



Novels into film

By George Bluestone

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First published in 1957, this seminal work of film theory analyzes the process -- "the mysterious alchemy" -- by which novels are transformed into films.

Beginning with a discussion of the aesthetic limits of both the novel and the film, George Bluestone goes on to offer close readings of six films based on novels of serious literary merit -- *The Informer*, *Wuthering Heights*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Ox-Bow Incident*, and *Madame Bovary* -- focusing on the additions, deletions, and other changes made by the filmmakers in adapting the source material for the screen. Based on both in-depth research into film archives and libraries and on interviews with the screenwriters, directors, and producers who worked on these films, *Novels into Film* concludes that because the novel lends itself to states of consciousness and the film to observed reality, the adaptation of one from the other produces a new and wholly autonomous art form.

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Novels into film By George Bluestone Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"Bluestone believes that the film is independent, free to add that new ending or to leave several characters on the cutting room floor. In judging the quality of any filmed novel his question is, Has the movie maker discovered visual effects that interpret rather than repeat the material of the novel? In other words, Has he created a new form?... Each film is analyzed by comparing novel and shooting script and then viewing the film with script in hand. Alterations are carefully studied in light of a broad knowledge of literature and motion picture history, and extensive research is in evidence on every page." -- American Scholar

"An excellent and stimulating study... A brilliant critical essay on the limits of the novel and the limits of the film... His most important accomplishment is to integrate the critical approach to these varying forms: one respectable, dignified, accepted; the other young, often brash, fighting for recognition. This is an approach which is extremely useful for it does not involve the traditional advocacy for one form over another. Dr. Bluestone has respect for both." -- Los Angeles Times

About the Author

George Bluestone is professor emeritus of film at Boston University.

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