

Can you learn how to shift gears? A multimodal approach to plot in literary texts

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Taking its departure in multimodal social semiotics, this article presents a multimodal approach to narrative with a special focus on the plot of literary texts. We argue that plot is a characteristic of literary texts that is realized multimodally through images, graphic elements, verbal language, layout and typography. Through an analysis of Dorthe Nors' novel *Mirror, Shoulder, Signal*, we demonstrate both the cogency of a multimodal social semiotic analysis of a novel that does not explicitly foreground its multimodality and the analytical advantages of incorporating plot as a central concept in the analysis. This article's primary contribution to research in multimodal social semiotics lies in incorporating plot in the multimodal analysis and thereby showing how the narrative category of plot, which is often conceived of as a purely verbal construction designed by the author, can be seen as the result of choices made among different semiotic resources and at different levels of realization.

KEYWORDS: multimodal social semiotics, literary analysis, narrative, plot, multimodal realisation of plot