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USF Class of 2018  
04/02/2016

### A Look at Boys' Love

In an attempt to shed some light on the overlooked genre of graphic novels and, more specifically that of the homoerotic Japanese comic books of the *Yaoi* and *Shounen Ai* genre, this presentation examines multiple representations of the young male body ( i.e., the concept of *Bishounen* or "beautiful boy") in contemporary Japanese popular culture. My presentation demonstrates that *Shounen Ai* and *Yaoi* comic books, by women and for women, rely on the well-established concept of the *Bishounen* body to transcend traditional gender roles that restrict women from exploring their sexualities or experiences outside the domestic sphere. While retracing the origins of the concept in various art forms, I analyze how works of *Yaoi* and *Shounen Ai* reimagine the *Bishounen* and invite its readers to consider a disengendered body or the fluidity of a body that embraces both the feminine and the masculine as a medium for escapism.