

T.C
ATILIM ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI

THE CONCEPT OF HUMOUR IN GRAHAM GREENE'S
A GUN FOR SALE AND TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

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Çiğdem Gökçek

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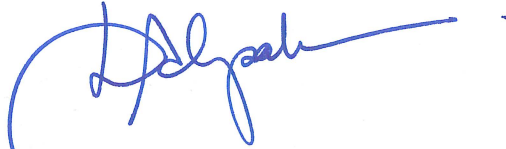
Çiğdem Gökçek tarafından hazırlanan “The Concept of Humour in Graham Greene’s *A Gun for Sale* and *Travels with My Aunt*” başlıklı bu çalışma 14.01.2011 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda oybirliği ile başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim dalında Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Gülsen Canlı, whose knowledge and guidance from the preliminary to the concluding level enabled me to develop an illuminating insight into the subject. Without her great patience, encouragement and support this thesis would not have been completed or written.

I would also like to thank the rest of my thesis committee: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lerzan Gültekin and Assist. Prof. Dr. Dürrin Alpakin Martinez Caro for their encouragement, appreciation and constructive comments.

Besides my supervisor Prof. Dr. Gülsen Canlı, I am indebted to Prof. Dr. Oya Batum Menteşe, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lerzan Gültekin, Assist. Prof. Dr. Evrim Doğan and Assist. Prof. Dr. Trevor Hope whose courses I had the honour and joy to attend during the masters programme. They inspired me with their immense knowledge and helped me to broaden my view throughout my educational journey.

Further thanks go to my friend Hande Uçartürk, the most efficient, helpful and modest librarian of Bilkent University Library, who patiently assisted me with my research by tracking down the books and articles.

Finally, I thank my family for supporting me with their love and encouragement throughout my studies.

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INTRODUCTION

The answer to the question “what is humour?” lies in the answer to the question “What’s inside and outside a fish?”. Unfortunately, this question is not raised here to make a humorous remark. The answer is quite simple and it is simply “water”. Human beings are like fish. They are full of life and they are surrounded with life. Humour to human beings is what water is to a fish. Humour is the very life itself that springs from depths of both body and imagination and it is everywhere outside. The fish is blessed with water and human beings are blessed with humour. However human beings are empowered with mental ability, most of the times they enjoy this blessing unconsciously like fish. Thanks to philosophers who shed light on the reviving power of humour in an endless variety of situations in innumerable ways which escape our attention. A great deal of theories have been developed on humour, each theorist like the blind men trying to get a notion of the elephant in the well-known poem *The Blind Men and The Elephant*, have touched on the body of humour from their own stance. What may be true in parts doubtlessly serves for the whole. Humour may confuse or it may amuse, it may be an attack or taking a step back but on the whole, it is sheer vitality, as Langer explains in her theory *The Comic Rhythm*.

Susanne Langer constructs her comic theory on “the pure sense of life” (327) which forms the rhythm of life and which can be explained as the essential vital force or the basic impulse to survive in all living things. Langer grounds her argument on drama which she claims as a competent literary form in expressing the organic pattern of life and its rhythm. In the beginning of *The Comic Rhythm*, Langer points out that drama and prose fiction are the literary forms whose real value escapes the attention of both the critics and the audience. Novel is not a “psycho-biographical document”, neither drama is a form to impose morality. Drama brings out an organic form by setting up a similar version of events of the past, present

or future and arranging the details with the thematic content “into a rhythmic single structure” (326). In this respect, prose fiction is similar to drama. Like a dramatist, the author of a novel also follows the same route while creating his/her work. S/He portrays a picture from this world including every element that plays into life and makes the reader feel the sense of vitality that springs from the whole work in which people go in and out of different situations in the course of a particular time, in particular places. Therefore, Langer’s theory can be considered applicable to the works of prose fiction as well.

According to Langer, drama mirrors “the pure sense of life” (327) , the awareness of feelings such as sensation and expectation which are seen in higher beings. Moreover, it reflects “the personal sense of life” (327), a more blended and detailed activity that starts, develops and ends, which is to be called self-realization, an activity that seems to suit only human beings, in innumerable forms.

This pure sense of life, is the backbone of comedy and Langer’s comic theory evolves around it. The sense of life is something which comedy manifests afresh and it is complicated in various ways. She refers to Alexander’s¹ term for the pure sense of life, ‘enjoyment’ and explains it accordingly. Enjoyment is the ability to grasp the difference between the organic and the inorganic. This, is a matter of protection and regeneration of the self in order to function properly and fulfil the purpose of its existence. Every being and every happening in the universe is particularly designed and arranged in order to serve a significant purpose. Thus, there is a mechanism that works in nature. The simplest and the most essential purpose of this mechanism is to maintain the given life. This fact shows itself in the most elementary form of existence, an organism. An organism has a tendency to keep its balance and defend itself from every threat and attack that might harm its structure and if injured, it follows a set of actions to renew its parts and get its balance back (Langer 328).

¹ S.Alexander, *Space Time and Deity*

All living things in nature continue their existence in this biological model through whose processes, springs the life rhythm. If the rhythm is broken, the balance is gone and all the activities have to be rearranged to get rid of the obstacle and regain the balance. If the obstacle cannot be removed despite the strife under various conditions, the living thing adjusts itself to its present condition by a modification of its activities and continues to exist in its new form of balance (Langer 328).

There is a similarity between the rhythms of animal and human life, since it is a struggle to secure their balance in the midst of a hostile world. But the matter of living is a more complicated process for human beings since they have the ability to imagine. The power of mental activity bonds the human beings not only to the living members but also to the ones that have already passed away. Consciousness and imagination have enlarged their perception of the world and mental brilliance has become their most important means of taking advantage of it by seizing the opportunities (Langer 330).

Langer argues that this human life feeling forms the basis of comedy. The comic writer creates a life coming with its surprises, chances and events whether unexpected or full of risks, a life which each individual has to struggle against according to his/her own view of life. This is inevitable because its uncontrollable and unknowable future is called Fortune. In appearance of Fortune, Destiny forms the texture of comedy. It is the progression of events by comic action in which the protagonist's balance is lost and regained during his fight with the world over which he wins a triumph by using his/her ability to make the best of his/her luck, intelligence and ability to tolerate the misfortunes in a humorous or a philosophical way. This sense of life, which commands the individual to make use of any chance that will help the balance remain in equilibrium, forms the basic rhythm of comedy (Langer 333).

Langer supports her argument by noting the relevance of the occasions on which this form of art has made its appearance; in all kinds of celebrations; welcoming spring, success, victory, the newly-born or the newly-wed. These are the times when human liveliness is magnified with its moments of tension and relief, joy of achievement or stimulation by the primitive impulses in the midst of a bewildering world. Accordingly, concerning the origin of comedy, as in the means of its relation to the Greek god Comus, it is also significant that this is the god of fertility, an emblem of regeneration. The eternal celebration of existence and the unbreakable rhythm it preserves, develops, modifies but never loses, is the essence (Langer 331).

As it is this rhythm of liveliness that lifts the spirit of comedy, Langer elaborates on the nature of this rhythm by turning back to the biological model of life. She emphasizes that higher forms of organisms start their life, achieve a certain level of development, reproduce, decline and finally fall. This is the natural progress of life, a realization of their being. As human beings have the distinctive characteristic of consciousness, they are absolutely aware of the fact that, from birth, every individual has to pass the stages of youth, adulthood and old age and has to face death in the end. Therefore the mind of the individual is shaped by this inescapable final event of human life. People try to cope with this disturbing reality by making the best of their time. They seek as much experience and adventure as they can (Langer 332). They take life as an important task to be fulfilled, in Langer's terms life is "the soul's pilgrimage...or self-realization" (333).

Human beings struggle to achieve their goals while facing with the unknown forces of Destiny contributes to the rhythm of life in the form of Fortune. Comedy is full of accidental happenings which can be considered as a result of bad luck or good luck. Events appear in loosely bound parts and relate to the members of a culture while conveying the liveliness of society and the rhythm of its energy which shows itself in each of its members (Langer 334).

Langer gives the example of the nataka, a form of Indian drama which is epic comedy. She claims that comic rhythm exists in this form by pointing at the fact that there is no finality but a recovery of equilibrium and a promise of oncoming future as it is so in the comic form (333). What shows the essential sign of comedy is the constancy of the characters which is also closely related to the unbroken vital continuity of life, the comic rhythm. Whether they are evil or good, the characters remain the same from the beginning till the end. The comic hero contends with the difficulties brought by nature or society and gets the better of them by using mental or physical powers (Langer 333).

Langer emphasizes that the typical mood of comedy is humorous and it contains all kinds of humour. She mentions the relation between humour and the 'sense of life' and stresses laughter in relation to the vital feeling (Langer 339). According to Langer, laughter appears to emanate from a sudden and powerful increase in 'vital feeling' and it is not as simple or clear as it seems. It is the perfect closing of a complicated process. She compares the activity of laughing to the activity of speaking. Speaking is the peak point of intellectual activity, likewise, laughter is the climax of feeling, "the crest of a wave of felt vitality" (340).

Langer admits that immediately felt superiority involves in itself a rise of vital feeling but she underlines the fact that this rise cannot be only due to a sense of boasting or there is no need to mock anybody to get that feeling. She supports her idea by giving the example of babies' laughter at the re-emergence of a toy which was shown and hidden. She claims that laughter springs from the babies in accordance with the loosening of tension and feeling of delight which emanates from the realization of their expectation (340).

Langer observes that the laughter in 'gallows humor', is again a rise of vital feeling which functions as a person's sparkle of aggression, a way of challenge in the face of the stressful situation. She also associates this kind of laughter with the hysterical one. The

laughter of the hysterical person springs from the feeling of vitality that pushes itself spasmodically through panic and depression and that is why it bursts out wildly and sometimes turns into cries and tears (340).

Langer notes that people do not always laugh at funny situations or at a funny person. They often laugh while enjoying active sports, dancing or saluting friends and there is no trait of superiority or ridicule in a smile that is returned. When we smile back at another person, we recognize that person's value as a human being (341).

Among the comic figures, there are harlequins, clowns and fools who are treated unfairly and pushed from one trouble into another, however they are undestroyable and they have the power of good humour and self-assurance (Langer 341). Buffoon is one of these important comic figures of the folk theater who has been energetic like Hans Wurst, Punch or the Turkish Karagöz. These historically famous figures stand as a mirror for the real buffoon, they are the undefeatable personages whose task is to protect themselves in a series of difficult situations they are thrown into and they are the figures who are extremely capable of overcoming each of these troubles without a scratch. In this respect, their being displays the primitive rhythm of life, against a world persistently coming on them with its unexpected, dissapointing and interesting surprises. They cannot be defined as good or bad and they are not moralistic, either. Whether they are victorious or defeated, whether they are in sorrow or fear, they are still funny and full of inexhaustible energy. The more they fail, the more cracking their next act will be (Langer 342).

Similar to the figure of the buffoon, there is the figure of the trickster. Conrad Hyers traces its origin in mythology and gives Prometheus as an example of the trickster figure and claims that the trickster figure is "one of the earliest images of human existence" (176). Hyers

observes that cheating and being cheated seem to be the rules for survival in this world since the ancient times. He suggests

The image of the trickster and the metaphore of the trick...no doubt belong to the earliest cultural strata of food-gathering, hunting and fishing, where the caprices of the nature's food supply, the lack of control over animals and the environment, and human techniques of stalking, baiting and trapping, easily suggested trickery as fundamental element of life. (177)

The trickster figures whose chief aim is survival, are depicted as characters running between adventures and misadventures. They take whatever life brings them and they achieve their adaptation through testing and making mistakes. Nothing in life is important enough to upset them. They are happy to exist and enjoy their existence in this world. Hyers describes the trickster's attitude to life:

Trickster is too busy surviving to have the luxury of decadent contemplation. Rather than being weighed down by his misfortunes and limitations or the apparent inequities and injustices of life, he takes life as a challenge and makes a game of it. All the while, the setting of his adventures, winning or losing, is a decidedly comic one. (180)

Such comic figures maintain the comic rhythm. What human beings live in real life, with all of its moves, ups and downs, is extracted and embodied in the form of such comic figures. Thus the rhythm of life is mirrored in comedy. If comedy is genuine, it is absorbingly interesting and it shows the picture of vitality, therefore it generates a natural feeling of enlivenment. An extended sequence of chance happenings complicate the conditions in the story, nevertheless, victory is to be won over the troubling world. On the other hand, we perceive the rhythm and the illusion of the life on the stage through our notion of the work as a whole. We are not moved by each of the events pursuing one another but by their meaning when the work is considered in its completeness. The vitality of the actual world is exemplified, arranged and introduced to people with its peaks marked by humour (348).

According to Langer, the rhythm of life is 'light' because love of life weighs more in every creature. The nasty surprises of this world are threatening and they force the living thing to find ways to confront them. However dangerous it is, this confrontation is also a fascinating one, because it is through this battle the living thing keeps its complex form intact. This is a world not only menacing and hostile but also encouraging and attractive. In comedy, desire and wisdom are called in to gamble with the fortune which inspires the essential feeling of comedy: the feeling of vitality. The real opponent in this game is the world itself. But in the play, the antagonist is the gambler who can hardly be called a scoundrel. In the world of comedy, an absolute victory or an absolute thrashing in the battle with the world is out of the question, because nature and life coexist and it is the same world that gives pleasures as much as it gives troubles. Comedy belittles this battle showing that its perils are not disastrous at all, they are only the troubles that make one feel ashamed or make one lose respect (Langer 348-9).

Since Langer emphasizes the fact that "the natural vein of comedy is humorous" (338), and comedy involves all kinds of humour, the basic characteristics of comedy also correspond to those of humour. Therefore, humour is essentially related to "the sense of life" (339). It is alive and always at work throughout the battle between human beings and chances of nature. It instinctively springs from the individual at the moments of strain in order to help him/her to take the serious matters of this world more lightly. It does not let the individual give in to the puzzling, frustrating or threatening forces of nature. In any case which may upset the balance of the individual, humour stimulated by vital force, emerges to protect the organic unity. Since "the sense of life is always new, infinitely complex, therefore infinitely variable in its possible expressions" (Langer 327), humorous situations occur in many different ways and humour is used by people deliberately, playfully or instinctively in various forms of expression. Humour and laughter appear as a "lift of vital feeling" (Langer 340) and come

into play as a form of adaptation to the very different circumstances, thus they become a means of survival for the individual. Superiority, incongruity and relief theories of humour are the major theories which explore these ways and forms. Langer's theory covers the common point of these major theories since what lies at the heart of all is the fact that humour and laughter have a survival value and a significant role in the process of adaptation of the individual to the world s/he is surrounded with.

Adaptation through humour in accordance with superiority theory is realized in many ways. To begin with Hobbes' view of laughter, it is basically linked with man's ceaseless, egotistical desire to be in a superior position in comparison to other people. According to Hobbes's theory, this kind of laughter is absolutely self-congratulatory and a proof of triumph since people laugh when they realize the abilities and advantages they have which other people lack. In his *Leviathan*, he explains laughter and says,

Sudden Glory, is the Passion which maketh those Grimaces called Laughter; and is caused either by some sudden Act of their own, that pleaseth them; or by the Apprehension of some deformed Thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves. (1998 119)

People may laugh at themselves as a result of their personal success or they may laugh because they notice in other people some deficiency which they do not have. Hobbes views laughter at deformities of other people as "a sign of Pusillanimity" (1998 119-120) and criticizes such behaviour since despising people for their foibles is morally wrong.

In *Human Nature*, he elaborates his theory of laughter. He adds that things that cause laughter must have the quality of being "new and unexpected" (1994 54) which is also stressed in the theories of incongruity. Besides, Hobbes claims that people also laugh at their own jokes or an absurdity they notice in others in which case it is again a celebration of an ability they realize in themselves. They may also laugh at their own foolishness when they

look back on their past but it is important that they should be in a better condition at present. If what they remember is a cause of disgrace, they will not be pleased at all since it will put them in an inferior position among other people. Therefore, men do not like being laughed at. Laughter rising from superiority is significant in the survival of human beings in the light that it helps an individual to strengthen his self-confidence and self-respect by which he gains courage to achieve his goals in life.

Superiority theory also overlaps aggressive humour theories which are developed in accordance with the evolutionary perspective and these theories, too point to the power of humour which is of great significance in human survival. Anthony Ludovici, in his book *The Secret of Laughter* (1932), bases his theory on Dr. G. T. Wrench's suggestion that "laughter is the expression of superior adaptation" (Ludovici 62). Ludovici claims that an individual's laughter arises from the feeling s/he gets as a result of her/his superior adaptation to life. Laughter may occur due to a personal matter on which there is no impact of any external factor or it may occur as a result of mind's engagement in an activity of comparison. Besides, laughter may arise pretentiously as a cover for the feeling of inferiority. In any case, laughter emerges as an achievement of an individual's struggle to fit in this world (Ludovici 62). Ludovici explains the origin of laughter in accordance with Darwin's theory of evolution. There is a parallel between human laughter and animal behaviour. Animals display their teeth or fangs when they feel threatened. This behaviour of animals can be interpreted as a challenge or a warning against an enemy and a way of informing their attacker that they are fully equipped with weapons. The gleaming teeth are the weapons of animals in the war of survival and display of teeth "is to make a claim of superior adaptation" (Ludovici 70). The act of showing teeth in human laughter serves the same function. Showing teeth in laughter is "a display signalling superior adaptation" (Ludovici 72). According to Ludovici, human

laughter which occurs in many different circumstances is a display of a human being's ability to survive in other words his /her ability to fit in his/her environment.

Avner Ziv explores the theories of aggressive humour in his book *Personality and Sense of Humour*. He refers to the psychologist, Albert Rapp who has a humour theory which is based on the aggressive instinct in human beings. Rapp stretches back to the ancient times and suggests that laughter occurred for the first time at the battlefield as an expression of aggressive instinct of primitive man. It developed from his shouting "ha..ha..ha" on winning a battle, thus laughter turned into a sign of triumph while the bruises and grotesque appearance of the beaten became the laughing stock of the winners. In modern world, Ziv claims physical violence is substituted with mental power. The humorous remarks made in joke competitions, riddles or guessing games are all forms of hidden aggression (6).

In relation with this theory, Ralph Piddington's observation of Eskimo offers a good example of expression of aggressive feelings in humour. He explains the method Eskimo use to end their arguments. When two parties are in conflict, they challenge each other to "a satirical song contest" (Piddington 49). After having composed their satirical songs about their opponent, they meet in public to sing their song. "The man who receives the greater acclaim is regarded as the winner and his rival correspondingly loses prestige" (Piddington 49).

Ziv underlines the psychologist Alfred Adler's claim that the instinctive desire to gain superiority is strongly related to the inferiority complex of man. According to this claim, feeling of inferiority is inherent in every human being and this feeling is the main reason for all kinds of human behaviour since human beings are motivated by the desire to get rid of this feeling of inferiority. He observes that throughout their process of development children feel themselves inferior to their parents and to their environment in general. Disturbed by this

feeling, children try to prove their abilities on every occasion. Ludovici, relying on Adler's theory emphasizes that laughter of children appears as their superior adaptation, their way of overcoming the feeling of inferiority. "The laugh is compensatory. It relieves the constant heavy downward pull of the sense of inferiority. It throws it off, or at least helps one to forget it for a space" (Ludovici 108-9).

Ziv also agrees that feeling of inferiority plays into human behaviour and claims that there are many ways which man deals with this unpleasant feeling. Using aggressive humour is one of these ways. According to Ziv, the easiest way to get rid of inferiority complex is to make the person in the superior position feel inferior. He argues

When we succeed in reducing someone's power or status, it is as if we have elevated ourselves in comparison with him. Although the superior feeling is imaginary and momentary, it is enjoyable. Humor that points its arrows at a person of high position is actually an expression of aggression toward him. (8)

Ziv points out that aggressive humour is also linked to frustration and considered as a means of taking revenge on people who are the cause of disappointment. When a person is hindered by an obstacle and fails to fulfill his/her aim a feeling of frustration fills the person and leads him/her to react in a hostile manner. Ziv refers to Dollard and Miller's theory of frustration and aggression. Frustration is a psychological feeling which is followed by physical tension aroused as a result of obstacles that get in the way of a person and prevent his/her achievement. The tension caused by this frustration is released in the form of aggressive behaviour (9). Ziv claims that frustration is often caused by the people who hold superior positions in society and have the authority to interfere with people's doings. Since it is not acceptable to act aggressively, frustrated people use aggressive humour thus get relief from the strain caused by their frustration (9-10).

The strain is relieved in the form of humour does not always result from frustration. Feelings of fear, anxiety, excitement or expectations of people may also be the causes of tension which will be discharged in guise of humour and laughter. Herbert Spencer's relief theory of humour illuminates how the tension created by various feelings is transformed into laughter. Spencer claims that "emotions and sensations tend to create bodily movements"(196). Feelings arouse some kind of tension in certain muscles and when the feelings get more intense, the tension created in the nervous system also rises. If this tension exceeds a certain limit, it will be discharged through some other special muscles. That means the nervous tension will expand itself in one or more channels in accordance with the circumstances. Spencer suggests that the same process is at work when a person seems to be quietly engaged in thoughts or feelings. The state of consciousness is formed by the transmission of the tension to other parts of the nervous system.

Sensations excite ideas and emotions; these in their turns arouse other ideas or emotions; and so continuously. That is to say the tension existing in particular nerves...generates an equivalent tension in some other nerves, or group of nerves, with which there is a connection: the flow of energy passing on, the one idea or feeling dies in producing the next. (197)

Spencer emphasizes that when the tension cannot be released in bodily motion, it will surely pass on to other parts of the nervous system and will arouse more nervous excitements and more intense feelings. Melancholic behaviour is claimed to be a consequence of such activity that takes place in human body. Accordingly, if a person is liberated from this tension through discharge achieved in bodily motion, s/he will be psychologically healthier as Spencer puts it "those who are forced to exert themselves after misfortunes, do not suffer nearly so much as those who remain quiescent" (199).

Laughter is interpreted by Spencer as "a display of muscular excitement" which proves that nervous excitement that exceeds a certain level "vents itself in bodily action" (200). The

feeling which causes the tension might vary. The feeling may spring from perception of something ridiculous, joyous or incongruous. It may also stem from something distressing since sardonic and hysterical laughter occurs due to “mental distress”. Whether it is mental or physical, a strong feeling seeks to discharge itself through specific muscles. In case of laughter the feeling frequently takes the route which follows “the organs of speech” and “it happens that certain muscles round the mouth, small and easy to move, are the first to contract under pleasurable emotion” (Spencer 201). If the feeling is too strong, it will be transmitted to muscles related with respiration and when the respiratory channel proves insufficient for the discharge, the tension will transfer itself to another channel, to the upper limbs of the body (Spencer 202).

Ziv argues that since laughter is a form of liberation from tension and anxiety, humour - in other words the essential cause of laughter - can be considered as “a defense mechanism” (48), a way of tackling disturbing, nerve-racking or threatening situations. In the light of the relief theory, Ziv explores two kinds of humour which appear as “a defense mechanism”: self-disparaging humour and black humour.

Self-disparaging humour is the type of humour in which a person makes himself/herself the laughing stock by exposing his/her weaknesses deliberately. Susan Vogel points out that “making fun of oneself, offering oneself to an audience as a figure of fun or as the target of one’s own abusive wit” is also known “as self-defacing humor, or self-ridicule” (87). Ziv claims that ability of people to laugh voluntarily at their own expense is highly appreciated in society and he explains the grounds for this appreciation by drawing attention to the psychological characteristic of the people who use self-disparaging humour: “He knows and accepts himself with all his complexities” (Ziv 62). People of such characteristic are conscious of the limitedness of their abilities and however limited their abilities may be they can stay content. This objective appreciation of the self with all of its deficiencies is evident

in self-disparaging humour which proves its usefulness in the survival game since it works as a defense mechanism. Accordingly, Ziv suggests that people use this type of humour with the aim of preventing possible attacks that might be directed by other people. By exaggerating their own failures in the light of humour and by laughing at themselves before other people do, they avoid being laughed at or being exposed to any unpleasant criticism (62). In this light self-disparaging humour strengthens people psychologically, builds self-confidence and enables people to adapt themselves to society in a healthy way. From another aspect, since this kind of humour requires the positive characteristics of self criticism and self-appreciation people who use self-disparaging humour may be expressing their superiority by showing that they are strong enough to rise above their weaknesses. Whatever may be its motive, self-disparaging humour helps people to stand their ground despite their weaknesses and protects their self-confidence from shattering. However one appears to be destroying his/her positive image, he/she actually reconstructs a stronger image by reconciling both with his/her fears and potential attackers. He/she psychologically gains equilibrium through using humour. By turning his/her weaknesses into laughing matter, he/she succeeds in rising over feelings which may be destructive (Ziv 62-3-4).

Fear is on top of the destructive feelings that cause people to lose their balance and in cases of fear black humour appears as a defense mechanism in order to keep the self in equilibrium. Black humour is a way of dealing with situations which arouse fear in the individual. The most fear-arousing situation for man is his confrontation with death or danger of death. Ziv likens adults' use of black humour to a child's use of whistling in darkness. Both whistling and use of black humour function in the same way. Whistling of the child does not change the reality that darkness is still there. Likewise, use of black humour does not remove the danger of death. Although both of these defense mechanisms seem not to be working, in fact they do.

they provide a certain encouragement to those who employ them. This comfort stems from one of the most wonderful of man's characteristics – his will to cope and not to suffer passively in the face of the tragedies that threaten his security and his very existence. (Ziv 52)

Black humour has a different place among the other defense mechanisms because a person who uses such kind of humour is aware of the danger and ready to deal with it in an active way. Therefore black humour can be considered as “a sort of challenge to frightening phenomena” and “this challenge carries a number of messages” (Ziv 52). Firstly, a person using this defense mechanism announces that he/she is strong enough to face the grim event. Secondly, he/she is not scared at all, on the contrary the situation seems funny to him/her. This ability of a person to laugh proves his/her triumph over the situation. Ziv also refers to Piaget's observation which emphasizes that laughter is an expression of control over the situation. According to his observation of children's behaviour in games, children are seen to smile at their first successful attempts in the game. Children are seen to laugh when they progress to more advanced levels and succeed in doing tasks which they used to find difficult before. This implies that the mastery over a situation satisfies the child and finds expression in smiles and laughter (Ziv 53). Ziv claims that use of black humour has the same function since it “consists of a sense of mastery” (53).

Black humour is also a way of coping with traumatic situations. People use black humour in situations to overcome the horror they cause and they find encouragement in treating a serious subject as lightly as possible. Thus they do not get lost in the depressing event, on the contrary, they avoid getting involved in it. “The bitter reality cannot be altered; what can be altered is one's attitude toward it” (Ziv 55).

Traumatic situations may also lead people to create a fantastic world and black humour, in such cases works through fantasy. Reality cannot be gotten rid of but it is given a distorted form by a use of fantasy. “Despite the courage of such attempts to cope, there is a sad element

in black humor. Usually it arouses no real laughter, but only a smile (occasionally bitter), for the pleasure we have in it combined with distress” (Ziv 55).

Humour flourishes especially at the most unpleasant moments of life. As Mark Twain claims: “Everything human is pathetic. The secret source of humor itself is not joy but sorrow. There is no humor in heaven” (qtd. in Eastman 331). The plight of human beings in this world where they are surrounded by troubles and dangers appears to be a necessary enough reason for the rise of humour. When people find themselves in trouble or in danger, humour is stimulated by feelings of fear or anxiety. Following a frustrating or a traumatic event, people try to regain their balance by lifting their spirits up through using humour. This reveals the defensive function of humour which is crucial for human survival. Antonin J. Obrdlik, in his article “*Gallows Humor*”-A Sociological Phenomenon, also claims that “humour is born out of sad experiences accompanied by grief and sorrow. Spontaneous and deeply felt- the very necessity of life which it helps to preserve” (715). He focuses on a specific type of black humour which people use in distressful situations especially the ones when they are confronted with dangers and when they are in fear of losing their lives. The kind of humour people use under these circumstances is called gallows humour. Obrdlik highlights the morale-strengthening function of this type of humour and as for the situation of danger, gives the example of the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Germans. He claims that gallows humour has a positive effect on people who are oppressed by their enemies and a negative effect on the oppressors. He bases his argument on his first-hand experiences which he gained during his nine-month-stay in Czechoslovakia after the Nazi invasion. He observed that people started inventing anecdotes and making jokes long before the invasion because the tense atmosphere was signalling the oncoming dangers and many people “found in anecdotes an intellectual and emotional escape from the disturbing realities” (Obrdlik 710). After the Munich Pact, Czech people were disappointed to see the Czech traitors who were

collaborating with the Germans. In those times, humour was used to attack the Czech traitors. When the invasion took place many people were imprisoned and tortured in concentration camps. Obrdlik marks this period as the beginning of “the most typical phase of the social function of gallows humour” (712). He points out that gallows humour which appears in the form of anecdotes or jokes about the oppressors provides a kind of shelter for people who live in absolute fear of losing their lives or possessions. He claims :

This is gallows humour at its best because it originates and functions among people who literally face death at any moment...These people simply have to persuade themselves...that their present suffering is only temporary...In a word, they have to strengthen their hope because otherwise they could not bear the strains to which their nerves are exposed. Gallows humor,...is their psychological escape. (712)

Through using gallows humour, people belittle the effect of the frightening events thus they cope with their fears. While this sort of humour helps people build up their courage, it has a demoralizing effect on the butt. In the case of the oppressed nations as Obrdlik argues, gallows humour has the positive effect “in the strengthening of the morale and the spirit of resistance of people who struggle for their individual and national survival” (716).

Gallows humour, as explained above, is a way of facing the threatening, dangerous and unpleasant face of this world. It becomes a form of survival by which imagination finds out a way to rise above the shocking situation. Likewise, in the case of grotesque humour, the mind is again at work to regain balance. This time the mental power is engaged on working out the absurdities of life and it tries to clear up the confusion into which it is thrown.

According to Santayana grotesque is formed through the alteration of some usual form in an exaggerated way. The striking thing about the grotesque is that it is a unique creation which might have been also presented by nature. These creations are called comic or grotesque in accordance with their difference from the natural form. The discrepancy between the typical and the created form causes confusion in the mind, but the striking point of the

grotesque, “the inward possibility” stimulates a development in the understanding. The confusion resulted from incongruity is cleared up by an enhancement in the imagination and what used to be considered as “impossible and ridiculous” is recognized as an ideal type (Santayana 256-7).

If the object which emerges as a misshapen combination of different forms is not extremely puzzling, a vague idea about the harmony and the individuality evolves in the mind of the person despite the weirdness of its form, that is the grotesque. “It is the half formed, the perplexed, and the suggestively monstrous” (Santayana 256-7). Therefore, grotesque has its unique place among the things which push the limits of the human intellect.

Similar to a paradox, grotesque is challenging to the intellect because it presents something illogical to the mind and inappropriate to the conventions. It does not measure up to any standard or expectation and it resists limitation. Thus, it gives an opportunity to the mind to view things in a different light. Accordingly Harpham, emphasizes that grotesqueries “stand at a margin of consciousness between the known and the unknown, the perceived and the unperceived, calling into question the adequacy of our ways of organizing the world, of dividing the continuum of experience into knowable particles” (2006 3).

From the point of view of the artist, the grotesque is as Harpham puts “a partial liberation from representationalism” (1976 463), a challenge against the limits of the world and an opportunity to create something original. Some deformity in the physical appearance provides the basic material for the creation of the grotesque characters. Since the medieval period, ugliness has been associated with moral corruption and it has found reflection in grotesque images. Therefore, “misshaped form can be read forward to indicate spiritual or intellectual perversity” (Harpham 1976 465). Another way of creating a grotesque character is simplification which results in, in E. M. Forster’s terms “flatness” (Harpham 1976 465). Such

characters are motivated by “an impersonal, mechanical driving force behind them” therefore “the victims of obsession” are liable to become grotesque characters (Harpham 1976 465).

In his article *The Grotesque: First Principles*, Harpham argues that grotesque does not only relate to physical condition and its distortion. It includes everything that belongs to human life. The conventional norms established by human beings, their partiality in beliefs, all of their ordinary ways with the world and all kinds of deficiencies frame the concept of the grotesque. As the world and its conditions change throughout ages, human beings adapt to new experiences and get different views in consequence. Thus the criteria to define what is unusual or threatening for human life change accordingly. Therefore, the grotesque finds different expressions in accordance with the changing time and view (1976 463). In this respect Harpham’s stress on the always changing nature of the grotesque in accordance with the developing life hints at its animate nature.

In *Rabelais and His World*, Mikhail Bakhtin focuses on the animate characteristic of the grotesque and suggests a positive interpretation of the form as he explores its universal, liberating and regenerative quality. According to Bakhtin, the main tenet of grotesque realism is “the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract”(19). This “degradation” to the earthly and bodily existence, in other words the “transfer to the material level” (Bakhtin 19) means to get into contact with earth which takes but also gives life. In accordance with this view, Bakhtin argues that the exaggerated form of the material side of the body presented in grotesque realism has a positive quality since it covers all that belongs to humans and earth (19). The bodily element is inherent in all people and the demonstrations of the images related to bodily life represents “the collective ancestral body of all the people” (Bakhtin 19). People are born into a continuous process of development in which they enjoy change, freedom, abundance and fertility. Although death is a part of this process, it, too serves the maintenance of existence. Bakhtin gives the example of a one-celled organism which divides itself into two

different forms before it disappears and he infers from this reproduction of the organism that “there is no departure from life into death” (52). Bakhtin claims that grotesque reflects this fact by revealing the possibility “of an entirely different world, of another order, another way of life” (48). The grotesque destroys whatever that appears to be unquestionable, static or whole in this world and comes up with new suggestions for alternative worlds.

The responses to the grotesque vary from laughter and astonishment to either horror or disgust. Harpham points out the fact that laughter as a response to the grotesque may occur involuntarily when the individual cannot deal with the situation in any other way. “In such cases laughter serves to diminish the horror or perplexity and make the nightmare seem more bearable” (1976 464). In a similar way, Bakhtin emphasizes the importance of fear-arousing nature of the universe and notes that people have always been in a struggle with “the fear of the immeasurable, the infinitely powerful” (335). He claims that the scaring facts of life are ridiculed in the form of grotesque and any kind of fear is overcome and “terror is conquered by laughter” (336).

Wolfgang Kayser also underlines the diversity of responses to the grotesque. The grotesque arouses laughter but there is something unpleasant underneath. It has a power which fascinates but also threatens at the same time. It invites the individual to judge the standards of social norms and shatters what is commonly believed to be true. Its deviation from the normal and its suggestion of the likelihood of alternative worlds are alarming for the individual, however, it is necessary for the individual to experience a confrontation in order to preserve his/her emotional balance. Through facing with the unusual the individual gains insights into different possibilities in life thus s/he becomes more knowledgeable and more prepared for further confrontations with the strange, unexpected and unpredictable ways of the world (Kayser qtd. in Adams&Yates 2).

Kayser suggests that “feelings of uneasiness, fear,...horror and dread” (qtd. in Adams and Yates 2) are among the responses to the grotesque. These feelings are also the ones which give rise to black humour. Terry Heller refers to Mathew Winston’s categorization of responses to black humour: absurd black humour which elicits laughter and grotesque black humour which arouses graver feelings. Heller elaborates on the difference between the two responses by focusing on the balance between them. When humour and horror are juxtaposed in equal degrees, there is suspension between the two extreme points. When humour is dominant over horror, the response is absurd black humour and when horror is dominant over humour the response is grotesque black humour (Pratt 197-8). It can be assumed that grotesque humour and its types are formed through the combination of different proportions of some material. The discrepancy perceived in images or ideas point to the most common source of humour which is known as incongruity.

Immanuel Kant explains his incongruity theory of humour in his work *The Critique of Judgement*. Kant bases his theory on gratification which is always consistent “in a feeling of the furtherance of the entire life of man, and, hence, also of his bodily well-being” (197). According to Kant, gratification stems from “the changing free play of sensations” (197). Emotions like hope, joy, anger or fear engage in a kind of play which stimulates the vitality of the mind and the body. Things that cause laughter also result from a “play with aesthetic ideas” (Kant 198) and prove their effect on the body. As a response to the play of ideas, a movement occurs in the intestines and a feeling of health results in an “entire gratification of an animated gathering upon the spirit” (Kant 198). Jest is also something in which the play starts in thoughts and sets the body in motion. The understanding cannot find what it expects, then releases its hold which causes the organs to oscillate. This movement achieves an equilibrium which is good for the health of the body. Accordingly, Kant highlights the source of laughter:

Something absurd (something in which, therefore, the understanding can of itself find no delight) must be present in whatever is to raise a hearty convulsive laugh. Laughter is an affection arising from a strained expectation being suddenly reduced to nothing. (199)

Although the mind cannot understand this transformation, there is still enjoyment due to the activities that take place in the body as a result of mind's frustration and this frustration "produces an equilibrium of the vital sources of the body" (Kant 199). On hearing a joke, the mind of a person gets a certain expectation about how things will turn out and when things happen in a way just the opposite of what is expected, "it is rather that the bubble of our expectation was extended to the full and suddenly went off into nothing" (Kant 200). In such a case the mind feels deceived and thinks again in order to make sense of what is happening. The looking back and seeking a reasonable meaning cause a tension and relaxation in the body. The involuntary movements of the mind which are accompanied by the movements of the internal organs cause fatigue which produces a feeling of health.

According to Arthur Schopenhauer humour arises from the sudden perception of an incongruity between a concept and something with which it does not match up. The concept is applied to the object(s) but when looked at from other perspectives the object(s) appear to be in a striking contrast with the characteristics of the concept and laughter results from the sudden perception of this conflict. He explains the process as

two or more real objects being thought through one concept, and the identity of the concept being transferred to the objects. But then a complete difference of the objects in other respects makes it strikingly clear that the concept fitted them only from a one-sided point of view. It occurs just as often, however, that the incongruity between a single real object and the concept under which, on the one hand, it has been rightly subsumed is suddenly felt. (I, 59)

Schopenhauer claims that the more the concept and the real object seem to fit each other in a certain point of view, the more striking their incongruity in different aspects and the

stronger the laughter will be. In this respect everything that raises laughter has its source in “a paradoxical, and hence unexpected, subsumption” (I, 59). Schopenhauer also underlines the fact that laughter is a pleasant feeling and explains why perception of an incongruity is a source of excitement and joy. When an incongruity between what is imagined and what is noticed appears, the thing noticed is definitely true as a consequence and it has a limitless diversity with which the abstract thought cannot compete. This superiority of what is perceived over what is conceived is the source of the pleasure (II, 98). Schopenhauer argues that perception does not require any effort and it is a form of joy since it gives satisfaction to human beings. On the contrary, the act of thinking is demanding and engages the mind of human beings with many concepts concerning either past or future, which may arouse feelings of fear, regret or care which usually prevent people from taking pleasure. Therefore perception of an incongruity is like a victory won over the oppressing human mind which is “for once, convicted of inadequacy” (II, 98).

In his work *Taking Laughter Seriously*, John Morreall makes an evaluation of the superiority, the incongruity and the relief theories of humour and gives his own account of the theory of humour. Morreall claims that when these theories are considered as a whole, they underline three main characteristics of laughter which can be taken as the basis in the creation of a more inclusive theory. The first characteristic is the psychological shift which can be either cognitive (perception of an incongruity), affective (bursting of positive feelings in relation with superiority or release from strain) or both (aggressive humour). The second and the third characteristics are the suddenness and the pleasantness of the shift. In the light of these views, Morreall summarizes his general theory of laughter situations: “Laughter Results from a Pleasant Psychological Shift” (1983 38-9).

Emphasizing that laughter is a pleasant feeling Morreall points to the defence mechanism function of humour. He explains this function of humour by taking a closer look

at laughter of embarrassment and hysteria. Morreall's argument depends on the view that laughter stems from a positive change in the psychological state. However, the psychological shifts in cases of embarrassment and hysteria are negative: "What is felt in these cases is not security, control and pleasure, but rather distress" (1983 55). Since laughing is a pleasant feeling in its nature, it has a natural tendency to give rise to more pleasure. Laughter may occur uncontrollably or willingly due to distress or uneasiness but in any case it will result in pleasant feelings thus it will help the individual preserve his/her balance.

In the case of hysteria, laughter occurs unconsciously as a reaction to "a catastrophe that is too overwhelming for the person to handle, cognitively and emotionally, in any normal way" (Morreall 1983 56). Since the person is too absorbed by the shocking event, he/she cannot come to terms with the fear and bursts into laughter which is a reaction contradictory to the unpleasantness of the situation. Morreall claims that this reaction is a denial of the disturbing facts and it forms a distance between the person and the event. Although it is temporary, the distance helps the person get less involved in the unpleasant situation. Thus laughter detaches the person from any kind of destructive feeling and assists in the preservation of the psychological balance (Morreall 1983 57).

Similarly, humour is also a way of detachment from the situations which are difficult to cope with, however this detachment takes place on "a much more conscious level where we gain control over ourselves and our situation" (Morreall 1983 57). The element of consciousness points to the fact that a person develops his/her own sense of humour while using humour to recover his/her balance which is disturbed by some unbearable event. If a person has a more well-developed sense of humour, he/she will be able to step back and laugh in a greater variety of situations. The ability to step back is prerequisite for developing a humorous attitude towards life. In this respect Morreall points out the similarity of humorous attitude to the philosophical attitude:

The person who looks at his life philosophically does not let his emotions color his view; he is distanced...from the practical aspects of his situation. And this calmness makes his assessment of situation more objective, more like that of an unbiased observer. In both respects the humorous attitude is like the philosophical: the person who can appreciate the humour in his own situation is liberated from the dominance of his emotions, and so he has a more objective view of himself. (1983 105-6)

This view of Morreall stresses the fact that a person with a philosophical attitude can distance himself/herself from the situation as long as he/she is capable of getting his/her emotions under control. Thus a person who is released from the tension of emotions can objectively evaluate both the situation itself and his/her own stance in that situation. Likewise, a person with a humorous attitude can laugh at the situation he/she is involved since he/she is not overcome with the wave of emotions. Therefore, he/she adopts a broader perspective on self-criticism.

Morreall also draws attention to the difference between people who have a humorous attitude and people who have a serious attitude toward life. A serious person is likely to feel worried about the course and result of events. S/he is disturbed when some incongruities arise in the normal course of events whereas a person who has a good sense of humour tend to feel more relaxed, joyful and “less dissatisfied by failure” (Morreall 1983 122).

Morreall explains incongruity as “ a violation of a pattern in someone’s picture of how things should be” (1983 60-1). People have their own view of the world where everything has its own place and is present in an order. Incongruity stems from something which suddenly appears and clashes with the accepted order of the world. Whatever seems funny or strange involves some incongruity. Morreall explains incongruity as “some thing or state of affairs which we perceive, remember, or imagine, strikes us as out of place” (1987 188). Morreall argues that people respond to incongruities in three different ways : “Negative Emotion, Reality Assimilation and Humorous Amusement” (1987 188).

In negative emotions, a person is disturbed to see the violation of the natural order of things. The type of the incongruity varies in accordance with the type of the negative emotion. However, all negative emotions including fear, anger or disgust involve “some kind of practical concern about the incongruity”:

Some situation that matters to us is judged not to be as we want it to be , and we are motivated to react in various ways that have the potential of improving the situation itself or at least our relation to it. The world is somehow slipped out of our control, and we are motivated to bring it back to control. (Morreall 1987 191)

In reality assimilation, the incongruity is considered as a problem which interrupts the mental process of understanding. The mind is confronted with something unusual or inappropriate which does not match its accepted frame of concepts. Then, it tries to fit this new experience in its schema of concepts (Morreall 1987 192).

In responses of both negative emotions and reality assimilation there is a kind of tension which is caused by some dissatisfaction. A person who is emotionally disturbed by the situation or a person who cannot make sense of the situation s/he is faced with, are both discontented because they do not know how to deal with their new experience, in other words they are not in control anymore. The loss of control leads to action in both of the cases. In negative emotion, the person makes an attempt to change either the unusual situation s/he is beset with or her/his involvement in it. In reality assimilation, the person makes an effort to develop a new perspective on the situation in order to make sense of what is happening. (Morreall 1987 193-5).

Morreall traces the reality assimilation in human beings back to the “orienting reflex in animals” (1987 194) and notes that animals discover new things in their environment by this reflex mechanism. The exploration goes on until the new things are recognized or placed in a new schema. Morreall argues that this “orienting reflex” is also present in human beings in a

much more developed form due to their ability of thinking (1987 194). Confrontation with unusual events leads to some kind of activity through which people try to adapt themselves to the new situation and survive in life.

Moreover, there is the situation of humorous amusement in which people simply enjoy the incongruities. Morreall also explores the survival value of amusement in connection with the desire of human beings to test the limits of their mental power. He claims that human beings learn more about their environment due to their curiosity. Accordingly, they become more competent in dealing with it. Thus they succeed in surviving (1987 20).

Like Langer's, Henry Bergson's theory of humour depends on the vital force which exists in every human being and stimulates every human experience. Along with human beings, society and life are also vital structures. Bergson claims that both life and society call for careful observation of current situations and in addition they demand both intellectual and physical flexibility which is crucial for adaptation. Adaptation is achieved through the interaction of two forces "tension and elasticity" (Bergson 72). An individual who lacks these vital forces will not be able to respond to life in an adaptive way. Instead, s/he will display mechanical or rigid behaviour which will create a comic effect and will arouse laughter because of its incongruity.

According to Bergson's argument, society is also regarded as a living thing. Therefore any rigidity which contradicts the flexibility of social life will also become laughable. In this respect, Bergson notes that ceremonies that take place in social life contain laughable elements. Since a ceremony is serious as long as it is associated with an important object, it will become comic when concentration is fixed not on its object but only on its stereotyped actions (Bergson 89).

Bergson asserts that the mind imagines that every individual has a soul which has a limitless power of adaptation and everlasting freedom of will. The powers and freedom of the soul find expression in the body to a certain extent. However, the material form cannot keep up with the stimulations of “this higher principle” (Bergson 78) and leads the body to mechanical movements while spoiling the graceful ways of the soul. Thus a comic effect is created.

If something happens to be noticed as graceful about the body, it is due to the “very flame of life, kindled within us by a higher principle” (Bergson 92). The graceful is perceived when the material limitedness of the body is disregarded and the vitality which springs from “the very principle of intellectual and moral life” is considered. But when the attention is diverted from the suppleness that originates from the soul to the material form of the body, the comparison of body to soul will be like what clothes are to the body: “inert matter dumped down upon living energy” (Bergson 92-3). The comic effect is obtained through placing one on the other. Bergson formulates this effect and says “Any incident is comic that calls our attention to the physical in a person, when it is the moral side that is concerned” (Bergson 93).

Bergson draws a line between the living and the mechanical by presenting the vitality of life. Life is “evolution in time and complexity in space” (Bergson 118). Since it is a progress which depends on continuous development and growth, going backwards or repetition of events are out of the question. Besides, each of its elements has a unique quality which co-exists with other elements in a system of progress whose order cannot be reversed. Bergson claims that the opposite effect of these facts such as repetition and inversion are used as methods to produce comic effects. When a series of events are reproduced by the same or different characters, coincidence becomes something extraordinary and the situation becomes something laughable or when the situations are reversed and a character is caught in his/her own trap, the effect is the same (Bergson 118-9-21-2).

Conrad Hyers, in his *The Spirituality of Comedy*, explores the reversability of roles from a different perspective. According to him, the reversal of roles is used as a source of humour in order to mock the religious matters. Hyers explains this reversal in the example of a Haitian mock ritual “the catechism of the Guede,” in which Roman Catholic devotees, catechetical instructions, and ecclesiastical functionaries are parodied” (118). At the end of the ceremony, in honour of Guede (the ancestral spirits), the participants are ordered to stand in a line and they have a mock examination to which they give ridiculous answers. Each participant is honoured by a “prestigious ecclesiastical, political or military title” (118). Finally, the most inappropriate candidate is praised as Pope.

The aim of this ritual is simply to ridicule the oppressing authorities of society especially its religious institutions. It is a reaction against the rigidity and dogmatism of religion which rejects to coexist with humour or laughter. It has always been the fact that “which is sacred is only to be approached in fear and trembling, in awful solemnity, in lowly obeisance and humble adoration, nor in levity and gaiety” (Hyers 126). By performing such rituals where laughter and humour rises from the profaning of the sacred, people seem to experience a sense of release from the restriction of religious rules.

The examination of the theories that has been studied so far reveals that humour has many different functions for people who use it. Humour can release from strain. It can be used to resist authority and oppression. It can appear as a way to feel more powerful against all odds of the world. It can be a form of self-assertion, a way of coping with what is frightening or it can be an attempt to make sense of what is confusing. However diverse these functions may seem, they serve for human survival on the whole. In accordance with this point of view, the aim of this thesis is to examine Graham Greene’s concept of humour which demonstrates the divergent functions of humour and its overall importance as a means of adaptation to life which is a game of survival. *A Gun for Sale* and *Travels with My Aunt* are Greene’s two

novels which are chosen to be studied in the light of the humour theories discussed above within the frame of Sussane Langer's comic theory, *The Comic Rhythm*.

Henry Graham Greene was born in 1904 in Hertfordshire. He was a shy child and was not keen on sports but reading books. He was an admirer of adventure stories. Rider Haggard and R.M. Ballantyne were among his favourite authors who influenced his writing style. He went to Berkhamsted School where he suffered from other children's teasings because his father was the headmaster. He had a troubled childhood and he attempted suicide many times. He left school for a while and he was sent to the psychoanalyst Kenneth Richmond to be treated. Richmond motivated Greene to write and introduced him to many famous literary figures of the time. After his treatment, Greene returned to school and graduated in 1922. Then he continued his education at Balliol College of Oxford University and became the editor of *The Oxford Outlook*. He was interested in politics and he joined the Communist Party but he did not continue his membership for long. He wrote profiles of Communist leaders such as Fidel Castro and Ho Chi Minh. He graduated from Balliol in 1925.

Greene's writing career started in *Nottingham Journal*. While he was working there, he received a letter from Vivien Dayrell Browning on some errors he made about his writings regarding Catholicism. Their friendship developed and after Greene converted to Catholicism in 1926, they got married.

Later, Greene moved to London to work as a subeditor of *The Times*. He had his first book *The Man Within* published in 1929. The success of the book tempted Greene to leave his job at *The Times* and he decided to be a self-employed writer. However, failing in his next two novels *Rumour at Nightfall* and *The Name of the Action*, he started to write book reviews for *The Spectator*. Due to his financial problems, he wrote *Stamboul Train* and got his reputation. He categorized his book as an entertainment in order to distinguish it from his

serious books. He also took up writing film reviews for *The Spectator* and he tried screenwriting. He both wrote original screenplays and adaptations for the cinema. *Third Man* was one of his film treatments.

In 1930s, travelling became a passion for Greene and he visited many countries looking for adventure. His journey to Sweden resulted in *England Made Me*, his trip to Liberia was described in *Journey Without Maps*, and his visit to Mexico where he witnessed the religious persecution inspired him to write *The Lawless Roads* and later *The Power and The Glory*. Between the years 1941 and 1943, he was the secret agent of British government in West Africa, Sierra Leone and his impressions inspired him to write *The Heart of the Matter*. His travels went on and he became a famous war reporter for several newspapers. He was in Vietnam during the Indochina War and in Kenya during the Mau Mau outbreak. He also went to Haiti, Cuba, Poland, Puerto Rico, Paraguay, Argentina and many other places (McEwan 10-11).

Among his books are *The End of the Affair*, *The Quiet American*, *A Burnt Out Case*, *The Honorary Consul*, *The Human Factor*, *Monsignor Quixote* and his two volumes of autobiography, *A Sort of Life* and *Ways of Escape*. Greene also wrote books for children, some plays (*The Living Room* and *The Potting Shed*), short stories and collections of essays.

Until 1958, Greene named some of his books as entertainments most of which were thrillers which were full of crime, escape, murder, chase and pursuit. These books reflect Greene's sensitivity about violence and crime that prevail in the modern world. Therefore while creating his characters Greene develops images of isolated and hunted people who have become victims or agents of violence in a world full of danger and betrayal (Kulshrestha 179).

A Gun for Sale is also among the books which Greene denominated as entertainment. Greene wrote this book in the form of thriller and created a crime story. A gun man murders a

minister, then abducts a pretty girl whose fiancée is a policeman. The gun man realizes that he is conned then sets out to take his revenge. On his way, he abducts the policeman's girlfriend and the policeman who is already pursuing him for a trivial crime, falsely assumes that his girlfriend is the gun man's accomplice. After misunderstandings are cleared and the guilty are killed, the girl and her fiancée are united.

The themes which Greene deals in this book are of serious kind such as betrayal, injustice, greed and guilt but the work itself seems to be a sense of relief for the writer. While he unfolds his story which evolves around serious themes, humour also springs from his work. Releasing the characters and the readers from strain and helping himself to get rid of his tension. Greene admits this feeling of relief he finds in the act of writing and in humour:

The strain of writing a novel, which keeps the author confined for a period of years with his depressive self, is extreme, and I have always sought relief in 'entertainments' – for melodrama as much as farce is an expression of a manic mood. (qtd in Kulshrestha 179)

A Gun for Sale was published in 1936. It is a book that belongs to the early years of Greene's writings. Its setting, as Greene mentions in his autobiography is Nottingham. His memories of that city seems not to be very pleasant. In his autobiography *Ways of Escape*, Greene writes his impressions of Nottingham and his loneliness: "I lived for three winter months...it was the furthest North I have ever been, the first strange city in which I had made a home, alone, without friends" (1981 56). Greene also underlines in *Ways of Escape* that the years between 1933 and 1937 were troubled years because of the Depression in England (1981 29). These facts reveal that Greene was under the effect of negative feelings while he was working on his book and he used humour at the darkest moments, though not in a rich way.

On the other hand, after 33 years, while Greene was working on a new book *Travels with My Aunt*, he was again not feeling very positive and this book is one of his most humorous books. Greene describes his stressful mood with a comparison: “If *A Burnt Out Case* in 1961 represented the depressive side of a manic-depressive writer, *Travels with My Aunt* eight years later surely represented the manic at its height – or depth” (1981 219). He also gives reasons for his negative mood. He tells that his mood turned to manic due to an important decision he had to make: “What swung me out of the depression into the manic condition...came from making a difficult decision in my private life and leaving England to settle permanently in France in 1966. I burned a number of boats and in the light of the flames I began to write a novel (1981 220). *Travels with My Aunt* was produced in the aftermath of such a crisis in the life of its author. Since humour rises when the emotional or physical strain becomes unbearable, Greene’s use of humour in this book and the relief he gets do not seem like a coincidence. Accordingly, he expresses his enjoyment in creating the book:

Travels with My Aunt is the only book I have written for the fun of it. Although the subject is old age and death – a suitable subject to tackle at the age of sixty-five – though an excellent Swedish critic described the novel justly as ‘laughter in the shadow of the gallows’, I experienced more of the laughter and little of the shadow in writing it. (1981 220)

Despite the fact that the themes that run through *Travels with My Aunt* are not less important than the themes he deals with in *A Gun for Sale*, Greene succeeds to open a wider perspective in *Travels with My Aunt* which enables him to take the grim realities of life as lightly as possible and enjoy life at the topmost degree.

In this book, Greene portrays the relationship between an aunt and her nephew who will later turn out to be mother and son. They meet at the funeral of the assumed mother of the nephew. Henry, the dull nephew is brought back into life by his lively Aunt –in fact his mother- Augusta who takes him to an unusual, exciting and confusing world by telling him

stories while tempting him to travel with her. Henry transforms through his travels and his interaction with other people. He discovers his own vital feeling and adapts himself to the rhythm of life through developing a sense of humour.

GCCRIIS

CHAPTER I

A GUN FOR SALE

Hyers defines life as a contest and thinks it is more than a conflict.

It is a play of forces, a sporting proposition, an interplay of opposites, a cosmic dance...Life flows as rivers flow, sometimes lazily in the summer sun, sometimes in a raging spring torrent; sometimes fertilizing, sometimes eroding, sometimes building up; sometimes tearing down; but not necessarily at war with anything or anyone. (66)

Based on a similar view, Langer thinks the rhythm of comedy is the rhythm of existence which is formed by this contest between the world and its inhabitants. In *A Gun for Sale*, the contest from which the comic action springs, is portrayed by Greene as a war. However harsh it may seem to survive in a decadent and corrupt world where deceit, hypocrisy and inconsistency prevail, it is again the same world where the comic action finds its home. Although Greene associates the act of human survival in a mad world with the metaphor of battle, the light of comic vision seeps through the novel and proves that in its very essence, life is a game that has to be played. Every living thing is designed to serve a function in the system and it is again in their opposition as well as in their co-operation where lies the harmony of life.

A Gun for Sale, is the depiction of this game of survival. In the course of this survival human beings are inevitably driven to interaction. A world full of surprises and unexpected turn of events force people to deal with life in their own way. Sometimes opposing and sometimes agreeing, people come together in their strife to make the best of what the world has prepared for them in the form an unknown future. While experiencing any kind of depression, crisis, danger or accident in the course of this game, what bursts out in each person is the love of life, the urge to live, in other words, a vital feeling of human existence.

This vital feeling which is essential to the basic rhythm of life, becomes the core of humour and laughter at the breaking points of strain.

The rhythm of life from which the comic pattern emerges in this novel is going to be explored through the unfolding of the plot. Greene uses an episodic structure for the intricate plot of this story. This structure creates an effect of interest, curiosity, suspense and surprise which is a clear indicator of the rhythm in the book. It also enables the author to use each episode to introduce new characters and intertwine different chains of complicated events which are to be resolved throughout the story.

An agent of a steel factory owner hires Raven, a gun man, to assassinate the Czech minister of war. Soon, Raven realizes that he is double-crossed and the police are after him because he has been spending the forged money he was given when he completed his feat. Then he decides to take his revenge and sets out to find his employers. This action of chase and pursuit around which the events are interwoven leads to an involvement with people from all walks of life. This provides Greene with a whole panorama of a society full of different characters and a great deal of incidents and situations through which these characters can be revealed. Thus, Greene illuminates the human condition and the comic rhythm of human existence in the form of humour.

In the opening scene the major character of the novel, Raven, the cold blooded gunman who is on his way to murder the Czech minister of war is portrayed. Right from the start Greene greets the readers with a twist of incongruities. We live in a world full of inexplicable, incomprehensible things such as where murder is an occupation. This undeniable reality is highlighted by the portrayal of Raven. He is a man for whom murder is “just a new job” (GS 5) and as it is the case with most of Greene’s characters, Raven has a deformity. In his case, his deformity, a hare-lip is “a serious handicap in his profession” (GS 5) because his is a job

which requires a constant camouflage of identity while his deformity is self revealing. As Greene describes him, Raven does not look any different from hundreds of other young men who are walking in the streets except for his deformity. Raven is obsessed with his hare-lip because ever since his childhood he has noticed that people, above all girls find him repulsive and he has never had a girl friend. His hare-lip which sets him apart from the rest of the world is like a sign of his eternally ruined life and “a badge of class” (GS 14), pointing out the poverty of a family who could not afford a skillful surgeon. As for his family, what he knows of them is nothing more than a hanged, criminal father and a mother who committed suicide. As for his upbringing, he has got nothing but painful memories of a childhood spent in an orphanage. Since, this has been the kind of life he has lived, he is full of hatred and his heart is ‘a chip of ice in his breast’ (GS 11). “He wasn’t used to any taste that wasn’t bitter on the tongue. He had been made by hatred...he had never felt the least tenderness for anyone; he was made in this image...he didn’t want to be unmade” (GS 66).

When Greene creates a coldblooded murderer, a terminator-like killing machine and gives him enough reason to hate this world, he also gives him a hare-lip and exposes him to the world as a human being who is as vulnerable as any other human being. This is a key point in Greene’s character portrayal. This key point also plays a significant role in the forming of comic rhythm. As the rhythm requires continuity which is attained through the upsetting and the recovering of an equilibrium, characters move in this world, stumbling from one situation into another, changing their roles: tricksters are fooled, bullies are humiliated, cruels become victims.

While he is on his way to carry out his new task, the person he is going to murder, is preoccupied in his usual routine without knowing it is the last afternoon of his life. The old minister’s fingers are inkstained since he has been busy doing some paperwork and he is about to have a dinner of a four-minute boiled egg while his secretary is getting ready to leave

the house. Outside the house, Raven is preparing to get in; he cuts the telephone wire and rings the bell. As soon as the secretary opens the door, his camera-like eyes scan what is in their view and his criminal mind in full concentration starts to calculate all the possibilities. Since he can be easily recognized by his hare-lip, he is careful not to show it to the elderly secretary of the minister. When she brings the letter of introduction he hands her, closer to her eyes, he is relieved to see that she is shortsighted. Once in the room with the Minister, who is busy with the boiling eggs, he makes his plan: "I'll give her three minutes by the alarm clock to get well away: he kept his eyes on the Minister's chest: just there I'll shoot" (GS 6). While he is thinking of his plan and preparing to shoot, suddenly the alarm clock begins to ring and then he hears someone running in the corridor. The door opens, the secretary enters and sees Raven's lip.

An act of violence is going to be committed soon but some obstacles appear unexpectedly in the way of the determined murderer. Since the reader is prepared from the beginning that a murder is going to take place, the tension builds up as the murderer approaches his target step by step. But the unexpected interruption of trivial things such as the ringing of an alarm clock which makes the murderer lose his nerve, causes relief in the reader with the thought that he may not reach his aim. Thus, threat of death may be swept away and the scene appears humorous.

By giving life to such a committed murderer and naming him after a carcass eating animal, Greene rationalizes a murderer's actions and frustrations. By turning something unacceptable into something natural, a bitter form of humour emerges from this incongruity. Even Raven's thought has humour in itself. As the secretary enters the room Raven thinks: "my God, what a household. They won't let a man do things tidily" (GS 7). When the relation between the murderer's name and his job is considered, the way he thinks seems natural. The bird which he derives his name from, has in its nature to feed on carcass. Since Raven is a gun

man and earns his living by killing people, committing murder is something natural for him. Hence, his reaction to the hindrances are understandable. According to Dollard and Miller's theory which is based on frustration and aggression, "a sense of frustration is produced when we come across an obstacle that prevents us from achieving important goals. When other people are the sources of frustration, there is a tendency to react aggressively toward them" (Ziv, 1984: 9). Frustration is a form of feeling which arises from both psychological and physiological tension and this tension is relieved by aggressive behaviour which is displayed towards the person or the object that stands as an obstacle. This aggression may take the form of humour (Ziv 9). The ringing of the alarm clock, the intrusion of the secretary and the exposition of his hare-lip cause frustration in Raven because they are the things that get in his way to prevent him from reaching his aim. It is already incongruous to consider murder as a job and earning money to make a living but it is earning money by killing people. Besides, this incongruity increases with Raven's care for his job. Raven's taking such violent action as an occupation for himself is not acceptable but his assiduous ways while performing his task as if he is doing a useful service shows that he is really into this job. Thus his concentration is of crucial importance to him in order to carry out his job smoothly. When this is the case, the trivial things that happen by coincidence of the moment of his performance, disappoint him and make him nervous thus evoke in him a humorous thought. At that moment of strain, the ringing of the alarm clock, approaching footsteps, the intrusion of the secretary make him think that in such a house they will not let a man do something properly.

The intrusion of the secretary, followed by her expression of repulsion at the sight of his harelip fills Raven with rage and he shoots the minister three times, twice at the back and once at the skull which caused "it open like a chinadoll" (GS 7). The poor Minister who is explaining how salt prevents shell cracking a few minutes before his murder, has no chance to prevent his own skull from cracking, because death approaches him from his back.

In the case of the secretary, however, her death comes more violently. Although her chances are not many, she reacts with a full urge to live, determined to protect her old, nevertheless dear life. She is so shocked by the violence she witnesses that Raven thinks she will beg him for her life. He aims and shoots but surprisingly, he misses and is astonished to find the old lady “so tough” (GS 7) because “she [is] through the door before he [can] fire again, slamming it behind her” (GS 7). Fate kindles a spark of hope and a basic instinct to survive makes its challenge. Since the key is on Raven’s side, she cannot lock the door but leans on it with “amazing strength” (GS 8) screaming “at the top of her voice” (GS 8). Raven has to shoot through the door to kill her but she remains alive quite a while. Raven’s dedication to carry out his job and the old woman’s chance to grasp an opportunity to protect herself are juxtaposed tensions of their lives. Therefore, the old woman’s struggle is a cause of frustration for Raven and the tension he feels raises a bitter form of humour. Before Raven leaves the house, he is irritated to hear the woman’s voice and thinks: “who could have imagined an old woman could be so tough? It touched his nerve a little just in the same way as the bell had done, as if a ghost were interfering with a man’s job” (GS 8). Humour in Raven’s situation also stems from some kind of incongruity. In the general frame of physical rules, an aged person will be physically weak but this old lady proves the contrary. Raven who thinks within the general frame is astonished to see the result. This sudden collapse of expectation in Raven also gives rise to humour in the situation.

In the meantime the news of the Czech minister’s murder spreads out. Papers give details of murder, posters are put up all around the town announcing the murder and the stir it caused in other countries. People are affected by the headlines of papers because it seems more than likely that a war is soon to break out: “Europe Mobilizing” (GS 10), “Yugoslavia Asks For Time. Adriatic Fleet at War Stations. Paris Rioters Break into Italian Embassy” (GS 23).

In the following episode, Greene introduces Anne Crowder and Jimmy Mather, a couple who are concerned with their own problems, are travelling home on a bus. Anne Crowder is a young attractive woman who is about to get an acting job in the theater of another province and she feels distressed by the thought of starting up a life in an unfamiliar place, away from her boy friend. Her boyfriend Jimmy Mather, the bulky, clumsy, sullen and unromantic detective sergeant who is hoping to get in charge of a very important sort of crime, something like “A murderer with all the world watching” (GS 37), so that he can be promoted and afford to marry Anne. He is quite content with his job. He is not interested in leadership or patriotism or any other mighty cause. He just likes what he does best: “planning things, making decisions” (GS 21) and his whole occupation is to avoid uncertainty which he cannot stand. When it comes to his understanding of love, it is not a matter different from his job. “Love, like crime has to be solved and cleared from all the uncertainties and it should be “stamped and sealed and signed and the licence paid for” (GS 72).

Greene, juxtaposes these two characters who do not make a perfect couple. Humour rises from the incongruity of their personalities and the incongruity in the understanding of love that unites them. Their difference of opinions, their dissimilar attitudes towards life and their contrasting natures serve as convenient devices for the game of life, as well as creating a comic effect. When the lively, humorous nature of Anne and the dull, predictable character of Mather come together, they form a relationship of incongruities. In contrast to her boy friend, Anne seems like a more sympathetic and lively figure and her ability to survive in this contest with life is the most remarkable amongst the other characters due to her good sense of humour. In her strife to meet the demands of her own life, she tries to come to terms with the odds of the world. At such moments of handling strange, unpleasant or difficult situations, “the human life feeling” (Langer 331) rises and breaks into humour.

To begin with, she is aware of the fact that Mather and herself do not make a perfect couple. While they are on the bus, Anne hums the tune in the record she has bought but her boyfriend thinks that “It’s a silly song” (GS 9). As she insists that it is a lovely song, he finds her way of accepting their difference from each other in a humorous attitude:

“It’s a lovely song – Jimmy. I simply can’t call you Jimmy. You aren’t Jimmy. You are outsize. Detective sergeant Mather. You are the reason why people make jokes about policemen’s boots”. (GS 9)

Anne is humorous about the incongruity between her lover’s physical appearance and his name. “Jimmy” is the diminutive form of James and it is a term of endearment. However, to call a man of such a large size with a shortened version of his name as if he is a small boy does not appeal to Anne. She finds humour in this incongruity and cracks a joke on his lover’s physical appearance. On the other hand, when Mather suggests her to call him “dear” instead of Jimmy, the strange disparity in their relationship, becomes apparent: “Dear, dear, she tried it out on the tip of her tongue,... ‘Oh no,’ she decided, ‘I’ll call you that when we’ve been married ten years” (GS 9). As for the suggestion of “darling”, her humour still lingers: “Darling, darling. I don’t like it. It sounds as if I’d known you a long, long time” (GS 10). Her hesitation to call her fiancée with words of love is also incongruous and she is humorous enough to make a joke out of this situation, too.

Morreall explains the difference between people who have a serious approach to life and who have a humorous approach:

The fundamentally serious person approaches his daily life in a practical frame of mind, expecting most situations to make important demands on him. When incongruities arise, he usually sees them as disturbances in the practical order of things – something isn’t working as it should, here is another problem to be solved. The person who has a humorous attitude toward life, on the other hand, has the capacity for distancing himself from the practical aspects of most situations, and simply enjoying the many incongruities he experiences or thinks up. (1983 122)

Anne's humorous attitude helps her tolerate the difference between Mather and herself. It is not only a piece of music that they cannot agree on. There is a kind of incongruity in their relationship. Although they are planning to get married, she cannot bring herself to address him with his name or with other words of affection. It seems that Mather is not the perfect lover. He is not romantic at all and he is always cautious. He nearly treats her as if she is a school girl who should be early in bed. However, after years of experience in her profession, Anne has had a notion of what it is like to live with the 'eccentric' or the 'thwarted genius'. Therefore, she wants to secure herself with the company of an ordinary, reliable man whom she will 'be able to know what he'd say next'. Her understanding of happiness is founded on this simple expectation of getting married with a man whom she can trust. Therefore, she prefers to distance herself from the strangeness in their togetherness simply by joking.

Anne's humorous attitude towards life appears also in serious situations such as the ones involving fear or anxiety. When Anne sees the posters, or the papers announcing the murder, she loses herself in thought. The murder occupies her mind because everybody thinks it might start a war. "[S]he couldn't help remembering that war might be declared before they met again. He would go to it..." (GS 24). The reason the thought of war disturbs her mind is the fact that Jim is sure to join in that war, taking all her happiness, her feeling of security, her joy of life away with him and leaving her alone in the midst of a strange world. She cannot help thinking from her own perspective. Not only staying alive is the main aim but also feelings of safety and satisfaction play into this game of survival. When she sees the crowd of people who are gathered under the lit noticeboard to read the latest news about "the troop movement over Europe" and "precautions against gas raids...she had feared it only for herself and Mather. She had thought of it as a personal tragedy played out against a background of cheers and flags" (GS 54).

Besides the possibility of a war and Mather's likelihood of joining the army, there have already been other obstacles between Anne and her happiness. They want to get married but they do not have enough money. Moreover, they can hardly find time to see each other. Anne will soon be going away for a new job and she will not be able to see Mather for a long time. These unpleasant realities of life shake Anne and cause her to lose her balance, however, the urge to preserve the hope of happiness pushes Anne to laugh:

'It's the nights that bother me.' She laughed, 'It's going to be wearing,' but immediately became serious, 'I'm happy too.' About happiness she was always serious; she preferred to laugh when she was miserable. She couldn't avoid being serious about things she cared for, and happiness made her grave at the thought of all the things which might destroy it. (GS 9)

Anne's anxiety which is caused by the unpleasant realities of her condition in life finds its release in laughter. Her laughter is a way of channelling her misery, a relief of the tension. When she is happy, it means that there is no tension and the balance is safe so she feels calm and serious. However, the possibility of any danger that may ruin the things which make her happy, raises her level of anxiety. This rise will be followed by a humorous attitude or laughter as a kind of defense mechanism against threats. Herbert Spencer explains this situation of laughter due to "nervous excitement at any moment present to consciousness as feeling, must expand itself in some way or other" (200). From a similar perspective, Ziv explores this mechanism in relation to "tension relief".

Spencer's tension relief theory explains laughter as a release of nervous energy which builds up within the human body (200). In accordance with this view, anxiety caused by an unpleasant situation finds its relief in the form of laughter. If anxiety is too much, its release gives more pleasure and accordingly this pleasure is expressed in laughter. Avner Ziv suggests that "if laughter is one of the physiological expressions of the release of tension and anxiety, humor can be seen as a way of coping with those phenomena that cause tension and

anxiety in us. Thus humor fulfills one of its central functions: that of a defense mechanism” (Ziv 48). When looked from a deeper point of view, this defense mechanism is a form of adaptation to the disturbing situation. Langer explains this mechanism according to the biological pattern of living beings. The disturbed organism which lost its balance “struggles to retrieve its original dynamic form by overcoming and removing the obstacle, or if this proves impossible...it adapts itself to the situation” (Langer 328).

Greene elaborates his description of Anne’s mood. As their short journey is about to reach its end and time to part has come, Anne feels more depressed because she has to contend herself with loneliness in her dismal lodging where she is to find nothing but a cold meal with her landlady. In future, she will be travelling to earn her living and she will still be missing the warmth of a home which she can share with Mather. Again, the vital feeling breaks through the tension, lifts her up and appears in her way of talking. When her fears and strains reach a climax they are eased down by getting an expression in humour and laughter:

The nearer they got to home the more miserable she became, the more they got to home the more lightly she talked. She was keeping things off and out of her mind: the peeling wallpaper, the long flights to her room, cold supper with Mrs. Brewer and next day the walk to the agent’s, perhaps a job again in the provinces away from him. (GS 10)

After she gets off the bus, she walks up the street, praying to God to get some money soon and to let her relationship go well. While she is walking, “A man passed her going up the road; he looked cold and strung up, as he passed in his black overcoat; he had a hare-lip. Poor devil, she thought, and forgot him...” (GS 11). Following Anne’s prayer, this first casual meeting on the street, is a foreshadowing of the approaching coincidences that will drive the characters into each other’s lives and make them perform the game of survival according to their own view of life.

Passing by Anne, Raven hurries to the cafe where he is to see his agent Cholmondeley, to get paid for the job he has done. Cholmondeley whose most prominent features are his fatness and the emerald ring he wears, is a man of greed and power. He is a very repulsive figure: “His wide square face fell in folds over his collar” (GS 12) and “his great white open face was like a curtain on which you can throw grotesque images: a rabbit, a man with horns” (GS 13). This exaggerated character, is the embodiment of most negative qualities. He, also has frailties. His soft spot for sweets and his squeamishness chips the sharp edges of his grotesque figure and humanize him. This incongruity between his incredibly appalling appearance and his petty obsession with sweets creates humour. When this grotesque figure is stimulated by his frailties which are beyond his control, the way he acts make him appear more ridiculous. His weakness for sweets makes him buy, eat, suck and store sweets anywhere and anytime.

According to George Santayana, grotesque is something similar to humour which emerges in “plastic form” (256-7). This effect is produced by the exaggeration of some of the features of “an ideal type” or its combination “with other types”. Something which has no equivalent in nature is formed by the writer. “We call these inventions comic and grotesque when we are considering their divergence from the natural rather than their inward possibility” (Santayana 256-7). When this recreation fits itself in our imagination and gives us the feeling of “unity and character in the midst of the strangeness of the form, then we have the grotesque. It is the half-formed, perplexed and suggestively monstrous” (Santayana 256-7).

Cholmondeley has the striking features of a grotesque character. His exaggerated features which are fused into an impossible form set him apart from the known norms. He is the embodiment of both physical and spiritual ugliness. He is powerful, cruel and beastlike but he is also squeamish. Besides, he has a big wide face like a screen and on this face he has

small eyes twinkling at the sight of sweets. The incongruity caused by the discordant proportion of his physical features and the fusion of the most repulsive characteristics create a confusion mixed with fear, disgust and laughter. The function of this grotesque character is also significant in black humour. By creating the most repulsive figure and turning it into a mocking material, the frightening realities of human nature are belittled. Ziv claims that “turning the frightening reality into fantasy, or the frightening fantasy into the ridiculous” is the crucial point of black humour (58). In this respect, the grotesque figure of Cholmondeley functions as a way of escape from the absurdity of life, works as a “courage mechanism” (Ziv 58).

Geoffrey Harpham emphasizes that “for an object to be grotesque, it must arouse three responses. Laughter and astonishment are two; either disgust or horror is the third” (1976 463). Harpham argues that laughter aroused by the grotesque, may have a function to dispel “the horror or perplexity and make the nightmare seem more bearable” (1976 464). Since grotesque is a combination of separate forms, it creates a world of “contradiction and ambiguity” (Harpham 1976 464) so such response of laughter seems a way to handle the strangeness of the situation.

When Raven meets him in the cafe, the sight of the dining people and “the long list of sweet iced drinks, of parfes and sundaes and coupes and splits” (GS 12) causes distaste in Raven. Broke and hungry, Raven has no place “among the little tables and bright fruit drinks” (GS 13) and he has no time to waste either. On the other hand, Cholmondeley takes his time examining the menu and offers him a sweet. Again, Greene’s juxtaposition of these two opposing characters gives rise to humor. Both belong to the criminal class and both are up to illegalities. Despite their common point, the sharp contrast between their appearance and their conditions of living forms an incongruity. Cholmondeley is “fat”, “vulgar” and “false” but has “an impression of great power” with “the cream dripping from his mouth”. On the other hand

Raven, “dark and thin and made for destruction” (GS 13), possessed nothing but an empty wallet, the clothes he is wearing, his hare-lip and the gun. This meeting of two diverging characters is humorous due to the incongruity between them. For instance, Raven gives a mocking reply to Cholmondeley’s suggestion to have a *parfe*: “It’s odd, wanting to eat ice in this weather. You’ve only got to stay outside if you’re hot” (GS 12).

When the contrast between the conditions of the two criminals is considered, Raven’s use of humour appears as his disguised aggression which is generated from his inferior position against Cholmondeley. For a moment, he elevates himself and relieves the tension of his poverty and hunger by pointing at the stupidity of Cholmondeley’s idea of eating ice cream in such cold weather. According to Adler’s theory, behaviour of human beings are controlled by the inferiority complex which is formed in childhood. People constantly strive to overcome the feelings of inferiority. One simple way of dealing with these feelings is to achieve superiority by “reducing someone’s power or status”. Humour pointed at a powerful person is “an expression of aggression” (Ziv 8).

Cholmondeley is far from understanding the plight of Raven, he is focused on his own desire: “His eyes softened as they rested on a Raspberry Split at the next table and confessed wistfully to Raven: I’ve got a sweet tooth” (GS 13). When Raven is about to tell how he did his job, Cholmondeley does not want to hear anything because he gets squeamish when violence is mentioned. He emphasizes that he has no responsibility since he is “just an agent” (GS 13). He has clients and they are the best. Fate has saved him and his clients are the prosperous. His consciousness of his good fortune gives his vital feeling a rise and it finds expression in humour. When he tells Raven that acts of violence mean war for his clients, Raven starts a sentence “And I and the old man...”, which is directly completed by Cholmondeley and makes him laugh at his own humour: “Are in the front trench” (GS 13).

Cholmondeley's delight at his humour can also be observed in relation to the superiority theory of Hobbes.

According to Hobbes's theory which is developed from the theories of Plato and Aristotle, human beings continuously struggle with each other for power. Therefore, they are eager to see deficiencies in others so that they can relish their superiority and laughter springs when a person is filled with such feeling of superiority over other people (1954 54). Cholmondeley is aware of his superiority over Raven and enjoys this situation. He takes pleasure in possessing the power which enables him to keep his crimes hidden and he feels safe. He has the best clients and he is the prosperous. He is not the one to face danger and do the real fighting, it is the job of the poor and the weak, like Raven. His laughing at his own humor depends on this consciousness:

Men laugh often, especially such as are greedy of applause from everything they do well, at their own actions performed never so little beyond their own expectations ; as also at their own jests, and in this case it is manifest, that the passion of laughter proceeds from a sudden conception of some ability in himself that laughs. (Hobbes 1994 54)

After getting his money, Raven heads for the place where he stays. While he is walking, Raven sees Christmas decorations on shop windows. He also sees a girl behind one of the shop windows who is adjusting a dummy. Christmas and women are the two things which drive Raven mad. To begin with he can stand neither the sight nor the sentiment of Christmas. Since he grew up in orphanages, he has known no joy of family bliss, or Christmas. When it comes to women, apart from a mother who selfishly left him by committing suicide, he has known no other woman because of his malformed lip. Filled with hatred and rage, on an impulse he goes to the shop with "a kind of subdued cruelty" (GS 14) and he shows his lip to the girl "with the same pleasure that he might have felt in turning a machine gun on a picture gallery" (GS 14). Raven's obsession with his deformity is a sign of his inferiority complex.

He is excluded from society and company of women due to his hare-lip. His frustration leads him to act in an aggressive way. He wants to disturb people who reject him by the sight of his malformed lip. He uses his lip as a weapon to destroy the happiness of other people. His amusement generates from cruelty, he takes his revenge from life or makes his bitter existence more bearable by his aggressive humour. Like Konrad Lorenz, Anthony Ludovici also suggests that laughter has evolved from aggressive physical gestures. Ludovici explains laughter as “a physical challenge or threat to an enemy” (Morreall 1983 6). Since people show their teeth in the act of laughing, as dogs do likewise when they show their aggression, laughter is a way of warning the enemy that they are strong and totally in control of the situation (Morreall, 1983: 6-7). Raven’s showing of his lip and his ridicule of the shop assistant by pretending as if he is in the best shop in town is his way of asserting his power and achieving his superiority over the girl. He pays five pounds for a five guinea dress and does not want it to be packed, he says “The girl will fetch it. He grin[s] at her with his raw lip. ‘You see, she is class. This is the best dress you have?’ And when she nodded and took the note away he said, ‘It’ll just suit Alice then” (GS 14). Raven’s aggressive humour appears in sarcasm which is “attacking a person by praising him in a false tone” (Eastman 205). Eastman also emphasizes that this kind of humour has “ a particularly searing...quality, because it not merely denies him the virtue in question but clothes him in it...” (205). While praising the shop, the dress and the woman he is buying the dress for, Raven is in fact despising them.

Raven’s aggression is directed also against the maid of the place he stays in. The psychological and physiological tension of his frustration with life finds its discharge both in aggressive action and in an insulting remark. Alice is another repulsive figure with a physical deformity. She is the hunchbacked maid of the place where he stays. When he gets there, he calls her to clean his room and hits her on the head and laughs : ‘I’ve bought you a Christmas dress, Alice. Here’s the receipt. Go and fetch it. It’s a lovely dress. It’ll suit you’ (GS 15).

Raven, who is abandoned by his mother in his childhood and from whom girls turned away with disgust because of his hare-lip relieves his pain by the help of a scornful joke. He makes fun of both the shop girl and Alice. The shop girl stands for the women he cannot befriend. On the other hand, Alice, another character with a physical deformity, a hunchback, is a mirror of Raven's own deformity. When he mocks her, he is in fact attacking his fate which has chosen him to bear such deformity. His longing for many things which life prevented him from having, because of his deformity, awakens the vital feeling of his human existence. The human life feeling bursts out to prove that there is still life in that bitter figure. The joke of Raven derives from an insult, and emerges in the form of bitter humour. The impulse of life in this case stimulates the character to defend his vital being and to keep his sanity. When he feels knocked down, it brings him back to himself again, that is maintaining the rhythm: the upsetting and recovering of the vital balance.

The same rhythm can also be observed in the condition of Alice, too. The way she dreams of taking her revenge is not much different from Raven's joke. She cannot stand to be bullied by someone who is of the same kind with her. When the detectives Mather and Saunders come to the place where Raven stays and ask about Raven and the dress he has bought for Alice, she tells them that she would not take it but she would sell it back to the shop, take the money and laugh at him. She also adds to express her hatred against him: "I'd like to swipe at that lip of his. I'd laugh. I'd say I'd laugh" (GS 17).

At that moment, Raven is about to go out for dinner but he is lucky enough to hide himself in the phone booth when he realizes the police are asking for him. He learns what people think of him as he listens to the conversation between his landlord, Alice and the detectives: "A bloody bully...I shan't be sorry when you've locked him up...He is ugly through and through. That lip of his. It gives you the creeps...I wouldn't have him in the house but he pays...Him friends.What would he do with friends?" (GS 17). Crouched in the

phone box and faced with people's hatred against him Raven sees his reflection on the glass and he begins to laugh. Bitter is the reality and so is Raven's laugh: "He began to laugh quietly to himself on the floor of the little dark box: that's me they are talking about, me: staring at the pane of glass with his hand on his automatic" (GS 17). According to Spencer, when feelings get too strong, the tension they create in the nervous system exceed a certain limit and "vents itself in bodily action" (200). He also emphasizes that not only the joyous emotions but any kind of intense feeling will be released in the same way. For instance, the nervous energy caused by "mental distress" will also discharge itself in the form of laughter known as hysterical or sardonic. In this case, it can be said that Raven's extreme psychological strain relieves itself in his hysterical laughter.

The hostility of a world where he can never have a friend, does not let Raven take part in this game of survival on equal terms with other people. He is alone and weak, and his laughter proves his urge to cling on to life. His laugh comes out of him as a sign of vitality right at the time when he is most in need to feel that he is still alive. In the midst of the loneliness, misery and enmity that surrounds him, the urge to stay alive, that pure natural feeling of human existence flashes in the form of laughter. Accordingly Langer emphasizes that when a hysterical person laughs, "the sense of vitality breaks through fear and depression spasmodically" (341).

For Alice, the landlord, his wife and the shopkeeper in the neighbourhood, Raven's arrest by the police will be fun, an event that one would even pay to see it. Raven is favoured by no one and getting rid of him is something that will relieve the people he knows. The landlord is offended when Raven made fun of his wife's crib and Mrs. Mason, the shop owner in the neighbourhood does not want to see his ugly face in her shop again.

In the world where comic rhythm is at work, nobody can be sure that they are secure from tripping over an obstacle and getting into a messy situation. This is a world full of “.. physical or social events occurring by chance and building up the coincidences with which individuals cope according to their lights” (Langer 331). The landlord asks Alice to call his wife who is chatting at Mrs. Mason’s place. Alice opens the door of the phone box and gets in without knowing she has shut herself in the box with Raven. The tension which is released when Alice learns with joy that the police are after Raven, climbs up again with the most unlikely incident: the two similar characters, full of dislike for each other, getting locked in a coffin-like space. Alice thinks she is in danger at first, however the situation turns to be more bitter for Raven who needs to know what is going on: ‘With the automatic stuck against her back he even tried to plead with her’ (GS 18-9). But he succeeds in controlling the situation. He makes her pretend that she is making the call and asks her to spill the story. He learns that the police are after him because the money he paid for the dress turns out to be forged. Having understood that he has been deceived by his employers, Raven is “possessed by a deep sullen rage” (GS 18) and he decides to find the agent and his employer to take his revenge. Thus, the chase and pursuit around which the rhythm of existence will continue to beat, begins.

In the meantime, Anne is expecting Mather to take her out for the last time before she leaves the town for weeks. But, instead of turning up, Mather gives a ring to the place she stays in and her humorous landlady answers the phone and this time the tension of the unpleasant situation is eased by the old woman’s humour. From the way Mather speaks, the landlady understands that something is wrong and guesses that he will call off the evening. She describes his way of talking: “he sounded all of a jump. Impatient, I should say. Half barked my head off when I wished him good evening...He is going to call off the evening, I suppose,” the landlady said. ‘It’s always the same. You girls who go travelling around never

get a square deal” (GS 21). The old woman takes the matter lightly by accepting it with humour. She has seen that girls like Anne can never find decent and honest man.

Anne picks up the phone and Mather tells her that they are after a man involved in safe robbery, therefore he will not be able to come and he advises her to take the midnight train, so she might have time to rest before rehearsals. After Mather is disconnected for he has not got enough coins to continue their conversation, Anne feels insecure on the threshold of an unfamiliar world waiting to swallow her. The intervention of fate in the form of a disconnected line, leaves question marks in the minds of the couple. Anne is frustrated by this event. She is to leave the town for weeks and she does not even know whether they will be able to meet at the station or not. She is strong enough not to cry, nevertheless she seems to lose spirit.

At this moment of distress, when the balance is lost, it is regained through the reviving power of life feeling which makes its appearance in the landlady’s humorous approach. She understands Anne’s feelings and her worries, and her humor dispels the clouds and lightens the air when she calls Anne for a chat and explains how useful and healthy it is to talk by backing her argument with a doctor’s recommendation. She also gives her husband who passed away due to something he got in his throat and poisoned him as a proof for the good of talking. Her speech is a good example of black humour:

It does you good to talk. Really good. A doctor said to me once it clears the lungs. Stands to reason, don’t it? You can’t help getting dust up and a good talk blows it out. I wouldn’t bother to pack yet. There’s hours and hours. My old man would never of died if he’d talked more. Stands to reason. It was something poisonous in his throat cut him off in his prime. If he had talked more he would have blown it out. It’s better than spitting. (GS 22)

Ziv claims that death is one of the biggest human fears and black humour is used as a defense mechanism against the fear of death or other things which arouse fear in people. The use of black humour boosts the courage of the person who applies it and people’s tendency to

use this kind of humour stems from “one of the most wonderful of man’s characteristics – his will to cope and not to suffer passively in the face of the tragedies that threaten his security and his very existence” (51-2).

The way the landlady deals with the reality of death and her attempt to cheer Anne up seems amusing. She does not want Anne to get upset and advises her to talk. The idea of getting dust in the lungs and that one has to blow it out by talking seems funny and her reasoning makes sense in a bitter but still humorous way. Her thinking shows that she seems to take the reality of death as something that can be easily kept at bay. One needs “a good talk” to live longer. Langer points out that human beings perceive life as “a passage from birth to death” (332). People are aware of the inevitable end they have to face and they reconcile themselves to this fact in many ways. Whichever way they choose, they will “look for as much life as possible between birth and death” (Langer 333). The landlady deals with life in a similar way. She overcomes the serious experience of her husband’s death by trivializing its real reason. Her reasoning also implies that there are various ways of dealing with obstacles which life puts in ways of people. This attitude of the landlady seems like a sign of challenge on behalf of Anne, against the unexpected turn of events. The sour and bitter taste of life’s experiences prove to trigger the love of life in every human being. This love of life moves each person to the main action of their life that is to survive. In its essence, it is achieved best only by doing simple things that seem trivial. In other words, staying alive is easier as long as the vital feeling refreshes people and helps them to trivialize the problems so that they can gain an extra score in this game of survival.

Anne follows Mather’s advice and takes the midnight train. Greene makes the characters bump into each other on this train ride. The future, or Destiny he designs, is full of risks, surprises, chances, accidents and the characters are in grasp of this inescapable flow of coming events which happen in the most unexpected times and which are quite

uncontrollable. Each character has his/her own way of dealing with these situations they are thrown into by their good or bad luck. Losing and gaining their balance in the course of events, they continue to survive. Thus, emerges the rhythm of life and alongside with it, does the comic pattern. Like Langer, Hyers also observes the function of fate's accidents and chances in the tradition of comedy:

The arbitrariness in the fortunes and misfortunes of life is a universal human experience...Individual life as well, no matter how privileged on any scale of value, is a mixed array of successes and failures, just and unjust deserts, happy and unhappy coincidences...these elements of randomness and happenstance that swirl through much of our lives are made the special focus of attention. They are elements that we often downplay, or attribute to sinister forces. (173)

When Anne reaches the station, there is not any room left in the third class which she usually travels in and the conductor tells her to go to the front of the train where first class seats are. When she gets there and tries to have a look out of the window in order to see Mather who might come and see her off. At that moment, Anne, meets Cholmondeley for the first time and this chance meeting will prove a misfortune for Cholmondeley at the end of the novel :

A hand pulled at her sleeve. 'Excuse me,' a fat man said, 'if you have quite finished with that window. I want to buy some chocolate.'

She said, 'Just one moment, please. Somebody's seeing me off.'

'He's not here. It's too late. You can't monopolize the window like that. I must have some chocolate.'

He swept her on one side and waved an emerald ring under the light. She tried to look over his shoulder to the barrier; he almost filled the window.' (GS 24-5)

When she catches a glimpse of Mather, she cannot make herself seen by him, because Cholmondeley refuses to leave the window, busy with picking his chocolate, paying and getting his change. Having missed her chance to see Mather one more time, Anne, irritated by this fat man who sits opposite her, notices from the label on his suitcase that both of them are

going to Nottwich. Cholmondeley does not realize what an unpleasant image he has left in Anne's mind which would eventually lead him to his death angel. On the other hand, Anne's strength, again, is emphasized by Greene: "But she wouldn't cry; she was fortified by all the conventional remarks which came automatically to her mind about spilt milk and it will be all the same in fifty years" (GS 25). Her power of recovering from unpleasant experiences is a proof of the "vital continuity" (Langer 335) which forms the comic rhythm. Whatever obstacles or enemies she might come across, like the comic personages in the *nataka*¹, she will get over and continue her way.

Meanwhile, Raven tries to get an operation on his lip from a doctor who has been up to illegalities. But the doctor recognizes him from the papers and wants to give him "gas" while his secretary makes an attempt to call the police. Raven is just in time to realize that he is about to be betrayed for the second time and makes his escape. However, he is startled with the fact that it is the lawless again, people of his kind who have tried to deceive him. He feels an indescribable loneliness. He has done his job properly but has not been treated fairly. Moreover, everybody is against him, they betray him at the first possibility. Rich with fake notes he has been hungry for nearly twenty-four hours. He cannot understand this unreasonable hostility of the whole world and wants to take his revenge. This betrayal scene throws light on the incongruous way of a world where thieves betray thieves.

His Destiny forces Raven to get even with the other competitors of the game who use tricks and try to win over without playing fair. His only means of defense is his brain, his ability to think and make the proper decisions in order to grasp the opportunities to get even with his enemies. Therefore, he concentrates on his calculations of how he can get to

¹ South Asian Theatre

Cholmondeley and his employer without getting caught. He is sure that Cholmondeley must be planning to leave the town and Raven thinks that before leaving the town, Cholmondeley will go to the shop where his letters are delivered. He decides to watch the shop and finally Cholmondeley arrives. Raven pursues him to the station and learns which train he will be taking. He gets himself on the same train thinking that the conductors might not have the numbers of the stolen money so he can pay on the train. He is also sure that sooner or later it will be understood that he has taken the route to North, so he takes his ticket as if he is going to get to the last destination. Like Cholmondeley, Raven too, is engaged only with the idea of his survival in this world. He plays a game of life and death, a game where he has his turn both as the hunter and the hunted:

Raven could never realize other people; they didn't seem to him to live in the same way as he lived; and though he bore a grudge against Mr. Cholmondeley, hated him enough to kill him, he couldn't imagine Mr. Cholmondeley's own fears and motives. He was the greyhound and Mr Cholmondeley only the mechanical hare; but in this case the greyhound was chased in its turn by another mechanical hare. (GS 33).

When they reach Nottwich, Raven sees Cholmondeley getting off the train. While thinking what to do with the ticket which would identify him immediately, he makes a sudden decision in order to gain time and not to get caught before he is done with his betrayers. He approaches Anne who, at that moment, is waiting for a porter at the buffet door.

By making these two characters meet by chance, Greene's design of *Destiny*, leads to an adventurous game of pursuit and chase in which the characters have to perform their best to get themselves out of dangerous situations. At such times of peril, accident or threat, man's vital feeling rises and helps him keep his balance. Thus, lifted by the life feeling, the character carries on his life either by enduring the difficulties or working out a solution in accordance with his own situation. When his vitality reaches a climax, it comes out as humour as Langer

emphasizes that there is a relation between "the sense of life" and humour and describes humour as "a sudden heightening of the vital rhythm" (Langer 345).

As noted before, Anne's good sense of humour distinguishes her from the other characters. She can take things in a lighter perspective and she keeps herself emotionally distant in problematic situations, therefore she can always find a way to get over difficulties.

As Hyers notes:

The comic spirit seems capable of standing apart from and adjusting to whatever the circumstances, with a shrug or a wink inserted somewhere or other... This in fact is an expression of one of the most saving attributes of human nature: the capacity for freedom and transcendence that enables us to laugh and joke and see the humor in things great and small. (166)

According to this perspective, Anne is the closest figure to have the comic spirit. Her ability to survive in the most life-threatening situations, stands out. For instance, her first confrontation with danger occurs at the station when Raven approaches her to get her ticket. Raven notices her at the station buffet and hiding his lip, offers help to carry her baggage. Anne is pleased at this offer and when he suggests to have a sandwich, her amiable manner astonishes Raven who is not used to finding such natural friendliness. After buying their sandwiches, he shows her his lip but to his surprise, instead of an expression of repulsion, he gets a sincere smile from her and it has a melting effect on the icy heart of Raven. Langer remarks that

Laughter is, indeed, a more elementary thing than humor. We often laugh without finding any person, object, or situation funny. People laugh for joy in active sport, in dancing, in greeting friends; in returning a smile, one acknowledges another person's worth instead of flaunting one's superiority and finding him funny. (341)

This view emphasizes the human feeling in laughter and its social value as it brings people close to each other and it also serves for the maintenance of the rhythm in the society.

Laughter or smile cannot be limited only to assert feelings of superiority, it is a natural, positive life feeling which arouses joy in both the person who smiles and the one who receives a smile.

Then Raven directly tells Anne that the police are after him and demands her ticket. Anne is to take this serious situation as lightly as she can by her jokes and she succeeds in confusing Raven's feelings by her friendly manner:

She swallowed the bread in her mouth and began to cough. She said 'For God's sake hit me on the back.' He nearly obeyed her; she had got him rattled; he wasn't used to normal life and it upset his nerve. He said 'I've got a gun,' and added lamely, 'I'll give you this in return.' He laid the paper on the counter and she read it with interest between the coughs, 'First class. All the way to- Why I'll be able to get a refund on this. I call that a fine exchange, but why the gun?'. (GS 42)

Anne's urge to protect herself against an unexpected arrow fired by Fate's bow, finds expression in the lifting of her vital feeling. All of a sudden, Anne is confronted with a stranger who threatens her to get her ticket and tries to drag her with him to a future of uncertainty. Her instinct to cling on to life moves her to seek a way back to safety and the difficulty of the situation heightens the vitality in her and breaks into humour:

'Now' he said, 'you are going out of the station with me. I'm not taking any chances'

'Why not eat your ham sandwich first?'

'Be quiet' he said, 'I haven't the time to listen to your jokes'

She said, 'I like he-men'. My name's Anne. What's yours?' (GS 42)

Despite the fearful situation, Anne tries to keep her balance by behaving as normally as she can and her humour helps her withstand the attacks of life. She masks her fear by treating the man who is kidnapping her as an acquaintance with whom she has a friendly relationship. As Raven forces her to walk with him, she drops one of her suitcases on the road and makes

Raven carry it. While walking, she keeps him in conversation and hopes that keeping company will save her from death, since she believes that killing someone you get close to cannot be easy. When she suspects him of murder, he confesses that he has been sought for some stolen notes which he was paid for a job he had properly done. He tells her that he has been double-crossed by an agent called Cholmondeley and it is Cholmondeley's friends who organized the murder of the old minister. He also gives Cholmondeley's description which Anne recognizes immediately. Anne thinks that if Raven finds Cholmondeley who is involved in the murder, there will be no reason for a war to break out. But Raven does not care about a war because "there has always been a war for [him]" (GS 47). Complaining of injustice, he reveals his sensitivity on an intimate matter: "He said, 'If a man's born ugly, he doesn't stand a chance. It begins at school. It begins before that'" (GS 44). Anne pretends that there is nothing wrong with his face and that she has not noticed his hare lip: "What's up with your lip?..Oh I suppose you mean your hare-lip...I've seen worse things than that" (GS 44).

Raven leads her to an area of a housing estate on the edge of Nottwich and Ann understands that he is taking her to a place where he can kill her. Feeling the gravity of her situation she is in, vitality in her runs to release her from the pressure and her humour comes into play again. She asks: "Are you going to buy a house?" (GS 45). As Anne confronts the danger of death, there flourishes black humour. Anne, as a defense mechanism jokes with Raven. This attempt of her indicates that she refuses the possibility of death lest it may bring her down. By making fun of the situation she eases the tension. Thus, she finds the strength to carry on. Ziv's emphasis on the importance of using black humour is also significant : "Life puts us in situations that would be difficult to endure if it were not for our attempts to lessen the anxiety and the tension associated with them" (53).

Anne's clinging on to hope for life is explicit. Although she is aware of the danger of death which is so close to her and although she knows her chance to escape is not much, the

pure sense of life in her forces her to keep sane and behave as normally and friendly as she can. Thus, she escapes the fear of losing her life and hopes for an opportunity she can make use of even in the most helpless moment. When they enter one of the houses, she asks for Raven's permission to sit down, complaining that she is too tired and that she has to be working all afternoon. She begs Raven to let her go, telling that if she does not turn up for the show that afternoon, she will lose her job. Moreover, she invites Raven to the show while Raven is pushing her to the bathroom with the intention of murder. Trying to calm her, he tells Anne that he will lock her up for a few hours. Anne, scared but still full of hope, prepares to put on some make up on her face. Right at that moment, as Raven is about to shoot Anne, the intrusion of the estate agent into the house with a customer gives Anne the chance she has been looking for.

With this intrusion, Greene swings the pendulum of Destiny from bad luck to good luck. He lets his characters take advantage of opportunities and allows them to relish a moment of relief or he makes them endure the tensions in their own way. Thus, he forms the rhythm of life.

While Raven is too puzzled to act in so sudden an event, Anne takes her chance and immediately gets in control of the situation. She asks Raven to give her two of the stolen five pound notes. While the men are about to lead their way to the bathroom, Anne goes out of the bathroom and shows herself as a customer who is interested in the house. She shows the money and assures the agent that she is ready to go with him to his office and pay directly. As Langer observes, characters have to exhibit "a brainy opportunism in the face of an essentially dreadful universe" (331) and their capability for survival, the continuity of the vital rhythm so to speak, lies in their ability to make use of their wit and humour. As Anne makes her escape by taking the chance and using it cleverly, she avoids death. Hyers, too, claims that comic figures display "a special talent for running and hiding. They are masters of elusiveness" (65).

However Anne frees herself from Raven but Fate drives her into another perilous situation. As Anne starts her new job at the theater she comes across Cholmondeley. Cholmondeley who introduces himself as Davenant or Davis to the people in the theater, appears as one of the backers of the acting company but his real intention is different. He is a lecherous man and happens to be there to take one of the acting girls out and have fun. Anne, thinks that Raven might be telling the truth, and if Raven gets this man, war can be prevented, so she wants to help Raven. She volunteers to go out and dine with Cholmondeley so that she can learn where he lives and then she can let Raven get him.

Although Anne thinks that she can handle the game she starts, she is also scared and as the tension she feels increases, vitality in her finds its expression in humour. Cholmondeley takes her to the Metropole, his favourite restaurant, “his chosen home: the huge stuffy palace of food” (GS 57). The ceiling of the restaurant is decorated with constellations of stars. Cholmondeley admires the sight and tells that he always keeps a table under Venus to which Anne replies: “You ought to be under the Great Bear” (GS 57). As soon as they sit down, Cholmondeley loses himself in the menu seeing nothing but “a series of tastes” and Anne is surprised to see that he shows no interest in her. She thinks that he cannot be dangerous. In her opinion, he seems to be the type with whom she has become familiar due to her experiences in the other provincial theaters. But she is still not experienced enough to “know how far she could go without arousing in the other more excitement than she could easily cope with” (GS 57). She also feels nervous because she does not want to go far with him. She wants to belong only to Mather: “Anne thought she knew his type, you could pass them off with a kiss or two, and when they were drunk tell them a sentimental story until they began to think you were their sister. This would be the last: soon she would be Mather’s; she would be safe” (GS 60).

As they leave the restaurant, Cholmondeley refuses the porter's call for a taxi because 'it saves three pence to take one from the rank in the tanneries' (GS 60). His greed for money is equal to his gluttony. When the little carol singers follow them with the hope of getting a couple of coins, his cruelty goes far enough to pull the hair of the poor boy 'till a tuft came out between his fingers' (GS 60). After witnessing such a scene, and seeing how serious he gets in the taxi when she questions his relation to the Midland Steel, Anne feels more nervous about Cholmondeley.

In the scenes above Greene develops the grotesque figure, Cholmondeley and reveals more negative aspects of his character. He is mean, greedy, lecherous and sinful. Harpham notes in his article that since the medieval period, physical deformity or ugliness which is accompanied by bestiality and sin, has been the most common characteristics in the creation of grotesque images. He also points out that the "misshaped form can be read forward to indicate spiritual or intellectual perversity" (1976 465). Cholmondeley's diabolical fatness is an obvious sign of his gluttony and greed. His power and money come from criminal activity and they are spent on gluttony and lechery. These are also Cholmondeley's obsessions which at the same time determine his fixed, narrow vision. This characteristic of the grotesque figures - in E. M. Forster's terms - is their "flatness". Such characters "seem to expand a perpetual energy which points not to a "rounded" personality but to an impersonal, mechanical driving force behind them. Victims of obsession particularly lend themselves to grotesque characterization" (Harpham 1976 465). Cholmondeley's obsessions also make him a mechanical, rigid sort of character who is trapped in an absurd position in life. It is again those obsessions which turn him into a source of laughter.

While they are driving to his place, Cholmondeley wants to be sure that Anne is experienced and she takes the matter lightly again: "It's no good looking for eggshell if that's what you mean" (GS 61). They arrive at a house where Cholmondeley has a hired room, a

room which is nearly covered with a big double bed. He stuffs his mouth with Turkish delight and suggests dancing first, grasping her waist and shaking her up and down in the space just enough to stand between the wall and the bed. Anne, realizes that she has put herself in a more dangerous situation than she has expected and gets badly scared. At this moment it is again the love of life that challenges the traps of the world and seeks relief in humour:

‘I’ve known better floors,’ Anne said, trying to keep up her spirits with her own hopeless form of humour, ‘but I’ve never known a worse crush,’...Quite suddenly, blowing off relics of icing sugar which clung round his mouth, he grew passionate. He fastened his lips on her neck. She pushed him away and laughed at him at the same time. She had to keep her head. ‘Now I know what a rock feels like,’ she said, ‘when the sea amen – anem – damn , I can never say that word.’ (GS 63)

Anne tries to keep on talking and by chance she mentions how terribly the murderer killed the old secretary of the minister. Cholmondeley begs her to stop and confesses: “I’ve got a weak stomach. I don’t like horrors” (GS 63). Having discovered his soft spot, Anne thinks that the control of the situation is in her hands and without knowing she will have gone too far, she pushes her luck, and really scares him by telling that she saw someone with a hare-lip watching the house. Cholmondeley gets weaker and “sitting there in his stockinged feet with tears in his deep selfish eyes” (GS 64) tries to explain that he is only an agent. He is also scared of his boss who will not forgive him this time because “there is more than half a million at stake” (GS 64). Although he gets sick at the thought of any action of cruelty, for fear of his boss, he catches her wrist and pulls her across the bed with his one hand while taking a pillow with the other. The struggle for life is the essence and the quenchless desire to keep its continuity is undestroyable even in the most hopeless situations. Anne’s feelings at the moment of facing death is a good example:

She told herself even then: it isn’t me. It’s other people who are murdered. Not me. The urge to life which made her disbelieve that this could possibly be the end of everything for her, for the loving,

enjoying I, comforted her even when the pillow was across her mouth; never allowed her to realize the full horror, as she fought against his hands, strong and soft and sticky with icing sugar. (GS 65)

Meanwhile Mather, who is tracking the stolen money, learns that Raven got off the train with a woman. Afterwards he finds out that the woman is Anne and to find her he goes to the theater and gets the information that the head actress of the theatre company, Miss Maydew who is about to open a jumble sale, may have seen Anne. Then he goes to the jumble sale to see Miss Maydew. There is quite a hustle and bustle and he has to wait for a long time before he can have a word with her. When he finds the chance to talk to her, it turns out that she does not know anything about Anne.

While watching the sale, Mather sees an old woman carrying Anne's bag which he himself had presented her as a birthday present and which carries her initials. He also notices Raven who is also looking at Anne's bag at that moment. Raven does not see Mather and goes after the old woman without noticing that he is being followed by him. As the woman reaches her house and opens the door, Raven gets in immediately. He asks the woman where Anne is but he cannot learn anything from the woman, then he searches the house. This house is the one to which Cholmondeley had brought Anne. It turns out that the house is used as a bawdy house and the old woman is the landlady who rents rooms to people like Cholmondeley. He finds Anne propped up in the fireplace of one of the rooms and gets her out of the house. Anne's clinging on to life in the dark, airless fireplace is another instance of how strong is her urge to survive. When Raven saves her, she tells about what she has been thinking and planning all the time she was in the fireplace. As Raven expresses his surprise to find her not scared at all, she tells him: "I knew I'd be found all right. I was in a hurry. We haven't got much time. I thought about the war all the time" (GS 99). Raven helps Anne get out of the house and Mather watches them from a distance. When he sees them together he thinks she is really an accomplice of Raven and finishes his relationship in his mind.

Raven tells Anne that they will be spending the night in a shed in the goods yard. When he talks of the place, he says: “Why, there’s even sacks, lots of sacks. It’s going to be like home” (GS 101). Anne notices the incongruity in Raven’s understanding of home and tells him that it would be “a bit bare of a home”. Her humour is still in action but this time as a celebration of a reconciliation. Anne feels that she has won Raven’s trust and Raven also assures her that he will not do any harm to her. When Raven admires Anne’s courage and is moved by her willingness to help him, he gets sentimental for a moment but Anne carries on joking without knowing the truth.

He said, ‘You’ve got sense all right. I like you.’

‘Thanks for the compliment.’

‘It’s no compliment. You don’t have to tell me. I’ve got something I’d like to trust you with, but I can’t.’

‘What’s the dark secret?’

‘It’s not a secret. It’s a cat I left back in my lodgings in London when they chased me out. You’d have looked after it.’

‘You disappoint me, Mr. Raven. I thought it was going to be a few murders at least’ (GS 118-9)

Getting over the danger of death released the tension in Anne. Despite the fact that she has to spend the freezing night with Raven in a shed, she is still alive and that liveliness springs and cheers her in the form of humour. When Raven complains that he cannot sleep because of his bad dreams, Anne suggests: “We might tell each other stories? It’s about the children’s hour” (GS 120). She mocks him by telling the story of a cat and a fox. The story is about a clever cat whose one simple trick saves it from danger and a fox who boasts of his many tricks but gets caught by a hunter in the end. In this story Anne appears to associate herself with the cat and Raven with the fox. From the aspect of superiority theory of Hobbes, Anne’s humour originates from her “sudden conception of some ability” (1994 54) in herself in comparison

with Raven's weakness. She sees herself as a cleverer and a more talented contestant in the game of survival.

This tale also points out a positive element of black humour. It is the sense of mastery. Ziv refers to Piaget's explanation of laughter as "a reaction to mastery of a situation" (52). According to Piaget's observation of children, success gained at play is confirmed by smiles and laughter. When the child passes to an advanced level and observes other children in the lower level who find it difficult to do certain tasks, he laughs at them. He laughs at his own success, too. Sense of mastery brings satisfaction and satisfaction brings smiles and laughter (Ziv 53). Having won Raven's trust, she feels safe and knows that Raven will not harm her, because he thinks that they are now friends. She is also aware that, when she will get out of the shed in the morning, she will be questioned by the police as a suspect of Raven's accomplice. However, she believes that she will somehow find her way out and will be as lucky as the cat in the story. She believes in her power and that she will be able to have control over any kind of situation. Telling of this funny story lifts her spirits and it may be her way that would make the cold night she has to spend with Raven more bearable. It may also be a way of challenging a world which tries to outsmart its inhabitants.

In this scene Raven is touched by what he has just learned. He realizes that he has killed someone who as a child had similar experiences. He learns from Anne that there are many common points between the minister's and his own life: "He wasn't one of the rich...his father was a thief and his mother committed [suicide]" (GS 122). Like Raven, he was brought up in an orphanage, too. Moreover he was working for the welfare of people like Raven by cutting down all the expenses of the army. After learning these, Raven feels so guilty that he cannot bear the weight of his crime. He wants to confess to Anne that it was him who murdered the minister. But, in order to get to that point he decides to start from the very beginning, from his first murder. He slowly begins to tell about them under the mask of dreams and he talks about

psychoanalysis but he cannot pronounce the word: “was reading once – I like reading – I’m educated, something about psicko – psicko – ?” (GS 124). He wants to try it with Anne because the doctors would call the police. She has been faithful to him so far, so he thinks he can tell everything and thus he may be able to get rid of all his sins and nightmares. Anne is ready for conversation and she encourages him: “Life is full of funny things. Me and you being here. You thinking you wanted to kill me. Me thinking we can stop a war. Your psicko isn’t any funnier than that” (GS 125). Anne makes sure that he can trust her and that she will not go to the police. Anne’s assuring Raven that he can trust her with anything will prove to be an incongruous statement because it is going to be seen that she will think quite the contrary after Raven’s confessions are over. On the other hand although Raven has tried to keep away from women all his life because he believes a woman can only bring ruin to a man’s life. He has believed that he would never go soft on a woman but he does so when he meets Anne and falls under the spell of her sincere affection. Raven is caught up in the web of fate. He is knocked down by unexpected blows to which he always had felt himself prepared. In his opinion, women have always been dangerous for men, therefore it was his motto to keep away from them. However, he cannot help going soft on Anne. Besides, he gets another blow from someone whom he had seen as a prey before. He reminisces his meeting Cholmondeley for the first time. Raven used to do races and one day he gets mixed up with a guy from the rival gang and has to kill him. It was during those racing days that Raven had met Cholmondeley. He tells Anne about his first impression of Cholmondeley: “I thought he was a mug” (GS 128). Humour here stems from the reversal of roles. Raven who once had seen Cholmondeley as a prey, as someone who can be duped, falls a prey to Cholmondeley and becomes the one who is duped.

Raven, believing there is now someone whom he can trust with his life, step by step reveals the shocking scenes of his past. As he is done with all the murders he had committed

by pouring them out on Anne, he goes to sleep while Anne spends the whole night thinking. When it gets lighter in the shed, she sees he has no sacks and understands that he gave all of them to her to keep her warm. Yet she does not even feel pity for him: 'He was just an animal who had to be dealt with carefully and destroyed. "“Let him freeze,” she thought”' (GS 132). But, she goes on playing the part of a friend. She makes a plan and takes another risk to get them out of the shed. In order to mislead the police and save time for Raven to make his escape, she wears Raven's coat and hat and runs to the opposite side. She thinks they will not shoot first. But on the other side, the finger waiting to pull the trigger is Saunder's, for whom a small movement of the fellow would be enough to shoot, since this man is the one mixed up with the girl of his best friend and supporter, Mather. Mather is of special importance to Saunders as a friend because Saunders has a speech impediment and he owes his position in the police force to Mather's support and encouragement. When he commands the figure to put up his hands, Anne stands still. Saunders, the other detective, repeats his command for a second time and Anne still does not move. Already filled with hatred for the man who injured his best friend, he fires. Luckily, Anne is not hurt and is still full of humour and her association of herself with the clever cat in the story becomes more evident in her conversation with Saunders and her joking with him proves a celebration of her survival, her victory over the absurd attacks of life. 'You cannot get me! Look, it's a miss again. Is it the best you can do? Well, try harder! I am not dying yet!'. This is Anne's use of black humour:

'You are the third person who's tried to kill me,' Anne said weakly, leaning hard against the truck. 'Come to sunny Nottwich. Well I've got six lives left.'

Saunder's stammer came back: 'W-w-w-w.'

'This is where you hit,' Anne said, 'if that's what you want to know,' showing the long yellow silver on the edge of the truck. 'It's only an outer. You don't even get a box of chocolates' (GS 136)

As in most cases when Anne faces the danger of death, she is collected and strong. She does not give in and handles the frightening situations as a simple game to play and turns them into mocking material. Her use of black humour strengthens her and helps her cope with difficulties without losing her spirit. Ziv claims that black humour :

is a sort of challenge to frightening phenomena...the very naming of the phenomenon indicates that a person has it within his power to face it. Furthermore, not only is he not paralyzed by fear; he even contends that phenomenon is not really that frightening – and in fact it is rather ridiculous and even funny. His laughter testifies to a sense of victory and control over the situation. (52)

Having overcome another danger, 'the pure sense of life' (Langer 330) rises filling up Anne with the joy of revival and tempts her to mock the mocker, the life itself which in this case attacks her in the guise of Saunders. Life seems to be the only address that her reply goes to, as if she wants to tease it and belittle the every cruel charge it continuously makes, just because her 'human life feeling' (Langer 327) lifts her up and encourages her to challenge. The most important thing is to survive and it is achieved better by not taking everything as disastrous, or it may be the best to take even the most disastrous things as lightly as possible. This will enable the person to deal with difficulties more easily so long as the preservation and the unity of the self - where humour and laughter finds its expression - stands as the basic rule in this battle of life.

Anne is taken to the police station to make her statement. She is again humorous but Mather is like a wall and cannot take her humour. Then she tries to explain everything to Mather but Mather does not want to listen to her. She gives Raven away and tells Mather all about Raven's crimes but Mather thinks that she is telling a fairy story and asks her to write her statement, then he leaves her. In the meantime, Raven heads for Midland Steel where he will find Cholmondeley and his boss Sir Marcus. Sir Marcus is the greedy factory owner who is after making more and more money although he is a sickly old man awaiting death. He is

the man who has engineered the assassination so that a war can start between European countries and he can get richer and more powerful by exporting armament all over Europe. He has been planning to gain half a million pounds in return for a two-hundred-pound-cost murder. He has no respect for anything but money. The fact that the minister he had killed is his childhood friend with whom he grew up in the same orphanage sets forth another bitter form of incongruity. Two childhood friends who were brought up under the same roof, under the same conditions turn out to be such opposites. One serves for humanity, the other exploits it.

Sir Marcus is “a very old sick man with a little wisp of white beard on his chin resembling chicken fluff. He [gives] the effect of having withered inside his clothes like a kernel in a nut” (GS 107). It is not easy to hear what he says because he speaks in a whisper. He has got “old scaly eyes” but they looked as if they want to take in everything. He eats dry biscuits and drinks hot water. He has no pleasures at all and “his most vivid emotion [is] venom, his main object defence; defence of his fortune” (GS 108). He is so old that he can hardly walk, he is pushed in a “Bath chair” (GS 115) by his valet. Greene’s description of Sir Marcus is very striking since it portrays a man who has lost all his appetite and strength but his greed to earn more even at the expense of wars never seems to be satiated. His attempt to persuade the Chief Constable, Major Calkin to get Raven killed is also remarkable. At first, he tries to take advantage of the Constable’s patriotic feelings. Then he offers Constable the rank of a Colonel which really tempts Major Calkin, nevertheless Major resists this offer because his conscience is pricked. Sir Marcus, frustrated by Major Calkin’s response, threatens him that he may be demoted. The main source of humour related with Sir Marcus stems from the incongruity between his poor health condition and the extremity of his desires and doings. Despite the fact that he seems to be close to death more than anybody else, he acts as if he is immortal and continues to take advantage of anything in order to realize his schemes. Langer

describes this urge in human beings in accordance with the basic biological pattern in nature. “The impulse to survive is not spent only in defense and accommodation; it appears also in the varying power of organisms to seize on opportunities” (328).

The minister’s assassination has already stirred Europe and everybody is in fear of a coming war and a gas practice is organized by the police force. Raven’s day of revenge happens to be the day of the gas drill which is a rehearsal in case a war breaks out. But for the medical students, it will be the day of a rag.

The official part of the gas drill involves an air raid which is to be carried out with smoke bombs as the morning rush hour is over and people who are caught without gas masks in the street will be taken to hospital by ambulances. The unofficial part of the drill is the rag that is planned by a ridiculous leader figure who is admired, supported and obeyed by the majority of students: Buddy Fergusson. People who are not wearing their masks in the street will be taken as casualties by two of the ambulances and they are going to be rubbed with flour, water and soot and the ones who are caught by the third ambulance with a death-head’s banner, will be put in a cellar where the corpses are kept.

In this scene of a mischievous joke, the comic action springs from another juxtaposition that is made by the author. This time the opposition happens to be in two different levels. In the first level, it takes place between the medical students and the authorities. Buddy’s idea of turning the gas drill into a practical joke, is a way of dealing with the pressure of the authorities, or in another light, a way of releasing the tension caused by the possibility of an outbreak of war. The fact that the joke contains physical touch, it points to an expression of aggression, a challenge to break the bonds set by the government. As it is decided all the participants will be wearing their white coats covered in soot and their gas masks during the drill, the scene reminds one of a ritual. It is also a kind of triumph of the

ruled group over their rulers: “the whole gas practice would have been a dull, sober, official piece of routine if he hadn’t thought of making it a ‘rag’. The very word rag was powerful; it conferred complete freedom from control” (GS 140).

Hyers argues:

What anthropologists have referred to as ‘joking relationships’, for example are instances of ritualized aggression (and acceptance) traditionally employed as a way of preserving peace between individuals, parties or tribes. Joking, teasing and pranks defuse areas of tension and convert the mood to one of playfulness and gaming...The result of such actions usually has been the maintenance of balance and harmony between competing interests or persons within the group or between the groups. (26-7)

This view also supports Langer’s comic theory which depends on the maintenance of the equilibrium of living beings, by means of which the continuation of the rhythm of existence is provided for nature. As the nature of this world is cyclic, so is the interaction of its people. Driven by their natural instincts and desires to achieve their goals, they come together and play against each other by changing their roles. In the incident of the rag, for example, the group of the ruled ones are set free from their bonds playing out a game-like joke and rather symbolically get the chance to exercise the power of the rulers. Thus, they are relieved of the strain and rendered harmless and the balance is regained.

Besides, this practice of a rag frees Buddy Fergusson from his own weakness, his failure at school and provides him with a fantastic imaginative shield under which he sees himself invincible. The rag gives Buddy the opportunity to play the game of being a ruler. Accordingly, Fergusson’s name Buddy, makes a pun with the word bully which describes and suits his place and shows his power over the members of the medical school:

Buddy was having the hell of a time. Everyone was scampering to obey his orders. He was the leader. They’d duck or pelt anyone he told them to. He had an enormous sense of power; it more than atoned

for unsatisfactory examination results, for surgeons' sarcasms. Even a surgeon wasn't safe if he gave an order. (GS 140)

His bullying and his power finds its form in the rags he invents and this behaviour of his, gains him a status in the group. Ziv claims that "humor can help an individual to climb the ladder of social hierarchy – to be accepted, to win affection, and to gain status" (33). Buddy's use of humour has a function of defense as well. It comes out as a challenge against his own weakness. He is far from passing his exams with flying colours. Apparently, he is neither cut out to work hard, nor a man of brains but a man of muscles. Accordingly, his name also suggests another pun with the word body. He is described like a bulky, powerful animal that is ready to attack and he feels a deep superiority due to the impression he leaves around by his physical appearance. However, he is more like a balloon which is blown too much.

Like a great beast which is in need of exercise, which has fed on too much hay, Buddy Fergusson was aware of his body. He felt his biceps; he strained for action. Too many exams, too many lectures, Buddy Fergusson wanted action. While they surged round him he imagined himself a leader of men. No Red Cross work for him when war broke: Buddy Fergusson, company commander, Buddy Fergusson, the daredevil of the trenches. The only exam he had ever successfully passed was Certificate A in the school O.T.C. . (GS 141)

Like Cholmondeley, Buddy, too seems to be a grotesque figure. The grotesque takes its origin from an incongruity between "the virtuous limitations of form and rebellious content that it refuses to be constrained" (Harpham 2006 6). Buddy's physical appearance violates the norms of our perception because his beast-like form does not fit in the frame of what we accept as normal. He is full of energy like an animal who has eaten too much and he seems not to know how to release this excess of energy in a way no other than indecent behaviour or playing cruel jokes. He seems to be stripped of human values and thus he becomes intolerable to our imagination. As Harpham observes:

grotesque forms are material analogues or expressions of spiritual corruption and weakness. Their parts are in a state of anarchy, producing an impression of atrocious and inappropriate vitality. Such vitality is...the same as the destruction of order. (2006 6)

The confrontation with a grotesque figure which has “inappropriate vitality” rises humour. This kind of humour also plays into the survival of human beings and proves what Langer explores in her comic theory. It is observed that in the humour of the grotesque, too, the human life feeling surges in man in order to gain an equilibrium at the sight of something which disturbs his mind. He uses his imagination to make sense of what he sees and thus develops ways of adaptation to whatever unexpected occurs. Wolfgang Kayser, also observes this kind of response to grotesque and claims

we laugh at its comic features while sensing its dark implications...we are confronted with the demonic form which we wish to pull back while knowing that we must engage its power to maintain our well-being; we respond with alarm at its distortions and exaggerations; its fusing of organic and inorganic, human and animal aspects of reality, while gaining through those distortions insights into different ways of being and perhaps new possibilities for wisdom and wholeness. (Kayser qtd in Adams&Yates 1997 2)

Apart from his failure at school which he camouflages by his power of humour, his unsuccessful attempts to have affairs with girls, is another problem which finds its solution again in humour. When the gathered students ask about what to do with the women they find in the street, Buddy lifts his energy by the help of a joke: “Deliver’em to me. In war time we need more mothers” (GS 141). Buddy’s reputation with women depends on the exaggerated stories he makes up and tells other boys at the dormitory about the girls from whom he could not even get a goodbye kiss. He is extremely proud of the image he has created. He also blinds himself to the reality which is his way of escape from the bitter facts of life or his way of enlivening his spirit against the frailties and conditions that life forces him to live with:

He felt strong, coarse, vital, a town bull; he hardly remembered himself that he was a virgin, guilty only of a shame-faced unsuccessful attempt on the old Nottwich tart; he was sustained by his reputation, it bore him magically in imagination into every bed. (GS 141)

Although he does not have any satisfactory experience with woman, his pretension that he is an expert on this matter creates an incongruity between his behaviour and the reality nobody knows. Thus his deceiving himself appears ridiculous.

‘Treat’em rough they shrieked at him’ and ‘You’re telling me,’ he said magnificently, keeping well at bay any thought of the future : the small provincial G.P.’s job, the panel patients in the dinghy consulting rooms, innumerable midwife cases, a life-time of hard underpaid fidelity to one dull wife (GS 141).

He could see several of the younger nurses watching him through the panes. He could see the little brunette called Milly. She was coming to tea with him on Saturday. He felt his muscles taut with pride. What scenes, he told himself, this time there would be of disreputable revelry, forgetting the inevitable truth known only to himself and each girl in turn: the long silence over the muffins, the tentative references to the League results, the peck at empty air on the doorstep. (GS 142)

Although his ability to use humour secured him a leadership among his social group, he cannot master humour while dealing with his psychological frustrations. He uses humour not to face the reality but to escape to an imaginary world. His denial of realities brings him only momentary relief, thus he is doomed to be defeated.

Buddy has his weak points and secrets which he would be ashamed to confess, even to himself. He does exercise but he is still overweight and his body is not as agile and healthy as he thinks. When it comes to sex or success at school, he is a failure. He is aware of the fact that he will have to put up with an ordinary, boring life in future. Under these crashing realities, Buddy’s sense of life, vitality of his being regenerates itself and supplies him with power to go on. His humour is the outcome of this liveliness, challenging the circumstances life has pushed him into.

The lifting power of humour also shows itself in the case of Buddy’s victim Watt. Buddy, declaring that the students who have not bothered to come to hospital that morning to

help them and join in the practice which he takes as an important service done for the country, are all conchies. These students are the hardworking ones who prefer to stay indoors and study for the anatomy examination. Among these students, Buddy decides to pick on Watt whose house is in the area where they are looking for victims. He suggests that they go to Watt's home and strip him there. Watt is different from the others because he does not like playing games or spending his time in idleness like the way Buddy and his friends do. Instead, he likes working hard and he is aware that it does not help him gain any popularity. He relieves himself with the fact that his brilliancy is sure to guarantee him a promising future and his endurance to this ill-treatment will be the price to be paid for his future happiness and welfare.

When Buddy and his group enter Watt's room, Watt senses the danger of this visit because he knows that they do not like him and surely they are going to do some mischief. Naturally, his urge to survive against the hostility of this group, rises. Watt plucks up his courage, his vital feeling increases and it makes him give a mocking reaction to their intrusion: "Close the door please, there is draught" (GS 144), and he masks his aggression in the form of insult. He replies to the question that if he is a conchie or not: "How old-world your slang is," Watt said. "No, I'm not a conchie. Now I'm just looking through some old medical books and as I don't suppose they'd interest you, I'll ask you to show yourselves out" (GS 145). When they accuse him of not working for the country but for himself, Watt's sarcasm increases: "It's just a different idea of fun, that's all," "It's my pleasure to look at these folios, it's yours to go screaming about the streets in that odd costume" (GS 145). Raged against this insult, Buddy tells Watt that they are going to strip him off his clothes, and this time as the tension increases, vitality heightens and reaches a climax to spill out in the form of bitter humor. Watt defends himself against this physical attack by avoiding their contact with

him and telling that it will save time, he voluntarily takes his clothes off, and his sarcasm reaches to a breaking point when he comments on their aggressive behaviour:

This action has an interesting psychological significance. A form of castration. My own theory is that sexual jealousy in some form is at the bottom of it.' When Buddy's group 'like young bulls' wreck the room throwing books on the floor Watt watches them scared 'and the more scared he was, the more sarcastic he became. (GS 145)

Watt's use of black humour while confronted with uninvited hostile guests, provides him with some sort of encouragement and gives him strength to counter their aggression with his own style of hostility which has a touch of intelligence. However, it gives encouragement, according to Ziv, "there is a sad element in black humor. Usually it arouses no real laughter, but only a smile (occasionally bitter), for the pleasure we have in it is combined with distress" (55). In this respect, Watt's attempt to overcome his fear by using sarcasm is significant because sarcasm is bitter in itself. Arthur Asa Berger explains the roots of the word sarcasm: "Sarcasm stems from the Greek *sarkazein*, "to tear the flesh, to bite" It involves the use of cutting, contemptuous, and biting remarks, delivered often in a hostile manner" (49).

Buddy's awareness of Watt's superiority increases his hatred and his jealousy of Watt's success makes him act more violently. While Watt is standing in his pants, Buddy, crushed by his inferiority complex, seeks relief by pouring the inkpot over the open page of the old folio. Buddy's way of struggling with his deficiencies is masked by the practice of a rag. By the help of this practice, depending on his physical power, he exerts himself as if he is someone of power and importance but his rag is an exercise of cruelty on the victim. However, life's secret power of controlling events and changing roles of its actors at the most unexpected moments, seem to make the biggest joke on them.

When Buddy is back on his hunt of victims in the empty streets, he catches a glimpse of Raven and runs after him only to fall a victim into the hands of Raven. Buddy, seeing Raven's

thin figure, is filled up with a satisfaction of his superior physical strength. He tells Raven that he is a casualty and he will be taken to hospital, Raven with his automatic pushes him to an empty garage: “Me a casualty,’ he said ‘that’s a good one,’ laughing without mirth. ‘Get in through that gate or you’ll be the casualty” (GS 147). Then Raven gets him stripped. The joker, the daredevil warrior of the trenches, the leader of men, becomes a miserable and scared young boy shivering in his holed pants with his pink knees in front of an “undernourished city rat” (GS 148). Apart from the reversal of the roles of a joker and a butt, humour also lies in the incongruity that rises from the contrasting physical appearances of the two men. The unexpected triumph of the “undernourished city rat” over the huge beast appears as humour of incongruity.

The scenes following one another emphasize the reversability of roles between the victims and the jokers. By fooling Watt who is hardworking and ambitious and a figure of success, Buddy takes revenge of his own deficiencies. But, soon Raven makes him pay off and turns him into a butt of his own joke. Although Buddy is a bully, he is at the same time a human being who cannot achieve a reconciliation between his natural desires and the realities of the world. He wants to live in the best possible conditions but he is not clever enough to afford such quality of living. He wants to have a girl but he cannot get one. He lives in the imaginary, false world he creates by inflated stories. He seems to have secured his acceptance by the society by using humour but it does not help much, since he is at fault with the attitude he takes towards life. His cruel joking may be considered as a vice and since any vice lends to human beings their own sort of rigidity as Bergson notes (70), he becomes ridiculous and does not prove competent in the survival game. Since, the game can only be won by the ones who succeed to attain the virtues of – to borrow Hyers’s terms – “flexibility, compromise, playfulness, lightheartedness, childlikeness, celebration of life, survivability” (65).

After Raven gets Buddy stripped, he wears Buddy's clothes and gas mask. Thus camouflaged, he heads for the Midland Steel. On his way he comes across Cholmondeley and approaches him. Cholmondeley mistakes him for one of the medical students who are looking for victims they can take to hospital and in order to get rid of him, he offers him ten pounds. Since he does not carry much money on him, Cholmondeley asks him to come to his Office. Raven accompanies him without talking much. On the other hand, Cholmondeley thinking there is a doctor-to-be next to him, feels himself relaxed and starts chatting about his hiccups, spots and diet, he even tells that he is to meet a girl at noon. He takes Raven's silence for a kind of timidity and he becomes more ridiculous as he thinks: "The boy's shy...he's not used to walking about town with a man like me" (GS 159). His high opinion of himself, his entrapment in his selfish world, his one-dimension perspective makes him a source of ridicule. When the hidden identity under the gas mask, "a thin figure, little more than a boy's figure on which the white medical coat hang loosely" (GS 158) is considered, Cholmondeley's situation turns out to be more humorous.

When they get in Cholmondeley's room, the secretary comes in and takes orders to find him an afternoon train for town. Raven asks him whether he is scared of something and he replies: "There's a mad man loose in this town" (GS 161). Every sound or movement makes him uneasy. He locks the door, shuts the window outside which a cleaner's platform is hung and gets a feeling of security. After making sure that they are not to be disturbed by anybody from the outside, he takes two glasses and the port and turns to Raven for companionship since he does not want to be left alone. Raven asks for the money and when he is given the notes he asks whether they are stolen too. Thus revealing his identity, he pushes Cholmondeley to lead him to the office of Sir Marcus. When they enter the office, they find Sir Marcus "sitting in his Bath chair with a kind of bed table on his knees" (GS 164) and

Cholmondeley gets in a state as if he is going to collapse from sickness. Sir Marcus whispers to his valet to get out. But Raven locks the door.

In the meanwhile, Sir Marcus is playing the survival game in his own style. He does not take Raven's presence as a real threat to his life. He continues with his meal as if nothing has happened. As Ziv points out people who use black humour, "encourage themselves with the aid of a nonserious approach to very serious matters" (55). Greene describes Sir Marcus's reaction to Raven's threatening in the form of black humour:

"You're mad," Sir Marcus whispered. He was too old to be frightened; the revolver represented no real danger to him than a false step in getting into his chair, a slip in his bath. He seemed to feel only a faint irritation, a faint craving for his interrupted meal. He bent his old lip forward over the bed-table and sucked loudly at the rim of hot milk. (GS 165)

Raven shouts at Sir Marcus and tells him how he has killed the minister and the secretary and blames him that it is all his doing but Raven's words do not make any impact on Sir Marcus. The incongruity which rises from the danger of the situation and the indifferent behaviour of Sir Marcus in a situation which his life is in danger turns the scene into a humorous one. Moreover, he resists to accept the fact that he may be killed at any moment.

But the old man sat there apparently unmoved: old age killed the imagination. The deaths he had ordered were no more real to him than the deaths he read about in the newspapers. A little greed (for his milk), a little vice (occasionally to put his old hand inside a girl's blouse and feel the warmth of life), a little avarice and calculation (half a million against a death), a very small persistent, almost mechanical, sense of self-preservation; these were his only passions. The last made him edge his chair imperceptibly towards the bell at the edge of his desk. He whispered gently, "I deny it all. You are mad" (GS 165)

Sir Marcus simply represents "the most elementary instinctual purpose" which is "to maintain a pattern of vitality" (Langer 328) Sir Marcus's pursuits serve for the maintenance of his vitality. Searching and gaining what he desires help him gain his balance and form his rhythm

of life. The essential instinct to survive naturally leads to opportunism. His greed, his calculations or vices are simply due to this impulse to survive which serves to maintain the vital pattern of existence. While maintaining this pattern he meets obstacles. His dealing with these obstacles in order to preserve his usual balance gives rise to humour.

Raven in vain tries to frighten Sir Marcus, then he tells Sir Marcus to pray but the alarm has started ringing and someone is already at the door. Raven asks Sir Marcus to tell the police to keep away but Marcus is still calm: "You fool...they'll only get you for theft. If you kill me you'll hang" (GS 166). Then Cholmondeley screams to the man outside the door to keep away. At that moment, "while Raven [stands] pistol in hand before the two men, an absurd quarrel [breaks] out between them. Two men go on quarrelling, blaming and threatening each other as if they are alone on their own and there is no gun pointed at them that is ready to be fired any moment. This drives Raven mad and in order to silence them he shoots at Marcus first. Cholmondeley panics and begins to talk without stopping for breath. Raven blames him for his attempt to kill his friend, Anne. Cholmondeley tells him that she cannot be a friend because she is the reason why the policemen are waiting outside. He talks like a machine gun - "She's a policeman's girl. She's the Yard man's girl. She's Mather's girl" (GS 168) - to which Raven responds with two bullets and then loses all his spirit. The fact that he has been cheated by Anne leaves no hope of life in his heart. Although he has a chance to shoot Mather who appears on the cleaner's platform outside the window, he cannot recover from the defeat of betrayal and finally Saunders shoots him in the back through the opening door.

Afterwards, Mather and Anne get on the same train heading for London. Mather, having understood that Anne's story is not a fairy tale, reunites with her and tells her that they can get married immediately, because he has received a promotion and she will have a grant. Anne has been thinking herself as a failure and she feels guilty about betraying Raven.

However, the moment they enter London, she forgets everything. She watches from the steamy window of the train:

a mob of children went screaming down a street, she could tell they screamed because she was one of them, she couldn't hear their voices or see their mouths; a man was selling hot chestnuts at a corner and it was on her face that his little fire glowed, the sweet shops were full of white gauze stockings crammed with cheap gifts. (GS 185-6)

She feels at home again and forgets everything. It is clear that the end of the novel is also sealed with "the pure sense of life". The vitality of life Anne sees on the street fills her with hope and she feels her own vitality in the running of the children or in the fire glowing under the chestnuts. The time of their arrival in London is also significant since it is Christmas and the stockings are crammed with gifts. Time of Christmas revives hope in people and promises new beginnings to them. Therefore, it is emphasized that there is still life for the surviving characters of the novel. Though kept at a distance, there is also the disturbing reality of death. The death of Cholmondeley, Sir Marcus and Raven who did not fit to be members in an ideal society is not of any significance since such a society does not exist. There will always be people who will fill in the space left by Cholmondeley, Sir Marcus or Raven.

Although Greene eliminates the social misfits, the diverging figures who threaten society's well-being, he underlines the fact that these figures are parts of our natural world and they will be replaced by others of the same kind. Nevertheless, a couple's union by marriage seems to assure that continuity of society is to be maintained where contrasting natures and desires of human beings will call for each other in order to interact and form the rhythm of life from which humour springs.

As Langer argues, the rhythm of comedy is in fact the rhythm of life where survival is the basic impulse in every living thing. The nature of the comic pattern requires a world which is full of surprises, coincidences, fears and unexpected events in which characters take

their chances to deal with the situations in the best way they can. Their confrontation with odd characters or situations cause tension and confusion which leads to a loss of balance of the living being. The vital feeling rises in the form of humour and laughter to regain the former balance and maintain the rhythm of existence.

When difficult situations or confrontation with people of different natures increase the tension in an individual, his vital feeling motivates him to find relief and regain his usual balance. This struggle ends in triumph through using many ways of humour. Fear, horror or anxiety a person experiences are defeated by the “courage mechanism” of black humour. Feelings of inferiority are overcome as well as feelings of superiority are relished by the help of humour. Whatever the reason that gets a person down, it is the lifting power of humour that strengthens, encourages and inspires the person to carry on. Humour is also accompanied by laughter which releases the strain of any strong emotion and proves beneficial to people’s well-being.

Langer explains the feeling of comedy as “ a heightened vitality” (349) that challenges against the world. Our existence in life can be viewed as a game, where we have to keep up spirits, grasp opportunities, employ our wit and display our personal powers. We may become victorious or defeated but one thing is for sure, there is no permanent victory or permanent defeat in a world where the roles are continuously reversed. In a world of such inconsistency it is with the help of humour that the balance of life rhythm will be maintained.

CHAPTER II

TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT

Henry Pulling is a man in his fifties who has worked as a bank manager and retired rather early due to a take-over which left his position redundant. His colleagues think it is lucky of him to have an early retirement but he does not know how to fill his time. He briefly summarizes his life which hardly needs description: “I have never married, I have always lived quietly, and apart from my interest in dahlias, I have no hobby” (TA 9). His life is so empty and boring that his mother’s funeral causes him to feel a great deal of excitement. The first flash of incongruity appears between the serious nature of the occasion and the inappropriate feelings that it awakens in Henry. Henry’s feeling of exhilaration which is a positive and energizing emotion, contradicts the negative and depressing mood prevailing in funerals. However, attendants are also in a similar mood like Henry. Incongruity between the occasion and the feelings aroused at that moment creates a humorous effect.

The funeral service is a cremation. A “slight stirring of exalted expectation” (TA 10) is felt among the attendants. “Will the oven doors open? Will the coffin stick on the way to the flames?” (TA 10). Those who are present at the ceremony concentrate on the present moment of physical action rather than on the sad occasion of the cremation of the deceased. This incongruity can be explained by Bergson’s theory. He points out that society is perceived as a living thing and when something “inert, or stereotyped, or simply ready-made” (Bergson 89) is observed in society, that is a rigidity which contradicts the flexibility of life. Therefore he suggests that ceremonies in social life always contain a comic element. He likens the relation of ceremonies to social life to the relation of clothes to the body of an individual. He explains that both ceremonies and clothes are identified as serious in accordance with “the serious object with which the custom associates them” (Bergson 89) and if they are thought as

separate they are no longer serious. Bergson concludes: “For any ceremony, then, to become comic, it is enough that our attention be fixed on the ceremonial element in it, and that we neglect its matter...and think only of its form” (Bergson 89). Accordingly, the funeral scene in the book becomes comic since the attendants are engaged with thoughts about the material form of the ceremony and ignore the fact that this is the end of a life, the complete disappearance of a human being from the world.

Henry hears someone speaking “in very clear cold accents, ‘I was present once at a premature cremation’” (TA 10). This is Henry’s Aunt Augusta with her “two big front teeth” and “monumentally piled” (TA 10) red hair, whose outfit looks like a modernized version of the late Queen Mary’s. Henry is surprised by his aunt’s physical appearance whose incongruity adds a touch of humour to the occasion. The choice of red hair colour violates the established norms for old women and it appears as a sign of her passionate, extraordinary character. Her remark also contributes to the humour which breaks the silence and injects some levity into the grave ceremony.

Humour also rises from the juxtaposition of the incongruity caused by the clashing characters of Henry and his Aunt Augusta. The first striking difference between these two characters appears in their handling of the matters of old age and death. When Henry tells his Aunt Augusta that his mother’s death was a natural one because she was old, Aunt Augusta opposes Henry: “Old age? She was only twelve years older than I am” (TA 11). She minimizes the disturbing reality of death and keeps it out of question as a reason of old age. She is full of life and her liveliness, in Langer’s terms “the human life-feeling” (Langer 331) springs forth in the funeral as a challenge to death.

When Aunt Augusta learns that Henry is retired she is surprised: “Retired? A young man like you! For heaven’s sake, what do you do with your time?” Henry tells her about his

special interest in raising dahlias at which Aunt Augusta gives “a regal right-about swing of a phantom bustle” (TA 11). She finds Henry’s occupation rather dull. When she recalls Henry’s father’s active life with women she is surprised that he has not taken after him and has chosen himself a hobby so uninteresting. Henry does not know anything about his father except that he was interested in how many bedrooms he might fit in a building and in a humorous way he relates this interest of his father’s to his habit of oversleeping. However, Aunt Augusta throws light on Henry’s naive thoughts about his father, rather in a coarse way which shocks Henry: “He needed bedrooms for more than sleep...in a bedroom he did other things than sleep...you are the proof” (TA 11). Humour lies in the incongruity of Henry and Aunt Augusta’s contrasting outlook on interests and social norms. Although Henry belongs to a younger generation his interest in life does not exceed over a passive hobby like planting flowers. On the other hand, this interest is found boring by an elderly lady who is supposed to be interested in such kind of retirement occupation. In a similar way, the clash between their view of social norms is a source of the humour of incongruity. Aunt Augusta’s blunt way of putting forward the truth about Henry’s father’s interest in having sexual affairs is a proof of her disregard for the rules in society that restrict and determine what is or what is not appropriate to do. Henry’s amazement at Aunt Augusta’s attitude proves that he is more devoted to propriety whereas he is supposed to be more free-spirited. Thus, she diverges from the accepted moral norms of the society and this divergence appears more incongruous since as a representative of an older generation, she is supposed to be more regardful of what society establishes as acceptable.

His mother’s ashes have been put in a black classical urn and are presented to him wrapped in some sort of paper which makes the package resemble “ a Christmas gift”. Henry’s likening the package to a new year present points to the ironic treatment of death. It is a pleasure to receive gifts on any occasion. Christmas gifts have a special significance

because they are given while celebrating the beginning of a new year. It is a time when people wish for a better life than it used to be in the previous year. The feelings of hope for the future and expectations of happiness are distinctly felt. When this is the case, the association of the ashes with a christmas gift seems absurd. There is an association of something joyful with something sorrowful thing and this incongruity arises from this association. The incongruity between the general significance of a gift and the sad content it has in the given situation is humorous.

During their conversation in the garden of the crematorium, first Aunt Augusta asks whether Henry is married or not and when he says he is not married she asks whether he has children or not – assuming that he might have had one from one of his affairs. To have an illegitimate child is out of question for Henry who has been brought up by a puritanical mother. He is surprised at such a question because in his mind's picture old ladies are not supposed to expect or accept such kind of affairs. Although Henry is supposed to be a representative of a more modern generation than his septuagenarian aunt, he is more conservative and he gets shocked about his aunt's way of talking about sexual matters without any sign of uneasiness. On the other hand Aunt Augusta breaks the frame in which society is used to see an aged person. She is not interested in hobbies which are unexciting like raising flowers. She can say things which might be coarse or inappropriate on some occasions without thinking about the effect she might have on people. Contrary to many old people, she feels free to express herself. Thus humour arises from the incongruity between two generations and their values.

Henry wants to go home as soon as possible. He tries to leave his aunt as politely as he can and says he would like to have a cup of tea with her one day at his home in Southwood. Aunt Augusta continues to surprise him: "At the moment I would prefer something stronger and more tranquilizing. It is not everyday one sees a sister consigned to the flames" (TA 13).

This attitude of Aunt Augusta is an example of her using black humour as a defense mechanism. Ziv points out that people use black humour to deal with their fears. A person who uses black humour gives the message that “he has it in his power to face it” (Ziv 52). This message also puts a different perspective on the case. While Aunt Augusta uses black humour to provide herself with a psychological weapon against the disturbing reality of mortality, her ability to use this weapon becomes a proof of her superiority. This feeling of superiority stems from Aunt Augusta’s ability to shed light on the darkest moment of life by taking the biting reality lightly. The way she expresses the nature of the cremation in its frightening naked truth is a sign of her courage to deal with such a scary experience. She is aware of the unpleasantness of the situation, however she treats it as lightly as possible by her remark that a person confronting such a scary experience will need a stronger drink than tea. Thus, her humour shows that she is capable enough not to be defeated by fear of death.

While they are in the taxi on the way to Aunt Augusta’s house, she points out the oddness of their meeting at religious ceremonies and says that she has been in his baptism ceremony. Then she reveals a fact: “I was not asked but I came.’ She gave a croak of laugh. ‘Like the wicked fairy’” (TA 14). Laughter in this scene can be explained by the relief theory. According to Morreall, relief might fit into laughter situations in different ways. “The person may have come into the situation with the nervous energy that is to be released” (21). Aunt Augusta’s laughter appears to fit this. The fact that she is not wanted to be seen by the family may have built-up the nervous energy in the aunt and as the family members are now dead, her laughter comes as the release of this nervous energy. On the other hand by resembling herself to a “wicked fairy” she uses self-disparaging humour. Ziv states that a person who presents his negative characteristics, “removes the others’ potential weapons and doesn’t allow them the chance to attack him” (62). She knows that she has acted in a way the family members would find disturbing and confesses it in a humorous way. This is also another

example of her humour which may be considered a perspective of superiority. Although her humorous confession seems to be disparaging, it also shows that she is quite contented with her characteristics of being both self-assertive and self-confident. It is a proof both of her power to act as she likes and of her ability to confront any trouble which may come on her way.

Aunt Augusta shocks Henry by implying that his mother is not his real mother: "...you were your father's child. Not your mother's" (TA 14). Henry, who nearly thinks of the funeral as an exciting event, is so startled by what his aunt has meant that he gets hiccups. "Hiccups are said to be cured by a sudden shock and they can equally be caused by one. I hiccuped an incoherent question" (TA 15). The incongruous thought of Henry that the funeral will bring some excitement to his life is topped by this shocking news about the reality about his mother's identity. On hearing this unexpected news, he loses his balance and this loss of balance appears physiologically in a fit of hiccups which help him to release his nervous tension.

Bergson claims that body seems to be the perfect form of flexibility and a ground where all kinds of activities are consciously carried out. Although body appears to be the source of these activities, they originate from the soul. Life stimuli take their energy from something more elevated and are reflected through the body. Therefore the elegance or the flexibility which are observed in the body result from the negligence of the material aspect of the body. Vitality has moral and intellectual roots. When the materiality of the body is observed, the body is like an irritating weight which ties the soul down to the ground when the soul wants to rise higher. Thus the body in relation to the soul can be described as "inert matter dumped down upon living energy" (Bergson 92). Bergson argues that "the impression of the comic will be produced as soon as we have a clear apprehension of this putting the one on the other" (Bergson 92). Henry's case can be explained in accordance with this view. He has just come

out of the dismal atmosphere of his mother's funeral and he is abruptly informed by his aunt that the deceased is not his real mother. During the funeral and while talking with Aunt Augusta, his mind travels back to old times and he remembers his mother's communication both with him and his father. He is in a mood which he feels "raided by the memories of the past" (TA 10). The shock he experiences upon the news disturbs his emotional mood and the fit of hiccups that strikes Henry, as Bergson claims, draws the attention from the soul to the body and creates a comic effect.

While telling about her sister, Aunt Augusta mockingly calls her "a saint". Then she gives some details relating to his real mother. She refers to his real mother as "the girl" who got pregnant by his father but refused to marry so her sister married his father to cover up for "the girl" and made herself look pregnant by wearing cushions under her dress. She wore the cushions even in bed and refused her husband when he wanted to make love to her. She refused to make love even after Henry's birth, using the excuse of observing what church allows as the period to elapse before having a sexual union after child-birth. This incongruity between her real situation and her reasoning to escape the sexual act gives rise to humour. Although she did not experience pregnancy and child-birth, she could use them as excuses to avoid sexual contact with her husband. It is also incongruous that the image of a saint is used by Aunt Augusta not to emphasize her sister's sacrifice to look after a child but to ridicule her attitude towards sex. Even though there was the marriage bond her sister refrained from making love to her husband. The incongruity in this case points to a divergence from the accepted characteristic of a saint. A saint is known to be a person of love, mercy and charity but Aunt Augusta does not refer to these positive characteristics when she calls her sister a saint. On the contrary, she tries to express a negative characteristic of her sister by using a positive image. This incongruity between what is said and what is meant is an example of sarcasm. In the *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*, sarcasm is defined as "a

speech...which actually means the opposite of what it seems to say and which is usually intended to mock or insult someone” (1285). Max Eastman also emphasizes that sarcasm is “attacking a person by praising him in a false tone” (205). Likewise Aunt Augusta makes fun of her sister’s abstinence from having sex by likening her to a saint and by doing this, she in fact denies her sister the positive characteristics such as love, mercy and charity.

His aunt sees the confusion in Henry and tells him that there is nothing to be shocked about. She has opinions of her own which she puts across frankly and they appear in humorous lines. For instance, when Henry asks about his father she replies: “a bit of a hound, but so are most men. Perhaps it is their best quality. I hope you have the little bit of the hound in you too, Henry” (TA 15). Meyer suggests that “humorous lines often serve to express one’s views creatively and memorably because they are presented incongruously and unexpectedly” (319). Aunt Augusta’s view that most men are hunting dogs imply a negative characteristic of men which refers to their pursuit of women. When she adds that it might be their best quality, then her expression becomes incongruous. Something perceived as a negative quality, appears as a positive one.

When they arrive at the house of Aunt Augusta, she warns him that “ a white funeral” would not have been appropriate for her. This is another instance of self-disparaging humor Aunt Augusta uses. She implies that she is not a saint-like woman as his stepmother used to be but Henry cannot understand his aunt’s remark because she has remained single so far. The fact that her aunt has never married makes Henry think that she could not have had any affairs with men. Henry’s conservative thinking is in sharp contrast with his aunt’s unconventional attitudes. His aunt startles him again: “I have nearly always, during the last sixty or more years had a friend...Age, Henry, may a little modify our emotions – it does not destroy them” (TA 16). She implies that she still has the sexual urge and old age is not an obstacle to making love.

Langer emphasizes the close relation between the sex impulse and the life impulse and describes the sex impulse: “in a mature organism, it is the part and parcel of the whole vital impetus” (330). It is particularly a special part since it is performed by certain actions which are reflected in emotional life and produce a rhythm. The awareness of vitality, sexual desire and sexual action contribute to the rise and progress of “feeling, sensibility and temperament” (Langer 330). In this respect, Aunt Augusta’s reasoning of the affairs she has had so far is telling of the vital impulse she has within.

The juxtaposition of a middle-aged nephew and a septuagenarian aunt creates the main vein of humour in the book which results from incongruity. Until his meeting with his aunt Henry has led a safe, quiet and an uninteresting life. His perspective of life had been adjusted by the established thoughts and conventions of society. Therefore in his mind’s eye the concept of an old lady and the behaviour that can be expected from her do not fit in with his aunt’s character and behaviour. Therefore whatever she does seems to Henry as unusual, unexpected and incongruous. Thus, she surprises him, causes him to lose his balance and destroys the ordinary image of an old lady in his mind and thus humour arises. Vetach and Apte emphasize that humour rises from “violations of what is socially or culturally agreed to be normal” :

Humorous situation must involve a perceiver simultaneously having in mind one view of a situation that seems normal, and one view where there is a violation of the moral or natural order. When it seems that the situation is normal, yet something is wrong, humor occurs. If one or the other of these perceptions is absent, the perceiver will not find humor (Vetach, qtd. in Meyer 314). This perspective stresses the need for a rational development of a set of expectations that must be violated before humor can be perceived...(qtd in Meyer 314)

On the way up to Aunt Augusta’s flat she makes a joke about Henry’s loss of hair: “You have certainly changed a lot since I saw you last, though you haven’t got much hair”

(TA 17). Henry tells her that he used to have hair but he has lost it. Aunt Augusta's reply is like a challenge as if preserving one's own hair throughout life is a matter of some sort of skill. She has achieved to keep hers and therefore she is victorious: "I have kept mine. I can still sit upon it...Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair. Not that I could have ever let it down from a second-floor flat" (TA 17). Aunt Augusta's long hair is a symbol of her love of life and her feeling herself as young and attractive as Rapunzel. Henry's consciousness about age is undermined by Aunt Augusta. Therefore, her humorous reference to Henry's loss of hair, and her boasting with the condition of hers, also points out that she still has the energy of life and she finds herself still attractive. This use of humour can be explained by superiority theory which, as Hobbes argues, "is caused either by some sudden act of [one's] own, that pleases [one]; or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof [s/he] suddenly applauds [herself/himself] (1994 119).

Henry asks whether she is disturbed by the noise of the bar below her flat and learns that his aunt who has a good deal of appetite for alcohol finds it "very convenient" (TA 17) to live so close to a bar. She mentions that she sends Wordsworth to get the drinks whenever she runs out. Henry thinks that Wordsworth is his aunt's valet. Augusta explains who Wordsworth is in her own fashion which Henry fails to understand: "Let us say he attends to my wants. A very gentle sweet strong person" (TA18). This is a way Aunt Augusta often uses in her conversations with Henry when she wants to avoid telling the truth directly. Morreall claims that the "violation of the general guidelines governing conversation" can be considered as another class of incongruity (1983 79) and is a source of humour. Morreall examines the principles presented by H.P.Grice in his paper *Logic and Conversation* and makes an outline of the rules which are to be followed by the participants of a conversation. Two of these principles demand to be informative and to avoid ambiguity. Morreall points out that giving short and evasive answers to hide the truth is a "stock comedic device" (1983 80) and

deliberate use of ambiguity also serves the same purpose and gives the feeling that the person is avoiding communication on purpose (1983 81). Aunt Augusta's claim that Wordsworth attends to her needs simply gives the notion that he is an ordinary valet but such adjectives she chooses to describe him as "gentle, sweet, strong" adds ambiguity to the situation since they express special personal feelings about the person.

Aunt Augusta rings the bell and when the door is opened Henry is again startled to see "the very large middle-aged negro wearing a striped butcher's apron...glaring at him" (TA 18). Aunt Augusta tells Wordsworth that Henry is her nephew. Wordsworth is not satisfied by this explanation and he asks: "You be telling me whole truth woman?" (TA18). However Wordsworth's angry looks and his questioning of Aunt Augusta about the identity of Henry and the "touch of coquetry" in her speech stand as an evidence of a romantic sort of relationship but Henry cannot bring himself to accept such a possibility.

Aunt Augusta suggests that Wordsworth put the urn in the refrigerator. Henry remarks that this is quite an unreasonable suggestion because "ashes don't deteriorate" (TA 19) but the aunt replies: "No, I suppose not. How silly of me. But let Wordsworth put it in the kitchen just the same. We don't want to be reminded all the time of my poor sister. Now let me show you my room. I have more of my Venice treasures there" (TA 19). As she shows him the glass ornaments on her dressing table, she tells him: "They brighten the darkest day" (TA19).

Humour in Aunt Augusta's suggestion of placing the ashes in the refrigerator stems from incongruity. Meyer notes on the humour of incongruity:

An accepted pattern is violated, or a difference is noted – close enough to the norm to be non-threatening but different enough from the norm to be remarkable. It is this difference, neither too shocking nor too mundane, that provokes humor in the mind of the receiver, according to the incongruity theory. (313)

The incongruity theory focuses on cognition. In order to notice the differences individuals are required to have some certain patterns of logic. The individual needs mental ability to notice, perceive and classify the incongruous changes for the appreciation of humour. “Only with this ability can humor arise from any sort of perceived incongruous relation, including an unexpected event or object, or any observable deviation from an implied standard” (Grimes qtd in Meyer 313). In this respect, humour which Morreall calls as “absurd or nonsense humour” arises from the incongruous relation between the refrigerator and the ashes. According to the standard concept, a refrigerator is used to keep food fresh and prevent them from rotting. The ashes, on the other hand, do not fit in the category of things that deteriorate, therefore there is no need to place them in a refrigerator. In this case, a place which is inappropriate for a certain object is suggested.

When Henry remarks about the absurdity of his Aunt’s suggestion, Aunt Augusta insists on keeping the ashes out of their sight and refers to the ashes as those of “my poor sister”. Then, she immediately changes her mood and tries to cheer herself up and Henry with her collection of glass ornaments. Her use of black humour as before reveals Aunt Augusta’s attempt to dispel the fear of death. She tries to distance herself and Henry from the dreary presence of the ashes of her sister by focusing her attention on things she loves to look at, thus avoids the unpleasant situation to overcome her.

After Henry leaves Aunt Augusta’s flat he remembers the urn he has forgotten in the kitchen and goes back. He rings the door bell and speaks with Wordsworth through the microphone. After Henry answers Wordsworth’s several unnecessary questions, finally Wordsworth comes with the parcel which seems to have been opened. He tells Henry that he has had a look in it just out of curiosity. Henry who is disturbed by the way he is spoken to through the microphone expresses his dislike of Wordsworth’s attitude. Wordsworth explains: “Man, it’s jus that little mike there. Ar wan to mak it say all kind of rude things. There ar am

up there, and down there ma voice is, popping up into the street where noone see it's only old Wordsworth. It's a sort of power, man. Like the burning bush when he spoke to old Moses" (TA 24). Then he tells an anecdote about the intercom:

One day it was the parson come from St George's in the square. An he says in a dear brethren sort of voice, "I wonder Miss Bertram, if I could come up and have a little chat about our bazaar" "Sure, man," ar say, "you wearing your dog collar?" "Why, yes," he say, "of course, who is that?" "Man," ar say, "you better put on a muzzle too before you go come up here" "It was just old Wordsworth tempted by that little old mike. (TA 24)

This anecdote is an example of superiority humour which may be revealed in different forms. Ziv explains that according to Adler everyone experiences the feeling of inferiority since it is a natural part of the process that human beings follow throughout their development. Children grow up in a world surrounded with adults who impress them with their abilities. Their comparison of themselves to their adults make them feel inferior. Thus, the feeling of inferiority is something that is sown in childhood and it is the chief reason for human behaviour since all the doings of man have the aim of overcoming this feeling (7). Ziv points out that it would be too extreme to rationalize all human behaviour on the grounds of inferiority complex, however he recognizes that inferiority is a controlling factor to a degree since people attempt to prove themselves in many ways. They may devote themselves to hardwork in order to do better than anyone else and thus obtain a degree of superiority but there is an easier way to get this feeling (8). People can use aggressive humour to feel themselves superior by weakening the authority of people who have a higher position.

The anecdote of Wordsworth exemplifies this view. He confesses that the intercom tempts him because it gives him "a sort of power". He takes pleasure in using this power which elevates him to a position where he has the freedom of speech. He obtains a feeling of superiority by saying whatever he likes no matter how high the status of the person who is

“down there” and he is “up there”. The expressions of Wordsworth seem to function literally as well as metaphorically. The person is “down there” waiting at the door and is in an inferior position because he may be easily exposed to ridicule. On the other hand, Wordsworth who is “up there” and in a superior position, can freely say all kinds of things which are offensive since the hearer cannot see him. He uses this power to say things which are not normally acceptable. The violation of propriety points to the aggressive function of superiority. Wordsworth’s humour in his anecdote is pointed at the parson. A parson is a religious figure and therefore he stands as an authority when morality is in question. He preaches what is morally acceptable and what is not and warns people not to act in wrong ways and advises them to follow religious rules. He lives by these rules and sets himself as an example of decency to society. Wordsworth strips the parson of his respectability by lowering him to the level of a dog. He does this by playing on the word “dog-collar” which has two meanings. The dog-collar is a white collar which is worn around the neck by priests or ministers of the Christian Church and the word also stands for a kind of collar which is worn by dogs. When Wordsworth asks whether he is wearing his dog-collar or not, the parson is surprised since it is a part of his usual outfit in which he is to be seen by people. When he answers he does, Wordsworth suggests that he should also wear “a muzzle” before coming upstairs. A muzzle is a kind of cover or strap which is put over the nose and the mouth of a dog and it turns out that Wordsworth is making fun of him as if his dog-collar is the one that is worn by dogs. The punch-line of the joke comes with the word muzzle and it is not only used to debase something which is of religious importance. It has another significance when a clergyman’s role in Christian community is considered. As it is mentioned above he stands as a religious authority and delivers sermons telling what is forbidden or what is acceptable. Since his status enables him to announce the restrictions placed by religion, his speech has a controlling effect on people’s behaviour. This power of the clergyman is attacked by the word muzzle which is

a device to be put on the nose and mouth of a dog to prevent it from biting people, and in this case Wordsworth's suggestion implies that the parson had better keep his mouth shut. Thus, through the use of aggressive humour, Wordsworth takes away the parson's power of speech and elevates himself to a superior position. Wordsworth's aggressive humour also has a different dimension when his ethnic origin is considered. Ziv notes that aggressive humor is used by oppressed groups or nations which do not have the opportunity to retaliate in other ways. According to Ziv "[in] such cases humor is an instrument of self-respect and the spirit of freedom" (43). Joseph Boskin observes that the cultural inferiority of black people is reflected in the form of hostile humour. Society seeks to control and restrict black people. Blacks challenge this repression using hostile or aggressive humour. Due to its aggressive aspect, humour becomes "one of the most effective weapons in the repertory of the human mind" (Boskin qtd. in Morreall 252-3-6). Thus, Wordsworth represents the oppressed black community whose hostile humour functions as a counter attack to its oppressors. Having been on the side of the humiliated, he retaliates by humiliating his opponent.

Henry goes back home full of thoughts. He is suspicious of his aunt's story about his mother but if it is right, he is not so sure whether to keep the ashes among his dahlias or not. For a moment he has a mind to wash the urn. He ponders: "It would serve very well for the home-made jam which I was promising myself to make next year and the urn would have looked quite handsome on the tea table"(TA 25). But remembering the kindness his mother treated him with, he collects himself and gets over the urge to get rid of the ashes and goes out to the garden to choose a place for the urn. Henry's thoughts reflect his frustration about his mother. He is shaken by the news but he pulls himself together and eases his anger or avoids acting in fury by channelling his thoughts in a different way which is humorous. He is inclined to show his aggression by washing away the ashes down the sink and decides to use the urn as a container for some jam which he is planning to make for himself as a hobby of a

retired life. His choice of use for the urn after getting rid of the ashes is incongruous. This is also a similar situation to the one mentioned earlier: Aunt Augusta's absurd suggestion of putting the ashes in the refrigerator. In this case, a container is considered to fit in itself something which it is not made up to store. Urns are particularly designed for storing the ashes of a person who has been cremated, therefore home-made jam, food for the living, seems quite out of place when it is placed in an urn. Here, in Henry's thoughts there is humour of incongruity as well as relief of the feelings of hostility which were awakened by his deception and it helps him to distance himself from the disturbing existence of death which reminds itself through the sight of the ashes.

While Henry is occupied with his dahlias in the garden the telephone rings. It is Aunt Augusta who is calling to inform Henry about a serious matter but she takes it quite lightly: "I have an extraordinary story to tell you...I have been raided by the police" (TA 29). She warns him that the police may come over to his house to take his mother's ashes for analysis. She tells that in the middle of the night the door bell rang and it was the police. Aunt Augusta happily adds that it was her luck that she had her "best night dress" on at that moment. The police explains that they have been informed by reliable sources that there were drugs in the house. They take out the fluff from Wordsworth's pockets and ask about the contents of Henry's package which they had seen given to Henry at the door. Wordsworth says he does not know and when Aunt Augusta tells them that it is her sister's ashes, one of the police officers warns her not to be "flippant". The police seems to make sense of what is said. They are set on finding drugs in the house because their sources are reliable so they deal with the matter in their own way. They try to make out from the word ashes something which will be useful for their search. One of them wants to make a point: "A sort of powder, ma'am?" (TA30) and Aunt Augusta tells them they can pick whatever word they would like to call the ashes of her sister: "grey powder, human powder". They also ask about Henry and what he is

to do with the “powder”. Before they leave they examine the letters of Aunt Augusta and pick one of them who is from someone called Abdul and they want to know who Abdul is. Aunt Augusta points out the absurdity of the police officers’s attitude by saying: “Luckily, I had kept the envelope and it was marked Tunis, February 1924. Otherwise they would have read all sorts of things into it about the present” (TA 31).

The major vein of humour which stems from incongruity lies in the juxtaposition of the two rigid characters against a quite flexible one. The attitude of the two policemen gives the scene a comic effect. According to Bergson:

the comic character always errs through obstinacy of mind or of disposition, through absentmindedness, in short through automatism. At the root of the comic there is a sort of rigidity which compels its victims to keep strictly to one path, to follow it straight along, to shut their ears and refuse to listen.(Bergson 179-180)

In accordance with this view, the two policemen display a form of automatism before Aunt Augusta. They mechanically circle about the same point and try to make sense of anything according to their conditioned views which are impossible to change. They seem to have strong evidence that drug has been kept in the house so they act mechanically to prove that they are right.

On the other hand, Aunt Augusta’s attitude appears quite humorous in this scene. The unexpected and forceful intrusion of the police as representatives of the government authority does not affect Aunt Augusta at all. She seems to be prepared for anything that life is about to bring. She welcomes anything as an interesting experience and she can find something amusing in anything. Her way of breaking this news as “an extraordinary story” to Henry reveals her attitude clearly. The intrusion of the police and their search in the house to find something which will be sufficient for the police to find her and Wordsworth guilty stand as a threat to their freedom but she can ignore this threat and keep her spirits by her humorous

attitude. At such a serious moment instead of panicking she focuses on how she looks and finds herself lucky that she had her best nightdress on. This way she belittles the seriousness of the situation and remains collected. As Freud stresses, humour has a liberating and elevating effect. Morreall also explains that “the person who has a sense of humor is not just more relaxed in the face of potentially stressful situations, but is more flexible in his approach to any situation” (Morreall 1983 108). When the police insists on trying to find something out of the ashes, Aunt Augusta still takes the matter as lightly as she can. She responds to the irritating attempts of the police by playfully explaining the word “ashes” as “grey powder, human powder”. This play on words is also significant since it is a form of black humour and Aunt Augusta’s way of trivializing thus relieving herself of the fear of death, and in this case fear of danger.

Henry feels sorry for his aunt and he thinks “it must have been a terrifying experience” (TA 31). But Aunt Augusta’s reading of such kind of experience is different from that of Henry’s : “It was amusing in a way” (TA 31). Since Aunt Augusta is capable of experiencing the liberating effect of humour, she can see the funny side of every situation which is considered as stressful or depressing. On the other hand Henry who is a rigid figure differs in his viewing of the same experience. Morreall describes the person who lacks a sense of humour as

Someone who views everything as having a practical relationship to himself will not be able to view things from any distance, and thus will not be able to view things from any distance, and thus will not be able to enjoy anything simply as funny.(1983 106)

Henry seems to fit in this category, since he is not capable of distancing himself from serious situations. That is also the reason which makes him think that the event must have been “a terrifying experience” for his aunt.

While they are on the phone, the police arrive at Henry's house. They ask a series of questions and tell him they have found cannabis in the fluff taken from Wordsworth's pocket so they want to take the urn away for analysis since they think it might contain "pot". Henry is persuaded by the police to submit the urn and after their departure he immediately phones his aunt gives her an account of what has happened and that there is cannabis in Wordsworth's fluff. Aunt Augusta's remark is a spark of her understanding. She seems to support Wordsworth's trivial crime and gives the impression that she believes as long as one is not caught, one can commit crime. There is incongruity between the norms of society and an old woman's violation of these norms as a reaction to the mechanical aspect of society: "Oh dear, how careless of the poor boy" (TA 34) She says she has given him twenty pounds which will be enough to take him to Paris. Then she mentions that she has received a new letter from Abdul and this has made her think of travelling to Istanbul. Henry who has never travelled abroad except for the short school trip to Spain, suggests going to Brighton.

Travels of Henry with his aunt begin with their trip to Brighton. When compared to each other, their preparation for the journey highlights the basic difference between them. Humour arises from the incongruity of their contrasting styles. According to the accepted pattern of a female figure in society, Aunt Augusta is expected to be seen with a bigger suitcase since women are known to be more keen on clothes. However, Aunt Augusta surprises Henry appearing with "a little white leather cosmetics case which she calls her *baise en ville*" (TA 35) as luggage. On the other hand Henry also deviates from the accepted figure of a man in society and seems to care more about clothes since he cannot do without "a rather heavy suitcase" even if he is to stay for a night. His interest in clothes is closely related to his personality. He is so organized and conditioned by the rules set down by society that he thinks a change of suit requires a change of shoes; a change of shirt requires a change of underwear and socks. Besides, his will to keep everything in his control becomes apparent in his taking

some woollens with him as a precaution against the unpredictable weather. Aunt Augusta chooses to move freely and her preference of a small bag shows her free spirit. Her disappointment in seeing Henry with a heavy suitcase gives rise to humour since it adds to the incongruity between them. Despite her old age Aunt Augusta is eager to have a walk: “We must take a cab. I had hoped we could walk” (TA 35).

The incongruity between Henry and Aunt Augusta’s clashing preferences becomes more apparent. Aunt Augusta does not agree to anything which is likely to be found as a sound idea by people of old age while Henry does although he is younger. Henry has booked rooms at the Royal Albion and hopes for a quiet evening with “ a bath and a glass of sherry, a quiet dinner in the grill, and an early bedtime” (TA 35). Henry’s idea of a quiet evening does not appeal to Aunt Augusta at all. She wants to find Hatty, an old friend with whom she used to work for a man called Curran some forty years ago. This makes Henry think that it is very likely that Hatty may have died. Aunt Augusta challenges: “I am here...and I got a card from her the Christmas before last” (TA 36). She also wonders about where Wordsworth is. Then Henry thinks that she will hear from Wordsworth soon. Aunt Augusta’s reply is again telling:

I very much doubt it...my dear Henry...at my age one has ceased to expect a relationship to last. Think how complicated the life would be if I had kept in touch with all the men I have known intimately. Some died, some I left, a few have left me. If they were all with me now, we would have to take over a whole wing of the Royal Albion. I was very fond of Wordsworth while he lasted, but my emotions are not as strong as they once were. I can support his absence, though I may regret him for a while tonight. His knackers were superb. The wind took my hat and tossed it against a lamp post. I was too surprised by her vulgarity to catch it and my aunt laughed like a young woman. (TA36)

Aunt Augusta considers the breaking-up of relationships as natural and necessary incidents of life. She recalls her many short-lived affairs with humour. Although separations upset people they are necessary for maintaining the order of the world. These separations contribute to the rhythm of life. Aunt Augusta prefers enjoying her existence in this rhythm and takes every

incident as a natural part of the process of life. She misses Wordsworth but she also knows that her feelings for him have changed and reminisces the joy she had when they used to be together. She enjoys what life brings to her and does not lose her spirit when it takes something away from her. From every moment she takes pleasure as much as she can. Her vitality and sense of humour are also apparent in her behaviour. When the wind carries off Henry's hat, her attempt to catch it and her laughter which Henry likens to that of a young woman's prove the energy of life, the vital feeling she has within.

The difference of their perspectives becomes explicit in their conversation about the waxworks. Aunt Augusta criticizes the waxworks in Brighton for being "a job lot" and expresses her admiration for the ones in Madame Tussaud's. She expresses that she would be glad to see a waxwork of her figure. Henry says "I'd rather have my portrait painted" and Aunt Augusta reveals how one dimensional his view is by her remark, "you can't see all around a portrait" (TA 36). The juxtaposition of preference for waxwork against preference for a portrait is illuminating with respect to the difference between the perspectives of a humorous and a serious character. To begin with, waxwork appears to be the symbol of an eternal life. It is probably an embodiment of human beings' wish to continue their existence in this world despite the fact that they are doomed to be crumbled into dust. This wish springs from a "pure sense of life" (Langer 327) and the limitless possibilities through which the survival can be achieved. On the other hand, one's having his or her portrait painted may be considered as a consequence of the same wish to leave something behind which would last. However, waxwork has a distinguishing characteristic. First of all, it is the closest form to its original model. Its three-dimensional feature presents the full reason in detail and provides one with richer perspectives of the real thing. Life should be handled exactly the same way. The more one is able to widen his/her horizon, the more he/she will be able to understand life. The fun in life lies in its complexity which stems from "the pure sense of life" (Langer 327).

One can have fun as long as he/she has the ability to harmonize with this complexity and this ability depends on viewing things in various possible ways. Accordingly, Langer claims that “the pure sense of life is the underlying feeling of comedy, developed in countless different ways...The sense of life is always new, infinitely complex, therefore infinitely variable in its possible expressions” (327). Therefore, Aunt Augusta’s interest in waxworks is not a coincidence. Her tolerance and open-mindedness provides her with a better comprehension of life’s absurdities. She accepts the complexities of life and integrates herself in this complex system by the help of her humorous attitude and enjoys life as it is. Morreall also emphasizes that a person who has a humorous attitude towards life will be flexible and open to experience and “will enjoy moments of amusement for their own sake...and he will not get locked into a practical frame of mind” (1983 122-3).

On the other hand, Henry’s preference for a portrait of himself operates in a similar way in respect to revealing his attitude to life. In this case, a portrait appears to be the symbol of conventions. A portrait often shows the face of a person, for this reason it reflects only a part of a very complex image. In addition, it is a two-dimensional copy of the original and seems artificial since it fails to reflect the image in full detail. The flat and limited characteristic of a portrait fails to capture the distinguishing features. It is a lifeless and dull reproduction of something animate. Henry, too, like a portrait is squeezed into a frame and he is one of the samples that is made out of the conventions of society. He fails to see what lies beyond the frame. The frame is formed by the established rules and values of society and people are expected to fit in that frame. This is a kind of imprisonment since these conventions restrict people’s behaviour and mechanize them and allow no room for humour. Therefore, Henry and Aunt Augusta put together present a good example of incongruity.

Henry and Aunt Augusta go out in search of Hatty. After the two old woman are reunited they begin to reminisce about their common past. They laugh at a secret joke of

theirs about Curran, “The Revered”. This meeting scene of the two old and aged friends who have spent a period of their lives together appears to be a celebration of their survival. They are happy to see each other after what they have gone through. She is so self-confident and full of life that she thinks she will still be able to survive in the worst possible conditions. She is not surprised when Hatty reads danger and travels in her cup. She is sure that she will certainly have more adventures and she is full of hope that she will come through. Besides, she still expects to have romantic affairs and openly declares her interest in men.

This is a manifestation of “the pure sense of life”, “the natural activity in sensation, awareness, and expectation” or in other words “the personal sense of life, or self-realization” (Langer 327). As Langer claims this is a complicated activity which starts and develops and finally reaches an end. Since it is always fresh and unboundedly detailed, it can be expressed in innumerable ways. This feeling which serves to preserve the form of vitality springs as the basic instinctual purpose of life. Aunt Augusta’s way of taking life as a pursuit of new adventures, her interest and excitement at the possibility of experiencing new sensations are motivated by her “personal sense of life”. Whatever obstacles or dangerous situations she may meet, the expectation of a victory never dies away. It is like an organism’s behaviour to maintain its equilibrium in the face of “the bombardments of the aimless forces that beset it” (Langer 328). Confronting the surprises of life and working out a way for adaptation forms the basic “rhythm of life” (Langer 328). Her sexual desire too, plays its part for the continuity of this liveliness. Langer points out the significance of the sexual act in the rhythm of life:

Sexual excitement is the most intense and at the same time the most elaborately patterned experience, having its own rhythm that engages the whole creature, its rise and crisis and cadence, in a much higher degree than any other emotive response. Consequently the whole development of feeling, sensibility and temperament, is wont to radiate from that sort of vital consciousness, sexual action and passion. (330)

After they leave Hatty and go to dinner at the Cricketers' and Aunt Augusta tells him the story of Curran, "The Reverend" who was hit by an elephant in the circus and was hospitalised. On the visiting day, two dogs came to see Curran and were not allowed inside but Curran worked his way round the nurses by saying that they are "human dogs" and "bathed in disinfectant" (TA 44). The dogs with their pointed hats and pierrot collars came to bed and gave a paw to shake and touch his face with their noses. This behaviour of dogs attracted the attention of the ladies in the ward who had come to visit their husbands. They found the dogs very human-like and begin to ask questions about the dogs, whether they were gentlemen or lady doggies. Then the sympathy and attention raised by the dogs gave Curran an idea to play a joke. He said that the dogs were in fact a couple and they were married "at the doggies' church in Potters Bar" (TA 44). He said that once a year there was "a collection of dog biscuits" for "the poor strays" (TA 44). Thus, Curran and Aunt Augusta established and ran a church for dogs. Curran wanted Aunt Augusta to read the Bible and chose texts that would prove relevant for their services to dogs. He also included some other beasts. But Aunt Augusta found that dogs were not favourable according to the Bible. She found a text in the Bible and it is about what Jesus said about people who could go to heaven and showed it to Curran: "Without are dogs and sorcerers and whoremongers and murderers and idolaters and whosoever loveth or maketh a lie" (TA 46). But Curran was not discouraged at all, he was quick-witted enough to invent an explanation for the dogs' status in the Bible. He claimed that whoremongers, sorcerers and all the rest had souls and therefore they only had to repent. The same applied to dogs. Dogs which attended the service of their church were accepted as they repented so they were not in the company of whoremongers and sorcerers, "they live with respectable people in Brunswick Square or Royal Crescent" (TA 46-7).

This story treads on the area of religion and ridicules the sacred church by lowering it to an establishment for dogs. Hyers states that the scenes where the sacred is profaned and the

profaned is heightened to a holy status, are frequently used in comic tradition. “Customary expectations are overturned and established categories are jumbled or reversed” (Hyers108) to create a situation of incongruity and thus to give rise to humour of incongruity. Therefore what seems as blasphemy is a tumbling of hierarchies.

Another instance of witty explanation is made through a play on the word “Rev.”. The word “Reverend” is a title for the clergy and the word “revered” describes a person who is worthy of respect. When Curran denies blasphemy by his play on words, he still implies his mock authority as a respectable figure of the establishment. Humour here generates from the incongruity between what he denies and what he implies. By this way, he violates the pattern of respectability which is perceived by society. Moreover, he rises himself to a position of being worthy of esteem. Thus humour of incongruity overlaps with humour of superiority in Curran’s making fun of religion. Accordingly, Hyers points to the jester’s mockery of spiritual matters by setting examples from mock rituals that take place in the modern world. For instance, the Guede jesters in Haiti perform a mock ritual, “catechism of the Guede”, where they ridicule some religious matters in a mild way. The jesters poke fun at “Roman Catholic devotees, catechetical instructions and ecclesiastical functionaries” (118). When the ceremony ends the participants are asked by the leader to stand in a line and they have a catechetical examination. Their answers are “facetiously or ludicrously phrased” (118). Each one of the given answers authorize the “catechumen” for a specific and distinguished “ecclesiastical, political or military title” (118). The mock ritual of examination reaches its climax when the most inappropriate participant is honoured with the title “Pope” (118). Likewise in the mock ritual prepared for dogs the title “Rev” is given to the mock priest who is no other than Curran himself. Thus he assumes a higher position in the hierarchy which gives rise to humour of superiority.

Soon, the police interfered with their service on the grounds of “The Blasphemy Act” (TA 45). They were accused of using the title of the clergy, “The Rev.” but Aunt Augusta and Curran who had the support of all the dog owners of Brighton stated that the title had nothing to do with the established church because it did not stand for “Reverend” but “Revered”. But the police won in the end and Curran was caught “speaking to girls on the front”. Aunt Augusta “young and angry and uncomprehending” (TA 45) refused to help him and Curran left her.

After Aunt Augusta finishes her story, she suggests that they should sleep. But Henry cannot find it easy to sleep and feels a kind of “fear and exhilaration” (TA 49) for he has been taken into a world which is at odds with the simple world he is used to. His aunt’s sudden intrusion to his life, his learning that his mother is in fact not his mother and getting to know about his aunt’s past and present friends and their doings that is the incongruity of his and his aunt’s lives make him uneasy. Henry’s thoughts are mixed up due to this clashing of his and his aunt’s world. The incongruity between their different worlds build up in Henry some sort of nervous energy which will soon be released.

Back at home from Brighton, Henry telephones the Scotland Yard to talk to sergeant John Sparrow who has taken the urn which contained his mother’s ashes but has not returned it. Instead of Sparrow, another officer answers the phone whose voice reminds Henry of a very unpleasant client he used to have, a rear admiral who treated Henry’s clerks as “ordinary seaman” and Henry “like a sub-lieutenant who had been court-martialled for keeping the mess books improperly” (TA 50). The voice asks “on what business” Henry wants to speak to Sergeant Sparrow. Henry complains that he has not received his mother’s ashes yet and the voice says “This is Scotland Yard, Assistant Commissioner’s Office, not a crematorium” and hangs upon Henry. Henry rings back and asks for Sparrow, rather commandingly: “I want Detective Sergeant Sparrow” (TA 50). The same voice answers “On what business?”. This

time Henry snaps “Police business of course...what other business do you deal in?” (TA 50). Henry orders the voice to ask Sparrow to ring him and gives his name and surname. When the voice asks for his address and phone number, he refuses and says that Sparrow has both so “[he is] not going to repeat them unnecessarily” (TA 50). He also adds he is frustrated that Sparrow has failed to keep his promise and hangs upon the voice. Henry is relieved. He describes his feelings: “Going out to the dahlias I gave myself the rare award of a satisfied smile. I had never spoken to the rear admiral like that” (TA 51).

This conversation between Henry and the officer of Scotland Yard gives the first sign of the change that Henry has started to experience. He cracks the shell he has lived in so far by the change in his attitude towards someone who gets on his nerves. The change of attitude shows itself in his aggressive humour. According to Dollard and Miller’s theory, when a person meets an obstacle on his way to obtain a goal the person experiences both a physiological and psychological tension which causes frustration, this leads to a discharge in aggressive behaviour directed against the source of frustration (qtd. in Ziv 9). This way the built-up nervous energy is released. Therefore aggressive humour of Henry can also be explained by tension relief theory.

Herbert Spencer suggests that emotions and sensations build a kind of nervous energy in the muscular system of human beings and when this “nervous excitation” (195) reaches a climax, its discharge is realized through certain muscles. The nervous energy originating from strong mental or physical feeling is often discharged “through the organs of speech” (Spencer 201) and “it happens that certain muscles round the mouth, small and easy to move are the first to contract under pleasurable emotion” (201). Likewise Henry’s bottled up feelings are released through his speech in the form of aggressive humour and his excess nervous energy gives vent to a contented smile. The satisfactory feeling which is revived by relief after tension offers an overlap with superiority humour.

In this respect, Henry also experiences psychological relief as well as physical relief. He breaks free of restrictions of social conduct and constraints of a government institute by expressing his anger in a humorous way. This is the first time he has asserted himself in this way and it is the first sign of his integration into social life with a completely different attitude. He is also aware of this change he has been going through. He remembers his passive, yielding and quiet attitude against the admiral in the past and compares it with his present attitude against another figure of authority, the sergeant. Therefore, his smile finds its source in his “sudden conception of some ability in himself” (Hobbes 1994 76) and becomes a sign of his triumph in expressing his negative feelings freely and in a socially harmless way. Accordingly, Ziv suggests that we are frustrated particularly by people whose status or occupation give them the power to give orders or restrict people’s doings. Government officials are examples of such people. Aggressive behaviour against frustrating people of superior positions is camouflaged by humour and thus takes a socially accepted form (Ziv 9-10).

In this regard, Henry experiences a feeling of frustration when the officer answers Henry’s question in a terse manner and disconnects the line without letting Henry make an explanation. The degree of Henry’s frustration is heightened by Henry’s likening the voice on the phone to the voice of another figure of a superior status who used to be a rear admiral and who had treated Henry and the bank staff commandingly as if they were his inferiors. Henry collects himself and on his second call he speaks to the officer in an assertive way and takes control of the situation. His snapping reply to the officer’s question degrades and ridicules the officer who is in a superior position and who has just frustrated him. He reduces the officer’s power and status by ridiculing him and after giving his orders he ends the conversation by hanging up on the officer. Then he goes out to his garden with “a rare award of a satisfied smile” which is a sign of his victory over the terse officer. Ziv claims that this kind of humour

“gives us a sense of momentary but enjoyable superiority” (9). The description of the satisfactory smile as an “award” calls to mind Hobbes’s superiority theory which explains laughter as “ a sudden glory arising from some conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others or with our own formerly” (1994 54-5). At this moment of triumph, Henry reminisces that he had never been able to express himself in that way in front of the rear admiral so he seems to compare his past and present abilities and rejoices the present difference at the present moment. He used to be passive and keep his feelings to himself in the past but now he reacts and expresses them in a way which he has never done before. When he refers to Hobbes’s superiority theory, Morreall states that “laughter, then, is self-congratulatory; it is based on our finding ourselves better off in the struggle of all against all than someone else is, or than we used to be” (1983 6). Besides, this kind of humour “also enables us to take revenge on those who frustrate us” (Ziv 9). In this case, accompanied by his determined and commanding manner, his sarcastic reply with which ridicules the officer seems to be his way of avenging himself not only on the officer but also on the rear admiral who has been a bottled up nervous feeling of a recollection.

Soon, Henry receives a call from Sparrow and learns that his mother’s urn contains more pot than ashes and most of the ashes are probably sent down the sink by Wordsworth. Still, Henry wants the remnants but Sparrow explains that it is impossible because the human ashes are sticky so they are inseparably mixed with the pot. He assures Henry that he will get his urn back and suggests him to put it where he plans to and “forget the unfortunate circumstances” (TA 51). Henry is puzzled by this suggestion and points out the fact that the ashes will not be there. Sparrow’s remark is telling: “Memorials are often detached from the remains of the deceased. War memorials are an example” (TA 51).

The humour in Sparrow’s remark springs from the incongruity between abstract conceptions and real objects that are subsumed under those conceptions. A war memorial is a

structure which is built on an area in order to remind people of the ones who died during the wars. It stands as a symbolic tomb, a kind of collective grave. Its main characteristic is its spiritual value. On the other hand an urn is a container where the remains of a cremated body is put in. Although the body of the deceased has been transformed into some other form, it still has a solid presence, therefore it fits the conception of a natural grave. However, Henry's urn was returned empty by the sergeant so the solid object – what was left from a cremated body – disappeared and the idea to place the urn among the flowers lost its meaning. Nevertheless, the sergeant brings the urn under the same abstract concept of a war memorial and claims that the emptiness of the urn would not make any difference and it could still be kept in the garden as a symbolic grave. This suggestion reveals the absurdity of a social custom since a concept without an appropriate object seems to be stripped of its real value. Humour here arises from incongruity. According to Arthur Schopenhauer incongruity occurs when different objects are perceived in relation with one concept and the characteristic of that concept passes to the objects. However, when the objects are considered in other aspects the entire difference between them makes it clear that the concept suits them only from a single point of view. Thus, the incongruity between the object and the concept which the object is thought under unexpectedly turns out and gives rise to humour (I, 59). War memorials and the urn are the objects which are thought under the conception of a grave but a grave's characteristic is its content since it is filled with the remains of the deceased. This content which once belonged to a living person gives a spiritual value to the grave. However, the urn and war memorials are thought under the conception of a grave, the urn without the ashes loses its meaning and cannot be considered as a grave whereas the latter is socially accepted as a symbolic grave. This incongruity between the urn and the war memorial brings forward the absurdity of the idea of a symbolic grave since it has no spiritual value.

Henry hangs up on Sparrow and he thinks with joy that he must have confused the sergeant's mind about "the character of a retired bank manager" (TA 52). He feels "for the first time in [himself] a streak of anarchy" (TA 52). The pleasure Henry feels is strongly connected with his discovery of another feeling "a streak of anarchy" (TA 52). With respect to this new feeling Spencer's tension and relief theory seems applicable. Since he has met his aunt, Henry finds himself in unusual circumstances to which he cannot adapt himself easily. The secret about his mother, his aunt's affair with Wordsworth, the unreturned urn and his phone conversation with the Scotland Yard officer, his conversation with Sparrow and the impossibility of the retrieval of the ashes build up a nervous energy which needs to be released. Thus the nervous excitement that has been accumulated gets intensified and explodes in his speech. Henry's feeling in himself "a streak of anarchy" may be put down to this built-up nervous tension. The release of the nervous energy relaxes the muscles and forms a feeling of pleasure. As he finds the courage to speak up his mind he feels joy. He has always depended on reason and judged people and events by certain criteria. His view of life has not been different from the calculations he used to make in his working life. He has always been on good terms with his clients, even with the ones like the rear admiral. His aunt's unexpected intrusion into his life and the incidents following due to this intrusion, incite him to break out of the conventional mould of a retired bank manager. He is aware of the change he has been going through, however he is not quite sure why he has begun to act so rebelliously. He thinks it can be either his aunt's influence or the journey to Brighton or "some bacteria in the Pulling blood?" (TA 52).

Aunt Augusta comes to dinner and tells Henry that she has arranged a trip to Istanbul by the Orient Express. Then she starts telling her story about Henry's uncle Jo. Uncle Jo is a bookmaker and he earns a fortune on horses. Later, an interest in travelling develops in him. The fact that he has to stay constant and watch the running horses may be the reason for his

sudden passion for travel. Like the races following one another in such speed, life also flies and uncle Jo wants to slow it down. He thinks that he will do this by travelling and plans a world tour starting off on the Orient Express. When the train arrives in Venice he has a stroke and he cannot carry on his tour. Meanwhile Aunt Augusta who happened to be working in Italy at the time visits him and he asks for Aunt Augusta's help. Since he is not able to "travel physically", he has decided to "travel mentally". In order to continue his travels in this new style, he wants Aunt Augusta to find him a house with 365 rooms. He would be spending a day in each room and this would help him slow down his life. Aunt Augusta tells him that such a house is impossible to find, she thinks that even the Palace in Rome has fewer rooms. Aunt Augusta explains the absurdity of his request by saying, "The fact that he had probably had not long to live had only heightened his passion to extend what was left of it" (TA 58).

Aunt Augusta arranges for an old house in the country with the help of one of her acquaintances in Milan, Mr. Visconti. With a few adjustments like the division of the cellar into four sections and the inclusion of the kitchen, bathroom and the lavatory, the number of the bedrooms in the house is increased to fifty-two. Thus Uncle Jo would be able to continue his travels by spending one week in each room and a nurse would be following, a week behind him. He moves from one room to another with his suitcase with labels of all kinds of famous hotels. He spares the lavatory room as his last destination: "After all these luxury rooms...it would be fun to rough it a bit. Roughing it keeps one young" (TA 60). When Uncle Jo reaches the fifty-first room, he has a second stroke which paralyzes him on one side. The doctor advises him to stay in one bed if he wanted to live longer. Uncle Jo is found crawling on the floor, dragging his suitcase after him and when they find him he is about to die and says to Aunt Augusta that it "seemed like a whole life time" (TA 62). Through this incongruity of uncle Jo's travels, Greene takes the frighteningly serious matter of death and deals with it playfully. He belittles the harsh reality of death by magnifying the strong desire

of human beings for adventure which involves taking risks, discovering new situations and enjoying their ability of adaptation to new environments at the end of which they celebrate their chance of survival and the life itself in a world where the basic instinctual aim is “to maintain the pattern of vitality” (Langer 328).

This touching story disturbs Henry emotionally and he releases the tension through using black humour. “Uncle Jo...was lucky to have no currency restrictions. He couldn’t afford to die like that on a tourist allowance” (TA 62). Henry’s humour shows his progress in adapting himself to the unpleasant situation by taking a step back and making a joke of it. Thus he achieves an equilibrium. Likewise Langer underlines in her theory that all organisms tend to maintain their equilibrium in the midst of forces disturbing them and when disturbed they follow a set of actions to regain their balance (328). When people are confronted with a terrifying event, as simple organisms will do when disturbed, they will seek a way to get rid of the unpleasant change. Dealing with such disturbing situations by help of humour is a way of regaining equilibrium. According to Ziv, black humour is a way to cope with the fear of death both by recognizing its reality and taking an action against it. It can be considered “as a sort of challenge to frightening phenomena” (52). Ziv likens the effect that is produced by the use of black humour to that of children’s whistling to overcome the fear of darkness. Whistling does not change the reality, darkness is still there but it encourages the whistler to put up with its presence. Black humour functions in the same way, too. Black humour does not alter the possibility or inevitability of death, nevertheless it gives the person some sort of strength and even cheers him/her up in the face of the disturbing reality.

Uncle Jo prefers not to give up his ambition despite his poor health condition. He knows that he cannot put off the approaching moment of death, as well as knowing that he cannot spend what is left of his life waiting for that moment. This is why he does not take his doctor’s advice. What gives a person the feeling that he/she has lived a long life is the variety

of his/her experiences. The more a person experiences, the more enjoyable and longer life would seem. It is those experiences that make life worth living, the constant struggle to keep alive against all the obstacles of life and enjoying one's ability to survive for one more day. This view becomes more significant when Uncle Jo tells about his decision for his last destination, "the lavatory room". It is the most uncomfortable part of the house to stay in since it is too small to fit a bed but this does not upset Uncle Jo, on the contrary it cheers him up. He thinks that his struggle to survive when he is deprived of better living conditions will have a positive effect on him. His strife against all difficulties will boost his confidence and make him feel younger, since human beings are gifted with the power of thinking, they perceive life "as a passage from birth to death" (Langer 332). This passage consists of the stages of "youth, maturity and age" which are to be experienced by each person (Langer 332). Life is a journey that ends in death but human beings try to find ways to deal with the disturbing reality of death. The awareness of mortality shapes their whole understanding of life. They know that their time is limited and they strive to make the best of it. As Langer writes:

...since the instinctive struggle to go on living is bound to meet defeat in the end, they look for as much life as possible between birth and death – for adventure, variety and intensity of experience, and the sense of growth that increase of personality and social status can give long after physical growth has stopped. The known limitation of life gives form to it and makes it appear not merely as a process, but as a career. This career of an individual is variously conceived as a "calling," the attainment of an ideal, the soul's pilgrimage, "life's ordeal," or self-realization...his career, then, appears to be performed in him; his successive adventures in the world are so many challenges to fulfill his individual destiny. (333)

In this respect, Uncle Jo's decision to continue his travels after he had learnt that his health condition was getting worse, was the proof of his "instinctive struggle" to live as much experience as he could. He is at the stage of losing his energy, therefore he prefers to enjoy variety of experience. Each room with a different view in the house would give him a different feeling of experience while the lavatory floor would give him the most intense and

extreme one. Although he would never feel better physically, his endurance in the worst condition would contribute to his personal development. Therefore, reaching the final destination would be the achievement of his self-realization and his “vital balance” since human life is a strife adorned with “passional desires” while making the best from “the ailen and impartial chances” offered by this world (Langer 330).

However, Uncle Jo’s solution for satisfying his desire for experience and prolonging his life is quite extraordinary. It strikes one as absurd because it violates one’s sense of what is normal and rational. This absurdity stems from the incongruity between the concept of travel and the way uncle Jo puts it into practice. Main concept of travelling includes having new experiences, exploring different places in the world and a widening of horizon in relation with these discoveries but transforming the common characteristics of travel into the frame of a big house with lots of rooms evokes humour of incongruity. The whole scheme of accomplishing the goal of travelling through the rooms of a house as if each room is a different place to visit where he can see a different view appears to be an invention of fantasy. After his second stroke, he desperately attempts to reach the lavatory room and dies there in a sad way, crawling on the floor leaving behind him “a small pool of wee-wee” (TA 61). Nevertheless he is satisfied since he has succeeded in getting the feeling of having lived a long life. His fantastic plan to travel mentally has proved successful since he has had the satisfaction of a whole life-time experience, though he could not delay the time that would be the end of his travels. Ziv points to this particular way black humour functions:

Black humor also relates to the traumatic situation through fantasy. However, this fantasy does not attempt to cancel out reality; rather it aspires to cope with it through distortion of its shape. Despite the courage of such attempts to cope, there is a sad element in black humor. Usually it arouses no real laughter, but only a smile (occasionally bitter), for the pleasure we have in it is combined with distress.

(55)

Henry wonders how they will manage with their own tourist allowance but his aunt implies that this is not a matter to be bothered since “there are ways and means” (TA 63). Henry gets suspicious that his aunt may be planning something illegal and Aunt Augusta’s reply to Henry is not relieving for him: “How could I plan anything of the kind when I have never read any of the laws and have no idea what they are?” (TA 63). The incongruity in the answer makes it humorous. Although she claims not to have planned anything illegal in her life, her reasoning proves false since she has not an idea about what is legal which means she might have done anything that would not suit the laws. Aunt Augusta suggests Henry that they had better take the plane as far as Paris and insists that they should get on the airport bus from Kensington air terminal. Henry is surprised by his aunt’s choice since there are other alternatives. While they are on the bus to the airport Aunt Augusta behaves in a mysterious way which Henry cannot understand. She asks him to get off the bus as quickly as he can and check whether the trailer carrying their suitcases is still attached to the bus or not. If it is so, he will watch for her “further instructions” (TA 65). When the bus stops Henry gets off and sees to his surprise that the trailer is gone. Aunt Augusta is relieved and explains to Henry that it is a way of avoiding the customs inspection. She complains about the restrictions for travellers going abroad: “They have now taken to spot-checks on passengers leaving the country. They whittle away our liberties one by one” (TA 66). Henry then thinks that they are lucky that their suitcases will not be searched. Aunt Augusta disagrees: “Luck doesn’t enter my calculations. Only a fool would trust the luck...whenever new restrictions are made I make a very careful study of the arrangements for carrying them out” (TA 66). Here, Aunt Augusta proves that her earlier statement about laws is false since she confesses that she tries to find ways to avoid restrictions. Later she explains about the trailer. She has learnt by her observations at the Heathrow that there are certain points where the trailer is likely to be detached and points where the trailer remains attached to the bus. If the trailer is detached this

means the luggage will be loaded directly to the aircraft and when the trailer is attached this means the luggage is to be searched at the customs. His aunt tells Henry that if the trailer is attached she changes her flight for another day. The reason why such tricks have been developed by Aunt Augusta is also incongruous. She complains that the regulations only limit the freedom of people whereas those regulations are set to establish an order in society for the benefit of its every member. Her denial to obey these rules in the name of maintaining her rights thus becomes an example of humour of incongruity.

Aunt Augusta is a trickster in her own fashion. Hyers argues that the trickster image and the trick metaphor have their roots in the earliest times of human existence. He states that human beings were in a struggle to obtain their food under the uncontrollable conditions of their environment. All of their attempts to feed themselves and the techniques they used such as “stalking, baiting and trapping” (177) can be considered as the primitive forms of trickery, the essential key to survival. The trickster figure struggles to survive in the midst of uncertainties and arbitrariness of life without any clear plan. “In the absence of a ready-made blueprint for his existence, he learns through trial and much error. Yet, he shows no particular resentment over these circumstances, or any inclination to speculate on how things might or should have been” (180). Aunt Augusta’s trickery to avoid customs fits this description. She has a carefully prepared plan to trick the authorities who, in her opinion restrict people’s freedom by their regulations. However, she has no guarantee to carry it out smoothly. She takes her chance with the arbitrariness of fortune and the rest remains to be seen.

Aunt Augusta indicates that she has acquired much of her knowledge about Heathrow from Wordsworth when he used to work there as a loader. Then she relates stories of how loaders are involved in stealing gold and diamonds. Aunt Augusta tells Henry: “If you had been young man I would have advised you to become a loader. A loader’s life is one of adventure with far more chance of a fortune than you ever have in a branch bank. I can

imagine nothing better for a young man with ambition except perhaps illicit diamond digging. That is best practised in Sierra Leone” (TA 67). This advice sets another example of Aunt Augusta’s violation of established concepts in society. The incongruity in this suggestion adds humour to the conversation. Thieving is considered under the concept of a job by which a person regularly earns his/her living. The person whom this advice is given to is another source of humour since Henry is a person who has always lived by the rules. The incongruity of the suggestion finds its climax when it is met by Henry’s amazement. On the other hand, his aunt is surprised to find him to be “shocked by trivial illegalities” (TA 68). Aunt Augusta considers little thieveries or illegalities as wonders of human brain and she claims that “a little honest thieving hurts no one..” (TA 69). She explains how she has come to learn so much about the things that go on at Heathrow: “I’ve always been interested in human nature...especially the more imaginative sides of it” (TA 68). Langer claims that human beings have a similar rhythm of existence to that of animals. People strive to maintain their balance in the midst of “the alien and impartial chances of the world” (330) and their struggle with life is more puzzling since they have the unique power of imagination. Mankind survives through its “mental adroitness” which is its invaluable gem when it comes to exploit the world. It seems that life itself bears incongruity at its heart. All living things survive by making best of the opportunities they can grasp. Human brain is apt to do tricks when it is necessary for self-preservation. Accordingly, little thieving or illegalities are ways of people to take advantage of the unfair world and help them to survive. Hyers supports this view by claiming that trickster figures are identified with thievery to illuminate the fact that life needs life to survive: “life is taken as well as given, that it is sustained in part by taking, and that in a sense we are all thieves. What, actually, belongs to anyone that, in some sense has not been taken in the great struggle of creatures to survive?” (181). Langer also points at this fact by stating that there is “no spontaneous generation” (329) and she explains how the biological

pattern develops: "It takes life to produce further life. Every organism, therefore, is historically linked with other organisms" (Langer 329). So Aunt Augusta's philosophy of petty illegality may be said to find its support.

Before they take the Orient Express, they stay in the double hotel St James and Albany. Aunt Augusta takes a whole suite and Henry thinks that his aunt is being rather extravagant since they are going to spend just one night in Paris. As he gives his opinions on the subject of the suite, Aunt Augusta scolds him for interfering with her decisions on the subject of economy and advises Henry: "You must surrender yourself first to extravagance...poverty is apt to strike suddenly like influenza, it is well to have a few memories of extravagance" (TA73)

Then a man "tall and elegant with black sideburns" who "would have fitted in a matador's uniform" (TA73) comes to see Aunt Augusta. The man does not fit Henry's idea of a banker. Henry brings the suitcase his aunt asks him to and leaves them but while he is about the door looks back and sees that the case is opened and it is full of ten pound notes. Henry is shocked to see that his aunt has smuggled money and he reasons this rashness of hers with her years spent abroad. Aunt Augusta's character and morality are so extraordinary for Henry that he cannot fit her in his idea of an ordinary Englishwoman. While in his room he tries to comfort himself by reading Punch which reflects the unchangeable quality of English character. Then he thinks over the case of his aunt's smuggling money in the light of a different outlook: "If the ten pound notes.. ...were tied in bundles of twenty, there could easily be as much as three thousand pounds in the suitcase, or even six, for surely bundles of forty would not be too thick...twelve thousand was not an impossible total. I felt a little comforted by that idea. Smuggling on such a large scale seemed more like a business coup than a crime" (TA 74). This is the second time that a remarkable change in Henry's attitude is observed. His use of humour this time can be explained in relation to reactions to an

incongruous situation. Morreall classifies the reactions that are shown to incongruity in three forms: negative emotion, reality assimilation and humorous amusement. He borrows the term “reality assimilation” from Paul McGhee in order to explain the astonishment which is experienced following a strange event. This reaction differs from the others since incongruity does not result in negative feeling or amusement but it brings a problem to mind: “something has been presented to our consciousness that does not fit our conceptual schemata, and we try to make it fit” (Morreall 1987 192). When an individual meets with an incongruous situation or an event, his/her puzzlement produces a kind of tension and uneasiness which result from loss of control. Thus, the individual tries to regain his/her control over the surprising situation by trying to make sense of what has happened. At first Henry was astonished to find out that his aunt has smuggled money in her suitcase. The fact that his aunt committed a crime disturbed Henry’s balance but after a while this event which was unusual in Henry’s perspective turns into something natural and understandable through the cognitive process of his mind. He cannot change what has been done by his aunt, so he tries to change his understanding and he succeeds. He makes a calculation out of a moment’s glance at the aunt’s suitcase and feels comfortable when he imagines the possibility of how big might be the amount of money. He concludes that it would be considered as a business deal and brushes away the idea of crime. After he has listened to his aunt’s stories about Heathrow, Henry’s understanding of crime takes a new form. This instance of Henry’s humour also fits in with Spencer’s relief theory. When nervous energy reaches a certain limit of tension, its discharge is received by muscles, viscera or some part of the nervous system. The stimulus may be passed to the latter direction usually in the act of thinking and this transfer results in constituting consciousness. He claims that “Sensations excite ideas and emotions; these in their turns arouse other ideas and emotions”. That means the nervous tension causes a similar tension in other nerves and by the transfer of this energy ideas or feelings fade away while

generating new ones (197). Henry's anxiety about his aunt's illegal act causes some tension and builds up nervous energy which discharges itself through "some other portion of the nervous system" and causes "a rapid current of ideas" (198). The nervous energy built up by his anxiety about his aunt's illegal action finds relief in producing other ideas and feelings. He relieves himself from tension through a flow of new ideas which turns his aunt's behaviour into something quite acceptable.

Henry goes out for a walk in the gardens and he bumps into Wordsworth. Wordsworth thinks Henry is looking for a girl and he warns him about some of them who are "short-timers". He says "They do jig-jig, one two three out you go. If you wan a gel, you come along with Wordsworth" (TA 75). Henry does not understand what Wordsworth means by the word "jig-jig" and he says he does not want a girl. Then Wordsworth persuades him to have a drink somewhere which looks like a theatre where some women are sitting at the bar. Henry sees a nearly naked woman passing between the tables and assumes that with the word jig-jig Wordsworth might be refering to this woman travelling between the tables so tells him sharply that he does not want jig-jig.

"No jig-jig here...if you wan jig-jig you take her to hotel"

'Take who?'

'These gels – you wan one?'

Two girls come and sit down at their table and Wordsworth has already ordered four whiskies. Their conversation becomes funnier:

'Zak, chéri...present your friend please.'

'Mr. Pullen, you meet Rita. Lovely gel. School teacher.'

'Where does she teach?' (TA 76)

When Wordsworth laughs Henry understands that he has made a fool of himself and he says he is not interested and tells Wordsworth that he has to go. He also tells that they will be leaving the following evening with the Orient Express to Istanbul. Wordsworth warns him to be careful and mispronounces his name again. Henry who has looked ridiculous in the course of the conversation with the girls is irritated more with the mispronunciation of his name and uses humour to express his anger in a mild way. Therefore his humour derives its origin from superiority theory of Hobbes who claims that “men laugh at the infirmities of others” and therefore “men take it heinously to be laughed at or derided” in other words to be “triumphed over” (1994 55). Henry uses humour in order to make up for his previous embarrassment caused by Wordsworth. It can also be considered as a form of aggressive humour since he expresses his anger in a socially acceptable way: “ ‘Please call me by my right name, Pulling.’ I tried to temper my rebuke with humour. ‘You would not like it if I continually called you Coleridge’” (TA 77). But Wordsworth does not know who Coleridge is and Henry explains that Coleridge is a poet and a friend of Wordsworth. Wordsworth mistakes the poet Wordsworth whom Henry mentions as Coleridge’s friend for himself and tells Henry that he does not have a friend who is named Coleridge: “Ar never met that man. If he say ar did he humbug you” (TA 77). Here arises humour of incongruity. Henry’s use of humour in order to embarrass Wordsworth proves to be useless since Wordsworth fails to understand the point of the joke. Thus Henry’s situation becomes more humorous as Kant puts it “the bubble of our expectation was extended to the full and suddenly went off into nothing” (200).

When Henry gets back to the hotel, he finds his aunt sitting alone in the salon with “traces of tears in her eyes” (TA 80). He asks why she is upset and his aunt tells him that this hotel has been a special place for her and reminds her of many memories. Seeing the normal sign of old age, Henry feels for his aunt and wants to learn about her memories. When he learns that her memories are related to a love affair, he sympathizes with his aunt’s sad

moment which reminds him of the way he has felt “at the theatre, at the sight of old age remembering” (TA 80). Dabbing her eyes, she says it would be boring for him and describes what her story is like in sad humour: “An unfinished bottle of champagne found in an old cupboard with all the sparkle gone...” (TA 81). Henry is moved and takes his aunt’s small hand and on her soft hand he notices a brown grave-mark which is not powdered. Feelings of pity is explicit in Henry. He tries to bring her round to confide in him but his naive attempt is humorous: “Dear Aunt Augusta...it helps sometimes to speak to another person. I know I belong to a different generation – perhaps a more conventional generation...” (TA 81). This statement of Henry reveals the incongruity that originates from the juxtaposition of the two characters who are opposites in their views. What is incongruous is that these characters do not resemble typical members of their generations. Henry who belongs to a younger generation is more conservative than his septuagenarian aunt and his aunt is more open-minded than him. Their situation turns more humorous with the inversion of their roles. Aunt Augusta is in the position of a young person who finds it difficult to tell about a past experience to a grown up person whom she thinks will not understand. On the other hand, Henry plays the part of the grown up person who is trying to help the young one.

Aunt Augusta tells that ‘it’s a rather disgraceful story’ and Henry nearly kneels down holding her hand and assures his aunt that she can trust him. This gesture of Henry increases the sentimentality in the atmosphere and suddenly at the peak of this emotional scene Aunt Augusta surprises Henry by telling that her story which she hesitates to tell is not only a sad but also a funny one. Henry is frustrated with his aunt’s attitude.

‘It is your sense of humor, Henry, that I don’t fully trust. I don’t think we find the same things funny.’

‘I was expecting a sad story,’ I said rather sharply...

'It's a very sad story in its special way,' my aunt said, 'but it's rather funny, too.' I had let go her hand and now she turned it this way and that like a glove in a bargain basement. 'I must really have a manicure tomorrow,' she said. (TA81)

This scene is humorous since Aunt Augusta's sad mood and her willingness to tell about a past memory raises Henry's expectation to hear a sad story but suddenly this expectation is transformed into nothing. Aunt Augusta's diverting attention from something emotional into something physical gives a lift to the humour in the scene. Bergson recognizes this comic side of physicality in the characters: "No sooner does anxiety about the body manifest itself than the intrusion of a comic element is to be feared" (Bergson 94). What lies under Bergson's view is also a form of incongruity which rises from the confrontation of body and soul. Body as the material part of man is thought completely apart from the spiritual state of his being. When there is a situation related with intensity of feelings which calls forth the spiritual side of man, the unexpected intrusion of something related with body causes a confusion in the mind which is set on emotions. This incongruity paves the way to a humorous scene as in the example that Henry and Augusta share.

Morreall analyses reactions that are shown to incongruity in his theory. The first reaction he explores is "negative emotion" and he concludes that all negative emotions have in common "some kind of practical concern" in relation with the incongruity. He claims that when we are frustrated with the outcome of a situation which we expected to turn out differently, we tend to find various ways to better either the situation itself or our involvement in it. "The world has somehow slipped out of our control, and we are motivated to bring it back into control (Morreall 1987 191).

According to this view, the incongruity between Henry's expectation and its result causes the negative emotions of frustration and irritation in Henry. He expresses his disappointment: "I felt some irritation at her quick change of mood. I had been betrayed into a

feeling of sentiment which was not natural to me” (TA 81). This unnatural event causes a loss of balance in Henry and he tries to regain his balance and get rid of this negative emotion through revenge. Thinking that he might embarrass her, he reminds her Wordsworth by telling her that he and Wordsworth have met by chance on the street and also tells her that he did not give him their address. However, Henry fails to create the effect he desires on his aunt. Aunt Augusta is frustrated not because she is embarrassed but because Henry did not tell Wordsworth where they are staying. Here, the incongruity between Henry’s expectation and the result he gets brings humour to the situation. Henry’s plan to take his revenge and his failure caused by the unexpected attitude of his aunt forms the main vein of humour of incongruity.

When Aunt Augusta looks out of the window she remarks there are a lot of nursemaids and perambulators. Henry asks his aunt whether she would have liked to have a child or not. Aunt Augusta points out the inconvenience of having a child in her circumstances. She explains in a humorous manner:

Curran was not to be trusted as a father and by the time I knew Mr. Visconti the hour was really getting late...a child belongs to the dawn hours, and with Mr. Visconti one was already past the blaze of noon. In any case I would have made a very unsatisfactory mother. God knows where I would have dragged the poor child after me, and suppose he had turned out completely respectable...(TA82)

The evaluation of her circumstances are also humorous. She never complains of old age but recognizes its difficulty in case of bringing up a child. Aunt Augusta accepts that she is imprudent and she would be an unsatisfactory mother because she loves travelling and she has an adventurous life. Her self-consciousness about her weaknesses and her ability to acknowledge her frailties appear in form of self-disparaging humour. Such kind of humour is also incongruous since there is a kind of discrepancy between what is stated and what can be deduced from that statement. Although the person who uses this kind of humour seems to

strip from himself the virtues in question, he/she becomes superior since the confession requires some more important virtues such as courage and self-confidence. Ziv clearly describes the user of self-disparaging humour:

He knows and accepts himself with all his complexities. He is aware of the positive and strong aspect of his personality, as well as his weaknesses and absurdities. He is open enough toward himself to comprehend all his various characteristics...he user of self-disparaging humor demonstrates self insight as well as high self-acceptance. (62)

Then she thinks Henry has done the right thing by not giving their address to Wordsworth. She knows that Wordsworth will not “fit in with the St James and Albany”. She becomes humorous again: ““What a pity that the days of slavery are passed, for that I could have pretended that he served some utilitarian purpose. I might have lodged him in the St James across the garden’ She gave a reminiscient smile” (82). Her humour here is related to the story she is going to tell.

The story is about her affair with Monsieur Dambreuse. She meets this man on the street and they have coffee together. After a couple of days they settle in Albany. M. Dambreuse tells Aunt Augusta that he is a married man with six children. He works in a metallurgical company and his family lives in the country. Aunt Augusta does not mind his marriage since she is not a jealous woman. She enjoys spending time with him and she really loves him. He leaves her on Saturday mornings and returns on Monday evenings. Their affair continues until the day when the secrets of M. Dambreuse are revealed. While keeping a suite in the Albany with Aunt Augusta, M. Dambreuse keeps another suite in the St James with a woman called Louise. One day Aunt Augusta and a woman who happens to have tea in the garden between the St James and Albany begin a conversation and they tell each other about their “so-called” husbands and they are surprised to find out so many common things about the two men. At that moment M. Dambreuse with his stout wife and four children enter the

garden. Then it is understood that he is a retired man who lives in Paris not in the country and during the midweek afternoons when Aunt Augusta has thought that he is at work, he has been spending time with Louise.

Aunt Augusta accepts the situation with humour: “I must say it was achievement for a man who was well over fifty and had retired from full-time work for reasons of ill-health” (TA 84). Morreall claims that there is a direct relationship between the development of a person’s sense of humour and the development of his/her ability to step back to have laugh in different circumstances. That is to say, the more a developed sense of humour you have, the more skillful you will become in avoiding involvement in any kind of distressing event. Morreall underlines his statement by referring to Stephen Leacock: “the spirit of humor... ‘views life, even life now, in as soft a light as we view the past’” (1983 104). In the course of the conversation Aunt Augusta’s discovery of another fact about this past event and her acceptance of it with humor is the distance she keeps from the sad incident. In addition, the humorous remark she has made about Wordsworth before starting her story of Dambreuse is a proof of her good sense of humour which she has developed from a past event and applied it to the present. She expresses her feelings again in the light of humour:

...when I think of his expression as he turned and saw the two of us sitting at tea together, I cannot help smiling even today...and crying a little, too...for it was the end of an idyll. A man cannot forgive being made to look foolish. (TA 85)

Henry expects her aunt to be furious in the face of such deceit. He thinks it is her aunt and the other lady who are put in a ridiculous situation but her aunt thinks this deceit as an “achievement” and the revelation of the secret is a failure. The incongruity between the rigidity of Henry and flexibility of Aunt Augusta is humorous. Besides, Aunt Augusta’s humorous approach to the sad event reverses the roles of the victim and the victimizer. Her ability to keep her spirits and her tolerant manner forms a distance between the upsetting

event and herself and saves her from the position of a victim and places the man in the position of a victim. Morrell argues that “to the extent that we can achieve this distance from the practical side of any situation, we are free from being dominated by the situation” (1983 104). When looked at from the perspective of superiority, Aunt Augusta’s way of handling this situation without getting depressed and her tolerance with her deceiving lover, lifts her above all the unpleasantness of the condition she is in. Thus, her ability to keep her distance from the sad event places her in a more superior position while her lover belittles himself by taking the situation too seriously and considering it as a matter of pride.

Henry is irritated by his aunt’s remark and reminds her that the person who needs to be forgiven in this case is not his aunt but M. Dambreuse. But to his amazement his aunt explains that both Louise and herself agreed to continue their affairs. Besides, she thinks that the situation of M. Dambreuse is far worse than theirs: “M. Dambreuse never quite recovered his self-esteem. Now when he was rather tranquil in midweek he knew I realized the cause and it embarrassed him...he loved his little secret. He felt naked, poor man, and exposed to ridicule” (TA 85).

Henry finds it hard to accept and seeks some sort of confirmation of his thought that his aunt must have felt very bitter. But Aunt Augusta scolds him again: “You young fool...Monsieur Dambreuse was a man, and I only wish you had been given a chance of growing up like him” (TA 86). Then she softens and tells him “Sometimes I have an awful feeling that I am the only one left anywhere who finds any fun in life” (TA 86). Then she tells him that this is the reason that makes her upset. She wants to continue because her love is strong but M. Dambreuse cannot bear the fact that their affair is not a secret anymore. Aunt Augusta is disappointed that he longs for a secret but not for love. Aunt Augusta’s association of her sad story with having fun appears incongruous and does not make sense to Henry. What is normally considered important by society, turns out to be unimportant in Aunt

Augusta's attitude. Being deceived is not important at all for her since the joy she takes from a relationship with a man she loves, is what matters most. She takes a playful attitude towards life and breaks the rigid frame of values by denying them the importance given by society. Besides, her humorous outlook helps her to take as much pleasure as she can from life. Similarly, Morreall underlines that when looked through a humorous view of life "nothing is of absolute importance and...not all situations have practical significance – there are many free moments simply to be enjoyed" (1983 127).

Before they leave Paris and get on the Orient Express, Aunt Augusta wants to visit Musée Grévin to see the waxworks. When Henry says he prefers to visit the Louvre, his aunt expresses her dislike about "all those women with bits missing" as "morbid", then she relates a story explaining her repulsion of statues. A girl at the same place where Aunt Augusta had worked, meets a man who has a case of "fanciful brassières" (TA 89) with him and asks her to try on the ones she likes, she chooses the one which looks like two clutching black hands. Then the man asks her to go to England with him and she agrees. Later, the girl was found chopped up, in the shape of a torso and it was discovered that the man who had "a misplaced devotion to virginity" (TA 89) had been choosing girls that should be killed according to their taste for underwear. The man was caught and guillotined. But there have been people who pray for him and think that he will be saved. but after that "a cult start[s] for what they call "the good murderer" (TA 92).

This story may be considered as an example of grotesque humour. Terry Heller explains:

The juxtaposition of horror and humor may form a kind of continuum in which the proportions of humor and horror vary along two intersecting diagonals. Where these lines intersect, the proportions of these two effects are equal and the reader is likely to feel suspended between opposing extremes. Where the lines are furthest apart, the reader may feel horrified or amused but little or none of the opposing

effect. As the proportion of humor and horror in a work varies from the point of intersection, the reader will experience what Winston describes as absurd humor(humor dominating horror) and grotesque humor (horror dominating humor).(qtd. in Pratt198)

When horror and humour are twisted in a story, they are opposed to each other and their proportion forms a kind of balance. If the horror or humour element in a story weighs more, they are separate from each other, therefore they are far from being opposed to each other. If horror weighs more humour loses its effect and turns into grotesque humour. If humour weighs more, the effect of horror lessens and it becomes absurd humour. In the story of Aunt Augusta, the cruelty of a murderer is emphasized by the description of the way he had killed his victim. The humour which arises from the way he had trapped his victim or the humour that lies in the sympathy he had attracted after his execution are belittled by the extremity of the violence. Thus, the story can be considered as an example of grotesque humour. This kind of humour also has incongruity at its heart. The reality of the cruelty of the murderer and society's welcoming of his hideous crimes as a blessing create a threatening incongruity. Although the element of fear plays into the situation, humour is also present. The presence of fear and humour at the same time forms an ambiguous combination and violates the moral and social norms of society. The dark side of human nature is clothed in humour to help us to make fun of fear.

At the station, while Aunt Augusta is in her couchette, Henry is waiting at the platform and suddenly Wordsworth appears. When he sees Henry he wants to see Aunt Augusta but Henry tells that his aunt is sleeping in her couchette. Then he gets on the train and when he enters his aunt's couchette he sees there is a young girl sitting on the bed and his aunt is leaning out of the window "waving and blowing kisses" (TA 93) to Wordsworth.

Aunt Augusta informs Henry that the young girl is from the next couchette. She is an American girl named Tooley and she is going to Katmandu. He goes out to the corridor and

watches the towns and mountains rolling by and he feels homesick. He misses his dahlias and thinks how his life used to be safe and everything used to be in order before his mother's death. At that moment Tooley appears and complains that she has not slept well because she feels worried. She wants to talk with Henry. Henry invites her to his couchette. He offers her a cigarette but Tooley prefers hers which looks hand-rolled and offers one to Henry whom for the sake of politeness takes it. Henry likes the "odd herbal flavor" of the small cigarette and thinks that it is American and tells Tooley that he has not smoked an American cigarette before. Tooley says she has got them from a man in Paris to whom she has told about her problem. Then she gives an account of her quarrel with her boy friend and tells him that her father is a CIA agent. Henry enjoys Tooley's company and the cigarette she has offered: "This friend of yours in Paris...was a very good judge of cigarettes" (TA 99). When Tooley describes the man from whom she has got the cigarettes Henry understands that the man is Wordsworth. They go on their conversation and Tooley asks which frontier they are approaching. When Henry tells her that it is the Italian frontier, Tooley asks him to open the window and throws away her cigarette. Until that moment it does not occur to Henry to form a link between Wordsworth, cigarettes and cannabis:

"What have we been smoking?" I said.

"Pot, of course. Why?"

"Do you realize we could be sent to prison? I don't know the Swiss law or the Italian law but.."

"I wouldn't be. I'm under age."

"And me?"

"You could plead innocence," she said and began to laugh. (TA100)

Then Tooley confides in Henry that she has not forgotten to take the contraceptive pill and her period is six weeks late. Henry advises Tooley that she had better talk to his aunt about that matter and adds that he has no knowledge "about these things" (TA 101). Tooley says that she cannot talk to women because she feels shy of them and protests against the ignorance of men

at present. The situation Henry finds himself in with Tooley is incongruous in respect to their generations. Tooley's attitude breaks the frame of social conduct which Henry is used to act within. She can speak about matters which used to be unmentionable, for instance matters such as having sexual intercourse or getting pregnant outside marriage. Moreover, her choice to converse such topics with a man is also incongruous, an apparent deviation from the accepted ways of social conduct.

Tooley's anxiety about the possibility of being pregnant increases. As she gets more anxious, she becomes humorous. She uses humour to cope with her fear of pregnancy. She says: "I'm as hungry as a dog. I hope I'm not feeding two..." (TA 102) or she invents absurd cures for her situation and she wants to believe that they can be effective. For instance, she decides to smoke another cigarette and thinks that "it might do the trick" (TA 102). She also confesses to Henry that she has slept with a boy in Paris because she sometimes gets the curse at the moment of an orgasm. However, she is both aware of the absurdity of her thoughts and the reality. She smiles and says: "It's funny the ideas I get, I think almost anything might do the trick. I drank brandy and ginger ale in Paris because at school they said ginger did the trick. And I had sauna baths too. It's funny when all you really need is a curetage" (TA 102). As Ziv explains: "Black humor also relates to the traumatic situation through fantasy. However, this fantasy does not attempt to cancel out reality; rather it aspires to cope with it through distortion of its shape" (55).

Ziv also claims that although the use of black humour displays courageous attempts to handle fearful situations it has a "sad element". It does not elicit a real laughter of mirth but a smile because "the pleasure we have in it is combined with distress (55). The following passage is exemplary of the case. Tooley's awareness of the fact that she might need an operation leads her to take the matter lightly, she asks whether there may be an abortionist on the train without thinking the impossibility of getting an operation on the train. Then she tries

to look from the brighter side and feels lucky not to have been nine-months pregnant. However she tries to keep the thought away by joking, the fear is there, it lies under her humour.

When they arrive in Milan, Visconti's son Mario meets them and Aunt Augusta explains the unexpected appearance of Mario by telling that she had written him. Tooley, Henry, Aunt Augusta and Mario go to a restaurant together. Mario gives a brown paper parcel to Aunt Augusta.

She begins to tell about Mr. Visconti whom she has been more fond of than any other man except her first lover. She accepts that he is a twister and tells about some of his schemes by which she has also been tricked. Before uncle Jo dies he has quarrels with his brother and he leaves all his money and the house to Aunt Augusta. When Aunt Augusta meets Visconti, he is married and he has no money and he cannot get any from his wife who has all the money but he succeeds in getting most of Aunt Augusta's money which has been left by uncle Jo. Visconti plans exporting fresh vegetables to Saudi Arabia. He hires a whole floor of the Excelsior for his Arab notables and their dozens of wives. He even tricks Vatican to invest their money and arranges cocktails for the cardinals at The Grand Hotel. All the expenses of these hotel and party organizations are paid with Aunt Augusta's money. But Visconti fails to make money out of this scheme and disappears for a short period without leaving anything to Aunt Augusta. However, Aunt Augusta is happy that she has had such fun with Visconti. After Visconti leaves, Aunt Augusta goes to Paris then to Rome where she says she has taken up a part time job in an establishment behind the Messagero. Then one day Visconti walks in the place where she works without knowing she is there. They see each other and begin to dance between the sofas at one o'clock in the morning under the surprised look of the other girls. From his aunt's tellings Henry begins to understand that the place where she had worked is a brothel. He wonders whether Aunt Augusta has despised Visconti for his doings.

This reaction of Henry which is similar to the one he has shown about the Dambreuse affair makes his aunt furious:

I despise no one..regret your own actions if you like that kind of wallowing in self-pity, but ...never presume yours is a better morality...What do you suppose I was doing at the house behind the Messaggero? I was cheating wasn't I? So why shouldn't Mr. Visconti cheat me? But you, I suppose, never cheated in all your provincial banker's life because there's not anything you wanted enough, not even money not even a woman. You looked after people's money like a nanny who looks after other people's children. Can't I see you in your cage stacking up the little fivers endlessly before you hand them over to their proper owner? (TA 111)

Henry is startled and he is lost for words so he leaves his aunt's couchette and as he closes the door he hears her laugh. Aunt Augusta's laughter can be explained by Spencer's relief theory. As Spencer claims "the nervous excitement at any moment present to consciousness as feeling, must expand itself in some way or other" (200). Aunt Augusta's frustration with Henry's dull personality builds up nervous tension in her and this tension expands itself first in loud speech and then the excess energy passes on to other channels in order to vent itself thus her laughter occurs. Aunt Augusta's laughter of relief is also tinged with superiority. She is fed up with Henry's judgemental attitude and she rebukes him by making fun of his behaviour and gives him a lesson. Henry's silence and his quitting the couchette can be taken as his defeat by Aunt Augusta and her laughter can be considered as her triumph over him.

Later Henry wants to learn more about Mr. Visconti. During German occupation in Italy, Visconti collaborates with Germans "on questions of art" (TA 117). He knows where the unregistered works of art are hidden and he helps Germans to get those hidden treasures. However, he sometimes collaborates with the opposite side by getting money or pictures he likes to keep for himself. When his trick is found out he makes his escape. According to rumours, he was killed by a gondolier while fighting for a woman. Aunt Augusta never believes this story and knows he is still alive and she explains that Visconti is alive because he has written to his son Mario and Mario has written to him. This is why she and Henry are on a

train to Istanbul. Then she emphasizes what an excellent survivor Mr. Visconti has always been: “Mr. Visconti as I told you was not a man for fighting with knives or fists. A man who fights never survives long, and Mr Visconti was great at survival” (TA 118).

Aunt Augusta tells that it was a time that the Allies were approaching to capture the city and Visconti buys himself an outfit of a Monsignor and goes to the Excelsior to change his clothes. After he has changed, he wants to have a drink at the bar and finds himself a shady corner. One of the girls at the bar gets hysterical and regrets she has been sleeping with German officers and wants to make a confession to Visconti. They go to a hotel room and Visconti is tempted. He wants to learn some details and asks questions like how many times she has done or whether she has done it always in the same way or whether anything unnatural happened. Although his life is in danger he does not hesitate to enjoy himself. Humour here derives from both incongruity and superiority. It is incongruous that although Visconti is on the verge of losing his freedom, he is after having fun. In such a situation he is normally expected to run away but he prefers to take his time for a little play. In his play, he also enjoys a moment of superiority by using the Monsignor title and plays his little game with people who approach him with respect to this title.

The confession of the girl is interrupted by another woman, the general’s wife who drops in the bar for a drink before heading for North and hears that there is a Monsignor at the hotel, she also wants to make a confession. She tells Visconti that she has deceived her husband for three times. Visconti again enjoys this opportunity and takes his time while the general’s wife is so anxious to leave. He takes advantage of the wife who is so eager to end the ceremony. He tells her that if she gives a seat in their car they will have time to finish her confession. Since the car is to be occupied by the driver, the wife, the general and the Irish wolfhound, there is no space for Mr Visconti. So he suggests to leave the dog but the wife refuses. Wolf is the only thing that she loves in this world, her adulteries or her husband do

not mean anything to her. Then Mr Visconti suggests to leave the husband behind. Thus, they drive off but the Wolf jumps out of the car and it is run over by a tank. Mr Visconti likens the dog to “one of those biscuits they make for children in the shape of animals” (TA 123). Humour here springs from incongruity. It is incongruous that love for a dog is compared to love for a man and the incongruity becomes more striking when the former one weighs more. In accordance with this preference of the wife, Visconti’s suggestion to take the dog in the car instead of the general tops the humour of the situation. Humour of incongruity is followed by black humour when the dog is run over by a tank. The extremely disturbing sight of the dog’s death is laughed at by an incongruous comparison of the crashed body of the dog with children’s animal shaped biscuits. A carcass, useless waste can be thought under the same concept with food which is a source of energy for the living things.

Mr Visconti is an important comic figure in the story. The most important characteristic of the comic figures is their determined will to survive and their ability to fight with their wit instead of their fists. Getting engaged in a battle physically will probably harm them and they are the most unlikely characters that will wish to die. Life with its unexpected turns and surprises whether nice or nasty, will still be worth living. Sacrifice of the self is out of the question for a comic figure, because there is nothing in this world that can be taken as seriously as dying. Life itself is a reasonable cause enough to survive. “Comic heroism does not manifest a reckless determination to die at one’s boots, with a weapon in hand, with a look of defiance stamped on one’s face. It seems more inclined to the view that “they that take up the sword shall die by the sword” (Hyers 64). He may also be taken as a full reflection of Langer’s description of the buffoon :

the indomitable living creature fending for itself, tumbling and stumbling(as the clown physically illustrates) from one situation into another, getting into scrape after scrape and getting out again, with or without a thrashing. He is the personified *elan vital*; his chance adventures and misadventures, without

much plot, though often with bizarre complications, his absurd expectations and disappointments, in fact his whole improvised existence has the rhythm of primitive, savage, if not animalian life, coping with a world that is forever taking new uncalculated turns, frustrating but exciting. (342)

Mr Visconti, like the buffoon figure described by Langer is strikingly invincible. He steals, cheats and plays tricks. However he is sure to find a way of escaping in every situation by using his personal powers. He survives by grasping at every possible opportunity which will be beneficial to him. He tells lies in order to buy an outfit of a monsignor in which he will be safe from getting captured by the allied forces. When two women mistake him for a real monsignor and insist on making their confessions, he takes advantage of his guise as an opportunity to have fun and plays with them. Finally, he achieves to get himself a deal to make his escape. Even in a threatening situation, he has an incredible energy of life and it is with this indestructable energy that he can make the necessary moves to get himself out of trouble.

When the Orient Express reaches Istanbul, Tooley is happy because she has got the curse and thinks that the train journey has done the trick and she leaves to find her boyfriend who is supposed to be somewhere at Gulhane. Henry and his aunt go to Pera Palace and Aunt Augusta informs Henry that she is expecting a message from General Abdul who used to be a Turkish ambassador in Tunis and has helped them in their negotiations with Saudi Arabia. Aunt Augusta reminds Henry that she has received a letter from General Abdul in London and also a message through Mario in Milan. Aunt Augusta stays at the hotel while Henry goes out to see around. When he comes back he sees police cars in front of the hotel and a policeman called Colonel Hakim comes upstairs to search their room and interrogates them because they have been informed that Aunt Augusta and Abdul are planning to do some sort of investment in Europe. They cannot find anything and tell Aunt Augusta and Henry that they will be seen to their planes by the police which means deportation. Aunt Augusta tells Henry that she has

bought an ingot from Paris and the police have come to look for it. The ingot is hidden at the bottom of the candle which Aunt Augusta has ordered Henry to light before the police came in the room. She enjoys fooling the police by her cunning ways. She says nobody will be suspicious of a used candle and she depends on her age as a cover. Nobody will be suspicious of an old lady. Besides, she is not worried about the deportation on the contrary she sees it as a great advantage since they will not have to pass the Turkish customs. Henry cannot understand the ingot affair and learns that his aunt is trying to help Visconti who needs money. When Henry reminds her that he has stolen her money, Aunt Augusta says: "That was a long time ago. It will all be finished by now" (TA 138). In this respect Aunt Augusta, like Visconti is also "the personified elan vital" (Langer 342) for whom life is an adventure that will be lived with expectations and frustrations. Although it may be disappointing at times, nothing in life seems to be that much destructive, on the contrary life is always exciting and there is always room for hope. Likewise, Visconti's cheating is not disastrous for her. She has already forgotten it and is ready to run with what excitement life might bring next.

Henry and Aunt Augusta are back at home. Henry finds a picture of his aunt as a young girl of eighteen in one of his father's books. He notices the free spirit of his aunt which is evident in her pose and his thoughts dwell on his father for a while who dies on the first trip he has taken abroad. Suddenly, it dawns on him that he does not know the place of his father's grave. He rings his aunt and tells her that he would like to visit his father's grave if she knows where it is. Aunt Augusta tells him that his father is buried in Boulogne but she is reluctant to visit a cemetery.

Aunt Augusta remembers the date on which Henry's father died because it is a special religious day "the feast day of the Guardian Angel". She makes a joke : "The Angel seems to have slipped up badly on that occasion unless of course he was saving your father from a worst fate. That is quite a possibility, for what on earth was your father doing in Boulogne out

of season?" (TA 144) . This is another example of black humor. Henry's father's death coincides with the feast day of the Guardian Angel. Aunt Augusta, at first implies that the angel failed to perform its duty but then she turns optimistic and tries to make sense with the undeniable fate by thinking that the Guardian Angel let him die in order to save him from getting into mischief. Humour lies in the incongruity between the Guardian Angel's widely known positive function and how this function seems to turn out negative in practice but still can be considered as positive. The protective characteristic of the angel gives the impression that it saves people when they are in danger but when this quality of the angel is thought to have a function in the death of Henry's father, it seems incongruous. If the angel had protected him, he would have been still alive. Moreover, this humour of incongruity reaches a climax with Aunt Augusta's remark that the angel was still performing its protective function by letting him die which means that Henry's father's death might have been a blessing for him.

Aunt Augusta agrees to accompany Henry to Boulogne. When they arrive there it is evening time and they go to a restaurant for dinner. Henry gets sentimental and a humorous conversation takes place between him and Aunt Augusta who has nothing to do with sentimentality:

"Perhaps my father came here the night before he died"

"Order the wine, Henry...you know you have a morbid streak. This whole expedition is a sign of it – and the urn which you so carefully preserve. If your father had been buried in Highgate I would never have come with you. I don't believe in pilgrimages to graves unless they serve another purpose."

"What other purpose does this serve?" I asked rather snappily.

"I have never been to Boulogne," Aunt Augusta said. "I am always ready to visit a new place". (TA146-7)

Her reluctance to visit the cemetery is understandable since Aunt Augusta is the symbol of vitality, she is always after adventure and she is in continuous search for what is fresh and

new. She has nothing to do with the dead. Life is rich with endless possibilities of fortunes and misfortunes and as long as one is alive, she has to keep up with the rhythm of this pendulum. In order to do this, a person needs to be flexible. The ones who are rigid are incapable of enjoying life so they are already dead, though they may be alive. She repeats Mr. Visconti's favourite biblical quotation to make her philosophy of life clear: "Let the dead bury their dead" (TA 144). Since Aunt Augusta, like Visconti is the symbol of "the pure sense of life" (Langer 327), she looks at life from the same perspective with Visconti for whom every moment in life is a celebration of human vitality. Therefore, if one is still alive, he/she should seek in this world of birth and death "as much life as possible" (Langer 333).

Thinking of Henry's father, she is surprised to see how he succeeded in going as far as Boulogne after a woman because he used to be a lazy but a strong man for whom there is no reason to fight for anything in this world. When Henry naively thinks that his father may have been in Boulogne just on business, Aunt Augusta tells him that in that case he would send his partner. Then she relates the story of his partner William Curlew who has been a very weak man. He has been jealous of Henry's father's adventurous relationships with women and wants to get rid of his wife but he has such a perfect wife that he can find no reason to leave her, so he thinks he has to make her leave him. Henry's father makes a plan and composes a letter to William's wife describing William as "a shameful liar and an ignoble lecher" who spends her money with other women. William types the letter and puts it in a yellow envelope he normally uses for bills. His wife thinks it is a bill and she ignores it. William hands it over to her and goes upstairs to have a shave. Waiting makes him tense and he cuts himself many times while shaving. They are about to go to bed and William tries to get his wife to open the letter which she thinks is a bill. Finally she opens and reads the letter then tears it and throws in the waste basket telling that it is "a few shillings at the newspaper shop which she has already sorted out in the morning" (TA 150). She climbs the bed and kisses him telling that he

has been a very good husband and she notices the cottonwools William has put on his cuts. After cleaning the cuts she plasters them and says: “How funny you look now...dear funny William. I could forgive you anything” (TA 150). Thus, William cannot escape his “uncrackably perfect” wife and one day dies in her arms.

Bergson claims that “any arrangement of acts and events is comic which gives us, in a single combination, the illusion of life and the distinct impression of a mechanical arrangement” (Bergson 105). Bergson elaborates on this view by basing his argument on the mechanism of children’s well-known toy, “the Jack-in-the-box”, “the little man who springs out of his box” (Bergson 105). No matter how one tries to push him down or lay him flat, he jumps higher. This is the confrontation of two elements which are obstinate in their nature, “one of which, being simply mechanical, generally ends by giving in to the other which treats it as a plaything” (Bergson 106). Bergson argues that this simple mechanism lies behind many comic scenes. The scene between William Curlew and his wife is an example of this kind. William hopelessly plays a game against his unbeatable wife. He has his letter written by Henry’s father and when it comes to get his wife to read it he tries several times but cannot make her read it and when she finally reads it, she still remains as the perfect wife to whom William has to give in. What can be deduced from this story is that perfection is associated with mechanical behaviour. Since mechanical behaviour is a sign of rigidity, it is not life-like. Bergson notes that life and society demand our careful attention and “a certain elasticity of mind and body” which will help us adapt ourselves to the outcome of the situations in life (72). Absolute perfection means absolute balance, therefore it does not require any performance of flexibility through which the balance can be gained back. This is contrary to the principle of the rhythm of life.

In the morning, they go to the graveside and both of them are surprised to see a woman who has been standing by the grave of Henry’s father. An argument begins over the grave

between the two women. Aunt Augusta asks who she is and what rights she has over the grave. The woman tells that her name is Miss Paterson and that Henry's father has died in her arms. Aunt Augusta wants to end the conversation and tells Henry that they should go. Henry invites the woman to have tea with them. Miss Paterson joins them in the evening and tells about her relationship with Henry's father. Aunt Augusta despises the woman for being a "little sentimental creature" (TA 159) and many times interrupts Miss Paterson's story severely by making ironic remarks. Henry becomes angry by his aunt's strict attitude towards the woman, since he has a sentimental side to his character, he feels for the woman who has loved his father and has been frequently visiting his grave. When Aunt Augusta wants to tell the story of Mr. Pottifier, Henry suggests that she might tell it another time. Aunt Augusta does not tell the story and warns him one cannot be sure there will be another time and tells him that he will regret it one day for not listening.

Aunt Augusta and Henry part in Boulogne. Henry returns home and Aunt Augusta goes to Paris telling Henry that she has things to settle there and she leaves the keys of her house to Henry. A month and a half passes without any news from Aunt Augusta. Henry feels himself lonely and misses his aunt's company and regrets not listening to Pottifier's story. He loses his interest in his dahlias. Christmas comes and Henry still has no news from his aunt. He dines in a restaurant in the neighbourhood on Christmas evening and then joins the carol service at church. Having learned from the neighbours that Henry will be at the carol service, Sergeant Sparrow and his assistant Woodrow attend the service to have a word with Henry about his aunt. After the service they ask where his aunt has been or whether he has heard any news from her so far. They also ask questions about Aunt Augusta's friends Mr Visconti and General Abdul. They tell him that General Abdul has died and before his death he has made a statement about Mr Visconti, a war criminal whom the police has already written off as dead.

After more than six-months-time, Henry receives a letter from his aunt. In her letter, Aunt Augusta tells Henry that she has decided not to return and therefore she is giving up her flat. She asks him to get rid of the furniture except the framed picture of Freetown Harbour which hangs in Wordsworth's room. She wants him to join her as soon as possible and encloses a cheque for him so that he can get a first class ticket to Buenos Aires. After having done with the arrangements Henry arrives in Buenos Aires where there is no one to meet him and he goes to the hotel where he finds a message from his aunt telling that she has gone to Paraguay to help an old friend who is in trouble. She has enclosed a ticket for the river boat to Asuncion.

On the river boat, Henry meets a man called James O'Toole whom Henry soon understands that he is Tooley's father. Henry tells about their journey on the Orient Express. When James learns that her daughter is in Katmandu he becomes anxious. He complains to Henry about the difficulty of being a father. When Henry tells him that Tooley has told that her father is a CIA agent, he says that it is her imagination. He pretends to be a researcher who writes reports to government departments.

While Henry is sitting on the deck one morning, a Czech comes and sits next to him and makes conversation with him. Henry learns that the Czech has been in prison once. He has lost his mother under Nazis and father under the communists. He escapes to Austria where he marries an Austrian girl. He has had scientific training and he has decided to do business on plastics in Argentina. After his trips to Brazil, Uruguay and Venezuela he has noticed that only in Argentina people do not drink from straws. He has made two million plastic straws but he has not sold even a hundred. He is humorous:

“You want a straw? You can have two million for free. They are stacked in my factory today. The Argentines are so conservative they won't drink through a straw. I was very nearly bankrupt, I can tell you” he said happily”

“So what do you do now?”

He gave me a cheerful grin. He seemed one of the happiest men I had ever met. He had shed his past fears and failures and sorrows more completely than most of us can do. He said ‘I manufacture plastic material and let other fools risk their money on what they make with it’. (TA 197)

Greene’s portrayal of a character from Czechoslovakia might be telling with respect to the importance of humour in surviving against all the pains and obstacles that life forces people to contend with. In his description of the Czech’s background, Greene hints the plight of people in a country which had suffered under invasions and take overs. However sad, disheartening and fearful the experiences of the Czech people might have been due to Nazi invasion, they kept up their spirits with the help of humour. Greene’s inclusion of a Czech in his panorama of characters who are capable of dealing with difficulties of life with humour is also significant on the grounds that humour had played a crucial role for the survival of the Czech people in history. In his article “*Gallows Humor*” – *A Sociological Phenomenon*, Antonin J. Obrdlik explores the positive effect of gallows humour in lifting up of the morale of the oppressed people. He supports his argument with his first hand observations which were made during his nine-month-stay in Czechoslovakia after the Nazi invasion. When the signals of an invasion became apparent, people began to invent anecdotes as “an intellectual and emotional escape from disturbing realities” (710) and this use of humour played an important role as “a manifestation of morale” (710) during the period of mobilization. Obrdlik describes the aftermath of the invasion:

Everybody could hear and see for himself the cold facts of reality. The country was plundered and robbed. There was hardly a single Czech family from which at least one member did not disappear into a concentration camp; and the new masters....began to build their New Order on foundations cemented with the suffering and blood of their helpless victims. (Obrdlik 712)

He puts down the spreading of gallows humour to such circumstances he describes above and claims that the call for gallows humour can be seen in other countries which suffer in the hands of their oppressors. People in such countries live with the fear of death and they are always under the pressure of uncertainty. They are relieved from the tension caused by the disturbing atmosphere by inventing and spreading jokes about their oppressors and by ridiculing their enemies the members of the society unite and weaken the morale of the invaders. Thus, they strengthen their resistance and revive their hope in their struggle both for their individual and national survival.

Referring to his experiences on many occasions, Obrdlik stresses the positive influence of gallows humour on the mental and emotional state of people and tells that he witnessed how pessimists turned into optimists on hearing an anecdote. He also adds:

In addition, I am inclined to believe that what is true about individuals is true also about whole nations – namely, that the purest type of ... humor is born out of sad experiences accompanied by grief and sorrow. It is spontaneous and deeply felt – the very necessity of life which it helps to preserve. (715)

This view draws a parallel to Langer's comic theory. According to Langer, the "sense of life" as the basic vital feeling which stimulates human beings to survive has a close relation with humour. She recognizes the gallows humour as "the harsh laugh in distress" (340) and claims that the rise in vital feeling on such occasions is a sign of "self assertion" (340). Since the urge to survive is the basic motive of human beings, they have a natural tendency to preserve their existence, therefore they spontaneously cope with every situation which causes in them a loss of balance. When the tension rises and the balance is lost, humour in Langer's terms – "a sudden heightening of the vital rhythm" (345) – emerges. Unpleasant and painful experiences are threats to the physical and psychological well-being since they shake people off their balance and humour appears in such moments to regain the balance and provide the continuity of life.

In the case of the Czech in the story, he has gone through some sad experiences like imprisonment, losing of parents under the regime of oppressors or fleeing to another country. Despite the grimness of these events, he succeeds in surviving. He gets married in the country where he has taken refuge, sets up a business which terribly fails, nevertheless he starts from scratch and finds a way to make things work by changing his perspective. This strength of coping with difficulties of life seems to be in close connection with the character's humorous view of his unpleasant experience. He has spent a fortune on a job which has led him to the edge of bankruptcy yet he seems to be the happiest man of the world and he can make fun of his own failure. He can talk cheerfully about his useless two million plastic straws stacked in his factory. His use of humour maintains his balance in the face of a frustrating experience and becomes his way of challenge against the nasty surprises of fate.

As the boat arrives at Formosa, Wordsworth comes to take Henry to the customs on Aunt Augusta's orders. Henry, who has not been very fond of Wordsworth and the unexpected encounters with him, is now happy to see him and greets him with pleasure: "Whatever trouble he might have caused me in that dead old world of mine, I was overjoyed to see him now" (TA 205).

Wordsworth takes Henry to his aunt's new house which seems to Henry that it belongs to a millionaire, but as he discovers it has been neglected for long and inside there is not much furniture except a couple of chairs and a dining table. Aunt Augusta gives him the news that they have been reunited with Mr. Visconti who is on his way to join them. She also tells him that on her way to Buenos Aires she has come across with Dambreuse: "Poor man, he had aged a great deal. I didn't even recognize him until he began to tell me about his metallurgical company and his family in Toulouse" (TA 218). Humour in this scene rises from the accidental meeting and the repetition of the comic action. Monseieur Dambreuse and Aunt Augusta come across on a cruiser after so many years and begin to make conversation without

recognizing each other. Humour arises from how they come to remember each other. Aunt Augusta realizes that he is Monseieur Dambreuse when he tells her about his occupation and his family in Toulouse. This is the statement with which he had deceived Aunt Augusta and another woman in his better days and now after so many years it turns out that he still tries his chance with women by using the same trick. The fact that he is trying to play his old trick on a woman whom he had already deceived is humorous. This is the kind of humour based on repetition. Bergson explains repetition as “a situation, that is, a combination of circumstances, which recurs several times in its original form and thus contrasts with the changing stream of life” (Bergson 119). This happens in everyday life though in a crude way. According to Bergson it is not funny when we come across a friend in the street whom we have seen along time ago but the coincidence would be funny if we happen to see that friend for a third or a fourth time on the same day. Therefore, when we imagine a series of events and within the flow one of these events happens again including either the same or different characters, it will be an unusual coincidence. Aunt Augusta and Dambreuse had met in Paris for the first time and had an affair which ended with Aunt Augusta’s discovery of Dambreuse’s secret about his family and the other woman. These two characters meet again after several years under different circumstances and in a different surrounding which makes an extraordinary coincidence. Dambreuse’s health condition has deteriorated, however he is still willing to create new secrets in the same way as he had experienced with Aunt Augusta many years before. Besides, his failure to recognize Aunt Augusta makes the event more humorous.

Bergson notes that “life presents itself to us as evolution in time and complexity in space. Regarded in time, it is the continuous evolution of a being growing older; it never goes backwards and repeats itself” (118). Thus repetitions result in “mechanisation of life” (126) which creates a comic effect since such rigidity contradicts with the vitality and the variety of things in life. Accordingly, absentmindedness can be a cause of the ludicrous in events or

characters since forgetfulness lead to repetition of some actions which will happen mechanically and clash with the vitality and variety of life.

There is humour also in her excuse for not recognizing and for not being recognized. She pities Dambreuse and implies that she has failed to recognize him due to his appearance which has changed so much by old age. On the other hand, she explains that Dambreuse has not recognized her because of her hair colour. Her high opinion of herself and her feelings of superiority contribute to humour in the scene. Although both of them have aged, and both are likely to have a worn appearance, Aunt Augusta sees herself in a much better condition in comparison to Dambreuse and her discovery that he is still telling the same lie, puts him in an inferior position. Humour in this scene can be explained by superiority theory since Aunt Augusta's attitude appears as a self-congratulation on realizing "some deformed thing in another" (Hobbes 1998 119).

Aunt Augusta tells Henry that Mr. Visconti thinks that he can at last make a fortune in Paraguay and wants someone who can do the accounts for him. She asks Henry to stay and live with them in Paraguay. She explains how life with them will be like if he chooses to stay:

Tomorrow you may be shot in the street by a policeman because you haven't understood Guarani, or a man may knife you in a cantina because you can't speak Spanish and he thinks you are acting in a superior way. Next week when we have our Dakota, perhaps it will crash with you over Argentina. My dear Henry, if you live with us you won't be edging day by day across to any last wall. The wall will find you in its own accord without your help, and everyday you live will seem to you a kind of victory.
(TA 225)

Next day, Henry decides to go to town and he is given a red scarf by his aunt to carry with him since it is the National Day and red is the colour of the governing party, Colorado. After a stroll in the town Henry takes his way back home and as he is passing by the headquarters of the Colorado Party, he gets into a fit of sneezing. Without thinking he takes

the scarf from his pocket and blows his nose. Suddenly he finds himself on the pavement with a bleeding nose and the party members surround him. He thinks himself lucky by thinking something worse: “if I had blown my nose near a group of gauchos I might well have received a knife in the ribs” (TA 228). After Henry is taken to the police station his good humour lingers. He tries to explain that he has blown his nose by mistake but he cannot make them understand. While he is repeating words like *ambassador* or *ingles* which he has thought may be of some help, a young police officer hits him but not in a harsh way. Henry is learning from his experience: “I was discovering something new. Physical violence, like the dentist’s drill, is seldom as bad as one fears” (TA 229). Henry’s recent discovery is humorous from the point of incongruity. There is a comparison of two different actions which evoke fear in people. However these actions are completely different from each other by their function and they cause fear in different ways, they are subsumed under the same concept. Human battering is a form of physical violence: it scares people and it is absolutely harmful for human health. On the other hand, a dentist’s drill has also a scaring quality though it is used for the improvement of health. Therefore, subsuming of both battering and dentist’s drill under the concept of physical violence creates humour of incongruity which is topped with Henry’s conclusion that these actions are not as scary as one thinks.

To his surprise the young officer who has hit him, gives him a dirty handkerchief, then he writes a street name and number on a piece of paper from which Henry gets the idea that they are asking for his address. Everyone around comes closer with curiosity. Henry shakes his head because he does not know the address of his aunt’s house. Then the young officer whom Henry begins to think as his friend writes down the names of hotels to which Henry again shakes his head.

Suddenly Henry remembers the funeral, his aunt’s remark that she has been once in a premature cremation, his thought about how it would be a break in his monotonous retired life

and how true that thought has become. Besides there has been the lawnmower and the rain about which he has felt so worried about. Then he bursts into laughter. This laughter of Henry's can be explained by relief theory. Spencer describes "that laughter is a display of muscular excitement and so illustrates the general law that feeling passing a certain pitch habitually vents itself in bodily action" (200). Henry's new discoveries about life which started with his journey accompanied by his aunt, has violated the whole pattern of values and norms in which he used to contemplate the world. Having lost his balance, he tries to adapt himself to a world to which he has been a stranger before. Through losing and gaining his balance as a result of his new experiences, Henry makes progress at developing a different outlook on life. During this progress, his thoughts and feelings accumulate and form some tension in his nervous system. His encounter with physical violence causes the tension to exceed the limit and discharge itself through laughter. His laughter makes the company around him angry and the young officer takes away his handkerchief, and another officer hits his ear. Finally when he gives the name O'Toole, it works and James comes to his rescue. He says that he can arrange his release and wants to have a talk with his aunt about Mr. Visconti. He also mentions that Mr. Visconti is in prison. When they arrive at the house of Aunt Augusta Visconti appears from the lavatory to greet them. This incongruity between O'Toole's statement and the reality makes the scene humorous.

Henry has been waiting to see Mr. Visconti for a long time since he has been so dear to his aunt and "not many men have been so loved or have been so forgiven that much" (TA 236). He is expecting to see a tall, dark, lean and aristocratic Italian but Mr. Visconti is just the opposite of what Henry thinks of him in his mind's eye: "short and fat and bald" (TA 236). He has a large gap in his front teeth and his hand resembles a bird's claw due to a broken little finger. Humour lies in the incongruity between Henry's imaginary picture of Visconti and Visconti's appearance in real life. In accordance with the impression Visconti

left in Aunt Augusta, Henry imagines Visconti as a very attractive, handsome man. This expectation of Henry is reduced to nothing as a result of Visconti's stepping on the scene with his totally unattractive physical appearance.

Visconti explains how he has fooled the lie detectors. When they asked him simple, innocent questions such as what his favourite food is, he answers them thinking of Aunt Augusta and he gets excited or when they ask serious questions he stops thinking his darling and calms down so the police gets angry both with the machine and Visconti. He thinks Champagne works better as a lie detector because "it encourages a man to be expansive, even reckless" (TA 237). Here again, humour rises from incongruity. Alcoholic drinks are known to weaken the person and blur his consciousness and cannot be used as a test of telling the truth but Visconti suggests they would serve the police better as lie detectors. This opinion of Visconti is humorous and it also has a tinge of superiority in it. With his playing around with the police and their lie detectors Visconti proves his intelligence and his power to control himself. Moreover, he makes fun of the authority with his incongruous suggestion that the police should use champagne in order to make people confess.

He also fools the CIA agent, O'Toole who has come to make a deal with him. O'Toole tells him that he may say that the file is closed and the police will not trouble him any more. Knowing that a famous picture is in Visconti's possession, he demands the stolen work of art in return for his security. But Visconti says that the picture has been given to him by the Prince as a present. Besides he is used to living in danger and "cash alone has a tongue" (TA 239) for him. Finally Visconti gets O'Toole pay ten thousand dollars for a picture of Leonardo Da Vinci which is hidden under the framed photograph of Freetown Harbour that Henry has brought with his aunt's orders from England. After O'Toole leaves Henry finds Visconti laughing in the livingroom and learns that the picture is not the genuine one.

When Visconti's appearance, his character and his ways of dealing with life are taken into consideration, he is, like Aunt Augusta, a grotesque character. He violates the concept of attractiveness with his short, fat and bald appearance. There is no expression of a meaning in his eyes. Greene describes them as if "one could read into them whatever one liked" (TA 236). Moreover, with its broken finger his deformed hand which calls into mind the claw of a bird points at the grotesque image of his body. Bakhtin agrees that the "transformation of the human element into an animal one" is a characteristic of the grotesque" (316) and "the combination of human and animal traits is...one of the most ancient grotesque forms" (316). Bakhtin also suggests that the grotesque is "the basis of all the abuses, uncrownings, teasing..." (341). Visconti's misuse of a religious title, his mockery of the figures of authority and his ability to annoy them give a tinge of the grotesque. In addition, Visconti's playfully and intelligently dealing with threatening situations where his life and freedom are in danger highlights his invincibility which also hints at a characteristic of the grotesque. Since Visconti is considered as a grotesque figure, he represents in Bakhtin's terms "the people's growing and ever-victorious body that is "at home" in the cosmos" (341). He appears as the embodiment of all the forces in cosmos and therefore "death holds no terror" for him. Besides, his bodily and earthly existence as a grotesque character is positive. He can always find alternative solutions, he wants to wallow in prosperity and he is interested in women. All of these traits of bodily life "fertility, growth and brimming over abundance" (Bakhtin19) are present in all people and emphasize the vital and triumphant form of human existence (Bakhtin 19).

Visconti describes the importance of survival and the intelligence that plays a crucial role in the act of survival by giving the example of rats: "Rats indeed are ahead of us indisputably in one respect – they live underground. We only began to live underground during the last war. Rats have understood the danger of surface life for thousands of years.

When atom bombs fall the rats will survive” (TA 247). He also thinks that God has created a variety of species in case “some of his prototypes fail”. He claims that “the future of the world lies with the rat” (TA 246).

Hyers argues that the trickster figure in the majority of trickster myths is a character who lives a series of adventures and misadventures which are loosely connected with each other. Tricksters have no specific place in society or in the organization of things. Their unique occupation in life is to survive against all difficulties and adapt themselves to the situations that occur due to unplanned coincidences (177). They search for a social identity by moving between the borderlines of human and animal kingdoms. The trickster is known to be an admirer of particular abilities of some animals. They wish they could “fly like the eagle, or see like the owl, or leap like the cougar or run like the rabbit, or eject musk like a skunk” (185). This wish also holds a mirror to the idea of having totem animals. The person identifies herself/himself with the specific animal whose powers s/he wants to own. Moreover, Hyers admits that “some animal can be pointed which is superior to humans in nearly every respect” (185). He also remarks our nakedness when we are compared to animals and our depravity of skills and talents which most animals are blessed with. What lies behind the human survival is their adaptability. While animals are endowed with enviable powers, human beings are gifted with a brain which is capable of creating “all sorts of paradises and utopias” as well as “holocausts and hells” (51). The power of imagination is the most striking function of our brain and helps us create elaborate alternatives for the various situations we may meet.

Langer describes the use of these abilities as the fundamental components of a biological pattern. All living things tend to keep their balance and therefore they have to make the best of the conditions they are in. If there is an obstacle, it needs to be removed. If it cannot be removed, adaptation is to be achieved. She gives examples of the power of

adaptability inherent in living things. She gives an example of a tree which cannot get enough sunlight due to other surrounding trees. In such a condition the tree begins to grow thinner and taller. Animals such as chimney swifts or mice naturally benefit from the houses built by human beings. Chimney swifts which are used to building their nests among rocks, choose building walls to accommodate themselves. Mice are good at choosing the right spot in a house to wander about. They prefer kitchens where they can find warmth and food (Langer 328). “All creatures live by opportunities in a world fraught with disasters” (Langer 329). What makes human beings adaptable for survival is the gift of brain and the power of their imagination. Human beings live by “a brainy opportunism in face of an essentially dreadful universe” (Langer 331).

Visconti and Aunt Augusta decide to get married and they give a party at their house. Visconti breaks the news to Henry and he reasons their decision: “now that the sexual urge is behind us marriage presents no danger of infidelity or boredom” (TA 248). The association of infidelity and boredom with marriage is humour of incongruity since marriage is an event by which people unite to enjoy their life together and promise to be faithful to each other. But their thinking of this event under the concept of sexual urge, undermines the socially accepted pattern of marriage. Humour rises again from the violation of what is ordinary.

Since divergence from the widely accepted ways of thinking and living is the outstanding characteristic of both Aunt Augusta and Visconti, their marriage tops their challenge against the commonplace. Aunt Augusta is also a grotesque figure like Visconti. Aunt Augusta’s appearance in the funeral with her extraordinary physical features, her comfortable attitude in talking about sex, her interest in men, travel and drinking, point at her strong connection with the bodily and worldly existence which is a quality of the grotesque. Aunt Augusta’s joyful involvement in life, her unusual attitudes in different circumstances of life, her mockery and denial of the established rules and social manners appear as an assertion of her vital feeling

while dissolving the indissoluble. Her endless energy of life and her complete openness to the new and unexpected also strengthen her vital grotesque image. Accordingly Bakhtin emphasizes the significance of this vitality: “The last thing one can say of the real grotesque is that it is static; on the contrary it seeks to grasp in its imagery the very act of becoming and growth, the eternal incomplete unfinished nature of being” (52).

Therefore the union of the extremely vital grotesque figures of Aunt Augusta and Visconti highlights the fertility and eternal regeneration that takes place in the system of the world where old age and death are the necessary processes in the formation of new lives. Their tumbling down of the established norms and their free spirit strikes as a blow on the widespread beliefs and domination of conventions while offering new alternatives of living. Their marriage, in a sense is a liberation from restrictions and a celebration of existence with its richness in variety. Accordingly, Bakhtin explains the destructive and reviving function of the grotesque humour :

To consecrate inventive freedom, to permit the combination of a variety of different elements, and their rapprochement, to liberate from the prevailing point of view of the world, from conventions and established truths, from clichés, from all that is humdrum and universally accepted. (35)

Langer also emphasizes the celebrating and alive spirit of humour which exists as a structural element in comedy and she notes on comedy as “ an art form that arises naturally wherever people are gathered to celebrate life..triumphs..weddings...” (331). Humour still springs at the end of the story since there is a celebration of vitality. The story closes with the party scene where Visconti and Aunt Augusta celebrate their marriage with hundred guests none of whom is a real friend. Henry thinks that Visconti must have invited the whole town to prove that he is free and prosperous again. Visconti’s celebration suits Langer’s description as “an image of human vitality holding its own in the world amid the surprises of unplanned

coincidence” (331). He has gone through difficult times but he has survived successfully in the end.

At the party among the guests are O’Toole, the police officers and the Czech. Henry meets the chief customs officer who eats eight kilos of beef a day. He urges Henry to dance with his daughter and tells him to advise her to eat more meat. Henry and the girl who is under eighteen have a talk over poetry and then he excuses himself and tries to find a quiet place for himself. While he is wandering in the garden he sees Wordsworth’s body lying on the ground. He has been killed by a man who is hired by Visconti to watch over the house against strangers. He goes back to the house and breaks the news but Aunt Augusta cannot be bothered: “Yes, dear, all in good time, but can’t you see that now I am dancing with Mr. Visconti?” (TA 264). The final and the most outstanding incongruity of this world is set in the closing scene: death and celebration of life appear within the same frame. However, Aunt Augusta implies in her reply that life goes on and she is full with love of life. She will be playing her part in this game with the world and take her chances with fate because as Langer claims “the world is as promising and alluring as it is dangerous and opposed” (348). Besides, survival in such a world will be achieved through “continuous balance of sheer vitality ” (Langer 333).

Putting the pieces together Henry finally understands that Aunt Augusta is his real mother and he settles to a new life with his new family. He joins Mr. Visconti in import-export business and starts to learn the local language while planning a marriage with the sixteen-year-old daughter of the Chief of Customs Office. Consequently, Henry decides to take his chances with an unpredictable world which has surprising as well as dangerous ways with all living creatures. During his journey with his aunt he has been shaken off his balance and thus he has learnt to adapt himself to unexpected turns of life in order to survive. The sense of humour he has developed throughout the journey plays an important role in his

adaptation to the way of the world which has never crossed his mind. He realizes that the world he used to contemplate in rigid frames is in fact full of incongruities and nothing is worth to be of major concern. Dealing with difficulties and surviving despite all dangers in this world requires the ability to enjoy life with all of its absurdities and misfortunes while looking through the glasses of humour.

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CONCLUSION

The two novels of Graham Greene which have been studied in the previous chapters within the frame of Susanne Langer's theory *The Comic Rhythm*, convey the author's concept of humour. In Greene's novels, humour, like life itself is something alive and it dances to the continuously changing and developing rhythm of life which is maintained by the vital force, in other words by the survival impulse in every human being.

In Greene's novels the rhythm of life develops through an interaction between the inhabitants of this world where coexistence is an essential principle to survive. Life is a game that has to be played together and the harmony of life depends on the coexistence of the opposing powers. Accordingly, Langer underlines the nature of existence by noting that "life is teleological" (328). Since everything on earth has a function to perform, the opposition of powers also serves for the maintenance of the rhythm of life. Likewise, humour has its unique place in this teleological system of nature. It springs out as "a lift of vital feeling" (340) in the individual who is caught off guard at the moments of confrontation with the world's suddenly- sent surprises which can be confusing, threatening or amusing at times. Shaken by the new experience, the individual retrieves his/her balance by using humour.

The stories of the people Greene unfolds in his books are as intricate as real life. Life has a complex structure, rich with possibilities of experience. Innumerable factors, situations and events which are uncontrollable affect human life and they come to be known as fate. Greene's characters, like the people in the actual world have to deal with their fate in accordance with their view of life, their needs and their abilities. The differences in their perception of life, their demands and their goals are revealed during their interaction and these give rise to tensions. The tensions upset the balance of the characters and resolution is

necessary because keeping the equilibrium is crucial for survival of the individual and life gets its rhythm from these tensions and their releases.

Greene sets the rhythm of life in the books by letting his characters follow their own pursuit in a world where there is no escape from confrontation with the odds of life. By throwing his characters into different situations through a play on the elements of fortune and destiny, he creates an organic pattern. He also shows the interchangeability of roles and thus reveals how inconsistent the stance of human beings is in a world where things occur out of their control. Humour rises from this inconsistency and unpredictability of the events since they shake the people and stimulate their vital force to react.

However, Greene also shows that humour again rises when something is always consistent or predictable since consistency or predictability is a sign of rigidity and dullness which strictly contradicts the flexible and refreshing nature of life, the organic pattern so to speak. The vital pattern of life which Greene develops in his books reflects the infinite variety of situations and the likelihood of the rise of humour in numerous ways in accordance with the diversity of human experience. Humour may be stimulated in turn by aggression, incongruity, relief and superiority or sometimes humour may involve all of these conditions all at once. In addition, Greene underlines the fact that whatever its ways, its functions or its aims may be, humour is always the kick of the vital feeling because it has a reviving effect on its user.

A Gun for Sale begins with a murder and has a dark atmosphere in general but there is – though a little- space for humour in the rhythmic structure of the plot which is constructed on chase and pursuit. The double-crossed gunman Raven and people he gets to know throughout his pursuit of revenge; Anne Crowder and her fiancée, detective sergeant Jimmy Mather, the

double-crossing agent Cholmondeley and his boss Sir Marcus are the main characters of the novel.

Raven who is depicted with a physical deformity is a victim of loneliness and poverty and he is full of distrust and hatred against people, especially women. Therefore, his humour is always of the bitter kind such as sarcasm and aggressive humour. Accordingly, when he laughs, it is not a laughter of joy but a laughter of distress which bursts out at critical moments. For instance when his hatred against women is rekindled by his noticing the look of disgust on the face of the shop girl, he channels his aggression by using hostile humour. He reflects his feelings of hatred both for women and for his deformity in the guise of insulting or sarcastic remarks which he directs both at the shop girl and to Alice, the maid where he stayed. When he learns that he is cheated by the agent and overhears in the phone boot what people think of him, his laughter is the vent of his bottled up feelings of frustration and misery.

Cholmondeley is a figure of grotesque humour. His exaggerated features and incredibly appalling appearance with his perversity evoke negative feelings, on the other hand he is comical with his human frailties, such as his obsession with sweets or his weak stomach which cannot stand to see or hear any cruelty. The incongruous proportion of the elements confuses the mind and stimulates the imagination of people thus helps them open up different perspectives on life in order to get a better understanding of the possibilities for other forms of existence. Greene also uses this kind of humour to highlight the fact that there is always a dark side to life and grotesque humour is a way to turn what is scaring into laughing material and thus it gives a sense of release from fear.

Anne Crowder and Jimmy Mather are introduced by Greene as an incongruous couple. Greene juxtaposes Anne's lively, humorous character with Mather's dull and uninteresting

nature. The difference in their attitudes become more distinct at moments of stress. She is unhappy because she and Mather cannot afford to get married. She is anxious because she has to start a new job in another town and there is a possibility of Mather's joining the army if a war breaks out. When she feels the tension, Anne's humour rises as a defense mechanism and finds expression in light talk or laughter. Thus, she gets rid of the tension and anxiety which is raised by her fear and worries concerning her present and future condition.

There are some other instances where Anne's humour flourishes. When Raven threatens her with his gun and forces her to go with him to a deserted housing estate with the intention of killing her, although she is scared and she can sense what his intention is, her vital feeling responds with humour. Her use of humour when faced with danger of death, is a way of distancing or stepping back from the seriousness of the situation. A person who is not absorbed by the unpleasant situation can keep calm and sane, thus s/he can recover the emotional balance which is lost by the shock of the threat.

Anne confronts danger of death for a second time when she decides to help Raven and goes out with Cholmondeley. During her meeting with Cholmondeley she feels tense because she is scared. Again, her humour springs and she makes jokes, thus she collects her courage.

There are also moments of triumph for Anne where her humour appears as humour of superiority. When Anne is saved by Raven and they spend a night together hiding in a shed, Anne tells him the story of the cat and the fox. She associates herself with the cat who has one but safe trick whereas she mocks Raven by associating him with the fox who boasts of his many tricks but gets killed at the end. Anne rejoices her superiority by this tale because she feels herself cleverer and more talented in getting out of the tight spots of life. Although she knows that the police are watching them and they are thinking that she is an accomplice of Raven, she believes she can make up a story and prove herself innocent. Her instinct to

survive is so strong that she is the most likely character in the book to have a comic spirit. However dangerous is the situation she falls into, she has that vital power to stand against it.

There are also minor characters in the book such as the medical students Buddy and Watt. Buddy is another grotesque figure whose appearance evokes in the mind a beast-like creature. He is a failure at school and he cannot find himself a girlfriend. He has fears about his future because he is aware of his inability to succeed. These feelings produce some tension in Buddy which finds expression in a sick kind of humour. He is the organizer of the day of the rag at the hospital and he tries to gain a status at school through his use of humour.

He cannot stand the other medical student Watt's success because it reminds him of his own failure. Therefore he diverts his aggression in a somewhat inappropriate and mean way by using humour. He enters Watt's house and forces him to take off his trousers and pours ink on his dearly medical books. However mean Buddy's release of his negative feelings concerning his insufficiency is, it is still a form of self-assertion and a sign of the spark of life in him.

Watt, on the other hand, feels scared against the unexpected and disturbing intrusion of Buddy. His feelings of fear and anger build up some tension and find their release in the form of sarcasm and black humour. He responds to the primitive behaviour of his opponent by making intellectual remarks, thus proving himself superior although he is put into a situation of embarrassment. Watt's use of humour in this situation both helps him overcome his fear and rise superior over the inferior position he is forced into.

The reversal of the roles and the inconsistency of stances of people are strikingly illustrated by Greene in the scene where Buddy accidentally meets Raven and gets caught in his own trap. Raven gets him stripped to disguise himself in Buddy's clothes. Thus, Buddy becomes the victim of ridicule while he is looking for other preys. In addition, when the

incongruity between the physical appearance is considered the reversal of the roles seems humorous from another perspective. Raven is transformed to a powerful figure despite his thin and weak appearance whereas Buddy's bulky body is turned into a deflated balloon.

Sir Marcus, has no sense of humour but his character is a reflection of sheer opportunism. He is comical since he is like a mechanical figure who is devoted to his greed. Despite his deteriorating illness and his closeness to death, he is continually making up calculations and planning world wars which will make him richer. This rigidity in his character creates a comic effect.

Greene ends his novel with death but at the same time he unites Anne and Mather. Promising of a marriage also suggests that this is a world of regeneration as well as it is a place to die. Life will go on since it is alive with its all kinds of absurdities, incongruities and dangers. Although Greene lets his social misfits like Raven, Cholmondeley and Sir Marcus die, he also implies there will always be people like them. A world without them will be incomplete. Likewise the pure sense of life cannot be rejoiced without any tension, neither there will be any rhythm. In such a world where would humour be?

In *Travels with My Aunt*, Greene explores a wider range of humour and uses a more rhythmic structure of plot when it is compared to *A Gun for Sale*. He focuses on the relationship of an aunt with her nephew and portrays their interaction with other people during their travels. By interweaving the events through the frame of travel Greene produces a pulsating rhythm which reflects the eternal vitality and perpetual movement towards future. Travelling between countries parallels the development and maturing of people since new places and new acquaintances give people deeper understanding about the ways of the world.

The story opens with the funeral of Henry Pulling's mother. A beginning with death brings Henry together with a closer relative who is full of life and leads him to an adventurous

and exciting discovery of a new world. Henry meets his Aunt Augusta in whose company he will hear stories of other people and will learn to look at life from different points of view and develop a sense of humour by breaking the rigid frame of his conventional glasses. Thus, Henry is introduced to a world where he discovers his vital feeling and feels the joy of expressing himself freely.

Greene creates a good deal of humour of incongruity by juxtaposing the clashing characters of Henry and Aunt Augusta. Henry is an unmarried, retired bank manager whose hobby is to raise flowers in his garden. He is brought up by a puritanical mother and his view of life along with his temperament have been shaped in accordance with the puritanical mode. He is quite conservative and a very dull character. On the other hand Aunt Augusta is a free spirit, full of life, always interesting and too openminded for an old person of her age. Greene also hints at the unusual character of Aunt Augusta by depicting her with bright red hair. She is a passionate traveller and quite unpredictable. She can put across what she thinks as bluntly as she likes on any subject concerning the taboo ones, too. Therefore, her meetings with Henry, the stories she tells him, her views on certain subjects or her way of dealing with some issues that she reveals to him come as a shock to Henry. There are many incidents where Henry experiences some shock or confusion and loses his emotional balance. In time Henry learns to regain his emotional balance by changing his perspective on life while dealing with things in a different way which he is not accustomed to doing before.

At first Henry is shocked by his aunt's remarks about his father's sex life and he gets more shocked when Aunt Augusta tells him that her sister is not his real mother. Aunt Augusta makes fun of the frigidity of her deceased sister by calling her sarcastically a saint. The reason for Aunt Augusta's mocking of her deceased sister may have its roots at the past. Since Aunt Augusta used to love Henry's father and Henry is actually her son but brought up by her sister, she is likely to feel some jealousy. Since, she represents the vital force in the

book, she is portrayed by Greene as a woman who is too caught up in her own desires and pursuits in life to stop and give up her pleasures for the sake of parenthood. She seems to be a child on her own with her inexhaustable energy. Accordingly, she implies to Henry that she is still full of with this energy by referring to her sex life in an open way which embarrasses Henry. Humour rises from the violation of the moral values that are held high in society and incongruity between the minds and the ages of the two characters. The young one happens to be more narrow-minded whereas the older one is just the opposite.

When Henry goes to his Aunt's house, he meets Wordsworth, the black lover of Aunt Augusta. In this scene, Henry is again confused by Aunt Augusta's filippant and tart-like behaviour. Aunt Augusta avoids Henry's question by an ambiguous answer. By giving an evasive answer, Aunt Augusta escapes by violating the conversation rules and raises more curiosity and this gives rise to humour. Although Henry senses a strange relationship between Aunt Augusta and Wordsworth, he shakes the disturbing thought away.

The scenes where Greene juxtaposes Henry and Wordsworth are also humorous. Wordsworth's joking with Henry by using the intercom and his telling of Henry an anecdote about how he made fun of the parson of the neighbourhood can be explained by superiority or aggressive theories of humour. The fact that the parson represents religious authority, he has a repressive power on people's behaviour. Wordsworth grasps the chance to strip the parson of his social status and respectability and get a feeling of relief. Wordsworth's humour may also be considered as hostile humour due to his feeling of inferiority which stems from his ethnic origin.

Greene creates different forms of humour through using Aunt Augusta's stories about different people. On their trip in Brighton, Aunt Augusta tells her story about Curran. The story is about Curran and Aunt Augusta's establishment of a church for dogs. Humour in this

story stems from Curran's idea of applying the institution of church and its services for the beasts. He adjusts some text from the bible, turns the charity activities for the homeless into collection of dog biscuits for the stray, organizes mock rituals and declares himself the head of the church. Greene uses this story to turn the tables down and reverse the established conventions of social life. The church as a sacred institution is profaned and the dogs as profane creatures are lifted to a superior position.

Henry gets too confused and he feels suspicious about Aunt Augusta's stories. His balance is absolutely shaken and he cannot decide what to believe. The shocks and confusions caused by Aunt Augusta raises the tension in Henry to a level enough to get some relief by springing into action. He phones Scotland Yard and asks for Sergeant Sparrow. When he gets teased by the mechanical speaking style of the person on the other side of the line, he reacts by expressing his anger through using hostile humour against the detective on the phone. He looks back his past and compares his present self with his former self and he feels a sense of victory. He has never been able to express his anger or frustration when he used to work as a bank manager.

Greene delivers another story from the character of Aunt Augusta. The story reveals how the reality of death is handled by a person who knows he is going to die. Greene illustrates the use of black humour as a defense mechanism. The story is about Henry's Uncle Jo. When Uncle Jo gets too ill to travel, he decides to continue his travels in an absurd way. Aunt Augusta arranges him a house with fifty-two rooms. Uncle Jo spends his last days travelling from one room to another dragging his suitcase behind and his nurse following him and he dies before he reaches his last destination. The story derives its humour from both absurdity and incongruity. The concept of travelling between countries is applied to travelling between the rooms of a big house. The thought is absurd and its absurdity depends on the incongruity between the normal way of travelling and the extraordinary way Uncle Jo realizes

his will. This unusual thought points to the surge of vital feeling in the individual and a way of challenging against his/her mortality through fantasy. It also stresses the chief struggle of human beings in their journey of life is to achieve self-realization and their permanent desire to get as much as they can from life.

Henry who has gained a new insight into different possibilities of experiences through Aunt Augusta's stories, develops a sense of humour. He makes a joke about Uncle Jo's death which affects him deeply. He makes a funny remark by saying that Uncle Jo was lucky because he did not have to travel with tourist allowance otherwise it would be too costly for him. Henry uses black humour and achieves to keep his distance from the unpleasant situation of Uncle Jo who had to die crawling on the floor dragging a suitcase in a pool of wee-wee. Thus, he brushes away the disturbing reality of death and he gains his emotional balance back through his use of humour.

Henry carries on his adaptation to a new world he is introduced by Aunt Augusta who upsets all of his values. Henry is faced with another shock when he learns what goes on at the Heathrow and the tricks Aunt Augusta plays there in order to avoid customs. Aunt Augusta's careful study of new regulations, her calculations and plans, her tolerance with trivial illegalities and thieveries are an explicit violation of the rules which are made to keep society and its members in a harmonious order. Greene's use of humour again emphasizes the vital force which stimulates the individual's mental power to grasp every opportunity so as to make the best of every situation. Any obstacle that is met on the way to achieve a goal is frustrating for the individual, therefore it has to be removed. Like any trickster figure Aunt Augusta plays for her survival, too.

Henry is confused again by his new discovery about Aunt Augusta but he succeeds in adapting himself to this new situation through reality assimilation. At first he cannot reconcile

himself to the idea that Aunt Augusta is committing the crime of smuggling. His balance is lost by this disturbing thought, however he makes a remarkable recovery of his balance through his use of humour. When he reconsiders the situation from another perspective he adapts to a new understanding which sweeps aside the thought of crime. He convinces himself that if Aunt Augusta has a very large amount of money with her, this cannot be thought as smuggling but a business deal.

Greene also shows in the character of Aunt Augusta that an individual's sense of humour helps to view things that seem awful in a funny way. Aunt Augusta's story with Monseieur Dambreuse. He is one of Aunt Augusta's lovers and he is found out to be cheating her with another woman. Aunt Augusta reconciles herself to this embarrassing situation by her tolerant attitude which shows itself in her humour. She thinks that having such an affair is a real success for a man of his age. Moreover, her understanding of love is again striking since she does not mind the other women. However, Monseieur Dambreuse takes the matter seriously, yields to his pride and finishes their relationship. Moreover, her tolerance with adultery and her willingness to continue the relationship rises Aunt Augusta to a superior position. She pities him because he feels like a fool. This incongruity between the responses of Aunt Augusta and Monseieur Dambreuse is humorous since it violates the conventional understanding of love and reverses the stances of a man and a woman in a relationship.

Greene introduces another lover of Aunt Augusta, Mr. Visconti whom she has loved the most among her other lovers. Aunt Augusta tells Henry about her adventures with Mr. Visconti. Mr. Visconti is depicted as a buffoon figure. He is a survivor and he achieves his survival through stealing, cheating and tricking. He can overcome any difficulty or danger by grabbing at every opportunity that will be beneficial for his use and he also finds time to entertain himself in the meanwhile. His escape from Italy during the German occupation by disguising himself as a monsignor shows how he is capable of keeping himself safe from

danger while enjoying the every moment of life. When he is caught by the police, he fools the lie detectors and the police by his ability to control himself through his use of humour. He achieves adaptation through his power of imagination. He represents the élan vital like Aunt Augusta, the undefeatable, endless source of energy which demands for more experience and more enjoyment from life.

The marriage of these two indomitable figures, Aunt Augusta and Visconti at the end of the book, is sheer celebration of life with its adventures, dangers, surprising or upsetting incongruities. Celebration of life means to accept the strange ways of the world. The unpredictability and uncertainty of the world tells its inhabitants that everything is possible. Although human beings seem to be vulnerable to the attack of unknown forces of fate, they are blessed with the pure sense of life from which humour springs.

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ABSTRACT

Humour and laughter are the most natural expressions of human beings and inseparable elements of social interaction in life. Since social interplay between people has a multidimensional quality, humour and laughter find expression in various forms. Due to the dimensionality of experience, humour and laughter have been discussed within the frames of different perspectives and many theories of humour and laughter have been developed over time. Among these theories, superiority, relief and incongruity theories of humour are the major ones. Although humour as a whole denies explanation in terms of any single perspective, all these theories underline the most striking function of humour as a way of adaptation to life.

In this thesis, Graham Greene's concept of humour in his two novels *A Gun for Sale* and *Travels with My Aunt* is studied in the light of major humour theories which are examined within the framework of Susanne Langer's theory *The Comic Rhythm* which is based on the adaptive power of humour. According to Langer's theory, human beings, like every living thing in nature, are also motivated by the impulse of survival and they interact with each other. Due to this interaction, they are confronted with different circumstances and they gain new experiences. These experiences arouse some feelings such as confusion, anger, fear, or embarrassment and they lead to either mental, physical or emotional loss of balance. Since preservation of vital balance is the essential aim of life, the life energy motivate human beings to gain their balance back. Adaptation of human beings to the new circumstances and to their environment is realized in this process of losing and recovering of the balance through which the rhythm of life is formed. Humour and laughter which derive their power from the life force reflect the rhythm of life. Accordingly, Greene depicts the concept of humour as the rising up of this life energy and emphasizes the renewing power of this energy on the feelings and thoughts of human beings and their perception of the world. He reveals the

concept of humour as an attempt of human beings to reconstruct their balance which is often shaken by their confrontation with the world.

Key Words:

- 1.Humour
- 2.Life energy
- 3.Balance
- 4.Adaptation
- 5.Survival

GCPRIS

ÖZET

Mizah ve gülme insanoğlunun en doğal ifade biçimlerindedir ve sosyal etkileşimin vazgeçilmez unsurlarıdır. İnsanlar arasındaki sosyal etkileşimin çok yönlülüğü sebebiyle mizah ve gülme de çeşitli biçimlerde ortaya çıkmaktadır. İnsan deneyiminin çok yönlü olmasına bağlı olarak bu unsurlar değişik bakış açıları çerçevesinde tartışılmış ve zaman içinde pek çok mizah ve gülme kuramları geliştirilmiştir. Bu kuramlar arasında en önemlileri üstünlük, rahatlama ve uyumsuzluk kuramlarıdır. Her ne kadar tek yönlü bakış açısına göre yapılacak bir tanım, mizahı bir bütün olarak açıklamada yetersizse de, kuramların her biri özünde mizahın en çarpıcı özelliğini, insanın hayata adaptasyonunu sağlama işlevini vurgulamaktadır.

Bu tezde, Graham Greene'in *A Gun for Sale* ve *Travels with My Aunt* adlı eserlerindeki mizah kavramı, mizahın uyum sağlayıcı gücünü temel alan Susanne Langer'in komik kuramı *The Comic Rhythm* çerçevesinde değişik kuramlar da göz önünde bulundurularak incelenmektedir. Langer'in teorisine göre insanlar da doğadaki diğer canlılar gibi hayatta kalma dürtüsü ile hareket ederler ve birbirleriyle sürekli etkileşim halindedirler. Bu etkileşim nedeniyle insanlar değişik durumlarla karşılaşır ve yeni deneyimler edinirler. Karşılaşılan durumlar insanlarda şaşkınlık, öfke, korku ya da utanma gibi çeşitli duygular uyandırır ve psikolojik, zihinsel ya da fiziksel dengenin sarsılmasına sebep olur. Canlı dengesinin korunması hayatın temel amacı olduğundan, yaşam enerjisi insanı kaybolan dengesini yeniden kurması için harekete geçirir. İnsanların yeni durumlara ve çevresine adaptasyonu da, hayatın ritmini oluşturan bu canlılık dengesinin bozulup yeniden sağlanması sürecidir. Kaynağını yaşam enerjisinden alan mizah da hayatın ritmini yansıtmaktadır. Greene her iki eserinde de mizahın insanın içindeki yaşam enerjisinin yükselişi olarak ortaya çıkışını ve bu enerjinin insanın duygu ve düşünce dünyasını, dünyaya bakış açısını yenileyici gücünü

vurgular. Yazar mizah kavramını , insanın dünyayla olan çatışması boyunca sık sık sarsılan dengesini yeniden kurma gayreti olarak göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

- 1.Mizah
- 2.Yaşam enerjisi
- 3.Denge
- 4.Adaptasyon
- 5.Hayatta Kalma

