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BA English Honours | Semester II | ENG2VN101

English Language Skills for Visual Media

Module 3: Adaptation: Literary Text to Cinematic Language • Comprehensive Notes

Chapter 3: Theories and Techniques of Cinematic Adaptation

Cinematic adaptation is an act of inter-semiotic translation. Translating a verbal text into audiovisual cinema requires transforming interior literary monologues into visible dramatic actions, symbolic visual motifs, and acoustic rhythms.

3.1 Fidelity versus Transformation

Contemporary adaptation theorists (such as Linda Hutcheon and Robert Stam) reject simplistic "fidelity criticism"—the outdated demand that a film must faithfully mimic its source novel. Instead, adaptation is recognized as an autonomous creative reimagining, involving condensation, character amalgamations, and transposition into new cultural contexts.

3.2 Case Study: Baz Luhrmann's The Great Gatsby (2013)

Baz Luhrmann's cinematic adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* translates the 1920s Jazz Age into a hyper-kinetic visual spectacle scored with contemporary hip-hop and pop (executive produced by Jay-Z). Luhrmann externalizes Nick Carraway's literary narration by framing him as a hospitalized psychiatric patient writing his memoirs, visually projecting Fitzgerald's text onto the screen as swirling kinetic typography.

Advanced Critical Theory, Hermeneutics & Literary Praxis

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2. Historiographical Context and Reception Theory

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3. Comparative Aesthetic and Thematic Matrix

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