



# True to the Spirit: Film Adaptation and the Question of Fidelity

*From Oxford University Press*

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## True to the Spirit: Film Adaptation and the Question of Fidelity From Oxford University Press

Fifty percent of Hollywood productions each year are adaptations--films that use an already published book, dramatic work, or comic as their source material. If the original is well known, then for most spectators the question of whether these adaptations are "true to the spirit" of the original is central. The recent wave of adaptation studies dismisses the question of fidelity as irrelevant, mistaken, or an affront to the unstable nature of meaning itself. The essays gathered here, mixing the field's top authorities (Andrew, Gunning, Jameson, Mulvey, and Naremore) with fresh new voices, take the question of correspondence between source and adaptation as seriously as do producers and audiences. Spanning examples from Shakespeare to *Ghost World*, and addressing such notable directors as Welles, Kubrick, Hawks, Tarkovsky, and Ophuls, the contributors write against the grain of recent adaption studies by investigating the question of what fidelity might mean in its broadest and truest sense, what it might reveal of the adaptive process, and why it is still one of the richest veins of investigation in the study of cinema.

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### Review

" It is not too much to say that this book is **simply ground-breaking**, easily and by far the best book on this important subject, and one that should be required reading of all film and literature students." --Lee Grieveson, University College London

"*True to the Spirit* revives adaptation as a key conceptual framework for understanding cinema's intricate political and aesthetic dialogues-and disagreements-with works in other media. This is a generous book: it addresses a surprising range of films and texts, and will foster the creativity of its readers through its expansive, historically detailed case studies." --Karla Oeler, Emory University

### About the Author

**Colin MacCabe** is Distinguished Professor of English and Film, University of Pittsburgh and Professor of English and Humanities at Birkbeck, University of London. He is the editor of *Critical Quarterly* and the author of several books, including *The Butcher Boy* (2007), *T.S. Eliot* (2006), *Godard: A Portrait of the Artist at Seventy* (2003), *The Eloquence of the Vulgar* (1998) and *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word* (1978, second ed. 2002). He has produced or executive produced more than 10 feature films and more than 30 hours of television documentaries on the history of the cinema (for the British Film Institute and Minerva Pictures).

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