

**OLLSCOIL NA hÉIREANN, GAILLIMH**  
**DÁMHA NA NDÁN AGUS AN LÉINN CHEILTIGH**  
**SCRÚDITHE NA NOLLAG 1999-2000**  
**AN TARD-DIOPLÓMA I GCUMARSÁID FHEIDHMEACH**

**GAEILGE SCRÍOFA**

Cáit Ní Dhomhnaill  
Máirtín Ó Briain

Aon uair an chloig amháin a cheadaítear.

Aistrigh an sliocht seo a leanas go Gaeilge:

One of the minor side effects of millennium fever is that, up to now, we've been largely spared the "What were the 1990s all about?" retrospectives which usually accompany the end of any decade. But when people do start to look back on these curious 10 years, surely one of the things they will notice most will be the increasing fascination with what has come to be known as the Irish diaspora. They may see *The Irish Empire*, a major five-part documentary on the subject starting on RTÉ 1 next week, as valuable source material, because, in its own way, this multinational cultural product tells us as much about Ireland in 1999 as it does about the history of Irish emigration.

Commissioned by RTÉ, the BBC and the Australian channel SBS, *The Irish Empire* is a polished production which explores the experiences of "the Irish abroad", from the monastic settlements of the early Christian period to the prepackaged theme pubs of today. Unlike last year's Disney-produced series, *The Long Journey Home*, which focussed primarily on the experience of the Catholic Irish in the US, *The Irish Empire* takes a broader view, not just in including the emigrant experience in Britain and Australia, but in taking pains to point out the often underplayed role of Ulster Presbyterians in North America.

This tension between different readings of the Irish emigrant experience is one of the elements which lifts *The Irish Empire* out of the rather romanticised grand narratives of some previous documentaries on the subject, particularly those produced or financed by Americans, although one might wish at times that the revisionists and post-revisionists of different hues who pop up throughout the series might have been offered the opportunity of engaging directly with each other, rather than in 30-second soundbites to camera.