

## Ó KRUGER KAVANAGH GO DTÍ AN CAILÍN CIÚIN: AN CULTÚR FÍSE AGUS AN TROID AR SON NA BARÁNTÚLACHTA

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In eagrán na bliana 1937 de *Irisleabhar Muighe Nuadhat*, cuireadh aiste i gcló dar teideal ‘Na Scannáin i nÉirinn’. Liam de Brún, sagart óg ó dheoise Fhearna a scríobh.<sup>1</sup> ‘Míorbhúilt na h-aoise seo’ a thug sé ar na scannáin agus dhírigh sé, ag tús na haiste ar fad, ar a luach:

Sa t-saoghal atá ann anois is beag brainnse tionnscail atá chómh tábhachtach leis na Scannáin chéadna; is beag gné ealadhan atá chómh cómhachtach leo, ná saghas caitheamh aimsire atá chómh coitchanta leo; ’siad an córas is treise iad le smaointe do léiriú, agus an rud is feidhmúla i gcúrsaí oideachais agus – d’á n-abrainn é – i gcúrsaí móráltachta, a tháinig riamh fós sa t-saoghal. (de Brún 1937: 76)

Cháin sé go láidir an fhaillí a rinneadh go dtí sin ar chúrsaí scannánaíochta in Éirinn agus ar ‘sholáthar na scannán dúthchais’ (Ibid.: 77) go háirithe. D’aithin sé nach mbeadh sé cothrom Éire a chur i gcomparáid le tíortha móra ach d’áitigh sé gur cheart í a chur i gcomparáid leis an Iodáil, an Ostair agus an Bheilg, i measc eile, agus, ach sin a dhéanamh, go bhfeicfí láithreach chomh mór chun deiridh orthu agus a bhí muid.

D’admhaigh sé go raibh léas dóchais éigin ann agus d’aithin sé triúr a raibh scannáin mhaithe curtha ar fáil acu ó bhunú an tSaorstáit: J. N. G. Davidson, stiúrthóir amaitéarach, a chum agus a stiúir, *By Accident* in 1930. Scannán tostach dubh agus bán, a raibh Mary Manning, duine de na mná ceannródaíochta a bhí ag plé le cúrsaí scannánaíochta, ina leas-stiúrthóir air, agus ról beag aici ann (IAFI). Denis Johnston an dara duine a luaigh sé, agus a scannán *Guests of the Nation* (1935), a raibh baint, arís, ag Mary Manning leis, agus a bhí bunaithe ar ghearrscéal le Frank O’Connor. Cé gur mhol de Brún iarrachtaí na beirte seo, thug sé aitheantas ar leith do Robert Flaherty agus *Man of Aran* (1934), scannán faisnéise ficseanach nó eitnifhicsin.

<sup>1</sup> Déanaim amach gurb é seo William Browne (deoise Fhearna) a thosaigh i gColáiste Phádraig, Maigh Nuad, in 1930, agus a oirmíodh ina shagart in 1937. Féach <https://www.clericus.ie/person/9306>.

I measc na solátharuightheoirí neamh-spleádha so tá Riobárd Ó Flaithbheartaigh – fear atá t’réis dubhshlán a thabhairt fé ghradam na Stiúruightheoirí is mó cáil sa domhan. Tóg Pabst nó Fritz Lang sa Ghearmáin; Eisenstein nó Pudovkin ’sa Rúis; Rene Clair nó Calvalcanti sa bhFrainc; Rotha, Lubitch, nó aoinne eile is maith leat – níl ar chumas aoinne aca an áilneacht doimhin chéadna ná an draoidheacht chéadna do chur ’n-a gcuid phictiúirí agus atá ar chumas an Fhlaithbheartaigh. Fear is eadh é sin atá t’réis a shaoghal do chaitheamh ag taisteal an domhain le n-a ghléas grianghrafaidheachta, agus is ag dul ó bhuadh go buadh a bhí sé go dtí sa deire do rug sé an chraobh leis le n-a shár-phictiúir “Man of Aran” – an epic sin a léirigheann dúinn saoghal iarsma sean-Éireann na nGaedheal agus cómhac an iarsma san i gcoinnibh cómhacht do-chlaoidhte an dúlraidhe. Taobh thiar de’n epic sin léirigheann sé dhúinn áilneacht na tuaithe i n-Iar-Chonnachtaibh le clisteacht is le h-ealadhantacht a chuirfeadh an lucht féachana fé dhraoidheacht beagnach. Scannán is eadh é seo gur ró-annamh a chítear a shamhail i saoghal na bpictiúirí .i. saothar ealadhanta ó dhuine cáilidheachta. (de Brún 1937: 77)

Ba é Robert Flaherty a stiúir *Oidhche Sheanchais* (1935), an chéad scannán fuaimne riamh sa Ghaeilge, scannán a ndearna an rialtas urraíocht air (Mac Congáil 2003).<sup>2</sup> Níorbh é Flaherty an chéad duine a léirigh Oileáin Árann ar an scáileán mór, ar ndóigh. Deich mbliana roimh *Man of Aran*, rinneadh an gearrscannán tostach 3 nóiméad go leith, *Wonderful Western Islanders*.<sup>3</sup> (Is féidir breathnú ar an scannán ar shuíomh Institiúid Scannán na hÉireann: <https://ifiarchiveplayer.ie/wonderful-western-islanders/>.) Rinneadh *Aran of the Saints*,<sup>4</sup> chomh maith, in 1932, agus *Damhsa Árann* thart ar thréimhse *Man of Aran*.<sup>5</sup>

Maidir le barántúlacht an léirithe a rinneadh ar na daoine in *Man of Aran* go sonrach, shíl Seosamh Mac Grianna:

2 Féach, chomh maith, Rockett, Gibbons & Hill (1988) *Cinema and Ireland*, Ó Catháin (2004) ‘Oidhche Sheanchais le Robert J. Flaherty: An Chéad Scannán Gaeilge dá ndearmadh’ agus Ó h-Íde (2014) ‘Robert Flaherty’s *Oidhche Sheanchais*: The First Film in Irish’.

3 ‘This short documentary depicts the lives of the inhabitants of the Aran Islands off the coast of Galway in 1924. This short film, made about ten years before Flaherty’s epic *Man of Aran*, is probably the earliest surviving film of the islands. It presents a multi-faceted portrait of island life showing locals going about their daily routines: cattle are tied to a curragh and rowed out to a waiting steamship; islanders are photographed by visitors to the island; island men participate in the game of stone throwing (ag caitheamh cloch nirt).’ (IFA)

4 Léiríodh *Aran of the Saints* go poiblí in 2011 mar chuid de thaispeántas speisialta, ‘Journey to Aran’, a réitigh Institiúid Scannán na hÉireann.

5 Bhí an méid seo in *Scéala Éireann* ar an gcéad lá de mhí Dheireadh Fómhair 1935 ina thaobh: ‘Twenty-two Aran Islanders attended the showing of *Damhsa Árann* in a Galway cinema yesterday. Many members of the party took part in the picture which shows the islanders dancing, net-weaving, churning and spinning.’ (*Scéala Éireann* 1 DF 1935: 9)

... it is a good picture ... but as a picture of a community it is wretchedly incomplete. How can this be explained? Robert Flaherty cannot be a fool. It is a case of the wish being father to the thought. The industrial communities cannot bear the idea of granting equality to those Aran folk; it would make it necessary to concede an immense superiority to them ... The land of Aran is not poor; it is more productive than that of Meath, even if Meath were tilled. The standard of living is not low. The deaths by drowning are not more numerous than those by motor accidents in Dublin. The whole winter is a period of ease and merriment. (Mac Grianna 1987: 178–79)

Agus níorbh eisean an t-aon duine amháin a raibh amhras air faoin léiriú. Thuig muintir Árann féin a bhí sa scannán nach raibh aon bhunús leis an rud a rinneadh agus níor chuir Cól Mac an Rí, Tiger King, fiacail ann agus é faoi agallamh in 1976 – ‘bhí a fhios agam go maith gur *bullshit* a bhí ann’ (RTÉ 1976).

Ach cuimhnímis gur sna tríochaidí a rinneadh é, agus faoi urraíocht an stáit. Ceapadh de Valera ina Uachtarán ar Ard-Chomhairle an tSaorstáit in 1932 agus chuir sé roimhe léiriú ar leith ar an tír a stiúradh agus a chur chun cinn, agus thuig sé gurbh iad na healaíona an meán chuige sin. Bhí sé féin, agus roinnt dá chuid airí i láthair nuair a léiríodh *Man of Aran* de chéaduair agus thaitin an léargas a tugadh ann ar mhuintir na hÉireann leo. Faoi mar a mhaíonn Martin McLoone, ‘in Ireland, the film arrived just as the de Valera government was reinvigorating the ideals of cultural nationalism and it provided an almost perfect cinematic expression of the ascetic romanticism that lay behind this whole project’ (McLoone 2000: 38). Thuig Dev an rud a bhí á mhaíomh ag Liam de Brún, thuig sé cumhacht mhúnlaithreach na n-ealaíon agus níor leas leis an rialtas, dá bharr, tacaíocht a thabhairt do thionscnaimh a chuirfeadh chun cinn íomhá rómánsach thraidisiúnta de mhuintir na tíre agus cultúr an stáit úir á fhorbairt acu – muintir Árann gona laochas agus a síorthroid i gcoinne chruatan an tsaoil sa chás áirithe seo.

Ag filleadh ar aiste Liam de Brún, thagair sé leis, don scannán *The Dawn*, a cuireadh ar taispeántas in Éirinn in 1936 agus i Meiriceá in 1938. Faoi ainm *Dawn over Ireland* a scaoileadh i Meiriceá é. Thomas Cooper a stiúir an scannán, agus rinneadh é a thairfeadh i gCill Airne. Bhí Dónal Ó Cathail ar dhuine de na scríbhneoirí, fear a raibh baint aige le scannán eile a rinneadh in Éirinn sna tríochaidí, ceann a ndearnadh é a thairfeadh ar oileán eile, an Blascaod Mór an uair seo, dar teideal *The Islandman*.<sup>6</sup> I litir a

<sup>6</sup> I litir a scríobh Harry Dugan, stiúrthóir *The Hills of Ireland* (scannán a tháinig amach in 1951), chuig Kruger Kavanagh i mí Dheireadh Fómhair 1953, luaigh sé scannán seo Uí Chathail: ‘Did you ever see Donal O’Cahill’s film (running one hour) on the Blasket Islands. He has a copy at his home.’ (Pádraig Ó Néill, nia le Kruger, a thug an litir dom.)

scríobh sí chuig George Chambers, bhí an méid seo a leanas le rá ag Eibhlís Ní Shúilleabháin ina thaobh:

28.5.37 A crowd of Film Stars has been to Blaskets for a week, eighteen altogether, taking every sort of picture ... Have you seen anything about them on the papers, three Londoners with a filming camera, I am sure you will see these soon, like ‘Man of Aran’, in a few months time they say. I think this will be called the Islandman. (Ní Shúilleabháin 1978: 56–57)

Bhí *An tOileánach* le Tomás Ó Criomhthain ocht mbliana ar an bhfód nuair a rinneadh an scannán, agus an t-aistriúchán a rinne Robin Flower trí bliana, ach níorbh é Tomás Ó Criomhthain an ‘Islandman’ an uair seo. I mí Mheán Fómhair 1937, thagair Eibhlís don scannán arís:

11.9.37 ‘The Islandman’, they called that Film is not about my father-in-law – may God rest his soul. I heard it was a man from the University College Dublin, by the way, they are making that film of, you know it means a young man that visited Blasket once and went to college again and then eloped to the Island again and spent his life time there. [The] film then shows you his hard working life here and troubles. (Ibid.: 57)<sup>7</sup>

Ar aon dul le *Man of Aran*, bhí daoine ann a cháin gnéithe den léiriú a rinneadh ann. Cuireadh an méid seo a leanas i gcló in *The Kerryman* in 1939:

People who have seen the film “Islandman” in the local cinema recently, knew at a glance that the boat shown as a Blasket canoe was a curragh of the type used along the West Coast of Ireland. It cannot be compared to the graceful design of the Kerry canoe or naomhóg as it is called in Irish. (1939: 6)

Agus, faoi mar a scríobh Mac Gabhann in *Scéala Éireann* i mí Aibreáin na bliana céanna, i mír dar teideal ‘The Islandman – What Worlds Away’:

The céilidhe scene is sporadic, unnatural. Here was the real chance to show the Blasket spirit. It was lost. (Mac Gabhann 1939: 5)

<sup>7</sup> Féach, chomh maith, ‘Blasket Island Life: Irish-Made Film Nearing Completion’, a cuireadh i gcló in *Scéala Éireann*, ar an 8 Deireadh Fómhair 1937.

D'áitigh de Brún go raibh an-éileamh i measc an phobail ar scannáin, go raibh cuid mhór pictiúrlann sa tír ar fad, ach gur scannáin eachtrannacha ba mhó a thaispeántaí iontu, toisc nach raibh scannáin dhúchasacha á ndéanamh:<sup>8</sup>

Is ag dul i méid i n-aghaidh an lae atá an géar-ghádh atá le tionnscal scannán dúthchais anso má's mian linn áit do bhaint amach do Scannánaibh Éireannacha i ndomhan na bpictiúirí reatha i n-ao' chor. Rud eile dhe, de dheasgaibh an tionchuir a bhíonn ag na scannánaibh ar aigne na ngnáth-dhaoine, táid ag tabhairt isteach sa tír gnéithe, smaointe agus gníomhartha atá – ar an gcuid is lugha dhe – gallda, agus atá ag múchadh an leithleachais náisiúnta ionainn do réir a chéile. Má táthar chun é seo do chosg, nó aon leigheas d'fhagháil air, tá sé fíorriachtanach anois, ar mhaithe leis an t-Saoidheacht Ghaedhealaigh, go ndéanfaí scannáin 'n-a mbeidh cultúr agus barr-shamhla na nGaedheal le feisgint go soiléir. Rud eile fós, níl aon ghné eile ealadhna 'na gcuireann an pobal an oiread suime, ná a thugann caoi chomh mór do shaothar ealadhanta leis na scannánaibh. Mar sin, má tá an Gaedheal chun é féin do chur i bhfeidhm i n-ao' chor, is ins na scannánaibh is treise is féidir é sin do dhéanamh. (de Brún 1937: 78)

D'admhaigh sé go raibh easpa airgid ina chonstaic mhór roimh fhás an tionscail agus mhaigh sé nach bhféadfaí dul chun cinn fiúntach a dhéanamh, d'ainneoin iarrachtaí soláthraithe neamhspleácha áirithe, gan tacaíocht cheart an Stáit. Faoi mar a dúradh cheana, rinne an rialtas urraíocht ar *Oidhche Sheanchais*, ach feachtas eagraithe leanúnach a bhí ag teastáil dá mbeadh deis in aon chor ag tionscal scannánaíochta Éireannach. Bhí Earnán de Blaghd ar aon intinn leis an mBrúnach, agus é ag scríobh in *Scéala Éireann* an bhliain dar gcionn:

Ó tháinig na scannáin chainnte isteach tá namhaid nua láidir ag an nGaedhilg. Má leanann ré na scannán beidh sé fuar againn bheith ag iarraidh an teanga do shábháil mura dtoilthigheann an Riaghaltas cuid mhaith airgid do dheónadh le peictiúirí Gaedhealacha do chur ar fáil. (de Blaghd 1938: 4)

<sup>8</sup> De réir an taighde a chuir Thekla Beere i láthair an *Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland* i mí na Bealtaine 1936, bhí 190 pictiúrlann i Saorstát Éireann in 1935, 111,438 suíochán ar fad iontu, 27.2 suíochán an duine sa tír (Beere 1936: 85). Faoin dtráth sin, deireadh na dtríochaidí, bhí laghdú ar líon na scannán dúchasach, ach níor mhiste a lua go ndearnadh sé scannán dhúchasacha is fiche in Éirinn idir 1915 agus 1917, de thoradh rath an scannáin *The Lad from Old Ireland* (1910) faoi stiúir Sidney Olcott (Gillespie 2007: 61).

Is díol suime é gur thug de Blaghd le fios san alt céanna nach mbeadh sé i gcoinne ligean do Hollywood na scrípteanna a chur ar fáil dá mba ghá agus go n-aistreofaí go Gaeilge iad. Thuig sé go raibh tionscal na drámaíochta Gaeilge á chéasadh ag galair na drochaisteoireachta agus na drochscríbhneoireachta scrípte, agus b'fhacthas dó gurbh é caighdeán na teanga an ceann ba thúisce a bhí le leigheas. Ag scríobh dó mar gheall ar dhúshláin seo na drámaíochta Gaeilge, dúirt Pádraig Ó Siadhail:

Níor tugadh iarraidh saothrú fadtréimhseach na drámaíochta a phlé ... Dá réir sin, ceapadh drámaí lochtacha, cumadh drámaí nár bhain le saol an fhichiú haois, úsáideadh an amharclann – an meán cumarsáide ba dhíri roimh theacht an raidió is na teilifíse – mar uirlis bholscaireachta, is cothaíodh caighdeán bréagach léirmheasa a bhí le fáil go dtí na caogaidí ... Ón tús, bhí acmhainn na drámaíochta, a bhí ina healaín fhorásach liobrálach nua-aimseartha i dtíortha eile, craptha ag aineolas, ag coimeádachas is ag dearcadh “Irish-Ireland” na nGaeilgeoirí. (Ó Siadhail 1993: xi)

Ach d'fhéadfaí a áitiú gurbh é ‘dearcadh “Irish-Ireland” na nGaeilgeoirí’ freagra lucht na hathbheochana ar an *stage Irishman* a bhí á léiriú ar feadh na gcéadta bliain agus gur chreid siad go raibh barántúlacht sa domhan Gaelach a bhí á chur chun cinn acu. Faoi mar atá ráite ag Éadaoin Ní Mhuircheartaigh agus Nollaig Mac Congáil:

Léiriú dearfach ar shuílce agus thréithe na tíre a bhí ann, murab ionann is an scigphictiúr den Ghael, mar a léiríodh go coitianta é i bpearsa an ‘stage Irishman’. Is le cur i gcoinne na híomhá áiféisi scigmhagúla seo a tosaíodh an ghluaiseacht drámaíochta chomh maith agus bhí cuspóirí i gcoitinne acu leis an gConradh. (Ní Mhuircheartaigh & Mac Congáil 2008: 11)<sup>9</sup>

De réir J.O. Bartley, níor cruthaíodh carachtar buanchrutha, nó *stock character* an *stage Irishman* i ndrámaíocht an Bhéarla thar oíche ach forbraíodh é thar na céadta, agus i dtrí chéim éagsúla:

But it will be convenient to speak of its development in three stages, never forgetting, however, that these shade into or overlap one another, and have no definite boundaries. With this proviso, the stages may be taken as the realistic, the indifferent, and the false. (Bartley 1942: 439)

<sup>9</sup> Faoi mar a d'fhógair Yeats: ‘We will show that Ireland is not the home of buffoonery and of easy sentiment, as it has been represented, but the home of an ancient idealism’ (Gregory 1913: 9).

Cé go bhfuil go leor scríofa mar gheall ar an *stage Irishman*, agus an *stage Irishwoman*, leis, ó scríobh Bartley a alt in 1942, tá fiúntas go fóill ag baint leis an gcur síos cuimsitheach a dhéanann sé ar fhorbairt an léirithe. Luann sé trí thréimhse ama leis na céimeanna difriúla: 1587–1659, 1660–1759 agus 1760–1800. Léiriú sách réalaióch a rinneadh ar na hÉireannaigh i ndrámáí Béarla sa chéad thréimhse: ‘this stage Irishman was a not inaccurate or unfair representation of the Irish as the English knew them, limited indeed, and picturesquely or humorously exaggerated, but fundamentally realistic’ (Ibid.: 442). Faoin dara thréimhse, chonacthas go raibh athrú ag teacht ar an léiriú a rinneadh ar an Éireannach ar stáitsí Shasana:

He ceases to wear ‘trowses’ and to carry a dart. He is no longer a costermonger or chimneysweep. Farting does not specially offend him. It has been forgotten that Saint Patrick banished the snakes. In addition to bonny clabber he now eats potatoes, not shamrocks, which are no longer mentioned; but he still drinks usquebaugh, swears by Christ and Saint Patrick, howls, and uses expressions from his native tongue. His country is still boggy, and he is called a bogtrotter; his plough is attached to his horse’s tail.<sup>10</sup> ... For the first time he carries a ‘shillela’; he wears brogues, and talks with one. He is inclined to be amorous. (Ibid.: 443)

Faoi dheireadh an ochtú haois déag agus thús an naoú haois déag, bhí an *stage Irishman*, a raibh lucht na hathbheochana chomh mór sin ina choinne, ar an bhfód:

He is inclined to blunder, and bulls pour from his lips; ... He is no longer noted as a false witness, nor remarkable for fortune hunting. Although ploughing by the tail was actually being practised, it is only casually referred to; but there are references to bogs and bogtrotters. His bonny clabber is now called buttermilk. He still loves usquebaugh, but often calls it whiskey. His brogue is continually mentioned, but it is his speech, not his footwear. His Gaelic expressions, now mostly exclamations, are relatively less frequent, and markedly less exotic than before. He swears and mentions Saint Patrick often, but he howls less. He is quarrelsome and amorous. Potatoes are his staple diet, shamrock his emblem, and a shillela is often in his hand. (Ibid.: 445)

<sup>10</sup> Tá plé cuimsitheach déanta ag O Riordan (2023), in ‘Ploughing by the tail: a phantom phenomenon’, ar an gcleachtas seo agus ar an mbealach inar baineadh úsáid as chun léiriú tarcaisneach a dhéanamh ar na hÉireannaigh.

Maíonn Bartley go raibh carachtar seo an Éireannaigh bunaithe, agus seanbhunaithe, faoi 1800, mar sin, go raibh éileamh ag an lucht féachana air, agus gur chuma, i ndáiríre, faoina bharántúlacht. Ní nach ionadh, agus go leor scannáin luatha i bhformáid an téatair bheo, aistríodh an meon seo gan stró ón stáitse go dtí an scáileán mór, agus bhí a áit ag an *stage Irishman* i scata scannán ag deireadh an naoú haois déag, faoi mar a mhíníonn Peter Flynn:

But “The Biograph Up to Date”<sup>11</sup> reminds us of another important aspect of the moving picture industry in its early primitive phase – the centrality of the stage Irishman and the fascination he held for middle-class male patrons. A popular figure in vaudeville in the late nineteenth century, the stage Irishman was a caricature of the immigrant Irish – shabby, dim-witted, incapable of reason, and prone to verbal and physical outbursts, often under the influence of alcohol. Less civilized than his Anglo-American counterparts – and known variously as Paddy, Casey, Murphy, or Brannigan – the stage Irishman occupied the role of ethnic Other, a comic inversion of genteel Anglo-American masculinity reinforcing the popular opinion that the Irish were incapable of assimilation into modern American civilization. (Flynn 2012: 122–23)

Cé nach bhfuil Flynn ach ag plé leis an tréimhse 1895–1907, agus le scannáin ar nós *Michael Casey and the Steamroller* (1902), *Casey’s Christening* (1903), *How Murphy Paid his Rent* (1903) agus *Brannigan Sets Off the Blast* (1906), áitíonn sé, d’ainneoin an dul chun cinn a bhí á dhéanamh ag na hÉireannaigh i Meiriceá, go raibh éileamh leanúnach ar an íomhá chlaonta:

Forged a half-century prior, the image of the rioting Irishman had had a spectacular impact on the American imagination, and it now stubbornly persisted despite its increasing obsolescence ... The neighborhood cop, the crusading priest, and the demure Colleen had yet to take full root in the popular imagination, despite their evident presence in the public sphere. So the Paddys, Caseys, Murphys, and Brannigans remained. (Ibid.: 132)

Ar ndóigh, bhí gné sa bhreis ag baint leis an léiriú claonta a rinneadh ar mhuintir na hÉireann sna scannáin ná mar a bhain leis an léiriú céanna ar an stáitse – óir bhí lucht féachana i bhfad níos leithne agus i bhfad níos

<sup>11</sup> Foilsíodh ‘The Biograph Up to Date’, stiallghreannán, sa *Boston Globe* in 1899.

ilchineálaí ag dul chuig an bpictiúrlann, agus bhí aithne leataobhach á cur acu, dá bharr, ar na hÉireannaigh.

Ba rud é seo a ghoill go mór ar Mhuiris “Kruger” Caomhánach, ó Iarthar Dhuibhne. Rugadh é in 1894 agus in aois a naoi mbliana déag dó, thug sé an bád bán go Meiriceá (Ó Lúing 1986: 8). Chuig Springfield a chuaigh sé ar dtús, uaidh sin chuig New Haven, Hartford, Nua-Eabhrac agus Bostún. Ón gcéad lá dó thall, chuir sé chuige saol maith a chruthú dó féin i Meiriceá, agus seacht mbliana i ndiaidh dó na Stáit Aontaithe a bhaint amach, bhí Saoránacht Mheiriceá aige – rud a chruthaigh dúshlán áirithe dó nuair a d’fhill sé ar Éirinn.<sup>12</sup>

Pé rud faoi shaol maith a chruthú dó féin, is cinnte go raibh saol thar a bheith spéisiúil aige thall, agus bhí tionscal na scannánaíochta ina chroí-lár. Chaith sé tamall ag obair le Comhlacht Drámaíochta Shubert, comhlacht léirithe a raibh neart amharclann acu i Nua-Eabhrac, ar dtús, ach ar fud na Stát ina dhiaidh sin. Faoi mar a dúirt sé féin, in agallamh a rinne sé in *Scéala Éireann* in 1952:

I was in the States during the ‘Roaring Twenties’ working as advance publicity agent for the Schubert [*sic.*] chain of theatres. I met everybody worth meeting. (O’Sullivan 1952: 8)

Bunaíodh MGM (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) go luath sna fichidí, agus chaith Kruger tréimhse ina oifigeach caidrimh phoiblí dóibh. Deirtear faoi go ndearna sé tréanobair maidir le cur chun cinn na scannán, go fiú in áiteanna nár fáiltíodh rompu:

For Kruger was a Public Relations Officer in real earnest that time. He built the M.G.M. circuit the hard way, when even in the U.S.A. the hick-towns did not take kindly to the installation of movies and it was Kruger’s job to see that they did. (Mac Gabhann 1949: 3)

Chaith sé tamall, leis, ina rúnaí ag an amhránaí mór le rá Walter Scanlan (Walter Van Brunt), i ndiaidh dóibh casadh ar a chéile agus Kruger i Nua-Eabhrac. Bhí baint lárnach aige le cur chun cinn na barántúlachta Éireanaí sa ról seo agus é de fhreagracht air daoine a aimsiú le haghaidh mhórsheo an Scanlánaigh, *The Blarney Stone*, faoi mar a deirtear linn i leabhar Uí Lúing:

One of the most important duties of Kavanaugh was to test out the various prospects for places in the cast as to their Irish accent and no

<sup>12</sup> ‘Nuair a bhain sé amach oileán na hÉireann an 7 Meitheamh 1929, Meiriceánach ab ea é ó thaobh dlí, rud a chuir d’oibleagáid air, faoi ordú oifigiúil dar theideal Aliens Order, tuairise a thabhairt air féin san *Certificate of Registration*. Thóg sé amach an Deimhniú sin sa Daingean ar an 26 Márta 1930’ (Ó Lúing 1986: 28).

matter what other qualifications the applicant might have, if the true tongue wasn't there, there wasn't a chance. The cast had to be 100 per cent Irish to the tip of their tongues. (Ó Lúing 1986: 14)

Agus faoi mar a scríobh sé féin i gcolún leis, 'Broadway as a Melting Pot', a bhfuil fáil air in aircív Kruger in Ollscoil Mhá Nuad (PP/8/5(26)):

I went up last week to [Geo. M.] Gatts' office to find out when he was going to send out Walter Scanlan and his full-fledged Irish players. You never saw such a bevy of pretty colleens applying for a role in Scanlan's new play. I waited in the lobby for a while and one would think he was back stage in the Abby [*sic.*] Theatre, Dublin, listening to their cute little brogue. Only Irish need apply for Scanlan's play. (Kavanagh PP8/5(36))

Agus é ina rúnaí agus fear poiblíochta ag Scanlan, ina oifigeach caidrimh phoiblí le comhlachtaí éagsúla léirithe, mar aon le baint lárnach a bheith aige leis na Ziegfeld Follies ar Broadway, tugadh deiseanna iontacha do Mhuiris aithne a chur ar mhaithe agus ar mhóruaisle dhomhan na scannánaíochta agus an téatair.<sup>13</sup> Tá scéal ann, leis, go raibh aithne ag Kruger ar Al Capone, go fiú, scéal a insíonn Maidhc Dainín Ó Sé sa chnuasach *Is Cuimhin linn Kruger*.<sup>14</sup>

B'fhear mór cuideachta é Kruger, aithníodh gurbh fhear maith poiblíochta é agus bhí an-éileamh ar a chuid scileanna.<sup>15</sup> In 1924, d'fhill sé ar Éirinn, agus ar Chiarraí, áit a raibh an scannán *Irish Luck* de chuid Paramount Pictures á thaifeadadh. Bhí príomhlaoch an scannáin, Tommy Meighan, aisteoir mór le rá sna pictiúir thostacha, ina theannta. Cúram

13 Ba le linn na bhfichidí a tharla seo ar fad agus faoi mar a deir Seán Ó Lúing ina chuntas ar Kruger: 'Dá gcuireadh Muisir chuige d'fhéadfadh sé caibidil spéisiúil a chur le stair na scannán sa tréimhse nuair bhí an tionscal ag athrú ó phictiúir balbh go pictiúir fuaimne, mar bhí sé caidreamhach lena lán den aos ealaíon a bhain leo' (Ó Lúing 1986: 18).

14 'T'anam an diabhal,' arsa Dainín isteach i mo chluais. 'Féach cé tá tagaithe inár measc, é siúd sa chulaith dhaor síoda. Sin é Al Capone ...' 'Nach é sin Kruger lena chois?' arsa mise [Seán Coughlan, ceoltóir] le Dainín. 'Sé an fear céanna é. Ní foláir nó go dtáinig sé ó Nua-Eabhrac le cois an fhoireann peile.' Nuair a chonaic Kruger mé féin agus Dainín, threoirigh sé Capone agus an fear téagartha eile a bhí lena gcois inár dtreo. Chuir sé sinn in aithne do Chaponé ... 'Cogar, a Khrúigir,' arsa Al, 'an bhfuil chun cur fút inár measc an babhta seo?' 'Nílim, mhúise, a Al. Níl an chathair seo fairsing a dhóthain do bheirt againn.' Lig Capone scarta mór gáire, 'Ó, mhúise, a Khrúigir, is mór an fear seoigh tú,' ar sé (Ó Sé 1994: 103).

15 Rinneadh tagairt do Mhuiris, leis, i ngearrscéal de chuid an scríbhneora cháiliúil, Ring Lardner, 'The Jade Necklace' (Ó Lúing 1986: 18). D'fhéadfaí a shamhlú go raibh a chuid scéalta á ndathú ag Muisir le hainmneacha réaltaí móra Mheiriceá, ach tá neart fianaise i litreacha agus i ngiotaí sna nuachtáin thall a thacaíonn leis na scéalta ar fad. Agus faoi mar a dúradh sa pháosa a scríobhadh faoi in *The Irish Times* i mí Dheireadh Fómhair, 1955: 'If, on occasions, his listeners find it difficult to believe that Kruger was intimate with the many famous people to whom he refers so casually in his anecdotes, a glance around the dining-room will afford them proof; for there in their hundreds are the photographs of his friends, great and humble alike' (*The Irish Times* 8 Deireadh Fómhair 1955: 8).

poiblíochta an scannáin a bhí ar Kruger de réir chuntas Uí Lúing (1986: 17), ach tuairiscíodh sa *Hartford Courant*, i mí Aibreáin 1924, go mbeadh cúram eile ar Kruger, leis, nuair a bheadh sé sa bhaile, agus é ag faire amach do chailíní a d’oirfeadh do stáitsí Mheiriceá:

Maurice Kavanaugh, well known in Hartford, where he has been a visitor with Eamon De Valera, when De Valera was president of the Irish republic; with John McCormack, when McCormack was in concert work, and more lately with Walter Scanlan, the Irish tenor, stopped in Hartford yesterday afternoon on his way to Boston, from where he will sail for Ireland next week for a visit of about three months ... Kavanaugh has been commissioned to find “some of the Irish beauties that Tom Moore praised in his poems”, with an idea of bringing a real chorus of Irish beauties to America. (*Hartford Courant* 9 Aibreán 1924: 15)<sup>16</sup>

Ní hé amháin go raibh baint ag Kruger le poiblíocht scannán ach deirtear go raibh cúram cinsireachta air, leis, maidir leis an léiriú a bhí á dhéanamh ar Éireannaigh ar an stáitse agus ar an scáileán. I mí an Mheithimh 1924, cuireadh litir a scríobh Dan Burns, Ciarraíoch a bhí ag cur faoi i mBostún, i gcló in *The Kerryman*, litir ina ndearna sé cur síos ar éachtaí Kruger thall agus ar an meas a bhí ag lucht Broadway air:

I take the following extract from one of the American papers: ‘Maurice Kavanaugh, considered the Irish Censor of Broadway, gave out a statement to-day that all caricature of the Irish race on stage and screen must come to a stop, and usually what the Irish critic says is heeded by several producers. Only a few years ago Kavanaugh had a few so-called Irish pictures shelved.’ (Burns 1924: 7)

Is é *Kathleen Mavourneen* an scannán is mó a luaitear le Kruger ó thaobh na cinsireachta de.<sup>17</sup> Ag filleadh ar litir Burns, tá an méid seo a leanas inti mar gheall ar an mbaint a bhí ag leis:

<sup>16</sup> Tagraíodh san alt céanna do nithe áirithe eile a bhí beartaithe ag Kruger a dhéanamh nuair a bheadh sé sa bhaile: ‘About the first thing he intends to do when he reaches the other side, however, Kavanaugh said, is to visit, or attempt to be allowed to visit De Valera, who is still held in prison. He will also visit his own brother, who was one of those who were imprisoned for some time for their part in the Irish revolution, but is now at liberty. He will tour Ireland with a camera, going much of the way by bicycle or motorcycle, studying conditions and taking pictures on the way, while watching for the Irish beauties.’

<sup>17</sup> Deir Ó Lúing go raibh Marie Dressler sa phictiúr agus gur ghabh sí buíochas le Muiris as an bhfeabhas a bhí curtha aige air, ach ní luaitear í i mease fhoireann an scannáin. Bhí sí in *The Callahans and the Murphys*, áfach, scannán a chuir MGM amach in 1927 agus ceann eile ar bhain an-chonspóid leis i measc an phobail Éireannaigh i Meiriceá. Féach Walsh (1990) ‘The Callahans and the Murphys’ (MGM, 1927): a case study of Irish-American and Catholic Church censorship’.

One of these was ‘Kathleen Mavourneen’. This picture was one of the greatest insults to the Irish race. He stated that the Irish public in America are awakened to the fact that pride of race comes ahead of politics, and that nothing will be left undone to have producers give clean Irish art as it should be given. (Burns 1924: 7)

Nuair a tháinig an scannán amach in 1919, tarraingíodh raic i measc na nÉireannach agus b'éigean don chomhlacht léirithe é a bhaint de na pictiúrlanna.<sup>18</sup> Deir Seán Ó Lúing gur thug Independent Films cuireadh don Chaomhánach dul chomh fada leo, an scannán a scrúdú agus rud ar bith tarcaisneach a ghlanadh as, rud a rinne sé, de réir dealraimh:

I took the fairies out of old men's ears. I took the ribbons off the pigs and the pigs out of the parlours. I shot down drunken Paddies trailing their coats on the road. I left the shamrocks and most of the blarney. And ‘Kathleen Mavourneen’ hit the screen minus a lot of whiskey, a lot of shillelaghs and a lot of blood. (Ó Lúing 1986: 23)

Chomh maith leis an ruaig a chur ar ghiotaí maslacha i scannáin, deirtear go ndearna Kruger moltaí maidir le haisteoirí Éireannacha oiriúnacha, cuid acu a rinne gaisce ina dhiaidh sin, ‘leithéidí, Rex Ingram, Pat O’Brien agus J.M. Kerrigan’ (Ibid.: 24).

Cé go raibh súil éigin á coinneáil sna 20idí, mar sin, ar scannáin Mheiriceánacha ina raibh léiriú ar Éirinn agus ar na hÉireannaigh, agus cé go raibh borradh faoi líon na nÉireannach a bhí ag obair i dtionscal na scannánaíochta, níorbh ionann sin is a rá go raibh deireadh leis an léiriú claonta.

Breis agus 30 bliain i ndiaidh do Kruger na *shillelaghs* a ruaigeadh as *Kathleen Mavourneen* bhí siad ar ais de thapaigean i mórscannán Disney, *Darby O’Gill and the Little People*, scannán a bhfuil cultas bunaithe anois air. Meiriceánach ab ea Walt Disney ach bhí sé thar a bheith bródúil as a chuid fréamhacha Éireannacha. I mí na Samhna 1946, scríobh sé chuig a dheirfiúr, Ruth, agus thagair sé do thuras go hÉirinn a bhí beartaithe aige:

18 ‘... all hell broke loose. The Friends of Irish Freedom and The Central Council of Irish Associations violently objected to the depiction of poverty in Ireland (although castles and middle class towns were also shown). Other groups – in a foreshadowing of today’s Politically Correct casting furor – objected to a “Jewess” portraying a beloved Irish heroine. Stink bombs were rolled down the aisles in theaters playing *Kathleen*’ (Golden 1996: 195). Ba í Theda Bara, Giúdach ó Cincinatti a ghlac an príomhról, cailín óg ó Éirinn, rogha nár thaitin leis na hÉireannaigh thall, ná níor thaitin an léiriú a rinneadh ar mhuintir a dtíre dúchais leo ach oiread.

After the premiere [of Song of the South] we are flying up to New York and sailing on the Queen Elizabeth on the 14<sup>th</sup> for England and then over to Ireland. We are starting a picture on the Leprechauns or ‘little people’ as they are called in Ireland, so we plan to spend most of our time there gathering background material and learning all we can about Irish folk-lore. (Walt Disney Family Museum).

Thug Disney le fios, mar sin, go ndéanfaí taighde ceart ar bhéaloideas na tíre agus an scannán á fhorbairt acu, agus le linn dó a bheith in Éirinn bhuail sé le Séamus Delargy ó Choimisiún Béaloideas Éireann.

In aiste Tony Tracy, ‘When Disney Met Delargy: *Darby O’Gill* and the Irish Folklore Commission’, deirtear gurb é Brian J. Connolly, státseirbhíseach sa Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha a chuir Walt Disney i dtreo Delargy i dtosach, agus casadh ar a chéile iad nuair a bhain Disney Éire amach i mí na Samhna 1946. Scríobh Bríd Mahon, cartlannaí sa Choimisiún, an méid seo a leanas mar gheall ar chuairt sin Disney ina cuimhní cinn *While Green Grass Grows: Memoirs of a Folklorist*:

The Second World War was over, life was returning to normal and Ireland was emerging from her self-imposed isolation when, in the summer of 1946, word reached us via the Department of External Affairs that Walt Disney was coming to Dublin and that his first port of call would be the offices of the Irish Folklore Commission. It was his intention to make a film dealing with Irish fairy folk. Delargy was enthusiastic and manuscripts and volumes were taken down from shelves, dusted and made ready for Disney’s inspection ... Delargy, like the Department of External Affairs, was dismayed that he had come to Ireland with the intention of making a film about leprechauns ... Following the wishes of our director, we tried to interest Disney in one or other of the great heroic sagas: The ‘*Táin*’ or ‘The Well at the World’s End’ ... There was the story of Deirdre ... or ‘The Pursuit of Diarmaid and Gráinne’ ... We told him the story of the children of Lir ... But no; nothing but leprechauns would do the man who had set his heart on meeting one and had travelled across the Atlantic in the hope that his wish might come true. (Mahon 1998: 48–51)

Faoi mar a bhí luaite ag Disney sa litir a chuir sí chuig a dheirfiúr, agus faoi mar a thuig lucht an Choimisiúin – cé go ndearna siad neart iarrachtaí é a bhaint den chonair sin – bhí sé ar intinn ag Disney ón tús scannán a dhéanamh faoi lepreacháin. Tá an chuma ar an scéal, áfach, nár iarr sé féin, ná duine

ar bith a bhí ag obair ar an scannán leis, nár iarr siad riamh ar Delargy ábhar ar bith ina raibh tagairt do leipreacháin a chur chucu, d’ainneoin go raibh leabhair agus ábhar de gach sort á chur go Meiriceá aige:

But more surprisingly, there are no written requests from Disney for leprechaun-related material from the Folklore Commission’s archive which contains several hundred examples of leprechaun tales. (Tracy 2010: 55)

In 1949, cuireadh an scannán i leataobh ach tugadh faoi arís in 1958. De réir Tracy, thug Disney cuairt eile ar Bhaile Átha Cliath go luath an bhliain chéanna ar thóir aisteoirí ach, ‘there does not seem to have been any communications with Delargy during this visit’ (Ibid.: 57). Rinneadh an scannán a thaifeadadh i Meiriceá ach i mBaile Átha Cliath a bhí an chéad taibhiú domhanda, ar an 24 Meitheamh 1959. Ba chara le Walt é an t-aisteoir cáiliúil Pat O’Brien, a bhí i measc na n-aisteoirí a mhol Kruger, agus bhí an bheirt acu, is é sin, O’Brien agus Disney, páirteach sa chlár 50 nóiméad, ‘I captured the King of the Leprechauns’, a craoladh ar an teilifís ar an 29 Bealtaine 1959, 3 seachtaine roimh an gcéad taibhiú – Disney den tuairim, is dócha, go ndéanfadh sé an-réamhphoiblíocht don scannán.

Bhí an-tionchar ag ‘*oirishness*’ *Darby O’Gill* ar lucht Hollywood agus bhí a thionchar go fóill le brath agus John Sayles ag obair ar *The Secret of Roan Inish*, a tháinig amach cúig bliana is tríocha níos déanaí, in 1994, cé nár ghéill seisean dó:

Sayles himself has no Irish ancestry; he says he simply wanted to make a genuine Irish film – and certainly not one in the style so many Americans think of as “Irish”. “My casting director in Ireland would have the word ‘DOG’ next to certain actors’ names. I asked her what that was about, and she said it stood for ‘Darby O’Gill’ – meaning that that actor tended toward a stage-Irish character, especially when an American is looking at them. So, if I used them in the film, I’d have to direct them away from that broad, almost vaudevillian Irish-American view of what the Irish are.” (Chanko 1999: 181)

Thug Walt Disney le fios go minic gur chreid sé sna leipreacháin ach is é is dóichí gur thuig sé go raibh an domhan ag athrú agus go raibh níos mó éilimh ná riamh, dá bharr, ar an íomhá den Éirinn thraidisiúnta a bhí múnlaíthe in intinn na nGael-Mheiriceánach. Thuig sé, leis, go raibh rud aige siúd nach raibh ag mórán eile, bhí bealach aige – agus na hacmhainní

chuige – le ‘seanfód’ rómánsach na samhlaíochta a chaomhnú trí mheán na scannánaíochta, seanfód a bhí á chuardach ag carachtair i scannáin eile, leis, carachtair ar nós Sean Thornton in *The Quiet Man*.

Áitíonn Michael Gillespie, áfach, gur éirigh le John Ford, stiúrthóir *The Quiet Man* arbh as an Spidéal dá athair agus Árainn dá mháthair, an iomhá rómánsach a bhí in intinn Thornton a cheistiú, seachas é a réadú:

Throughout the film Sean Thornton may very well look and behave like a stage Irishman, but only because he chooses to ignore the authentic, unromantic Ireland that surrounds him and to suppress recognition of the extent to which his own behavior conforms to that world. (Gillespie 2007: 69)

Maíonn sé, dá bharr, go raibh tionchar díreach ag *The Quiet Man* ar scannáin dhúchasacha a rinneadh ina dhiaidh sin in Éirinn, agus tagraíonn sé go sonrach do Bhob Quinn agus *Poitín*:

Quinn’s 1978 Irish language film, *Poitín*, presents a far less sentimental representation of the economic disparity and social anarchy of rural Ireland than one sees in *The Quiet Man*. Nonetheless, its power comes from subverting the same pastoral tradition attacked in Ford’s motion picture. Indeed, Ford’s deconstruction of the impulse to romanticize country life gave viewers a background that allowed Quinn to employ his starkly realistic representations. (Ibid.: 70)

Taitníodh scannáin de chineál *The Quiet Man*, *Darby O’Gill*, *Ryan’s Daughter*, *Far and Away*, agus araile, linn nó ná taitnídis, agus pé cineál brí a bhainimid astu, ní fhéadfaí a shéanadh gur spreag siad tionscal turasóireachta – turasóireacht na scannán nó ‘*film-induced tourism*’ mar a thugtar air – i roinnt mhaith codanna den tír nach mbeadh cuairteoirí chucu murach iad.

### Conclúid

Tagraíodh tríd an aiste seo do chuid de na hiarrachtaí a rinneadh thar na blianta chun léiriú níos barántúla de na hÉireannaigh a chur chun cinn sna scannáin. Ach tagann, agus tiocfaidh, scannáin amach go fóill ina bhfeictear, agus ina bhfeicfear, an léiriú claonta cúlanta – ach sin ceann de mhórdhúshlán thionscal na scannánaíochta i ndomhan an Bhéarla. Tá neart Éireannach ag plé leis an tionscal anois, agus tá neart scéalta dearfacha againn dá bharr, ach ar deireadh thiar, leanfaidh lucht Hollywood – Paramount Pictures, Universal Studios, Disney et al. – ag freastal ar mhargadh mór Mheiriceá,

agus cén dochar, ina dtuairim siúd, má dhéantar léiriú claonta ar phobal ar bith chomh fada agus nach dtéann siad thar fóir (pé dream a shocraíonn cad is ‘thar fóir’ ann) agus go saothraíonn siad na milliúin agus na billiúin ag oifig na dticéad.

Agus ní feiniméan é seo a bhaineann le Meiriceá amháin. Níor lig Sasana riamh don *stage Irishman (or woman)* imeacht go hiomlán ón stáitse. In 2023 féin, craoladh an tsraith *The Woman in the Wall* ar an BBC, dráma bunaithe ar na neachtlanna Maigdiléana. Ag scríobh dó in *The Irish Times*, cháin Ed Power easpa barántúlachta na sraithe:

This honourable mission [solas a chaitheamh ar smál na neachtlann] is derailed by the show’s portrayal of small-town Ireland as a hellscape ... And then there’s the constant use of expletives by every single character, even the well-spoken woman who wants the laundry survivors to speak about their experiences. This comes across as a winking way of signalling the natives’ uncouthness and inability to control and properly express their emotions – ancient caricature repackaged for Generation Bingewatch. It’s the Beeb doing *The Banshees of Inisherin*. Or rebooting its donkeys in the pub episode of *EastEnders* from 1997. (Power 2023)

Ach níl amhras ar bith faoi, agus thagair Liam de Brún dó seo agus é ag scríobh sna tríochaidí, ach gurb é tionscal léirithe dúchasach an t-aon réiteach ar scéal na neamhbharántúlachta, tionscal a bhfuil tacaíocht láidir an stáit taobh thiar de, tacaíocht nár cuireadh ar fáil go traidisiúnta, faoi mar a mhaíonn Dervila Layden:

The state’s antipathy towards film as modern and corrupting meant that those who wished to make films had to fight to have its validity as an art form recognized. There was no system of state support and, until 1958, no Irish film studio ... When the state finally did start to accept and support film (rather patchily) from the Lemass era onwards, the focus was on film as a commercial and inward investment opportunity ... As a result, Irish cinema texts speak less of genre, less of film theory and more of nationalism, language, religion, colonialism and culture ... But the elevating of this contextual material has resulted, I think, in an emphasis on Irish film more as *Irish* and less as *film*. (Layden 2007: 30–31)

Dúshlán a chonacthas roimhe sin i gcomhthéacs na drámaíochta Gaeilge. Ghlac sé tamall ar thionscal scannánaíochta na hÉireann tosú i gceart,

mar sin, más ann dó i ndáiríre. Maidir le tionscal na scannánaíochta Gaeilge go sonrach, níor mhór aitheantas a thabhairt do na scéimeanna ‘Oscailt’ agus ‘Lasair’ de chuid na nóchaidí deireanacha, don obair éachtach atá déanta ag Gael Linn le seachtó bliain anuas, agus do Cine4, go háirithe.

Ar deireadh thiar, an bhfuil réiteach níos fearr ar chúngach thionscal na scannán Béarla ná scannáin Ghaeilge a chur ar fáil? Má táimid chun an troid ar son na barántúlachta a bhuachan, níor mhór dúinn ár gcultúr físe féin a shainiú (– cé muid féin?), seilbh a ghlacadh air agus ár scéal féin a athghabháil. Agus sin é atá á dhéanamh againn le tamall anuas go háirithe. Dá ndéanfaí infheistíocht níos fearr ar an bhfearann ní bheadh aon teora leis an méid a d’fhéadfaimis a dhéanamh. Faoi mar atá ráite ag Colm Bairéad:

This recent surge in Irish-language films, which began in earnest with *Arracht* is due almost entirely to increased investment, to a commitment to the idea of Irish-language cinema by a number of key stakeholders – TG4, Screen Ireland, and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. It has resulted in a continuity of films in Irish that the industry and Irish audiences have never known before ... It has felt in these past few years that a sense of real possibility has attached itself to Irish-language cinema, a sense of something new to be discovered in this expression of ourselves. Something that belongs unreservedly to us. (Bairéad & Ní Chruaí 2023: 9)

Ach níor mhór dúinn a bheith cúramach nach í an Ghaeilge an t-aon difear amháin idir scannáin dár gcuid féin agus scannáin de chuid dreamanna eile – ní barántúlacht a bheadh ansin ach féiniúlacht theangeolaíoch. Tagraíonn Michael Cronin don cheist seo agus don bhaol go mbeadh againn:

The appearance of difference but the reality of indifference ... You may indeed have the language or *teanga* but does it belong to or describe a country or *tír* that differs greatly from the one that might be described in the other dominant *teanga*? (Cronin 2005: 16)

Nó, mar a deir Fidelma Farley:

Merely grafting Irish on to “universal” stories might appear to be an act of modernizing the language, but in actuality has the opposite effect – by removing Irish from its context it becomes increasingly isolated and irrelevant to contemporary Irish life. (Farley 2007: 174)

Ach ní rud nua i scéal na Gaeilge é ceist an chultúir a chur as riocht. Trí mheán an aistriúcháin a phléitear stair liteartha na Gaeilge go minic agus i gcás tíortha agus teangacha a buaileadh faoi chois, bíonn íogaire ar leith ag baint leis an bpróiseas sin. Is sampla maith é an réamhrá a chuir Charlotte Brooke le *The Reliques of Irish Poetry* (1789) ina labhraíonn sí faoin dualgas a mhothaigh sí oidhreacht na tíre a léiriú, ‘*to vindicate, in part, its history*’ (Brooke 1789: v). Chuige sin a deir sí faoin dúshlán a bhí roimpi:

I do not profess to give a merely literal version of my originals, for that I should have found an impossible undertaking. –Besides the spirit which they breathe, and which lifts the imagination far above the tameness, let me say, the injustice, of such a task, –there are many complex words that could not be translated literally, without great injury to the original, –without being “false to its sense, and falser to its fame.” (Ibid.: v–vi)

Is trí mheán an aistriúcháin agus na bhfotheideal a chuirtear, agus a chuirfear, scannáin Ghaeilge chun cinn ar bhonn idirnáisiúnta, agus, ar ndóigh, is trí mheán an aistriúcháin a chuirtear agus a chuirfear scannáin áirithe in oiriúint do phobal na Gaeilge. Níor mhór dúinn a bheith cúramach i gcónaí, dá bharr, nach gcaillfimis an troid ar son na barántúlachta i dtionscnaimh dá leithéid, ná, go deimhin, i dtionscnaimh bhunaidh.

Tá cur síos in aistí an chnuasaigh seo ar roinnt de na scannáin Ghaeilge is fearr agus is tábhachtaí a rinneadh go dtí seo, agus léirítear go soiléir gur barántúil an léiriú a dhéantar ar mhuintir na tíre seo iontu, rud a dtagraíonn Ed Power dó, ina alt thuasluaite in *The Irish Times*, agus é ag labhairt faoi *An Cailín Ciúin*:

Watching *The Woman in the Wall*, the BBC’s baroque and hysterically overcooked attempt at confronting the wickedness of the Magdalene laundries, I can’t help flashing back to *An Cailín Ciúin*. That Oscar-nominated Irish film signalled its authenticity with a brief but powerful scene in which a solitary Kimberley is placed on a table in a gesture of veiled affection. At that point Irish viewers knew they were in safe hands. Anyone who grew up in Ireland in the 1980s will have understood what the biscuit represented: kindness concealed beneath gruffness, a treat lighting up one of those becalmed Sundays. (Power 2023)

Ciallaíonn líon ard na scannán a dhéantar ina mbíonn léiriú ar Éirinn nó

ar Éireannaigh nach mbeidh smacht i gcónaí againn ar an léiriú a dhéanfar orainn ar an scáileán. Ní fiú dúinn inní a chur orainn féin, mar sin, maidir leis an gcuid sin den tionscal nach bhfuil smacht againn air. Ba cheart dúinn, áfach, ár gcultúr físe féin a chur chun cinn oiread agus is féidir inár gcuid scannán féin. Bainfear an bonn, dá réir sin, ó léiriú seanfhaiseanta claonta ar bith agus ceisteofar a bharántúlacht. I bhfocail Gabriel Byrne:

We, as Irish filmmakers, have a responsibility to tell our own stories ourselves because it is those stories that tell the world who we are. (Byrne 1999: 70)

Is linne ár scéal féin, agus táimid á athghabháil de réir a chéile. A bhuí leis an obair atá déanta ag lucht scannánaíochta na tíre seo, as Gaeilge agus as Béarla, níos minice ná a mhalairt muid féin, gonár lochtanna agus ár laigí, a léirítear anois ar an scáileán mór. Chríochnaigh Liam de Brún a aiste in 1937 ar cheist reitriciúil:

Cá bhfios dúinn ná gur gairid dúinn an lá 'n-a mbeidh Scannáin Ghaedhealacha, ní h-amháin i ngach pictiurlann i n-Éirinn, acht i bpictiurlanna gach príomh-chathrach, cathrach, agus baile mhóir ar fuid an domhain chómh maith? (1937: 82)

Ach ní ceist reitriciúil a thuilleadh í. Cé nach bhfaca an Brúnach é, tá an lá sin tagtha ar deireadh agus clú agus cáil ar scannáin, ní de chuid na hÉireann amháin, ach scannáin de chuid na Gaeilge, chomh maith, fud fad an domhain mhóir. ‘When *An Cailín Ciúin* eventually finishes its theatrical run’ a scríobh Cleona ní Chrualaoi, ‘it will have been seen in over 60 countries, by audiences who have never heard our ancient language before’ (Bairéad & Ní Chrualaoi 2023: 10).

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PP8: Cnuasach Kruger/ The Muiris Kavanagh Archive. Bailiúcháin Speisialta: Ollscoil Mhá Nuad.

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- IMDb (Internet Movie Database) [cur síos ar ‘Dawn over Ireland’]: [https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0203439/?ref\\_=nm\\_knf\\_t\\_2](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0203439/?ref_=nm_knf_t_2)
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