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Screen Adaptations: To Kill a Mockingbird: A close study of the relationship between text and film

R. Barton Palmer

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R. Barton Palmer : Screen Adaptations: To Kill a Mockingbird: A close study of the relationship between text and film before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Screen Adaptations: To Kill a Mockingbird: A close study of the relationship between text and film:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Even a sacred cow requires an examination
By Jeremy Storly
I read this book because I have always loved both the novel and the film, but I have always questioned the approach taken by the director in the adaptation of the film. Certainly, Gregory Peck is Atticus. He has become Atticus in our American consciousness, and Atticus has become Gregory Peck in glasses. Still, what were the social attitudes at the time of the book's release? What were its controversies? What obstacles had to be faced in its adaptation (for surely it is a true adaptation in the spirit of Harper Lee's great novel)? This book explores these questions and more, and it is, for the most part, illuminating. At its best moments, Palmer's text is illuminating and definitely succeeds in shedding new light on the novel, the film, and the relationship between the two. At its best moments, this book takes a fresh look at two of the 20th century's sacred cows. In the spirit of true criticism, however, we are not given either sensational praise or panning of the novel, but a truly fair and academic look at the film and novel. If Palmer's writing has a flaw it is that at times it comes across as elementary. Do we really need to resort to Wikipedia or IMDB as sources when other, more reliable sources surely exist? At times, Palmer spends too much time stating the obvious and not enough pulling back the curtains. These moments are noticeable, but scarce; and this is fortunate, for this book has a lot to say, and for the majority of Americans who have embraced *To Kill a Mockingbird*, it is an illuminating text.

To Kill a Mockingbird is an immensely important work of literature which is studied worldwide. Literature and film adaptations studies students will find plenty of material to support their courses and essay writing on how the film versions provide different readings of the original text. Focussing on several film versions and adaptations, the book discusses: the literary text in its historical context, key themes and dominant readings of the text, how the text is adapted for screen and how adaptations have changed our reading of the original text. There are many references to the literary text and screenplays and the book also features quotations from directors, critics and others linked with the chosen film and text.

"I recommend the book as an inspiring read not only for film buffs but for anyone reading or teaching the novel, regardless of educational level." *Southwest Journal of Cultures* (May 2009)
About the Author
R. Barton Palmer is Calhoun Lemon Professor of Literature, Professor of Film and Screenwriting, British Literature at Clemson University (US) and the author of many books on literature and film.