

# Aspects of Narrative in Art History

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Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University

Abstracts

13:45-14:30, December 02

**Katharina Frank (Stuttgart State Academy of Art and Design)**  
**New Testament Stories: Narrative Structures in Early Modern  
Netherlandish Engraving and Book Illustration**

The early history of printed bible illustration in the Netherlands is indeed initially one of the German and French graphic reproduction art and is rooted especially in the Lutheran New Testament from 1522, which is for example adapted in the Antwerp Liesvelt-Bible from 1526. Most of the protestant bibles from the midst of the century are not illustrated or even forbidden as a result of the council of Trent. In the second half of the sixteenth century Antwerp became the center of book production in the Counter Reformation.

As the bible illustrations are embedded and closely linked to the text, one focus of the investigation will be how the narration of text and image interact. Is the function of the image illustrative and closely connected to the text? Or is the image to be viewed upon as an autonomous entity? In some cases the image itself concludes further inscriptions. These have the purpose to guide the reader's and observer's mind and can serve as memorative, didactic aid or as a medium of contemplation and meditation, as observed for instance in the Jesuit Bible illustration.

This lecture tries to examine the illustrations from the beginning of printed Netherlandish bible illustration in the 1520s to the major Jesuit illustration projects of the late 16th century. As the amount and diversity of illustrations is huge, my study will focus on selected scenes and stories of the New Testament, in particular the parables of Christ. These scenes include a continuous narrative structure with Christ as the guiding and recurrent main figure. Is the story spitted up in several monoscenic images? Or is the narration centered simultaneously in one single picture? The single illustrations or sequences will be investigated concerning their narrative structures.

Ivo Raband (University of Berne)

Printed Narrative: *The Festival Books for Ernest of Austria from Brussels and Antwerp 1594*

During the early modern period the medium of the “festival book” became increasingly more important as an object of “political narration” throughout Europe. Focusing on Netherlandish examples from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, my talk will focus on the festival books printed for the Joyous Entries of Archduke Ernest of Austria (1553-1595). Ernest was appointed Governor General of the Netherlands by King Philipp II in 1593, being the first Habsburg Prince to reside in Brussels since 30 years.

In Brussels and Antwerp the Archduke was greeted with the traditional *blijde intrede*, Joyous Entry, which dates back to the fourteenth century and was a necessity to actually “become” the sovereign of Brabant and Antwerp and to uphold the privileges of the cities. Decorated with ephemeral triumphal arches, stages, and *tableaux vivants*, both cities welcomed Ernest and, at the same time, demonstrated their civic self-assurance and negotiated their statuses. In honor of these events of civic power, the city magistrates commissioned festival books. These books combine a Latin text with a description of the events and the ephemeral structures, including circa 30 engravings and etchings. Being the only visual manifestation of the Joyous Entries, the books became important representational objects.

The prints featured in festival books will be my point of departure for discussing the importance of narrative political prints and the concept of the early modern festival book as a “political object”. By comparing the prints from Ernest’s entries with others from the period between 1549 and 1635, I will show how the prints became as important as the event itself. Thus, I want to pose the question of whether it would have been possible to substitute a printed version of the event for the actual ceremony.

**Kayo Hirakawa (Kyoto University)**

**Narrative and Material: Oil Paintings on Rare Metal, Stone and Fabric in the Late Sixteenth and the Early Seventeenth Centuries**

Around the turn from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century in Europe, various materials came to be used as the support of the oil painting. Copper, silver, slate, marble, lapis lazuli, silk and others added the rare and curious appearance to artworks usual paintings on panel or canvas had never realized. In some cases, their surface was partly unpainted and diverted to the background of the pictorial representation. Art lovers at that time highly estimated them because of the unique appearance, and ardently collected them in their collection rooms called as *studiolo, cabinet or Kunstammer* which were full of precious items such as ancient coins and cameos, relics of saints, gold works, gems, minerals, zoological and botanical specimens and so on.

This presentation examines how oil paintings on rare materials narrate biblical and mythological histories and allegories in their own way. The preference and tendency in the choice of the theme, the particular way of the narration which developed in connection with their unique appearance as well as the meaning the material symbolically signifies will be made clear.

In addition, both sides of precious supports were often painted. In such works, the verso and recto were closely related by the narrative system and the appropriate device of display was invented for them. *Four Elements* series, which Hans von Aachen painted on both sides of two alabaster panels at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II of Habsburg (now in the Ambrass Castle collection, Innsbruck), will be a case study proper to this presentation.

**Miki Kuramochi (Kyoto University)**

**The Allegorical Representation of Narrative in the Paintings by Nicolas Poussin: A Case Study on *The Triumph of David* at Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid**

At the end of 1620s, Poussin painted *The Triumph of David* (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid). The images of melancholic David with Goliath's head had already been painted by Reni. Nevertheless, in this painting we also find Victoria having an oak crown and three putti, all of which are never mentioned in the Bible. Nor are they represented in any other art form of the same subject. Previous research has identified sources of these motifs, so I would like to reconsider their significances and functions. This is in order to point out that the content of narrative in this picture is represented allegorically by a close relationship between the distinctive elements.

According to Pliny the Elder, the oak crown is identified with *corona civica*, therefore it is clear that Victoria praises the triumph of David and promises the throne of Israel to him. In addition, we must examine the three putti; the putto trying to take the royal crown from Victoria's hand, another one playing a harp, and the third wiping away his tears. Originally, the First Book of Samuel reports that David had received favors from King Saul by virtue of his skill in playing the harp. However, his victory over the Philistines invited Saul's jealousy and brought about his intent to kill him. Hence, based on this story, it is reasonable to suppose that the actions of putti around his harp and two crowns indicate a discord between David and Saul over the throne. Secondly, Goliath's arms held in the manner of trophaion suggest the transience of earthly powers. In conclusion, we could consider this painting, due to the disposition of eloquent motifs, not as a scene of victory, but as a representation of the narrative that holds a great deal of connotations for the subsequent story.

**Michiko Fukaya (Kyoto City University of Arts)**

**Aristotelian Peripety? Creating Tension in the Representation of *Cimon and Pero***

The story of *Cimon and Pero*, or *Caritas Romana*, enjoyed great popularity as a pictorial theme in the seventeenth century. In southern and northern Netherlands, many artists, including Rubens, Bloemaert, Goltzius, Van Baburen, and others executed works of this subject. Surveying this pictorial theme from the sixteenth century onward, one will notice, however, that there is a specific watermark in the representation of Pero. While earlier paintings always depicted the breastfeeding daughter as gazing upon her father, later ones represented her as worrying to be spied upon and casting her eyes backwards to make sure that the act of nurturing is unnoticed.

In this paper two aspects of this inventive treatment of the story will be discussed. First, I will consider the direct pictorial sources for the change. As has been suggested, it derives from Caravaggio's altarpiece, and Rubens and Van Baburen have come to know it via Manfredi. The paper attempts to ascertain the process in more detailed way.

Second, I argue that this shift corresponded with the dramatic interests of Dutch literary circles, which may be a reason for the wide and immediate acceptance of the new invention. While the earlier works make a rather static impression, the new narrative device, namely anxious Pero and the jailer(s), makes the viewer feel greater tension, suggesting there could be "reversal of circumstances" or "peripety" at this very moment, as a result of the discovery or "insight". In the first half of the seventeenth century, the Dutch cultural elites were introduced to Aristotelian notions, via Daniël Heinsius' treatise, and sophisticated viewers may have well appreciated works of art from similar criteria. From this view point, other literary and artistic treatises are also considered.

**Nils Büttner (Stuttgart State University of Art and Design)**

***Het burgerlyke of cierlyke Modern: New Forms of Pictorial Narratives in Dutch Seventeenth-Century Painting***

The epistemic value that we today connect to words only, was also granted to pictures in the Netherlands of the seventeenth century. The resulting expectations were expressed through the Horatian slogan of “*ut pictura poesis*.” This request, originally aimed at artists of the word to use a more pictorial language, developed into the central argument for the equal treatment of verbal and pictorial art. Respectively, the art theorist Franciscus Junius termed poetry and painting the “Sister Arts” in his treatise of 1637 *De pictura veterum*. Samuel van Hoogstraten called painting even a science in 1678. Against the background of this claim it's no wonder that the painters of the seventeenth century did not settle for illustrating classical texts and framing literary dramas. Within the medium of painting, these painters tried for new ways of pictorial narration with no underlying texts. This lecture will deal with examples of this new form of painting which the painter and art theorist Gerard de Lairesse called “*Het burgerlyke of cierlyke Modern*”, i.e. the “civic or delicately modern.” The focus will lie on Jacob Jordaens’s *Night Vision*, a painting that – according to Gerard de Lairesse – did not draw upon any literary source.

**Sakiko Takahashi (Kyoto University)**

## **The Miraculous Buddhist Image and Legend: Focusing on the Standing Statue of the Healing Buddha at Inabadō and Picture Scrolls Depicting Legends of the Inabadō**

Miraculous Buddhist images that shine, speak, move, or even fly are the subject of various tales of miracles that have been painted as picture scrolls. In this presentation, the standing statue of the Healing Buddha at Inabadō and picture scrolls depicting the legends surrounding it will be investigated.

The standing statue of the Healing Buddha at Inabadō is carved from a single piece of wood with three knots at the back. It has been argued that the statue was carved between the end of the tenth century and the early eleventh century, because of similarities to the standing statue of the Amitabha Tathagata at Shinnyodō that was made around 994.

The *Inabadō Engi* describes the miraculous tales of the standing statue of the Healing Buddha, in which Tachibana no Yukihiro travelled to the highest-ranking shrine of Inaba Province under imperial order. After receiving a divine sign in his dream, Yukihiro raised the shining statue of the Healing Buddha from the waters of Karutsu harbor. Then he built a temporary hall, where he placed the statue, before returning to Kyoto. Later, in 1003, the Healing Buddha flew to the house of Yukihiro, so Yukihiro converted his house into a Buddhist temple and enshrined the statue there. By its grace, he became the Governor of Inaba Province in 1005.

Within this presentation, three variant picture scrolls of the *Inabadō Engi* will be compared with regard to changes in religious faith at Inabadō and developments in illustrated founding stories of shrines and temples. The authorities for these miraculous tales and the background of the legend's establishment will then be examined. Finally, this presentation will consider the relevance of the particular materials used for the making of the Healing Buddha to the legend in which the shining figure was drawn from the sea.



**Noriyuki Nakano (Cultural Properties Division, Kyoto Prefecture)**  
**Significance of Substantiality in Nineteenth-Century Japanese**  
**Paintings: Yōsai Kikuchi's Illustrated History of Japanese Heroes and**  
**the “*Rekishhi-ga*” of the Meiji Era**

*Rekishhi-ga* is a genre most prominent between 1890s and mid-1900s. As the genre was so highly valued, this type of painting was debated by two celebrated critics of the time, Shōyō Tsubouchi and Chogyū Takayama, as to whether artists chose historical subjects to create great paintings, or whether they were actually trying to depict remarkable historical events correctly. In 1899, The Yomiuri Shimbun invited suggestions for historical subjects appropriate for *rekishi-ga*. These incidences brought greater attention to the genre. It is therefore no surprise that representative works from this period are *rekishi-ga*, and understanding of *rekishi-ga* is critical for the appreciation of paintings from the Meiji era.

Yōsai Kikuchi (1788-1878) is an artist who made big influence on *rekishi-ga*. He is known for his book *Zenkenkojitsu*, biographies of more than 500 notable mythological and historical figures from ancient times to the fourteenth century. Meiji painters always referred to this book and many paintings were created based on this book.

*Zenkenkojitsu* was the achievement of Yōsai's research into history. Due to its minuteness, it was highly valued by Meiji painters who put much weight in substantiality in their works. Although the book was published in 1868, the first year of the Meiji era, Yōsai had already finished writing it by 1836. The first half of the nineteenth century was a time when artists sought for substantial evidence in the depiction of their paintings, Bunchō Tani (1763-1840) being the best example.

This research will start by giving thoughts to how *Zenkenkojitsu* was written with its historical context. The study will focus on substantiality – “referring to historical research as the foundation of new work”. The idea of substantiality has been a respected value among painters of the nineteenth century, although its meaning was reinterpreted throughout this period. This change in the meaning of the term will provide us with an interesting insight into the distinctive character of Meiji paintings, and the modernization of paintings in Japan.

Jessica Korchanowski (University of Göttingen)

*“Mundus vult decipi”*: Pictorial Narrative in Jan Steen’s Genre Painting *The Quack on the Village Square*

Dutch seventeenth-century genre paintings with the popular image of the medical quack offering remedies or executing operations on a public square often have a highly narrative structure. As is mostly the case, the depicted mountebanks offer their cures while simultaneously perform buffoonery in order to catch and absorb the attention of their audience. Particularly this nexus between medicine and comical theatre creates ideal prerequisites for the *mise-en-scène* of a visual narrative, which is captured in its decisive moment. By the example of Jan Steen’s painting *The Quack on the Village Square*, c. 1673 (Instituut Collectie Nederland, inventory number NK2499) the narrative conception and composition of such a genre scene are to be disclosed and explained.

The “deception”, mentioned in the eponymous motto, is twofold. On the one hand the figure of the quack in Dutch genre art is stereotypically characterized as a mercenary impostor, who hides his lack of professionalism behind his pretentious appearance. On the other hand genre paintings per se are designed to delude the eye of the beholder in an entertaining manner: The scenes appear to be realistic because they refer to specific historic-cultural circumstances. But on a deeper, symbolically encoded layer of meaning they warn the viewer against the amoral and deceitful nature of the quack. In this context the painting by Jan Steen contains allegorical and emblematical references. Additionally the scene seems to process motives from Adriaen van de Venne’s book *Tafereel van de belacchende werelt* (Den Haag, 1635), in which the author uses the fair as setting to exemplify the folly and vices of men in a satirical and moral-didactic way.

**Tomoko Yoshida (Kyoto Notre Dame University)**

## **Doubling the Pleasure: Pendants in Eighteenth-Century French Paintings and Prints**

Pendants are a pair of paintings or prints usually produced by the same artist. In many cases, they are of the same size, and their subjects are related. Considering the symmetrical mode of displaying pictures of the day, it is not surprising to find many pendant paintings or prints in eighteenth-century France. This form of presentation does not only contribute to a decorative effect, but also let each work enhance charm by contrasting or associating their contents. Painters, engravers, dealers, and amateurs actively made use of this tactics.

Although pendants exist in every genre of pictures, genre paintings are of particular interest from the standpoint of narratives in pictures. A typical example is Greuze's *La Malédiction Paternelle* and *Le Fils Puni*. As genre paintings, the story told here is not the famous, authorized one. The viewers are invited to "read" the image and make stories by themselves. A single picture can create some narrative, but juxtaposed images can widen the story and stimulate the imagination.

However, the use of pendants is not limited to make a serial story. Some pendants keep the stories of each work separated, but affect the perception of each other at the same time. Fragonard's sensual painting, *Le Verrou* was conceived to be a pendant of religious *L'Adoration des Bergers*. Given this combination, the focus would be on the sinfulness of the flesh.

There is another interesting phenomenon. Once a painting was engraved, it could be paired to other images than the original counterpart. In this way, one single image can create several stories. As a mode of appreciating images which prevailed in the period of explosive growth of the art market, pendants provide us with prolific examples of narrative generation in pictures.

**Lisanne Wepler (Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig)**  
**Narrative and Fabulous: Stories in Baroque Bird Painting**

In my dissertation *Geschichten aus der Vogelmalerei des niederländischen Barocks – Stories from Bird Paintings of the Dutch and Flemish Baroque* – I tried to figure out, if so called “decorative art” like bird paintings are able to submit even more than pure aesthetics to the viewer. For my research I collected about 850 images of bird paintings, mainly of Dutch and Flemish provenance; but also French, English, German and Italian paintings. While looking at them and trying to get them into a certain order, I realized, that they are much more than only decorative. They differ in many ways from each other, not only concerning the style of their representation or the ability of the painter. I found out that some of them – especially the paintings of Melchior de Hondecoeter – contain special ingredients to create little stories out of the behaviour of the birds and the interaction between them. But with usual art historical methods (iconography) I couldn’t get much further with handling this subgenre. So with the background of linguistics and literary studies, I created a new kind of analyses based on narratology, which can be an intermediate step between describing a picture and an iconographical analysis. During this kind of analysis, which surly included the iconography of a painting, the narrativity of some of the pictures changed into a real literarily verifiable story. I am going to present one way of discovering such a story.

**Toshiharu Nakamura (Kyoto University)**

## **How to Make Better Narrative Compositions: Rembrandt's Presumable Instructions to His Pupils**

During his roughly forty years of activity as a painter, Rembrandt had numerous pupils and provided them with artistic training. There are, however, very few written sources which tell us about his teaching methods or his relationship with the disciples. We owe much of what we know about his teaching activities to a vast corpus of his own works and the related ones made by his pupils. Rembrandt's pupils were most likely encouraged to copy and produce variations of the master's works, especially narrative drawings. Some very interesting painted variants based on Rembrandt's compositions are indeed known to us.

According to the workshop custom of the time, disciples tried hard to imitate the master's style. Since it is often very difficult to distinguish Rembrandt's own works from those of his skillful pupils, focus of the researches has been drawn to telling the difference. Besides that, it must be very useful to analyze the variants by the pupils, given that they might reflect Rembrandt's own ideas for improvement. There also exist some drawings by Constantijn Daniel van Renesse on which Rembrandt made corrections. The aim of this paper is to specify the characteristics of instructions which Rembrandt presumably gave to his pupils, through the examination of some noteworthy copies, variants and corrected drawings.