

LARB Digital Edition: Film and the Art of Adaptation: Issue #18

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Summary:

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More so than any other art form, film relies on collaboration. The essays in this collection, *“Film and the Art of Adaptation,”* consider a range of contemporary films inspired by celebrated works of American literature, including Baz Luhrmann's spectacular take on *The Great Gatsby* and James Franco's faithful transposition of *As I Lay Dying*.

Ruth Yeazell considers the difficulty of representing the interior life of one of Henry James's orphaned children in *“Updating What Maisie Knew,”* while Len Gutkin's sassy pan, *“A Beatnik Animal House,”* shows how John Krokidas's adolescent romp *Kill Your Darlings* butchers the murder that launched the Beat movement. Lowry Pressly's discussion of Steve McQueen's humane and heartbreaking *12 Years A Slave* defends McQueen from charges of sadism in his adaptation of Solomon Northup's little-read slave narrative. Rounding out the collection is Jerry Christensen's take down of historian Ben Urwand's controversial book *The Collaboration: Hollywood's Pact with Hitler*.

From adaptation to collaboration, these six essays illuminate how writers, directors, and actors work together across yawning gaps in time and space to bring history and literature to the silver screen.

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