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Adaptation Studies at a Crossroads

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After years of being stuck in the backwaters of the academy, adaptation studies is on the move. A decade's worth of pioneering work by Brian McFarlane, Deborah Cartmell, Imelda Whelehan, James Naremore and Sarah Cardwell on the relation between film adaptations and their literary antecedents culminated in the publication of Robert Stam's three volumes on adaptation, two of them co-edited with Alessandra Raengo, in 2004 and 2005. The monumental project of Stam and Raengo sought to reorient adaptation studies decisively from the fidelity discourse universally

attacked by theorists as far back as George Bluestone to a focus on Bakhtinian intertextuality—with each text, avowed adaptation or not, afloat upon a sea of countless earlier texts from which it could not help borrowing—and this attempt was largely successful. If Stam and Raengo had any notion...

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