



Conférence du Cercle Benvéniste

Benveniste Circle Conference

One Picture or One Thousand Words? Issues of Language Representation in Manga

Presented by Ben Whaley

A central question that continues to occupy Comic Studies is whether thematic and narrative analysis alone is an adequate framework for approaching a hybrid medium of text and image. Surely it was a dominant framework in the early 1990s, with such books as Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* (1993). Yet, since the early 2000s, writings from Thierry Groensteen (1999, *Système de la bande dessinée*, 2007 English) and Ōtsuka Eiji (2012, *How Manga Tried to Become Films*) have advocated for a combination of a media theory and aesthetic analysis of manga and interpretation. This debate is made all the more visible when deciding how to represent language (spoken words, foreign scripts, song lyrics, etc.) within the visual grammar of Japanese manga (print comics). Drawing on the theories of McCloud, Groensteen, and Ōtsuka, this talk begins by introducing common challenges and techniques manga artists use when representing language on the page. It concludes with a case study of Ōima Yoshitoki's hit manga *A Silent Voice* (2013, *Koe no katachi*, 2015 English) which grapples with these very considerations of formal elements in its story about a young deaf girl who is bullied in school.

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Zoom (ID: 950 1955 4703 / Passcode 281514)

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