



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

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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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