

# 活 動 報 告

神奈川大学人文学研究所主催国際シンポジウム International Symposium at Kanagawa University

# Visual and Graphic Narratives

開催日：8月24日（火）(Tue. 24 August 2010)

場所：神奈川大学横浜キャンパス 17号館 215室 (Room 215, Yokohama Campus, Kanagawa University)

参加無料 (Attendance free) 使用言語：英語 (Working language: English)

フィンランドとブラジルの比較文学研究者を招き、「ヴィジュアルとグラフィックの語り」をテーマにシンポジウムを開催します。マンガや映画などの語りに関心のある方々のご出席を歓迎します。

Those interested in visual and graphic narratives in film and manga are welcome to attend a symposium with speakers invited from Finland and Brazil.

総合司会 (Chairperson) : Stefan Buchenberger (神奈川大学 Kanagawa University)

I. 研究発表の部 (Presentations) 14:00~16:15

Stefan Buchenberger: "Opening Remarks"

Kai Mikkonen (University of Helsinki):

"Narrative Agency in Graphic Storytelling: Examples from Jiro Taniguchi's *Quartier Lointain (harukana machi-e)*"

Luiz Guilherme Couto Pereira (Universidade de Sao Paulo):

"Tex, Lone Wolf and Preacher: Justice wanders through three countries"

Helena Bonito Couto Pereira (Universidade Presbiteriana MacKenzie, Sao Paulo):

"Jose Saramago's *Blindness*, the Book and the Movie"

II. パネルディスカッションの部 (Roundtable Discussion) 16:30~17:30

パネリスト (Panelists) : Kai Mikkonen

Luiz Guilherme Couto Pereira

Helena Bonito Couto Pereira

村井まや子 Mayako Murai (神奈川大学 Kanagawa University)

問い合わせ先：神奈川大学人文学研究所

(For further information, contact the Institute for Humanities Research, Kanagawa University.)

〒221-8686 神奈川県横浜市神奈川区六角橋 3-27-1 電話(phone) : 045-481-5661 (内線 ext. 4224)

## Visual and Graphic Narratives

Part of the ICLA (International Comparative Literature Association tri-annual congress) in Seoul, from August 15<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> 2010, was the symposium on “Graphic Narratives: Animations, Comic Books, Cartoons and Graphic Novels”, which featured 11 presentations.

Three participants of the ICLA congress then came to Japan to give presentations at the international symposium hosted by the Institute for Humanities Research of Kanagawa University.

Summaries:

The first presentation was given by Professor Kai Mikkonen from the University of Helsinki, who talked about:

- The Narrative Agent and Focalization in Graphic Storytelling. Examples from Jiro Taniguchi’s *Quartier lointain*

The presentation focused on the the problem of narrative agency in graphic narratives and its similarities in cinematic narratives.

Professor Mikkonen argued that “images in graphic storytelling, as in films, have an intrinsic, explicit point-of-view from which they are seen, no matter how personal or impersonal that perspective may be. In regard to literary narratives, the sense of a physical, spatial vantage point from which the story is told is, likewise, indispensable. Spatial positioning in literature, however, is crucially different from spatial positioning in visual narratives, in that literary texts are relatively free to fuse, in any one sentence, the vision through which the elements are presented and the narrator’s voice that verbalizes that vision (Mieke Bal’s phrasing).”

To illustrate his arguments, Professor Mikkonen showed examples from Jiro Taniguchi’s graphic novel, *Harukana Machi-e* (1998), the first person narrative of a man who mistakenly boards a train to his old hometown and arrives, travelling back in time, as young boy. This manga was translated and adapted for a Western readership into French as *Quartier lointain* by Kaoru Sekizumi and Frédéric Boilet in 2006.

The second presentation was given by Mr. Luiz Guilherme Couto Pereira from the Universidade do Sao Paulo, Brazil, who talked about:

- *Tex, Lone Wolf and Preacher: Justice wanders through three countries*

Drawing on structuralistic theory as well as on Scott McCloud's ground breaking research on graphic narratives, Mr. Pereira argued that the three graphic narratives and their errant well-doing heroes he compared show the roles of those heroes in three different contexts – European, Asian and American – and also identify three different types of graphic narratives – an Italian fumetto, a Japanese manga and an American comic book series.

For this he showed juxtaposed images from the three graphic narratives mentioned in the title of his presentation:

“Tex” an ongoing comic book series, a so called fumetto, published since 1948 in Italy. It focuses on the adventures of a traveling cowboy in what are basically old fashioned Western-style stories.

“Lone Wolf and Cub”, a Japanese manga, originally published from 1970 to 1976. The main character is a masterless samurai who travels with his three year old son through Japan, during the Tokugawa era.

“Preacher”, an American comic book series, published in United States from 1995 to 2000. The protagonist is a priest who wanders through the United States attempting to (literally) find God and bring him to justice for his crimes.

The last presentation was given by Professor Helena Bonito Couto Pereira from the Universidade Presbiteriana MacKenzie, Sao Paulo, who talked about:

#### White blindness in book and movie: denunciation of blurred visions

This presentation focused on Nobel prize winning Portuguese author José Saramago (1922-2010), his novel *Blindness* (1995) and its cinematic adaptation (2008). In his novel *Blindness*, an entire unnamed country is stricken with a mysterious plague of “white blindness”. The novel follows seven characters which are among the first victims: a man who is driving his car in the opening scene, his wife, a doctor and his wife and several of the doctor's patients. The unexplained origin and nature of the blindness cause widespread panic, and the government attempts to contain the apparent contagion, sending blind people to an asylum. When this asylum is overcrowded, living conditions and morale soon degrade horrifically.

While the plot of the movie itself follows Saramago's novel faithfully, director Fernando Mereilles added an element of multiculturalism with the first victim of the blindness being Japanese rather than Portuguese and the locations of the movie being Montevideo, Toronto and Sao Paulo, rather than Lisbon. As Prof. Pereira argued it is the filmmaker's intent to broaden the scope of the literary work and to intensify the messages of the original text. This intensification in the movie reinforces the character of the book as a denunciation of post-industrial society, with its lack of ethics, the exacerbated individualism, nihilism and widespread disbelief in humans.

After the three presentations a lively discussion amongst the panellists and attending professors and students followed. Due to the date late in August not many could attend the symposium, which was, however, well received, with plans for further academic activities and possible joined projects between the various universities.

(By Stefan Buchenberger)