

Abstract:**Animating characters through music: a multimodal and musical framework for character analysis exemplified through Pixar's *Up***

Films are inherently multimodal *and* intermedial media products, bearing on representation *of* (intermedial relations) and *through* (multimodal integration) a range of different media. In this presentation, I want to focus on the multimodal aspect and explore how to perform a character analysis in film which is rooted in a *multimodal* and *musical* approach – discussing the meaning potential of music as it interacts with other auditory and visual modes in constructing and developing filmic characters.

Following the character theory set forth by Jens Eder, what defines and sets characters apart from other elements of the filmic narrative is that characters are experienced as ‘fictional beings’ having ‘an inner life’ of their own (Eder, 2010). What *animates* a character in other words – in the sense of lifting a specific representation from the level of pure artefact to the level of ‘fictional being’ – something experienced as having a consciousness – is the impression that the representation is capable of having thoughts and feelings of its own. Since music in both animated and live-action features is often considered to provide an emotional content and a background for understanding characters’ feelings, it seems logical that music in diverse film genres should therefore play a significant part both in creating and developing characters as multimodal artefacts *and* in animating them into ‘fictional beings’.

Using selected examples from the Pixar film ‘UP’ (Docter and Peterson, 2009), I will discuss how to conduct an analysis of character formation in film based on a musical and multimodal semiotic approach, inspired among others by the works of Philip Tagg, John Bateman and Mikhail Bakhtin. Following this, I propose that character formation in film depend on a dialogic and polyphonic orchestration of different semiotic modes, herein several interacting visual and musical modes, to construct a character as a structured reservoir of meaning potential.

Key words: multimodality, semiotics, music, character, animation

Biographic information:

Title of proposal: Animating characters through music: a multimodal and musical framework for character analysis exemplified through *Up*

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Biography:

Signe Jensen is a PhD student at the Centre for Intermedial and Multimodal Studies at Linnaeus University in Sweden. She has a background in Musicology from Aarhus University in Denmark, and her research interests centre on music and sound as parts of intermedial and multimodal media constellations. In her ongoing PhD project, she focuses on music in children's animated features, exploring the musical potential for meaning through a qualitative audience study. The project aims to analyse a selected range of popular animation features from a 'textual' perspective as well as through children's verbalizations of their actual experiences of the films.