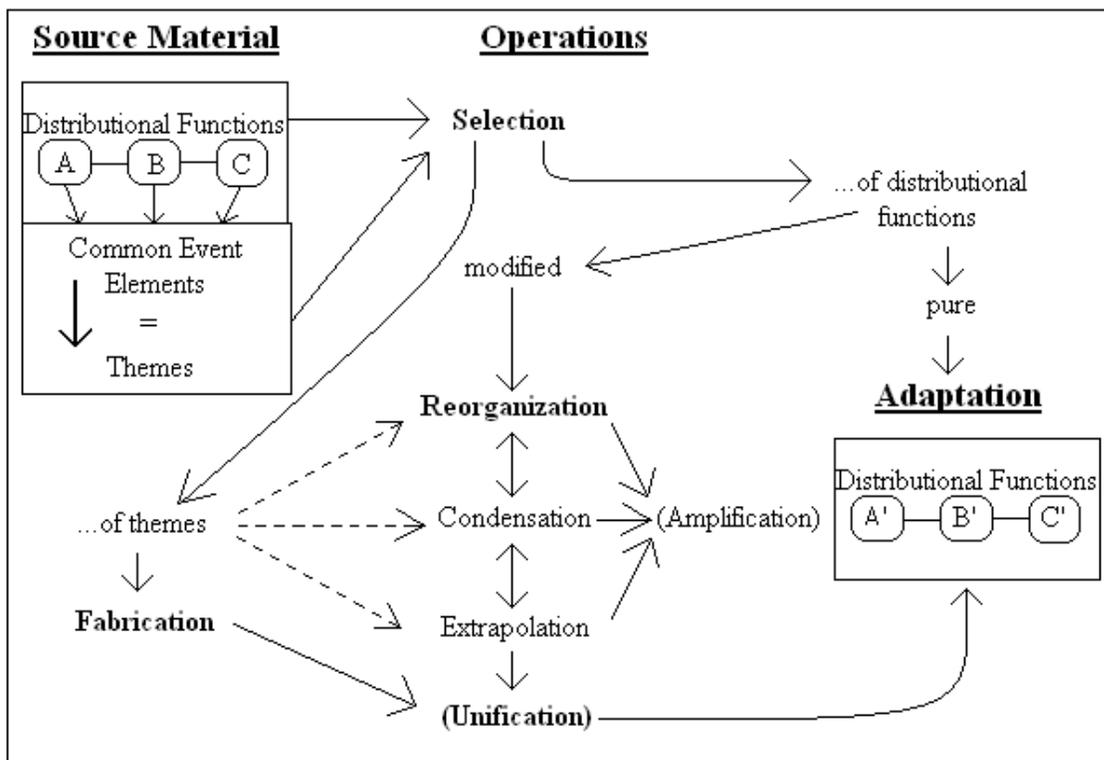


Dear Students,

In our last session, we began discussing Semiotic Analysis (i.e. the analysis of signs and symbols) as a method of inquiry or *way of reading popular culture*. Prior to summarizing the techniques and challenges of semiotic analysis, however, it is necessary to introduce the composite model of adaptation. All the terms and operations labeled below should be familiar to you from the structural and thematic models of adaptation already introduced. The composite model puts all the pieces together into a single versatile diagram that accounts for the fact that in practice, no remake or adaptation is ever purely thematic or structural, but most often a combination of both.

The starting point of the process is crucial to understanding the relationship of the adaptation to the source material. If “distributional functions” are selected first and are meant to serve as the backbone of the narrative, then the adaptation will be structural, even if events are omitted, some themes are emphasized over others, and some events are fabricated to modify the plotline. Conversely, if “themes” (characters and conflicts) are selected first and a new set of distributional functions are fabricated based on them, then the adaptation will be thematic, even if some distributional functions from the source material are selected for inclusion in the adaptation.

### *The Composite Model of Adaptation*



Another determining factor to the relationship of adaptation and source material is the format of the source text. A serialized source text spanning many episodes over multiple volumes or seasons and vast amounts of time, will be adapted thematically if the format of the adaptation is, for example, a feature film that only permits a few hours of runtime. This is especially common when long-running serialized comics (e.g. Superman) or television programs are adapted for the “big screen.” On the other hand,

highly coherent source texts (such as novels) are more likely to be adapted structurally (e.g. *Gone with the Wind*) when the adaptive medium is film.

At the other end of the spectrum, unified/cohesive source texts (e.g. books, films) will be adapted thematically if the adaptive medium is one that demands long-term serialization like television (e.g. *The Fugitive*, *M\*A\*S\*H*, etc.).