

Cronan na Balantra in Patrick Pearse's "The Mother" in comparison with Georgian "Iavnana"

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Abstract

The article is dedicated to comparison of two folk lullabies – Irish Cronan na Balantra and Georgian Iavnana, reflected in wonderful fiction writings, correspondingly, Patrick Pearse's "The Mother" and "What did Iavnana do?" by Iakob Gogebashvili. It is shown that lullabies are an inevitable part of the child's early years. But lullabies are special among folk songs and fairy tales, they are sort of magic – they carry all mother's love, they are protection and support. It is noteworthy that both stories were written by icon figures for Irish and Georgian nations. Otherwise, they are very different. What unites both stories and what permitted us to make this comparison is the magic of a lullaby, the miracle of mothers' love to their children, the eternal and universal topic for humankind. The fact is that almost at the same period of time, two different authors from faraway from each other countries who never knew each other, were underlining the importance of lullabies. They taught us how to hope, to be wise and patient, to be humans, love our children, care for and pass our culture from generation to generation.

Keywords: magic of lullaby, folklore, preserving culture, figure of a mother

1. Introduction: What is a lullaby?

A lullaby is a soothing song, usually sung to young children before they go to sleep, with the intention of speeding that process. As a result they are often simple and repetitive. Lullabies can be found in every culture and since the ancient period (Wikipedia, n.d., b). Children's poems, called the nursery rhymes, have an important role in every culture's folklore. These simple poems, like other folklore examples were orally spread from generation to generation, and just later they were collected and classified. Lullabies are an inevitable part of the child's early years. But lullabies are special among folk songs and fairy tales, they are sort of magic – they carry all mother's love, they are protection and support.

For Georgian people, Iavnana comes from Nana, Georgians' daity, daity's Mother, an embodiment of the spiritually beautiful Woman, who sang for her sleepy Son. It is a very special song even today, in our prosaic business-minded world.

The English term "lullaby" is thought to come from "Lu,lu" or "la la" - sound made by mothers or nurses to calm children and "byby" or "byebye", either another lulling sound, or a term for good night" (Shavladze, 2012).

What about Cronan na Banaltra? As we searched in old Gaelic dictionary word by word it can be defined in this way: cronan has meanings of buzz and drone. It can be said that it is connected to the noise; banaltra has many meanings and the most important and useful in this context would be this definition: trainee nurse, student nurse, pupil nurse or probationary nurse, nursery nurse, children. There is not given the definition for these words together but to we think it can be concluded that nurses served to keep away any noise (remember the African American spiritual "Hush, little baby, don't you cry) from children being about to fall asleep. We could not find any information whether it is sang today or not, probably not, as there is no information about it on the Internet. It is a pity if this magic song has been lost.

2. Why are lullabies important?

First of all, it supports the development of oral skills. Also, according to what mother sang to her child, develops child's nature, psychics. According to the psychologists' opinion children grown up without lullabies are more egoistic, angry, aggressive and nervous. Substitution of a tender, caring, giving the feeling of safety lullaby by television, loud music or other new tech developments, popular today, is very dangerous to children's future. It will damage child's psychical as well as learning or communication skills. So, mothers, please go on singing lullabies to your children, as it will help them grow kind, worm, loving and sensitive person.

3. Patrick Pearse

Patrick Pearse (1879-1916) was a central figure in recent Irish History. He was born in 1879; his father, James, was a stone worker who worked on church buildings in Dublin and his mother, Margaret, came from a family that had endured the Great Famine in 1846 and had left County Meath for Dublin. As Pearse was an active defender of Irish culture and language, he protested against Ireland being under England's rule. However, all Patrick Pearse's protests fell on deaf ears. As a result, by 1913, Patrick Pearse had become more depressed. Those who knew him, described him as becoming more and more melancholic as the years progressed (Wikipedia, n.d., d).

4. "The Mother"

The major character of the story, Maire, after many years of marriage, did not have children. She is described by Pearse as a person who loved children and could treat babies even better than their own mothers who always called her when their babies were crying and could not sleep. Maire sings "Cronan na Balantra" to babies. There is an Irish legend that this lullaby was taught to Irish women by Virgin Mary herself. Maire was told a story, the old people's belief, about Blessed Virgin with

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her child, who comes to everybody's home at Christmas Eve, where She is waited for, with a lit candle in the window, opened door and food on the table. Virgin Mary will bring happiness and glory to those houses where She is hosted with opened hearts. Maire believes this legend strongly, she does everything as it is needed and finally her family gets a child and happiness. She did not get what she wanted easily – she had the hope and the belief that she never lost, and finally the main reason, she tortured herself much, hoping that the torture of her body would soften God's heart. She deserved what she got after four years.

The author offers us an open characterization of Maire. Is it by chance that her name is, in fact, Mary? Or is it both an allusion and an antonomasia? Maire has a long beautiful face, brown broad and smooth black hair girl. She has some special gift of treating babies kindly and with understanding, some warmth in your inner side. This fact is also underlined by other women sitting with her. They mention that "Maire has magic", that Maire is like the harpers of Meave that would put a host of men asleep when they would play their sleep-tunes". Pearse tries to create positive feelings in readers towards Maire. Why does he need it? To cause reader's sympathy to her? To my mind, not for this. The purpose for showing Maire's beauty was to lead us to the climax of the story. The good, the spirituality is eventually seen by the God.

The two ladies accompanying Maire are minor characters, but it may be said that Old Una Ni Greelis plays a more important role, as a person who passes legends and traditions from generation to generation. It is her who tells Maire the legend around which the story develops. The women are not described openly, it is implied that none of them is an antagonist in the story.

5. Iakob Gogebashvili

Iakob Gogebashvili (1840–1912) was a Georgian educator, children's writer and journalist, considered to be the founder of the scientific pedagogy in Georgia. Through his masterly compiled children's primer, *Mother Tongue* (დედა ენა), which in a modified form serves to this day as a manual in Georgian schools, every Georgian since 1880 has learnt to read and write in their native language. Iakob Gogebashvili is the author of numerous fables, many of which are based on Esop's ones (Wikipedia, n.d.,a).

6. "What did Iavnana do" - "Iavnanam Ra Hqmna"

In the story "Iavnanam ra Hqmna" by I. Gogebashvili the magic of lullaby is described. The plot tells us about a little Georgian girl who was kidnapped and taken to Dagestan, where she was brought up. After many years pass, she was at last found and brought back home by her father, but she is no longer a 6-year-old Georgian girl, she is a pretty grown up girl, totally Daghestanian, nothing Georgian has been left in her mind, no language, no memory of her parents, friends, of relatives. The girl is suffering from being in a totally strange environment, she does not feel at home. Parents tried everything, did their best to help their daughter recollect something, but in vain. Finally, as they cannot bear to see their daughter suffering, they decide to send her back. But this is when the climax

of the story unexpectedly come and the magic of lullaby, Georgian Iavnana, has its effect. One day mother with a great grief starts singing Iavnana unconsciously in a very low voice, she had never sang it after Qeto's (the girl's) disappearance. And a miracle occurs: nervousness appeared on the girl's face, it was clear that some buried memories were trying to come alive, some pleasant feelings were trying to spit out from the depth of the memory. Mother noticed her daughter's confused expression and continued singing in a louder voice and was looking at her with mother's limitless love. Qeto finally calmed down, smiled, looked at her mother with the same loving face and screamed "mom". Mother and daughter embraced each other, simultaneously with a great pain and a great happiness. The happiness was brought back to that family.

7. Comparison

In both wonderful lyrical stories we come across the magic of a lullaby. In Pearse's story it links generations, probably from pre-historic time, it brings happiness to worthy people. According to this beautiful short story, the woman who can sing the ancient Cronan na Balantra, beats herself as a penance for being childless. But her ability to deal with babies was the first blessing to Maire, her readiness to suffer in order to become a mother, to be the preferable host for Virgin and "her" child. The figure of the mother in this story demonstrates more than anything the overlapping of the rural family with the Divine Family found within "folk" revivalism. A mother in this Divine Family plays a vital role as they mothers are reproducers of children and traditions. And "the god loves the women better than the men. It's to them He sends the greatest sorrow, and it's them He bestowes the greatest joy." Pearse wanted to revive Irish language and culture, traditions, and this short story is his contribution to this process.

In "Iavnanam ra Hqmna" the family tried to show their daughter places she used to play, dolls she loved the most, friends, but the only thing she recollected was the song sang by mom with universal love.

It is noteworthy that both stories were written by icon figures for Irish and Georgian nations. Otherwise, they are very different. What is the connection between these totally different author's works? What can be found similar in "The Mother" and "Iavnanam Ra Hqmna"? This is the magic of a lullaby, the miracle of mothers' love to their children, the eternal and universal topic for humankind. The fact is that almost at the same period of time, two different authors from faraway countries who never knew each other were underlining the importance of lullabies. They taught us how to hope, to be wise and patient, to be humans, love our children, care for and pass our culture from generation to generation.

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