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MAN OF ARAN AGUS SCANNÁN GAEILGE
le Robert Flaherty

Nollaig Mac Congáil

Rinneadh scannáin cháiliúla sa tír seo i gcaitheamh na mblianta a bhain cáil amach dóibh féin ar chúiseanna áirithe ach is beag acu a bhfuil an stádas céanna acu is atá ag *Man of Aran* le Robert Flaherty. Áirítear an scannán seo ar chlasaicí na scannánaíochta ar fud na cruinne. Tá an méid seo a leanas scríofa faoi ar shuíomh idirlín Árann:

> *Robert Flaherty's stunning documentary film **Man of Aran** was first previewed in London in 1934. Many experts consider that **Man of Aran** includes some of the world's finest footage. The film played an important role in bringing the islands to the attention of the world.*[1]

Is fiú roinnt sonraí a thabhairt faoin scannán féin. Tháinig an scannán seo ar an tsaol sa bhliain 1934, maireann sé 75 bomaite, agus scannán D/B agus 35 mm atá ann. I mbliain a eisithe ghnóthaigh sé gradam idirnáisiúnta 'Scannán na Bliana':

> *The film **Man of Aran** has won the prize awarded by the National Board of Review for motion pictures for the best film of the year. This is the first time that a British film has been chosen…*[2]

Foilsíodh leabhar *Man of Aran*[3] le Pat Mullen, fear de bhunadh Árann agus aisteoir sa scannán, ag cur síos ar stair an scannáin. Is léir ón bheagán sin féin go bhfuil cáil fhada leitheadach ar an scannán seo.[4] Ní miste an scéal a chíoradh a thuilleadh, b'fhéidir, agus snáithíní eile a bhaineas leis an scannán seo agus le fear a dhéanta a fhiosrú.

Níor thuata ar bith é Roberty Flaherty (1884-1951) i gceird na scannánaíochta nuair a thug sé faoi *Man of Aran* a dhéanamh. Ní hamháin go raibh sainscil agus spéis dá réir in

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[1] http://www.visitaranislands.com/man.html

[2] *Irish Independent*, 29.12.34. Deirtear faoin scannán in *Time Out: Film Guide* (Penguin Books, 2000) 651: 'Flaherty… quite happily places the Aran fishermen in a preconceived *mise en scène* of spartan struggle in order to arrive at his intended goal: images of stylised heroism. A film which remains - especially in its elemental images of sea and storm - mightily impressive.'

[3] E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1935.

[4] 'The film is accompanied by music, the score of which is based on the traditional Irish folksongs of the Aran Islands' (*Irish Independent*, 26.4.34, 2).

ealaín na scannánaíochta aige agus go raibh scannáin déanta aige cheana, ach bhí fealsúnacht ar leith taobh thiar de na scannáin a roghnaigh sé le déanamh, fealsúnacht a bhain le laochas dochloíte an duine agus é i ngleic leis na dúile tíoránta. Is é a rinne na scannáin cháiliúla *Nanook of the North*, *Moana*, agus *Louisiana Story* i measc go leor eile. Agus is é fosta a rinne an chéad scannán a raibh fuaimrian Gaeilge ag gabháil leis, mar atá, *Oíche Sheanchais*, nach bhfuil mórán eolais ag lucht na Gaeilge ná ag lucht na scannánaíochta[5] faoi, is cosúil.

Ní hamhlaidh nár chualathas aon fhocal Gaeilge[6] ar scannán roimhe sin. Mar shampla:

IRELAND ON THE SCREEN[7]

> *In 1933, too, many films… were produced. A series of short musical films, featuring Irish artistes and songs, were undertaken. The Irish language was used in some of the numbers. The firm of McConnell-Hartley Ltd., Dublin, undertook these 'musical shorts.' It was the first time the Irish language had been used in a 'talkie.'*

Is fada roimhe sin, áfach, ó cuireadh tús le ré na scannán sa tír seo. Bhí scannáin Bhéarla ag teacht isteach go tiubh sa tír le blianta roimhe sin agus bhí spéis as cuimse ag gnáthphobal na tíre agus ag daoine óga ach go háirithe iontu sa tréimhse sin. Bhíodh cuntais rialta san am ar na nuachtáin ar na scannáin a bhí á dtaispeáint agus faoi na réaltaí scannán.[8] Bhí an méid seo a leanas le rá ag Micheál Ó Maoláin (as Árainn) ag comhdháil bhliantúil Chonradh na Gaeilge sa bhliain 1937:[9]

> *The young people of today knew more about cinema stars than they did about many other persons and things. Some time ago he met a little girl from Skibbereen who knew more about Mae West than she did about O'Donovan Rossa.*

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[5] Tá an t-uafás scríofa faoi Robert Flaherty i gcaitheamh na mblianta ach is fíorannamh amach is amach a dhéantar tagairt don scannán Gaeilge seo leis.

[6] Gí go raibh an Ghaeilge ó dhúchas ag aisteoirí *Man Of Aran*, ní hí a labhair siad ar an scannán. Mar a dúirt tuairisceoir amháin: 'A more debatable point is the use of sound in the film, and especially the use of dialogue. The sound effects are well done. But one feels that the characters should have been shown as speaking in Irish for the Aran islanders do not use English among themselves' (*The Irish Times*, 7.5.34, 6).

[7] *Scéala Éireann*, 5.9.35, 1. Níl aon údar luaite leis an alt seo.

[8] Díol suntais é go ndearnadh aistriú Gaeilge faoi scéim aistriúcháin an Ghúim ar chuid de na leabhair a ndearnadh scannáin díobh agus a bhí á dtaispeáint ag an am seo.

[9] *Scéala Éireann*, 1.4.37, 6.

Meán iontach tábhachtach a bhí sa scannán i sochaí na hÉireann ag an am ar chuid mhór cúiseanna agus mhairfeadh a chumhacht agus a thionchar go dtí teacht na teilifíse. Bhí daoine ann san am sin a thuig an tábhacht a bhain le scannáin ó thaobh na Gaeilge de. D'aithin an Rialtas ag tús na dtríochaidí, mar shampla, go raibh tábhacht ag baint le scannáin ó thaobh Athbheochan na Gaeilge de.

MORE IRISH ON RADIO: TALKIES: NEWSPAPER[10]

> *[Senator Blythe]: If they were not going to have talking pictures in Irish, then the outlook for the restoration of Irish was remote. The first picture should be for schools.*
>
> *Ó tháinig na scannáin chainnte isteach tá námhaid nua láidir ag an nGaedhilg. Má leanann ré na scannán beidh sé fuar againn bheith ag iarraidh an teanga do shábháil mura dtoilighean an Riaghaltas cuid mhaith airgid do dheónadh le peictiúirí Gaedhealacha do chur ar fáil. Ní fheadar i gceart cad é an méid airgid a bheadh ag teastáil, acht is dóigh liom, dá mba ghádh é, go mb'fhiú oiread a chaitheamh le Galldachas na bpictiúrlanna do luigheadú agus a caithtear ar thaidhleoirí le clú agus gradam an stáit d'fhógairt thar lear .i. £70,000.*[11]

Chaithfí beart éigin a dhéanamh faoin scéal. Thapaigh an Rialtas an deis.

> *Suddenly the Government sprang a surprise. A supplementary estimate for £200 was introduced in the Dáil to cover the expenses of the production of a sound film in Irish, to be produced on Aran. The filming was, it was announced, to be done by Robert J. Flaherty, who at the time was quietly engaged in filming Man of Aran..*[12]

Seo a leanas an cuntas gearr a thugann Proinsias Ó Conluain faoin scannán ina leabhar ar stair na scannán:

> *Oíche Sheanchais* [1932] le Robert Flaherty. An chéad scannán a raibh fuaimrian Gaeilge ag gabháil leis agus an ceann ba mheasa dár cheadaigh Ó Flathartaigh a ainm a chur leis. Ní hairsean ar fad a bhí an locht, ar ndóigh - ba bheag a d'fhéadfadh sé a dhéanamh leis an £200 a chuir an Roinn Oideachais ar fáil dó.[13]

Bhí lámh ag duine eile i ndéanamh an scannáin. Deir an Dr. Kenneth Whitaker:

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[10] 'Proposals in Senate,' *Scéala Éireann*, 11.4.35, 3
[11] Earnán de Blaghd, 'Trí Módha Léirighthe,' *Scéala Éireann* (20.1,38, 4).
[12] *Scéala Éireann*, 5.9.35, 1. Níl aon údar luaite leis an alt seo.
[13] Proinsias Ó Conluain, *Scéal na Scannán* (Oifig an tSoláthair, 1953) 241.

[Delargy] helped Robert Flaherty to produce in 1934 the first-ever sound film in Irish Oíche Sheanchais.[14]

Nuair a chuirtear na sonraí sin uile maidir leis an scannán seo san áireamh, díol suntais é nach bhfuil mórán eolais ag lucht na Gaeilge faoin scannán áirithe seo ná faoi stair a dhéanta.

Mar a tharlaíonn, tá cuntas againn faoina stair[15] agus an chaoi nár tapaíodh deis eile le cuidiú le cúis na Gaeilge. Seo a leanas alt a scríobh J.A.P. ar an téad seo:[16]

Is the First Gaelic 'Talkie' Worth While?
Famous Irish-American Producer Does Not Think He Can Do Much With It

by
J.A.P.

On his way back from one civilization to another - that is to say, from Wardour Street to the Aran Islands - last week, Mr. Robert Flaherty tarried for a few hours in Dublin.
Mr. Flaherty, as you ought to be aware by this time, is the famous Irish-American producer who has been making a film of the Aran Islands for the past year or so. He is also the man who is to make the first Gaelic 'talkie' financed by the Saorstát. The State, I believe, has plunged recklessly to the extent of a couple of hundred pounds in this matter.
I have read a lot of bla-flum about what the State expects for its modest investment. I gather that it expects quite a lot. And I think that its stinginess deserves a disappointment.

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[14] James Hamilton Delargy: Address by Senator T.K. Whitaker to the Glens of Antrim Historical Society, Friday 3 April, 1981.

[15] Tá nóta breise ag Micheál Ó Maoláin (as Árainn) maidir leis an scannán seo má bhainim an chiall cheart as a chuid cainte:
'D'airíos ag dul tharam é gur gearr go mbeadh an pictiúr úd faoi shaol na nÁrainneach á spáint ar na scannáin.
Bhí sé i gceist go spáinfí pictiúr i dtosach ar an gceann mór - 'An Seanchaí' chois tine ag inseacht seanscéil don chuideachtain thart. Fear as Árainn a bheadh sa seanchaí seo de réir mar gealladh ar dtús.
Mar chuala mé le gairid, tá athrú ar an scéal. Ní fear as Árainn ná canúint Árann a bheas ann chor ar bith anois. Ní thuigim cad chuige a ndearnadh an t-athrú seo. Más saol Árann atáthar ag brath ar léiriú, níl aon duine eile is fearr a d'fhéadfadh an saol sin a thuigsint ná an tÁrainneach féin.
Is iontach an rud é nach bhféadfaí duine in Árainn Mhóir nó in Inis Meáin nó in Inis Oírr a fháil a bheadh inchurtha le aon duine eile le seanscéal nó le úrscéal Gaeilge a inseacht. Tá mise cinnte go mbeadh dá dtéití dá lorg ach ní dheachthas.
Tugadh £200 as sparán poiblí na tíre leis an bpictiúr Gaeilge seo a chur ar fáil agus ba cheart go mbeadh tuairisc éicint ag muintir na tíre faoi. Tuige ar caitheadh Árainn in airde?' (*Scéala Éireann*, 3.11.33, 4).

[16] *Irish Independent*, 15.7.33, 4.

The idea of this pioneer film is that a seanchaí tells a story in Gaelic to an Aran Island audience. Good! Gaelic literature abounds in wonderful stories and there is great scope here - a chance of linking the screen with the saga and binding the interest with the language.

What we should have, of course, is a series of scenes unfolding the tale as the seanchaí tells it - Diarmaid and Gráinne, Deirdre and the Sons of Uisneach, Cú Chulainn, the Táin Bó Cuailgne, the coming of Patrick and the lighting of the Paschal Fire on the Hill of Slane, the Romances of the Knights of the Red Branch - whatever story he might pick for the moment.

What wonderful pictures could be made from those stories and what a wonderful spur it would be to the language movement.

And what are we going to get? Something extremely pedagogical, I infer. According to the present plans, we will see and hear the seanchaí telling the story - with, of course, appropriate setting and possibly a few very brief introductory scenic 'shots.' And after that, what?

"Well," said Mr. Flaherty when the question was put to him in Dublin on his way back to his beloved islands, "what can I do except pan the camera round on the folk who are listening to the story. That is to say, you will get alternate views of the storyteller and his audience - and, for the rest, you will listen to the Gaelic. I should say that the picture is not going to help you out much with the language."

And, incidentally, it is rather an insult to an artist like Flaherty to ask him to make such a cheap film - it is like translating a language lesson from the still life of the blackboard to the vitality of the screen and utterly failing to take advantage of the extended scope.

I know that Mr. Flaherty does not think much of the project. He realises, I think, that the State is spoiling the ship for a ha'porth of tar. He has stated that he does not see how he can do much with the film in the present circumstances. Neither do I.

The Government gives subsidies to the older and more circumscribed variants of art - substantial subsidy in at least one case - but when it comes to utilising the very latest vehicle and directing it into the proper channel, they jib at a ha'penny, so to speak.

Before it is too late I wish they would give Mr. Flaherty the chance that his genius deserves.

Seo a leanas an nóta a foilsíodh faoin dóigh ar glacadh le céadléiriú an scannáin, áfach.

FIRST ALL-GAELIC TALKIE[17]

[17] *Irish Independent*, 17.12.34, 5. Tá an méid seo a leanas le rá ag Brian McIlroy faoi stair an scannáin seo: '… in 1938 Fianna Fáil, the political party that rules during the 1930s, began to promote the notion of Gaelic language films for school audiences, under pressure from some lobby groups. At the same time Robert Flaherty was commissioned to make an Irish language film. The Dáil sanctioned £200 to be given to the project which turned out to be a disappointment. *Oidhche Sheanchais/ A Night of Story-Telling* (1935) was intended as a short to preface *Man of Aran*; it depicts an old man at a fireside telling stories. By all accounts the film failed to gain much attention, mostly because of the banal script provided by the Department of Education (*World Cinema 4: Ireland* (Flicks Books, 1988) 31).

Oíche Sheanchais

Those who had the opportunity of viewing Oíche Sheanchais at a private showing in the premises of the Gaumont British Distributors Ltd. Building were highly pleased with the recording and photography of the first all-Gaelic talkie.
Sponsored by the Government, the talkie depicts a fireside scene in an Aran house in which the principal characters in the Man of Aran film are introduced. It takes about 12 minutes to show and is mainly concerned with the telling of an old folk-tale by Seáinín Tom Ó Direáin.
The picture was produced by Mr. Robert O'Flaherty who was assisted by Mr. Séamus Ó Duilearga, M.A.[18]
When it is ready for public showing many people all over the country will be delighted to see Oíche Sheanchais and to enjoy hearing the storyteller's beautiful Irish.

OÍCHE SHEANCHAIS: Text of Gaelic Talkie[19]

'An Scéal a Inistear sa Chéad Scannán Gaeilge'

Is gairid anois nó go mbeidh an pictiúr Gaeilge *Oíche Sheanchais*, a deineadh le deontas ón Rialtas, is gairid go mbeidh sé dá léiriú ar fud na hÉireann. Is é *Oíche Sheanchais* an chéad phictiúr Gaeilge dar deineadh riamh. Anso síos an scéal a aithriseann an seanchaí sa phictiúr maille le réamhrá beag. Roinn an Oideachais a d'fhoilsigh an scéal.

Ar oileáin Árann, teorainn thiar na nGael, tá roinnt de na nósanna a bhain le muintir na hEorpa sa meánaois beo fós - agus tá bua na scéalaíochta ar cheann de na nósanna sin. Is ag ríomh scéil agus ag gabháil amhrán a caitear oícheanta fada fuara an gheimhridh. Insíonn Seáinín Tom Sheáin seanscéal[20] a bhí ina sheanscéal míle bliain ó shin.

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[18] Tá cáil mhór ar Árainn le fada ó thaobh na Gaeilge agus an bhéaloidis de. Ar théad seo an bhéaloidis, tá an méid seo a leanas canta ag Pat Mullen: 'No book ever thrilled me more, or indeed as much, as our own folklore tales as told by my Uncle Jim, tales of *The Fionna, Fion-Ossian, Oscar and Diarmuid, Ghoul MacMorna, Conan Maol*, and hosts of those mighty men. The men of Aran in those days read little fiction. They lived in their stories, and their eyes flashed with fire or grew dim with emotion as a tale reached great heights of courage or sank down to sadness' (*Man of Aran* (The M.I.T. Press, 1970) 15-6).

[19] *Scéala Éireann*, 15.3.35, 4. Tá an t-ádh dearg orainn go bhfuil script an scannáin seo féin againn nó deir Sunniva O'Flynn, Archive Curator, IFC, nár éirigh leo cóip den scannán seo a aimsiú gí go bhfuil siad á lorg le blianta. Tá mé buíoch de Sunniva as a cuidiú.

[20] Maidir leis an scéal béaoidis seo, féach an nóta seo a leanas ag Séamus Ó Duilearga: 'Oidhche Sheanchais. Sean-scéal a insigheann Seáinín Tom Sheáin [Í Dhioráin, nach maireann] as Árainn. Ar n-a scríobhadh síos do Roinn an Oideachais. [1935]. Téx an scannáin ghlóraigh "Oidhche Sheanchais" (*Leabhar Sheáin Í Chonaill* (Brún agus Ó Nualláin Teo., 1964) 430.

Bhí fear thiar sa gcuid thiar de Chonamara sa tseanaimsir agus ba é a ainm Máirtín Mac an Rí. Bhí a bhean caillte agus bhí triúr mac aige. Ní raibh an mac ab óige acub mar déarfá, ní raibh aois fir aige ach bhí aois fir ag an mbeirt eile.

Bhí sé tugtha anuas san am sin go raibh banc iascach i gCuan an Fhód Duibh agus bhí bád as chuile cheard ag tíocht ag iascach ann.

Bhí go maith. Bhí líonta amuigh ag chuile bhád a leithéide seo d'oíche agus bhí líonta amuigh ag clann Mháirtín Mac an Rí mar gach bád.

Tháinig an oíche thar cionn, thar cionn, thar cionn uilig le stoirm, le báisteach agus le farraigí móra.

Bhuel, nuair a bhí clann Mháirtín Mac an Rí ag gabháil go dtína gcuid líonta ar maidin roimh an lá, nuair a d'éiríodar, bhíodar á bhfáil féin faoi réir agus labhair a n-athair aniar den leaba leis an mac is sine acub.

"Ó, a mhic," ar seisean, "tabhair leat an píce atá ar chúl an dorais agus sáith splanc ann agus tabhair leat é."

"Á, codail anois, codail anois," a deir sé, "má tá codladh ort," a deir sé.

"Ó, a mhic," a deir sé leis an darna mac, "an dtiubhrfá, an dtiubhrfá - tabhair thusa leat é," a deir sé.

"Cuir an phluid faoi do shúil anois," a deir an dara mac, "agus ná bac leis," ar seisean. "Ná bac linne."

"Ára, a mhicín mo chroí thú," ar seisean leis an tríú mac, "tabhair thusa leat é agus déan comhairle d'athar."

"Déanfaidh mé comhairle m'athar," a deir sé. "Déanfad," a deir sé.

Rug sé ar an bpíce agus sháith sé síos is na[21] splanc sa tine é agus thug sé an píce leis ina láimh ag imeacht dhó.

Chuadar chuig an mbád agus chaith sé isteach an píce agus an splanc ar bhallast an bháid agus d'imíodar leob go ndeachadar ar a gcuid líonta agus os cionn a gcuid líonta.

Agus bhí bád ag gabháil isteach, bhí bád ag gabháil amach agus chuile bhád á bá, á bá.

(Ó, go bhfóire Dia orainn! Dia ár réiteach!)

(Ba bhocht an scéal é! Ba bhocht an scéal é!)

Ba bhocht!

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[21] Sic!

Bhuel, chonaiceadar an fharraige mhór ag tíocht go dtí iad féin.

(Go bhfóire Dia orainn!)

Ó bhí sí chomh hard, chomh mór…

"Ó, a dhriotháireacha," a deir an mac is sine, "tá muid báite anois go díreach."

"Tá," a deir an darna mac.

Níor rinne an tríú mac ach breith ar an bpíce agus ar an splanc agus í a chaitheamh in éadan na farraige.

Leáigh sí anuas, leáigh sí amach - smúdáilte. Níor fhan farraige ná ceo ná gála ná tada.

(Buíochas le Dia!)

Bád ar bith a bhí báite san am sin, bhí sí báite agus bád ar bith a bhí beo, bhí sí beo.

D'imíodar.

Tháinigeadar abhaile agus tháinigeadar i dtír san áit a bhí acub le theacht i dtír. Bhí hocht mbaintreach déag agus trí fichid ar an tráigh rompub agus ní raibh an méid sin baintreacha ann gan go leor leor daoine óga bheith ina measc.

Chuadar abhaile. Faoi cheann cheithre oíche ina dhiaidh, tháinig duine uasal iontach faoina *charoline* ard mór iontach chuig doras Mháirtín Mac an Rí, titim na hoíche, agus capall breá álainn ceart dubh aige agus scead bhán ina héadan a bhí chomh geal le meall sneachta.

"A Mháirtín Mac an Rí," ar seisean, "an bhfuil tú istigh?"

"Tá," arsa Máirtín Mac an Rí.

Chuaigh sé amach.

"Ó, céard tá uait, a dhuine uasail?" ar seisean.

"Dhá mba é do thoil é," a deir an duine uasal breá, "an ligfeá do mhac in éindí liom go ceann uair amháin an chloig? Agus mo lámh agus m'fhocal duit go dtiubhrfaidh mé isteach abhaile go slán sábháilte arís agat é."

"Ligfead, a dhuine uasail," arsa Máirtín Mac an Rí, "agus fáilte."

"B'fhéidir nach gcaillfeá tada leis," ar seisean.

Chuaigh an fear suas ar a chúladh[22] (chapall?) agus chuaigh an stócach suas ar a chúladh agus d'imigh leob. Agus ní rabhadar dhá fhad an chapaill ón doras nuair nach raibh a fhios aige cén cheard, cén áit ar thalamh an domhain mhóir a raibh sé.

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[22] Féach, Franz Nikolaus Finck, *Die Araner Mundart* II (Marburg, 1899) 166 sub *cúl*.

Bhíodar ag imeacht go dtáinigeadar go dtí caisleán breá álainn ceart de chúirt iontach. D'iarr an duine uasal an doras a oscailt agus osclaíodh. Chuadar isteach. Bhíodar ag gabháil isteach ó sheomra go seomra gur shiúladar an oiread seo seomraí agus chuile sheomra acub níos breátha ná an ceann eile go ndeachadar isteach i seomra a bhí lán le mná óga breátha agus bhí bean óg thuas ins an leaba. Bhí cos an phíce amach ón éadach.
"Tarraing é seo," arsa an duine uasal, "más tú a chuir inti é," ar seisean. "Sin Banríon na Bruíne agus mise Rí na Bruíne!"
(Ó, a Mhaighdean Bheannaithe!)
Rug seisean ar an bpíce agus chuir sé cos i dteannta leis an bpíce agus tharraing sé amach as a taobh an píce agus an splanc.
"Go raibh maith agat," arsa an bhean óg. "Go raibh maith agat," ar sise, "agus ní móide go gcaillfeá tada leis. Déanfaidh mise, b'fhéidir, beagán leasa dhuit," ar sise.
Chuaigh sé amach - an duine uasal - nuair a bhí an píce tarraingte agus shiúil seisean amach ina dhiaidh go ndeachadar ar an gcapall arís go dtug sé slán sábháilte isteach arís abhaile ag a athair é.
Faoi cheann trí bliana ina dhiaidh, bhí an sruth séin agus sonais ar Mháirtín Mac an Rí agus ar a raibh aige agus, faoi cheann trí bliana ina dhiaidh, cheannódh sé Cuan an Fhód Duibh agus a raibh ann, agus, faoi cheann trí bliana eile ina dhiaidh sin, cheannódh sé an paróiste a raibh sé ann uilig.
Sin é mo scéalsa anois agus ní mise a chum ná a cheap é.

Má rinneadh moladh áirithe ar an scannán tráth a eisithe, is cinnte nár shásaigh sé chuile dhuine. I measc lucht a cháinte bhí Earnán de Blaghd, fear a chreid go bhféadfadh scannáin Ghaeilge leas na Gaeilge a dhéanamh.

> *Referring to the Irish picture Oíche Sheanchais, Mr. Blythe said it was a model of everything an Irish picture ought not to be. He did not say that in any cavilling spirit but only to illustrate the difficulties*.[23]

[23] 'Proposals in Senate,' *Scéala Éireann*, 11.4.35, 3.

Mura raibh ardchéimíocht i ndán do *Oíche Sheanchais*, chan ionann is an chinniúint a bhí daite do *Man of Aran*, mar sin féin, bhí sliocht air le scannán eile, mar atá, *Damhsa Árann*, a rinneadh ar Árainn tamall ina dhiaidh sin.

> *… The Aran Islands seemed to be specially singled out for exploration and Damhsa Árann, a Gaelic League picture, was filmed there.*[24]

Seo a leanas cuntas gearr Uí Chonluain ar an scannán chéanna:

> ***Davidson, J.N.G. (Norris)***
> - ***Damhsa Árann (Zenifilms, 1934). Scannán faisnéiseach - an Ghaeilge agus ceol Gaelach le cluinstin ar an fhuaimrian - léiriú ar dhamhsa i gCill Éanna ar Inis Mhóir.***[25]

ARAN ISLANDS FILM

> *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.*[26]

Cá bhfuil macalla scéal agus ábhar na scannán sin as Árainn?[27] Tá, i scéal agus in ábhar dhírbheathaisnéisí an Bhlascaoid. Mar a dúirt Pádraig Ua Maoileoin blianta ó shin: 'Nuair a chacann gé…' Bhuail galar na scríbhneoireachta/dírbheathaisnéiseachta muintir an Bhlascaoid, d'imigh ó ghlúin go glúin, bhuail daoine eile ar tír mór, scaip go dtí oileáin/Gaeltachtaí eile. Scríbhneoireacht ag cothú scríbhneoireachta, leabhair ina ndíol aithrise ó shin i leith.

Scannán ar an Bhlascaod?[28] Eibhlís Ní Shúilleabháin ag scríobh i litir chuig George Chambers:

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[24] *Scéala Éireann*, 5.9.35, 1. Níl aon údar luaite leis an alt seo.
[25] Proinsias Ó Conluain, *Scéal na Scannán* (Oifig an tSoláthair, 1953) 236. Níl cóip den scannán seo ar fáil in áit ar bith go bhfios di, dar le Sunniva O'Flynn, Archive Curator, IFC.
[26] *Scéala Éireann*, 1.10.35, 9.
[27] Sna sála ar scannáin Árann, rinne Brian Hurst an scannán *Riders to the Sea* le J.M. Synge i gConamara agus i nGaillimh. Bhí dlúthbhaint ag an bhanaisteoir cháiliúil Gracie Fields leis an scannán chéanna. Níl aon dáta luaite ag Proinsias Ó Conluain leis an scannán seo ach tá a fhios againn ó chuntais ar na nuachtáin go raibh sé á dhéanamh i lár 1935 (*Scéala Éireann*, 6.7.35, 8). Féach fosta, *Irish Independent*, 11.7.36, 4.
[28] I measc cuairteoirí eile, thug Robin Flower cuairt ar Árainn le breathnú ar dhéanamh an scannáin *Man of Aran*.

A crowd of filmstars has been to Blaskets for a week, eighteen altogether, taking every sort of picture - Blasket has done good through them, money, tobacco and fags for everybody helping them - interesting photos too, canoe racing, five canoes landing in a storm and a man gone out to sea near the canoe and such pictures. 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…
The Islandman they called that film is not about my father-in-law. 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 here and troubles.[29]

Seo a leanas cuntas gearr Uí Chonluain ar an scannán chéanna:

THE ISLANDMAN

Heale, Patrick (Irish National Film Corporation) *The Islandman* [1938]. Scéal faoi na Blascoidí le Dónal Ó Cathail. Brian Ó Súileabháin, Eibhlín Ní Chuirrín agus Gabriel Fallon ann; amhráin le Delia Murphy.[30]

Agus cuntas comhaimseartha ar dhéanamh an scannáin i nuachtán náisiúnta:

… Islandman, the finishing stages of which are being completed each night in the Dublin studio of Scannán Chumáin Náisiúnta na hÉireann (sic!), under the direction of Mr. Patrick Heale, a Dun Laoghaire man of wide experience in the film world. Professionally, Miss Curran is a teacher of elocution and singing in St. Aloysius College. Also playing in the film is Mrs. Kiernan and her young daughter. Donal Ó Cathail wrote the scenario. Most of the work has already been done on the spot, in the Blaskets, where the company spent the last few months. For some of the indoor scenes, however, they need the studio equipment that is available in Dublin.
I wondered how accommodation and supplies had been found on the islands for such a large arrival of strangers. They had expected rough food and a good deal of discomfort, I learned, but instead of that the islanders provided for them excellently. They had the best of food and cooking and everything in the world was done for them that could make their stay pleasant. The remote Blasket Islands have added to the long list of their friends.
There must be perfect silence when a sound picture is being made so the high walls of the studio are muffled, even for the night work.

[29] Nuala Ní Aimhirghín, *Muiris Ó Súileabháin* (An Sagart, 1983) 29-30.
[30] Proinsias Ó Conluain, *Scéal na Scannán* (Oifig an tSoláthair, 1953) 239.

While the sounds of the city were dying out, the last of the election meetings dispersing, the picturehouses closing their door, and the trams passing from the streets, the actors and actresses gathered into the studio and started to make up their faces, hands and arms. Eyes became brighter, lips redder, skins smooth and tinted with grease paint. City clothes were set aside and fishermen's trousers and ganzeys were donned by the men, shawls by the women.
Then the scene was set, the brilliant lights adjusted, and the scene in a Blasket cottage built up in every tiniest detail. Just one corner was Blasket, the rest of the studio a network of cables and equipment with mechanicians intently occupied in the multitudinous detail of their complicated duties. Perhaps the work of the whole night till the first trams clanked out again in the morning will run off in a single minute of the completed film. M.C.[31]

Go hiondúil, nuair a thráchtar ar thréimhse na bhfichidí agus na dtríochaidí in Éirinn, dírítear ar chúrsaí polaitíochta agus ar chúrsaí eacnamaíochta agus chan gan chúis. Cuireadh eolas ar an tír seo ón taobh amuigh trí mheán agus de bharr eachtraí polaitíochta - mar a tharla arís de bharr 'thrioblóidí an Tuaiscirt' corradh is tríocha bliain ó shin. Ach chuidigh cuid mhór rudaí eile le scéal agus saol agus sochaí na hÉireann - nó gnéithe ar leith den tsaol sin - a tharraingt os comhair an tsaoil mhóir.

Scéal casta na scannán agus na scríbhneoireachta - bunleabhair Bhéarla gona gcomhlachtaí foilsitheoireachta idirnáisiúnta, aistriúcháin ar bhunleabhair Ghaeilge - , na hoileáin, na cuairteoirí, an bholscaireacht uilig sna meáin chumarsáide[32] - an t-uafás grianghraf ar nuachtáin náisiúnta faoi oileáin agus faoi iarthar na hÉireann, [33] an tionscnamh tábhachtach taighde in iarthar na hÉireann ó Ollscoil Harvard ag tús na dtríochaidí[34]- agus an saol cianaosta in iarthar na hÉireann. Gréasán aimhréiteach atá i scéal na tréimhse sin ar fad nach bhfuil deireadh ráite faoi go fóill.

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[31] *Scéala Éireann*, 28.6.37, 5. Rinne L. Mac G. léirmheas ar an scannán seo faoin teideal 'Film of the Blasket Mor' ar *Scéala Éireann* (8.3.38, 5) nuair a bhí sé á thaispeáint i mBaile Átha Cliath. Féach, fosta: 'She Would Not Leave Family for Film Contract' ar *Scéala Éireann* (9.6.38, 9) agus Arthur Flynn, 'History of Irish Film - Part 3,' *Ireland's Own* (31.1.03, 36).

[32] Bhíodh cuntais rialta ar na nuachtáin náisiúnta ar na hoileáin. Gné-ailt nó cuntais ar thubaistí móra is minice a bhíodh i gceist.

[33] Saol agus muintir Árann is mó a bhíodh sna grianghraif sin ach bhíodh na hoileáin eile luaite fosta, m.sh. na Blascaodaí, Acaill, Árainn Mhór, Toraigh srl.

[34] 'The Harvard Irish Study, 1931-1936. In the politically and economically tumultuous years of the 1930s, a team of American Academics arrived in Ireland to carry out archaeological and anthropological research. This research, directed by Professor Earnest Hooton (1887-1954) of the Anthropology Department in Harvard University, became known as 'the Harvard Irish Survey.'… There were three disciplinary strands to the study: archaeology, physical anthropology and social anthropology.' Conrad M. Arensberg & Solon T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland* (Clasp Press, 2001) xvii.

IARNÓTA

"Béaloideas 1934 Iml. IV. Uimh. IV. lth455
Miscellanea - Séamus Ó Duilearga
Gramophone Record of Irish Folktales
Parlophone Gramophone record E4075, recently issued, consists of two folk-tales recorded in February, 1934, in London, by Seáinín Tom Ó Dioráin of Eoghanacht, Aran Islands, Co. Galway. The recorder plays the principal part in the all-Irish sound-film 'Oidhche Sheanchais', which is to be released shortly. The record is an excellent one, and should be purchased by all interested in Irish. Its price in Saorstát Éireann is 3s. This is, I think, the first time genuine Irish folk-tales on a gramophone record have been published. The Parlophone Company deserves both congratulation and encouragement in their enterprise. I feel sure that all who see the film will wish to have this unique record.
S. Ó D."

Tá an ceirnín le fáil sa Chartlann Fuaime, Roinn Bhéaloideas Éireann, UCD, ag Earlsfort Terrace. Seo a leanas an tagairt dó:

Ó Dioráin, Seáinín
Árainn, Co. na Gaillimhe
Parlophone 1934, 10" disc
Scéal. Tale "An Soitheach Sí"
cf. *Béaloideas* 1934 Iml.IV. Uimh.IV. 455.
DIF Ref. C0290 & C0681

Tá seans ann go bhfuil an scannán féin le fáil, ach tá mo chuid fiosraithe fós ag dul ar aghaidh, gan críoch faoi láthair.