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The article digs into the different characteristics of laughter depicted in world literature's epic poems. Although laughter is often seen as a simple emotion, here in epic narratives, we see that it can have many representations and transformations hence uncovering its deeper, psychological, mental, and philosophical meaning.

The article begins by examining laughter as a recurring motif in epic narratives, pointing out its part in the lives of both ordinary and supernatural characters. Laughter becomes not only a literary and linguistic device but also a tool to describe the characters' attitudes towards each other and society in general. It becomes a means of coping with adversity thus giving more intensity and engagement to the topics of the epics.

Different types of laughter are also described and analysed in the article. Laughter is categorised into various forms: genuine laughter, kind laughter, mockery laughter, evil laughter, or even laughter in the face of tragedy. All these forms reveal the characteristic traits of the character who laughs in this or that situation. It can show both bravery and cowardness, kindness and evil, tolerance and apprehension.

The article also discusses the cultural and historical significance of laughter within epic narratives. It shows how the time and place impact the laughter, and how it can have variations in different societies and, particularly, epic traditions. Thus, one of the recurring themes throughout the analysis is the role of humour and laughter in cultural norms and values.

In conclusion, the article highlights the importance of laughter in epic poetry, showing that it is a frivolous or inconsequential element and a rich and deep aspect of these timeless works – national epics and narratives. The characteristics of laughter in the epics and national narratives offer valuable insights into the human experience, cultural dynamics, and the development of the epic heroes – both ordinary and supernatural characters, thus revealing their more profound characteristic traits.

Keywords: *Epic, laughter, mockery, ridicule, irony, stupidity, naivety, evil, collective unconsciousness, Sasna Tsrer.*

Abstract

Laughter, a complex and multifaceted human expression, holds a distinct place within the realm of literature, particularly in epic narratives. This abstract delves into the characteristics of laughter as depicted in various epic works across different cultures and epochs. By analysing laughter's role, forms, functions, and underlying socio-cultural implications, this study aims to uncover the intricate layers contributing to laughter's depth and complexity within epic literature.

Epic narratives, renowned for their grand scale and encompassing themes, often incorporate laughter as a dynamic element that transcends mere amusement. Laughter in epics can be manifested in diverse forms, ranging from jovial and innocent to cynical and scornful. Such diversity enables authors to infuse characters with distinctive traits, reflecting their personalities, social status, and roles in the narrative. Furthermore, laughter's role extends beyond a simple emotional response, serving as a literary device to enhance characterisation, develop plotlines, and navigate thematic intricacies.

The functions of laughter in epics are manifold. It can be used as a unifying force, bridging cultural gaps and promoting relatability among diverse audiences. Laughter also serves as a tool for satire and critique, allowing authors to subtly comment on social norms, power dynamics, and human follies. Moreover, the

cathartic nature of laughter is harnessed in epics to provide emotional respite amidst intense conflicts, offering readers a momentary reprieve from the narrative's tension.

Socio-cultural dimensions play a crucial role in shaping the portrayed laughter in epics. Different cultures attribute varying connotations to laughter, influencing how laughter is woven into the narrative fabric. Epics from ancient civilizations to modern societies showcase how laughter can be both a unifying and diverse force, reflecting societal attitudes toward humour, morality, and individualism. Additionally, the evolving nature of humour across epochs underscores the adaptability of laughter as a literary tool, enabling epics to remain relevant and engaging across time.

In conclusion, the characteristics of laughter in epics are far from superficial, encompassing intricate layers of meaning, function, and cultural significance. Through a comprehensive examination of laughter's forms, roles, functions, and socio-cultural dimensions, this study sheds light on the profound ways in which laughter enriches epic literature. By understanding the nuances of laughter within epics, readers and scholars alike can gain deeper insights into the human experience as portrayed through these timeless narratives.

Introduction

Laughter, a universal expression that transcends linguistic and cultural boundaries, has been an integral facet of human interaction since time immemorial. Within the vast tapestry of literature, this enigmatic human response finds a distinct and compelling resonance, particularly within the intricate narratives of epics. Epics, revered for their expansive scope, cultural significance, and exploration of the human condition, offer a unique platform for the exploration of laughter's characteristics. Far from being a mere frivolous element, laughter within epics encompasses a rich array of forms, functions, roles, and socio-cultural implications that intricately contribute to the depth and complexity of these enduring literary masterpieces.

The presence of laughter in epics is not limited to fleeting moments of amusement; it is an embodiment of the multifaceted emotions, dynamics, and values that drive epic narratives. As the characters traverse through trials and triumphs, laughter emerges as an indispensable companion, reflecting the spectrum of human experiences. Its nuanced portrayal, often evolving in response to evolving circumstances, offers a lens through which characters' and societies' psychological, emotional, and social dimensions can be examined.

Epics, by their very nature, encompass a vast array of characters and scenarios, each wielding laughter as a distinctive expression. From the heroic laughter

of champions on the battlefield to the subtle mockery exchanged among countries, the forms of laughter within epics are as diverse as the characters themselves. Such variations allow authors to infuse into their creations, revealing individual traits, social hierarchies, and thematic undercurrents that would otherwise remain concealed.

However, the significance of laughter in epics transcends its role as a mere reflection of character attributes. Laughter functions as a potent literary device, capable of catalysing pivotal plot developments, evoking emotional responses, and serving as a conduit for socio-cultural commentary. Its inclusion is not arbitrary but rather a strategic tool that authors deftly employ to accentuate themes, reveal underlying tensions and add layers of complexity to the narrative.

Moreover, laughter's role within epics extends beyond its textual presence; it connects with readers on a visceral level. Universally understood, laughter becomes a bridge that spans temporal and cultural divides, fostering a sense of connection between distant epochs and contemporary audiences. Through laughter, epics gain a timeless quality, resonating across generations and offering a glimpse into the shared aspects of the human experience.

As laughter is deeply intertwined with cultural norms and social values, its portrayal within epics is inherently shaped by the sociocultural contexts in which these narratives originate. Different cultures ascribe diverse meanings of laughter, ranging from celebratory to subversive. Consequently, the interpretation of laughter within epics becomes an intricate exploration of the interplay between individual expression and collective identity. By analysing the cultural nuances of laughter, readers gain insight not only into the characters' experiences but also into the broader societal fabric in which these narratives are woven.

In the following exploration, this study focuses on multifaceted characteristics of laughter in epics, unravelling its forms, functions, roles, and sociocultural dimensions. Through a comprehensive analysis of selected epic narratives across various cultures and epochs, this exploration seeks to illuminate the profound ways in which laughter enriches and elevates the literary landscape of epics. In doing so, it strives to foster a deeper appreciation for the intricate interplay between laughter, humanity, and the enduring narratives that encapsulate the essence of human existence.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LAUGHTER IN EPIC

The overview of this topic is connected with some difficulties. First of all, as philosophical problems, laughing and laughable are problematic. Besides the fact that

they have always been at the centre of the intellectual observation from Plato and Aristophanes to Nietzsche and Bakhtin, there are still many unsolved matters in this field. On this matter, Jean-Paul Richter only mentions that "the laughable didn't wish to fit in philosophical statements" as it accepts "various portraits."

The question of relativity in the epic is controversial. By the circumstance that the epic is based on the category of greatness, which is endlessly high, Jean-Paul, about whom we had mentioned above, finds the presence of the laughter in epic illogical as it is an endless low. "Using only one funny line in the epic can destroy the heroic epic. " This factor probably leads some critics like L. Nazarov to deny the existence of the laughable in the epic.²

The combination of the epic and the laughable can also be denied according to M. Bakhtin's opinion. According to Bakhtin, laughter generally brings near to reality, while the epic extracts reality from the epic turning it into "an absolute past", so the laughter and the epic are non-compatible in this case also.³

However, the laugh and the capricious have their special place in the epic and the culture of the storytellers, because it is always present in the course of human emotions alongside mythical semantics as a metaphor for the reincarnation of the sky, the sun, and the universe.⁴

Studies show that the laughter in the epic is present not only with the appearance of the main motives but also with secondary ones. It is meant to realize concrete goals so it is represented with various performances.

Both in "Sasna Tsrer" (Davit's childish actions in Msr, meetings with Melik and Khandut's finances etc.) and "The Song of Nibelungs" ("Sixteenth Adventure") funny events contribute to the hero's heroism thus affirming the following statement by Hegel: "the people who are happy with all their heart, may not be a fool and a vail, indeed."⁵

The comic episodes which sometimes appear in the Irish sagas, especially in the dialogues when the heroes argue ("The Tale of Mac Da Tho's Pig"), also have the same purpose – making the hero more heroic in the principle of an 'endless highness', while being humiliated even more according to the principle of an 'endless lowness'.

The laugh and the comical have different characteristics in "The Song of El Cid". In the third part of the 112th chapter the scenes and events that are connected to

¹ Jean Paul, *Prigotovitel'naya shkola etiki*, 1981, pp. 127-128.

² Nazarov L., *Istoriya zapadnoevropeyskoy literatury srednykh vekov*, 2016, p. 40

³ Bakhtin M., *Epos i roman*. Sbornik, 2000, p. 304

⁴ See more: Freidenberg O., *Poetika syuzheta i zhanra*, 1997, pp. 93-96

⁵ Hegel, *Estetika*, t. 3, 'Iskusstvo', 2971, p. 275.

Cid's brothers-in-law are depicted. They are people who lived a life in the palace and understand only the stories connected to battles. Military operations help us discover their main essence. The image here is relevant to Schopenhauer's opinion on laughter: our ideas and the present reality are not relevant to each other.¹

There are also episodes of laughter in the Icelandic "Elder Edda." In sagas of "Harbard's Song", "The Lay of Hymir", "Trym's Poem", etc. the gods are mocked.

The laughter in the epic is universal. Laughter, being connected with collective unconsciousness and orientation of the outlook, gets its full and mindful representation in the folk works. Bergson is certain, that the lonely one cannot appreciate the laughable: "Our laughter is the laughter of some group."² The adjustment of the collective essence of the laughter is crucial from the point of view of the National and psychological description and discovery.

While speaking about the carnival laughter, M. Bakhtin highlights its international and festive essence. "One doesn't just watch the carnival, it is something to live with, and everybody lives as its essence is international."³ It is comprehensive and is directed against everything and everybody including the ones who laugh. In one case, the laughter is happy, in the other case it is scourging. "The laughing aspect of the wholeness of the laughter" is being drowned by using comical laughter – the laughter becomes a private phenomenon separating itself from the mocking.⁴ So, Bakhtin considers the carnival laughter a unique archetype of the comical types which had been formed even later. The inceptions of affirmation, denial, humour, and satirical exist separately in it. They later are divided into independent types of comedism.

The heroes in "Sasna Tsrer" become different holders of the laughable. The element of laughter always keeps the epic's world animated feeding it with a power that endlessly gives life.

Any truth is a great phenomenon. According to Bakhtin, it is never serious only and always has something from the sphere of laughter within itself. Unlike the mind, the 'living body' is always in the changeable stream. That is the reason the laughter is always directed at the body pole. Bakhtin observes the body in the cosmic plan: 'The concept of the unspiritual in the laughter is not personalized or detached from the rest of the world as the holder of such laughter is not the individual, but the people generally. The fact that there are too many laughful characters is connected

¹ Schopenhauer A., *Sobranie sochineniy*, 2011, p. 63

² Bergson H., *Smekh*, 1992, p. 13

³ Bakhtin M., M., *Tvorchestvo Fausta Rable I narodnaya kul'tura srednevekov'ya i Rennessansa*, 2965, p. 10

⁴ The same location

with this collectiveness. There are several joyful and scatological (extremely immoral) characters within whom the physical life is just boiling.¹

The fundament of the epic "Sasna Tsrer" is the somatic, unspiritual laughter. It is the representation of people's outlook on the world, their attitude towards life, and phenomena. The laughable is typical for almost all heroes. More likely, it is an angle of observing life through the looking glass than a typical characteristic trait for one hero. Everybody is funny because life has an infinite source of laughter in itself. Both enemy and ally of the beloved hero can be funny, so the laughable is limitless. In this case, we may talk about the carnival trait of laughter, where affirmation denial, humour, and satirical come along. According to Bakhtin, this is the archetypal trait of laughter that gradually turns into different types of laughter. First of all, it is the irony and the humour.

THE RIDICULE AND HUMOR IN EPIC POEMS

In the ridicule, the laughable is performed under the mask of seriousness – with a mostly negative attitude toward the subject. In the humour, seriousness is performed under the mask of the laughable – with a mostly positive attitude towards the object.² It is distinguished by the difficulty of valuing life and the outlook on the world. The humour, "Imaginative Dialectica" reveals the greatness behind the unimportant, the wisdom behind the madness, and the sadness behind the laughable. And the undressing laughter of satire the subject of which are defects, is distinguished with a negative and disrobing tone.

The humour and satire are typical for many characters of "Tsrer". Humour is observed as a necessary trait for the people's beloved heroes. Kind-hearted laughter also forms a unique psychological situation in various ways with all the consequences derived from here. Determined by the essence of the teller's emotions and attitude, the laughable can be ignorant, polite, soft, rude, healthy (natural), etc.

The heroes normally are performed with their typical traits in the epic. Some of them are heroic, some are accommodating, and others are poor and arrogant.

Davit is at the core, and the attitude toward him is intimidating and attractive. There are few scenes without laughter with the portion needed. Laughter is typical for all the primary and secondary characters, and it completes the living body of the epic.

Sanasar and Baghdasar ask for temporary shelter at Erzurum's Amira.

¹ Sychev A. A., *Priroda smekha ili Filosofiya komicheskogo*, 2003, p. 55

² *Literaturniy enciklopedicheskiy slovar'*, 1987

"We are the sons of Baghdad's Khalifa"
And Amira said:
"Hey, hey, hey..."
And shook his shoulders in front of them.
We run from their dead people
And we come across their living people.¹

The wordplay is the representation of the whole situation that becomes concrete and special and discovers the essence of the laughter. Sanasar notices the absurdity of the way they act.

"Brother, we have been running from that Babig,
Shall we put his name on our hole? " ²

As a starting point, Sanasar's slight self-mockery is gradually developing, but this also reveals the essence of the developing laughter in the epic where it is all about *naivety*.

The trait of laughter in the action does not generally change, but its essence still does. Sanasar returns to Baghdad, and Emir is happy to sacrifice him to idolatry. The further development shows Emir's *stupidity* and sophistication.

The mockery might be restricted, yet its negative attitude toward the custom is obvious. That attitude can temporarily hold up the natural stream of life. After Abamelik's death, Sasoun was in mourning for seven years.

The peasants said: "Uncle Toros,
Our brave sons became old men,
And our girls became old women:
If you live and mourn for seven years
Abamelik of Msr will come back to life
And we will mourn more than seven years."³

Toros commands all the boys and girls to get married but there is a strict attitude toward the established order in the talk of the nation. It is deeply connected with the human *stupidity* which people have reached as a result of *exaggeration*. In the

¹ 'Sasna Tsrer', joghovrdakan vep. Ashkhatutyamb Sargis Harutyunyan, 1977, p. 12

² The same location

³ The same location, p. 20

case of the Emir, the mockery is direct and rude, while here it is meaningful as the stupidity is observed as a social phenomenon. It reveals the connections and relationships between the individual and the society.

Stupidity is the disclosure of controversial phenomena of one's imagination and reality. The laughable is hidden in one's indecisive behaviour and the inability to understand life in its abundance. Among these all, according to Schopenhauer, the most dangerous is pedanticism.¹ Pedanticism is when one, having some power, or a position in a certain environment, can force his conception on people. The results of this are nothing but negative for society. The order that Uncle Toros had inherited from their ancestors is so absurd that the environment articulates the uselessness of its implementation.

The *irony* in the epic that is connected with *stupidity* is spread to many characters. Msra Melik will have to give the children to Uncle Toros if they fall under his sword, that is – accept his full power. Vergo the Spooked being psychologically a slave, doesn't even guess the results of the demand and agrees immediately: "Let us go, pass under his sword and leave."²

Social illiteracy is a powerful force. In the force of tradition, in the fortress, Uncle Toros "sees his grandfather in Vergo" because the latter is an old man, and Davit "put in front of the calves"³ as the bravest and the youngest of them all. This is also connected with Vergo's stupidity. Uncle Toros is so confident about his undertakings that no one can question his decisions which are implemented in the force of the tradition of their ancestors. Disorientating and blindly following the ancestors' tradition leaves hard consequences on social life.

In the case of Davit, it is all more about *naivety* than stupidity.

When Davit was a drover, he mixed wild animals with domestic ones and brought them to the city. Scared people left their houses. The hero got offended by the people's "ingratitude. " This is also connected with *misunderstanding* and *naivety*.

"Oh, world – he said. Do good after this all
I have sweated and bled, gathered the wealth for you,
For you not to know my worth!"⁴

¹ Schopenhauer A., *Mir kak volya I predstavlenie*. Glava VIII. Po povody teorii shmeshnogo, izdatelstvo Kharvest

² Tarontsi Krpo, *Sasuntsi Davit kam Mheri dur* // Sasna Tsrer, Hay joghovrdakan vep, yntir patumner, 2008, p. 12

³ The same location

⁴ Ayraratci Murad Hovsepyan, *Davit – Mher* // Sasna Tsrer, volume B, Second Part, Yerevan, 1951, p. 255

Davit's intention of making wild animals "domestic" is also connected with *misunderstanding*. There are also rabbits among those animals, which Davit mistakes for "goats." The hero is tired of continuing to race after the animals, and the uncle who brings the food for the noon, is afraid to approach the drove where there are many wild animals. He stuck his stick in the land, tied the bread on it and left: "Come and take your bread."¹ People get into uncomfortable situations because of Davit's naivety which leads to a peal of genial laughter.

Naivety is also typical for Older Mher. A lion has blocked the roads, and the country is in a difficult situation.

He said: "What lion? What is a lion? "

The latter replied: "It's big. It is eating the people."

He said: "Is he eating the people from the distance or coming closer to do that?"²

The exaggerated naivety makes people laugh. Not finding the mare he was looking for in Lord Gorgik's stable, Mher decides not to leave just like that. This is more like *stupidity* than an adequate response to reality.

He said: 'There is not a horse I need.

Let me hit its foal,

If it is strong, I will get on it and ride away.'³

The foal could bear the hero's beat, and Mher put the horse on his shoulder and took it away. The citizens burst into laughter on such a scene. This is a visible and also visible kind of laughter that forms a genial attitude toward the character.

The habitant prefers the obvious, people are attracted by the outer presentable, while Mher has gotten deep into the phenomenon, he has decided that the horse is not worthy of him, and he has chosen a worthy and fiery horse for himself, so he knows more than the rest of the people, and Mher cannot help but smile.

A light mockery can be seen in the whole situation which is connected with the character's personality in the end. Following Uncle Toros's advice, Mher leaves for Msr to lower the taxes. He returns 'in a full victory', yet it is not so.

¹ The same location, p. 254

² Aparanci Murad, Sasna Tsrer, Volume B, First Part, p. 58

³ Manuk Torosyan, Sasna Tsrer // Sasna Tsrer, Volume B, First Part, p. 265

'Msra Melik is a very respectful man,
He gave the tax to me,
We are the owners of this land.
He said: "Go, eat, drink, and enjoy yourselves."¹

In reality, Melik got more for his achievements; his wife is going to have a child from Mher, and Mher Junior is going to be Davit's main rival. The laughable and the slight mockery are connected with Mher's credulity; Mher weakened the strength of his blood against the enemy's distribution, and his descendants will be fighting against those who are related to them, while the character considers it as a victory.

Davit had met the cultivators of the land before he got to Khandut. The discomfort starts either from *unfamiliarity* or *greediness*. What is unknown to the hero, is also dangerous. He is going to hit the buffalo coming out of the mud with a mace without thinking much.

Are you a daredevil of Sasoun?
Haven't you seen a beautiful lady?²

Davit gets into another funny situation because of greediness or *unfamiliarity*. Everything changes further: Davit pities animals, he starts cultivating the land for them, eating the worker's whole bread and goes on his path.

In Manuk Torosyan's version, Davit cultivates the land just to give the buffalos some time to rest, and then he twists the mace and chain and throws the pieces in different directions of the world.

Pro Mkhe would say:
"Last year a ring of chain came along,
It fell into the water of the lake,
I saw it"... they say it to mock.³

The teller himself adds that they tell it just to laugh, and the one he had told is a fact, as Pro Mkhen saw a ring of the chain Davit had thrown 'into the water of Bstro's well'. The teller affirms in the annotations that those people were the Khastouri. The example shows that the laughable brings the phenomena closer to the

¹ The same location, p. 163

² The same location, p. 35

³ Alashkertci Manuk Torosyan, *Sasna Tsrer* // *Sasna Tsrer*, the national novel, Sovetakan Grogh, 1977, p. 179

present, and people have seen that with their own eyes. This fact does not 'destroy' the epic, moreover, it makes everything real and catchy. The teller builds up the epic hero's character which is also close to the usual worker. Epic is a living body so it cannot be separated from the present.

Davit meets Gorgiz the doorman. He is so confident that his goal will be realised that he promises to make Gorgiz their godfather when he marries Khandut. Although the misunderstandings connected to his naivety and unawareness continue, at the next moment, he talks to him as with his godfather because he finds that the matter is solved. He was being offended by Khandut. Davit decided to destroy the city and leave.

Gorgiz started begging, saying: "I am begging you,
Let it be: it is dark. In the daytime,¹
In the day again, it will destroy and leave.
In the daytime. Please, destroy and leave."

Gorgiz's character, in this case, is stripped of its monotony by the use of laughter. He is more than David thinks of him. Gorgiz is not just a janitor, he is a man who loves his city. His request has an implication. He advises David to destroy the city with light so that complications do not arise for him, while the intention is different: before the light, a lot can change, and David can give up the idea of destroying the city. Laughter turns the epic reality into a living body, and the latter phenomenon makes the person contradictory or not one-layered.

When Khandut was informed that Davit was going to destroy the city, she rushed to prevent it.

And they came, knocked on Khan's door to be opened
Davit said: - Well, well,
The citizens here are so shameless,
They don't wait until morning,
They say - please, destroy and leave then,
Gorgiz came out and saw
He turned to Davit and said:
"Those are like grass - they don't have anything strong."
They opened the door. Khandut came to Davit.¹

¹ Tarontsi Krpo, Sasuntsi David kam Mheri Door // Sasna Tsrer, the national novel, Sovetakan grogh, 1977, p. 38

Laughter to David, which is benevolent, and kind to the heart, is nevertheless often related to an unnecessary trial. It is not so much an expression of naivety as of stupidity. He reaches the land of Jealousy. Lora Hamzi and Shapkov Khorasan are also there. Only the winner will marry Khandut.

Khandut Khanum said:

"I will marry you without a fight,

Why are you getting into a fight?"

He said: "If I marry you without a fight

I am no longer a man. Go to your house"²

There is no need to fight as Davit reached his goal. And still, he decided to fight. His name had been known on his way to Kaghzvan; he 'is not able' to take his beloved lady. The king expresses himself even more sharply. He does not consider David's behaviour logical.

"Stop being such a daredevil:

My daughter is marrying you,

I will let them know so they do not fight."

"Oh, woah – Davit said.

Shall I exchange my manliness with a piece of clothing?"³

Therefore, David's persistence is not justified, for him the test is connected with vanity, which causes laughter.

In the story "Sasuna David and Mher" by Gevorg Petrosyan,⁴ the meeting between David and Khandut is also full of laughter, which emphasizes the hero's unreasonable stubbornness. Davit is a follower of the accepted tradition, so he considers it inappropriate for Khandut to fall before his uncle and himself.⁵

"Hey boy, – the uncle said. Stop being such a daredevil!"

"No, Davit said. She is a woman. And she didn't obey my words!

I am not going to marry her, let us get back!"⁶

¹ The same location, pp. 38-39

² Arakel Shakoyan, *Sasma tsrer // Sasna Tsrer*, the national novel, Edit Print, 2008, p. 180

³ The same location, p. 184

⁴ *Sasunci David*, collected and published by Grigor and Vahagn Grigoryans, Sovetakan grogh, 1977, pp. 187-251

⁵ The same location, p. 239

⁶ The same location

Laughing at David, which is mostly good-natured humour, can emphasize not only his naivety but also his cunning.

When Melik arrived with his army in the field of Msho, and Uncle Toros went against them with thirty-nine Sassoons, having previously gotten David drunk and left him at home, Armaghan cried and cursed the hero for destroying Tsovasar. Its consequence could be the destruction of all of them. David advises his uncle's wife to collect stones and throw them into the fire.¹

"It is already afternoon, Mother!
I am opening my mouth
Now, open my mouth with your hand,
In the day, burn my intestine, so that I died."
The mother hit her hand
And Mother's hand bled on the stone.

Under the threat of burning Armaghan's hand with a stone, David learns the location of his father's horse and weapons and takes up arms. He discovers a secret he has kept for years and achieves it with ridiculous ingenuity.

The feeling of superiority over the enemy becomes a reason for irony.

Melik is so self-confident that he chooses to sleep for seven days, and during that time his army is fighting and, when he wakes up from his sleep, the victory will already be secured. But David disturbs Melik's sleep already on the fourth day. They try to wake the giant from his deep sleep with all kinds of glowing objects, and he later complains about the inconvenience:

David said from the side:
"I am thinking if there would be someone greedy.
Hey, immortal! I've brought you death...
Msramelik laughed at him and said:
The turnip eater from Sasoun has come,
To fight with Msramelik.
He said: 'I'll get up and eat it on breakfast
So that it doesn't remain for lunch.
If I eat it for lunch, it won't remain for dinner
And if I eat it for dinner, it won't remain for supper."

¹ Manuk Torosyan, *Sasna Tsrer* // *Sasna Tsrer*, the national epic by Sargis Harutyunyan, Sovetakan grogh, 1977, p. 190-191

David said: "What are you afraid of then?
I'll stay for breakfast, lunch, and dinner
And even for supper."
He got up, sat down and looked at oldened David.
He has lost a power of ten buffalos.¹

Both epic heroes are confident in their abilities. But for one of them, self-confidence is a guarantee of defeat, for the other, it is a guarantee of victory. If in the case of Melik, boasting is an occasion for ridicule, then in the case of Davit, it is irony. Confident in his strength, the hero ensures victory by word and deed.

The joke full of irony, which is hidden under the seriousness, is also characteristic of Little Mher. A joke, even a bad joke, speaks of Mher's dual character. It is about human lives, which Mher did not value. The plot does not fully cover the hero. Khandut asks Mher where his uncles are. Mher had returned alone from the hunt, and this made Khandut more suspicious.

She says: "The uncles...
The three in Kaputkogh
Is grinding his teeth,
The three in Sasoun."
"Oh, she said, my home has been destroyed
He has murdered my brothers."²

Kaputkogh and Sasun sat the uncles on the trees and threw them. The game was always taken from him. Mher punishes them.

The restrained joke has the same effect in the creation of Terry Toros's character, where the separation between his inner conviction and the spoken word is obvious, but the plot does not fully reveal the hero. He is a quick-thinking, resourceful person. Msramelik agrees to return the children if they are put to the sword as a sign of submission. Everyone passes by, they can't bring David closer with "ten efforts". He will never become subject to his enemy.

"Uncle Toros, said Msramelik, why didn't he pass?"
Uncle Toros said: "He is afraid"³

¹ Mokatsi Hovhan, David ev Mher // Sasna Tsrer, the national epic, 1977, pp. 461-462

² Shekoyan, sasna Tsrer // Sasna Tsrer, Volume B, Second Part, 1951, p. 161

³ The same location, p. 119

The subtle irony towards Msramelik is obvious. Thoros is deceiving him to keep David out of harm.

The heroes of "Sasna Tsrer", who are immersed in the universal mood of laughter, form the living body of the epic, which takes place and arises with internal contradictions, which is natural.

That world of laughter, which is formed as a result of the naivety, ignorance, and in some cases also stupidity of the people of Sassoon, acts as a carnival type of laughter, in which case the laughter is not so individual as it is of a general, popular nature. If we are talking about the naivety of David, the foresight of Toros, and the cowardice of Virgo, then there are not so many individual qualities as qualities characteristic of the people.

Those heroes have their descriptions but are measured by the same or almost the same nature of laughter, which is associated with ignorance or stupidity.

It is worth noting that the archetypal nature of laughter is best connected with rural life, thinking, and language. The speakers are people who live in a rural environment. Rural humour is more objective and specific than urban humour, which is rational but more abstract. In rural humour, the living body of laughter forms a complete world that is understandable and acceptable to everyone, here individualized laughter is secondary, where the person being mocked is left out of the general flow, in that case, we can talk about individual laughter separated from the general archetypal state of laughter when the speaker separates himself from the other person. If at the archetypal level of laughter, we are talking about the collective, the speaker is not talking about himself, but about "we" and on behalf of "we", then in the case of ridicule, the object of ridicule becomes "he" or "they", which are not only outside the circle of "we", but also directly opposite to "we". The borders between them have a considerable distance.

In "Trees", humour, as an archetypal quality of laughter, as a whole body, includes the characters, which are funny with their celebratory, and in some cases, scatological (highly obscene) behaviour. Let us recall Kozbadin's reply to the women of Msra, who expected a great booty from him, or Toros's remark to Mher:

Here Uncle Toros said: "Be you ruined!
Why did I see you? Your wind ruins us."¹

¹ The same location, p. 170

As the phenomena in "Tsrrer" are presented in a broad overview, therefore, laughter as a whole body presents certain forms of manifestation. The archetypal body of laughter disintegrates, and mockery emerges. In this case, the ridiculed object is no longer demarcated from the general body of laughter, "we" and "them" are separated. In the case of ridicule, laughter does not spread to the general public, it has a specific address.

Humpback Duck is presented with a devastating mockery. There is a big difference between his wishes and reality. The appearance is ugly, but the point is not to make fun of the physical defect. The ridiculous is associated with a very specific idea that people are fighting against. Kuz Badin is a symbol of violence and deprivation. Making fun of violence means fighting against the idea of violence. Ridicule reveals the radical contradiction between the appearance and the essence of the phenomenon.

Kuz Badi marches proudly to Sassoon with an army of two thousand and answers the question of the women of Msra, what is the goal:

"I am going to Sasoun to bring the rip.
To bring red, milkable cows,
To bring black, yokable oxen,
To bring a tall woman so that she loads camels,
To bring a short woman so that she milks
To bring a beautiful woman."¹

Behind the smug answer hides a dastardly scammer. Out of fear, he stays out of town, goes to a monastery, kills a priest, manages to escape David's persecution, and on his way back meets women who make fun of the humiliated but confident Big Mouth.

In all the examples given, laughter is best expressed through speech and is the result of thought. Humour expressed through the speaker's mouth in individual cases is also not excluded.

Less often in epics, "bodily laughter" is also mentioned, referring to both the other person and oneself. The Kings wanted Jealousy to stand out with an unusual look.

Hamzi's side of Lori was hung over the surface
Such a huge man he was... Shapkov Khorasani as well

¹ Ayraratci Murad Hovsepyan, David – Mher // Sasna Tsrrer, Volume B, Second Part, 1951, p. 261

He pushed his eyelashes to his back with a staple,
Tied it to his neck.¹

But it is not the unspeakably ugly people who are funny. Terrible figures hide fearful souls under them. When Khandut demands a fight to decide who is stronger, they simply run away from the guardianship.

Perhaps a type of "body laughter" can be seen in the naming of Abamelik's children by Uncle Toros after seeing the newborns: "Vzhik Mkho", "Veto", "Dzenov Ohan", "Brnats Kurik"² and so on.

The people mentioned in Melik's letter can be classified as having the same type of laughter. Out of anger, he "shapes the heart" with a knife and writes the invitation to war with blood:

//“Come, come! // Gouverneur of the Gouverneur! // The Lords of the Christ! //
The ones with the forehead of spades, //The ones with the tongues of peddles, //Come
here: it is invasion against the incredulous.” //

If the ugly body size of the opponents becomes an object of ridicule, then in the case of Sasna heroes, their body size becomes an object of benevolent laughter, where their immeasurable strength is revealed in comparison to their enemies.

Mets Mher goes to Msra Land. Pasha sends ten horsemen to find out what "sort of a man" the opponent is.

They come and see him
Lying in the tent,
Half of his body inside and half of it outside the tent
The latter ascending and descending from his breath.³

There are also talks of "body worship" and "body laughter", which are essentially pagan and contrary to Christian tradition. Of course, this is the first and also the silent kind of laughter that Christian ideology rejects. The best example in this epic is the contrast between David's actions and the "hour of wrath" in the village. This is a religious ceremony, a rite of the hour to deal with natural disasters (divine retribution) in which sacrifices are made. When David's estranged friend says he hasn't eaten a spoonful of his "Rage Meal", David goes to eat the meal. Harissa was

¹ Arakel Shekoyan, Sasna Tsrer // Volume B, Second Part, 1951, p. 261

² The same location, pp. 113-114

³ Shekoyan, Sasna Tsrer // Volume B, Second Part, 1951, p. 104

placed in the pot, and the elders came to bless it. David takes the copper with four fingers and walks away.

Somebody called.
Hey! He took the pot!
For your God's sake, stay quiet!
He is one of the daredevils of Sasoun.
He will return and beat us up.
Let him take it as a trouble in his head.¹

This is a clear, contemptuous attitude against the accepted order. David makes fun of the protocol, he does not care what the people gathered here are doing, he just needs to deliver the meal to his friend and that is it. Laughter is against the Christian tradition, it is seen as a pagan phenomenon.²

Thus, the laughter in "Sasna Tsrer" is, in general, carnival in nature: everyone is subject to laughter and irony, it is collective laughter, and the speaker himself is included in the general mood. This is the initial, archetypal state of the phenomenon; as a manifestation of collective laughter, it is directly related to Eastern psychology.³

PHILOSOPHICAL ESSENCE OF EPIC

Falsehood as an object of laughter leads to ridicule and naivety, and misunderstanding leads to humour in various guises. In the former case, the deficiency is organic and cannot be avoided, but in the latter the deficiency is repairable, life goes on in its natural course and the obstacles are completely surmountable. In a way, this situation contributed to the unity of people, the preservation of traditions, and the clarification of identity boundaries. Because laughter no longer separates 'us' from 'them'. It turns out that laughter plays a big role in building people's self-confidence.

Nonetheless, the laughter shown in 'Sasna Tsrer', which pervades the daily routines and key moments of the life of the Sassoon people, is of a universal rather than personal nature and is more of an oriental culture. It is a feature as an

¹ Tarontsi Krpo, Sasunci David kam Mheri Door // Sasna Tsrer, the national epic, 1977, p. 24

² Gore vam, smeyushiesya nyne! Ibo vosplachete i vozrydaete // the Byble, 1993, p. 1091

³ Sychev A. A., Priroda smekha ili Filosofija komicheskogo, Mordov University Publishing House, 2003, pp. 127-128

expression of group psychology. However, this is a form of expression that is directly related to the substance of the phenomenon.

In "Sasuna Tsrer" the philosophy of comedy is exposed to a dominant perspective. This philosophy focuses on stupidity and performance. This is an oriental feature, associated with both Byzantine and Russian philosophy.¹

Russian literature, like Armenian literature, has dealt with this issue not only in folklore but also in its best works.

Hovannes Tumanyan's Brave Nazar is an outstanding oriental poem that captures the essence of folk wisdom. When Andersen's "baby" sees the king naked and talks about it, the environment presented by Tumanyan is plunged into the darkness of backwardness and stupidity. If Manuk evokes hope for the future, Tumanyan's setting offers no shred of hope. Only Ma understands that an ungrateful man sat on a horse and tried to throw Nazar to the ground. Eastern and Western concepts of backwardness are opposite. However, the philosophy involved in the essence of laughter is the same.

Acting foolishness is the basis for establishing the character of Nazar. Ivan the Fool plays an important role in Russian folklore. He is usually the third son of the king and no one pays attention to him. After all, his success smiles at him. This hero finds a solution that defies normal logic. A. Sinyavsky cites this hero as the central hero of Russian folklore. "This is a favourite hero of folk tales. I am not afraid to say that the most common and colourful fairy tale characters are the fools, the chosen ones who deserve special attention."²

The classic expression of this approach is the epic Sasna Tsrer. "Fool's Feat" is the focus of the title. The crazy people of Sassoon are fighting to keep their homeland, home, and their credit, but they do it in unusual, accepted ways. Undertakings that go against logic offer a way out of their impasse. David alone fights against Misra's innumerable army, plagues the tax collectors, etc. Mher singlehandedly tears apart the lion with bare hands, etc.

THE OBJECTIVE AND THE SUBJECTIVE IN THE LAUGHABLE

In "Tsrer" the decisive thing is the object of laughter, its description.

Davit torments Kuzbadin, pulls out his teeth, and sets them on his forehead. Msra Melik sees the newcomer from a distance and laughs to herself:

¹ Sychev A. A., *Priroda smekha ili Filosofiya komicheskogo*, Mordov University Publishing House, 2003, pp. 182

² Sinyavskiy A. D., *Ivan – Durak: Ocherk russkoy narodnoy very*, Agraf, 2001, p. 37

It's true – Kozbadin has come with a burden.
He has brought a lot of plunder – he is coming with laughter.¹

But the disappointment and surprise are great when he is informed that it is Kuzbadin who is standing in front of him:

What happened, Kuzbadin?
Where are the people? Where is the plunder?
The seven years' tax from Sasoun.
Kuzbadin opens and closes his mouth,
But cannot utter a word.²

The source of laughter is the subject and its depiction. Kuzbaddin's ugly appearance at first misleads Melik, and when viewed from a distance the visitors appear to be cheerful and laughing, and it is believed that the spoils they bring are the heart's desires, but it is believed that he is a man of David. It turned out to be annoyed, and Kuzbadin's "trembling mouth" was already a sign of joy or a humble sign of defeat. Laughter is triggered by laughing objects and their detailed descriptions. Equally ridiculous is baby David's innocence when trapped in a dark room. David slams his bones against the window glass at lunch. The sun is shining and the master (tutor) who comes in sees David struggling to draw out the sun's rays.

He said: "This ray has come into my room and isn't leaving."
He said: "Hit your eyes for a moment."
Just as he hit his eyes,
He held the hole of the ray with his handkerchief, and the ray disappeared.
He said: "Oh, I have been struggling today since morning,
Couldn't take the ray out.
You are stronger than me; how did you take it out?"³

David's childish behaviour causes laughter, but the main thing is that in the foreground, the object of laughter is David, with the description of the ridiculous.

The preliminary and archetypal state of laughter, expressed in the discovery of the attainment of stupidity, with its emphasis on explaining the subject of absurdity,

¹ Mokaci Kako bidza, Sasna David // Sasuntsi David, new narratives, Sovetaka grogh, 1977, p. 40

² The same location

³ Arakyali vanqi gyughatsi David, Tgha David // Sasna Tsrer, Volume B, Second Part, 1951, p. 327

becomes the peculiar quality of Sasna Tsrer. On the other hand, in European epic works, the subject of laughter is becoming more and more important, not the one who is ridiculed but the one who mocks, without excluding the object of laughter.

In this sense, Thomas Hobbes played a major role in the development of the theory of laughter, in which the fundamental change from the object to be laughed to the person to be laughed at occurs. A sense of superiority plays a central role in the concept. "The passion of laughter is the passion that exists within us under the influence of sudden thoughts of our merits, and by comparing it with the weaknesses of others which we notice at that moment, we notice nothing but a sudden sense of ambition. The philosopher, like Aristotle, does not distinguish between laughter and ridicule, believing that the joy expressed in laughter is what makes one feel superior. Whereas in the Nibelungenlied Siegfried catches a bear at the end of the hunt to amuse his fellow hunters, in the Baumelied David drives the calf into the city and mixes it with wild animals. Sometimes it's about naivety, other times it's about ingenuity.¹

But this poignant image of the Nibelungen is secondary to the semantic content of laughter expressed in the gap between the main antagonists. The unknown authorship of this poem shaped events and ideas that emerged from previously told versions, including the philosophy of laughter. The tragic potential within the poem's content is expressed in the desperate cry of one of the feuding women and the mockery of the others.

Here the object of ridicule is no longer in the foreground, but there is a subject, the mocker, who reveals the whole mystery of events and emphasizes his superiority over others.

The same is true for "Sid's Song". That ridicule is directed at Syd's greedy and cowardly bridegroom. "I searched for a long time, but I found very little," says the author. Her entire group laughs at her before Sid scolds her.

Everything revolves around personal feelings, insults, and the resulting desire for revenge. Laughter is not an everyday feeling that makes you feel good ("Sasna Tsrer"), it is just a weapon. The once benevolent character has changed.

A person can be offended both seriously and laughingly.

Laughter in Rolando's Song is also a phenomenon of subjective perception formed by the standpoint of laughter or ridicule. However, like medieval Christian poetry, the epic rejects laughter, deeming it pagan blasphemy. However, it does not appear in the text at all. The irony is deep inside the situation. Mr. Ganelon's

¹ Nibelungenlied, translation, introduction and annotations [in Armenian] by Ara Arakelyan, Nairi, 1007, p. 152

appointment as ambassador is an insult and ridicule that amounts to murder. So, what is important here is primarily the perception of the situation being ridiculed, not Ganelon preparing to destroy. In this case, we are talking about irony.

CONCLUSION

The subject of laughter in epic poetry is arguable as a mutually exclusive category, yet it occupies its place in the world epic and completes the world of a given epic. Through its expression, the absurd becomes an important point of view for perceiving phenomena, without which speech becomes one-sided and incomplete. The combination of "Sasna Tsrer" and European epic works shows that the two differ in their philosophies of comedy. The first serves as a typical carnival-like form of laughter, as an expression of Eastern psychology and worldviews, in contrast to the more recently emerging European personal laughter.

In "Sasna Tsrer" laughter appears as a performance of stupidity in content, and the object of laughter is emphasized in the form of expression. In European masterpieces, which are the result of personal development, it is all about personal laughter with irony, and the subjective aspect of laughter is everything in its method of presentation. The superiority of the German epic (Klimhild), the inner wit of the French (Ganelon becomes an ambassador), and the irony of the Spanish are individual forms of ridicule, contrasting the subjective and objective aspects of laughter and emphasize the positive aspect—the Laughter Side ("Sasna Tsrer").

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Թեև էպոսում ծիծաղի խնդիրը վիճահարույց է, այնուհանդերձ այն համաշխարհային էպոսում ունի իր տեղը և ամբողջացնում է տվյալ էպիկական աշխարհը: Ծիծաղելին իր դրսևորմամբ դառնում է երևույթների ընկալման կարևոր տեսանկյուն, առանց որի ասելիքը կդառնար միակողմանի ու ոչ ամբողջական: «Սասնա ծոեր»-ի և եվրոպական էպիկական երկերի համադրությունը ցույց է տալիս, որ դրանք տարբեր են ծիծաղի փիլիսոփայությամբ: Առաջինը՝ որպես արևելյան հոգեբանության, աշխարհայացքի արտահայտություն, հանդես է գալիս որպես ծիծաղի արքետիպային՝ կառնավալային ձև, ի տարբերություն եվրոպական անհատական ծիծաղի, որ ձևավորվել է համեմատաբար նոր ժամանակներում:

«Սասնա ծռեր»-ում ծիծաղը իր բովանդակությամբ դրսևորվում է հիմարության սխրանքի մեջ, իսկ արտահայտման ձևի առումով կարևորվում է ծիծաղի օբյեկտը: Եվրոպական էպիկական երկերում, որոնք անհատական մշակումների արդյունք են, առաջնայինը անհատականացված ծիծաղն է՝ հեգնանքի կիրառմամբ, իսկ մատուցման ձևի իմաստով առաջնայինը ծիծաղի սուբյեկտիվ կողմն է, կարևորը ծիծաղողն է և ոչ թե ծիծաղելին:

Գերմանական էպոսում գերազանցության զգացողությունը (Քրիմհիլը), ֆրանսիականում ներքին սրամտություն-հեգնանքը (Գանելոնն է դառնում դեսպան), իսպանականում սարկազմը ծիծաղելիի արտահայտման անհատական ձևեր են, որ կարևորում են ծիծաղի սուբյեկտիվ կողմը՝ ի հակադրություն ծիծաղի օբյեկտիվ կողմի («Սասնա ծռեր»):

***Բանալի բառեր՝** էպոս, ծիծաղ, ծաղր, ծաղրուծանակ, հեգնանք, հիմարություն, միամտություն, չարություն, կոլեկտիվ անգիտակցական, Սասնա ծռեր:*

ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА СМЕХА В ЭПОСЕ «САСНА ЦРЕР»

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В статье рассматриваются различные характеристики смеха, запечатленные в эпических поэмах мировой литературы. Хотя смех часто рассматривается как простая эмоция, в эпических повествованиях мы видим, что

он может иметь множество репрезентаций и трансформаций, раскрывающих его более глубокий, психологический, ментальный и философский смысл.

Статья начинается с рассмотрения смеха как повторяющегося мотива в эпических повествованиях, указывая на его роль в жизни как обычных, так и сверхъестественных персонажей. Смех становится не только литературно-языковым приемом, но и средством описания отношения персонажей друг к другу и к обществу в целом. Он становится средством преодоления трудностей, что придает темам эпоса большую насыщенность и увлекательность.

В статье также описываются и анализируются различные виды смеха. Смех подразделяется на различные формы: искренний смех, добрый смех, насмешливый смех, злой смех и даже смех перед лицом трагедии. Все эти формы раскрывают характерные черты персонажа, который смеется в той или иной ситуации. В нем может проявляться как храбрость, так и трусость, доброта и зло, терпимость и опаска.

В статье также рассматривается культурно-историческое значение смеха в эпических повествованиях. Показано, как время и место влияют на смех, как он может варьироваться в разных обществах, а значит - и эпических традициях. Таким образом, одной из повторяющихся тем во всем анализе является роль юмора и смеха в культурных нормах и ценностях.

В заключении в статье подчеркивается значение смеха в эпической поэзии, показывая, что он является не только легкомысленным или несущественным элементом, но и богатым и глубоким аспектом этих вневременных произведений - национальных эпосов и сказаний. Характеристика смеха в эпосе и народных сказаниях дает ценное представление о человеческом опыте, культурной динамике, развитии эпических героев - как обычных, так и сверхъестественных персонажей, раскрывая их более глубокие характерные черты.

Ключевые слова: эпос, смех, издевательство, насмешка, ирония, глупость, наивность, зло, коллективное бессознательное, Сасна Црер.

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