



**Verbal Humour as An Anti-Feminist
Vehicle in Shaw's Heartbreak
House : A Pragma-Stylistic-Study ●**

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الفكاهة الشفاهية كأداة ضد المرأة في مسرحية بيت الأسي لجورج برنارد شو:

دراسة تداولية-أسلوبية

الخلاصة

كثرت الدراسات والأبحاث حول الفكاهة الشفاهية والتي تمخضت عن عدة نظريات اجتهدت في تحليلها وتأويلها للفكاهة وتراكييها. أسهم كل من راسكن (Raskin) و اتاردو (Attardo) بثلاثة نماذج للتحليل وقد تميزت بعمق تحليلها وشموليتها النسبية من خلال نظرية النص الدلالية (Semantic Script Theory of Humour) والنظرية العامة للفكاهة الشفاهية (The General Theory of Verbal Humour) ونظرية النصوص الفكاهية (Humorous Texts Theory) التي أضافها اتاردو فيما بعد. تسعى الدراسة الحالية إلى استكشاف الدور الهجائي للفكاهة الشفاهية وتحليل الأمثلة الفكاهية و تركيبها وكذلك أدوارها الموضوعية. وتطبق هذه الدراسة أنموذج نظرية النصوص الفكاهية ولاسيما النظرية العامة للفكاهة الشفاهية لمسرحية (بيت الأسي) لجورج برنارد شو وتبحث الفكاهة الشفاهية كأداة ضد المرأة فيها. فضلاً عن ذلك سلطت الدراسة الضوء على الوظائف التداولية والنفسية والاجتماعية التي تؤديها الفكاهة .

Abstract

The study of verbal humour has generated a multitude of research that yielded numerous and various theories that endeavour to analyze and interpret its mechanisms and structures. Raskin and Attardo contribute insightful and relatively exhaustive models of analysis in the form of the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) which Attardo later supplemented with the Humorous Texts Theory. The present study is an attempt to explore the satiric role of verbal humour and analyze the humorous instances, their structures, as well as thematic roles. It implements the Humorous Texts Theory, namely the General Theory of Verbal Humour Model (GTVH), to George Bernard Shaw's *Heartbreak House* and investigates verbal humour as an Anti-feminist vehicle in it. Besides, this study highlights the pragmatic and sociopsychological functions performed by humour in fictional/dramatic contexts.

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Introduction

Many researches, surveys and efforts have been devoted to defining what humour is, nonetheless humour remains such a mysterious phenomenon that there is no satisfactory definition or consensual view of it (Attardo, 1994:3; Ermida, 2008:1-8). Clearly, humour is a matter of opinion and linguists do not agree upon a precise definition of it to the extent that some of them hold that humour is indefinable and there is no general theory of it. As such, "linguists, psychologists and anthropologists have taken humour to be all-encompassing category, covering any event or object that elicits laughter, amuses or is felt to be funny" (Attardo,1994:3 ; 2001b:166-185; 2005:1). Shaw's *Heartbreak House*, henceforth (*HH*), is analyzed in terms of its humorous thrust in an attempt to reveal the relation humour holds to the construction, and development of the plot besides its share in characterization and character's focalization. The study intends to touch upon the notions that humour in *HH* performs satiric function relevant to the anti-feminist portrayal of the female characters in the play in addition to its pragmatic and socio-psychological functions.

• This study is based on an M.A. dissertation entitled Verbal Humour and Jokes in Shaw's *Heartbreak House* and Coward's *Relative Values: A Pragmatic-Stylistic Study*.

Humour: Definitions

Strictly speaking, humour as a term is derived from Latin and is originally used during the Renaissance as a physiological term to refer to the four primary fluids or humours of the human body namely: blood, phlegm, cholera and melancholy (Stowell, 1966:16-17). The combination of these elements operates in such a way that "each person is regarded as motivated by a preponderant humour that gives him a characteristic bias or eccentricity of disposition" (Abrams,1957:101). This viewpoint coincides with a classical medical theory according to which the proportion of four humours influences human's mood producing different kinds of humours such as "the sanguine humour, the choleric, the phlegmatic and the melancholic." A human becomes more eccentric and/or humorous when the proportion of one fluid increases (Whitfield, 1963:74).

Moreover, humour is a blanket term that encompasses all loosely laughter related phenomena within the field of the comic and also refers to the cognitive and emotional mechanisms of response. It is "the offspring of man that comes from the brain and is produced by our peculiar mental constitution and not by external objects" (Lestrangle, 2006:10). Subscribing to this stance, Zoology (2009) confirms that humour is "a mental construct [that] . . . belongs to the cultural milieu." In addition, some scholars contend that humour does not have substance or essence, instead; it is only a flight from difficulties or serious problems that demand thoughtfulness rather than laughter (Gray, 2009:8).

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Hay (1995:155) asserts that "most literature on humour assumes that laughter is the normal and most appropriate support for an attempt at humour." It is often used interchangeably with humour and a supposed symmetry has been established between the two. Philosophers like Aristotle and Plato base their definitions of humour on laughter and maintain that humour is what makes people laugh. Despite the fact that humour and laughter are yoked together, actually they are not synonymous. Humour, indeed, is the stimulus that leads to the response reflected in the process of laughing. Nevertheless, neither humour always entails laughter nor laughter is often stimulated by humour (Hatch, 1997: 278; Ruch, 2008:20). Laughter is engendered by a host of resources and humour is only one of them (Hurley et al., 2011:35).

Ermida (2008:6) sides with this view and thinks that the assumption that humour and laughter are related is totally false because the "correlation between an intellectual and cognitive phenomenon, humour and a complex neuro-physiological manifestation, laughter" is illogical. Added to this, humour is a complex and a purposeful activity that demands intuition and is arguably "reliant on genetic machinations" so that a person can understand it (Polimeni & Reiss, 2004:348). Not only that, humour is also a subjective concept that differs in accordance with situational contexts and culture. That is why, what is perceived as humorous to one person may not be so for another (Chairo,1992:5; Lundmark,2003:8). On the other hand, laughter is "a rather versatile phenomenon, which may-or may not-accompany the humorous stimulus" (Ermida, 2008:7). However, both humour and laughter contribute to linguistic benefits in that both of them "facilitate the development of language by maintaining a pleasurable association to conversation" (Polimeni & Reiss,2004:352).

Hegal and Schopenhauer view humour in terms of incongruity as a deviation from what people consider to be normal or acceptable (Raskin,1979:326). According to Giovacchini (1996:3), humour is a human attribute that creates a sort of harmony and balance between the psychology of individuals and the routine activities of real life. Bergson conceives humour as "a form of satire . . . [that] meets evil with evil" (qtd. in Mcfadden,1982:121). Ape attempts to introduce an all-embracing definition of humour from linguistic, social and psychological perspectives. He says that "the concept of humour parallels that of language in linguistics, culture in anthropology and personality in psychology." He believes that as these concepts are prominent ones in their domains, so is humour. Also, he stipulates that humour should constitute three ingredients that serve to define it as humour, namely: the target, incongruity and laughter. From Ape's stance, humour should involve these components: "(a) that any act, event, object or person can function as a locus of incongruity, and so as a potential trigger for humour; (b) that the mind makes sense of incongruity and becomes

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mirthful; and (c) that this is reflected overtly often in smile and laughter (qtd. in Handelman,1990:323-24).

Socially, humour is described as "an intended or unintended message interpreted as funny" (Lynch, 2002:423), and as non-serious mode of communication (Raskin, 1985:100-104). Likewise, Martineau (1972) and Berger (1976) declare that humour is an instance of communication that consists in contradictory meanings and is invested mainly to evoke laughter among participants (qtd. in Hay,1995:4). Further, humour is identified as an "interpersonal emotion management . . . that strengthens or restores the feeling, norms of situations and creates amusement in itself generating positive emotions among members of an interacting group" (Francis et al.,1999:158). Farb (1981) defines it as a momentary agreement set by the joke teller and the hearer where it is used fundamentally to set aside both social and linguistic rules or to enter into a new universe of discourse (qtd. in Miller,2009:6). In the light of these definitions, humour is perceived as a communicative device that signals the mutual understanding between the producer of the humorous messages and the interpreter of these messages.

The Functions of Humour

Throughout history and across cultures, humour has an important role in promoting well-being. It is generally agreed that humour has psychological, therapeutic and social advantages. Humour is "a self-care tool to cope with life stressors" (Berk,2002:42). Freud stated that "laughter is a release from tension and a freedom from restraint" (1995:27). Over and above, humour is a therapeutic prescription and stress reliever. It plays a critical role in determining people's health and behaviour (Bernard, 2007:261). For instance, the Bible asserted that humour is as good as medicine and the Medieval professor of surgery, Henri de Mondeville, advised patients to apply humour as a vital treatment to recover from pains instead of surgery (Quick et al.,1997). Bergson maintained "that laughter comes from superiority . . . and is librating" (qtd. in Kern, 1980:3). Ruch, on his part, lends weight to the social and psychological benefits of humour and says that humour is useful for both "emotional health" and "social relations" (2008:19).

The social functions of humour are diverse and complex. Attardo classifies the social effects of humour on conversation into four classes: "social management, decommitment, mediation and defunctionalization." Social management includes all cases where "humour is used as a tool to facilitate in-group interaction." It represents one's desire to be liked by others thereby s/he manages to build rapport and sustain relationships (Attardo, 1994:323).

Decommitment is a subclass of social management. It is "the possibility of taking back something by claiming that one was just kidding" (Attardo, 2001b:173). As a mediating device, "humour is either used to introduce or carry out potentially embarrassing or aggressive

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interactions." Humorous discourses sometimes signal "coded messages" about banned or embarrassing arguments such as sex without "personal risk" (Attardo,1994:327). The defunctionalization function of humour is a language that performs non-communicative but playful purposes which is a view embraced by Freud (1905:30). The language of humour is characterized by its deviation from the norms of language as a means of communication.

Additionally, humour has a rhetorical function in public speaking. For example, in the form of satire, witticism and irony, humour is an influential communicative tool in preaching and an interactive medium for conventional opinions. Indeed, it entertains the congregation, revives their interest and illuminates their minds (Rushing & Barlow, 2006:7). Likewise, humour has "rhetorical and persuasive potential for writing as it is used to creatively prove a point, or relieve boredom and tension in otherwise stuffy writing" (Telfer,2002:1).

Contemporary Theories of Humour

Among the linguistic theories of humour, the present study adopts Raskin and Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH) which is based on the Semantic-Script Theory of Humour developed originally by Raskin in addition to the Humorous Texts Theory which is an expansion of the GTVH professed by Attardo to account for lengthy stretches of humour. Therefore, a detailed account of three is provided below:

Semantic-Script Theory of Humour (SSTH)

SSTH is the first formal theory of verbal humour that is systematized by Victor Raskin in 1985 using jokes as the basis of his theory. It is thought to be "a variant of incongruity theories" because its formula borders on concepts of incongruity and incompatibility in that script oppositeness is analogous to incongruity and compatibility is identical to appropriateness (Attardo & Raskin, 1991: 331; Attardo, 1997: 395). SSTH is a script-based theory since Raskin (1985: 81) uses the term script to refer to "a large chunk of semantic information surrounding the word or evoked by it ." Cognitively, "a script is an organized complex of information about something (typically, a lexical item, but not exclusively, since there are obviously non-lexicalized concepts) ." Scripts are, then, the mental representations of a large amount of cognitive structures or information relevant to a given lexical item or situation stored in the mind of native speaker (Raskin, 1979: 325).

Raskin asserts that scripts are correlated to, and elicited by "lexical items". Typically, scripts are either encyclopedic or lexical. Each one of the two kinds represents a semantic network of interrelations connected by links of various semantic characters such as "synonymy, hyponymy, antonymy and correspondingly labeled." The set of scripts, whether lexical or non-lexical along with their links and all the other connectors between the two sets of scripts would

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form "the semantic network which contains all of the information a speaker has about his/her culture"(Attardo,1994:201-202). The main hypothesis of the SSTH theory as postulated by Raskin (1985:99) is:

A text can be characterized as a single-joke-carrying text if both of the conditions are satisfied :

- (1) The text is compatible, fully or in part, with two different scripts.
- (2) The two scripts with which the text is compatible are opposite.

Raskin (1985:57) avers that the purpose of his SSTH is to answer the question, "What semantic properties of the text make it funny?" Script opposition "is necessarily binary in nature and Raskin indicates the basic opposition to be actual/non-actual, normal/abnormal, and possible/impossible." These three classes stand for "the basic opposition between real and unreal situations in the texts" (Attardo, 1994: 204). From the hypothesis of the semantic theory, it is concluded that verbal humour rests on ambiguity that is deliberately and unexpectedly created.

Fundamentally, SSTH was the first to bring forward the fact that "all humour involves a semantic-pragmatic process . . . [since] it includes a semantic opposition between the scripts (frames) activated by a (fragment of a) text and a violation of the maxims of the principle of cooperation" (Attardo, 2003 : 1287).

In spite of its fame, the SSTH has its own limitations. Besides its being applicable to jokes only rather than other types of humorous texts, it is restricted almost to the semantics of the joke and does not include other linguistic subfields. Another drawback of the theory is that "it can not tell how similar two jokes are" (Attardo, 1994 : 208) . Not to mention, the focal point of the SSTH is on the notion of "comparison", the clash between the apparent sense and the hidden sense, dubbing it as "script opposition" without any explanation of how such an opposition performs. It also incorporates the concept of "inappropriateness" into script opposition equating it with the first interpretation [more obvious meaning], rather than regarding it as "inherent properties of the less obvious meaning [second interpretation] " (Ritchie, 2004: 80).

General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH)

The GTVH is a general and essentialist theory of verbal humour that originally evolved from SSTH and is designed by Attardo and Raskin in 1991. It is a combination of the Script-based Semantic Theory of Humour and Attardo's Five-Level joke representation model. The scope of this theory is enlarged by the Knowledge Resources (KR) and the focus of the theory is on joke similarity to extensively include any information concerning the processing and generating of humorous texts (Kyratz, 2003: 2).

In order to enlarge the GTVH, Attardo and Raskin add five knowledge resources or parameters to be utilized when seeking out the structural homology

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of jokes. Thus, besides the script opposition of the SSTH, the GTVH includes: "logical mechanism (LM) , the target (TA) , the narrative strategy (NS) , the language (LA), and the situation (SI)" (Attardo, 1994 :223). Attardo and Raskin (1991: 313) posit "a hierarchical model of joke representation consisting of six Knowledge Resources" :

- **Script Opposition (SO):** It deals with the script opposition presented in SSTH. Attardo defines the script in the GTVH as "an interpretation of the text of a joke" that incorporates the "encyclopedic knowledge into the lexicon" (2001a:27). Script Opposition (SO) is carried over into GTVH from SSTH and is characterized as the most abstract KR (Attardo,1994:226).

- **Logical Mechanism (LM):** This resource is the "distorted, playful logic" which does not stand out in a real world but is limited only to the realm of the comic. It justifies for "the way in which the two senses (scripts, isotopies) in the joke are brought together", and corresponds to the resolution phase of the incongruity/resolution model (Attardo & Raskin, 1991:306).

- **Situation (SI):** This parameter concerns itself with the situation of joke. It subsumes the "props" of the joke including the "objects, participants, instruments, setting, activities, etc" (Attardo & Raskin, 1991:303).

- **Target (TA):** This resource refers to any individual or group to whom the joke is oriented or from whom ridiculous or stupid behaviour is expected. Target is the only optional parameter among the six KRs (Attardo & Raskin,1991:301-302).

- **Narrative Strategy (NS):** It is the "genre" of the joke and the rhetorical structure that defines the nature of the text. It takes various forms such as "expository text, question and answer, a simple narrative, a dialogue, riddle or a pseudo-riddle" (Attardo & Raskin, 1991:300-301).

- **Language (LA):** This parameter "contains all the information necessary for the verbalization of a text" (Attardo,1994:223). LA is responsible for the position of the punchline and for "the expression of the contents of the joke (Attardo & Raskin, 1991:299).

Humorous Texts Theory

Humorous texts theory is, in fact, grounded in the GTVH. Attardo (2001a:28) expands the GTVH to embrace not only short humorous texts exemplified by jokes but also all longer literary texts irrespective of their types, length and genre such as "narrative texts, dramatic texts and conversations texts." The theory assumes that the text is a vector or "physically linear and directed only in one direction. Along the text occurs one or more instances of humour" (Attardo, 2002b:23). These humorous instances are termed as jab lines and punch lines. Longer humorous texts are distinct from a joke in that where a final punch line is an indispensable element of the joke, longer humorous texts such as comic plays

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incorporate "instances of humour distributed throughout the text" (Corduas et al., 2008: 245). In essence, Attardo rests his classification of comic lines on the criteria of "formal or thematic similarity" (2001a:37).

Attardo bases his model on the premise that long humorous texts are exclusively linear structures which can be classified into two classes: those that are identical to joke structure in that they end with a punch line and those which "consist in non-humorous narratives, but display somewhere along [their linear structure] one or more humorous components [known as] jab lines" (Attardo, 2001a:29; Ermida, 2008: 108). In brief, the study of humorous texts boils down to "the location of all lines (jab & punch) along the text vector, i.e. its linear presentation" (Attardo, 2001a:37). The main goal of this model is to prove the fact that the distribution of humour along the text is not random but is meaningful, though it is distinct from one text to another (Corduas, 2008: 255).

Jab/Punch lines

In conformity with the new extension of the GTVH, and to handle texts that have instances of humour in the plot, central concepts are provided, notably, jab/punch lines. Jab lines are essentially "humorous instances that can occur in any position" in the text not necessarily final and are "fully integrated in the narrative" (Attardo, 2001a:37). Semantically, the jab lines are similar to the punchline except that the former does not disrupt the continuity or the interpretation process of the text, but allows it to persist "while still producing incongruity in which humour resides" (Corduas et al., 2008:255). The punch lines, on the contrary, are humorous lines which adjust and break "the interpretive flow established" in the set up (Attardo, 2001a:89). Usually, humorous texts locate the jab lines in strategic positions that will retain in memory while the punch lines are placed in prominent final positions (Attardo, 2001a:59).

Anti-Feminism and Shaw's Heartbreak House

Antifeminism is defined as "the conviction that women are not entitled to the same moral and legal rights as men, or to the same social status and opportunities" (A Feminist Dictionary, 1985:54). Most anti-feminists hold that women are psychologically and innately different from men, a matter that makes women play a subordinate role in society. According to the anti-feminists, "women's characters should be controlled, dominated, subdued, abused, and used not only for male benefit but for [their] own" (1985:275). Antifeminism is of different types manifested in literature mainly in the form of misogyny because "anti-feminism is its ideological defense; in the sex-based insult passion and ideology are united in an act of denigration and intimidation" (1985: 275). Thus, the term antifeminism connotes both misogynistic tenets and the antifeminists who oppose the equality between men and women. Flood (2007:21) maintains that

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"antifeminism denies at least one of three general principles of feminism: that social arrangements among men and women are neither natural nor divinely determined; that social arrangements among men and women favour men; and/or that there are collective actions that can and should be taken to transform these arrangements into more just and equitable arrangements." In line with this view, Kimmel (2004:61) states that antifeminism is "the opposition to women's equality" and argues that antifeminists oppose "women's entry into the public sphere, the re-organization of the private sphere, women's control of their bodies, and women's rights generally." Women are thus confined to domestic trifles for "the social construct of the ideology of marriage is therefore, antifeminist in nature, as it confines women within the four-walls of the house and burdens them with familial and social duties" (Verma & Sharma, 2010:36). Shaw's Hesion, for instance, takes the responsibilities of a daughter-housewife-domestic hostess who should keep the house in order to be economically dependent. She is not able to discard her traditional role, break up the chains of slavery and become an independent woman. The dramatist positions her within the four-walls of the house without providing her with any choice.

Shaw believes that "women are intellectually weaker and they cannot undertake any work outside the house independently. They are, therefore, expected to do the domestic work, bring up children and conform to male expectations" (Verma & Sharma, 2010:41). In the *HH*, Shaw conveys his misogyny through such characters as Hector, Shotover and Randal who severely condemn, criticize and demonize women, not to mention female characters themselves who take active part in the lampoon. Shaw in *HH* treats the female characters with contempt. He says that the *HH* "is the place where "Youth! beauty! novelty! . . . are badly wanted . ." (*HH*:45). The playwright projects his antifeminist attitude by creating the fickle female characters of Ellie Dunn, Hesion Hushabye and Lady Ariadne Utterword showing them as inferior to men as they are unable to make rational decisions or altruistic judgments. For instance, Ellie rebuffs her lover Hector and abandons Mangan to get married to the salt Captain Shotover; Hesion lures Mangan first, then turns to Mazzini and Ariadne is involved in love relationship with Randall, but tries to tempt Hector as well. Shaw thinks that women's sole purpose in *HH* is to ensnare man to enter into the institution of marriage. Marriage in *HH* is seen as a weapon for the subjugation of women and makes them in a second-rate position to men. For instance, Ellie Dunn's announcement that "every woman who hasn't any money is a matrimonial adventurer" (*HH*:87), is an antifeminist stance of the dramatist to maintain economic dependence of women on men. Shotover's marriage with Ellie reveals the playwright's antifeminist attitude that man is the "spiritual husband and

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second father" (*HH*:123) of a woman who, in the view of Shaw, "always needs someone else to complete her" (Kern, 2007:21). "The roles of a husband and a father are different but in an antifeminist discourse, they overlap each other as both of them patronise the women under them (Verma & Sharma, 2010:37). Shaw thinks that "women earn their livelihood and get their work . . . not because of their competence but because of their physical charm. This idea is a misogynistic in nature" (Sharma & Verma, 2010:56).

Similarly, Ariadne, who leaves *Heartbreak House* and marries a governor, Hastings Utterword at the age of nineteen , is an evidence of submissiveness and economic slavery of women. Shaw's antifeminist outlook also finds a manifestation through Ariadne's comic statement that "Napoleon was quite right when he said that women are the occupation of the idle man" (*HH*:112). Ariadne's physical beauty is a source of love and happiness for her husband, Hasting, but hatred for Hector who philosophizes saying "Your fatal gift of beauty forces men to discuss you" , to which she proudly responds "I get my whole life messed up with people falling in love with me" (*HH*:111). Hector's attitude towards Adriane envisions the playwright's anti-feminism in that he admires Ariadne because of her extremely good looks. "Shaw views women's power in their physical beauty and sexual allurements because women characters in the play exercise their power over men through sexual allures" (Verma & Sharma, 2010:38). By depicting women as an object of sex and fascination for men, Shaw highlights his antifeminist ideology where a woman has to please some man in order to support herself. Morgan (1974:202) discloses the antifeminist attitude of Shaw towards women saying that:

The dream phenomenon of the doubling, fusing and splitting of characters gave Shaw a means of handling his own ambivalences of attitude—towards women and romance, money and power, art and revolution—and making them illuminate ambiguousness of the world.

Indeed, The female characters in the play are the stereotypes of women's roles in leisured society. Shaw's anti-feminist attitude is also manifested in the presentation of Hesione's physical beauty (*HH*: 46). Shaw depicts her charm as a means of men's entertainment. Akin to her sister, Adriane, Hesione uses her beautiful outlook to trick men and then humiliate and reject them. However, she surrenders herself to her father, Shotover, to keep her soul and body together, a matter that proves the power of Patriarchal notions: "Shaw's unflinching faith in male supremacy is apparent in the character of Shotover who imposes his will on the women in the play particularly his daughters in order to have control over them" (Verma & Sharma, 2010:37). His manipulative emotional games have kept all the women hostage to his desperate emotional needs.

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In the opinion of Shaw, mothering and Matriarchy are important roles of a woman. For instance, to Ariadne, Randall is a naughty child whom she has to subdue. She tells Hector: "When the children got nerves and were naughty, I smacked them just enough to give them a good cry and a healthy nervous shock. They went to sleep and were quite good afterwards. Well, I can't smack Randall: he is too big; so when he gets nerves and is naughty, I just rag him till he cries. He will be all right now" (*HH*:113). This mirrors Shaw's ideas about the conventional power a mother is endowed with. He states that "the strongest and best position a woman can occupy . . . is that a wife and a mother" (qtd. in Sharma & Verma, 2010:54). Then, Shaw propagates the traditional idea of a woman as a housewife and that women should live under the control of men. Besides, Shaw's antifeminist ideology is reflected in his depiction of Randall as a weaker person though this weakness is used by him in the presence of Ariadne as a strategy to hoodwink her. He is merely a doll in the play and Adriane is embowered by him.

Verbal Humour and Antifeminism in Heartbreak House

HH is an anti-war drama and a satirical assault on those who glorify the horrors of war. It was written between 1916 and 1917 as war raged across Europe by the great wit George Bernard Shaw (Kruse, 1987:102-104). It was performed in 1920 in New York, where it ran into (125) performances to favourable reviews and public acclaim (Tripp, 2011:9). Following the example of the Russian playwrights, Tolstoy's "War and Peace" and Chekhov's "The Cherry Orchard", Shaw wrote *HH* as a quasi-Chekhovian comedy and "a fantasia in the Russian manner on English themes" (Dukore,1973:100). *HH* is a metaphor of the overheated house, in the shape of a ship, in which "Europe was stifling its soul" and England in the run up to the war (Shaw, 2003:17). With its bold combination of high farce, caustic wit, biting banter and brilliant satire, *HH* is a telling indictment of the generation responsible for World War I.

The main plot of *HH* is built around Ellie Dunn's dilemma with other subplots that focus on other characters and events. Ellie Dunn is a young woman from the less-moneyed class who, despite being in love with another man, intends to marry the "Napoleon of industry" Boss Mangan, a man whom she does not love but thinks that he will offer her money and security. Hesione, Shotover's older daughter, invites Ellie to the *Heartbreak House* in order to put an end to her engagement to Mangan. Initially, Hesione's attempt fails as Ellie discovers that the stranger whom she falls in love with is Hesione's husband, Hector. After other attempts on the part of Hesione and her father, Ellie breaks off her engagement to Mangan and marries someone else, oddly enough neither her lover nor her fiancé. So, before the play ends, Shotover and Ellie announce their marriage. While the family of *Heartbreak House* and its guests are fiddling, the threat of war looms

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ahead. Thus, at the end of the play the war is suddenly waged. Women ironically enjoy the sound of bomb explosions reverberating through the countryside while the businessman, Mangan and the burglar, William Dunn, get blown in the pit where Shotover keeps his dynamite while *Heartbreak House* goes up in flames.

Applying Attardo's model of the Humorous Texts Theory (2001), the stylistic analysis of *HH* commences with picking up and cataloguing all the humorous jab/punch lines along the linear structure of the play. The humorous lines are analysed and interpreted in terms of plot, themes and characters with regard to the social and psychological functions of humour and jokes.

The GTVH analysis of the play reveals that the total number of the humorous lines is (479). However, the distribution is fairly imbalanced and random. Shaw begins with plenty of humour that tends to decrease towards the end. In contrast to the strong start of the play where humour in Act I forms about (37.995 %) and about (41.753 %) in Act II, Act III is the least humorous contributing about (20.250 %). In consequence, Acts I and II constitute about three quarters of the text as shown in Table (1). Indeed, Shaw oscillates between more and less humour so that he could create the sober mood of the war at the end. He expends a wealth of effort on making the humorous effect in the play work hand in hand with the gloomy effect. Namely, all the effects of the text are geared towards the achievement of the humorousness along with seriousness. Then, the humorous intent of a text would have an impact on the nature of that text.

Table (1): The Distribution of Humorous Lines in *HH*

No	Category	No	%
1	Total Page number	133	—
2	Act I	182	37.995
3	Act II	200	41.753
4	Act III	97	20.250
5	Jab lines	449	93.736
6	Punch lines	30	6.263
7	Total	479	—

In regard to the characters that are targeted most by humour in Shaw's *HH*, Table (2) displays that Boss Mangan and Ellie Dunn get the lion's share of the humorous lines as targets in contrast with other characters. There are (74) instances of humour targeting Mangan, and (62) targeting Ellie. It should be noted that the relatively high number (74) out of (479) the total number of the humorous lines in the play is quite significant, as it gives a clear indication that a rather large part about (15.448 %) of the humour in the text is comical at Boss Mangan's expense. The next most frequently targeted character is Ellie Dunn, who receives

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about (12.943 %) of the humour. Hence, as a stereotypical figure of capitalism, Mangan becomes the object of ridicule by the *Heartbreak House's* residents.

Table (2): Humorous Lines Targeting Characters in *HH*

No	Characters	Humorous Lines	%
1	Boss Mangan	74	15.448
2	Ellie Dunn	62	12.943
3	Hector Hushabye	34	7.098
4	Mazzini Dunn	33	6.889
5	Randall Utterword	32	6.680
6	Hesione Hushabye	28	5.845
7	Ariadne Utterword	24	5.010
8	Hastings Utterword	8	1.670
9	Captain Shotover	13	2.713
10	The Burglar	12	2.505
11	Guinness	6	1.252
12	Total	479	—

As for the other characters, it is found that they contribute to humour as far as the development of the plot is concerned. That is to say, they are targets of humour whenever the events in the play dictate. Hence, the other most frequent targets are Hector Hushabye, Mazzini Dunn, Randall Utterword and Hesione Hushabye. Hector, a major character in the play, is stereotyped as the parasitic and the dashing hero of *HH* of whom most characters make joke. In addition, he is Ellie Dunn's prince charming. Mazzini Dunn is the typical nineteenth century liberal and Ellie's father. Randall is pigeonholed as an aristocrat presenter. Hesione Hushabye is depicted as the one who allures Ellie to the *Heartbreak House*. Above all, the starting point of the central strand of Ellie Dunn is set in motion in part at her instigation.

Alternatively, Table (3) catalogues the characters that engender most of the humour in the play. Notably, Hesione and Shotover have the lion's share of humorous instances contrasted with the other characters. By their weird manners, harsh satire, trace of irony and deadpan humour, Hesione and Shotover mercilessly ridicule other characters and poke fun at them. Hector comes next; he is Hesione's husband and the daydreaming liar who attracts women and finally laughs at them in a mildly humorous vein. Ellie and Ariadne imbue the play with humour as they control men's hearts and then break them. Mangan and the burglar, "Land-thieves and water-thieves" (*HH*:100), have also tried their hands at making *Heartbreak House* inhabitants look foolish and absurd. Other minor

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characters like Mazzini, Randall and Guinness contribute the least to the humorous atmosphere of the play. The family of *Heartbreak House* together with Ellie and Mangan, the two guests whom the main plot of the play centers around, are the most prominent characters in the play. Therefore, most of the humour is evoked by them.

Table (3): Jokers in *HH*

No	Characters	Humorous lines	%
1	Hesione	124	25.887
2	Shotover	92	19.206
3	Hector	85	17.745
4	Ellie	46	9.603
5	Ariadne	36	7.515
6	Mangan	32	6.680
7	The Burglar	20	4.175
8	Mazzini	13	2.713
9	Randall	11	2.296
10	Guinness	10	2.87
11	the playwright	3	0.626
12	Total	479	—

The correlations among the humorous lines in *HH* yield three main female characters in the play, notably, Ellie Dunn, Ariadne Utterword and Hesione Hushabye who provide *HH* with its structural backbone. The stereotyping of women as negative images is fleshed out by the humorous instances in the text. In fact, Shaw uses verbal humour to satirize and undermine what he deems as female's corruption in a cultured, leisured Europe before the World War I, where women lived without scruples and "look like variety theatre stars, and the types of beauty imagined by the previous generation of painters" (Shaw, 2003:3-4). Women characters are depicted in relation to the humorous lines and in regard to the social and psychological functions of humour:

Ellie Dunn

Ellie Dunn, the heroine of the play, is Mazzini Dunn's daughter. She is depicted as a pretty lady, **slender, fair, and intelligent looking, nicely but not expensively dressed, evidently not a smart idler** (*HH*:39). She is engaged to Boss Mangan and intends to marry him because he will provide her a decently secure financial independence. Ellie is a young singer preoccupied with romantic delusions. She secretly loves a handsome man called "Marcus Darnley" who turns out to be Hector, the husband of her friend, Hesione Hushabye. In the eyes of Ellie, Marcus/Hector, is her prince-charming and the young romantic idealist,

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though he is in reality a mere deceitful and shallow fellow of broad appeal. Upon discovering her lover's true identity, all the romantic illusions, Ellie has absurdly entertained about love and heroism, are overturned and her romantic ideals are replaced by realistic concerns.

Thrust into the world of *Heartbreak House*, Ellie Dunn falls asleep in the lobby of Captain Shotover's ship-like estate until she is awoken abruptly by Nurse Guinness, a servant in the house. This scene of the *HH* reinforces the impression that Ellie Dunn is a daydreaming girl and also symbolizes the state of humans when they first come into this disinterested world, **abandoned, tired and starving. No room ready. No hot water. No welcoming hostess. Our visitor is to sleep in the toolshed, and to wash in the duckpond (HH:40).** Ellie's luggage scattered across the front steps of *Heartbreak House* is a cryptic hint at the anarchy that the British society lives in: **A young and attractive lady is invited here. Her luggage is left on the steps for hours (HH:40).** Above all, this scene signifies the sub-title of the play "fantasia", that is perceived as a dream or a fake world. Thus, the play incorporates a fusion between dream and reality where each character attempts to escape from the real world into a make-believe world of his/her own creation, full of denial.

Shaw conveys all the false sentiments of shallow romanticism through the humorous jab lines delivered ironically by Mrs. Hushabye. From his viewpoint, romance is only a pose fiction that binds itself to a distorted reality and gives scope to imagination and idealization (Coles,1980:30-31). Noticing the volume of the Temple Shakespeare on the drawing-table, Hesione infers that Ellie has an affair with another man. But, Ellie declares that she reads Shakespeare because she likes *Othello*. After a rather long discussion, set between Ellie and Hesione about the love story between Othello and Desdemona, Ellie tells her hostess Hesione, about her romantic involvement with a dashing stranger whom she meets by accident at the National Gallery. Ellie is besotted with this stranger so much that she seriously believes his fabricated stories of adventure and chivalry where supernatural events and fairy tales are spun. The silly fancy of Ellie, in effect, brings out dense streams of comic talk and much humour is evoked when Ellie is thrown into ridiculous confusion:

MRS HUSHABYE. This is yours, isn't it? Why else should you be reading *Othello*?

ELLIE. My father taught me to love Shakespeare.

MRS HUSHAYE [*flinging the book down on the table*]. **Really! your father does seem to be about the limit.**

ELLIE. [. . .] don't you think it must have been a wonderful experience for Desdemona, brought up so quietly at home, to meet a

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man who had been out in the world doing all sorts of brave things and having terrible adventures.

HUSHABYE. That's your idea of romance, is it?

ELLIE. Not romance, exactly. It might really happen.

Ellie's eyes show that she is not arguing, but in a daydream

MRS HUSHABYE. Ah! Now we're coming to it. Tell me all about him. I knew there must be somebody, or you'd never have been so miserable about Mangan.

ELLIE [. . .] I don't know him.

MRS HUSHABYE. But you want to know him ever so much more intimately, eh?

ELLIE. No, no: I know him quite—almost intimately.

MRS HUSHABYE. *You don't know him; and you know him almost intimately. How lucid! (HH:52-53).*

MRS HUSHABYE. [. . .] May I ask his name?

ELLIE [*slowly and musically*]. Marcus Darnley.

MRS HUSHABYE [*echoing the music*]. *Marcus Darnley! What a splendid name!*

MRS HUSHABYE. Hm! Is he one of the Aberdeen Darnleys?

ELLIE. Nobody knows. *Just fancy! He was found in an antique chest—*

MRS HUSHABYE. A what?

ELLIE. *An antique chest, one summer morning in a rose garden, after a night of the most terrible thunderstorm.*

MRS HUSHABYE. *What on earth was he doing in the chest? Did he get into it because he was afraid of the lightning?*

ELLIE. *Oh, no, no: he was a baby. The name Marcus Darnley was embroidered on his baby clothes. And five hundred pounds in gold.*

ELLIE. The garden of the Viscount—

MRS HUSHABYE. —de Rougemont?

ELLIE [*innocently*]. No: de Larochejaquelin. A French family. A vicomte. His life has been one long romance. A tiger—

MRS HUSHABYE. *Slain by his own hand?*

ELLIE. Oh, no: nothing vulgar like that. *He saved the life of the tiger from a hunting party: one of King Edward's hunting parties in India (HH:54-5).*

As a significant source of humour, coincidence is employed, giving the situation created by discovering Hector's identity a sense of movement. While Ellie turns pale with shock and was about to faint as she learns that Marcus

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Darnley is her friend's Hesione's husband, Hector seems indifferent and responds with a vein of acrid irony :

ELLIE [*seeing him and rising in glad surprise*]. Oh! Hesione: this is Mr Marcus Darnley.

MRS HUSHABYE [*rising*]. **What a lark! He is my husband.**

ELLIE. But now—[*she stops suddenly: then turns pale and sways*].

MRS HUSHABYE. [*catching her and sitting down with her on the sofa*]. Steady, my pettikins.

THE MAN. My real name, Miss Dunn, is Hector Hushabye. **I leave you to judge whether that is a name any sensitive man would care to confess to (HH:56).**

ELLIE. [*staring at her thoughtfully*]. There's something odd about this house, Hesione, and even about you. I don't know why I'm talking to you so calmly. I have a horrible fear that my heart is broken, but that heartbreak is not like what I thought it must be.

MRS HUSHABYE [*fondling her*]. **It's only life educating you, pettikins (HH:58).**

Thus, what comes of the romantic love affair between Hector and Ellie is nothing but heartbreak. The obvious comic irony is that, whereas Mrs Hushabye encourages her to cry, Ellie comments that her feeling is different from what she anticipated, and it seems that heartbreak makes her heartless or hard-hearted. In reality, Ellie's character shows the disillusionment of an idealist and this is what essentially has formed her romantic notions of heartbreak. Deep down, Ellie realizes that she will find her proper mate only when she lays aside her delusive reverie and this is the beginning of her journey into maturity and reality. In fact, Shaw attempts to expose romance as a mere sham, a big lie and sentimental illusion. He believes that romance is "the root of modern pessimism and the bane of modern self-respect" (Coles, 1980:31). The playwright quickly eclipses the pseudo-romance and self-deception of Hector via a scene that is humorously set.

Ellie progresses through heartbreak from innocent idealism to disenchantment about her romance with Marcus Darnley/Hector Hushabye. Analyzing the main situation of **HH** 'Ellie's marriage to Mangan' reveals that it incorporates three interlocking situations that are developed structurally. Each one of these situations comprises the Ibsenite-Shavian pattern of exposition—situation—discussion and resolution (Dukore,1973:101). First, the coincidence stems from Ellie's discovery that Marcus Darnley is Hesione's husband as displayed in these lines :

MRS HUSHABYE [*laying Ellie down at the end of the sofa*]. Now, pettikins, he is gone. There's nobody but me. You can let yourself go. Don't try to control yourself. Have a good cry.

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ELLIE [*raising her head*]. Damn!

MRS HUSHABYE. *Splendid! Oh, what a relief! I thought you were going to be broken-hearted. Never mind me. Damn him again.*

ELLIE. I am not damning him. I am damning myself for being such a fool. [*Rising*]. How could I let myself be taken in so?

ELLIE. [. . .] I am quite cured (*HH:57-58*).

Second, Hesione's determination to break Ellie's relation with Mangan is openly announced to Ariadne in that **She is going to marry a perfect hog of a millionaire for the sake of her father, who is as poor as a church mouse; and you must help me to stop her** (*HH:46*). The discussion progresses later as Hesione strives to shake Ellie's determination by casting doubt on her motives:

MRS HUSHABY [*rising and marching about*]. *You may have drifted into it; but you will bounce out of it, my pettikins*, if I am to have anything to do with it.

ELLIE [*hopelessly*]. No: it's no use. I am bound in honor and gratitude. I will go through with it (*HH:52*).

The third situation, which is the most important one, concerns Shotover's attempts to persuade Mangan first and then Ellie to break off the engagement. Later on, this endeavour is crowned with success as Mangan announces his intention to Ellie to call the imminent marriage off. On her part, Ellie renounces Mangan and announces her wedding to Shotover.

After having her heart broken by Hector, Ellie is no longer the romantic girl. Ellie's disappointment with Marcus/Hector turns her into an *impudent little fiend* (*HH:89*). She is resolved to confront life with a rod of iron particularly after discovering that the rules and manners of society in the *Heartbreak House* are disorderly. So then, Ellie is stripped off her romantic illusions and comes to realize the inadequacy of emotional cynicism considering romance as a mere foolish sentiment. Now, Ellie is struggling to **make the best of [her] ruined house** (*HH:88*). That is, she consoles herself by marrying Mangan for money being unable to marry Hector for love.

Ariadne Utterword

Ariadne Utterword is described as a **blonde, very handsome, very well dressed, and so precipitate in speech and action that the first impression (erroneous) is one of comic silliness** (*HH:42*). Lady Utterword is the younger daughter of Captain Shotover. She broke her father's heart long time ago when she announced that she would marry anyone merely to escape from home. She married Sir Hastings Utterword at nineteen and returned home twenty-three years later on account of her poor health, but she finds that her family does not recognize her. She is a **rigidly conventional woman** who loathes and rejects the

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Bohemian lifestyle as well as the odd manners of her father as she herself declares in her dialogue with Hector: **I am a rigidly conventional woman. You may think because I'm a Shotover that I'm a Bohemian, because we are so horribly Bohemian. But I'm not. I hate and loathe Bohemianism (HH:67).** As a haughty and imperialistic woman, Lady Utterword offers a gloomy picture of a convention-bound Puritan snob.

Ariadne is evil incarnate and a self-confident seductress. She is named after a mythological figure. "Ariadne was the daughter of Minos and the wife of Dionysus who helped Theseus find his way out of the labyrinth by means of a thread." Utter in 'Utterword' means death (Langworthy, 2012:7). Randall, with his unrequited love for his sister-in-law, is one of Ariadne's victims. He is utterly infatuated with her though she demeans and makes a fool of him. Randall has always carried a torch for Lady Utterword; therefore, he follows her to the *Heartbreak House*, but he instantly becomes jealous of the handsome Hector. In spite of his attempts to behave properly before others, Randall always makes an exhibition of himself. He is humiliated by Ariadne who treats him as a child and teases him like a cat trapping a mouse. Akin to Mangan who is put down, governed, rendered a helpless creature by Ellie, Randall is manipulated and subdued by Ariadne who turns him into a feeble man. In both situations, women have more power than men.

As a child, Ariadne admired the figure-head of her father's ship, "the Dauntless" and thought that it was "the most beautiful thing on earth" (HH:41). So, she married the *numskull of a husband*, Hastings Utterword, who exemplifies great political authority as a governor of all the crown colonies in succession, since he ironically resembles the Dauntless. **He had the same expression: wooden yet enterprising (HH:41).** Shotover feels unhappy for Ariadne's home coming and asks the nursemaid Guinness to inform her that he has totally forgotten about her quipping that: **The natural term of the affection of the human animal for its offspring is six years. My daughter Ariadne was born when I was forty-six. I am now eighty-eight ((HH:41).**

Nobody in the *Heartbreak House* welcomes Ariadne excluding Nurse Guinness who ridiculously informs Ellie about her arrival at the estate: **My gracious! It's Miss Addy, Lady Utterword, Mrs Hushabye's sister: the one I told the captain about (HH:42).** Disenchanted, Ariadne swells with sadness because neither her father nor her sister cares for her and no preparation has been made to receive her. Rather, she has been treated badly by her family who neglects and insults her more than once. She is laughed at and targeted in several jab lines delivered mostly by Hesione and Shotover who deliberately pretends that he does not recognize her:

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THE CAPTAIN. *What! another lady! I must fetch another cup [he makes for the pantry].*

LADY UTTERWORD [*rising from the sofa, suffused with emotion*].

Papa! Don't you know me? I'm your daughter.

THE CAPTAIN. *Nonsense! my daughter's upstairs asleep.*

LADY UTTERWORD [*hysterically*]. Papa, you can't have forgotten me. I'm little Paddy Patkins. Won't you kiss me? [*She goes to him and throws her arms round his neck*].

THE CAPTAIN [*disengaging himself*]. *You should grow out of kissing strange men: they may be striving to attain the seventh degree of concentration.*

LADY UTTERWORD. But I'm your daughter. You haven't seen me for years.

THE CAPTAIN. [. . .] *I have come to think my absent daughter Ariadne a perfect fiend; so do not try to ingratiate yourself here by impersonating her (HH:43-44).*

Likewise, Hesione does not recognize Ariadne, but greets her sister unfeelingly and never shows sympathy for her. By contrast, Hesione welcomes Ellie, the visitor, with open arms which reflects the contradictions which the *Heartbreak House* lives in :

LADY UTTERWORD. Hesione, is it possible that you don't know me?

MRS HUSHABYE [*conventionally*]. Of course I remember your face quite well. *Where have we met?*

LADY UTTERWORD. [. . .] *you unfeeling wretch!* (HH:46).

LADY UTTERWORD [*rising suddenly and explosively*]. *Hesione, are you going to kiss me or are you not?*

MRS HUSHABYE. *To-morrow morning, dear, before you make up. I hate the smell of powder* (HH:47).

Ariadne, has rebelled against her upbringing in the Shotover household. From her childhood, Ariadne yearned to be a respectable lady and have a normal life. She has left *Heartbreak House* because of the chaos it lived in where everything seemed to be fantastic and unusual: **the luggage lying on the steps, the servants spoilt and impossible, nobody at home to receive anybody, no regular meals, nobody ever hungry because they are always gnawing bread and butter or munching apples** (HH:43). She comes back after a long time to find the same state of disorder and confusion infecting not only the manners but also ideas, talk and feeling. Returning home after an absence of twenty-three years, Ariadne wants at least a demonstration of affection or love on the part of her sister and

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father for she expects them to behave properly and decently, but what she finds is boredom, emotional shallowness and abnormality.

However, Ariadne is not innocence incarnate. Shaw creates a manipulative and cunning woman who manages to toy with men reducing them to merely powerless puppets through her feminine wiles making them fall into her trap. She is involved in love affairs with other men like Randall and Hector. Ariadne is sarcastically described by Hector, who is infatuated with her, as *an extremely enterprising old girl. She has the diabolical family fascination. I began making love to her automatically (HH:68)*. In her conversation with Hector, Ariadne acknowledges that she is a whimsical lady: *I am quite a good player, myself, at that game. Is it quite understood that we are only playing? (HH:68)*. Also, her sister, Hesione alludes to this fact and comically warns her husband lest he falls into her snare: *Take care, dear child. I don't believe any man can kiss Addy without falling in love with her (HH:68)*. These humorous jab lines contribute to presenting a clear-cut image of Ariadne's flawed character and cast light on other aspects of her life :

MRS. HUSHABYE. Hector, this is Addy.

HECTOR. [*looking at her with a piercing glance of deep but respectful admiration, his moustache bristling*]. [. . .] I am extremely glad to welcome you at last under our roof [*he offers his hand with grave courtesy*].

MRS HUSHABYE. *She wants to be kissed, Hector.*

LADY UTTERWORD. Hesione! [*But she still smiles*].

MRS HUSHABYE. *Call her Addy; and kiss her like a good brother-in-law; and have done with it (HH:64)*.

Just like Ellie, Ariadne is entangled in secret love affairs, nevertheless, there is a difference between the two women. Ellie seems to be very clever and knows how to benefit from social activities like concerts and art galleries where she meets and socializes with men, for instance, the way she began her romance with Mangan and then Marcus/Hector later on :

MRS. HUSHABYE. *Quite a romance. And when did the Boss develop the tender passion?*

ELLIE. Oh, that was years after, quite lately. He took the chair one night at a sort of people's concert. I was singing there. [. . .] He was so pleased with my singing that he asked might he walk home with me. I never saw anyone so taken aback as he was when I took him home and introduced him to my father, his own manager (*HH:51*).

ELLIE. I mean that he [Marcus] does not call on us. I—I got into conversation with him by chance at a concert.

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MRS HUSHABYE. *You seem to have rather a gay time at your concerts, Ellie (HH:54).*

By contrast, Ariadne exploits social conventions to maintain her liaison with men who fall for her charm. Yet, both women succeed in turning men into impotent characters. In each case, the two women start a relation with one man, but leave him to get hold of another. For example, Ellie subjugates first Mangan, and then Hector but leaves them both to marry Shotover in the end. Likewise, Ariadne starts an affair with Randall and ends up with Hector instead.

Hesione Hushabye

Hesione is the eldest daughter of captain Shotover and *the demon brought forth by her father (HH:71)*. The dramatist portrays her as a good-looking woman who has **magnificent black hair**, but humorously *eyes like the fishpools of Heshbon, and a nobly modelled neck, short at the back and low between her shoulders in front (HH:46)*. She is a mysterious lady as Ellie tells her: **You are such a sphinx: I never know what you mean (HH:53)**. Moreover, Mrs Hushabye is a vulgar woman because she has picked up **so much slang from the children that [she is] hardly presentable (HH:53)**

Unlike her puritanical snobbish sister, Hesione is the very image of the Bohemian and the recklessly flirtatious sensualist. **She is uncorseted and dressed anyhow in a rich robe of black pile that shows off her white skin and statuesque contour (HH:46)**. Hesione is a portrait of an unrepentant sentimentalist, unashamed of her beliefs and actions. Taking her cue from her father who says hello to any visitor to his house and proceeds to prepare a room for him while he neglects and ill-treats his own daughter, Hesione invites visitors and greets them warmly while she receives her sister, Ariadne, badly. She is the woman who really runs and presides over the *Heartbreak House* together with Captain Shotover.

THE CAPTAIN. [. . .] I madam, have two daughters. One of them is Hesione Hushabye, who invited you here. *I keep this house: she upsets it [. . .] She invites visitors and leaves me to entertain them (HH:41)*.

Hesione, the captain's forthright daughter, is a vigorous woman. She is strongly determined to prevent Ellie from giving her heart and soul to the lionized but rich businessman Boss Mangan. Therefore, she has invited Ellie for a weekend in the country mansion to thwart this matrimony. Hesione skillfully persuades Ellie to reveal her secret love. More than this, she shares with her the joys of that sentimental love, when abruptly Hector, her husband, enters the room and is identified as the lover Ellie is talking about. Heartbroken and disillusioned, Ellie vows that she will go on with her marriage to Mangan and concludes: **if I**

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can't have love, that's no reason why I should have poverty. Thus, Hesione's plan does not proceed smoothly as she anticipated. When Hesione learns that Ellie's beloved is Hector, she reacts calmly and does not show any sign of jealousy but seems to be used to her husband's romantic adventures. Hesione proudly praises Hector :

ELLIE. [. . .] How could I let myself be taken in so?

MRS HUSHABYE [*cheerfully*]. Why not, pettikins? Very few young women can resist Hector. I couldn't when I was your age. He is really rather splendid, you know.

ELLIE [*turning on her*]. *Splendid! Yes, splendid looking, of course. But how can you love a liar? (HH:57).*

As Ariadne and other women in *HH* who dominate men by sheer force of personalities and finally ruin them, Hesione is a romantic siren who fascinates men, outrageously flirts with them, then rejects and leaves them heartbroken. She is involved in romances first with her husband, Hector, Mazzini and then with Mangan in an attempt to lure him away from Ellie. Indeed, Hesione's love affair with Hector is artificial rather than genuine. Her characteristic witty bluntness is only a veneer to hide the weariness beneath fake romanticizing. This is made clear in her dialogue with Hector in the course of which they poke fun at each other using irony :

MRS HUSHABYE. [. . .] She [Ariadne] has never been in love in her life, though she has always been trying to fall in head over ears. She is worse than you, because *you had one real go at least, with me.*

HECTOR. *That was a confounded madness.*

MRS HUSHABYE. [*laughing and caressing his arm*]. *We were frightfully in love with one another, Hector. It was such an enchanting dream* that I have never been able to grudge it to you or anyone else since.

HECTOR. *I can't believe that such an amazing experience is common. It has left its mark on me. I believe that is why I have never been able to repeat it.*

MRS HUSHABYE. *I have invited all sorts of pretty women to the house on the chance of giving you another turn. But it has never come off.*

HECTOR. You fascinated me; but *I loved you; so it was heaven.* This sister of yours fascinates me; but *I hate her; so it is hell. I shall kill her if she persists.*

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MRS. HUSHABYE. *Nothing will kill Addy; she is as strong as a horse (HH: 69).*

In these humorous lines, Shaw utilizes antithesis (heaven/hell) script opposition in order to evoke humour and at the same time conveys layers of hidden meanings. Hector in his flirting with his wife, depicts his love for her as heaven to allude obliquely to moral and virtuous life. On the other hand, he describes his love for Ariadne, his sister-in-law, as hell to signify the immoral and futile infatuation that may tempt him towards his self-destruction.

Actually, Hesione is the sort of woman for whom there is more than one man and one chance. Exceeding the limits, she courts Boss Mangan, casts her romantic spell upon him and toys with him in a cat and mouse game. However, like the other characters in the play, Hesione is nothing but a fun-loving person who finds her solace in inviting men and fascinating them. She herself confesses that to Ellie: **when I am neither coaxing and kissing nor laughing, I am just wondering how much longer I can stand living in this cruel, damnable world (HH:88).** So, love is her best pastime.

ELLIE. A siren. So you are. You were born to lead men by the nose: if you weren't, Marcus would have waited for me, perhaps.

MRS HUSHABYE. [*suddenly melting and half laughing*]. *Oh, my poor Ellie, my pettikins, my unhappy darling! I am so sorry about Hector. But what can I do? It's not my fault: I'd give him to you if I could (HH: 87).*

ELLIE. I suppose you think you're being sympathetic. *You are just foolish and stupid and selfish* I want all the strength I can get to lean on: something iron, something stony, I don't care how cruel it is.

MRS HUSHABYE. *You want to rest your wounded bosom against a grindstone. Well [folding her arms] here is the grindstone (HH:88).*

MRS HUSHABYE. Well, *of all the impudent little fiends I ever met!* Hector says there is a certain point at which the only answer you can give to a man who breaks all the rules is to knock him down. *What would you say if I were to box your ears?*

ELLIE [*calmly*]. *I should pull your hair.*

MRS HUSHABYE [*mischievously*]. *That wouldn't hurt me. Perhaps it comes off at night.*

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ELLIE [*so taken aback that she drops off the table and runs to her*]. *Oh, you don't mean to say, Hesione, that your beautiful black hair is false?*
MRS HUSHABYE [*patting it*]. *Don't tell Hector. He believes in it*
(*HH*:89-90).

Conclusion

The investigation of the humour in *HH* in accordance with the GTVH and Humorous texts Theory proves that characters develop, evolve and their world views are constructed and furnished through the humorous purport of the text. The characters are portrayed, shaped, and revealed via humorous lines, specifically humorous jab/punch lines. Further, characters are constructed and their mentalities are depicted through humour that targets them, exposing, for instance their foolishness and shallowness; or else, they contribute to humour that sketches their attitudes, emotions and beliefs

The distribution of the humour in the text is found to be random. The inconsistent distribution of humour across the texts can be attributed to the plot structure and characters' presence. The entanglement of events and the presence of more comic characters would render segments of the text more humorous than others. In addition, the plot and events involved are responsible for the abundance of humour in certain parts and its scantiness in others.

Upon analysis, it is clear that Shaw conveys his anti-feminism through humour in the play using metaphor as a stylistic device describing women as *the devil's granddaughters* (*HH*:121) to trigger the women/demons script opposition which is fully compatible with the text. Shaw alludes to the fact that women represented by *the Shotover sisters have two strange powers over men. They can make them love; and they can make them cry* (*HH*:112). He points fingers at women as the vehicle of men's ruin and final downfall alluding perhaps at man's first sin. Therefore, he fervently prays for their death: **Hector lifts his fists in invocation to heaven and cries Poor wretch! Oh women! women! women! Fall. Fall and crush** (*HH*:114).

Notably, women in *HH* gain a lion share of the humorous lines as targets as well as jokers. For instance, Ellie, the protagonist of the play, is the one who is targeted most by humour next to Mangan as Shaw makes fun of her romantic delusions and disparages her power over men. Ellie's character reveals Shaw's anti-feminist views concerning women's exploitation of men. He depicts women

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in a negative image and cryptically suggests that for all her innocence and purity, Ellie is no less an opportunist than Mangan (Verma & Sharma,2010:39).

In terms of jokers, Hesione comes on top as an attractive siren who overpowers men and hen-pecks her husband, Hector. Overall, humour is the vehicle exploited to couch in social criticism and commentary where the playwright satirizes the European civilization for its moral bankruptcy and the women of the *HH* who turn men into helpless puppets and keep them hostages to their whims.

Indeed, love and marriage occupy a large portion of the play. The romantic combinations and the shifting relationships among characters enrich the text with long discussions. With all the amusement in Shotover's house, there is also heartbreak suffered by those self-centered and materialistic seekers of power. For example, Shotover's heart is broken by his daughter, Ariadne who once declared that she would marry anyone to get away from her father's home. Ellie opts to marry Boss Mangan despite the fact that she is in love with Hector who turns out to be her hostess's husband and so he breaks her heart. Then, she decides to throw over the industrial Mangan and marries the sea captain Shotover. Mangan intends to marry Ellie but he falls in love with Hesione who tricks him and breaks his heart. Finally, Randall gets involved in love affair with Ariadne. Later on, she breaks his heart and moves towards Hector.

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- **Appendix: Humorous instances from Heartbreak House**

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- 1-THE CAPTAIN. Our visitor is to sleep in the toolshed, and to wash in the duckpond (P:40).
- 2-THE CAPTAIN. The natural term of the affection of the human animal for its offspring is six years. My daughter Ariadne was born when I was forty-six. I am now eighty-eight (P:41).
- 3-THE CAPTAIN. Do not touch that fly-blown cake: nobody eats it here except the dogs (P:42).
- 4-NURSE GUINNESS. They say he sold himself to the devil in Zanzibar before he was a captain;
- and the older he grows the more I believe them (P:42).
- 5-LADY UTTERWORD [*hysterically*]. Papa, you can't have forgotten me. I am Ariadne. I'm little Paddy Patkins. Won't you kiss me?
- -THE CAPTAIN. [. . .] You should grow out of kissing strange men: they may be striving to attain the seventh degree of concentration (P:44).
- 6-THE PLAYWRIGHT. *She*[Mrs Hushabye] has *eyes like the fishpools of Heshbon* (P:46).
- 7-LADY UTTERWORD [*rising suddenly and explosively*]. Hesione, are you going to kiss me or are you not?
- -MRS HUSHABYE. To-morrow morning, dear, before you make up. I hate the smell of powder (P:47).
- 8-MRS HUSHABYE. [Shotover] He is as mad as a hatter (P:48).
- 9-MRS HUSHABYE. Who! Him. He. It [*pointing after Mazzini*]. "Graver, solider tastes," indeed! (P:48).
- 10-MRS HUSHABYE. Fancy [Ellie]your grandparents, with their eyes in fine frenzy rolling! (P:50).
- 11-ELLIE. Just fancy! He[Marcus] was found in an antique chest—
- -MRS HUSHABYE. What on earth was he doing in the chest? Did he get into it because he was afraid of the lightning? (P:54-55).
- 12-ELLIE. His life has been one long romance. A tiger—
- MRS HUSHABYE. Slain by his own hand? (P:55).
- 13-ELLIE. He is a Socialist and despises rank, and has been in three revolutions fighting on the barricades (P:55).
- 14-MRS HUSHABYE [*caressing her*]. Pettikins, my pettikins, how I envy you! and how I pity you! (P:56).
- 15-MRS HUSHABYE. He[Hector] has a whole drawerful of Albert Medals for saving people's lives (P:57).
- 16-MANGAN [*irritated*]. See here, Captain Shotover. I don't quite understand my position here. I came here on your daughter's invitation. Am I in her house or in yours?
- -CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. You are beneath the dome of heaven, in the house of God (P:60).
- 17-CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Marry a West Indian negress: they make excellent wives. I was married to one myself for two years (P:61).

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- 18-THE GENTLEMAN. Excuse my intruding in this fashion, but there is no knocker on the door and the bell does not seem to ring.
- -CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. Why should there be a knocker? Why should the bell ring? The door is open (P:61).
- 19-CAPTAIN SHOTOVER. I should not have recognized you[Randall]: your head is no longer like a walnut. You have been boiled in bread and milk for years and years, like other married men (P:62).
- 20-HECTOR. We have met, dear. Don't introduce us any more.
- -MRS HUSHABYE. Sorry. I hate it: it's like making people show their tickets (P:65).