet of the Old-Bailey! For the first Fact I ‘ll insure thee from being hang’d; and goin to sea, Filch, will come time enough upon a Sentence of Transportation”(“The Beggar’s Opera” 11) .

In the early eighteenth century North America was a special area that contains a larger number of transported criminal. Transportation act was an act passed that transported the accuser send them to foreign places and they spend a different periods there, it could be seven years, fourteen, or forever. The period was depended on the type of crimes that the criminal was committed (Mclynn 286). In the play act two, scene One, mentioned: “But pr’y thee, *Matt*, what is become of thy Brother *Tom*? I have not seen him since my return from transportation” in some case some people did not come back to their lands like ben Budge (“The Beggar’ Opera” 23). Mclynn suggested that the arrival of ben from his transportation could make a problem to them because England was passed through a terrible situation, Ben could be recaptured and send again for a long period or could be executed (286).

3.4. Conclusion

In the eighteenth century *The Beggar's Opera* was considered as the best example of ballad opera and the most English theatre work. The only reason behind the use of the whores and thieves rather than other subject was to present the leading class of the society at that time. John Gay was reflecting his world in *The Beggar's Opera* and he also seeks to link the events of this play with the real one in London.

General Conclusion

The history crime in England was one of the most significant and attractive subjects. In the eighteenth century Madam Geneva, lack of sanitation, division between the extreme of poverty and wealth, bad living condition and the rise in the rate of crimes and criminals were a central features of the social life of London. Most historians were in agreement that London presented a unique law and disorder and generally speaking England's society was depicted as "barbaric". During this era the court differed from today court. Harsh punishments were generally considered by the authorities as a way to put a limit to all crimes and the lower class were always the victims. One example about these cruel penalties: the prisoners were not allowed to see the evidence against them before the trial until they should wrote a written defense and this latter should read loudly in the court. The prisoner who refused to speak, they pressed with large stone until they spoke. this decades believed that transportation or execution were not enough to punish those people and failed to control their bad behavior because these penalties has a little effect on people who committed crimes. The failure of these harsh punishments was lead the officers and juries to insert other crimes.

The eighteenth century was one of the most significant centuries since it was obviously where the play was performed and it marked John Gay as a great ballad opera writer, poet and dramatist. He also presented new style of musical theatre. John Gay in his watershed play *The Beggar's Opera* introduced the themes of crimes, corruption and comedy. *The Beggar's Opera* differed from the Italian Opera because characters of this play were thieves and criminals rather than heroes and kings. Gay presented the criminal justice system since the time of this play was consistent with these social crimes. Through this literary piece of theatre could understand that there is a more moral lesson.

Gay was mirroring his world and he tried to introduce the idea that some events that occurred in his play *The Beggar's Opera* was not completely contradicted with the real

records of that period like the link between the fictional characters and famous criminals especially the portrayal of the male Macheath and Edward Dalton and the close relation between Peachum and Jonathan Wild in most of the criminal activities that happened during the eighteenth century. John Gay influenced many thinkers and writers within and outside Britain.

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