From Ground Zero to Degree Zero: Akira as Origin and Oblivion

CHRISTOPHER BOLTON
associate professor of comparative and japanese literature, williams college

4:00 - 5:30 p.m.
leavey library auditorium, usc

Ōtomo Katsuhiro’s anime film Akira is often identified as the work that ignited the anime boom in the U.S. This characterization is motivated in part by the graphic image of an explosion that opens the film, an image that seemed to herald a destruction of old paradigms and the arrival of new media when it first flashed across U.S. movie screens in 1989. But paradoxically this work that marks an origin or turning point for anime has also been strongly identified with a postmodern aesthetic that seems to erase the very notions of origin and history. In contrast Ōtomo’s Akira manga (upon which the film is based) is a 2,000-page epic that foregrounds origins of all kinds—historical, political, and graphic. This talk will compare these two versions of Akira to ask what strengths and limitations manga and anime each have as media, when it comes to locating ourselves in history, in political culture, or in space.

for more info & to rsvp, please visit: http://dornsife.usc.edu/eascenter/from-ground-zero-to-degree-zero/

co-sponsored by USC DEPT. OF EAST ASIAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

www.usc.edu/easc | 213.740.2991
Facebook. Twitter. Tumblr. @USCeasc