

East Asian Studies Lecture Series

Co-Sponsored by: *The Institute for Japanese Studies
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EASC Lecture Series '08

The History of Popular Culture in Japan

The History of Shōjo Manga (Girls Comics) in Japan:

Friday, May 16

1:30—3:30 p.m.

115 Mendenhall Lab
125 South Oval Mall

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Shōjo manga, or romance comics for teenage girls, is an extremely popular and prominent genre of comics in Japan. This genre is characterized by a very dense visual style, including flowery backgrounds and big-eyed, androgynous boys and girls. Why is this genre so appealing to girls? Where did it come from? And why do so many of the stories feature androgynous characters or even homosexual romance?

This talk will give an overview of the history of shōjo manga, from its origins in 1920s and 30s girls' magazines, to the "revolution" of women writers in the 1970s, to the present day. The main focus will be on Ikeda Riyoko's 1972 hit *The Rose of Versailles* (*Berusaïyu no bara*), the "shining masterpiece of shōjo manga." This lush, sweeping epic about the French Revolution not only visually appealed to girls' sensibilities, but also provides an example of the struggle in shōjo manga between the fantasy of an androgynous, homosocial world free of oppressive gender roles, and the desire to depict heterosexual romance that is both realistic and empowering to girls.

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All are welcome to attend. For information, please contact: Institute for Japanese Studies | 614.292.3345 | stucky.7@osu.edu