

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
ORDU UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

DOMESTIC REALISM AND HUMOUR IN NEIL SIMON'S
SELECTED PLAYS:
BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS (1983), *BILOXI BLUES*
(1985), *BROADWAY BOUND* (1986)

EMRE ŞEKERCİ

SUPERVISOR
PROF. DR. ERDİNÇ PARLAK

MASTER'S THESIS

ORDU 2022

Öğrenci Beyan Metni

Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak savunduğum “Domestic Realism and Humour in Neil Simon’s Selected Plays: Brighton Beach Memoirs (1983), Biloxi Blues (1985), Broadway Bound (1986)” adlı çalışmamın, tarafımdan bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmadan yazdığımı ve yararlandığım kaynakların “Kaynakça” bölümünde gösterilenlerden farklı olmadığını, belirtilen kaynaklara atıf yapılarak yararlandığımı belirtir ve bunu onurumla doğrularım.

28/05/2022

Emre ŞEKERCİ

Acknowledgement

My sincere, appreciative thanks and gratitude goes to my advisor, Prof. Dr. Erdinç Parlak, for his guidance and support, and patience that he has had and shown throughout my study. Without his constructive support and guidance, I could not have completed it. I would also like to thank our head of department, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Turgay Han, for his valuable insights, help and guidance which have been great asset to me to complete this thesis. My special thanks also goes to all professors at the Department of English Language and Literature at Ordu University.

Moreover, my sincere and heartfelt thanks goes to all lecturers and professors at Kafkas University Western Languages and Literature Department for their valuable support, and guidance which I do appreciate. Finally, I would like to thank my beloved parents, Beyhan and Ömer, and my brother, Canmert, and friends for their valuable support and encouragement during all my studies, I could not have completed this dissertation without their enduring support.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement.....i

Table of Contents.....ii

Özet iv

Abstract..... v

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER I LAUGHTER THEORIES..... 8

1 .1 COMEDY 8

1.2 HUMOUR / LAUGHTER..... 10

**1.3 THE SUPERIORITY AND INCONGRUITY THEORIES OF
LAUGHTER..... 15**

1.4 RELIEF THEORY OF LAUGHTER..... 21

1.5 . REALISM IN AMERICAN DRAMA 25

**CHAPTER II MARVIN NEIL SIMON (1927-2018) AND HIS MAJOR
WORKS 28**

**2.1. SOME REMARKS ABOUT NEIL SIMON’S LIFE, CAREER AND
STYLE 28**

2.2. *COME BLOW YOUR HORN* (1961)..... 34

2.3. *BAREFOOT IN THE PARK* (1963) 35

2.4. *THE ODD COUPLE* (1965) 35

2.5. *THE STAR-SPANGLED GIRL* (1966)..... 36

2.6. *PLAZA SUITE* (1968) 37

2.7. *THE LAST OF THE RED-HOT LOVERS* (1969) 37

2.8. *THE GINGERBREAD LADY* (1970)..... 37

2.9. *THE PRISONER OF SECOND AVENUE* (1971) 38

2.10. *THE SUNSHINE BOYS* (1972)..... 39

2.11. *THE GOOD DOCTOR* (1973)..... 39

2.12. *GOD’S FAVORITE* (1974) 39

2.13.	<i>BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS</i> (1983).....	40
2.14.	<i>BILOXI BLUES</i> (1985).....	41
2.15.	<i>BROADWAY BOUND</i> (1986)	43
2.16.	CHARACTER SELECTION AND SETTING IN SIMON'S WORKS.....	44
CHAPTER III ANAYLSIS OF PLAYS		52
3.1.	<i>BILOXI BLUES</i>	52
3.2.	<i>BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS</i>	67
3.3.	<i>BROADWAY BOUND</i>	87
CONCLUSION.....		110
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....		114

Özet

Marvin Neil Simon (1927-2018), Amerikalı oyun yazarı, senarist, televizyon şaka yazarı ve Amerikan tiyatro tarihinin ticari ve sanatsal açıdan en ünlü ve başarılı oyun yazarlarından birisidir. Bu çalışma, Neil Simon'ın Brighton Beach Memoirs (Anılar)(1983), Biloxi Blues (Askerliğim) (1985)) ve Broadway Bound (Ver Elini Broadway) (1986) oyunlarında üç geleneksel mizah/kahkaha teorisini: Üstünlük Teorisi, Uyumsuzluk Teorisi ve Rahatlama Teorisi'nin nasıl kullandığını ele almaktadır. Otobiyografik oyunlardır ve Simon'un BB üçlemesi olarak da bilinirler. BB üçlemesinde, Simon aile mizahını ve kariyerini, tutkularını ve kendi yaşam deneyimlerini irdelemektedir. Bu oyunlar aile içi gerçekliği konu edinmektedirler.Simon, eserlerinde kahkaha teorilerinin varsayımlarını ustaca kullanan bir oyun yazarıdır. Bu çalışma, bu teorilerin Simon tarafından nasıl ve hangi bağlamda kullanıldığını incelemektedir. Ayrıca, bu çalışmanın ana amaçlarından birisi de, drama izleyicilerinin ve okuyucuların Simon'un diğer tiyatro yazarlarına göre en iyi kullandığı tek satırlık güldürü unsurunu nasıl ustaca ele aldığını ortaya koymaktır. Bu çalışma, üç bölüm ve giriş kısmından oluşmaktadır. Giriş bölümünde, çalışmanın amacı, çalışmanın önemi, çalışmanın kapsamı, çalışmanın kısıtları, literatür taraması ve çalışmanın metodolojisi yer almaktadır. Birinci Bölüm, ağırlıklı olarak mizah/gülme teorilerinin tarihsel gelişimlerine ve bu teorilerin öncülerine, bu teorilerin önemine, aile içi gerçekliği ele alan Amerikan draması'na vurgu yapmaktadır. İkinci Bölüm, ağırlıklı olarak Simon'un hayatını, üslubunu ve belli başlı oyunlarını özetleri ile birlikte ele almaktadır. Üçüncü Bölüm, mizah/kahkaha teorilerinin seçki dramatik metinlerde nasıl ele alındığını ve analiz edildiklerini içermektedir. Çalışmada metin analizi ve nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır.

***Anahtar Kelimeler:** Neil Simon, Mizah/Kahkaha Teorileri, Brighton Beach Memoirs, Biloxi Blues, Broadway Bound*

Abstract

Marvin Neil Simon (1927-2018) was an American playwright, screenwriter, television joke writer, and one of the most popular and successful dramatists commercially and artistically in the history of American theatre. This study explores how Neil Simon utilizes three traditional humour/laughter theories: The Superiority Theory, the Incongruity Theory, and the Relief Theory, in his Brighton Beach Memoirs (1983), Biloxi Blues (1985), and Broadway Bound (1986). They are autobiographical plays and also known as Simon's BB trilogy. The BB trilogy is based on family humour and professional, ambition and centres on Simon's own life experiences. They are domestic realistic plays. Simon is a playwright who masterfully employs the assumptions of laughter theories in his works. This study depicts how these theories are utilized and in what context they are used by Simon. Furthermore, this study's major concern is to reveal how drama audiences laugh at Simon's one-liners which Simon far excels almost all comedy playwrights. This study consists of three chapters and an introduction part. The introduction part covers the aim of the study, the significance/importance of the study, the scope of the study, the limitations of the study, the literature survey and the methodology of the study. Chapter One mainly deals with laughter theories with a particular emphasis on their historical development and leading figures and their significance to comedy, laughter and domestic realism in American drama. Chapter Two largely focuses on Simon's life, his writing style and some major works of him and synopses of his major plays are briefly mentioned. Chapter Three focuses on the analysis of the selected dramatic texts revealing the humour/laughter theories. The study adopts the qualitative analysis research method incorporated into textual analysis.

Keywords: *Neil Simon, Humour/Laughter Theories, Brighton Beach Memoirs, Biloxi Blues, Broadway Bound*

INTRODUCTION

“Since life is neither all comedy nor all tragedy, why can’t it be that way in plays?”

Neil Simon

Drama is also one of the most important genres of literature. Drama basically has two major types: tragedy and comedy. Moreover, these major types are also divided into subcategories. This study deals with comedy, so it is worth defining comedy. The roots of comedy date back to ancient Greek. Actually, the term ‘comedy’ is an amalgamation of the Greek words “‘komos’ or ‘komai’, and ‘oda’, words that reflect comedy’s roots in the Greek peninsula. ‘Komos’ translates as ‘revel’, while ‘komai’ comes from the word for ‘village’”. (Stott, 2005, p. 5) Many drama critics claim that drama emerged from the festivals honouring the god, Dionysus. He was the son of Zeus and Semele and a god of nature and fertility. So we could suggest that comedy is actually a rural product with seasonal agrarian fertility rituals.

Comedy is considered to be one of the “longest, most continuous generic tradition in Western literature, tracing its roots back to Aristophanes and Menander, appearing in many different national literatures, surviving centuries of cultural change with its basic conventions stubbornly intact.” (Leggat, 1998, p.1) Comedy, compared to tragedy, is a good tool to convey the message of the playwright or touch on the social problems with the veil of laughter. There are two major comedy types: high comedy and low comedy. High comedy, with tridimensional characters, appeals to the intellect of the audience while low comedy, with one or two dimensional characters, focuses on action rather than intellect. Low comedy mainly provokes laughter by some rough and rude jokes, scolding, quarrelling and clownery. It has been used by playwrights to add some relief to serious subjects and forms and reduce the tension of tragedy.

Marvin Neil Simon (1927-2018) was an American playwright, television joke writer and screenwriter and one of the most popular dramatists commercially and artistically in the history of American theatre, most probably in the world. Moreover, to many drama critics, he was the most successful dramatist in the history of the world theatre in commercial terms. (Berkowitz, 2013)

Walden writes, in Neil Simon: Toward Act III?

There is little doubt that Neil Simon is one of the most prolific, productive, and successful playwrights the United States has ever produced. Although his work does not always revolve around specifically Jewish characters' themes, he has not forgotten either his roots or his aspiration to be evaluated as a serious playwright. (1980, p.77)

He was born into a Jewish family having volatile family relations and his father is said to have left them many times, in the Bronx. He was named Marvin Neil and nicknamed 'Doc' "because he was fond of examining people with a toy stethoscope. He is still called 'Doc' by most people, including his wife and he still feels an almost doomed compulsion to live in New York." (Bryer and Siegel (eds.) 2019, p.9) He is also called 'the laugh machine'. He was raised in New York. His childhood was harsh and difficult. He was the child of the Great Depression in 1930s. His family faced with lots of financial hardships and they hardly met the ends.

He went to New York University and University of Denver. (Berkowitz, 2013) Through hard and difficult early years in his life, it was his mother who "stood by me and I knew that whatever I did, it was wonderful with her. While I was always upset and angry when my father left home, when he would come back, I loved being with him" (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.xii) During those difficult times, comedy writing to him was, somehow, a defence mechanism. In his Conversations with Neil Simon, he writes

I have a compulsion to keep writing. I am enormously restless, and I just have to fill every single second of the day. One of the most dominant parts of my personality is this enormous desire I have to do everything myself. I don't trust anybody. Except in finances-in that I have enormous trust. Bryer and Siegel (eds.) ,2019, p.10)

Most of Simon's characters are one or two-dimensional ones with little psychology. Simon seems busy with exhausting comic material rather than exposing the psychological insights of his characters. Two-dimensional characters do not have psychological depth. Simon's plays are not regarded as high comedy if the wit is omitted from them. His comedies are called low comedies. Generally, his characters are depicted as perceptive and intelligent. Unlike many leading playwrights such as Shakespeare, Shaw, and Ibsen, Simon does not use subplots in his plays but gives a single, clear conflict to initiate the action. But he was a master craftsman of light, exposing and highly entertaining comedies. His majority of works are about theatre, television and the cinema.

Individuals, language, and society are the major components of literature.

Language is realized in literary texts. Similarly, humour gives life to society. Behaviours of people are shaped by humour, comedy, and laughter. Moreover, individuals express themselves through humour. Significant genres of literature such as poetry, novel and drama are the most valuable tools used to express human experiences, sufferings, dilemmas, miseries and joy, so it would not be wrong to claim that literature is our only exit gate to pour out our feelings and continue to live. However, humor is not a genre but a style. It is one of the most commonly used literary devices by writers in their writings. As the sharpest weapon of literary criticism, it is an indispensable instrument for writers to rich and colour their style and convey their messages directly to the audience or reader. Humour/laughter is an ever-present human entity and activity. It takes place in almost all kinds of social interactions. Most of us cannot help laughing at something funny in our daily routines. Laughter is the fundamental mode of expression common to human beings. From this perspective, Simon is considered one of the most significant playwrights who uses laughter elements skilfully in his works. He is called a “laugh machine”.

Humour has greatly changed since ancient times. Humour was not utilized to mean funny, and amusing until the eighteenth century to show the deviation from normality. A host of famous philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Bergson, and Schopenhauer tried to answer the question, from a philosophical perspective, ‘what is humour’? Traditionally, the same question has been explored by dramatists as well. Humour causes laughter and it brings laughter to our mind, so we could say that laughter is the gift of humour. Nesin (1973) states there is laughter in humour. Humour and laughter are inseparable. If there is no humour then there is no laughter, either. Humour and its manifestation should be studied to understand a particular society and its people. Since ancient times, laughter has been regarded as a sign of vice and cowardice. To Aristotle, it is a major human trait and essentially belongs to human beings.

This study aims to deal with how three laughter theories, namely, The Superiority Theory, The Incongruity Theory and The Relief Theory function in Simon’s BB trilogy: *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (1983), *Biloxi Blues* (1985), and *Broadway Bound* (1986). They are autobiographical plays. The BB trilogy is based on family humour and professional ambition and centres on Simon’s own life

experiences. Even though Simon is regarded as one of the most prolific playwrights in the world, there is no study done on his plays from the perspective of Humour/Laughter Theories. This study is the first of its kind done in this field.

This study is made up of three chapters and an introduction part. The introduction part covers the aim of the study, the significance/ importance of the study, the scope of the study, the limitations of the study, the literature survey and the methodology of the study. Chapter One mainly deals with laughter theories and their significance to comedy, laughter and domestic realism in American drama. Chapter Two basically focuses on Simon's life, his writing style and some major works of him. Chapter Three is about the analysis of the selected plays.

Our research question is 'how are laughter theories utilized in Simon's selected autobiographical plays to provoke laughter in the audience'? So the study aims to depict how the Laughter Theories: the Superiority, the Incongruity and the Relief Theory are utilized in Simon's BB trilogy: *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Biloxi Blues* and *Broadway Bound*. The reason why we have chosen Neil Simon is that though Simon is considered to be one of the most prolific and successful playwrights in American drama even in world drama, unfortunately, there are a couple of studies done on his work. Those studies are mainly about the staging of his plays on Broadway, but there is no study done on his plays from the perspective of laughter theories. This study aims to present Simon to the Turkish audience and to those who are interested in literature, particularly drama. The chosen plays may not be rich enough in terms of laughter and laughing matter but they are autobiographical works that made the drama critics take Simon seriously. Moreover, they represent real-life experiences of Simon and true to life. Simon wrote forty plays and numerous movie screenplays. Twenty-eight of the plays out of forty were staged on Broadway and five musicals were produced on Broadway, too. Most of his plays have been adapted to screen, as well. In summary, this study examines laughter from the perspective of three laughter theories: The Superiority and Incongruity, Relief Theory in Simon's selected plays: *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (1983), *Biloxi Blues* (1985), and *Broadway Bound* (1986) to explore how Simon, as a comedy playwright and humourist, utilizes laughter as a direct response to a comic situation.

The study is the first of its kind done in Turkey and abroad. There is no academic study on Simon's works from the perspective of laughter theories.

Simon's plays are considered to be domestic comedies that explore family life and relationships and set an example for American domestic comedy in the 1960s and 1970s. Simon's distinctive style gives room for domestic issues in his plays. He is regarded as a keen observer of domestic and contemporary life. He exhibits the concerns and values of middle-class people and their lifestyles. Simon employs a clear cut single conflict triggering the conflict of the play rather than using subplots. Moreover, his plays are about social problems and human aspirations with domestic realism. Somehow, they all appeal to universal human characteristics. Drama, as a major genre of literature, is one of the best mediums to talk about people and entertain people by using comic elements. Simon is a master of one-liners and his craftsmanship invites us to analyse his works from many perspectives. Laughter theories have been widely used by writers and playwrights. Simon is a playwright who masterfully employs the assumptions of laughter theories in his works. This study depicts how these theories are utilized and in what context they are used by Simon. Furthermore, this study's major concern is to reveal how drama audiences laugh at Simon's one-liners at which Simon far excels almost all comedy playwrights.

The study's scope covers Simon's BB trilogy: *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Biloxi Blues* and *Broadway Bound* and it deals with these plays only from the perspective of laughter theories and their application by Simon. The study limits itself to only analyse the plays according to the assumptions of three Laughter Theories: The Superiority, the Incongruity and the Relief Theory. The play may be examined and analysed from many different points of views and perspectives but we do not want to broaden the scope of our study in order not to confuse the readers. The scope is designed to address our research question which reads: 'How are three laughter theories employed by Simon in his autobiographical trilogy to trigger laughter in the audience'? Simon's works can be studied from many perspectives. The assumptions of literary schools of criticism can be applied to Simon's works. We have purposely focused on analysing his trilogy from the scope of laughter theories only.

Our literature survey has shown that there are not many works written and done on Simon's plays from drama and artistic techniques' perspectives and the available literature about Simon is scarce. There are a couple of works written about his

works. There is an MA Thesis titled *An Examination of the Comedic Techniques Found in Selected Works of Neil Simon* by Gary Garrison. It was submitted to North Texas States University. Later on, it was published by Texas University Press in 1980. This MA thesis does not analyse Simon's plays by the application of humour/laughter theories.

Many of those works deal with staging techniques of Simon's plays and some plot overviews of Simon's works as Simon is an understudied playwright. There is no specific work that deals with laughter theories in Simon's works. Moreover, we have had lots of difficulty in collecting primary and secondary sources about Simon and his works. If there had been more studies done on humour/laughter theories applied in drama texts, then it would be more useful and helpful for us to analyse the selected plays by Simon in depth.

Our research has found that there are only a handful of studies done on Neil Simon and his works so far. Except for some interviews with the playwright, directors and actors, and some theatre reviews, there is one major work titled *Neil Simon: A Critical Study*, (the later edition titled *Not-So-Simple Simon*) by Edythe M. McGovern. It was published in 1979 by UNKNO. But in this critical work of Neil Simon, McGovern barely touches on Simon's humour. There is very little humour analysis in this work. She mainly deals with character types, and plot synopsis of Simon's plays.

It is worth noting that another significant work on Simon is *An Examination of the Comedic Techniques Found in Selected Works of Neil Simon* by Gary Garrison. It is actually an MA Thesis submitted to North Texas States University. Later on, it was published by Texas University Press in 1980. Another significant work about Neil Simon is *Understanding Neil Simon* by Susan Koprince. It was published in 2002 by University of South Carolina Press. It is important to cite Neil Simon's own work. It is titled *Neil Simon A Memoir Rewrites*. It was published in 1996 by Touchstone. Moreover, another memoir of Simon titled *The Play Goes On* was published in 2011 by Simon & Schuster. In this memoir, Simon deals with his early career working in television, his early play and love. It is about his career development: failure and success. The latest work on Simon is *Conversations with Neil Simon*, Jackson Bryer and Ben Siegel (eds.), published by University Press of Mississippi in 2019. *The Collected Plays of Neil Simon*, vol, 3 was published by

Random House in 1992. We could say that another significant work on Simon is Robert Johnson's *Neil Simon* published G.K. Hall in 1983. It is worth mentioning *Neil Simon: A Casebook*, Gary Konas (ed.) published by Garland in 1997.

This study will be the first of its kind done in Turkey and abroad from the perspective of this study. There has been no study done on Neil Simon and humour/laughter in his works yet. Three major laughter theories will be applied to Simon's BB trilogy: *Brighton Beach Memoirs (1983)*, *Biloxi Blues (1985)*, and *Broadway Bound (1986)*. The trilogy and some of Simon's plays are available in Turkish as well, but there is no MA or PhD study done on Neil Simon in Turkey yet.

In this study we have used textual analysis method based on Three Laughter Theories: the Superiority, the Incongruity and the Relief Theory in Simon's BB trilogy: *Brighton Beach Memoirs (1983)*, *Biloxi Blues (1985)*, and *Broadway Bound (1986)*. The qualitative analysis research method has been used to analyse the selected plays.

CHAPTER I LAUGHTER THEORIES

“This world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel.”

Horace Walpole

1.1 COMEDY

Comedy is one of the major genres of drama. Moreover, drama is also one of the most important genres of literature. Drama basically has two major types: tragedy and comedy. For sure, these major types are also divided into subcategories. It is worth defining comedy. The roots of comedy date back to ancient Greek. Actually, the term ‘comedy’ is an amalgamation of the Greek words “‘komos’ or ‘komai’, and ‘oda’, words that reflect comedy’s roots in the Greek peninsula. ‘Komos’ translates as ‘revel’, while ‘komai’ comes from the word for ‘village’”. (Stott, 2005, p.5) Many drama critics claim that drama emerged from the festivals honouring the god, Dionysus. He was the son of Zeus and Semele and a god of nature and the fertility. So we could suggest that comedy is actually a rural product with seasonal agrarian fertility rituals.

Comedy is considered to be one of the “longest, most continuous generic tradition in Western literature, tracing its roots back to Aristophanes and Menander, appearing in many different national literatures, surviving centuries of cultural change with its basic conventions stubbornly intact.” (Leggatt, 1998, p.1) Comedy, compared to tragedy, is a good tool to convey the message of playwright or touch on the social problems with the veil of laughter. Kelly, in his preface to *The School for Wives*, puts it as: “The great business of comedy [consists] in making difficulties for the purpose of removing them; in distressing poor young lovers; and in rendering a happy marriage the object of every catastrophe.” (qtd. in Leggatt, 1998, p.3)

The importance of this quote is that it fulfils the expectations of the audience. Playwrights play explicitly or implicitly against the expectations of the audience. Comedy, then, acts as a problem solver and ends in resolution symbolized by marriage. Laughter is another significant distinctive characteristic of comedy. Ben Jonson, in his prologue to *Volpone* (1606), puts it beautifully: “All gall and copperas from his ink he draineth, Wherewith he’ll rub your cheeks, till red with laughter,

They shall look fresh, a week after.” (Wilkes (ed.), 1981, p.230)

The value of Jonson’s statement is that laughter is indispensable to comedy, that is why audiences go to theatre to get entertainment and release their negative feelings. It is known that salt is an old metaphor for wit. Jonson demonstrates that comedy can make us laugh by rubbing our cheeks with it. Thanks to comedy, we could say that laughter can act as a glue which connects people to one another in a society. Comedy makes us laugh with other people and feel a bond with them. Furthermore, laughter sometimes may make us find true friends and people because we are really what we are when we laugh. We could argue that laughing is an honest act because we build and maintain our relationships on honesty.

In the eighteenth-century sentimental comedy was very popular on the English stage. The sentimental comedy and laughter went hand in hand during those times. (Leggatt, 1998) We could contend that if laughter were denied from comedy, then, there would be no comedy at all. Laughing is innately a human act. Though we do not exactly know why we laugh at jokes and funny things, it still remains as a mystery. Comedy could be an answer to that mystery. Laughter can be regarded as a way of tackling something uncomfortable or getting rid of nuisance people and stuff. Moreover, comedy is a good tool to bring about the incongruity which is the essence of laughter. Laughter when combined with comedy may give us pleasure and make us discover uncomfortable things as well. A typical comedy ends with a laugh.

The following quote puts our argument beautifully.

Comedy’s focus on the social level of life is as common a feature as its use of laughter and the happy ending. As the order affirmed in the traditional ending is essentially social - marriage, the family, the rule of law - so the anxieties on which comic laughter plays are social anxieties: the need for money, security and social position, and the fear that such needs are dehumanizing. (Leggatt, 1998, p.5)

Comedy does not give us a simple mirror image of society. However, it directly addresses to it. It examines social anxiety and it is the exposure of social anxiety. As Leggatt (1998) argues “Comedy deals, notoriously, in type-characters: the heavy father, the young lovers, the fop.”(p. 7)

Simon, in *Conversations with Neil Simon*, shares his views about comedy and drama as follows:

I use the comedy in a way to get the audience’s attention and then sort of pull the

rug from underneath them. That's how I view life. Things are wonderful, things are going along just great. And then a telephone call comes and just pulls the rug from under you. Some tragic thing, some tragic event, has happened in your life, and I say if it can happen in life I want to do that in the theatre. It took a long time to convince audiences and critics that one could write a play that way. I remember reading Lilian Hellman saying, 'Never mix comedy and drama in the same play; the audiences won't understand it. They say to me, Is it comedy? I say, no, it's a play. They say, Is it a drama? And I say, It's a play. It has everything in it. (Bryer and Siegel, 2019, p.131)

It is a fact that people never laugh at anything nice and beautiful. But people laugh at incongruous things. Comedy makes people keep their anxieties and fear under control. It is known that American comedy is basically satiric and urban. Neil Simon is regarded as one of the most significant playwrights of American drama in terms of his domestic and urban comedies. His plays are mainly urban and satiric. Simon's comedies retell a simply story in a different witty mode.

1.2 HUMOUR / LAUGHTER

“Perhaps even if nothing else today has any future, our laughter may yet have a future.” Friedrich Nietzsche

Individuals, language, and society are the major components of literature. Language is realized in literary texts. Similarly, humour gives life to society. Behaviours of people are shaped by humour, comedy and laughter. Moreover, individuals express themselves through humour. Major genres of literature such as poetry, novel and drama are the most useful tools used to express human experiences, sufferings, dilemmas, miseries and joy, so it would not be wrong to claim that literature is our only exit gate to pour out our feelings and continue to live. Humour is not a genre but *style*. It is one of the most commonly used literary devices by writers in their writings. As a sharpest weapon of literary criticism, it is an indispensable instrument for writers to rich and colour their style and convey their messages directly to the audience or reader. Humour/laughter is an ever-present human entity and activity. It takes place in almost all kinds of social interactions. Most of us cannot help laughing at something funny in our daily routines. Laughter is the fundamental mode of expression common to human beings.

Humour comes from antiquity to the present. It is defined as follows:

1 [U] the quality in sth that makes it funny or amusing. 2 [C, U (formal) the state of your feelings or mind at a particular time, 3 [C] (old use) one of the four liquids that were thought in the past to be in a person's body and to influence health and

character.” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2000, p.636)

Martin explains the liquids as: “humour denotes the fluids that constitute human body: blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. (Martin, 2007, p. 21)

Humour has greatly changed since ancient times. Humour was not utilized to mean funny, and amusing until the eighteenth century to show the deviation from normality. A host of famous philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Bergson, and Schopenhauer tried to answer the question, from a philosophical perspective, ‘what is humour’? Traditionally, the same question has been explored by dramatists as well. Clark, in his *Humour and Incongruity* (1970), offers a satisfactory and broad definition of humour. It is as follows:

Humour, it will be said, is a family-resemblance concept: no one could hope to compile any short list of essential properties abstracted from all the many varieties of humour human misfortune and clumsiness, obscenity, grotesqueness, veiled insult, nonsense, wordplay and puns, human misdemeanours and so on, as manifested in forms as varied as parody, satire, drama, clowning, music, farce and cartoons. (p.20)

The philosophers, Plato, Kant and Hobbes, wrote about humour and laughter. But Henri Bergson’s famous work *Laughter* (1900) is considered to be the first notable work written in this field. Laughter is too difficult to explain and define. Bergson puts it “this little problem ... has a knack of baffling every effort, of slipping away only to bob up again, a pert challenge flung at philosophical speculation.” (198, p. 61) As in line with it, gelotology, basically the science of laughter, which comes from the Greek word ‘gelos’ means ‘laugh’ or ‘laughter’, focuses on answering such questions: Why do people laugh? How do they laugh? At what or whom do they laugh? Or simply, why we laugh?

Humour causes laughter and it brings laughter to our mind, so we could say that laughter is the gift of humour. Nesin (1973) states there is laughter in humour. Humour and laughter are inseparable. If there is no humour then there is no laughter, either. Humour and its manifestation should be studied to understand a particular society and its people. Since ancient times, laughter has been regarded as a sign of vice and cowardice. To Aristotle, it is a major human trait and essentially belongs to human beings. Stott notes “Aristotle, noting that laughter is exclusive to human beings, believed that an infant could not be considered truly human until it had laughed its first laugh at forty days old.” (2014, p. 171)

Laughter is, as part of humour, not only fun and human beings use it to serve for their social, psychological and physiological needs. Human beings use how their reaction with laughter to the things they like, or they see strange or surprising. We could say that the opposite of crying is laughter. From this perspective, it may be directly linked to happiness. However, people do not only laugh for fun and happiness but also to mock and condemn others. As in line with it, Bacon remarks “the object of laughter is deformity, absurdity, shrewd turns, and the like.” (qtd. in Gregory, 1923, p.336)

It is worth noting that laughter was not accepted as something positive during ancient times. For instance, Plato, as a most influential critic of laughter, did not regard laughter as a desirable act. In his famous work *The Republic*, he argues that those who govern and occupy higher positions should not laugh at all because he thinks that laugh is only for ordinary people with physical and mental defects. To him, it is a malicious act, so people with dignity should avoid it as much as possible. (Stott, 2014)

Laughter has been a major component of comedy since ancient times. Comedy is one of the best mediums which helps us understand human identity and nature. Now we should survey how early Christianity treated laughter. It is known that early Christianity was hostile to laughter by citing the reason that Jesus was never seen laughing and it is not mentioned in Old and New Testament.

Stott puts it as:

In the Book of Genesis, God tells Abraham that his wife Sarah will give birth to a son despite the fact that she is ninety years of age. Sarah understandably laughs at the very thought of it, but later, when the prophecy comes true, she laughs again, this time in wonder. (2014, p.172)

New Testament tells us Jesus Christ wept twice but it does not mention Christ laughing at all. Actually, in the Bible, there is almost no evidence of sense of humour. (Stott, 2014) To the Roman Catholic Church Authorities, frivolity and hilarity was equal to foolishness and ignorance. Stott (2014, p.172) quotes Ecclesiastes to show the Church’s attitude to laughter and humour.

The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools. For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity. (Ecclesiastes, p.7.4-6)

Halliwell suggests “mocking and laughter have become [was] banned in the

early Christian world because Jesus was humiliated and ridiculed by the soldiers just before his crucifixion.” (2008, p.475) During the Medieval Era, the Roman Catholic Church shared Plato’s ideas about laughter because the Church authorities placed a greater emphasis on serious behaviour in society. Billig puts it as “Christian grimness certainly did not die out with the waning of the Middle Ages; the advocacy of a serious mode of life was holding its place in the Christian world afterwards.” (2005, p. 48)

Christian theology, especially the Roman Catholic Theology, favoured simplicity, poverty, humble life style over the luxurious and immoral lives of their pagan ancestors. They sought virtue in self-control, deprivation, and misery as they strongly believed that the physical pleasure was dangerous and it should be avoided at spot. The situation is clearly explained by Pullar as following:

the body had to be broken; it had to be abused and maltreated, its reactions, sensations and natural functions became to the Christians a real and terrible neurosis.” (2001, p. 37) To the Church circles, laughter makes people lose their self-control and prone to commit sin and they link it to laziness, irresponsibility, anger, and sexual lust. For instance, Basil the Great, one of the leading church authorities, claimed “raucous laughter and uncontrollable shaking of the body are not indications of a well-regulated soul, or of personal dignity, or selfmastery. (qtd. in Wagner, 1962, p.271)

The rejection of laughter by the Christian Church was a common practice during the Middle Ages. Stott, in his *Comedy*, argues “in early Christianity, it was conventional to understand the human subject as fundamentally torn between the animalistic urges of the flesh and the sanctity of a pious soul.” (2014, p. 173) Clement of Alexandria was the first person to consider laughter as purely human, however, he warned Christians against it. To him, laughter may make them have animalistic instincts. The following quote by Clement (1983) shows it explicitly:

For, in a word, whatever things are natural to men we must not eradicate from them, but rather impose on them limits and suitable times. For man is not to laugh on all occasions because he is a laughing animal, any more than the horse neighs on all occasions because he is a neighing animal. But as rational beings, we are to regulate ourselves suitably, harmoniously relaxing the austerity and over-tension of our serious pursuits, not inharmoniously breaking them up altogether. (p. 250)

This quote reminds us that we should refrain from laughter from time to time no matter how it is human and natural to human beings. In the same work, Clement argues that women should avoid laughter because it may make women sexually immoral. “The discordant relaxation of countenance in the case of women is called a giggle, and is meretricious laughter.” (Clement of Alexandria, 1983, p. 250)

Early monastics regarded laughter as one of the greatest crimes. Palmer argues as:

In the earliest monastic regulations (in the fifth century) laughter is condemned as the grossest breach of the rule of silence, and later it is considered a breach of the rule of humility; it is also considered the greatest dirtying of the mouth, which should be a filter for good and evil to enter and leave the body; therefore, it must be prevented. (1994, p.44)

The above quote tells us that the more we close our bodies to the outside world, the more we can open our inner souls to God. It also refers to the importance of female and monastic silence. But the Church had to gradually change its stand against laughter. Stott writes:

While the early church made significant attempts to banish and condemn laughter, the medieval period saw ecclesiastical authorities drawing it into the liturgical calendar and distinguishing between good laughter and bad. (2014, p.174)

Correspondingly, we see the same case in morality plays of the Mediaeval Era. Clowns play the role of vice to show human flaw and how to overcome it before mankind moves to get the grace of God. Jacobson argues “if there were no devils to expel, there would be no comedy to enjoy.” (1997, p.151) During the Medieval Era, hell was a kind of hilarity for many people.

In the twelfth-century we see that the Church authorities try to reconcile laughter with religion to win over the hearts of people, so religious festivals were held such as the Feast of Fools. But the Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) “issued a decree condemning the Feast of Fools, in pragmatic terms the incorporation of laughter into worship was a necessity if the church were to extend its authority over areas of folk-belief and folk practices, including the still-thriving Roman Saturnalia that it had so far failed to assimilate.” (Stott, 2014, p.175) The moral attitude to laughter was kept. It was used as an instructive tool to emphasize human failings and correct it with spiritual intervention. “The Feast of Fools should not be thought of as a decline into idiocy, so much as a demonstration of a subtle intelligence that understood the incompatible tensions between riot and ritual as fundamental aspects of human existence”. (Welsford qtd. in Stott, 2014, p.175) Laughter, during the Medieval Era, was used to show it as a part of creation and find the truth of Bible rather than adopting a rigid approach to it.

A host of scholars and philosophers wrote and commented on the laughter such as Hobbes, Descartes, and Prynne. Plato was the first person to articulate it and it

is known that the Bible was the most dominant in the Western view of laughter for more than two thousand years. In the twentieth century, one of the most significant figures of the theory of the novel, Russian novelist Mikhail Bakhtin extended the implications of laughter into the political sphere to triumph over oppression. Bakhtin (1984) writes:

festive folk laughter presents an element of victory not only over supernatural awe, of the sacred over death; it also means the defeat of power, of earthly kings, of the earthly upper classes, of all that oppresses and restricts. (p. 92)

According to Bakhtin, it is the true voice of ordinary people to resist to the oppression of the official culture and ideology, so laughter alleviates the tension of the official culture and ideology.

In summary, the following quote by Gregory beautifully summarizes what we have been trying to say about humour/laughter. “A world without humour would be a world without men and a world without laughter would be a world without children.” (1923, p. 336) We could say that humour may be a cover up for our pains that’s why playwrights frequently use it in their works. Here, it is worth noting the theories of laughter or humour: The Superiority and Incongruity, and the Relief Theory.

1.3 THE SUPERIORITY AND INCONGRUITY THEORIES OF LAUGHTER

The Superiority Theory of laughter basically means that human beings like finding humour in the misfortunes of other people. It dates back to the ancient philosophers, Plato and Aristotle; however, it was coined by modern writers. While the Superiority Theory basically contends that whatever comical is regarded as inferior and laughter is a kind of expression of the sudden realisation of superiority, The Incongruity Theory deals with the formal object of amusement. Kulka, in *The Incongruity of Incongruity Theories of Humor*, argues:

The theory is considered to be particularly well suited to account for the humorous laughter and amusement occasioned by jokes, though it has often been extended to other objects of amusement (comedy, satire, parody, mimic, clowning, trickery, caricature, slapstick, absent-mindedness, folly, etc.). (2007, p. 321)

It is worth defining these terms basically before we further our study.

“Comedy [is] generally a play of happy nature, lightness of spirit, and amusing dialog, in which serious disaster is averted.” (Moblely, 1992, p.27)

“Satire [is] a type of comedy that uses wit, irony, and exaggeration to expose

individual and institutional folly, vice, and stupidity.” (Mobley, 1992, p.131)

“Parody [is] the mockery of a writing style by an exaggerated imitation of its predominant characteristics.” (Mobley, 1992, p.108)

“Mimic to copy the way sb speaks, moves, behaves etc., especially in order to make other people laugh.” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2000, p.808)

“Clowning behaving in a playful or comical way.” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2000, p.224)

“Trickery the use of dishonest methods to trick people in order to achieve what you want.” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2000, p.1388)

“Caricature 1 a funny drawing or picture of sb that exaggerates some of their features, 2 a description of a person or thing that makes them seem ridiculous by exaggerating some of their characteristics.” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2000, p.177)

Slapstick [is] literally, two hinged wooden slats attached to a handle. When the device strikes a person, a loud smack is heard. Originally used by Harlequin in commedia lazzi. The term now refers to any comedy that features physical, often abusive, pranks. (Mobley, 1992, p.137)

Plato, in his *Philebus*, demonstrates Socrates’ views and ideas on laughter:

Then if we find in our friends the three kinds of ignorance we outlined, imaginary wisdom, beauty and wealth, delusions which are ridiculous in the weak and hateful in the strong - if we find these in a harmless form in our friends, may we not say, as I was saying before, that these delusions are simply ridiculous? ... And do we not agree that this state of mind, being ignorant, is evil? ... And when we laugh at it, do we feel pain or pleasure? ... And we agreed that it is malice that is the source of the pleasure we feel at our friend’s misfortune? Then our argument shows that when we laugh at what is ridiculous in our friends, our pleasure, in mixing with malice, mixes with pain, for we have agreed that malice is a pain of the soul, and that laughter is pleasant, and on these occasions we both feel malice and laugh. (qtd. in Morreall, 1987, p. 12)

What we infer from the above quote is that laughter results from degrading, disparaging the others, misfortune of others, delusions and the ridicule and mockery of our friends or others. “Ridiculing others may stem from the feeling of superiority over the others because the laughing person can see that the other is not as normal as he is.” (Roeckelein, 2002, p. 122)

It reveals that in ancient times, it was linked with violence and aggression because people laughed at and mocked each other because of their physical appearances, success in daily life, aptitudes for doing basic things. Wolfreys writes “witnessing someone else’s bad luck is comic to us because, the argument runs, we identify with the misfortune, but feel lucky to have escaped the accident.” (2011, p. 144)

Not all incongruous situations cause laughter or amusement. The concept of amusement may differ in different situations and change from person to person.

Clark, in *Humour and Incongruity*, suggests:

It is no good now saying that there are many instances of incongruity which are not

amusing, for in saying that the apparently incongruous is the formal object of amusement all we are saying is that nothing can (logically) amuse someone unless he sees it as incongruous, that seeing it as incongruous is a necessary condition of his finding it humorous. We are not saying that it is a sufficient condition for his finding it amusing, we are not saying that if he sees it as incongruous he is bound to be amused by it. To say that 'what is dirty' gives the formal object of cleaning is to say that nothing can be cleaned unless it is dirty, not that anything dirty will be cleaned. (1970, p. 29)

It is worth noting the incongruity not always makes something funny. As we have just mentioned how Plato did not like laughter and warned people to keep away from it. Morreal, in *Comic Relief*, argues it as following:

If the Superiority Theory is right, laughter would seem to have no place in a well-ordered society, for it would undermine co-operation, tolerance, and selfcontrol. That is why when Plato imagined the ideal state; he wanted to severely restrict the performance of comedy. (2009, p.7)

People laugh provided that incongruities are dissolved when they realise how everything fits and makes sense together. “We tend to laugh only when these incongruities dissolve, when we suddenly realize how everything fits together, how it all makes sense after all.” (Kulka, 2007, p. 327)

With the advent of Humanism in the sixteenth century, laughter was separated from official culture and ideology. What is serious and what is comic was separated. Bakhtin puts it as:

“a starker demarcation of the serious and the comic where that which is important and essential cannot be comical, and the essential truth about the world and man cannot be told in the language of laughter.” (Bakhtin, 1984, p.67) During the Renaissance Period in the sixteenth and seventieth centuries, we observe that the concept of laughter had ethical values. Thomas Wilson, in his *The Arte of Rhetoricke* (1567), argues the Humanist conception of laughter as follows:

...and the meane that maketh us merrime ... is the fondnes, the filthines, the deformitie, and al suche evil behaviour, as we see to be in each other. For we laugh always at those thinges, which either onely, or chiefly touche handsomely, and wittely, some speciall fault, or fond behavior in some one body or some one thing. (qtd. in Stott, 2014, p. 177)

The idea of using laughter in rhetoric comes from the father of rhetoric, Cicero (103-43BC). He writes:

It clearly becomes an orator to raise laughter . merriment naturally wins goodwill for its author; and everyone admires acuteness, which is often concentrated in a single word, uttered generally in repelling, though sometimes in delivering, an attack; and it shatters or obstructs or makes light of an opponent, or alarms or repulses him; and it shows the orator himself to be a man of finish, accomplishment

and taste. (1984, p.28)

We could say that the significance of rhetoric in humanism or during the Renaissance replaced the medieval conceptions of laughter. The medieval conceptions of it were redemptive and inclusive. (Stott, 2014) discusses that mockery and ridicule were prevalent during the Tudor and Stuart England. They were used to consolidate social ties and norms.

Michael Bristol writes:

Ridicule is a recognized element in law enforcement, in the punishment of insubordination and in the everyday feeling of superiority enjoyed by nobles in respect to their servants. Laughter is also an important element in the strategies of social appeasement used by servants in respect of their masters. Self-abjection and selfridicule are significant elements in an elaborate system of deferential gesture and compliment. (1985, p. 126)

What we can infer from it is that the Superiority Theory has been a major theory of humour and laughter in Western culture and tradition. It goes without saying that the most renowned representative of Superiority Theory is Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). He was one of the most famous philosophers of the world in the seventeenth-century. Stott writes:

In truth, Hobbes had little to say about laughter, but what he did say is quoted in almost every discussion of the subject, even though his ambiguity towards it is clear when he calls laughter the signal of a ‘passion that hath no name’. (2014, p. 178)

Hobbes wrote his famous work *Human Nature* in 1650. In that work he discusses the human nature in detail. The following quote by him explicitly explains laughter and its concept.

Laughter is nothing else but a sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly. (1840, p. 46)

It tells us that laughter is, by its nature, conflictual and antagonistic and it serves for establishing a kind of hierarchy when the pleasure erupts. In his other famous work *Leviathan* (1660), he touches on his ethical and moral objection to it as: “much laughter at the defects of others is a sign of Pusillanimity.” (Hobbes qtd. in Stott, 2014, p. 78) As we see in this quote, laughter does not necessarily refer to an inferior person or situation. We could easily detect the effect and mark left on humour by Hobbes. He suggests:

Sudden glory, is the passion which makes those grimaces called laughter; and is caused either by some sudden act of their own, that pleases them; or by the

apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves. And it is incident most to them, that are conscious of the fewest abilities in themselves; who are forced to keep themselves in their own favour by observing the imperfections of other men. And therefore much laughter at the defects of others, is a sign of pusillanimity. For of great minds, one of the proper work is, to help and free others from scorn; and compare themselves only with the most able. (qtd. in Morreall, 1987, p.19)

Hobbes again claims “laughter without offense must be at absurdities and infirmities abstracted from persons, and when all the company may laugh together.” (1840, p.47) It is clear that much laughter does not originate from our suppressed and oppressed feelings. Moreover, it works on a moral framework.

The Superiority Theory played a great role in determining and regulating the manners of men coming from higher classes who were against laughing by citing their breeding in the eighteenth century. For example, Lord Chesterfield writes a letter to his son and warns him against laughter.

He should be never heard to laugh while you live. Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill manners ... In my mind nothing so illiberal, and so ill-bred as audible laughter ... how low and unbecoming a thing laughter is. Not to mention the disagreeable noise it makes, and the shocking distortion of the face it occasions. (Stanhope qtd. in Stott, 2014, p.179)

The above quote shows us that Christianity is totally against laughter and its fear of bodily disorder. Laughter is considered to be an enemy of class differences. Laughter is treated from a class-based perspective and the fear of laughter makes them be scared of being vulgar.

Addison argues: “Laughter slackens and unbraces the Mind, weakens the Faculties, and causes a Kind of Remissness, and Dissolution in all the powers of the soul.” (Addison qtd. in Stott, 2014, p.179)

Here we see that Superiority Theory is determined by the upper classes of the society or in other words by the elites refraining from laughter. Later in the eighteenth century, the attitude of the elites to laughter changed in a positive way. The importance of pleasure in laughter over derision or mockery became prevalent. Now the Superiority Theory operates on a physical defect, personal misfortunes and social inequalities rather than jokes. (Stott, 2014)

Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) challenged Hobbesian views of laughter and humour. He harshly attacked “the malevolent theory of laughter, remarking that when we laugh there is a great fund of pleasantry.” (Hutcheson qtd. in Stott, 2014,

p.180) To Hutcheson, laughter is nature given gift to human beings and it is a ridiculous moment in every human soul to alleviate their resentments and concerns. Furthermore, we could propose that the Incongruity Theory does not mean degradation but pleasure and peace which is not taken at the victim's expense.

The eighteenth century was the age of much more civic life and sociability rather than a pious devotion because of the Age of Reason or Enlightenment. The Incongruity Theory basically focuses on funny and amusing traits of laughter and amusing surroundings.

Billig puts it as following:

Incongruity theories represent the second major tradition for understanding humour. The basic approach was developed in the eighteenth century as a reaction against Hobbes's view of laughter. Instead of seeking the origins of laughter within the motives of the person who laughs, incongruity theories have sought to identify those incongruous features of the world that provoke laughter. (2005, p.57)

The theory presupposes that people have a particular expectation in every context of the discourse. If this expectation is crushed or distorted by an unexpected, sudden and incongruous thing, then humour/laughter urges as a result of inconsistent, unsuitable and incongruous circumstances. Leading nineteenth-century English essayist, drama critic, and philosopher, William Hazlitt, contends "laughable is based in incongruity, the ludicrous is based in the contradiction between the object and one's expectation of it, and the ridiculous is based on the contradiction between custom, sense, and reason" (qtd. in Roেকেlein, 2002, p. 128)

Bergson's view of laughter can be considered under the Incongruity Theory. He argues that comedy is a human attribute and laughter is an indispensable element of comedy.

The first point to which attention should be called is that the comic does not exist outside the pale of what is strictly human. A landscape may be beautiful, charming and sublime, or insignificant and ugly; it will never be laughable. You may laugh at an animal, but only because you have detected in it some human attitude or expression. (Bergson, 1980, p.62)

Simon Critchley, in his *On Humour*, explains Bergson's essay on laughter skilfully.

Two claims are being made in this passage: first, that the central image of Bergson's book is the mechanical encrusted onto the living; second, what makes us laugh is a person who gives us the impression of a thing. Bringing together these two claims, we laugh when a human being or another living being, whose behaviour we imagine we can predict, begins to appear some-how thingly or

machine-like. Humour, therefore, consists in the momentary transformation of the physical into the mechanic, when the mechanical encrusts itself onto the living like plaque on the surface of a tooth. (2002, p. 56)

Beattie, in *On Laughter and Ludicrous Composition*, enlarges on the Incongruity Theory as follows:

Laughter arises from the view of two or more inconsistent, unsuitable, or incongruous parts or circumstances, considered as united in one complex object or assemblage, or as acquiring a sort of mutual relation from the peculiar manner in which the mind takes notice of them. (qtd. in Stott, 2014, p.181)

We could contend that the Superiority Theory is obsolete now. This leads us to think about why some things are funny while others are not. Kulka (2007) says:

...with jokes we understand the source of the incongruity, the misapplication of the conception, the reason for the mistake, since understanding a joke means seeing how the incongruity involved can be resolved. Its enjoyment, often expressed by laughter, is occasioned by a shift from the state of cognitive dissonance to that of cognitive resonance. (p.326)

We could suggest some explanations for it as it is rooted in the unconscious and culture. The Incongruity Theory helps us escape from the harsh rigidity of social norms. Now it is worth enlarging on another theory of laughter: 'Relief Theory'.

1.4 RELIEF THEORY OF LAUGHTER

This theory deals with describing humour by adopting a tension and energy release model. It discusses the basic structures, patterns and psychological processes which cause laughter. It holds that people laugh to express and release their emotions and physical tensions. The relief we get from laughter is amusement and pleasure. It is a useful and natural tool to abate hatred. Laughter serves for reducing the excess of sensitiveness and makes society get rid of its burden. Concerning this theory, the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced two most important relief theorists: Herbert Spencer and Sigmund Freud.

Herbert Spencer and Sigmund Freud saw the triggers of laughter not so much as are cognition of incongruity within scenarios or linguistic formulae, but as a symptom of division and struggle within the self, recognition, as it were, of incongruous selfhood. (Stott, 2014, p.182).

This is called 'Relief Theory'. It is a fact that Freud's studies on the human psyche and his discovery of the unconscious contributed a lot to the development of this theory. Gregory is another scholar whose views on the relief theory of laughter are also worth mentioning here. His *Some Theories of Laughter* deals with

major theories of laughter.

He writes:

Laughter originated in a conquered danger and the release from strain that determined its origin determines all its variations. Since men triumph over one another laughter was socially begotten and retains a social nature. Its social origin is apparent in its infectiousness, in its connexion with triumph and cruelty, in the prevalence of the practical joke and in its preoccupation with the drunken, the indecorous and the obscene. (1923, p.334)

To Gregory, laughter with practical jokes enables us to talk about obscene and taboo subjects and get rid of feeling of fear. He furthers it as follows:

We breathe in for effort and breathe out for relief; when we laugh we do both, because an interruption relaxes our effort, and continue to repeat, in a titter or its magnification, the effortful breathing in and the relaxful breathing out. Because laughter arises from relaxation through interruption, its impulse seeks to effect no change in the relation of the organism to the outer world, but terminates in the bodily changes. (1923, p.331-332)

Gregory's views of laughter show similarities with those views of Freud and Spencer. Before Freud's discovery of the unconscious, it was believed that the conscious part of us determined most of our actions but Freud showed that the unconscious part of our psyche determines our actions not the conscious. It was a revolutionary discovery of human psychology and psyche.

Freud's discovery helps us understand the processes and causes of laughter. Freud (1856-1936) put forward a theory about humour. His theory holds that it refers to our unconscious desires and thoughts which are mainly kept hidden in our social interactions.

This would explain the concept of a relative and individuated sense of humour' not shared by all, as individual psyches are wont to find different topics or ideas humorously appealing based on the different experiences that have helped to shape them. (Stott 2014, p.183)

But we could note that Freud was inspired by English philosopher and scientist, Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) before he formulated the mechanics of his theory. (Stott, 2014)

To Spencer, laughter is a result of a physiological cause and the flow of internal nerve energy. "On occasion, nervous energy will be displaced from its proper outlet and redirect itself in short bursts of activity such as heavy breathing, jumping up and down, or rubbing one's hands with glee." (Stott, 2014, p.183). It is a kind of release and purging of the internal nervous energy. In brief, we could say that he

regards laughter as a release of energy and tension from a stressful situation or condition. According to Spencer, humour is very beneficial to human beings who experience it because laughter makes, even temporarily, people forget, their problems. Thanks to laughter, people manage to release their negative energy accumulated through the physical movements of the laughter. Stott (2014) quotes Spencer in his *Comedy* at length:

Spencer imagines internal channels along which nervous energy flows. The grander or more serious the emotion, the more the channels dilate. If a sequence of ideas were to then take a ludicrous turn, the channels become restricted and the surplus of energy expends itself: the excess must therefore discharge itself in some other direction; and ... there results an efflux through the motor nerves to various classes of the muscles, producing the half convulsive actions we call laughter. (p.184)

According to this quote, we could propose that laughter is the product of reduced anticipated ideas. Freud's study shows, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905), similarities with Spencer's model of laughter. Freud argues that the superego imposes an internal prohibition that is why the energy should be redirected into another channel. Freud suggests that jokes are used as a tool to make explicit and open statements about taboo subjects: "a purpose being satisfied whose satisfaction would otherwise not have taken place." (Freud, 2001, p.117)

To Freud, there are two types of jokes: "innocent and tendentious" (Stott, 2014, p. 184). The first one is basically a word game but the latter one conveys an intended meaning. It may serve for the purpose of aggression, defence or satire and it may reveal a hidden sexual desire. We use these jokes to express our inner feelings about taboo or thorny subjects and avoid directly insulting others as the norms of etiquette. Thanks to jokes, we can talk about taboo topics and jokes remove the inhibition of the joker and interlocutor. Freud writes:

The joker has saved his psychological expenditure. We should say that his pleasure corresponds to this economy. Our insight into the mechanism of laughter leads us rather to the introduction of the proscribed idea by means of an auditory perception, the cathectic energy used for the inhibition has now suddenly become superfluous and has been lifted, and is therefore now ready to be discharged by laughter. (2001, p.149)

We could say that laughter serves as a strong mechanism to remove all barriers on the anti-social ideas and thoughts. It operates as an unseen mechanism which regulates the soul of human beings. It would not be wrong to claim that laughter is a kind of catharsis for human psyches and creates equilibrium between human

psyches and society as a whole. The theories of laughter suggest that laughter is a conventional method enabling us appropriately to interact in social situations. The following quote is a good proof of it.

Persons who give themselves much to mirth, wit, and humour, must greatly disqualify their understandings for the search after truth. (Hartley qtd. in Gregory, 1923, p. 335)

Humour always contains serious and deeper impulses acting as appearances of psychological darkness of our unconscious and it makes us accept that we are imperfect beings. The expressions of laughter can serve for a variety of feelings and emotions. It also replaces ungraciousness with amusement. Laughter is the bodily common human behaviour.

Irony, satire, and parody are the major categories of humour. It can also be categorised into subgroups such as subversive, inclusive, and reflective. Humour usually distorts social, logical and linguistic rules. Plaza writes “it entails a breach of rules - linguistic, behavioural, aesthetic etc. - and an acknowledgement of the breach” (2006, p.1)

Now it is worth putting some remarks about American humour. Broadly speaking American humour is aggressive and rude given under the gently disguise of comedy. Jesse Bier, a leading figure who writes on contemporary American humour, states as:

American humor is inclined to speed and high verbal energy; anything else lies dormant on the stage, easily forgotten and gladly overlooked. Furthermore, American humor reflects American lifestyles and behaviors. And since Americans tend to lead fast-paced, chaotic lives, as an audience we can understand and associate with humor on that level. (1968, p.17)

What we perceive from this quote is that the American humour is used by playwrights to express the cover-up for American hostility and an outlet to reveal the dissatisfaction with society. It also reveals that the aggressive tendency of American humour is utilized as a source by comedy playwrights to create a common laughter from which the audience can release their nervous or negative energy out.

To sum it up, we could suggest that American humour is a characteristic of ordinary Americans. It is intimidating, angry and condemning to structure an inflexible society because American society lives with their own inflexible standards. This study will examine laughter from the perspective of three laughter theories: The Superiority and Incongruity, Relief Theory in Simon’s selected plays:

Brighton Beach Memoirs (1983), *Biloxi Blues* (1985), and *Broadway Bound* (1986) to explore how Simon, as a comedy playwright and humourist, utilizes laughter as a direct response to a comic situation.

1.5. REALISM IN AMERICAN DRAMA

Realism, as an art movement and a reaction to Romanticism, emerged in nineteenth century in Europe. Then, it spread to the US at the last quarter of the century as a pivotal literary trend. (Berkowitz, 2013) In nineteenth century the major popular drama type was melodrama “depicting a simplified moral universe in which good and evil are clearly recognizable traits of a hero and a villain who are locked in a struggle for dominance that is often violent and sensational.” (Murphy, 2004, p.168) It is worth noting here that American melodrama mainly depicts an innocent female character facing the evil in society in the nineteenth century.

Romantic melodrama was prevalent on the American stage till realism dominated American stage at the beginning of the twentieth century. (Berkowitz, 2013) Murphy, in *Theatre in America*, states “by the second of half of the twentieth century, realism was the choice of writers who wanted to write plays of literary quality for the American stage.” (2004, p.169) Realistic plays of the period basically deal with addressing the social problems in which lower and mainly middle class people living in big cities. “Basically, realism in literature came because man was being forced to look at life more realistically - all of life. Its beginnings were slight and frequently light in both thought and tone although themes sometimes became serious.” (Meserve, 1964, p.152)

In the first half of the twentieth century many playwrights started experimenting with realistic themes. The new movement seemed to be very useful and beneficial to writers. The Great Depression left devastating effects on American public lives. Fletcher (2018) American Dream which is belief of a land of opportunity rewarding hard work and talent were proven invalid to ordinary Americans and literary circles. To many Americans, capitalism betrayed their hopes and broke down all economic system. There was disbelief, moral and social uncertainty among people. America did not mean a melting pot to many people after the Great Depression.

Fletcher argues:

Contrasts, coincidences and incongruities abound in the areas of domestic life, education, consumerism, popular entertainment, art, culture, virtually every aspect of daily life. On the one hand, pastimes like the Sunday drive (car ownership was surprisingly widespread then), listening to the radio and going to the movies transcend social class and offer a classless experience, a 'level playing field'. On the other hand, soup kitchens in major cities and the black rollers (moving topsoil), black rain comprised of water and dust, and dustbowls in the Midwest illustrate how very differently life was experienced across the country. (2018, p.1)

From this perspective, it is worth mentioning about domestic realism. It is largely utilized by writers to illuminate individual experiences of people. It was Eugene O'Neill whose plays focused on analysing human psychology rather than exploring metaphysical questions. The effects of the First and Second World Wars and the Depression were presented to the audience by the realistic modes of theatre. Domestic issues were major issue for many playwrights after the Great Depression; most particularly Tennessee Williams was a pioneer addressing those issues and problems affecting ordinary people's lives. (Berkowitz, 2013)

It is worth stating that domestic realism in American Drama was not a result of an artistic movement. Berkowitz (2013) argues as:

The emergence of a dominant dramatic style was not the creation of a conscious 'school' or artistic movement. Such self-conscious direction or manipulation is actually quite rare in any of the arts in America; and, in fact, what little artistic doctrine existed in the 1930s - that influenced by the Communist Party - specifically rejected domestic drama, demanding literature about the masses. And, despite a growing consensus, some significant playwrights of the period, seeing that domestic realism had limitations as well as potentials, rejected the mode and continued to experiment in non-realistic styles. (p. 44-5)

Domestic realism actually means the actualities of daily life. It has become prevalent in American Theatre after 1950s. (Chanksy, 2015) Domestic realism has more or less many characteristics of 'kitchen sink drama'. Mobley defines it as "a term used by critics to describe the realistic working class plays of England's Arnold Wesker because so much of the action takes place in homely settings, such as the kitchen..." (1992, p.79) Those works on domestic realism, in general, deal with themes examined by the kitchen sink drama such as ironing, dusting, vacuuming, sewing, floor scrubbing, bathing, dressing children, caring for elderly, doing laundry, dining, serving, entertaining, etc. Domestic realistic plays look at domestic life in a way different way than those traditional theatres.

Neil Simon's *The Prisoner of Second Avenue* (1971) is good example for

examining the issues which are subject to the domestic realistic plays. Chanksy writes as “garnering a Tony nomination for Best Play and running for 798 performances. It quickly arrived in major theatres in Chicago, Boston, Rome, and later London, enjoyed summer stock revivals, and was made into a film in 1975.” (2015, p.178) It deals with a middle-class American family, Mel and Edna’s tragicomedy life. Mel suffers from paranoia and angst. The characters are stuck between monstrous American capitalism and materialistic values. The setting is a high rise building in New York’s expensive neighbourhood where upper middle class people live. In the play the characters are actually given as the ironic symbols of American capitalism. In luxury they feel as if they were prisoners in New York. This paradoxical situation is well presented by Simon.

The play explicitly shows us that no matter how technology seems to provide comfort to people, in reality, the opposite is true. It makes life harder for people as observed in this family. In the Mel Edison family, almost all household appliances do not work properly. The air conditioner is not appropriately adjusted, and the walls are not thick enough to keep away the noise coming from the street traffic. The garbage smells horribly.

For Simon, family is a universal subject. Simon says:

I don’t write social and political plays, because I’ve always thought the family was the microcosm of what goes on in the World. I write about the small wars that eventually become the big wars. It’s also what I’m most comfortable with. I am a middle-class person; I grew up in a middle-class neighbourhood. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.156)

Simon’s plays are considered to be domestic comedies which explore family life and relationships, and set an example for American domestic comedy in the 1960s and 1970s. Simon’s distinctive style gives room for domestic issues in his plays. He is regarded as a keen observer of domestic and contemporary life. He exhibits the concerns and values of middle-class people and their life styles. Simon employs a clear cut single conflict triggering the conflict of the play rather than using subplots. Moreover, his plays are about social problems and human aspirations with domestic realism. Somehow, they all appeal to universal human characteristics.

CHAPTER II MARVIN NEIL SIMON (1927-2018) AND HIS MAJOR WORKS

“Fate is both your liability and your hope To sit in a room alone for six or seven or ten hours, sharing the time with characters that you created, is sheer heaven. And if not heaven, it's at least escape from hell.”

Neil Simon

2.1. SOME REMARKS ABOUT NEIL SIMON’S LIFE, CAREER AND STYLE

He was an American playwright, television joke writer and screenwriter and one of the most well-known dramatists commercially and artistically in the history of American theatre. Moreover, to many drama critics, he was the most successful dramatist in the history of the world theatre in commercial terms. (Berkowitz, 2013) He was called as ‘King of Broadway’ by drama critics.

Walden writes, in *Neil Simon: Toward Act III?*

There is little doubt that Neil Simon is one of the most prolific, productive, and successful playwrights the United States has ever produced. Although his work does not always revolve around specifically Jewish characters’ themes, he has not forgotten either his roots or his aspiration to be evaluated as a serious playwright. (1980, p.77)

He was born into a Jewish family having volatile family relations and his father is said to have left them many times, in the Bronx. He was named Marvin Neil and nicknamed ‘Doc’ “because he was fond of examining people with a toy stethoscope. He is still called ‘Doc’ by most people, including his wife and he still feels an almost doomed compulsion to live in New York.” (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.9) He is also called ‘the laugh machine’. He was raised in New York. His childhood was harsh and difficult. He was the child of the Great Depression in 1930s. His family faced with lots of financial hardships and they hardly met the ends.

He went to New York University and University of Denver. (Berkowitz, 2013) Through hard and difficult early years in his life, it was his mother who “stood by me and I knew that whatever I did, it was wonderful with her. While I was always upset and angry when my father left home, when he would come back, I loved being with him” (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.xii) During those difficult times,

comedy writing to him was, somehow, a defence mechanism. In his *Conversations with Neil Simon*, he writes:

I have a compulsion to keep writing. I am enormously restless, and I just have to fill every single second of the day. One of the most dominant parts of my personality is this enormous desire I have to do everything myself. I don't trust anybody. Except in finances-in that I have enormous trust. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.10)

Simon is regarded as one of the most prolific playwrights in the history of American theatre. However, he wrote a play almost one a year and he was apt enough to turn out his comedies as success, he was “accorded the least critical and academic study of any major American playwright, for a reason that says more about literary criticism than the plays. Literary analysts have never been comfortable with skilled craftsmen who make few if any pretensions to high art.” (Berkowitz, 2013, p.154) However, Orfanella even compares him to Shakespeare.

With all due respect to that fellow known as the Bard, no playwright has had a greater impact on the Broadway stage than the one known as Doc. As Neil Simon's body of work approaches that of Shakespeare, his position as America's premier playwright has been firmly established. (1998, p.108)

Lipton argues, in *Conversations with Neil Simon*, as following:

By any measure-quantity, quality, popular success, renown-Neil Simon is the preeminence purveyor of comedy in the last half of the twentieth-century. Like the work of most writers of comedy, from Aristophanes to Woody Allen, Simon's humor is written to be spoken. And heard. For Simon the art of humor is both communal (each member of the audience in league with all the other members of the audience) and collegial (playwright and performers in league with the audience-a relationship) Simon will describe as a 'shared secret' (qtd. in Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.141)

He wrote forty plays and numerous movie screenplays. Twenty-eight of plays out of forty were staged on Broadway and five musicals were produced on Broadway, too. Most of his plays have been adapted to screen. However, his BB Trilogy-*Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Biloxi Blues*, and *Broadway Bound*- brought him success and thanks to those plays some drama critics and scholars started to take Simon's works seriously. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019) Although he was awarded two Emmys for television, five Tony awards for theatre and two Oscars for the cinema, “Simon is often dismissed as a writer whose background in television made him an expert in the one-liner at the expense of any depth.” (Chanksy, 2015, p.178) However, he is considered to be one of the most performed playwrights in USA and in the world. “the shows are reaching twenty or thirty million people...” (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p. xiii) However, Simon resist the association as one-liners

playwright and he even outrightly rejects it. The following quote by Simon puts the reason why he does not like being even called as a one-liner.

The comedy writing reputation is from early plays. I'm not denigrating them. If the show is funny. It's funny. I don't like to think that's me. These last forty years I've written plays mostly. I don't even know what one-liner is. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.245)

Though many critics do not take his works seriously, one respected drama critic, Walter Kerr, rightly acknowledges and champions his craftsmanship as:

Simon's special victory is to have discovered the exact amount of God's truth a light comedy can properly contain. I swear to heaven if I hear Mr. Simon put down one more time for his facility at coining swiftly relevant retorts, I am going to fill an entire page with one-liners every reader can recite along with me. They will all be by William Shakespeare. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.109)

Simon has theories about why he became a playwright. In an interview with David Sterritt, he reveals as:

It has to do with one's personality. It's like handing your personality through the door, but you don't have to show it. . It's on a piece of paper. You say, There, that's what I am, but I can't quite face you. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.36)

We could suggest that playwriting is a kind of process for Simon which is undertaken with a pen and paper. It is known that he does not use any computer to write his plays except a typewriter.

I get an idea for a play and sometimes I don't know when it's going. I just go line by line or word by word. But then you see it. The people in the play, they're the ones who control it. And then suddenly it's not about showbiz. It's about real life, at that stage. (Nathan qtd. in Bryer & Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.244)

What can be inferred from the above quote is that when he starts writing a play, he does not aim to get financial success from it or he does not design it for show business. We could suggest, as many writers, Simon has mainly drawn topics from his own life, his family, his marriages, and his professional experiences.

Concerning his one-liners, there are numerous critical reviews of his plays. It seems that Simon has hardly satisfied the critics and their expectations. In an interview with Clive Hirschhorn, he clearly states it as follow:

CH: how do you answer your critics who complain that your more serious comedies, like *The Gingerbread Lady* and *Prisoner of Second Avenue*, are sabotaged by witty one- liners you can't seem to avoid incorporating into your work?

NS: I have no answer. When I write something like *God's Favorite*, I'm criticized for not writing witty one-liners. So either way, I can't win.

CH. How you know when a line is funny? Does it have to make you laugh?

NS: No, I no longer laugh at the lines that emerge from my typewriter. The prerequisite for me is that the line must be able to express an old thought with a certain freshness and be seen from a different point of view. And if I'm convinced it does., the chances are it'll get a laugh from an audience. What, ideally, I want audiences to say is: 'My God, I've often thought about that, but I've never heard it expressed quite that way.' What audiences are very suspicious of this is the easy gag-the obvious 'laugh line' that seems manufactured and contrived and which the playwright didn't have the discipline to fling out. (Bryer and Siegel, 2019, p.51-52)

This quote sheds light on what laughter means to him but the critics fail to give enough credit to his works because Simon does not write any play to make the critics happy. That's why he just focuses on his work and being creative and prolific.

Garrison argues it as follows:

Undoubtedly Simon is one of the most productive playwrights in the past twenty years and, additionally, one of the most financially successful. A Broadway season without a new Neil Simon show would almost seem inadequate. Ironically enough, Simon's career did not begin in theatre but instead in television writing in collaboration with his brother, Danny, for the Phil Silvers Arrow Show in 1948. (1980, p.vii)

After television, he started his playwriting career. Some critics claim that most of his plays have no well-structured plots rather than mechanical ones. His plots hang on comic dialogue and situations. Simon's skill is to juxtapose simple opposites and then reconcile them with conflict of the play. However, Coates states that "the literary canon needs an injection in the funny bone, and a dose of Neil Simon is just what the doctor ordered." (2005, p.23)

Concerning his writing style, when Frank Gagnard asked him about it, he answered it as following:

Looking back at what and how I write, I seem to begin a play with two people of completely opposite nature and temperament, put them in an intolerable situation and let the sparks fly. The extra ingredient, and very important, is that they must both emphatically believe that their way of life right one. Then it's playwright's job to support both of those beliefs. As for form, I prefer my comedies in three acts. When I start, I write extensive notes for the first act, a sketchy outline for the second, and nothing for the third. Sometimes I don't find out for certain what's in the third act until a week before we open on Broadway. (Gagnard qtd. in Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p. 4)

What we infer from the above quote is that first he bases his premise on opposites and then he supports and develops the opposite characters by giving an equal importance to two characters. It seems that he writes his third act after many

rehearsals and it is put on stage on Broadway.

James Lipton, in an interview with Simon, asks him “when did you first realize you were funny?”

Simons answers it as following:

It started very early in my life-eight, nine, ten years old-being funny around the other kids. You single out one kid on your block or in the school who understands what you’re saying. He is the only one who laughs. The other kids only laugh when someone tells them a joke: Two guys got on a truck... I’ve never done that in my life. I don’t like telling jokes. I don’t like to hear someone say to me. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.131)

In 1992 Jackson R. Bryer interviewed Simon and posed this question to him:

Since you’ve been writing play, have you ever been tempted to do anything else - write a novel or write poetry?

Simon answers it as:

Certainly not poetry. I couldn’t see where I would get more satisfaction than from doing a play, its being so malleable that I could play around with it all the time during rehearsals or readings or whatever. With a novel it seems like such a lonely life; there’s no one. It’s between you and the person that buys the book. (qtd. in Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.178)

We could suggest that prose is not a right tool to convey the message of the author to the audience directly compared to drama, particularly comedy. In an interview with Simon, Jackson R. Bryer asks him the following question:

“How have changed your writing method over the years since you started writing plays?” Simon answers it as:

When I started, I didn’t know how to find my way. I didn’t know how to start the play; I didn’t know when I was on the wrong track. I was such a virgin at it that I always needed to go to someone and say, ‘Is this any good’? After ten or twelve pages, I was showing everybody! No one has seen a page of *Laughter* on the 23rd Floor, and I’m finishing the first act. No one saw a page of *Lost in Yonkers* until I finished it; I just went ahead. I’m more reticent to show things to people now anyway, because even if they love it, they put responsibility on you: ‘This is great’. (Bryer and Siegel(eds.), 2019, p.191)

Simon knows the distinction between being witty and humorous. In an interview with Simon, Clive Hirschhorn asks him the following question:

CH: Do you regard yourself as a witty or humorous writer?

NS: There’s a very narrow distinction between the two, you know. After all, the object of both is to make you laugh. Humor, I guess, is something intrinsic to the plot. For example, in *You Can’t Take It with You*, a typewriter is delivered by mistake to the house in which the play is set. So one of the characters decides to become a playwright. That’s humorous. But in *The Odd Couple*, when Oscar Madison tells Felix Ungar it took him two hours to work out that initials FU on the

note he found on his pillow meant Felix Ungar-that's wit. Most of the plays I've written I'd classify as witty, I guess. Though I have written some humorous ones as well... (qtd in Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.46)

Simon is known as a workaholic playwright as he has produced so many plays. Bryer, in an interview with him conducted in 1992, asks him if he were a workaholic or nor not, he answer it as:

Well, if you consider any man who goes to work five days a week on a job, doesn't work on weekends, and doesn't work nine to five. I work four hours a day, but I don't come into this office for any other reason but to work. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.191)

It is clear that he was a well-disciplined playwright who appreciates the importance of time. At the same interview with Bryer, he says he has written as many or more than Tennessee Williams and Sam Shepard who wrote in the twenties. "Shakespeare wrote thirty-seven, I think: George Bernard Shaw wrote fifty-some plays. I don't think it's such an enormous output of work; it's just that people will say to sometimes: "You've made enough money. Why do you keep doing it?" They miss the whole point of it." (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.192)

It seems that he is not satisfied with the output of his plays except the money he has made from his writing. Some critics claim that Simon's plays are not serious dramas. Moreover, Simon interestingly thinks that his plays are 'entertainments'. They are not regarded as serious work of art. To Simon, two of his plays are to be enduring classics or masterpieces: *The Odd Couple* and *The Sunshine Boys*. With drawing the character, Eugene Morris Jerome, Simon has become a recognized playwright for drama critics. He has proved that he could write serious plays as well as one-liners. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019) The critical acceptance was important to Simon because he, to certain extent, cared for what the critics said about his plays. His BB-trilogy made the critics take him seriously. As a king of Broadway, he had to pay a price for being famous. In an interview with Jack Slater in 1977, Slater asks him this question:

"How much has success as a playwright contributed to your loss of innocence?"

Simon answers it as follows:

Success takes you to some very strange places. It isolates you and it affects people around you-your family and friends. They begin to view you differently, as though you were some sort of extraordinary person: you have been to a place they haven't seen, a place they don't know at all. For example, I had relatives who used to call

and who stopped calling. Finally, when they did call they would say, “I hate to disturb you”. In other words, they were saying that you are now a separate person. Also, it was very difficult for me as a writer to walk along the street and be recognized. One of the joys of being a writer is one’s anonymity. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.41)

We could contend that success must have taken him to many strange places as a Jew origin American playwright. His success isolated him from his close friends and even from his kinship.

Simon was a good learner before becoming a famous playwright. He says:

I learned more from bad plays than from good ones. Good plays are a mystery. You don’t know what it is that the playwright did right. More often than not you see where a work fails. One of the things I found interesting was that a lot of comedy came from drunks on the stage. If a character was drunk he was funny, but are not drunk. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.166-7)

We know that unless we see bad examples we will never ever appreciate good examples. It seems Simon builds his works on good examples after seeing bad ones. We could liken it to ‘learning by trial and error’. It is worth noting some of his major plays to introduce Neil Simon to the Turkish audience and theatre and literature lovers.

2.2. COME BLOW YOUR HORN (1961)

Come Blow Your Horn is an autobiographical play that brought him his first Broadway success. It deals with the experiences and feelings of Neil Simon and his brother, Danny, who try to leave their Jewish home. It is actually about family parental conflict and Simon’s feelings. The following quote is a good example of it. Walden cites it from Playboy:

My father would leave home, be gone for a few months and then come back, and I felt that our life was like a yo-yo! We’d be spinning along pretty good, and then-zap, the string would break and he was gone. The string broke five times, and, according to Danny Simon, who tried to shield Neil from the brunt of it all, his brother must have felt pain that he didn't show. He saved it for his writing. (Walden, 1980, p.79)

It depicts a boy who goes away home to live with his playboy elder brother, Danny, who try to leave their Jewish home. After they leave their parents, Buddy who is the youngest decides to live with his elder brother, Alan, who is a womaniser and lives in a rich Manhattan apartment. Buddy Baker loves his brother’s free and independent lifestyle. Alan makes him familiar with New York life and lifestyle But the problem is that their father is not happy with it. Buddy seems to be a success at socialising after having spent some time with his elder brother. A husband of the

woman who was dating Alan beats him and he is now deadly scared of dating whomever he meets.

Consequently, Alan breaks up his relationship with a girl called Connie. Alan wants his younger brother, Buddy to end his shaking lifestyle as well. Alan, somehow, proposes to Connie. They get married. After marriage, Alan wants to devote himself to doing family business. Their father, Harry Baker, regards Alan as a nuisance because he does not come to work on time and does not do the things when his father is away for business. His playboy lifestyle annoys Harry.

In the end, Alan starts questioning his futile and playboy lifestyle and reviewing his life again and tries to make Buddy change his futile lifestyle, too.

2.3. BAREFOOT IN THE PARK (1963)

Barefoot in the Park is actually a depiction of the early life years of Simon and his first marriage. In this play, Simon centres his comedy on a young marriage. It deals with newlyweds who experience a period of adjustment whereas his orthodox nature gives way to “her free-spiritedness.” (Berkowitz, 2013, p.154). It deals with the story of Corie and Paul Bratter who have just returned from their honeymoon. As they just start their new married life in a small fifth floor of an apartment building in New York. Paul Bratter is a young lawyer but he is a conservative one. The coming of mother meddling with all their affairs and the upstairs neighbour cause troubles to them and such things constrain their love. Their relationship is very passionate at the beginning, but later on the relationship turns up something funny and comic.

Barefoot and *Lost in Yonkers* won Simon a Pulitzer. It was one of his first big hits. Simon, in *Conversations with Neil Simon*, reveals his feelings about this play as: “Everything was about it was terrific-the atmosphere, the aura...” (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.36)

2.4. THE ODD COUPLE (1965)

The Odd Couple examines the comic incompatibility of two divorced men sharing the same room. Felix and Oscar are unhappy roommates. It is actually about divorce and its effect on the relationship of two men sharing the same room together. While Felix is clean one, Oscar is messy and unclean. It comes from life again but not Simon’s own life. The characters are real and believable ones,

however, comedy distorts them. It is one of the masterpieces of Simon. It is one of his classic comedies.

The setting is again an apartment building that belongs to a sportswriter, Oscar Madison, who has just retired. He is unclean and messy. We can understand that the sportswriter's wife has just left him because of that. A group of young men are in this apartment for their poker game. They seem to meet regularly at certain times each week. As host, Oscar offers some warm coke and sandwiches to his guests. Felix Ungar comes late because it seems that his wife has just thrown him out of house. He is frustrated and depressed and he seems to have some sort of suicidal inclinations. Oscar accepts him as a roommate. As soon as Felix starts living with Oscar he finds out how hard to live with him. The final straw comes when Oscar invites two beautiful sisters who live in the same apartment block to his home. The tidy and clean, Felix, and the untidy and messy, Oscar, start quarreling and they decide to go their own ways. In this play, we see that Felix seems to commit suicide but he does not commit suicide. If he committed suicide, then it would be a serious play then it would not be funny. This play is one of the masterpieces of Simon. It won him A Tony Award. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019)

2.5. *THE STAR-SPANGLED GIRL (1966)*

The Star-Spangled Girl is about two would-be revolutionary writers who are in contact with a romantic all American girl. The play proves that romance overcomes politics. The setting is San Francisco. Time is the 1960s. It mainly examines a love triangle that is mixed with politics. The major characters, Andy Hobart and Norman Cornell, are depicted as radical liberals. They have financial problems and they are aware that they cannot make a living on their magazine alone. The magazine is a protest one. They use their apartment as a publishing office. A retired Olympic swimmer, Sophie, who is a typical all-American girl, becomes their next door neighbour. Norman falls for her at first sight. His obsession with this girl causes uneasiness for Andy Hobart. In order to continue the operations of the magazine, Andy employs her to sustain the business. After experiencing the irresponsible way of living of Norman, Sophie fosters lovely feelings for Andy. After Sophie's falls in love with Andy, the friendship of Andy and Norman and the future of the magazine are put in danger.

2.6. PLAZA SUITE (1968)

Plaza Suite is about middle - aged New Yorkers who are inflicted with the passage of time. Its plot structure is again simple and easy to grasp. The setting is Suite 719 at the Plaza Hotel in New York. The major characters are Sam Nash, Karen Nash, and Jesse Kiplinger. It depicts three couples occupying that plaza suite. The first couple, Sam and Karen Nash, is at the hotel to celebrate their wedding anniversary. It is the same hotel where they spent their honeymoon. Whereas Karen seems to have some kind of romanticism, Sam is indifferent to her and he keeps busy himself with business matters. Meanwhile, a successful, talented, and womaniser Hollywood man, Jesse Kiplinger, comes to the hotel to kill a few hours of his time with girls. Muriel Tate, one his old hometown girlfriends, comes to meet him. The third couple arrives at hotel. They are there to celebrate their daughter's wedding ceremony but they are stuck in their room. No matter hard they try to unlock the door they fail and they get furious and lose their temper.

2.7. THE LAST OF THE RED-HOT LOVERS (1969)

The Last of the Red-Hot Lovers is about an adventurous middle aged man who tries to sleep with other women by adultery. But all his escapades and attempts to commit adultery are unsuccessful. It is regarded as one of the most amusing and entertaining comedies of Simon. The setting is again New York. The lead characters are as following: Burney Cashman, Eliane Navazio, and Bobbie Michele. It deals with Barney Cashman who is forty-seven years old and married with three children. He runs a restaurant. He suffers from a midlife crisis, so he wants to try to do different things to satisfy his secret desires and fantasies at last once. He wants to have affairs with three women but at his every trial something negative happens and prevents him from having an affair. In the end, Barney invites his wife to the apartment in which he has rendezvous with other women. Actually, it makes us ask a basic question to ourselves. 'What do we do, if our lives have not been satisfactorily lived?' Or 'what do we do when we get older or we get through a midlife crisis?'

2.8. THE GINGERBREAD LADY (1970)

The Gingerbread Lady deals with an alcoholic woman who tries to recover herself from this habit. It is regarded as one of his most serious plays written during

the 1970s. It is a two-act play. It is called dark comedy or dark humour. Dark comedy is actually a kind of comedy embodying the elements of tragedy and comedy. The major characters are Eva Meara, Polly Meara, and Toby Landau. Evy Meara, who is a cabaret singer, is a married woman. But her life, marriage, health, and career are destroyed by her alcohol addiction. She is put into a sanatorium to recover from it. In the play, we meet her after ten weeks of her being at the sanatorium. It is clear that her friend, her daughter and husband try to help her come to sobriety. Her daughter needs her mother's affection.

2.9. THE PRISONER OF SECOND AVENUE (1971)

The Prisoner of Second Avenue shows a New Yorker who goes mad by the irresistible comic pressures of New York, or in other words by the pressures of city life. The play's setting is Manhattan, New York, in the early 1970s. According to many sources, during the 1970s New York City had financial crisis, and faced high crime rates. The play starts with depicting Mel Edison, a middle aged man with problems. He tries hard to maintain the costs of his small apartment. It mainly focuses on the difficulties and ills of city life and how the capitalist system erodes human values and the primary motive of man to survive. Mel and his wife, Edna, keep on fighting with urban difficulties which make the prisoner of the Second Avenue. Mel and Edna depict the urban despair. We could contend that it is a satire of the capitalist system and how the urban life makes life unbearable for those who have little means to cope with it. Simon, in his play, depicts how urban life can make people with little means a prisoner of it. We could argue that Edna is the real victim of urban life because the city has not improved living conditions for its people, and she bears all tirades of her husband, too. Though everything they have is stolen from their apartment, they fight for survival in the city as if they were in the jungle.

In an interview with Jack Slater, Simon reveals his views about the play as follows:

I've written about marriage a good deal. Because I believe in it so much. I know the problems one goes through in marriage. When you work out that relationship, you just keep going to this new and better and more wonderful place with each other. Then you're better able to relate to the rest of the world. If you can't make it with one other person. I don't see how you can make it with a lot of human beings. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.42)

The play explicitly depicts attitudes towards marriage in an urban setting.

2.10. *THE SUNSHINE BOYS* (1972)

The Sunshine Boys deals with two former vaudevillians that are almost always fighting with each other. Vaudeville was a very popular art form in the US at the beginning of the twentieth century. (Berkowitz, 2013) Vaudeville means “... light entertainment consisting of ten to fifteen individual acts - singing, dancing, acrobatics, comic skits and monologs, animal performers, magic - all unrelated in one show.” (Mobley, 1992, p.160) The plot is about an attempt of a young theatrical agent who wants to re-unite Willie and Clark who were long-time friends and vaudevillians. They were at odds with each other for a long time. Now they even do not talk to each other. To re-organize their sketch they are made to come together and they start on working out numerous stuff to be in the public eye again. During the second half of the twentieth century, plots of Simon examine the victims and their limitations.

Simon acknowledges to Jackson R. Bryer about this play.

I loved writing *The Sunshine Boys*. It was a play that allowed me to be outrageously funny but dramatic at the same time, because these two old codgers were very poignant to me. They were tragic figures in a way, but they were so funny also. They really didn't know after a while whether what they were saying was funny or was from the act, because they talked in life in the same rhythms that they did in the act for forty-five or fifty years. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.184-5)

On the surface, *The Sunshine Boys* are full of funny utterances and gags but under surface, it has social realistic elements.

2.11. *THE GOOD DOCTOR* (1973)

The Good Doctor is made up of sketches modelled on Russian playwright, Anton Chekhov. It is about minor defeats of little people. It is a two-act play. Simon bases his play on Anton Chekhov's short stories. The setting is Russia at the turn of the twentieth century. It mainly examines human rights, social discrimination, abuse, the oppressor and the oppressed and the current capitalist system from a hilarious and comedic perspective. It strikingly focuses on a writer talking to the audience and showing them what he has written. He shares his childhood, family and friendships experiences with the audience as well. He makes the audience imagine different characters with all universal human traits.

2.12. *GOD'S FAVORITE* (1974)

God's Favorite deals with a biblical story of Job which is called 'the Book of

Job' as well. It is a comic and modern retelling of this biblical story. It is an absurdist dark comedy about Job. It is a two-act play. Its setting is Long Island. The major characters are Joe Benjamin, Sidney Lipton, and Ben Benjamin. To drama critics and many reviewers, it is said that Simon wrote it as a response to his first wife who died of cancer. As in the Biblical Job story, Joe Benjamin is a successful businessman who sells boxes. His family lives in Long Island. They have a luxurious life. Joe is a pious and devoted religious man. On one day a strange and eccentric messenger comes up and meets him, and then his faith to God is challenged as in the Biblical story. After that visit, Joe's life is shaken dramatically. He has been left with a 'Either Or' choice. He will either reject his faith in God as a servant to the Almighty, or he will face its consequences. Simon depicts it beautifully in his hilarious comedy.

It was, somehow, a controversial play that's why it did not have any run on Broadway. It has very few one-liners compared to his other plays. It is known that the play was very popular with younger audiences. Actually, it touches on Simon's life.

2.13. BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS (1983)

Brighton Beach Memoirs (1983), *Biloxi Blues* (1985), and *Broadway Bound* (1986) are semi-autobiographical plays. They are known as Simon's BB Trilogy. It is a trilogy of Simon. The trilogy is based on family humour and professional ambition. It centres on Simon's own life experiences.

Brighton Beach Memoirs, the setting is Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, New York. The settlers are mostly Irish, Jewish, and Germans. It centres on one family's survival struggle just before the World War II during the Great Depression. It was a time of hardships for millions of people in the late 1930s. While Father makes all decisions, a passive-aggressive mother is self-sacrificing and manipulates his sons.

The main character, Eugene Morris Jerome, is on the threshold of puberty, sexual awakening, and looking for an identity. It is the first play in the trilogy. It is a two-act play. The major characters are Eugene Jerome, Stanley Jerome, and Kate Jerome. Eugene, as a teenager, is curious about learning a lot about girls, family, relationships, and upcoming the Second World War. He observes life from many perspectives. All his observations are witty and humorous. He talks with his Polish

Origin Jewish relatives. He cares for strong family ties and needs for a family. In his *memoirs*, Simon says “I really made a quantum leap in Brighton Beach as a playwright, because it was the first full-bodied play I had ever written, in terms of dealing with a group of people as individuals and telling all their stories.” (1996, p.386)

This play got lots of positive reviews from the New York critics. In an interview with David Richards in 1983, Simon explains his true feelings about Brighton Beach Memoirs as:

I feel that if I had died without writing my Brighton Beach Memoirs, well, I would have had a nice legacy as a writer of light comedies. But it would have been incomplete. This play has satisfied me so much that if it were all over right now and I never wrote another play. I'd be quite content. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.82)

We can say that Brighton Beach Memoirs was Simon's one of the masterpieces. As a playwright, it shows how far Simon went in American drama. Even though events are depicted or told through the eyes of the fifteen-year-old boy, Eugene Jerome, it is actually about every character. The characters' stories are integrated with everyone's story in society. Simon explicitly depicts dysfunctional people in this play. To Peter Marks, with Yonkers and his Brighton Beach trilogy:

he has added to his canon a series of richly textured plays that not only have contributed to the commercial success that has made him one of the world's richest playwrights but also have yielded a level of acceptance by critics that eluded him earlier in his prolific career. He was pigeonholed for so long as a comedy writer that he had felt slighted by those whom he believed wrongly consigned his work to some lesser category of art. (Marks qtd. in Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.174)

Brighton Beach Memoirs took Simon's nine years to write it. It is considered to be one of Simon's most personal plays, and “the naked honesty of its plot and characters resonated powerfully with audiences.” (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.236) It is one of his plays in trilogy which attracted attention of drama critics.

2.14. BILOXI BLUES (1985)

It is one of Simon's few plays whose setting is not New York. Arnold Epstein is depicted as a young Jew with strong will and determination. Sergeant Toomey is the commander of him and his fellow recruits. It examines the brave young men's fears, hormones, explicit bigotry and anti-Semitism. In this play we also see one-liners that are present, however, the play is under the shadow of the World War II. In this play again Simon deals with sensitivity, sexuality, adolescence, manhood

and fear.

Biloxi Blues mainly depicts the conflict and troubles experienced by Sergeant Merwin Toomey and Arnold Epstein. It is a two-act play. It is a semi-autobiographical comedy. It closely depicts Simon's own experience in the US Army. It brought Simon widespread acclaim from audiences and drama critics. It is a successful play because it has lots of comic elements. He won a Tony Award for it. It is not a farce because in farce a rich situation comes first but here we see rich characters are dominant rather than their situation. It is not mainly one-liners and two dimensional character. In this play we see that characters do not know each other until they enter the army. Simon, in *Conversations with Neil Simon*, writes:

When I got to Biloxi Blues, I really had to deal with it, because it became a subject of the play -of anti-Semitism or antihomosexuality or anti-anything. There was a war, a smaller war, going on within the circle of the men even before they went off to fight deeper into the truth, and I think that that's what the critics recognised and what I began to recognize in myself-that if I'm going to write plays, then I've got deal with the characters as absolutely truthfully as I possibly can. (Kaufman qtd. in Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.112)

The dialogues are full of gags, puns, and one-liners. (Korb, 2001) The major characters are as following: Eugene Morris Jerome, Roy Selridge, and Joseph Wykowski. Eugene Jerome, a perceptive and inward-looking young Jewish boy, comes from New York City who wants to become a writer.

He is recruited to the United States Army. After recruitment to the army, he is sent to a training camp located in Biloxi, Mississippi just before the Second World War ends. Jerome thinks that he will learn a lot from military experience and he will use this unique military experience in his writing career. Before enlisting to the army he had the idea that it would be perfect place with many comforts and entertainment but as soon as he enters into the training camp he sees true face of what the military really is. He and his fellow soldiers face the harsh, sadistic, and authoritarian attitude. Eugene learns about authority, danger, assimilation, love, homosexuality, and sadistic attitude. In this play, it sounds that Simon actually re-questions his conscience as a playwright. It has been adapted to the television. In 1988 New York Times released a review of its film version.

The Review is as follows:

They are Wykowski, Selridge, Carney and Epstein, the usual American cross-section. They're an exhausted but still tirelessly obscene crew given to

communication by insults - rudely frank comments about each other's origins, intelligence, odors and anatomies. Says the voice of Eugene (Matthew Broderick), who has a would-be writer's way of stepping outside events to consider his own reactions to them: It was hard to believe these were guys with mothers and fathers who worried about them. It was my fourth day in the Army, and I hated everybody so far. (March 25, 1988, Section C, Page 1)

The play does not employ profanity and obscenity which may go further against conventions of the society. In this play, 'Ho' is repeatedly used. Simon explains the reason why as:

I learned from watching Chaplin films that what's most funny isn't a single moment of laughter but the moments that come on top of it, and on top of those. I learned it from the Laurel and Hardy films too. One of the funniest things I ever saw Laurel and Hardy do was try to undress in the upper berth of train-together. ... Maybe 'Ho' also came from sitting in the dark as a kid. (Lipton qtd. in Breyer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.150)

2.15. BROADWAY BOUND (1986)

Broadway Bound deals with Kate Jerome, a middle-aged Jewish mother, who tells Eugene about the most spectacular incident of her life. In Simon's trilogy, *Broadway Bound* is considered to be the most serious play of his to date. It is an autobiographical play dealing with a mother, father and two adult sons, the younger one wants to be a talented writer. A kind of resentment occurs between father and son in terms of affection for the mother. It is, somehow, a father-son conflict.

Eugene manages to dance with Kate. Here are dialogues exchanged by Eugene and Kate.

Eugene: ... (He finds the right music. It is Benny Goodman's recording of "It Had to Be You") There! Listen! That's the perfect music ... (He crosses to Kate at the table) So he moved you gently around the floor.

Kate: Stop it Eugene. I'm not in the mood.

Eugene (Holding out his arms to her): Come on, I'll dance with you ... I'm George Raft ... (He mimes slicking down his hair) Everybody is watching us ... Don't let 'em down, Mom. (Kate looks at Eugene for a moment, listening to the music. Then she slowly stands and they begin to dance? awkwardly at first, then more gracefully) Kate: You're holding me too tight... Don't push me ... Just with your fingertips.

Eugene: You're so graceful, Mom ... I never knew you were so graceful. There's Adele Abrams. (He waves) Adele? She's wonderful. (They continue to dance)

Kate: Now turn me.

Eugene: How?

Kate: Just let go. (He lets go. She does a turn) Now give me your hand. (She is back in his arms for the finish of the number) And then it was over. (*Broadway Bound*, 1988, p.101)

The extract shows that Simon is apt at using rapid exchanges of one liner humour. It shows mainly one liners rather than character development, that is why many critics contend Simon fails to draw a meaningful development of character and his characters seem to have no clear cut motivation. Broadly speaking, *Brighton Beach Memoirs* and *Biloxi Blues* are about Simon's sexual awakening. In *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, the prominent figure is a mother, who suffers a lot under the hard work of daily routines, feels as an unappreciated woman figure with transitory memories of pleasure.

Simon acknowledges to Jackson R. Bryer,

I would not have written *Broadway Bound* if my parents had been alive. I couldn't have put them up on the stage that way. ... I reveal things about my mother, her inability to be close and emotional. It was an attempt to try to understand my family and my own origins. It's a play of forgiveness. (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.xv)

Broadway Bound was the last one of the trilogy. In that play we see Eugene has just been back in *Brighton Beach*. Again what observe in this play is that family still matters to Eugene because future holds a bright picture for him. Stanley and Eugene seem to have learnt a good lesson about not mingling humour and autobiography. The narrator is Eugene again as in *Biloxi Blues* and *Brighton Beach Memoirs*. Eugene sounds more mature compared to the narrator of other plays. The most significant scene in this play is when Eugene dances with his mother, Kate. Actually, Eugene seems to be a bit embarrassed because that scene may invoke the Oedipus Complex in the audience. We could suggest that Simon may be investigating his familial memories in his trilogy. It is clear that Simon, as an apt and able playwright, successfully explores dramatic structure in his BB trilogy.

2.16. CHARACTER SELECTION AND SETTING IN SIMON'S WORKS

In all those plays mentioned above, the action comes first rather than character. Berkowitz claims that "a more legitimate criticism is that virtually none of these plays uses the implicit opportunity to explore character." (2013: 154) For instance, in *Barefoot in the Park*, there is no character to explore as the young beautiful people explicitly seem to live happily ever after. It hardly reveals the personal differences of the characters. But the claim is rejected by Simon. Once he acknowledged to Kaufman, "If I'm going to write plays, then I've got to deal with the characters as absolutely truthfully as I possibly can." (Bryer and Siegel (eds.),

2019, p. xv)

We could state that Simon hardly draws tridimensional characters in his plays. A typical tridimensional character embodies such traits: physiology, sociology and psychology. Egri, in *The Art of Dramatic Writing*, outlines the major components of a tridimensional character as follows:

PHYSIOLOGY

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Height and weight
4. Color of hair, eyes, skin
5. Posture
6. Appearance: good-looking, over- or underweight, clean, neat, pleasant, untidy. Shape of head, face, limbs.
7. Defects: deformities, abnormalities, birthmarks. Diseases.
8. Heredity

SOCIOLOGY

1. Class: lower, middle, upper.
2. Occupation: type of work, hours of work, income, condition of work, union or nonunion, attitude toward organization, suitability for work. Education: amount, kind of schools, marks, favorite subjects, poorest subjects, aptitudes.
3. Home life: parents living, earning power, orphan, parents separated or divorced, parents' habits, parents' mental development, parents' vices, neglect. Character's marital status.
4. Religion
5. Race, nationality
6. Place in community: leader among friends, clubs, sports.
7. Political affiliations
8. Amusements, hobbies: books, newspapers, magazines he reads.

PSYCHOLOGY

1. Sex life, moral standards
2. Personal premise, ambition
3. Frustrations, chief disappointments
4. Temperament: choleric, easygoing, pessimistic, optimistic.
5. Attitude toward life: resigned, militant, defeatist.
6. Complexes: obsessions, inhibitions, superstitions, phobias.

7. Extrovert, introvert, ambivert
8. Abilities: languages, talents.
9. Qualities: imagination, judgment, taste, poise,
10. I.Q. (1960, p.36-37)

Most of Simon's characters are one or two dimensional ones with little psychology. Simon seems busy with exhausting comic material rather than exposing the psychological insights of his characters. Two dimensional characters do not have psychological depth.

High comedies typically have tridimensional characters focusing on intellect of the audience and making them think about ideas rather than making them laugh at the action, but generally speaking, Simon's plays are not regarded as high comedy if the wit is omitted from them. His comedies are called low comedies. Generally, his characters are depicted as perceptive and intelligent. Unlike many leading playwrights such as Shakespeare, Shaw, Ibsen, and Moliere. Simon does not use subplots in his plays but gives a single, clear conflict to initiate the action. But he was a master craftsman of light, exposing and highly entertaining comedies. His majority of works are about theatre, television and the cinema.

Berkowitz raises the reason why Simon's plays mainly have one or two dimensional character as:

One reason why Simon's characters show little depth or individuality is that they all sound alike. At this stage in his career Simon was essentially a jokewriter. (2013, p.155)

Simon brings together an array of jokes and they feed on each other. But we could suggest that *The Old Couple* and *The Sunshine Boys* have characters with psychological insights.

His works do not necessarily deal with Jewish characters and themes even though he was a Jew-American. But it is clear that he has not forgotten his origins.

He has not forgotten either his roots or his aspiration to be evaluated as a serious playwright. Always he obeys the drive to put down on paper the human condition and what it is up against and he has also followed the need to confront his own past, his burden of guilt, together with his perception of the contradiction between shoddiness of values and the stereotyped image of absolute morality. (Walden, 1980, p. 77)

Walden argues that Simon is an epitome of the American Dream. The American dream simply means 'people love you or hate you according to money

you make'. Money is regarded as a badge of identity in American capitalist system even today. "The conflict between Simon's suffering and his extraordinary talent and success is central to understanding his plays." (Zimmerman qtd. in Walden, 1980, p.78) His childhood was traumatic as a Jewish kid. During those times we could note that anti-Semitism was prevalent in the USA. As a Jewish kid, raised in New York, he had a traumatic childhood, so his childhood experiences were very important to him. (Walden, 1980)

In accordance with the above quote, Simon argues about the concept of success in American society as follows:

Success is something that people both cheer for and then try to destroy because it is both something that want to attain for themselves and then becomes a threat to them because they're not achieving. (Rousuck qtd. in Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p.88)

Some critics state that Simon is capable of using humour in every situation and he could not write a play devoid of humour. "The humor itself is often self-deprecating grimmest point of view. Much of that, I think, comes from my childhood." (Simon qtd. in Walden, 1980, p.85)

Simon is a playwright who feels and thinks to write plays in serious subjects with a kind of humour to avoid the audiences crying and weeping. Simon's works are categorised as domestic comedies. Their setting is almost always New York City. Most of Simon's plays are set in New York. Almost all characters in his plays are middle-aged people. The reason for it, we may clearly cite that the flavour and environment of New York seemed to him most appealing.

His settings offer visual jokes and offstage action. The domestic plays depict middle-class Jewish family life, values, and relations. The major topics covered in Simon's plays are as following: intergenerational issues, conflicts, sexual freedom and liberation, marriage, divorce and family. Simon is able to differentiate the thin line between tragedy and comedy, so his plot structuring utilizes the potential conflict and humour embedded in the plot in a maximized way. He was a very prolific and hardworking playwright.

In his *Memoir*, he puts his enthusiasm for writing as:

When sitting down to write, apart from my visits to the local movie house in my head— I mean the real work—I would put in a five-day week, no weekends and no nights. I generally worked best in the morning, although after lunch, followed

by a walk around midtown and a visit to some bookstores, I would come home for the afternoon session and work almost till dinner time. I rarely made lunch dates or attended meetings of any kind. (Simon, 1996, p.363)

The above quote is good proof of why he was one of the most successful playwrights of American theatre in the second half of the twentieth century. In his *The Play Goes On*, he states it clearly:

“I was always a morning person: the first one up in the house, the first one dressed, the first one down in the kitchen, the first one at the breakfast.” (Simon, 2011, p.1)

What we can infer from it is that he seems to be a well-disciplined, diligent and meticulous playwright and values the importance of time. It could be one of the most important reasons why he was a very successful.

Simon, in his *Neil Simon A Memoir Rewrites*, writes that he was influenced and deeply affected by Tennessee Williams' (1911-1983) writing habit who was one of the most renowned playwrights of the American Theatre in the twentieth century. He states that “I read that Tennessee Williams wrote practically every day of his adult life, whether at home, traveling, or vacationing. He had set up a regular schedule of hours which only illness might cause him to take a respite from, which I would wager didn't happen often.” (1996, p.362)

Some critics contend that he is an apolitical playwright and remains indifferent to the social problems prevailing in society. The following quote shows us why he is not interested in politics.

I am not very much of a political activist either. I have backed many candidates, given money to many candidates, and supported many propositions, but I don't much care for politics. I think we have a government that's of the people, by the people, but for the people who want things their own way. On Inauguration Day, the departing president shakes hands with the incoming president and asks the country, with God's help, to support this new president, for that is what makes this country great. Then the next day, the party not in the White House spends most of their time trying to destroy the party that's in the White House. The running of the government just seems like an encumbrance that gets in the way of their trying to get back into the White House. (Simon, 1996, p.364)

It is clear that he is not interested in any kind of politics. What we could infer from his saying is that he cannot change anything by being a political activist or having any political affiliations with any party in US politics. We could suggest that he purposely avoids dealing with political issues of his time because of anti-Semitism among Americans during those times. It is logical to suggest that if he

had been a political activist, his plays would hardly have been staged on Broadway or reached a large Broadway audience. The following quote is a good indication of his indifference to politics. “I also don’t know how to run a country, a state, a city, or a town, which is why I try not to meddle or peddle ideas to other people of how it should be run.” (Simon, 1996, p.364)

In his *Memoir*, he states that he was raised as an idealist and romantic that is why he had great enthusiasm in watching Frank Capra’s movies mainly demonstrating moral themes evolving into fables. It is known that comedy, as a major genre of drama, is very useful and effective to convey the truth and message of the author to the audience. It is most likely that Simon prefers comedy to tragedy to entertain the public and convey his messages to the audience by employing comedy techniques.

He writes:

So I write plays for my own enjoyment, and I hope for the enjoyment of others, and I watch my wife of today give all her time and energy to help in matters political and charitable, and to anyone else who needs assistance. She’s not as cynical as I am. That’s why I write comedy. (Simon, 1996, p.365)

We, as human beings, have problems that may not be a laughing matter but Simon aptly transforms them into a laughing matter. He puts it as following:

The problems we cause ourselves are not necessarily a laughing matter, but when I put it down on paper, and get it right, then put it up on the stage and make that stage a mirror of our own responses and reactions, more often than not the audiences seem to laugh at themselves. They usually say, I know someone exactly like that, when in fact, they may be talking about themselves. So I love my work. I love the feeling of a pen in my hand, the finer the nib the better, flowing smoothly across a page with narrow ruled lines, because it makes me feel like a craftsman from an earlier period. (1996, p.366)

To Simon, writing plays is dear to him because he regards writing as his own individual progress and self-realisation. He states that “writing is still everything to me and it’s a way for me to chart and observe my own progress as an individual and hope that my plays become a documentation of the times we lived in, at least from the perspective I had to view it all.” (1996, p.366) Moreover, he did not produce any political play as citing the difficulties of staging it and its currency on the audience. As in line with it, Simon says “comedy writing to me is a defence mechanism; I can’t bear to see life as gloomy as it really is. I approach plays and life by laughing at the insanity of it all.” (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p. xiv)

Even though he is regarded as one of the most prolific playwrights of the American theatre in terms of commercial success, his awards are relatively few compared to his commercial success and popularity.

Bloom puts the reason for it as:

Yet his works have won relatively few awards, and I suspect his plays probably appear on relatively few syllabi in American literature courses, or even in American drama courses, for that matter. As a comic playwright, dismissed as a gag writer and master of the one-liner, he has never been taken seriously in most scholarly and academic circles; and even in the popular press his plays have been hailed more as entertainment than as art. Simon has always resided on the low side of the high culture/low culture debate; his plays are part of popular, mass culture. Their huge commercial success and their easy transferability to the screen are evidence of his mass appeal and therefore condemn him to denigration or, at best, neglect by the critics and chroniclers of high culture. Simon's plays, to some minds, belong in a category of mass entertainment with Hollywood movies (not cinema) and television shows, rather than in the category of serious theatre. Thus, Simon would seem to fall outside of the shadow of Eugene O'Neill, perhaps America's most serious dramatist. (1996, p.140)

Moreover, we could say that Simon is an open man about his public failures and private insecurities. "He frequently calls *The Star-Spangled Girl* his least favorite among his plays, despite the fact that it ran for a respectable 206 performances: 'I got no fun out of it. I hated writing it. The typewriter keys all felt as if they were ten pounds each'" (Bryer and Siegel (eds.), 2019, p. xvi)

Some critics claim that Simon was under the shadow of Eugene O'Neill's legacy who was one of the most important American dramatists using a straightforward, simple and unique style in his works and using the stage as a literary tool. But Simon's trilogy: *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Biloxi Blues* and *Broadway Bound* resemble O'Neill's plays in terms of dramatic quality and style. In that sense, we could say that Simon is a descendant of O'Neill in American Drama. *Broadway Bound* has allusions to O'Neill's works. In this play, we could contend that Simon demonstrates his own inner personal turmoil as a playwright.

Bloom proves our inference. He says that "perhaps Neil Simon, by naming his trilogy's protagonist Eugene, reveals a wish to be taken seriously as a dramatist, as Eugene O'Neill." (1996, p.141)

In his *Memoirs*, Simon states that almost at every interview, he is asked 'what is your favourite play?' He answers it as following:

I find the question, in its literal sense, impossible to answer. Does the question mean: "Which was the most successful?" "Which did I write better than any of the

others?" "Which do most other people like the best?" "Which did the critics seem most pleased with?" Etc.... For me the answer can be more closely found when I ask myself the following: "In what stage of my own development as a writer was I when I wrote the play?" "Was I a happy person at the time, and did this play make me happier?" "Did this play break new ground for me, enabling me to move to a farther-reaching place?" "Did I like the company of actors, the director, the new friendships I made, and the city where we tried it out?" "Did it achieve what I was aiming at?" "Was the opening-night party a blast?" "Why am I even thinking about this question?" (1996, p.138-9)

This quote sheds light on his style and his views about his works and the difficulty of measuring success as success is a changeable concept. The characters depicted in his plays are basically perceptive and intelligent. The plays generally depict the surface structure rather than the deep structure because the characters are two dimensional. Simon's characters know how to face their problems and find solutions to them.

CHAPTER III ANALYSIS OF PLAYS

3.1. *BILOXI BLUES*

EXTRACT 1

SELRIDGE. Where the hell are we? (EUGENE is still engrossed in his writing. ROY kicks him) Hey! Shakespeare! Where the hell are we?

EUGENE. West Virginia.

SELRIDGE. No shit? . . . Where's that near?

EUGENE. You don't know where West Virginia is? Didn't you ever take Geography?

SELRIDGE. I was sick that day. (Act I, p. 8)

In the opening scene, five recruits are seen on a train coach riding to Biloxi, Mississippi for a ten-week basic army training camp. On the way, Selridge, having just woken up, asks Eugene where they are. Upon getting the answer as West Virginia, Selridge seems to have no faintest idea about where West Virginia is located, either. Eugene, shocked by his ignorance, asks a rhetorical question to ridicule him. In return, Selridge responds illogically. According to the Superiority Theory, the audience, having fun of Selridge's ignorance, are provoked to laugh at him from their own comfort zone. Selridge's cunning answer also fuels up the humour created between the characters. In line with the Superiority Theory, humour is generated in the context of 'superior/ inferior' binary opposition in terms of either the audience or the characters. People, by their nature, feel a great deal of satisfaction when they see themselves as superior, more comfortable, more intelligent or luckier compared to those whom they laugh at. Laugh is regarded as a sign of pleasure, satisfaction or victory.

EXTRACT 2

EUGENE. You don't know what part of the country it's in?

SELRIDGE. (He rises and grabs his crotch) Yeah. This part. Up yours, Jerome. (Act I, p. 8)

In that scene, Selridge, having been ridiculed and laughed at by the group of the other fellow recruits, expresses his frustration in a socially unaccepted way by

pointing at his sexual organ. The exchanges between Eugene and Selridge are carried out in a friendly atmosphere as they actually share the same destiny in which they will fight together in the Second World War after being trained in the military camp in Mississippi. Selridge's gesture is included in the tendentious joke. According to Freud, joke is made up so as to relieve the sane of mind from repression and tension in the unconscious. In the light of Release Theory, it can be explained that Selridge, humiliated by his friends, diverts the humiliating approach thrown upon him with F- words and gets rid of the tension.

EXTRACT 3

CARNEY. What was I singing?

SELRIDGE "Chattanooga Choo-Choo."

CARNEY. I don't even know the words to "Chattanooga Choo-Choo."

WYKOWSKI. Maybe not awake. But you know them when you're sleeping.
(Act I, p. 9)

While they are on the train riding to the military barracks for the basic training in Biloxi, Mississippi, Carney, a recruit singing in his sleep, is woken up harshly by the others. Having been accused of disturbing the rest, Carney denies that he has no idea about the lyrics of the song which he sang in his sleep. However, Wykowski ridicules him by stating that "Maybe not awake. But you know them when you're sleeping." According to the Incongruity Theory, people are prone to laugh when they get confronted with what they do not expect to come. Carney's singing of the song whose lyrics he does not know when he is awake is puzzling for the audience, that is why it creates humor and laughter among the audience and characters. Humour, in this scene, is generated by the illogicality of the utterance embedded in the dialogue itself. To the audience, when Carney sings a song in his dream, but his failure to remember its lyrics when awake seems ridiculous and bizarre that is why they cannot help laughing at him. Carney's answer to Selridge "I don't even know the words to "Chattanooga Choo-Choo." sounds illogical and absurd to the audience. It causes laughter among the audience.

EXTRACT 4

EUGENE. (He stops writing and looks at the audience) Arnold Epstein of

Queens Boulevard, New York was a sensitive, well read, intelligent young man. His major flaw was that he was incapable of digesting food stronger than hard boiled eggs . . . I didn't think he'd last long in the army because during wartime it's very hard to go home for dinner every night . . . (The train rumbles on) Hey, Arnold! What's the best book you ever read?

EPSTEIN. War and Peace . . . The fifth time.

EUGENE. If I wanted to become a writer, who do you recommend I read?

EPSTEIN. The entire third floor of the New York Public Library. (Act I, p. 11)

Recruit Eugene finds Arnold Epstein, who is a fellow recruit, a very intelligent and highly intellectual man. After introducing him to the audience from his point of view, he turns to Epstein to take advice about books. Eugene, who passionately desires to become an author in his future, asks him which authors he should take an example to make his dream come true. In return, Epstein belittles him by implicating the impossibility of becoming an author with only a few established names and books rather than a great part of the New York Public Library. In the exchanges what we see is that Eugene is blatantly humiliated and the audience is triggered to laugh at Eugene as well. According to Superiority Theory, people are inclined to laugh when they witness or see others' misfortune, flaws and mistakes by assuming that they are luckier, smarter, more comfortable. Laughing is a sign of superiority for those in their comfort zone. In the above given exchange, Superiority Theory explicates the reason for the humour and laugh from the perspective of the audience. Moreover, what makes the audience laugh is Epstein's answer "The entire third floor of the New York Public Library."

EXTRACT 5

TOOMEY. I may be looking at you but I am talking to the soldier from Bridgeport. (He looks into ROY's face) Now what did you do there, Wykowski?

(They all look confused)

WYKOWSKI. I drove a truck. A moving van. I was a furniture mover.

TOOMEY. That's just what they need in the South Pacific, Wykowski. Someone who knows how to move furniture around in the jungle. (EPSTEIN

half raises his hand) I believe Private Epstein has a question. (Act I, p. 17)

Toomey, a formidable sergeant, gets the recruits lined up in the military base. He inflicts fear and a sense of discipline on his company. He deliberately looks at one's face but asks his question to another for the purpose of driving them into confusion and finding a way to berate and reprimand. He asks the recruits what they do before being recruited. Wykowski responds submissively. He says that he has been in the furniture transportation sector. Sergeant Toomey, full of all hierarchical power, humiliates him as his occupation makes no sense in the battlefield. ("That's just what they need in the South Pacific, Wykowski. Someone who knows how to move furniture around in the jungle"). Sergeant Toomey's response to what Wykowski says evokes laughter among the audience. Toomey creates some kind of incongruity although he gets a satisfactory answer to his question. The audience expects him to say something neutral or positive because being a driver requires some ability and experience and he could be a good service for the military. But Toomey seems not to appreciate his profession. However, the image of 'moving furniture around the jungle' is inconsistent and incongruous that generates laughter and humor. It is quite reasonable to find out what makes the audience laugh is that images jungle and furniture are not compatible with each other.

EXTRACT 6

EPSTEIN. You know what Time magazine estimates the casualty rate of a full scale invasion would be? Sixty-eight per cent. Sixty-eight per cent of us would be killed or wounded.

WYKOWSKI. No shit? . . . So out of this group, how many is that?

EPSTEIN. Of the six of us here, about four point three of us would get it.

CARNEY. What part of your body is point three?

SELRIDGE. Hey, Wykowski. We know what part of your body is point three.

(He giggles) (Act I, p. 32)

Here, we see that the six recruits are in their barracks and they discuss and anticipate the scale of the war being staged overseas in which they will be deployed after completing the basic training process in the military camp. The exchanges tell us that they have no idea about war and its possible consequences. Epstein draws a

gloomy picture by stating “the sixty-eight per cent of us would be killed or wounded.” When Wykowski wants Epstein to equate the ratio to the number in their group, Epstein answers as “about four point three of us would get it.” The ratio related to the human body generates laughter. Selridge attempts to distract the dark atmosphere by teasing Wykowski. As the given ratio is equated to a human body, Selridge implicates that the ratio actually refers to Wykowski’s constant sexual arousal. That reference makes them laugh at him. According to the Release Theory, the Second World War seems to cause anxiety, tension and depression in the scene.

Humour disperses these anxieties and depression among the characters. Relief is achieved through giggling and laughing. The intensified nerve force changes its strained flowing channel to a minor channel and gives itself a way out for the body and mind to relax. It can be manifestly seen that they manage to distract their mood affected by the impending war conditions and get relief by an explicit sexual joke.

EXTRACT 7

EUGENE. I'd love to talk to you more, Arnold.

EPSTEIN. I'm available.

EUGENE. Well, maybe when I get back Sunday night.

EPSTEIN. Sure. Anytime you want . . . Just make sure you don't come back pregnant.

EUGENE. Are you kidding? I'm wearing three pairs of socks.

EPSTEIN. Make sure you put them on the right place. (He leaves) (Act I, p. 49)

In the above dialogues, all the recruits, except Epstein, are seen to go on a two-day weekend leave from the military base. Epstein is punished by the sergeant Toomey, because of his questioning the orders and the military system which seems to be illogical to him. His punishment is to clean the latrines. Eugene finds his fellow recruit Epstein intellectually superior and wants to establish closer ties with him but at the same time, he has to get ready for the weekend leave as well. He says that he wants to spend more time talking with Epstein. Epstein, satisfied with Eugene’s approach, welcomes him but warns him humorously about his plans to go to the brothel with the other recruits. Eugene, inexperienced on sexual matters, also

makes fun of himself by saying that he has already worn three pairs of socks. Epstein makes the irony of him by emphasizing Eugene's inexperience as well. The humorous and friendly talk can be explained by The Superiority Theory. Eugene who has not had any sexual affair with any woman is an object of ridicule for both himself and Epstein who is an experienced one.

EXTRACT 8

EPSTEIN. I'm not a Jew anymore, Wykowski.

WYKOWSKI. What do you mean?

EPSTEIN. I converted to Catholicism yesterday. In six weeks I hope to become a priest and my first act of service to the Holy Father is to have you excommunicated, so get off my ass.

SELRIDGE. (He laughs) That's good. That's funny. God damn Jews are really funny. Hey, Epstein, I'm beginning to like you, I swear to Christ. (Act II, p. 60)

In the play, Wykowski is depicted as an aggressive character who hurls racial slurs at the Jewish people. Epstein, disturbed by his attitude, half-jokingly protests him by claiming that he will not be called a Jew anymore. His satirical utterance aims to correct his approach in a humorous way. Epstein, humiliated and dismissed for his faith, pretends that he has converted to Catholicism so that he can be regarded as a member of the same communion. Moreover, Epstein, by uttering. "I converted to Catholicism yesterday. In six weeks I hope to become a priest and my first act of service to the Holy Father is to have you excommunicated..." criticizes his fellow recruits' attitudes towards him. Selridge is quick enough to understand the humour and satire that is why he laughs. According to the Superiority Theory, Epstein, who is dismissed because of his Jew origin, reverses the 'majority vs. minority' binary opposition and teases him back. Selridge, another Catholic recruit, laughs contently because Epstein can defeat them only on the condition of converting to Catholicism. As Catholics, they think that they are superior to Epstein who is just a Jew.

EXTRACT 9

DAISY. We could talk while we dance.

EUGENE. It's hard for me because I'm always counting when I dance.

Whatever you said, I would answer, "one two, one two."

DAISY. (She laughs) Well, I'll only ask you mathematical questions. (EUGENE laughs as well) I'll bet you didn't know how to march before you got into the army (Act II, p. 73)

All the recruits in the training camp in Mississippi go on a weekend leave. One of Eugene's dreams is to fall in love with a girl so he goes to the U.S.O dancing hall to have a chance to meet a girl and chat with.

Here, a girl, named Daisy, approaches him and extends her hand to offer dancing. Eugene, full of anxiety, kindly declines her offer but comes up with the idea of chatting, instead. The reason why he rejects dancing is that he unintentionally begins to count the dance steps once they start dancing, so he prefers chatting to dancing. Daisy laughs at him and humorously tries to persuade him into dancing. Within the frame of the Release Theory, Daisy's innocent laugh is triggered by Eugene's unexpected and unusual excuse. What makes Daisy laugh is not Eugene's decline of her offer but his utterance "It's hard for me because I'm always counting when I dance." Actually, Daisy regards him as an innocent and naïve boy. Eugene's kind decline seems laughable to Daisy because Eugene's response to her invitation to dance is an unusual act to her. It seems that Eugene cannot dance and chat simultaneously.

According to the Release Theory, when people, having focused on their expectation, come across some other unimportant, minor, different, or unusual things or situations, and the superfluous nerve force in the body is released to get relief and this actualizes with a laugh as it helps the body to move the muscles and help the excess energy release.

EXTRACT 10

TOOMEY. Epstein, Arnold B.

EPSTEIN. Ho Ho! (TOOMEY looks at him)

TOOMEY. Are there two Arnold Epsteins in this company?

EPSTEIN. No, Sergeant.

TOOMEY. Then just give me one God damn Ho.

EPSTEIN .Yes, Sergeant.

TOOMEY. Epstein, Arnold B.

EPSTEIN Ho!

TOOMEY One more time.

EPSTEIN Ho!

TOOMEY Let me hear it again.

EPSTEIN Ho!

TOOMEY Am I understood?

EPSTEIN Ho! (As if to say "of course") (Act I p. 13)

Toomey is a stringent and formidable sergeant. He attaches great importance to discipline but anything. His purpose is to instill fear, unquestioned obedience and submissiveness among the trainee soldiers. According to his perspective, nobody will fight in the World War II, if the soldiers start questioning orders and logic of the war. To him, every soldier should be turned into robot-like slaves. He randomly gives irrational orders such as answering as 'Ho' to every question and doing one hundred push-ups. The audience laughs at the recruits' bewilderment, being shocked, the gestures and facial expressions. Epstein's gaze at Toomey after saying "Ho Ho!" and stressing "Ho", as if to say 'of course', trigger the audience into laughing. It sounds like a kind of coded communication. However, it goes without saying, the sergeant Toomey does not care about what they say or answer at all. As in line with the Superiority Theory, the audience, sitting in their comfortable seats with freedom and no exposure, laughs at the soldiers who are in trouble with the sergeant Toomey. Epstein's "Ho! (As if to say "of course") is laugh-provoking to the audience.

EXTRACT 11

TOOMEY. Yes or no, Jerome. Am I being unfair to the young man who is breaking his ass on the floor?

EUGENE. In my opinion ? ... Yes, Sergeant.

TOOMEY. I see . . . Apparently, Jerome, you don't understand the benefits of discipline. It is discipline that will win this war for us. Therefore, until you

learn it, soldier, I will just have to keep teaching it to you ... Selridge! One hundred pushups. Hit the floor!

SELRIDGE. Me???? . I didn't say nothin'.

TOOMEY. When we do battle, we are sometimes called upon to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of others. (Act I, p. 19)

Sgt.Toomey, determined to intimidate the recruits and instill discipline on them, is practicing 'Divide and Rule' policy in the exchange. After Toomey orders a recruit to do one hundred push-ups, he turns to Eugene and asks him if he is unfair or not. In fact, what he says is of no importance to the sergeant because he just looks for a pretext for ordering. Eugene, full of dread, says what he thinks and accepts the sergeant's cruelty of addressing to the recruits randomly to do push-up. Satisfied with Eugene's approval of his orders, he keeps on ordering them to do one hundred push-ups. Moreover, Selridge standing near Eugene is innocently standing in the line to get the sergeant's orders. After each interaction with Eugene, Sgt.Toomey turns to another recruit and orders him to do the push-ups. Toomey attempts to indoctrinate them with the idea that they should know how to sacrifice for their fellows in the battlefield. In the meantime, all the recruits, doing push-ups on the floor, look angrily at Eugene. While all the soldiers are doing the push-ups, Eugene and Sgt. Toomey are standing up and watching them. In these interactions, we hardly see any laughter but their situation could a laughing matter to others.

EXTRACT 12

EUGENE. I saw this in the Bronx Zoo. The gorillas were throwing it at each other.

ARNOLD. If you can't eat this, you can get something else. It's government regulations. Enlisted men must be served palatable food.

WYKOWSKI. Why don't you ask them for some matzoh ball soup, Epstein. I hear the army makes great matzoh ball soup. (He and SELRIDGE laugh. EUGENE looks emphatically at ARNOLD.) (Act I, p. 22-23)

What we see here is that the soldiers are sitting around a table, and they are desperately looking at the meal which has been just given to them. It is too disgusting for them to eat. Eugene compares it to the meal given to the animals at

the zoo. As a response to it, Arnold, another recruit, makes fun of him and the military conditions in which they are to survive. His irony is humorous because they all know quite well they must obey all the rules and eat whatever is given to them at the military and they are left no choice. As they are aware that they have no alternative to given food except to eat it. Military is not a place that serves a la carte menu. Wykowski, who is anti-Semitic, makes fun of both of them as well. 'Matzoh ball soup' is a traditional Jewish dish. Wykowski satirizes them by ironically saying that they can order their traditional soup if they wish. In fact, he misses no opportunity to hit at the Jewish recruits at the barracks. As seen in the extract, the binary opposition 'superiority/ inferiority' between military situation and civilian life and another binary opposition 'majority/minority between Christianity and Judaism run through in the conversation. According to the Superiority Theory, Arnold's irony about the meal is humorous for the audience who feel more fortunate compared to the recruits who have to eat whatever is given to them. Furthermore, Wykowski and Selridge, regarding themselves as superior compared to those of Jewish ones, feel a great deal of satisfaction with their origins and laugh at Arnold and Eugene as well.

EXTRACT 13

CARNEY. I hear they're getting ready to invade Europe and Japan on the same day.

HENNESEY. Where'd you hear that?

CARNEY. On the radio. It was one of them small stations.

EUGENE. Why on the same day?

CARNEY. Surprise attack. You hit them both at dawn. Then they don't have enough time to warn each other.

EUGENE. Hey, Carney. When it's dawn in Europe, it's a day later in Japan. They don't have dawn at the same time. Japan could read about it in their newspapers. (Act I, p. 31)

The recruits are in their barracks. Carney appears on the stage with the news he claims to have just heard on the radio. According to the news, the Second World War has escalated and the entente powers will carry out a sudden attack on the

central powers. He claims that the assault will be waged on at the same time to disperse any possibility of counter-attack. However, he says that the military operation will be carried out at dawn in both Japan and Europe simultaneously. This utterance bears a great deal of incongruity within itself. It is a self-refuting claim as it is crystal clear that Europe and Japan are in different geographies and at different time zones. Eugene expresses this improbability as well, so it is almost impossible to see a surprise attack carried out simultaneously in those lands. According to the Incongruity Theory, what people laugh at is inconsistency and incongruity because what they see runs counter to what they expect to see. It leads the audience into confusion at the very first moment and makes them laugh at it to manage to overcome the sudden perplexity. The audience is provoked to laugh at Carney's incongruous news. Moreover, the Superiority Theory can also explain why this scene is humorous from the perspective of the audience. Carney's intellectual inferiority and unawareness of the illogicality of the news can help the audience feel content with their intelligence and makes them feel superior to the soldiers.

EXTRACT 14

EUGENE. Listen, if you knew you were one of the guys who wasn't coming back, if you knew it right now, what would you do with the last few days of your life? It could be anything you want . . . I give everyone five seconds to think about it.

CARNEY. I thought about it. I'm not dying. You think I'm gonna kill myself to entertain you?

EUGENE. Why not? It's like a fantasy. I'm giving you the opportunity to do anything in the world you ever dreamed of . . . Come on.

SELRIDGE. I think it's a good idea. Let's play for money.

HENNESEY. For money?

SELRIDGE. Yeah. Five bucks a man. The guy with the best fantasy collects the pot. (Act I, p. 32)

The recruits are doomed to fight to the death at the battlefield after weeks at the basic training camp. Therefore, Eugene offers to play a game for the purpose of dispersing the depressing mood of the fellow recruits in the barracks. In addition,

Eugene actually wants his fellow recruits to reveal their dreams because he innocently wants to know their inner world. The play deals with choosing the best last wish and determining the winner. Every recruit will speak his last wish on the assumption that they have a week's lifetime before getting killed at war. Carney's rhetorical question provokes a laugh for the audience. According to the Release Theory, the audience is in the expectation that the characters should join the bet and say their last wish, but their expectation is diverted by the humorous rhetorical question and triggered to giggle. In other words, their expectation is automatically and suddenly lowered by Carney's response. In addition, the implied images 'death' and 'entertain' are uttered in one sentence, which runs counter to the expectation of the audience. This makes the rhetorical question weird, unusual, and thus sounding humorous.

EXTRACT 15

EUGENE Were you born in Biloxi?

ROWENA. No. Gulfport. I still live there with my husband.

EUGENE. Your husband?? . . . You're married?? . . . My God! If he finds me here he'll kill me.

ROWENA. No he won't.

EUGENE. Does he know that you're a—you're a

ROWENA. Sure he does. That's how we met. He's in the navy. He was one of my best customers. He still is.

EUGENE. You mean you charge your own husband? (Act II, p. 57)

Eugene is on weekend leave in Mississippi. He has gone to a brothel for the first time in his life. Before lying with Rowena, Eugene, trembling with full of anxiety, struggles to take off his shoes. In the meantime, they make small talk. Rowena says that she is originally from Gulfport where she still lives with her husband. Her marital status frightens him because he has presumed to have come to a brothel to lose his virginity to a prostitute. But contrary to his expectations, he is with a married woman who works as a sex worker. As the woman goes on speaking, it is understood that her husband is both her guard and pimp as well. This fact comes as a real shock to him because the marriage does sound a traditionally

and socially accepted one according to the norms of the society. It blatantly runs counter to Eugene's assumption of a typical and traditional family. So he questions her as "You mean you charge your own husband?" If taken literally, it sounds unusual and irrational to Eugene. The woman's unusual, strange and incongruous utterance and Eugene's bewilderment make the audience laugh at Eugene and his gullibility. The exchange between Eugene and Rowena, a prostitute, revolves around incongruity.

EXTRACT 16

EUGENE. Would you like to go somewhere? Down by the lake? Or to Overton's Hotel. They have dancing till midnight . . . Or we could just walk.

DAISY. I can't. I've got to be back in ten minutes. I shouldn't even be out now.

EUGENE. Ten minutes??? . . . Are you serious? I came all the way from Biloxi.

DAISY. I know. But it's Good Friday.

EUGENE. Isn't that a holiday?

DAISY. No. It's a Holy Day. It's the day that Christ our Lord died. We have to abstain from parties or movies or dates. It's a day of prayer and mourning.

EUGENE. So why do they call it Good Friday? It sounds like Lousy Friday to me. Ten minutes, Jesus! Sorry, no Jesus. I can't believe it. (Act II, p. 84)

Daisy is a devoted Catholic young girl attending an all-girls' school. Eugene meets her in the dancing hall and falls in love with her. He goes to Mississippi on all occasions to see his love, Daisy. In the extract, they meet again on Eugene's off day from the military camp but Daisy has no much time to spend with him, so she kindly declines Eugene's offer to do something together. On that day, it is almost impossible for Daisy to do anything with him because that day is the commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ. To her faith, as a devoted Catholic, she cannot do anything except pray and mourn because it is Good Friday. Daisy's citing the day on which Jesus died as 'Good Friday' seems illogical and awkward to Eugene. The audience is triggered to laugh at the incongruity and Eugene's confusion as well. In fact, he is right about his judgment. A day cannot be named as 'Good' if mourning the death of Jesus is of concern. This question provokes the audience into seeing the absurdity and tickles them to laugh at the incongruity in

which Eugene gets stuck.

EXTRACT 17

CARNEY. I'm so tired I'm just gonna sleep on the springs.

EUGENE. It never got this hot in Brooklyn. This is like Africa hot. Tarzan couldn't take this kind of hot.

SELRIDGE. Where's the phone? Call the manager. There's no ice water. (Act I, p.12)

The recruits arrive at their military camp in Biloxi, Mississippi after an exhausting train journey and go to their barracks with heavy bags. It is boiling hot and the recruits are seen extremely thirsty. Eugene compares Biloxi to his hometown in terms of hot weather and employs hyperbole to point at the extremity of the temperature. Carney dreams of sleeping on the springs as well. However, Selridge ironically approaches and makes fun of them. He pretends that they come at a holiday resort. His ironic utterance triggers the audience to laugh. According to the Relief Theory, the audience, taking pity on the recruits in wretched conditions, finds Selridge's irony humorous. Therefore, the gloomy atmosphere is dispersed abruptly and the relief is gained by the audience whose concentration on the recruits' misery turns into a comical scene by means of irony.

EXTRACT 18

TOOMEY. (Calmly) Gentlemen, I think we have a problem. All those wishing to help me solve it, get your asses in here before the firing squad leaves for the weekend. ON THE DOUBLE!!! Ten-hut!! . . . I've been in this man's army now for twelve years, four months and twenty-three days and during my tenure as a noncommissioned officer, I have put up with everything from mutiny to sodomy. I consider mutiny and sodomy relatively minor offenses. Mutiny is an act of aggression due to a rising expression of unreleased repressed feelings. Sodomy is the result of doing something you don't want to do with someone you don't want to do it with because of no access to do what you want to do with someone you can't get to do it with.

EUGENE. (To the audience) It makes sense if you think it out slowly. (Act I, p. 42-43)

What we see here, Wykowski's money has been stolen and Sgt Toomey orders all the recruits who are in line. He says that he has witnessed various kinds of crimes committed in the military throughout his career. According to him, even mutiny and sodomy are less important compared to burglary. He defines the words what mutiny, and sodomy mean to them. However, his definition of 'sodomy' is excessively wordy and convoluted. The ambiguity of the definition leaves the audience in perplexity and their incomprehension leads them into getting lost. Eugene's direct address to the audience helps them attain relief. They laugh at the definition rather than trying to understand it after Eugene's direct address audience. According to the Relief Theory, the audience is triggered to laugh after getting rid of the ambiguity and they find Eugene's satirical judgment entertaining and humorous.

EXTRACT 19

CARNEY. What was it like? Give us details . . . Was it "Empty Saddles in the Old Corral" or was it "Swing Swing Swing"?

EUGENE. It was sort of—"Moonlight Cocktails" . . . It was chatty.

WYKOWSKI. Chatty? Your first time in the sack with a pro was "chatty"?

EUGENE. She's not a pro. She only does it on weekends.

WYKOWSKI. So what does that make her? A semi-pro?

SELRIDGE. (He laughs) Great! That was great. Perfect remark, Kows... (Act II, p. 61)

Eugene comes to the barracks after weekend leave. His fellow recruits ask him how his experience with the prostitute in the brothel has been. Upon hearing 'chatty', they react bizarrely. Eugene rejects her to be named as a 'pro' because it is not her regular occupation. She earns money in that way just at weekends. Wykowski's rhetorical question creates humour and lets the audience and the other characters laugh heartily. 'A semi-pro' is manifestly incongruous. It sounds illogical and unusual. In line with the Incongruity Theory, when people come across something bizarre, strange, unusual, they react with laugh. This is the unreasonableness that makes people laugh with no other choice left when they face something unfamiliar.

EXTRACT 20

WYKOWSKI. Jesus, change your socks, will you? What is that, a new secret weapon?

SELRIDGE. I did change them. This one used to be on the other foot. (He giggles)

CARNEY. You creeps never grow up. I'll tell you one thing. After the war, I'm not having any reunions with you guys. (Act II, p.88)

In the closing scene, the recruits, who are to be deployed, are on the coach train, riding to the Atlantic seaport. Selridge, in his sleep, stretches his foot to Wykowski's mouth. Disturbed and awakened by the smell of Selridge's sock, Wykowski yells at him and tells him to change his disgusting socks. Selridge, ironically taking his sentence literally, says that he has already changed them. However, he has just put on the right on the left and the left one on the right. Selridge manifestly creates ambiguity by employing word play with his response. His aim is to tease him and he giggles as well. Humour is generated by means of incongruity in the above given exchanges between Wykowski and Selridge. According to the Incongruity Theory, humour is generated with inconsistency, ambiguity and clash in the exchange that the audience sees the absurdity and makes fun of the irrelevancy on the surface structure of the utterance.

3.2. BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS

EXTRACT 1

BLANCHE. (Stops sewing.) Kate, please. My head is splitting.

KATE. I told that boy a hundred and nine times. (She yells out.) Eugene! Stop banging the wall!

EUGENE. (calls out) In a minute, Ma! This is for the World Series! (back to his game) One out, a man on second, bottom of the seventh, three balls, one strike...Ruffing stretches, Ruffing pitches- (he throws ball) Oh, no! High and outside, JoJo Moore walks! First and Second and Mel Ott lopes up to the plate.

BLANCHE. (stops again) Can't he do that someplace else?

KATE: I will break his arm, that's where he'll do it. (calls out) Eugene, I'm

not going to tell you again. Do you hear me? (Act I p. 8)

The play's opening scene is in a home with a garden, and four family members are seen. A teenage boy, Eugene plays baseball by throwing it to the house's walls in the garden and narrating his imaginary game as a commentator. He imagines himself as a baseball player whose team competes in the World Series tournament. Baseball creates noise whenever it hits the wall, and this situation annoys the other members of the family who are in the house. Blanche, Aunt Eugene, struggles with a headache due to the noise, and Kate, Eugene's mother, warns Eugene to stop playing. Eugene ignores her warning and continues his imaginary game. When Blanche reiterates her discomfort, Kate humorously responds using superiority theory and warns Eugene again. According to the Superiority Theory, the connections between characters and the audience are set on the surface of binary oppositions in the concept of Laughter Theory. Kate's joke about breaking Eugene's arm awakens superior/inferior feelings inside the audience, leading to a natural reaction, laugh.

EXTRACT 2

EUGENE. (Slams ball into his glove angrily. Then he cups his hand, making a megaphone out of it and announces to the grandstands:) . "Attention, ladees and gentlemen! Today's game will be delayed because of my Aunt Blanche's headache" . (Act I, p. 9)

The sound of Eugene's baseball game continues to give her aunt a headache. After several warnings from Kate, Eugene stops playing and tells the audience why they stopped playing it. The game is canceled because it makes Blanche have a splitting headache. Nevertheless, we know that baseball games are not canceled in actual life conditions as it causes headaches in the audience. A play could be called off can be bad weather, natural disasters, etc.; however, in the play, the only reason is the headache of Eugene's aunt. In the light of the Incongruity Theory, these exaggerated differences cause absurdity. The audience is quick enough to catch this absurdity of the situation and reacts to it by laughing.

EXTRACT 3

KATE. (comes out of kitchen with a glass of lemonade and roller skate) A roller skate? On my kitchen floor? Do you want me dead, is that what you

want?

EUGENE. (rushes into the house) I didn't leave it there.

KATE. No? Then who? Laurie? Aunt Blanche? Did you ever see them on skates?... (holds out skate) Take this upstairs... Come here!

EUGENE. (approaches, holding the back of his head) Don't hit my skull, I have a concussion.

KATE. What would you tell your father if he came home and I was dead on the kitchen floor?

EUGENE. I'd say, "Don't go in the kitchen, Pal" (Act I, p. 11)

The Incongruity Theory claims that people tend to laugh when they face unexpected events. Based on the interactions between Eugene and Kate, Eugene's mischief, even if he does not misbehave, ends as he is accused at the end of the conversation. In this scene, Simon creates humour by using an unexpected answer of Eugene accommodated in these mutual interactions. While Kate is trying to explain to her son that the skates in the kitchen can cause an accident, the audience, who expects Eugene to respond to this accident with an understanding, encounters a different answer than they expect. The answer is abrupt to the audience; it leads to humour and laughter among the audience and characters.

EXTRACT 4

(.Eugene returns with a paper bag containing milk and butter under his arm. He stops, pretends to be a quarterback awaiting the pass from center. The bread is his football.)

EUGENE. Sid Luckman of Columbia waits for the snap from center; the snow is coming down in a near blizzard, he gets it, he fades back, he passes. (He acts all this out.)- AND LUCKMAN'S GOT IT! LUCKMAN CATCHES HIS OWN PASS! HE'S ON THE 50, THE 40, THE 30, THE 20. IT'S A TOUCHDOWN! Columbia wins! They defeat the mighty Crimson of Harvard, 13-12. Listen to that crowd!

(He roars like a crowd. Kate comes out of the kitchen. She yells out.)

KATE. EUGENE! STOP THAT YELLING! I HAVE A CAKE IN THE

OVEN! (Act I, p. 21-22)

When Eugene returns from the shop to which he was sent to buy butter and milk, he stops just before entering his house. This time Eugene begins to play football in his imaginary game, and the bread is his football. He also maintains his narration of the imaginary game aloud as a commentator. His loud commentary is heard by his mother, Kate. Kate gets angry inside the house and shouts at Eugene for playing outside the home. The two main reasons for laughter can be seen in this scene; Superiority and Incongruity Theories. According to Superiority Theory, people are lean-to-laugh when they witness others' mischances, defects, and faults by considering that they are in a better condition than them. They use laughter as a reaction to show this superiority. The audience laughs at Eugene's situation because they see how he is accused of playing an imaginary game in his mind in every circumstance and compare their comfort zone with his.

On the other hand, the absurd dialogues listed under the fundamental elements of Incongruity Theory welcome the audience with their answer to Kate. Kate finds a pretext to keep Eugene from making noise. The absurdity of the pretext makes the audience laugh because there is no connection between the cake in the oven and Eugene's game.

EXTRACT 5

STAN. [STANLEY] He tells me to sweep up. He says, for this week I'm the cleaning man.

EUGENE. I can't believe it.

STAN. Everybody is watching me now, waiting to see what I'm going to do.

(EUGENE nods in agreement)

...Even Andrew stopped crying and watched. I felt the dignity of everyone who worked in that store was in my hands. So I grit my teeth, and I pick up the broom, and there's this big pile of dirt right in the middle of the floor.

EUGENE. Yeah?

STAN. . And I sweep it all over Mr. Stroheim's shoes. Andrew had just finished shining them this morning, if you want to talk about irony. (Act I, p. 24)

In this scene, Stan tells his brother about an event that almost caused him to lose his job on that day. A cleaner, Andrew, who works at the same place, slips his brush from his hand during cleaning and spills a can of oil on the table. The spilled oil ruins the three hats on the desk. The boss, who witnesses this situation, says that the money for the hats will be deducted from his salary. Stan, who cannot stay indifferent to the attitudes of his boss, wants to protect the cleaner. On the other hand, the angry boss gets furious and tells Stan that he will work as a cleaner next week. Seeing that the employees at the workplace are witnessing his argument with the boss, Stan cannot stand this pressure and sweeps the dust on the boss's shoes, which he polished in the morning. The boss tries to humiliate him by giving him a worse role in the work. Stan, who does not give in to the boss's humiliation, insults him by dusting off the boss's shoes. As emphasized in the Superiority Theory, people have a confident expectation in the face of events, but sometimes they do not get the reaction they want. These reactions also create ridiculous situations, and people laugh at them. In the scene, the audience expects Stan's apology or anger directed at the boss's humiliation, but instead, Stan chooses to humiliate the boss. This unexpected situation arouses the feeling of laughter in the audience.

EXTRACT 6

STAN. So Mr. Stroheim grabs me and pulls me into his back office, closes the door and pulls down the shades. He gives me this whole story how he was brought up in Germany to respect his superior. That if he ever - (*in accent*) "did soch a ting like you do, dey would beat me in der cup until dey carried me away dead." (Act I, p. 24)

Stan continues talking about an event that nearly caused him to lose his job on that day. After Stan dusts off the boss's shoes, the boss calls him to his office and gives him advice on life by mentioning his life spent in Germany. Here, Stan mocks his boss. He tells his brother what his boss advised him by imitating his accent. A mocking accent reveals another person's weakness and awakens a sense of superiority in people. This sense of superiority is one of the main factors that initiate people to laugh.

EXTRACT 7

EUGENE. Oh, God! ...As if things weren't bad enough. and now this! ...The

ultimate tragedy .Liver and cabbage for dinner! . .A Jewish torture! .My friend, Marty Gregorio, an A student in Science, told me that cooked cabbage can be smelled farther than sound travelling for seven minutes. If these memoirs are never finished, you'll know it's because I gagged to death one night in the middle of supper.

(We suddenly hear a crash of broken dishes in the kitchen. EUGENE turns towards the sound, then to the audience.)

You're all witnesses. I was sitting here, right? But I'll get blamed for that anyway.

EUGENE&KATE. Come in here and help me! (Act I, p. 27-28)

In the above dialogues, it is seen that Eugene complains about the Jewish custom of eating liver and cabbage. He dislikes it, and he exaggerates the smell of the meals so much that he even says that he can die from that smell. Eugene's food exaggeration is so hilarious that it goes beyond the audience's usual reaction. According to the Superiority Theory, people laugh at what they see that contradicts their expectations. Eugene's conflicts with his mother rise again after Aunt Blanche breaks the dishes because of her disease. Eugene turns to the audience and tells them, "You're all witnesses. I was sitting here, right? But I'll get blamed for that anyway." After Kate takes care of Blanche, she calls Eugene to help her in the kitchen. Eugene already knows what will happen to him. He repeats what his mother said. These repeated accusations make Eugene look ridiculous. According to the Superiority Theory, Eugene's repeated charges are humorous for the audience, who feel more fortunate when they compare themselves with Eugene's situation.

EXTRACT 8

KATE. Don't talk like that. Something'll come up. You'll go to temple this weekend. You'll pray all Saturday.

JACK. (smiles ironically) There's men in that temple who've been praying for forty years. You know how many prayers have to get answered before my turn comes up? (Act I, p. 31)

Jack is a father who is responsible for taking care of seven people. He takes

care of his family and has to look after his sister-in-law's family. In that scene, Jack talks with Kate about how his boss went bankrupt. He lost his job because his boss went bankrupt. Losing his job creates problems and puts pressure on him as Jack has to think about taking care of his family and fulfilling his responsibilities for seven people to be looked after by himself. As a result of this pressure, he complains about his situation. Kate is aware of his apprehensions; however, she is also aware of those anxieties which make him uneasy. Kate then tries to calm Jack down and advises him to go to the temple and pray. However, Jack humorously mocks her advice. His ironic smile is a representation of the Relief Theory. Jack wants to get rid of the pressure put on his shoulders. Humour seems to be the only exit for him to relieve himself. Humour is the temporal catharsis for Jack. Jack's response to his mother also includes ironic incongruity. Jack ironically states that the god accepts the prayers in order, saying that there have been men who have been going to the temple for forty years and praying and that his turn will be late. He also mocks faith and does not take his mother's advice seriously. The interactions between Jack and Kate go beyond the audience's expectations, and this situation is regarded as an absurd situation by the audience, so they laugh at it. We could say that it suitably suits the Relief Theory.

EXTRACT 9

EUGENE. Larry Clurman is my father's age.

LAURIE. He's twenty.

EUGENE. Same thing... You think he's good-looking?

LAURIE. I don't think *anybody's* good-looking

EUGENE. Larry Clurman? He doesn't even have a chin. His tie comes all the way up to his teeth. (Act I, p. 32)

Eugene's conversation with Laurie is about Laurie's new date. Eugene likes Laurie, so he gets jealous of whoever she is in a relationship with. He then expresses his jealousy by saying, "Now I've got Larry Clurman to contend with." Eugene tries to humiliate Larry Clurman because of his jealousy. In this case, he sees himself as the person who deserves Laurie—seeing himself as superior to other candidates causes him to make fun of them. The audience knows Eugene's jealousy and understands why Eugene mocks Larry Clurman. However, to the audience, it

is an adolescent's jealousy that seems insensible to them. They think that he has deficiencies in his character because he makes fun of other people due to his jealousy. This time, the audience feels superior to Eugene because they see the flaws in his character. As a result of this superiority, the audience laughs at his defects.

EXTRACT 10

EUGENE. Chapter Seven. "The Infamous Dinner"!

(The others drift into the dining room, taking their seats. BLANCHE and KATE bring most of the dishes, passing them around. They are all seated as EUGENE continues his narrative.)

... It started out like a murder mystery in Blenheim Castle. No one said a word but everyone looked suspicious. It was so quiet, you could hear Lauri's soup going down her esophagus.

(They sit quietly, eating.)

Everyone had one eye on their plate and the other eye on Pop. Except me. I sat opposite Nora. I kept dropping my napkin a lot so I could bend down to get a good look at those virginal creamy- white legs. She was really deep in thought because she left herself unguarded a few times and I got to see half way up her thighs that led to the Golden Palace of the Himalayas. (Act I, p. 35)

In that scene, it is observed that laughter is caused by relief. All family members, except Eugene, look forward to this dinner because Jack will decide Nora's and Stan's future. Everyone is severe and nervous at dinner. However, Eugene stares at Nora's legs. It contradicts the problematic situation in which the family is. This attitude of Eugene, who ignores the tense atmosphere at dinner, creates a bizarre case that makes the audience laugh at it, but Eugene utilises it for his relief. It is laughing stuff for the audience.

EXTRACT 11

EUGENE. (to audience) Stanley knew what I was doing because he's the one who taught it to me. But he was busy with his problems like everyone else. You could hear the clock ticking in the kitchen. The tension in the air was so thick, you could cut it with a knife. Which is more than I could say for the liver.

(*He tries to cut his liver.*) (Act I, p. 36)

As the solemn atmosphere of the dinner continued to envelop everyone at the table, Eugene's only concern was the food in front of his and Nora's legs. Regardless of the event's seriousness, Eugene's behaviour causes laughter in the audience. The audience thinks it is the metaphorical description of the Eugene character, which displays inappropriate behaviours, in the sentence, The tension in the air was so thick, you could cut it with a knife, for the tense atmosphere of this dinner where essential decisions will be made. However, in the continuation of the sentence, he misled the audience by saying "Which is more than I could say for the liver and by trying to cut the liver" that he used the definition for the liver.

EXTRACT 12

EUGENE. I've got to talk to you, Stanley. I mean a really, serious, important talk.

STAN. Everybody in this house has to have a talk with somebody. Take a number off the wall and wait your turn. (Act I, p. 45)

Eugene and Stanley go to the room after dinner; Eugene plays baseball, and Stanley is lying on his bed thinking. Finally, the two brothers begin to talk, and Eugene still seeks advice from his older brother. Responding to Eugene's approach with a sarcastic tone, Stanley states that everyone in the house needs to talk, but no one speaks. Stanley expressed this expression by comparing it to the fact that everyone in the house waits to speak to someone, like customers waiting in line to make a transaction in a bank. In the context of the Incongruity Theory, the author used this analogy with an unusual sample and made the audience laugh.

EXTRACT 13

EUGENE. I had a dream last night. It was about this girl. I can't tell her name but she's gorgeous. We were really kissing hard and rubbing up against each other and I felt this tremendous buildup coming like at the end of *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. And suddenly there was an explosion. Like a dam broke and everything rushed and flowed out to sea. It was the greatest feeling I ever had in my life... and when I woke up, I was-I was-

STAN. All wet.

EUGENE. (surprised) Yeah! How'd you know? (Act I, p. 45)

Eugene tells Stanley about the critical issue he mentioned in extract 11. This talk reveals three different examples of incompatibility theory. In the first example, Eugene, who has just entered adolescence, is unconscious of this period. As Hobbes states in his idea of superiority, this unconsciousness caused the audience who had experienced this period or had knowledge about this period to see themselves as superior to the protagonist, Eugene. The second example in which the incompatibility theory is seen stems from Eugene's censoring of what he saw in his dream. The fact that he took care to use obscene language while telling his sexual drive to his brother and could not find how to express his erection due to this dream created a funny impression on the audience. Due to Eugene's lack of knowledge about puberty, he thinks the sexual dream he sees and the fact that he has an erection due to the dream is another situation that causes laughter in the audience. The audience considers themselves superior because of Eugene's ignorance about adolescence and trying to explain his situation by paying attention to his language while telling his dream to his brother. The audience is knowledgeable about adolescence and is not in Eugene's difficult situation. The last example of superiority theory to be extracted from this talk stems from Eugene's reaction. Thinking his dream and night emission was a unique situation for him, Eugene was surprised when Stanley knew the case with his all-wet answer. Eugene's inexperience in adolescence once again stimulated laughter in the audience because they were aware of the information about this period. This condition evokes the feeling of superiority among the audience when they compare themselves with Eugene.

EXTRACT 14

KATE. I just don't want to see you get hurt. I never mean you harm. I can take anything except when someone in the family is mad at me.

BLANCHE. (*crosses and embraces her*) I could never be mad at you, Kate. That I promise you to my dying day.

KATE. Go on. Have dinner with Frank Murphy. If Poppa ever heard me say those words, he'd get up from the cemetery and stand in front of our house with a big stick. (Act I, p. 52)

Kate and Blanche chat about the dinner Blanche is invited to, but Kate dislikes Frank Murphy, their neighbour, who invites Blanche to dinner. This situation leads to an argument between the two sisters. In this discussion, Kate's angered expression of her dead father being resurrected from the grave and standing in front of the house with a big stick caused the audience to visualise the description. This image, which causes laughter in the audience, is revealed as the reflection of the Incongruity Theory. According to the Incongruity Theory, people tend to laugh in the face of topics they did not expect, could not predict, and could not reconcile the discourses. In this example, Kate's statement about her father hit the audience from an unexpected point with a description outside of the flow of the tense atmosphere created by the two sisters' discussion.

EXTRACT 15

EUGENE. What are you going to say?

STAN. I don't know... You want to help me? You're good at those things.

EUGENE. People used to get paid for that in the old days. Professional letter writers.

STAN. (indignant) I'm not going to pay you money.

EUGENE. I don't want money.

STAN. Then what *do* you want?

EUGENE. Tell me what Nora looked like naked.

STAN. How horny can you get?

EUGENE. I don't know. What's the highest score?

STAN. .Alright. When we finish the letter.

EUGENE. I don't trust you. I want to get paid first. (Act I, p. 58)

After dinner, Stanley spoke to his father, Jack, about his dismissal. Although his father stressed that honor is an important consideration, he wants Stanley to return to work because the family needs the money. After this conversation, Stanley realized that his father cared about the same values but that Stanley had to return to work due to the challenging circumstances. He decides to go back to work and write an apology letter to his boss. He prepares tools to write the letter. Stanley realizes

that Eugene has better written language than himself. Therefore, he asks his brother for help. Eugene asks Stanley for payment in return at his request. When Stanley says he will not pay for it, Eugene says he does not want any money. Eugene has his payment method. Eugene's interest in Nora continues, and he wonders what she looks like naked. For this reason, Stanley, who stated that he had seen Nora naked before, asks her to talk about Nora's body. Eugene's interest in Nora continues, and he wonders what she looks like naked. For this reason, he asks Stanley to describe Nora's body, stating that he had seen Nora naked before. Here, Eugene's obsession with Nora causes laughter. Eugene's obsessive behavior makes him a laughing stock in the eyes of the audience. According to the superiority theory, people see themselves as superior to the problematic situations of another person. Therefore, the audience, who does not have such an obsession, finds Eugene's obsessive behavior ridiculous.

EXTRACT 16

KATE. Oh, my God! Are you crazy? Are you out of your mind? You're walking down the stairs?

JACK. I'm alright. I was tired laying in that bed. I wanted to see Blanche. (*He sits down slowly.*)

KATE. How are you going to get upstairs? You think I'm going to carry you? The doctor said you're not even supposed to go to the bathroom, didn't he?

JACK. You trust doctors. My grandmother never saw one in her life, she lived to be eighty-seven.

KATE. She didn't have high blood pressure. She never fainted on the subway.

JACK. She used to faint three, four times a week. It's in our family. We're fainters. Laurie, darling. Go get your Uncle Jack a glass of water, please. (Act I, p.67-68)

Due to Jack's illness, they call a doctor to the house. After examining Jack, the doctor asks him to limit his physical activities before getting out of bed. Jack is not very happy with this situation and leaves his bed, but when Kate realizes this situation, she gets angry with herself. An argument ensues between the two. This controversial dialogue includes examples of Incongruity Theory and Superiority

Theory that cause laughter.

The fact that Jack's mother lived to the age of eighty-seven without going to a doctor throughout her life led to the formation of the Incongruity Theory. It triggered laughter with an exaggerated example. In contrast to this approach of Jack, Kate replies with sarcasm that Jack's mother has high blood pressure and did not faint on the subway. Jack states that fainting is a common occurrence and that his family's nickname is Fainters. We encounter the Superiority Theory in this sample, although Jack's exaggerated examples continue. The thing that causes laughter in the audience or the reader is that they see themselves as superior because they do not have a fainting problem like him.

EXTRACT 17

LAURIE. Eugene! Your father wants us to go to the store

EUGENE. Tell him I'm sick. My stomach hurts.

LAURIE. You don't want any ice cream?

EUGENE. (*thinks*) Ice cream? Wait a minute. (*He sits up, looks out at audience.*) It's amazing how quickly you recover from misery when someone offers you ice cream. (Act II, p.72)

Jack asks Laurie to go to the grocery store with Eugene to buy ice cream. Eugene, who is constantly sent to the market to purchase the needs of the house, makes up an excuse when Laurie says they have to go to the market. Eugene, who loves ice cream very much, does not know they will need to buy it. When Laurie said they were going to buy ice cream, he humorously said, "It's amazing how quickly you recover from misery when someone offers you ice cream." utters the sentence. The realization of humor in this sentence can be explained by the Superiority Theory and the Incongruity Theory. First of all, according to the Superiority Theory, human beings tend to laugh when they encounter issues that someone else is obsessed with or has a weakness for if they do not have the same or similar problems. In the play, the character of Eugene, as soon as he hears the word ice cream in the sentence, says, "I am sick." The fact that he renounces his excuse caused the audience to realize the main character's weakness for ice cream, which caused the audience to laugh.

The audience witnesses that Eugene's character makes excuses for something throughout the play, but he still does these things unwillingly, this time encountering an unexpected event. The main character has again made an excuse not to do a job or go to the market, but this time, because he likes ice cream very much, he puts his reason aside and wants to go to the market voluntarily. People tend to laugh in the face of unexpected actions. In this example, the audience's encounter with a different attitude in the face of Eugene's usual attitude brought the humor to the surface.

EXTRACT 18

JACK. She's only sixteen, Blanche. At that age they're still wrapped up in themselves.

EUGENE. How am I going to become a writer if I don't know how to suffer? Actually, I'd give up writing if I could see a naked girl while I was eating ice cream. (Act II, p.72)

Nora went out without saying something to Blanche because she was angry with her mother for not allowing her to be a dancer in the Broadway show. Blanche, who will meet with another man for the first time after her husband's death tonight, is unhappy that her daughter exhibits such an attitude. Kate and Jack try to lift her spirits. Witnessing the sad events at home, Eugene thinks that he is the only person in the house who does not suffer, and he is worried that this situation will affect his dream of being a writer. After the audience observes the problems of the household members, they can be aware of the characters' moods. The issues of the characters also change the atmosphere of the game. Despite all these negative factors, Neil Simon used the adolescence of his character as comedy material. As Eugene noted, "Actually, I'd give up writing if I could see a naked girl while I was eating ice cream." The expression enabled the hostile atmosphere in this part of the play to turn into humor with an incongruous discourse.

EXTRACT 19

STAN. How much money do you have?

EUGENE. Me? I don't have any money.

STAN. (*puts another sweater over the first one*) The hell you don't. You've

got money in your cigar box. How much do you have?

EUGENE. I got one dollar twelve. It's my life's savings.

STAN. Let me have it. I'll pay it back, don't worry. (Act II, p.82)

Kate, nervous over Jack's illness and losing his job, learns that Stan also lost his salary in gambling. As a result of Stanley's irresponsible behavior when the household needs money because of Jack's condition, Kate gets mad. When Kate cannot control her anger, she starts arguing with her sister Blanche. Remorseful of his irresponsible behavior and valuing principles, Stanley decides to leave home. Thinking that he has a share in his mother and aunt's argument, Stanley puts his decision into practice. While making the necessary preparations, he asks Eugene for money. Although Eugene states that he has no money, Stanley knows where Eugene's secret stash is; inside the cigarette box. In this part of the plot, he referred to the money he took out of the cigarette case as "my life savings," leading to laughter in the audience as an example of Superiority Theory. The reason behind this laughter of audiences is their superiority feeling of them. Eugene called the small amount of money his life savings evoked a sense of superiority in the audience, whose financial situation is much better than this amount.

EXTRACT 20

EUGENE. I would hate it if my father died. Especially with Stanley gone. We'd probably have to move out of this house.

LAURIE. Well... Then you and your mother could come and live with us.

EUGENE. So if we all end up living together, what's the point in breaking up now?

LAURIE. I don't know. I have to finish reading.

(She goes back to her book. EUGENE gets up and looks at the audience.)

EUGENE. You don't get too far talking to Laurie. Sometimes I think the flutter in her heart is really in her brain. (*He crosses out of room, closes door and heads down the stairs. To audience.*) . I went into their bedroom and broke the news about Stanley. The monumental news that their eldest son had run off, probably to get killed in France fighting for his country. My mother said, "Go to bed. He'll be home when it gets cold out". I couldn't believe it. Their own

son. It was then that I suspected that Stanley and I were adopted. They finally went to bed and I waited out on the front steps until it got cold. but Stanley never showed up. (Act II, p. 86)

Blanche, who decided to find a job and begin a new life due to her argument with Kate, wants to leave the house. After Stanley's departure and the quarrel at home, Eugene discusses these matters with Laurie. Laurie believes that all this is because of her father's death. Eugene then starts talking about what would happen if his father died, but Laurie ends the conversation by stating that she has to read the book. Throughout the play, Laurie appears before the audience in the image of an intelligent girl, so Eugene sarcastically criticizes her by using her illness; heart flutter, to the audience; "You don't get too far talking to Laurie. Sometimes I think the flutter in her heart is really in her brain." Eugene's analogy that Laurie's real problem is not in her heart but her mental health is presented to the audience with a humorous style that reflects the Superiority Theory.

Eugene's humorous analogy provides how superiority theory leads people to laugh. This analogy implies that the conversation is not progressing because Laurie constantly gives rational answers. The concept of superiority, which makes the audience laugh, emerges because the audience realizes that a person who always offers reasonable solutions is obsessed with this issue. They feel superior to people obsessed because they do not have such an obsession.

EXTRACT 21

EUGENE. (to audience) ...So Aunt Blanche decided to stay while she was looking for a job, Nora went back to school next morning, gave me a big smile and her legs looked as creamy white as ever. Laurie was asked to take out the garbage but she quickly got a 'flutter' in her heart, so I had to do it. Life was back to normal. (He goes into the house. KATE comes out of the kitchen.) (Act II, p.92)

The main character tells the audience about the latest situation at home. The conflict at home has subsided, and life has returned to normal. However, according to Eugene, two things are out of the ordinary. Firstly, Stanley has not returned home yet, and secondly, the color of Nora's legs. The audience, who grasped the seriousness of the domestic problems, deviated with an unexpected sentence from

Eugene. Even though Eugene's devotion to Nora was unrelated to all these problems, he caught the audience from an unexpected point. According to the Incongruity Theory, unpredictable and spontaneous events can create laughter. The humor that makes the audience laugh in this extract stems from this feature of the Incongruity Theory.

EXTRACT 22

STAN. Hi! (looks around) Where's Mom and Pop?

EUGENE. Mom's in the kitchen cooking. Pop's upstairs with his prayer book. They figured if God didn't bring you home, maybe her potato pancakes would. What happened? Did you join up? (Act II, p. 92)

Stanley has returned home, and Eugene has asked where the parents are. Eugene humorously describes how his parents exert effort to get him home. What causes laughter in this dialogue is a natural reaction to the Incongruity Theory. The audience expects to see some serious action as Eugene talks about his parents' efforts to get Stanley's return; However, he does not do what is expected and uses humorous language. While it is a serious effort in the dialogue for his father to pray for Stanley, it is an expression that cannot be counted as a strenuous effort for his mother to cook potato pancakes for him to return home. Simon brings humor to the audience with an unexpected expression and catches them unprepared.

EXTRACT 23

JACK. Hey wait a minute. Don't get the wrong idea. If you were home last night when your mother told me, I would have thrown you and your clothes out the window. Today I'm calmer. Today I read the newspaper. Today I'm afraid for all of us.

STAN. I understand.

JACK. After dinner tonight, you apologize to your mother and give her the three dollars.

STAN. I will.

JACK. And apologize to your Aunt Blanche because she was worried about you, too.

STAN. I will.

JACK. And you can thank your brother as well. He came into my bedroom this afternoon and told me how badly you felt. He was almost in tears himself. The way he pleaded your case, I thought I had Clarence Darrow in the room. (Act II, p. 96)

Exaggeration of statements or events is one of the contents of Incongruity Theory. Exaggerated analogies make people laugh at extreme situations. In this extract, Jack says he forgives Stanley for leaving home and that he should apologize to his mother and aunt. He also mentions Eugene tearing himself apart to be forgiven for going home. The fact that Jack likens Eugene's effort to the famous lawyer Clarence Darrow is the element that creates humor in this extract. The humor stems from the exaggeration in the simile.

EXTRACT 24

KATE. You look tired. Did you get any sleep?

STAN. I got enough. I slept at a friend's house. Can I talk to you after dinner, Mom?

KATE. Where am I going? To a night club. (Act II, p. 96- 97)

Stanley wants to apologize to his mother for leaving home, but Kate is busy with dinner. Therefore, Stanley asks if they can talk after dinner. Kate humorously answers Stanley's request; "Where am I going? To a nightclub." This statement is an example of Superiority Theory. Kate is constantly dealing with housework throughout the play has caused her to be seen as a traditional housewife from the audience's perception. The audience's confrontation with Kate's expression out of the housewife role brought them to face an unexpected situation that made them laugh. In this respect, laughter emerged in the light of the Superiority Theory.

EXTRACT 25

EUGENE. (*out of breath*) I just broke the world's record to Greenblatt's. Next I'm entering the Grocery Store Olympics. Here's some mail for you, Pop.

KATE. Is that my sweet cream?

EUGENE. Never spilled a drop. The perfect run. (Act II, p. 97)

Eugene is sent to the market to buy ice cream in this part of the game. Eugene, who likes to play in his fantasy world just as he plays imaginary baseball with the wall at the opening of the first act, acts as an Olympic record-breaking runner on his way to the market. While he states that he did not spill a single drop of ice cream when he got home, this creates a funny impression on the audience. The audience encounters an unpredictable situation in the plot from Eugene's fantasy world. Surprising or unexpected content presented as an extension of Incongruity Theory triggers laughter. In this content, laughter was initiated in the audience using Eugene's imagination.

EXTRACT 26

STAN. Here. It's for you. Don't leave it lying around the room.

(EUGENE starts to open it. It's post card size.)

EUGENE. What is it?

STAN. Open it slowly.

(EUGENE does)

Slower than that... Close your eyes.

(EUGENE does. It is unwrapped.)

Now look!

(EUGENE looks. His eyes almost pop open.)

EUGENE. OH, MY GOD! ...SHE'S NAKED! YOU CAN SEE EVERYTHING!! (Act II, p. 98)

The crises in the house begin to resolve one by one After Stan returns home. Stan, who does not forget his brother Eugene during his days away from home, buys a gift for Eugene in exchange for a money loan a friend owes him. His gift is a poster with a naked woman. When he gave this poster to Eugene, Eugene's reactions to the woman on the poster being naked made the audience laugh. In this extract, it is possible to see the traces of the Incongruity Theory in the reactions that make the audience laugh. In the eyes of the audience, Eugene's interest in the female body catches them throughout the play as a tool of laughter outside the plot.

EXTRACT 27

STAN. It belongs to the guy who owes me two and a half bucks. I can keep it until he pays me back.

EUGENE. Don't take the money. Let him keep it for a while. (Act II, p. 99)

Eugene, who examines the poster of the naked woman, reminds him that a friend bought the poster in exchange for a debt he owed him. Fearing that he will lose the poster if the debtor gives the money, Eugene tells Stan that he should not ask for the money back. This situation, which reveals Eugene's adolescence, is observed in the audience as a laugh under the influence of the Superiority Theory. The audience sees itself inwardly superior to Eugene when his obsession with the female body is staged as an obsession since adolescence. Eugene's obsessive behavior triggered laughter in the audience, just as a jester ridiculed himself with clumsiness to entertain the noble class.

EXTRACT 28

KATE. (*yells up*) Eugene! We're all waiting for you!

EUGENE. (*calls down*) Be right there! I just have to write down something. (*He looks at photo again, then picks up fountain pen and his Memoir book and begins to write.*) ..."October the second, six twenty five p.m. A momentous moment in the life of I, Eugene Morris Jerome... I have seen the Golden Palace of the Himalayas... Puberty is over. Onwards and upwards..!" (Act II, p. 100)

In the last scene, which tells about the days when everything was back at home, a humorous approach was captured by both Incongruity and Superiority Theories. Eugene's interest in the female body is a common phenomenon underlying these theories. Eugene, who discovered the female body with the poster brought by Stanley, expresses his situation vaguely, likening it to his discovery of the Golden Palace of the Himalayas. This analogy creates a conflicting effect on the audience because there is no logical connection between the female body and the Golden Palace of the Himalayas. On the other hand, the female body has been the factor that led to laughter as an obsession with the theory of superiority. When he is the only one missing at the table eaten with her family members, her mother calls out to Eugene to join them at the dinner table. Eugene, whose curiosity to see a naked woman's body throughout the play finally ends, begins to write about this situation

in memoirs. He happily welcomed this, stating that his adolescence was now over. Observing these sexual desires and obsessions throughout the play, the audience witnesses it one last time at the end of the play. Eugene's weakness for the female body caused the audience to see him as superior to him. As stated in the Superiority Theory; the nature of man lies in the formation of a sense of superiority over those he sees as weak or who have counterproductive attitudes in an event. This feeling triggers the superior to laugh at the vulnerable.

3.3. BROADWAY BOUND

EXTRACT 1

KATE. (coming to BEN) It's six o'clock. The library is closed. Eugene has a million books upstairs.

BEN. I don't read what he reads.

KATE. He has everything.

BEN. He doesn't have a book about Trotsky.

KATE. You just finished a book about Trotsky.

BEN. One book doesn't cover Trotsky. Thursdays they stay open till seven.

KATE. This is Friday.

BEN. I'll take a chance. (Act I, p.7)

The play opens with the dialogues between Kate and her father, Ben. Ben has a staunch socialist idiom, so he cares about the soviet tradition. He is reading a book about Trotsky, who comes from a Soviet school. Ben wants to go to the library, but the library is closed at that time. Kate tells him to read one of Eugene's books, but this poses a problem for Ben; There is no book about Trotsky among Eugene's books. Ben states that the library is open until late Thursday, revealing how obsessed he is with Trotsky. Another indication of Ben's obsessive attitude can be observed when Kate said that he had already finished a book on Trotsky, and Ben replied that one book would not be enough to understand Trotsky. Ben's insistence and obsession led to the act of laughing in the audience. The theory underlying the audience's laughter is the Superiority theory. They secretly see themselves as superior to Ben because of his obsessive attitude.

EXTRACT 2

EUGENE. Why are you sitting in your coat?

BEN. I was going out. Your mother changed my mind.

EUGENE. (going to the dining table for an apple) You're better off. It's freezing. I saw a man kissing his wife on the corner and they got stuck to each other. Mr. Jacobs, the tailor, is blowing hot steam on them.

BEN. (looks at him, concerned) Two people got stuck?

EUGENE. If they can't get them apart, they're going to have to sew all their clothes together. (Act I, p.9)

Eugene occasionally prefers humorous language when talking to family members when returning home from outside. He expresses his comic language with an exaggerated analogy in the conversation between him and his grandfather, Ben. He exaggerates the coldness of the air and states that a kissing couple clings to each other and even says that a tailor gives hot steam to separate them. In this extract, exaggeration lies at the source of laughter. Exaggerated expressions appear as the element that reveals the Incongruity Theory.

EXTRACT 3

BEN. What kind of animal wears a zipper?

EUGENE. A zipper? I don't know. What kind?

BEN. A horse fly.

EUGENE. (to audience) See what I mean?

BEN. (crossing back to the sofa) That's a joke! Not two people got stuck together. You understand? (Act I, p.9)

Dissatisfied with Eugene's sense of humor, Ben tries to teach Eugene how to make jokes. Eugene, who knew his grandfather very well, predicts what kind of joke he will make. When I'm joking, oldie jokes are used, as in the example of 'Horse fly'. This situation causes Eugene to ridicule him and makes the audience understand that his sense of humor is terrible. As can be seen in the example of Eugene, the situation is confirmed by the audience. Despite all this, Ben insists that Eugene's jokes are inadequate, and that's the actual humor. Both Eugene and the

audience mocking Ben's sense of humor caused them to see themselves as superior. In a way, humiliation appears as the only element that forms the basis of laughter. In this dialogue, where we see an example of the superiority theory, the feeling of superiority arising from humiliation triggered laughter.

EXTRACT 4

KATE. (circling the table, setting plates) What are you eating an apple for? I made chocolate pudding.

EUGENE. It's not a fatal combination, Mom. Where's Pop? I have to talk to everybody. (Act I, p.11)

In the traditional family structure, individuals have settled roles. In work, which reflects the family structure, this dialogue between Eugene and Kate has been the subject of humour based on the roles of family members. Since it is common for a mother to interfere with her child's meals, the humorous approach of the Eugene character to this traditional attitude caused laughter. Eugene's expression 'it is not a fatal combination' mocks her mother's involvement in what she eats. The mother's involvement in the child's behaviour and the presentation of this situation to the audience with sarcastic language created laughter, as explained in the superiority theory. The subject, ridiculed by the audience, aroused a sense of superiority in them, triggering laughter.

EXTRACT 5

KATE. Pop? You want a little wine tonight?

BEN. No wine for me. Too much acid. I'll have a beer.

KATE. We're out of beer.

BEN. You got wine? (Act I, p.13)

The Kate and Ben dialogue reveals humor that developed under the influence of the Incongruity Theory. The problems experienced by the duo while communicating trigger laughter. Ben uses a self-contradictory statement - "No wine for me. Too much acid. I'll have a beer." - this is the main communication problem. Rejecting Kate's offer of filling wine because it is acidic, Ben's preference for another acidic beverage, beer, complicates communication and reveals an unreasonable refusal. The lack of mutual communication confused the audience in

terms of context and triggered laughter in the context of the Incongruity Theory.

EXTRACT 6

KATE. You went with her for a whole summer.

EUGENE. I had nothing else to do. She was nice on the first date... Part of the first date. Until nine-thirty.

BEN. He liked a girl until nine thirty?

KATE He's kidding. That's a joke.

BEN. That's a joke, too? Ask him to tell you about the people who got stuck each other.

EUGENE. This girl is serious. I knew it the minute I saw her. Her father owns a music company on the same floor where I work. She writes poetry. She paints. Her father hung her paintings all over his office. She's incredible. She plays tennis. She plays golf. when she walks down the street, constructive workers fall into the cement. If I live to be a hundred, I 'll never meet a girl like her again. (Act I, p.14)

Eugene continues to make fun of his grandfather because he doesn't understand Eugene's jokes and takes them literally. Ben's sense of humor emerges as one of the factors that push the audience to laugh. Eugene's description of events with an exaggerated language is presented as another factor that causes laughter. Ben didn't understand the exaggerated definition, considering it true that Eugene's exaggerated expression of his relationship with the girl he was within the summer. The audience laughed, feeling superior in the face of this incomprehension they witnessed. Eugene triggered laughter by presenting the beauty of the girl he loves to the audience with an exaggerated expression. Eugene's exaggerated statements are included in this extract as an example of the Incongruity Theory.

EXTRACT 7

EUGENE. (to BEN) She never turned down a chance to cook for someone before. Something's wrong between her and Pop, isn't there? (looks back at BEN) Grandpa? Did you hear me? (to audience) He's sleeping. He's probably working on the halibut joke. (Act I, p.15)

Kate, who has embraced the role of a housewife, is a mother who does her housework without interruption. One of her housework as she cooks for everyone in the house. Their marriage to John is in trouble, and there are problems between the two. Kate has refused to prepare a meal for someone at home for the first time. Realizing this change in her mother, Eugene realizes a problem between her parents and asks her grandfather to confirm, but he falls asleep. Ben falls asleep in unexpected places and unexpected times appear before the audience as a comedy element. Ben's sleep problem, which is contrary to the usual flow of the plot, brings with it the Incongruity Theory. Another element of humor that Ben's sleep brings to the text is the Theory of Superiority. Ben is falling asleep at unexpected times and places, which provides an environment where he will make fun of the audience. This situation creates a feeling of superiority in the audience and triggers laughter.

EXTRACT 8

EUGENE. You introduce yourself?

STAN. In elevator. I said, "Mr. Burrows, the greatest thing that could ever happen to me is to work as a writer on your staff." And he said "Good luck, kid." And got off on the twelfth floor.

EUGENE. That's why he said, "Good luck"? You made it sound like you had lunch with him or something.

STAN. Did you talk to Abe Burrows?

EUGENE. That's not exactly talking to Abe Burrows. That's like the Pope waving to you in Vatican. (Act I, p.18)

Two brothers, Stanley and Eugene, got a job at C.B.S radio to write a skit for a radio show. Stanley, who had just returned home from the C.B.S building, met the famous radio broadcaster Abe Burrows in the elevator and wished Abe Stanley good luck with the sketch. Excited about his new job, Stanley occasionally has trouble controlling his movements and overreacts. Making fun of Stanley's excitement, Eugene humorously mocks the situation. Stanley's checkless attitudes and reactions elicited a sense of superiority in Eugene and the audience. Stanley's excitement and Eugene's mock-ups meet the audience as a demonstration of Superiority Theory. Eugene told Stanley that there was no exaggeration in his conversation with Mr. Burrow. He made a humorous analogy with the expression,

"That's like the Pope waving to you in Vatican." Eugene's appearance in front of the audience with an independent analogy made them laugh because he caught them unexpectedly. The laughter here is indicative of the Incongruity Theory.

EXTRACT 9

KATE. (shouting from kitchen) EUGENE! WHAT DID YOU DO TO THIS MEAT??

EUGENE. (going slowly into the kitchen) I KILLED IT! IT WAS HIM OR ME, MA!! I KILLED THE POT ROAST!! (Act I, p. 23-24)

As we can see in *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, Eugene's clumsiness or disorganization since he was a child became the scene of mutual squabbles with Kate, as seen in this dialogue. The mutual bickering of mother and son sometimes causes funny scenes. In this scene, Eugene puts a pot roast in it while preparing himself a sandwich, but he chops the pot roast incorrectly and shreds it. Kate angered by Eugene's behavior, shouted at him. He made an absurd excuse for Eugene's wrong chopping, saying it was a matter of life and death with pot roast. Eugene's absurd excuse appeared in the text as an element that made the audience laugh. In the absurd example, in which a reflection of the Incongruity Theory is seen, the audience has disagreement within the context in the face of unexpected events, which caused laughter.

EXTRACT 10

EUGENE. (coming back into STAN's room) What's new inside the old brain, Stan?

STAN. You're still an infant. I have a God damn infant for a partner. Why don't you wait in your room. I'll call you when I think of it.

EUGENE. I want to help you.

STAN. I said, "Come back when I call you."

EUGENE. (At STAN's door) Yes, Hithcliffe. I'll be waiting on the moors. (Eugene returns, again, to his own room and sits at the desk.)

STAN. And bring up the cucumbers!

EUGENE. (to audience) It's very hard writing with your brother because your

whole relationship gets in the way. Can you imagine Hamlet written by William and Harvey Shakespeare? (Act I, p. 29)

Eugene and Stanley must write a sketch for the radio show, but they could not produce fiction in mind. On the one hand, Stanley takes this job very seriously, and on the other, Eugene wants to help him. The joint sketch work between the brothers leads to mutual quarrels. The quarrels appear as the factor that turns the dialogue between the two into humor in the eyes of the audience. Superiority Theory and Incongruity Theory are the basis of the tendency to laugh. Superiority Theory stems from the use of 'the old brain' and 'infant' in a contemptuous language. The humiliating style between the two created a sense of superiority in the audience and directed it to humor.

On the other hand, one of Eugene's characteristic features; The feature of comparing a person or event to famous people or famous events has led to the formation of Incongruity. After Stanley rebuffs Eugene by turning down his help, Eugene causes him to imitate Heathcliff, the famous antihero in Emily Bronte's novel *Wuthering Heights* (1984). Based on the communication problems with his older brother, Eugene used a second analogy by emphasizing William Shakespeare's Hamlet, trying to imagine that Hamlet was written by William and his imaginary brother Harvey Shakespeare. In both analogies, they are the crucial factors that make up the laughter. Although the similes fit the subject perfectly, they cause an unexpected imaginary connection and humor in the audience.

EXTRACT 11

STAN. Yes, what?

EUGENE. Yes, I am serious about writing.

STAN. No, I don't think you are.

EUGENE. (jumping to his feet) Oh, Jesus! . . . I am, Stanley. I am serious about writing. I'm kind of footloose and fancy-free about cucumbers, but I'm serious about writing.

STAN. You can say what you want, I don't believe you are.

EUGENE. I am!! I am!! (to the heavens) Please, Holy Mother, make my blind brother see that I speak the truth. (Act I, p.35-36)

Stanley tries to motivate Eugene to write a sketch. He knows how Stanley Eugene, who knows his brother's character in detail, will motivate him. He has built his sense of humor on infuriating the person or people he is in contact with by constantly repeating their sensitive issues. It is possible to see Stanley's sense of humor in this dialogue; Realizing that Eugene cares about writing, Stanley insists that he does not take writing seriously. Stanley's repeated accusations of writing annoy Eugene, and Stanley enjoys it. It is possible to talk about the influence of Superiority Theory since the basis of Stanley's sense of humor is to manipulate the issues that people care about. It is not only Stanley who enjoys this situation but also the audience since a similar sense of superiority is something the audience can achieve by observing the speech.

EXTRACT 12

EUGENE. (spreading out his arms again) You mean bigger than this?

STAN. You've got a lot to learn, my young friend.

EUGENE. "My young friend"?? . . . Jesus, now you're Abraham Lincoln! (Act I, p.37)

Stanley continues to anger Eugene by saying that he does not show enough interest in writing and does not think about careers, so Stanley will find someone else who takes them seriously. Eugene spreads his arms to indicate that he takes these situations quite seriously, 'You mean bigger than this?' He asks the question to Stanley. Stanley said Eugene is inexperienced as advising his brother and ended his sentence with 'my young friend'. Eugene is angry at his brother's advising speech and becomes obsessed with the expression 'my young friend'. Eugene's comparison of Stanley's way of speaking to Abraham Lincoln is the element that triggered laughter in this dialogue. The Incongruity Theory can explain the humorous conversation. It is possible to talk about an illogical incompatibility between the smile and the content, so the audience, aware of the incoherence, showed a laughing reaction.

EXTRACT 13

STAN. (nods) What's the essential ingredient in every good sketch we've ever seen?

EUGENE. I don't know. What?

STAN. Don't say "What" so fast. Think about it.

EUGENE. (thinks) What's the essential ingredient in every good sketch we've ever seen.

STAN. Right.

EUGENE. I don't know. What?

STAN. You do know. We've talked about it. You're just not thinking.

EUGENE. Stan, I don't want to take a high school exam. (Act I, p.38)

There is a speech in which Stanley pushes Eugene's patience to its limits. Stanley, who drives his interlocutor crazy with his repetitive questions, is once again dealing with Eugene. Eugene finally could not stand it, saying, 'Stan, I don't want to take a high school exam...', showing an angry reaction to the repeated questions. However, his reaction creates feelings of relief. The repetitive questions Stanley got on the audience's nerves and bore them, but Eugene's humorous expression of 'high school exam' got on their nerves. The basis of this nervous relief humor is Freud's Relief Theory because Eugene translated and expressed the ideas in the audiences' minds. The audiences, who only kept the ideas about the play in their minds in order not to hinder the flow of the game, seeing that their thoughts are expressed, cause them to relax and laugh. We can explain another element that draws the audience to the humor with the Incongruity Theory. Eugene's use of metaphorical 'high school exam' is the factor that creates laughter here. The fact that the plot chose the metaphorical word independently created the humor. The audience experienced inconsistency while choosing the metaphor from an unexpected topic and placing it in the context of the topic, which caused them to laugh.

EXTRACT 14

EUGENE. (sighs in exasperation) More conflict!

STAN. Come on. You know it . . . Think about it . . . Heh? . . . Do you know it?

EUGENE. Yes. It's when one brother wants to kill the other brother. (Act I,

p.38)

Stanley's repeated questions remain. Eugene now wants to reach the point, but Stanley wants not to give up on this action without driving Eugene mad. Eugene finally asks Stanley to stop repeating questions, using the phrase 'when one brother wants to kill the other brother', implying that he is infuriating. The Superiority Theory can explain the humor in this extract because it can explain why this scene is humorous from the audience's perspective. The audience, who is not in a similar situation, witnessed Eugene getting mad in this scene. Therefore, they felt superior to him.

EXTRACT 15

EUGENE. So at ten to seven in the evening, we had the idea for the sketch that would launch our careers, and we began to write. By eleven-thirty that night we had field up three pads and had not written a single usable word. (Act I, 43)

The two brothers, who finally found an idea for the sketch to be presented to the listeners on the radio show, attempt to write it, but they cannot write a single word despite thinking for hours. Besides the futile efforts, both brothers sacrificed their own time. Eugene has given up on meeting a girl that he believes a person can only meet a girl like that once in a lifetime, while Stanley becomes obsessed with the job on the radio and becomes all he can think about it. The audience, who was aware of the sacrifices made until this scene in the play, laughed at this situation. Here, the audience does not realize that even though not a single word can be written for hours, they have the background knowledge of the characters. This audience's awareness caused them to see themselves as superior to Eugene and Stanley because they were aware that they could think for hours and write more than one word.

EXTRACT 16

STAN. Why didn't you wake me?

EUGENE. (struggling out of sleep) What?

STAN. I told you to wake me at twelve-thirty.

EUGENE. What time is it?

STAN. Twenty-five to one. We overslept.

EUGENE. Five minutes! You're yelling about five minutes?

STAN. (hopping around the room, slapping his face) Come on! Get up! If we fall asleep again, we're dead. Get your blood going. Move! Get Oxygen into your brains. (Act I, p.53)

Stanley and Eugene could not write anything, despite trying for hours. Finally, Stanley, who is always serious about the sketch, asks Eugene to wake him at twelve-thirty. Stanley wakes Eugene, who has fallen asleep and begins to scold him by stating that they are late, but the humor here is not in his scolding but only in his complaining for five minutes. Overreacting to a five-minute delay, Stanley was what brought discord to the text. "Come on! Get up! If we fall asleep again, we're dead. Get your blood going. Move! Get Oxygen into your brains." As seen in his expression, his exaggerated and deadly caring made the audience laugh. Although the audience is aware of Stanley's excitement and desire, they know that his reactions and words are not of vital importance. The humor that makes the conscious audience laugh in this scene is based on the Incongruity Theory.

EXTRACT 17

STAN. We're not stopping. I'm just planning ahead. Like I do in gin rummy. . . We could be the greatest, Gene. The greatest comedy writers in America. . . I just have to learn to deal with the pressure. (Act I, p.55)

Stanley tells Eugene that everything is under control and that he has planned every detail. His earnest attitude continues, but on the other hand, the fact that he has control of the game in the analogy card game 'gin rummy' has given rise to the incompatibility theory. The audience, who could not establish a logical connection between the card game and writing sketches, showed their reaction by laughing. According to Incongruity Theory, an illogical smile statement can lead the audience to laughter because of its inadaptability feature with the context.

EXTRACT 18

EUGENE. (to audience) It was the biggest night of my life and here I was, sick in bed. I took Josie ice skating at Rockefeller Center and fell down seven times and came home with a 102 temperature. Jewish guys are never good at sports played between November and April. (Act II, p.56)

The most crucial night of Eugene and Stanley's careers has arrived. The sketch they wrote for the radio show was due to air tonight, but Eugene fell ill. Eugene, who went ice skating with Josie at Rockefeller, fell ill. Eugene, who uses exaggerated similes and metaphors for humor, used them in this dialogue with the audience. He fell to the ground seven times while skating but exaggerated the cold. In addition, Eugene used the phrase "Jewish guys are never good at sports played between November and April.", making an excuse for his illness. The fact that he attributed the cause of his illness to these two exaggerated conditions made the audience laugh. The Incongruity Theory can explain the audience's laughter. According to the Incongruity Theory, exaggerated or absurd similes and metaphors cause laughter in the individual or individuals observing the situation because independent figures of speech are included in a logical game plot. The fact that the fiction contains illogical phrases causes a conflict between logic and illogicality in the brain, and a laugh reaction occurs.

EXTRACT 19

STAN. ...The radio is broken. I can't believe THE RADIO IS BROKEN!!

KATE. You have to let it warm up first.

STAN. It never takes this long. NO, NO, NO!! IT'S BROKEN!! (He throws himself on the floor. The radio comes on. We hear dance music.)

KATE. You see!

STAN. (going to the radio to fine-tune it) Is that clear? That doesn't sound clear to me. Can you hear it?

KATE. I hear it fine.

STAN. It's all the ice on the wires. I hate the winter. (Act II, p.58)

The radio show featuring Stanley and Eugene's sketch is about to begin, and Stanley is as stressed as ever. He turns on the radio at home to listen to the program, but the radio is turned on late. On top of that, Stanley panics as he cannot control his stress. Although Kate states that the radio needs to be warmed up a bit for it to work, Stanley, under the influence of the stress he has been through, states that the radio has never been turned on so late. Soon the radio starts working, but this time Stanley begins to worry about whether the sound is clear. Although his mother

expresses that the voice is clear, Stanley does not want to accept this and blames the winter season for the ice on the cables. The fact that he performs all these movements overreacting due to stress indicates the defect of character control. The Superiority Theory claims that superiority or supremacy feelings can occur in the eyes of the audience during the plays. The audience, which detects this character defect with observations, creates a feeling of superiority because, at that moment, he is not out of control like Stanley. The feeling of superiority in the audience, who sees themselves as superior to him, appears as the factor that creates humor.

EXTRACT 20

STAN. (opening EUGENE's bedroom door) Let's go. We're on the air. (knocking on BEN's door) Grandpa! Come on. That is it! Gene and I are going to become Capitalist! (to EUGENE, as they come downstairs) Pop's not home yet. (Act II, p.59)

Stanley goes to their room excitedly to inform his brother and grandfather that there is very little time left before the radio show starts. He opens the door of Eugene, who is resting in his room, sick, and knocks on his grandfather's door. The humor in this extract lies in character Ben, who is a strict socialist, making fun of his ideology. 'Gene and I are going to become Capitalist!' used the phrase. Using his grandfather's socialist ideology, he jokes with Ben, expressing the opposite ideology. The Theory of Superiority can explain this contrast that creates humor. Even if Ben's socialist attitude in a society dominated by the capitalist system is humorous, Stanley's use of the term capitalist to tease his grandfather reveals a sense of superiority in the audience over the teased person.

EXTRACT 21

BEN. (stretching out on the sofa; to EUGENE) So, what kind of a story is this?

EUGENE. It's not a story. It's a variety show. It's music and sketches and monologues and comedy interviews. It's entertainment.

BEN. Why, because they have nothing to say?

EUGENE. It's not suppose to say anything.

BEN. There's nothing to say? With three-quarters of the world in economic slavery, there's nothing to say? (Act II, p. 60)

Ben, brought up with a traditional understanding, remained unfamiliar with the American show business because he came from the socialist tradition. Defending that the radio program should have an informative and beautiful narrative, Ben conflicts with the entertainment world. Although Eugene tries to explain the situation to his grandfather, it is pretty difficult for Ben, who has stereotypes and definite lines, to perceive this concept and uphold his thoughts. Eugene used the phrase 'It's not supposed to say anything.' to emphasize that people listen to the radio show just for humor. His grandfather stated that he did not understand activities that are meaningless on a globe struggling with 'three-quarters of the world in economic slavery.' Ben's fixation on social norms and ethos within specific patterns have been the factors that triggered the humor. It was laughter for the audience to observe someone's life from outside the general structure of society, that is, outside the Capitalist society. The laughter here presents an example of the Incongruity Theory. According to Incongruity Theory, the coming together of different concepts, experiences, or idioms in the text can cause inconsistency and complexity in the context. As a result, an act of laughing may occur. The existence of Ben with different ideas in a different society revealed the incompatibility and formed humor.

EXTRACT 22

BEN. (to EUGENE) They have a Spanish-speaking dog?

EUGENE. Wait'll you hear him. He's hysterical.

BEN. He really speak Spanish, or they taught it to him?

STAN. He can bark "Si, si." Whatever you ask him, he says, "Si, si."

BEN. (to STAN and KATE) If he speaks Spanish, the audience won't understand. They're not as smart as the dog. (Act II, p.62)

At the beginning of the radio program, the presenter informs about the program's lineup. One of this week's comedy radio program guests is a dog named Pepito, who can speak Spanish. Ben and Eugene start talking about this dog. When BEN asks if this dog skill was innate or taught, Eugene replies that the dog can bark, "Si, si.". Then Ben states that those who do not understand what the dog is saying are not as smart as dogs. The laughter in these dialogues arises from the Superiority Theory and Incongruity Theories. Superiority appears in two different

ways; The first is in Eugene's words, which makes fun of the dog's making the same sound under all circumstances. The other is in Ben's mockery of the intelligence of those who do not understand the dog's bark. Underneath both sarcastic languages is to see themselves as superior; Eugene belittles the dog's skills, while Ben belittles the listeners who do not understand what the dog is saying. What lies behind their condescending attitude is that they see themselves as superior to them.

What shows that Incongruity Theory creates humor is the dog who can speak Spanish. Incongruity Theory emphasizes that unusual elements cause laughter. Although the Radio program is a comedy broadcast in the game, the audience does not expect such a dog in front of them. The fact that a dog with such skills is an example that is contrary to both the plat and daily life has led to incompatibility.

EXTRACT 23

CHUBBY. The census taker told us the average family in Decatur has about two and a half children. Most families prefer to have two girls and half a boy. (The studio audience laughs.) The reason being that with a half girl, you still got to buy the whole dress, but with a half boy, you only got to buy pants. (The studio audience laughs and applauds.) (Act II, p.63)

Chubby, the program host, continues his program with his jokes. This extract examines his joke. Although the audience does not laugh in two different places, both are based on the same theories. There are Superiority Theories due to gender differences and Incongruity Theories due to the illogicality of jokes. Emphasizing the inequality between women and men provokes the feeling of superiority in the dominant sex, and this impulse makes them react with a laugh. The joke, which has an absurd concept in which an average family has two and a half children, causes inconsistency with reality because it contains supernatural elements. This situation allows the laughing reaction to occur, as mentioned in Incongruity Theory.

EXTRACT 24

BEN. (on the stairs) I'll teach you how to write it. You sneak in a few remarks about what's wrong with this political system. If you make it funny enough, C.B.S. will never notice.

EUGENE. (to STAN) Can't you just see it? . . . "The Socialist Reveu" starring Chubby Trotsky . . . We'd be writing it from jail.

BEN. I liked the Talking Dog. "Si,si!" He didn't make any points, but he made me laugh. "Si,si!" (BEN continues up the stairs and to his bedroom.) (Act II, p.69)

Stanley and Eugene's sketch successfully aired on the radio show. However, Ben cannot make sense of the jokes when the program is over. He argued that their jokes should have meanings and contain political messages. He mockingly states that they should write the sketches from prison if they follow a political approach, as his grandfather said. Angered by this situation, Ben says that his favorite thing in the program is the dog that barks "si, si" to annoy him. These funny dialogues, in which the grandchild-grandfather relationship is seen as mutual bickering, can be explained with Superiority Theory. Ben puts the audience into an expectation about political satire with jokes, and he implies them with the sentence, "If you make it funny enough, C.B.S. will never notice.". Ben implies that the capitalist system of the U.S.A. never understands what is wrong with its political system. Ben's strict socialist stance behind his criticism of the U.S.A.'s political system made the audience laugh at him because they see themselves as superior to him. Eugene implies that they would be in prison if he did what his grandfather said. The sentence he said to anger him, but containing a truth under it, created a feeling of superiority in the audience. The main reason for this feeling is that the viewer is aware that Eugene is doing this to mock and anger his grandfather. Ben said that he liked the dog in the show because he was angry with his grandson, making the audience feel superior. The reason for this is that Ben's stubbornness during the mutual bickering and walking away from there by saying words, he exhibits a childish act.

EXTRACT 25

STAN. (coming into EUGENE's room) How do I look?

EUGENE. Like a Jewish Cary Grant. (The phone rings.) (Act II, p.77)

Stanley is prepared to go out. He meets up with a girl he has been chasing for six months. Before leaving the house, Eugene asks how she looks. He answers his brother's question with a humorous analogy and says that he looks like the famous movie actor Jewish Cary Grant. However, it was desired to draw attention to the fact that the actor, who calls himself partly Jewish because Cary Grant's mother is

a Jew, has such aside. On the other hand, Eugene may have made this analogy to Stanley because he was a member of a Jewish family that Eugene wanted to emphasize in this dialogue. Whatever situation he uses the 'Jewish Cary Grant' analogy, the Incongruity Theory can explain the humor. According to Incongruity Theory, the audience expects their thoughts within the ordinary course of the play. If the expectation is destroyed or deformed by an unpredictable, impulsive, and inappropriate thing, then humor/laughter suggests due to unstable, inappropriate, and incongruous events. As can be seen in Eugene's other dialogues, his similes come from outside the audience's expectations and provoke laughter.

EXTRACT 26

KATE. Because they took one look at that statue and said, "That's not a Jewish woman. We're going to have problems again." (She goes back to polishing the table.)

EUGENE. That would be a riot. A Jewish Statue of Liberty. In her left hand, she'd be holding a banking pan. . . and in the right hand, held up high, the electric bill.

KATE. And my grandfather, of course, was a Socialist. When he saw the statue said, "It's too big. They should have made a small one and given the money to people who needed it." (Act II, p.81)

Eugene talks to his mother about the past days. Kate described her memory with her grandmother when she was nine years old. She explains that everyone prays in front of the Statue of Liberty because the statue is not a Jewish woman. He humorously describes how it would be its appearance if it were a Jewish Statue of Liberty. Kate's socialist grandfather's, "It's too big. They should have made a small one and given the money to people who needed it." She continued this humor with her sentence. This extract makes it possible to observe two different examples of the Superiority Theory. The first one was experienced by representing the Jewish image in the audience's minds, describing what would be like a Jewish Statue of Liberty. The fact that the Jewish image in the people's minds is put on the face of the society is the imaginary image of a minority religious group. Seeing the Jewish image in the form of stereotypes made the audience feel superior to the Jews.

On the other hand, the socialist discourse of Kate's grandfather about the size

of the statue made the audience laugh. In American society, where the capitalist order is dominant, making fun of a person who exhibits Socialist attitudes and thoughts indicates 'superiority.' Aware of this situation, this is the reason behind Kate, Eugene and the audience laughing at Kate's grandfather.

EXTRACT 27

JACK. (coming back to his suitcase, coat on) I've got to leave before she gets up.

BEN. So, who tells her? Me? If you want me to tell her, you'd better pay me. And I get top money for telling my daughter her husband walked out on her. (Act II, p.90)

Kate and Jack could not resolve their marriage problems. John thinks it's time to leave the house and confronts Ben as he takes his suitcase and descends the stairs. Ben refuses to let Jack leave the house without telling Kate. Responding to Jack's insistence on his decision with instant anger, Ben gave a humorous response at this point. We can express the essential elements that make up the humor with the Incongruity Theory. Since using contrasting elements together causes conflict in the context of the plot, the reader or viewer may react by laughing at this confrontation. Even in this scene where a tragic family problem is seen, Ben's choice of a humorous response aroused laughter in the audience, as opposite situations came together and caused discord. Another factor that causes laughter, which stems from the contrast, is that Ben, who adopts the principles of Socialism, wants to pay from the jack. Ben, who asked for top money even for a good deed, made a blunder that contradicted his beliefs, making the audience laugh.

EXTRACT 28

BEN. How long have you been up?

KATE. A few minutes. I heard Jack coming downstairs, I thought he must be hungry. Did you put up hot water?

BEN. (sitting at the table) Certainly I put up hot water. What am I, an invalid? (He butters his roll.)

KATE. You want some eggs?

BEN. No.

KATE. (crossing to the back porch) No eggs?

BEN. Why do you always ask me if I want eggs? If I wanted eggs, wouldn't I ask you?

KATE. It's too early in the morning, Poppa. Don't start in.

BEN. Listen, If it'll make you happy to make eggs, make them. Scrambled, not too loose. (Act II, p.92-93)

Ben can not stop Jack from leaving the house without telling Kate, but Kate hears everything. After Jack left the house, she came out of her room and talked to Ben as if she had had a casual breakfast. Humor was realized with these speeches. Ben, who likes to make fun of his opposing attitudes, said he did not want eggs when Kate was first asked but later said, 'Scrambled, not too loose.' With this sentence, he not only asked for eggs but also expressed their consistency. Ben's illogical and inconsistent attitudes and attitudes here caused laughter. According to the Incongruity Theory, incompatible actions and attitudes are among the factors that trigger laughter in people. Ben's activities and perspectives that cause laughter serve as examples of these factors, as observed in this dialogue.

EXTRACT 29

EUGENE. (to audience) When Mom heard the news about Pop, she didn't cry, she didn't reach for anyone to hug, she didn't make a sound . . . When I was in the army, they told us, in battle, don't bother attending the wounded who were crying for help . . . Go to those who didn't make a sound. They were the ones in real trouble . . . (KATE finishes her cigarette and goes into the kitchen. EUGENE comes down the stairs into the living room. To audience:) . . . The winter moved on and so did our careers. As the temperature grew colder, Stan and I got hotter. They doubled our salary at C.B.S. and we were washing our hands in the same john as Arthur Godfrey . . . (Act II, p.94)

In this dialogue where Eugene speaks to the audience, It is mentioned how his mother reacted to his father's departure and the rapid rise of their careers. Eugene, who stated that he did not react to Jack's departure and remained silent, mentions that he and Stanley's careers progressed rapidly, their salaries were doubled, and they are now famous. While describing that they were famous, he made humor with the expression 'we were washing our hands in the same john as Arthur Godfrey...'. He made the audience laugh when he described ordinary activities such as washing

hands by the same John as Arthur Godfrey, to explain that they are famous. The extraordinary inconsistency and exaggeration underlying the Incongruity Theory were the factors that revealed the humor in this dialogue. By showing an ordinary event as extraordinary, he expressed the humorous exaggeration here: Washing hands in the same John with Arthur Godfrey, a famous broadcaster and entertainer on CBS radio, is seen as an indicator of being famous.

EXTRACT 30

STAN. Where's Mom? . . . Mom!! Come on inside. Grandpa? . . . Where's Grandpa?

EUGENE. He fell asleep on the kitchen table. (KATE comes in from the kitchen and stands by the breakfast table, looking at the two boys.)

STAN. Mom! . . . Remember I once told you, you have to have faith in me . . . I knew talent when I see it and I knew right away that Eugene and I had it . . . I never gave up on us, did I? . . . Did I, Eugene

EUGENE. No. Never . . . Except for the eight times you wanted to commit suicide.

STAN. (hanging up his coat) Except for those eight times, I was like a rock.

EUGENE. And once you smashed the typewriter with my baseball bat.

STAN. Except for the time I smashed the typewriter, I never lost heart, right?

EUGENE. Except for the time you lost heart.

STAN. But otherwise, I never faltered. Never gave up hope. So guess what I'm going to tell you?

EUGENE. You gave up hope.

STAN. We got "The Phil Silvers Show." You, me and two other writers . . . Two hundred dollars a week . . . Apiece . . . APIECE!! . . . That's four hundred dollars a week . . . Do you realize how much money that is?

EUGENE. Three hundred dollars a week? (Act II, p. 94-95)

The two brothers were eventually promoted to their desired position on the radio. Stanley wanted to share his excitement with Kate and Ben in the joy of his and Eugene's success. Stanley believes that he survived the process without any

problems and problems, and the dialogues between Eugene, who put the facts together, created a funny situation. By ignoring the facts one by one, Stanley stubbornly maintains his belief that he had no problems throughout the process. The humorous conversations caused by Stanley's stubbornness can be explained in the context of Superiority Theory. Stanley's insistence on his false beliefs and attitudes is a sign of his obsession. He attempted suicide eight times during what Stanley said was OK, smashed the typewriter with his baseball bat, for the time lost his heart, and he gave up. All these situations he ignores show that he is helpless and loses control under stress. As the audience witnessed his helplessness, they considered themselves superior.

EXTRACT 31

KATE. You don't want bureau? It's a beautiful bureau. Your father and I bought that new in Bamberger's.

STAN. That was twenty-five years ago, Mom.

KATE. You don't want it, don't take it. I'll save it. Maybe your children will want it. (Act II, p.97)

Eugene and Stanley have to move out of the house for work. Kate wants to give Eugene a bureau before he leaves. He reminds his mother that they had just bought Bureauyi twenty-five years ago. Thinking she's gotten out of this situation, her mother said to Eugene, "I'll save it. Maybe your children will want it." she replied with a sentence. It is a funny situation when Kate attributes a twenty-five-year-old bureau as new and states that Eugene, who is not married yet, will keep the bureau for her children. The underlying reason for the funny situation can be explained by the Incongruity Theory. There are two points where the audience catches the dissonance. The first is due to Kate's statement that she has just bought a twenty-five-year-old desk. The other is due to the unmarried Eugene's statement that she will keep the bureau for her children. In both cases, the main reason for laughter is the result of absurd situations arising from exaggeration.

EXTRACT 32

EUGENE. That's too bad. How was Pop taking it?

STAN. He looked lousy. He asked about Mom. He asked if she was alright.

Then he started to cry. We were in Louie's Restaurant on Madison Avenue. He grabbed my hand and held it. He sat there for half the lunch holding my hand. The waiter looked at us like we were a couple of lovers. (Act II, p. 97)

Jack had not seen anyone in the household since he left the house. After coming home from outside, Stanley tells households that he met his father and had dinner with him. He states that the woman, whose father's reason for leaving the house, is very sick. Eugene is worried about his father's condition and asks how Jack is. He says that his father is exhausted and is wondering about the situation of the family members. Stating that he held his hand for a long time during the lunch, Stanley adds the continuation of his humor: "The waiter looked at us like we were a couple of lovers.". The misunderstanding of the waiter caused the event to be perceived differently. The fact that Jack and Stanley were perceived as a couple in love, regardless of the father-son relationship, made the audience laugh. The fact that laughter stems from incoherence is a testament to the influence of Incongruity Theory on laughter. Unreal or unusual perceptions that cause discrepancy based on humor are factors that make people prone to laughter.

EXTRACT 33

STAN. He made me promise him that. I said, "If it's important, Pop, why can't you tell us what's in it now?" He said he just couldn't. We would have to wait.

EUGENE. Suppose he lives to be ninety? They'll turn yellow, we'll never be able to read it.

STAN. They're probably letters of apology. Explaining why he did what he did.

EUGENE. By then I'd be fifty-four. I wouldn't even care. (Act II, p. 98)

When Stanley is at lunch with Jack, Jack hands him his letters. He forces Stanley to swear not to open the letters before he dies. Very curious about what his father had written, Stanley wanted to open the letter, but Stanley took an oath. Eugene, who started to produce a theory in his mind, mentions that if his father were lived until the age of ninety, the letters would have become unreadable. This situation triggered laughter in the audience. Although Eugene's statement is only a conjecture, it is a situation that could happen. While a life span of ninety years is possible, it is rare. For this reason, a situation that can be considered an exaggeration

hit the audience from an unexpected point and presented a laughter example where Incongruity theory was practical. Eugene also displayed an attitude that can be seen in his Superiority Theory. According to the superiority theory, making excuses or changing attitudes to fulfill the wishes can create a feeling of superiority for someone who witnesses this. Another main reason for forming this feeling is the changing attitude and knowing the main reason behind the excuses created. In both circumstances, it creates a sense of superiority that triggers laughter in the audience. In this scene, the audience has witnessed that Eugene uses assumptions as an excuse and is aware that his primary purpose is to read the letter his father gave him. In both cases, it creates a sense of superiority that triggers laughter in the audience.

CONCLUSION

Comedy represents reality within its funny content. Therefore, comedy has a connection with laughter, and laughter offers a deep look at the underlying meanings of theories and humor the audience perceives. According to the three traditional laughter theories, the research aimed to explain the humor in Simon's BB trilogy, reflecting domestic realism. The dramatic extracts have been selected to analyse, and the chosen extracts have been used to depict the Theories of Superiority, Incongruity, and Relief. These theories have been dealt with how the characters and the audience react to them. As a result of the study, it has been demonstrated that the three laughter theories brings the audience's sense of humor to light because laughter has an inseparable connection with humor.

As emphasized in the first part of the research, when we look at the historical development of laughter, we can understand that it is the product of a historical process. Laughter is one of the primary purposes of comedy plays where the audience goes to the theatre to have fun and get rid of their negative thoughts and get some entertainment. Although the roots of the comedy dates back to the festivals held for the honour of Dionysus in ancient Greece, it has greatly been evolved and served for meeting various needs of human beings different from those of ancient people's needs. Humor was the subject of the Old and New Testaments. It has enormously changed in its long history and has been employed by writers for many reasons such as entertainment, conveying the message of the writer and satire. We can say that the absence of even one anecdote in the Bible where Jesus laughed indicates the view towards comedy in the Middle Ages and Christianity. Since the eighteenth century, it has taken its current form by showing a development process towards modern humour and comedy.

This study has focused on Freud's Relief theory, Hutchison's Incongruity Theory, and Hobbes' Superiority Theories to analyse the selected dramatic texts. It has demonstrated that laughter, a reaction brought by humour, is a fundamental tool used by Simon to entertain his audience within their social domestic environments. We have also exhibited that laughter is a common element of the three traditional humour theories. Moreover, it has shown that Simon is a great playwright who aptly uses laughter embodied in his comedies. He depicts the values, concerns and social and domestic problems of his Jewish family in his autobiographical trilogy. These

plays deal with author's adolescent years, military memories and their reflections and impact on the playwright's domestic affairs with humour. Furthermore, the trilogy depicts clearly that humour is part of real life. It is experienced under different guises.

The laughter theories, we have employed to analyse the selected dramatic texts, suit well to the humour structure Simon utilizes in his comedies. The laughter theories used by Simon appeal the audience and trigger laughter in them. They simply cannot help laughing whether consciously or unconsciously. The real-life events and dialogues in the plots of these trilogies are the feature of Simon's autobiography, so the audience finds themselves in them and laugh. In this study, it has been exhibited that there is a parallelism between the reasons for the laughter in the audience and the reasons behind the real events or dialogues. It has been observed that the three Laughter Theories function in the extracts taken from the plays.

It has also been determined that the extracts, in which the Superiority Theory is seen, show similarities at three different points. The first is due to the fact that one character sees himself as superior to the other. What causes the feeling of superiority is due to the characters hitting each other's weaknesses on their faces. Another similar situation is when the characters exhibit obsessive and repetitive actions. The characters' obsessive attitudes and behaviours, getting out of control, and repetitive speeches or actions in the face of a passion or desire are similar. The audience, who has the chance to observe this situation directly and therefore feels superior to the character, reacts with laughter to what they witness on stage. The last similarity of the Superiority Theory stems from the audience mocking the subject that is mocked on the stage. In this similarity, the audience makes the mockery by observing indirectly. The situation on the stage is a laughing matter to the audience. The audience is neither ridiculed nor mocked or humiliated because they feel that they are superior to the characters on stage. In all three plays, we have observed the Superiority Theory.

The Incongruity Theory is the most prevalent one observed in three plays compared to the other two theories. We can cite the main reason for this that Simon often uses absurd, unusual, unexpected elements, situations, or similes for humor. His sense of humour makes the audience to disagree with the context and the humor

element used, and laughter occurs. Eugene, symbolising Neil Simon, mostly represents the Incongruity Theory as he mainly resorts to the absurd and unusual analogies. Interpretations independent of the content of the text are among the most frequently used techniques in similes and reconciliations. While using these techniques, he especially applies contrasting elements. The incongruity brought by the contrast to the text has the same effect on the audience's minds and burst into laughter. It has been demonstrated that the feeling of superiority generally occurs in contempt, obsessive character structure, and ridicule. The factors that cause the dissonance revealed by the Incongruity Theory are that the actions, similes, or metaphors in the text are illogical, absurd, and unusual.

The Relief Theory is the least common theory among the laughter theories in the study. The main reason for this is that the inner world of Simon's characters is not mentioned in his plays. The Relief Theory has been observed as the factors that create the feeling of relaxation in the audience, such as the tension in the family, the changing cycle of the atmosphere, and the voicing of the audience's thoughts through the character. Therefore, we can understand the characters' moods with the help of events or by expressing them. The first common subcategory; The tension, excitement, and atmosphere of the events in the plot relax the audience and make them laugh. Relaxation occurs when the tension level of the event or a situation disturbs the audience. The other subcategory is the feeling of relaxation that comes and triggers laughter in the audience, who watch the play only passively in the theatre when their thoughts are expressed through a character on the stage, and the relaxation triggers laughter.

Another conclusion drawn from the research is Simon's way of reflecting domestic realism. Most of Simon's works, especially the trilogy, are about the domestic real-life concerns and values. *Broadway Bound* and *the Brighton Beach Memoirs* depict the life of a Jewish family which can be considered as a typical structure of American society and family. The trilogy brings up various events, from daily discussions in the family to big problems, from unemployment to decisions that will affect the future. The family's struggle with these events is brought to the agenda through dialogues, combined with a humorous style, and presented to the audience. Each family member's struggle with life and the enriched contents with relatives other than the nuclear family has added a different

dimension to the text. The large family structure brought by the new dimension, economic difficulties, and the emergence of diseases in family members are the problems we encounter in both works. These are issues that can happen to any family in American society. When two brothers, Eugene and Stanley, who write sketches for the radio in *Broadway Bound*, could not find a suitable subject, they write about their own family life. Their father, Jack, who is disturbed by this situation, gets angry and scolds the two brothers for public displaying the family's private life. Most of the audience find something about their lives in the radio show.

In Simon's BB trilogies, we have observed that the most commonly used theory is the Incongruity Theory then comes the Superiority and Relief Theory. It has been a challenge me to explicitly differentiate them as they overlap each other in different situations and contexts. To several humour theorists, it is challenging to delineate each theories' boundaries. In the BB trilogy, the three theories are sometimes intertwined. The dramatic extracts taken from the trilogy employ all theories and how they are embedded in domestic realistic settings and situations.

The study has tried to introduce Neil Simon to the drama and literature lovers as no study has been done on him in Turkey so far. The laughter/humour theories have recently been applied to dramatic texts. Simon uses laughter as a weapon to depict human nature and domestic realism. Future researchers can study Neil Simon's works from different perspectives to introduce his works to Turkish readers and drama and literature lovers. Simon's domestic comedies shed light on the family structure of American society. Moreover, the three Humour Theories can be incorporated into a linguistic perspective. All in all, we could say that "laughter" is like oxygen for human beings and only unique to mankind and Simon is a master of using it in his works.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky, Cambridge, MA: MIT.
- Bergson, H. (1980). *Laughter*. In W. Sypher (ed.), *Comedy: "An Essay on Comedy"* by George Meredith, pp. 61-103, Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Bergson, H.(1980). "Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic", in *Comedy*, ed. Wylie Sypher, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp.59-190.)
- Berkowitz, M.G. (2013). *American Drama of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Routledge.
- Bier, J. (1968). *The Rise and Fall of American Humor* 1st edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart.
- Billig, M. (2005). *Laughter and Ridicule: Towards a Social Critique of Humour*. London: Sage Publications.
- Bloom, S. F. (1996). "The Lingering (Comic?) Legacy of Eugene O'Neill." *The Eugene O'Neill Review*, Spring/Fall 1996, Vol. 20, No. 1/2, pp. 139-146.
- Bristol, M. (1985). *Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England*, New York: Methuen.
- Bryer, R. J. & Siegel, B. (eds.) (2019). *Conversations with Neil Simon*. Mississippi. University of Press Mississippi.
- Burke, K. (1964). *Perspectives by Incongruity*. Hyman E and Kamiller B (eds), Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Chanksy. S. (2015). *Kitchen Sink Realisms, Domestic Labour, Dining, and Drama in American Theatre*. Iowa: The University of Iowa Press.

- Cicero (1984), "On the Orator's Use of Laughter", in D. J. Palmer (ed.) *Comedy: Developments in Criticism*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, pp.28-29.
- Clark, M. (1970). "Humour and Incongruity". *Philosophy*, Jan., 1970, Vol. 45, No. 171, pp. 20-32
- Clement of Alexandria (1983). "The Instructor, in The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D.325", ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, et al., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, vol. 2, pp.207-296. *Developments in Criticism*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 28-29.
- Coates, N. (2005). "Why We Need Neil Simon's "Lost in Yonkers"". *The English Journal*. Sept. Vol. 95, No. 1, pp. 23-28.
- Critchley, S. (2002). *On Humour: Thinking in Action*. London and New York: Routledge
- Egri, L. (1960). *The Art of Dramatic Writing*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc.
- Garrison, G. (1980). *An Examination of Comedic Techniques Found in Selected Works of Neil Simon*. Denton: Texas University Press.
- Fletcher, A. (2018). *Modern American Drama: Playwriting in the 1930s*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Freud, S. (2001). *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious, The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, 24 vols, London: Vintage.
- Gregory, J. C. (1923). "Some Theories of Laughter", *Mind*, Jul., 1923, New Series, Vol. 32, No. 127 pp. 328-344
- Halliwell, S (2008). *Greek Laughter: A Study of Cultural Psychology from Homer to Early Christianity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harmondsworth: Viking.
- Hobbes, T. (1840), *Human Nature, in The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, ed.

- W. Molesworth, 11 vols, London: John Bohn, pp.1-77.
- Jacobson, H. (1997), *Seriously Funny: From the Ridiculous to the Sublime*.
- Koprince, S. (2002). *Understanding Neil Simon*. Carolina: University of South Carolina Press.
- Korb, R. (2001). "Critical Essay on 'Biloxi Blues'." *Drama for Students*, edited by Elizabeth Thomason, vol. 12, Gale Literature Resource Centre.
- Kulka, T. (2007). Kulka, T. (2007). "The Incongruity of Incongruity Theories of Humor". *Organon F* 14, No. 3, 320 - 333.
- Leggatt, A. (1998). *English Stage Comedy 1490-1990: Five centuries of a genre*. London: Routledge
- Martin, R. A. (2007). *The Psychology of Humour: An Integrative Approach*. Amsterdam: Elsevier Academic Press.
- Merserve, W. J. (1964). "American Drama and the Rise of Realism", *Jahrbuch für Amerikastudien*, Bd. 9 (1964), pp. 152-159
- Mobley, J. P. (1992). *NTC's Dictionary of Theatre and Drama Terms*. Illinois: NTC Publishing Group.
- Morreall, J. (1987). *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humour*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Morreall, J. (2009). *Comic Relief: A Comprehensive Philosophy of Humour*. Chicago: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Murphy, B. (2004). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Literature Vol.4*, Jay Praini (ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nesin, A. (1973). *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türk Mizahi*. İstanbul: Akbaba Yayinlari.
- Orfanella, L. (1998). "America's Playwright: Rewrites, a Memoir by Neil Simon." *The English Journal*, Feb., Vol. 87, No. 2, pp. 108-109.

- Palmer, J. (1994). *Taking Humour Seriously*. London: Routledge.
- Plaza, M. (2006). *The Function of Humour in Roman Verse Satire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pullar, P. (2001). *Consuming Passions: A History of English Food and Appetite*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Roeckelein, J. E. (2002). *The Psychology of Humour: A Reference Guide and Annotated Bibliography*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Simon, N. (1986). *Biloxi Blues*. New York: Samuel French.
- Simon, N. (1986). *The Collected Plays of Neil Simon, vol. 1*. New York: New American Library.
- Simon, N. (1988). *Broadway Bound*. New York: Penguin.
- Simon, N. (1991). *Lost in Yonkers*. New York: Plume.
- Simon, N. (1992). *The Collected Plays of Neil Simon, vol. 3*. New York: Random House.
- Simon, N. (1996). *Neil Simon A Memoir Rewrites*. New York: Touchstone.
- Simon, N. (2011). *The Play Goes On*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Stott, A. (2014). *Comedy*. second edition. London: Routledge.
- Wagner, M., (1962). *St. Basil's Ascetical Works (Fathers of the Church, Vol. 9)*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press.
- Walden, D. "Neil Simon: Toward Act III?," *MELUS*, Summer, 1980, Vol. 7, No.2, Between Margin and Mainstream, pp. 77-86
- Wilkes, G., A. (ed.). (1981). *Ben Jonson Five Plays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wolfreys, J. (2011). *The English Literature Companion*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.