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The Informer (Ireland Into Film)



Synopsis

Liam O'Flaherty's novel *The Informer* (1925) is what the author of this fascinating study calls a "mythogenic text" - one that lends itself easily to adaptations, recreations and renditions. To date there have been four film versions (Arthur Robison 1929, John Ford 1935, Jules Dassin 1968, Michael Byrne 1992) and at least as many stage versions. One of the reasons the novel has proved so attractive to filmmakers is that it was itself written with an eye on the silent expressionist cinema of the day. All too often O'Flaherty has been regarded as a hard realist who drew the great vigor of his art from the native Gaelic culture of oral storytelling. In fact, he was much more at home in the linked gestural and visual language of melodrama and the silent cinema. As Patrick Sheeran amply demonstrates, the central antagonism between O'Flaherty's Hardman (Gypo Nolan) and the Gunman (Commandant Dan Gallagher) has provided dramatists and filmmakers with a compelling way of staging political conflict - not only in Ireland but in Weimar Germany and in the inner-city ghettos of Afro-America as well.

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