

ART IN TRANSLATION: CONTEXTUALIZING THE INSTRUCTIONAL MANGA PUBLICATIONS OF CHRISTOPHER HART

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Abstract

In 2001, American cartoonist Christopher Hart released the first of what would eventually be a large collection of instructional manuals on drawing manga. His *Manga Mania* series continues to be published and circulated today and can be found at many book and craft stores. As Hart utilizes a wide variety of source material to pull from, including his own experiences and background, translated manga and anime, as well as current trends--this complicates his texts as being representative of the medium.

This work is part of my master's thesis in art history at the University of North Texas. It examines the figural representations in Hart's *Manga Mania* as a sign system using Roman Jakobson's concept of intersemiotic translation. In doing so, I suggest that his work acts as a translation of manga that reflects cross-cultural implications and complicates the perception and understanding of manga in the context of the United States.

Introduction

There is no doubt of the impact of manga in the United States. The explosion of popularity and interest in manga at the

turn of the twenty-first century, often referred to as the manga boom, has been addressed at length academically (Brienza, 2014a). Brienza describes the event, stating that “[t]he market...grew rapidly at the beginning of the twenty-first century at a rate unprecedented in the publishing industry. Sales grew a remarkable 350% from \$60 million in 2002 to \$210 million in 2007 and did not begin to decline until the beginning of the recent economic downturn beginning in late 2008” (Brienza, 2009) much of the scholarship on the manga “boom,” which is “widely dispersed across multiple humanities and social science disciplines” (Brienza, 2009). This material she addresses made an attempt to understand manga and why it became so prevalent. What is manga then? The term, understood colloquially in the United States as comics originating in Japan, does not have a single agreed upon definition (Kacsuk, 2018). In the introduction to his 2004 publication, *Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese Comics*, Paul Gravett provides the “very misleading” definition of manga from the *Oxford English Dictionary* which, at the time, defined it as “Japanese comic books and cartoon films with a science fiction or fantasy theme” (2004). He corrects this statement, asserting that manga is not animated and that a variety of themes are explored outside of fantasy

and sci-fi alone (Gravett, 2004). The updated entry today defines manga as the following:

A Japanese genre of cartoons and comic books, drawn in a meticulously detailed style, usually featuring characters with distinctive large, staring eyes, and typically having a science-fiction or fantasy theme, sometimes including violent or sexually explicit material. Occasionally also applied to animated film. In extended use, denoting cartoons in this style from other countries. (“manga, n.2,” 2020).

The *Grove Dictionary of Art* includes a single entry for both “Anime and Manga” by Kirstin Ringelberg, in which the terms are described as “two related art media” (2018). Here, manga is designated as “the print form” and anime as “the moving form” suggesting their interrelated status (Ringelberg, 2018). Clearly, within an English-speaking context, manga may have many more associations than simply being comics produced in Japan. This definition even suggests that the term is applied to other ‘cartoons’ in ‘this style’ created outside of Japan. What is ‘this style’? Are ‘meticulous detail’ and ‘large eyes’ of a figure enough to categorize a work as manga? From the perspective of many American observers, manga is in fact most apparent as a trend of stylistic variations, particularly of the human form, especially including an emphasis on details such as enlarged eyes as well as other visual traits (Kacsuk, 2018). While manga certainly can be defined in much more broad

terms than this, this particular stylization is what most English-speaking readers most typically associate with it (Kacsuk, 2018). In this essay, I will examine the instructional drawing manuals of Christopher Hart in order to help illustrate this perception of manga in this population.

Many approaches to understanding the manga phenomenon or in the United States have been conducted under the assertion that it overwhelmingly dominated the book publishing industry in the United States, as much of the literature on manga implements “enthusiastic language about invasion, conquest and revolution” (Brienza, 2014b). As Brienza draws attention to, however, this perspective ignores the nuance inherent in examining manga’s impact and place in the United States and does not consider the ways in which manga was perceived in the first decade of the twenty-first century (Brienza, 2014b). In her 2016 publication, *Manga in America: Transnational Book Publishing and the Domestication of Japanese Comics*, Brienza concludes that “there was never any real invasion [of manga], and if there ever was any conquest or revolution at all, it was self-induced” (2016a, p. 173). Brienza asserts that through a production of culture perspective, the United States created and has continued to operate under its own, new practices of manga production and publication (Brienza, 2016a). The field of American manga publishing is, in fact, its own culture. She describes the publishing process as a “domestication” of manga from Japan to the United States particularly which has taken place in part, through the increasingly occurring practice of publishers’

development of local content, rather than sourcing and licensing directly from Japan (Brienza, 2016a). Who is producing this content domestically and how are they gaining the skills to do so? What do they need to learn in order to produce manga?

If we consider *manga* only as a visual style of the human form consisting of features like big eyes and pointy noses, as it has often been perceived in the United States, in order to produce manga, one would only need to emulate its visual traits. Manga produced domestically provides the publisher a much greater amount of freedom and control over intellectual properties, making it ideal to create content locally (Brienza, 2016a). As a result, many major American manga publishing companies began seeking out series to license, with the publishing company Tokyopop doing so as early as 2002 (Brienza, 2016a, p. 162.) Domestically produced manga like those licensed by Tokyopop have frequently been referred to as either Original English Language (OEL) manga or as “global manga” and have been a major part of American manga culture (Brienza, 2016a). Within this culture, I would like to address an aspect that has not yet been addressed in an academic context—instructional drawing publications, particularly those of Christopher Hart.

In a 2018 article for *Anime News Network*, author Deb Aoki recalls a conversation with a Japanese industry professional who was shocked when reviewing the portfolios of prospective American manga artists, explaining that “she’d see work that was done recently that looked like it was drawn or influenced by

manga that was popular 10, 20 or more years ago” (2018). Bainbridge and Norris attest that the standardization of a manga style was established principally in Japan through a series of instructional drawing books called *How to Draw Manga* (2010). Here they are referring to a series of publications by Graphic-sha of the same title, of which the first title was published in the United States just at the beginnings of the manga boom in 1999. Distributed in the United States just three years prior to Hart’s initial *Manga Mania*, these books spanned over forty volumes, each specializing in a different topic. Graphic-sha’s titles can now only be obtained secondhand. Meanwhile, Hart’s publications seemingly dominate the scene of instructional manga publications, having “sold over 8 million titles” (“About Chris”, 2019). Today his books are carried by a large number of retailers including “Michael’s Arts & Crafts stores, Hobby Lobby, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, Jo-Ann’s, Books-a-Million” as well as a number of independent book sellers (“About Chris”, 2019). Browsing the instructional drawing book section of any one of these locations, the prevalence of his volumes is staggering alone, and he has consistently released volumes for nearly two decades. Despite his economic domination of this area, his books have not been addressed within the context of this American manga boom. Why is this the case? As Aoki points out, “compared to Japan, or even Korea, Indonesia, or China, there aren’t a lot of places in North America where you can get hands-on training in how to draw manga from published or experienced professional artists” (Aoki, 2018). Certainly before wide-

spread use of the internet, in the early 2000's when Hart began publishing books on manga, these would have been among the few sources available to American audiences.

From sales numbers alone, it is clear Hart has made a sizable impact in the industry of American manga culture, but there have been no attempts to date to address his potential role in the creation and persistence of an American manga culture (Wolk, 2004). Including him within the discussion of American manga production and publishing may help us to understand the perception of manga in the United States as it was being consumed within the manga boom, as well as how he participated in the creation of a manga culture. Because of the widespread perception of manga as a stylization of the human form, I will examine Hart's book especially through this lens. How can Hart's publications on manga help us understand the culture of manga in the United States from the manga boom to today? By taking a critical look at Hart's publications, I will illustrate the complexity of the nature of manga in the United States. I argue that Hart is contributing to a distinctly American manga culture. Before examining these publications more closely, however, I would like to begin by clarifying that the conclusions I make here do not attempt to define the terms manga or anime themselves; I wish only to illustrate how these texts may help us understand the ways in which these terms are understood in the context of the United States and how they may illustrate Brienza's implication of a creation of culture in the United States (2016a).

Christopher Hart

Established as an American illustrator, Hart attended the California Institute of the Arts from 1975 as well as New York University, the Paier School of Art and the School of Visual Arts in NYC 9 ("Christopher Hart", 2005). He has consistently published instructional drawing books ever since his first publication in 1988, *How to Draw Cartoons for Comic Strips* ("Christopher Hart", 2005). In 2001, Hart released the first of what would eventually be a large collection of instructional manuals on drawing manga titled, *Manga Mania: How to Draw Japanese Comics*. By 2004, Hart had produced nineteen books devoted to teaching the reader to draw in a manga or anime style. Hart was no stranger to publishing; prior to the release of *Manga Mania* in 2001, he had published twenty-nine titles, all through Watson-Guptill in New York, which specializes in instructional art texts. Hart has been attributed as the "world's bestselling author of drawing and cartooning books", having sold over six million copies of his texts which have been translated "into more than 20 languages" ("About Chris", 2019). Hart still produces these books today, with the most recent addition in November 2018--*Manga Mania Universe: The Massive Book of Drawing Manga*. Though not all these titles include his own illustrations, as evidenced by the contributing artists pages of titles such as *Manga Mania* (2001) and *Manga Mania Universe: The Massive Book of Drawing Manga* (2018), he acts as editor and compiler, and his name appears prominently on the cover of each volume (Hart, 2001, p.

4; Hart, 2018, p. 4). His series is incredibly popular and highly circulated in the United States and abroad. An article in *Publishers Weekly* from March 2004 highlights the acclaim of Hart's publications:

It's just been a runaway success. We saw that the media was just saturated with this stuff—film, TV, video,” said Watson-Guptill executive editor Candace Raney. Raney noted that *Manga Mania* was #1 on Bookscan's art book sales charts for about six months and has been on that list for more than 150 weeks. Following that success, she said, “We've published [Hart's] *Anime Mania*, *Mecha Mania*, *Manga Mania Villains*, *Manga Mania Fantasy Worlds...* we've been tremendously successful, beyond our dreams.” The titles have collectively sold several hundred thousand copies (Wolk, 2004).

The first volume of Hart's *Manga Mania* was released just as the manga boom was beginning to take off in America. Hart was clearly aware of the potential for success in tapping into this medium. In an interview with *Publishers Weekly* in 2006, he stated that:

[m]anga is a trend that will become a staple...[i]t's like waiting for rap music to fade. If you open a conventional American comic book, all you see is talky, talky. No fight scenes. You open manga, and you see action, in-your-face fight scenes.

Manga does for kids what comic books used to do” (Rosen, 2006).

The back cover of Hart's first volume on manga assures the reader that “the primary purpose [of the book] is to give you the step-by-step visual instruction you need to draw and invent your own cool comic book characters in all the popular manga genres” (Hart, 2011). This is, firstly, an instructional guide. Within this book, Hart is providing an instructional approach to drawing in a particular style. The fact that this book came into existence illustrates a demonstrated assumption that the reader needs instruction from someone in order to have the material broken down step by step. In a similar manner to Hart's earlier cartooning publications, manga is presented in a series of building blocks teaching the reader to draw a manga figure through a series of steps. Hart is not the first artist to take part in this kind of instruction. The sale and distribution of drawing manuals like Hart's can be traced back to the post-war period in the United States, most notably with the Famous Artists School of Albert Dorne and Norman Rockwell (Plunkett & Livesey, 2017). Instructional materials mailed to students through the mail resemble that of the content in Hart's manuals with forms broken down into geometric shapes, often focusing on isolated parts of the body, one at a time. The similarity can be seen in a comparison of diagrams from session one of the *Famous Artists Cartoon Course* and a page from Hart's *Manga Mania* (2001), both of which break down the head through the use of geometric forms (figures 1 and 2).

What is put forth for the reader is the result of Hart's analyzing, deconstructing and reconstructing of what he understands manga to be in order to create a pedagogy of drawing manga. Hart's personal experiences with and perception of manga are also an integral factor to consider in examining his manga publications. There are several layers of interpretation that go into the final product of his books as he draws on his background in illustration as well as acting as an interpreter, compiling illustrations from each of the artists contributing to his publication and producing textual information to accompany them. Additionally, Hart was not unfamiliar with Japanese media prior to publishing his series on manga. In a section exploring potential super-powers for characters in *Manga Mania* (2001), Hart recalls watching the anime, *8 Man*, originally televised in the US in 1965 under the title *Tobor the Eighth Man* (Hart, 2001, p. 37; "8 Man", 2019). He draws on this title as an example of a design that "approximates flight", indicating to the reader to use speed lines to suggest quick movement (Hart, 2001, p. 37). The protagonist of the title also bears likeness to the illustration at the top of the page in not only their similarity in costume but in pose as well (figures 3 and 4).

As asserted by Lefevere, the role of translator is one of authority and power and there is always a degree, whatever the intention of the translator, to "reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such, manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way" (Lefevere, 1992). The content which Hart produces as an understanding of manga draws from a wide

range of contexts. For one, his personal consumption and experience of manga and related media has certainly informed his perspective, as evidenced by his reference to his own experience of watching televised series like *Tobor the Eighth Man*. Additionally, Hart takes part in the longstanding American tradition of remote art teaching through the use of manuals. We anticipate Hart to be a reliable authority on the content in his volumes, and as such he is placed in a privileged position over the reader. From the statement on the back of the volume, this title is "the only book to provide comprehensive drawing instruction in this style" (Hart, 2001). Thus, Hart presents himself and this volume as a trustworthy source; the reader may be assured that this volume will provide instruction in an authentic manga style. As such, I assert that Hart acts as a translator of manga's visual style for an American audience. Below, I will illustrate how he does so by examining the material in his instructional drawing manuals through the stylization of the human figure as well as the accompanying text.

The Body and Visual Aesthetics

While manga can be considered as both a socio-cultural artefact and a "visual style", defining this term out of its Japanese context is deeply complex (Cohn, 2010, p. 188). From the perspective of many American observers, however, manga is most apparent as a particular trend of stylistic variations of the human form (Kacsuk, 2018, p. 7). While many scholars agree that manga is much more complex than this, it is this aspect that

English-speaking readers most typically associate with it, therefore I will be considering manga primarily as a visual style (Kacsuk, 2018, p. 7). Only ten pages of the 144 pages of *Manga Mania* (2001) are dedicated to framing and narration, as most of the focus is on the visual traits and stylization of the figure.

What comprises and identifies this visual style and how do we define it? In his frequently cited essay “Japanese Visual Language: The Structure of Manga,” semiologist Neil Cohn defines manga in a non-Japanese context as a type of “visual language”, being “loosely conceived of as an ‘aesthetic style’” (2010, p. 187). Cohn notes that figures tend to have a “much rounder” and “not nearly as angular head” while the eyes are usually “spaced far apart” and the “nose is always subtle and small” (Cohn & Ehly, 2016). Facial expressions like those included on the “*shojo* style” page of *Manga Mania*, pictured in figure 5, share these similarities with several examples provided in Cohn’s essay, as depicted in figure 6. These images also include the exaggerated and geometric mouths, “sweat drops around the head” and “pointed teeth” that Cohn notes as well (Cohn & Ehly, 2016). Illustrations included on pages 58 and 59 (figures 7 and 8) of *Manga Mania* also include many of the same elements as pointed out by Cohn such as “small mouths, triangular noses, and angular colored hairdos” (Cohn & Ehly, 2016). Evident through these images in Hart’s publication, Kacsuk’s conclusion that these types of visual traits were “in part popularized by the visual world of how to draw manga guides” seems likely (Kacsuk, 2018). Cohn coins these

traits together as JVL or (Japanese Visual Language), to describe a “system of graphic expression” in specifically Japanese manga that is observed as a recognizable pattern of “big eyes, big hair, small mouth[s], and pointed chins”— the same traits many American readers associate with manga (Cohn, 2010, p. 187; Kacsuk, 2018, p. 7). Cohn summarizes statements from both Tezuka and scholar Frederik Schodt— asserting manga not just as pictures, but as a “type of symbol” or “another language” (Cohn, 2010, p. 187). It must be acknowledged as well that Cohn’s essay is an interpretation of manga’s visual style as well. However, in this case, as I will discuss below, Cohn’s understanding seems to correlate with Hart’s as he similarly notes many of the same visual observations in *Manga Mania* such as “delicate, upturned noses” and eyes that are “spaced far apart on the head” (Hart, 2001, p. 7).

If we consider this system of visual expression as a language, can it be translated? In dealing with the translation of imagery, Jakobson’s method of inter-semiotic translation deals specifically with the translation of images, defined in *Routledge Translation Studies* as a “transmutation”, acting as “an interpretation of verbal signs” (Bassnett, 2013, p. 25). Considering the aesthetic stylization of the human figure in manga as a language, I suggest that Hart’s act of interpreting and presenting this language to an English-speaking audience can be considered an act of inter-semiotic translation. What is the source text he is drawing on for this translation? Provided that Hart is not reading manga in its original source language of

Japanese, he has likely drawn from popular titles that would have been readily accessible to him in the United States at the time of his initial publication—2001. This seems apparent in a comparison of the illustrations in *Manga Mania* to those of manga and anime popular from approximately two decades ago. Images from his *Kids Draw: Manga Shoujo* recall those from serializations including *Pokémon* and *Digimon*, televised in the United States in 1998 and 1999 respectively—only several years prior to *Manga Mania* (2001)—particularly in the proportions of the body (figures 9 and 10). Both representations also feature a similar ratio of head to body size, large eyes and similarly shaped spikey hair. This is suggested as well by Couch, as he describes the success and permeation of titles like *Pokémon*, *Sailor Moon* and *Gundam* “among the teen and ‘tween’ population in the United States”, which began when the *Pokémon* craze hit in 1999 (2010, p. 213). Hart notes these titles in the intro to *Manga Mania* (2001) as well, stating “who hasn’t heard of Digimon, Dragon Ball Z, Sailor Moon and Pokémon?” (Hart, 2001, p. 7). Some characters closely resemble existing characters—in this case—with the character “Maximillion Pegasus” from the title *Yugioh*, which aired in 2001. Both characters feature similar jackets both in a maroon shade, with gold buttons and visible frills at the cuffs of the sleeves (figures 11 and 12). They are also both depicted with silver angular hairstyles. This apparent borrowing from popular anime titles is not surprising considering how interrelated the perception of both anime and manga have been in the United States, as evidenced by

the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s definition mentioned previously; and as asserted by Johnson-Woods, “[i]t is because of anime that manga came to the attention of the general populace”, making it difficult to separate manga from anime in an American understanding of the two subjects (2014, p.1).

Hart’s texts create a bubble in which many of the same stylistic variations are used. This self-contained American manga culture including Hart’s publications as well as domestically produced manga, feeds off of itself, which may help explain the observations noted by Aoki that American artists are not in tune with current trends in Japan. As with any other medium, predominant manga styles and trends typically change. Aesthetic preferences and practices shift over time with the rise and wane in popularity of certain titles. In contemporary series we can see the same traits associated with manga figures, particularly large eyes like those depicted in titles such as *Miss Kobayashi’s Dragon Maid* (2017), or *RE: Zero* (2016) which feature similarly stylized human figures (figures 13 and 14). As with more contemporary titles however, these titles both feature characters stylized with more simplified lines, rounder forms and noses that appear often as little more than a dot. Despite some similarities, there is still a striking difference when comparing the imagery of these titles to those of Hart’s. Even in later volumes like Hart’s *Manga Mania Universe* (2018), very few illustrated examples seem to resemble imagery of these titles, despite being published as recently as 2018. But looking at the images featured in

the original *Manga Mania* (2001), it seems that the imagery is reflective of popular titles at the time of its publishing, which seems to support Aoki's observations of a perpetuation of decade's old visual styles.

Hart makes clear that there is a distinct difference between the visual traits of manga as separate from a western style of comic. What then, is different about manga's visual aesthetics? He draws this distinction in the introduction to *Manga Mania* (2001) as he states—"manga's] style is unique and instantly recognizable" while it also "focuses on creating appealing characterizations of ordinary people" (Hart, 2001, p.7). This, he differentiates from western comics which he asserts "push the envelope to produce chiseled anatomy, intensity and violence" (Hart, 2001, p.7). The most clear example of this idea in *Manga Mania* is further into the publication where Hart demonstrates how to draw "fantasy heroes and Sci-fi characters" (Hart, 2001, p.82). Hart provides an illustration of a character portrayed in what he describes as a western style vs. a manga style as depicted in figure 15. In the accompanying text, Hart states that western comic artists define "every sinew" of muscle on their characters which he demonstrates in the middle graphic of each set (Hart, 2001, p.82). Manga heroes, he suggests, retain a boyish quality as illustrated on the right, where there is significantly less muscle definition as well as softer facial features (Hart, 2001, p.82). Though in many cases, somewhat of a synthesis seems to be illustrated with visual traits often associated with American superhero comics combined with these aspects of JVL. Many illustrations also

implement a more muscular build alongside the use of highly saturated colors that evoke the aesthetics of American superhero comics as well. This can be seen most clearly in figure 16—particularly in the brightly colored body suit and defined musculature of the character on the right.

The Text: What Makes a Manga Character?

Not only is the physical and stylistic variation of characters an important distinction to Hart, but the personality is as well. Hart's texts seem to suggest two major traits as being unique to manga, the visual style, particularly of the figure, and the personality of the characters, especially in their relatability to the average reader Christopher Hart. (Hart, 2001, p. 7). In *Manga Mania*, he asserts that one of the major distinctions between a manga character and that of a western comic character is that the former is "easier to relate to than, for example, an action hero who eats plutonium for breakfast and blasts through concrete walls"—a clear reference to the widely known American comic icon, Super-man (Hart, 2001, p. 7). Hart's publications also, however, suggest a strong correlation between an individual character's physical appearance and the perception of their personality and narrative role; effectually, each image exists as a complete character or character archetype. The stylization of the figure, face, body and all traits seem inseparable from the idea of the character itself, and Hart constructs these images or ideas of characters in a way that suggests that these are typical of the kinds of

character archetypes you will find in various genres of manga.

This is clear especially in the section in which the reader is shown how to draw the “good guy vs. bad guy” for fantasy characters (figure 17). Here, Hart provides two examples of character portraits—one good and one evil. Using essentially the same base, to create the “bad guy”, only small changes are made. In this case, the eyes are made smaller and more narrow with smaller irises. As he states in the accompanying text, “good guys have larger and rounder eyes than bad guys” (Hart, 2011, p. 83). He continues, stating that “they also scowl and display skeptical, jaded expressions”, and that in addition, “their faces are ‘decorated’ with telltale signs of badness: scars, stubble, multiple piercings, streaked hair, and the signs of general wear and tear that come from living on the wrong side” (Hart, 2011, p. 83). This merging of personality and appearance with similar archetypes continues with nearly every entry in Hart’s *Manga Mania Universe* (2018) as well textual accompaniment that merges the appearance of the character with the archetype and personality. We can see this again in the description of the “bishie boy” in Hart’s *Manga Mania Universe* (2018) as he presents a description of the archetype, stating that this character has “caused more than their fair share of broken hearts”, and is “self-confident but unable to commit” as well as “somewhat troubled, aloof and mysterious” (Hart, 2018, p. 35). While *Manga Mania* (2001) does not include a strictly labelled “bishie” character, many of the traits of the “bad boy” align closely with that of the “bishie” in *Manga Mania*

Universe (2018) and other manga titles by Hart including his *Kids Draw: Manga* (2005). This interest in character is also apparent from the included interview with VIZ President Bill Flanagan at the conclusion of *Manga Mania* (2001). In elaborating on a particular title, *Fushigi Yuugi*, Flanagan states that “it’s the characters that make the story really universal” (Hart, 2001, p. 140). He continues, stating that “the characters of manga tend to be normal people” and that the genre has appeal in the United States because it “has more sympathetic characters” than its Western counterpart (Hart, 2001, p. 140).

Another clear division Hart makes in *Manga Mania* is a categorization and explanation of different genres of manga, which in many cases are directly correlated with the same character archetypes and types of figural stylizations he utilizes. In *Manga Mania* (2001), Hart lists genres of manga which he describes as “popular categories”. The list includes a large number of categories including “romance/teen”, “historical/costume”, “fantasy/adventure”, “samurai”, “international spies/adventure”, “monsters/the supernatural”, “sci-fi/robots”, “young children (traditional style)”, “kid’s adventure”, “school drama” and “rebel teens” (Hart, 2001, pp. 58-59). This list of genres or subjects has been imagined by Hart. Here, he provides the options the reader has to choose from in expanding their stylistic variations for their own version of a manga style. Many of these genres and included character archetypes carry over into even the latest volume, *Manga Mania Universe* (2018).

Hart's first manga publication provides a more general overview of the medium, though later he would release titles specializing distinct genres like *Manga Mania: Bishoujo*, *Manga Mania: Shoujo*, and *Manga Mania: Fantasy Worlds*, as well as a title on anime. Hart acknowledges existing genres of manga, including that of *shonen* and *shojo*—terms typically denoting manga marketed toward boys and girls in Japan respectively. *Shojo* is recognized for its stereotypically large, heavily embellished eyes as pictured in this cover illustration for Riyoko Ikeda's *Rose of Versailles* 9 (figure 18). Hart synthesizes and acknowledges these stylistic dialects in his publications as well, as pictured particularly in the portrait in the bottom right of figure 19, which features similarly flowing hair and sparkling eyes.

Translation, Adaptation, or Domestication?

Is it possible to translate manga's visual style? Does it need to be translated? What are the implications of doing so? Hart's *Manga Mania* (2001) seems to suggest that some sort of interpretation and breakdown is, in fact necessary. Taken from the statement on the back of the volume, this title is "the only book to provide comprehensive drawing instruction in this style" (Hart, 2001). As addressed above, Hart's was, in fact, not the only publication on manga that was available to English audiences, however; as two years previously, volume one of Graphic-Sha's *How to Draw Manga* was published. In the case of Hart's publication, there is a different kind of

translation as he is creating his own material and putting it forth in faith that it will provide readers with the knowledge they will "need as both a tourist and a manga artist" (Hart, 2011, p. 126). Thus, Hart presents himself and this volume as a trustworthy source; the reader may be assured that this volume will provide instruction in an authentic manga style. With the suggestion that the reader may need to know Japanese vocabulary, he may even be suggesting that the reader will one day have a career in making manga in Japan.

How do we address Hart's publications as a translation? Susan Bassnett notably defines translation as an act that involves "rendering of a source language text into the target language so as to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and (2), the structures of the source language will be preserved as closely as possible but not so closely that the target language structures will be seriously distorted" (Bassnett, 2013, p. 14). Hart's publications do seem to suggest some level of equivalency in consideration of this definition. In addition to the quotation from the back cover, in the introduction of *Manga Mania* (2001) Hart suggests that the reader could someday become a professional manga-ka—a term typically denoting those working in Japan and producing comics for a living (Hart, 2001, p.7; Lehmann, 2005). The suggestion with this volume is that the reader will go on to break into the Japanese manga industry itself. Included in the back of the book is even a "common Japanese terms" list which includes phrases like "where can I get something to eat?" but also those related more directly to manga

publishing like terms for “publisher”, “submission”, and “portfolio” (Hart, 2001, p. 127). In other words, the content that Hart will teach the reader to produce will be equivalent to “authentic” Japanese manga. Lefevre on the other hand, considers translation as a “rewriting” or “manipulation, undertaken in the service of power” (1992). This act, he states can “introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices” of culture (Lefevre, 1992). By creating entirely new content that is organized and also explained through textual accompaniment, Hart is able to craft an interpretation of manga that he has complete control over.

While processes such as mirroring of pages have largely been done away with within the last decade, the manga and anime of the early twenty-first century was and is still subjected to a number of editorial processes and adaptations of both art and text before hitting contemporary American bookshelves. In many cases, a title may be adapted in a variety of ways, including textual translation, re-lettering, marketing and more. In some cases, art may also be modified or censored in order to make the source content more suited for American consumption. In some cases, elements that may have previously been adapted are left unchanged. For example, more common terminology including words like “*futon*, *tatami*, and even “*onii-sama*” (older brother) are often left as-is” (Schodt, 2016, p. 8). Japanese honorifics that are included following a person’s name are also more frequently being included in English releases as well as sound effects in the interest of authenticity (Schodt, 2016, p. 8).

Schodt notes that this causes a “weird hybrid of American “comic books” and “Japanese manga” because readers now turn pages and read panels in Japanese order (right to left) but read English text inside panels in English order (left to right)” (Schodt, 2016, p. 8). In 2002, American manga publisher Tokyopop, began publishing unflipped manga collections “with the sound effects untranslated” (Couch, 2010, p. 213). These publications act as source material for Hart and others as a reference for what manga is. It is important to acknowledge that the material he is drawing from has already been through processes of editing and adaptation before being presented to an American audience, so these changes become a part of Hart’s understanding of manga that he is synthesizing into his instructional publications.

Hart’s publications, beginning with *Manga Mania* (2001), were published coinciding with the American manga boom, as manga publishers in the United States were experimenting with ways to both adapt and market manga to American audiences. This means that many of the works Hart is drawing from have been through a number of processes beyond just textual translation. Works may undergo a process of re-lettering as well, and in some cases, modification or censoring of the art itself- further complicating his work as an interpretation of manga. Certainly, it wasn’t uncommon for a series to be changed drastically prior to broadcast in the United States and during the manga boom, these changes had the potential to be much more drastic than alterations made today (Schodt, 2016, p. 8). As Brienza addresses, the act of making

Japanese manga available to an American audience is complex, and in the context of the manga boom of the early 2000's, this was an ever-changing field. Translation is not typically a simple or straightforward process. As Brienza acknowledges, those involved in the process have difficulty even ascribing a label to this process—questioning whether it is translating, adapting, “repurposing, shepherding, evangelizing” or “localizing” (2016a, p. 17). Schodt provides a brief summary of the history of this process, describing how “niche translation experiments started in the 1970s” but that in “North America[,] commercial ventures didn’t succeed until the late 1980s” (Schodt, 2016, p. 7). In early adaptation efforts, whole pages were mirrored in order to be read “in ‘Western’ order (Schodt, 2016, p. 7). Additionally, art was sometimes censored or altered and at times, covers were swapped to “American-style covers drawn by US artists” (Schodt, 2016, p. 7). In one notable example, Japanese television show *Power Rangers* was subjected to a rigorous “reculturalization” process before airing in the United States in 1993 (Allison, 2006, p. 16). Prior to its release, all of the scenes where the characters appeared as normal teenagers were re-shot with American actors in the network’s attempt to appeal to an audience of American children (Allison, 2006, p. 16). In 2004, however, the episode “Lost and Found in Translation” aired, making explicit reference to the show’s Japanese origins (Allison, 2006, p. 16). Beginning with Hart’s first volume of *Manga Mania*, he does not seem to attempt to hide the Japanese origins of manga.

Adding another layer of complexity is the fact that many of Hart’s titles, including *Manga Mania* (2001) are compiled using illustrations from a number of different individual artists. In the case of Hart’s original *Manga Mania* volume, a total of ten artists are listed as contributors (Hart, 2001). Among those named include individuals Colleen Doran, Lea Hernandez, Svetlana Chmakova, and Francis Manapul, as well as Hart himself (Hart, 2001). Out of the group of contributors, only the work of Chmakova and Hernandez seems to carry the same stylizations of the figure that are consistent with this understanding of the ‘big eye’, ‘small nose’ manga character as pictured in figures 20 and 21. Of the artists featured in Hart’s books, Svetlana Chmakova, was a “frequent contributor” as well as a well-known name in manga publishing in the United States, having had major success with her title, *Drama-con*, originally published with Tokyopop in 2005 (Warren, 2006, p. 56). In an interview, Chmakova states that as well as having “several [art] styles”, she has been told that her “manga-influenced style looks very authentically manga” (Warren, 2006, p. 56). Additionally, she names titles including *Sailor Moon*, *Ranma ½* and *Slayers* as stylistic influences for her manga style (Warren, 2006, p. 57). Chmakova is also featured in *Mangaka America*, a publication that features manga by “America’s hottest artists” (Warren, 2006). Edited and produced by American artist, Tania Del Rio, and published in 2006, this volume provides an enlightening perspective on the view of manga produced in the United States in the context of the manga boom. In this publication, Del Rio

provides commentary addressing manga produced outside of Japan, stating that, “at the end of the day, manga is just a word. I think the word manga has already been assimilated into our language to describe a particular style. Its meaning has changed for us in the West; it doesn’t simply mean “comics” in the way that “otaku” simply means obsessed fan” (Warren, 2006, p. 12).

Conclusion

Through his publications, Hart participates in an American manga culture and his translation of the medium helps to create it. There are a wide variety of areas that Hart’s books could be expanded into, and a comparison of his materials to other instructional materials available in the United States could prove enlightening for further expanding understanding into how manga has been perceived outside of Japan, and what further implications exist. Additionally, there is further potential for an examination of Hart’s reception in Japan. How can his material be addressed from the perspective of cultural appropriation? Is Hart appropriating this culture through his publications? Hart seems to perceive the medium as being universal, particularly in statements provided in his most recent publication as he states that “manga has got to be one of the most popular styles of character art the world has ever come up with” (Hart, 2018, p. 8). Is the stylistic variation of the figure the only necessary trait a work must have to be called manga? Can manga be created by anyone who has adopted this visual style? Through both Hart’s imagery and text, we are able to see

his understanding of manga, which seems to follow the prominent correlation of visual stylization as its most defining feature. As such, he helps contribute to this perspective in the minds of an American audience.

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Figures

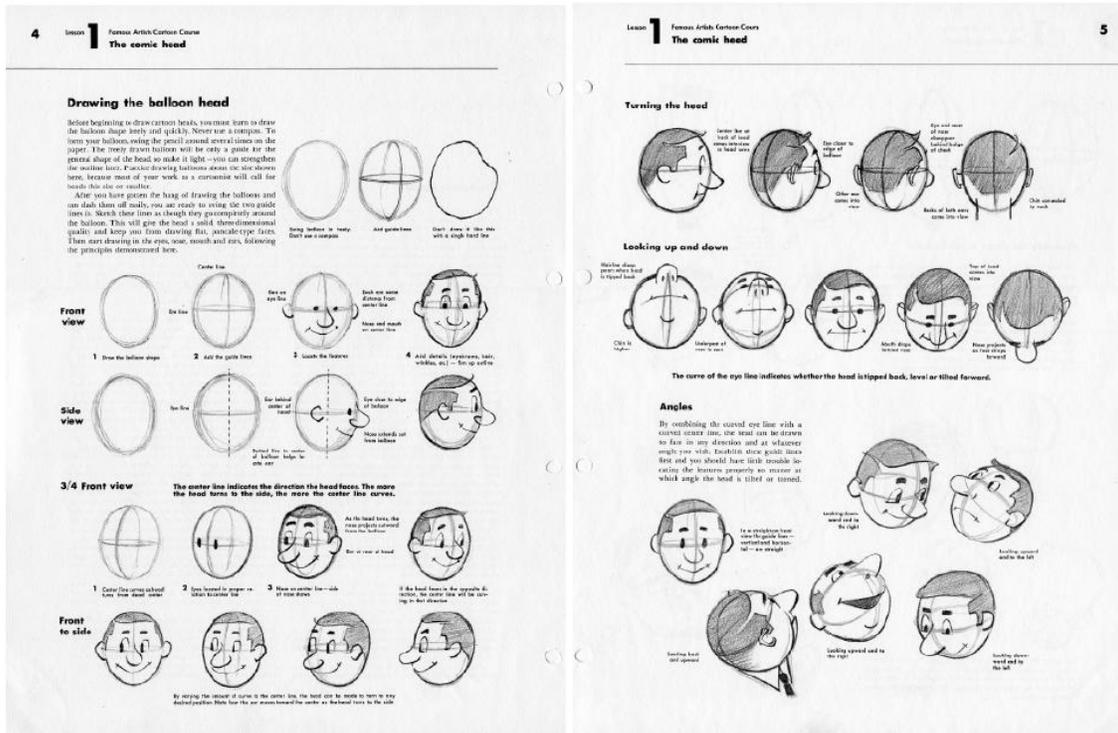


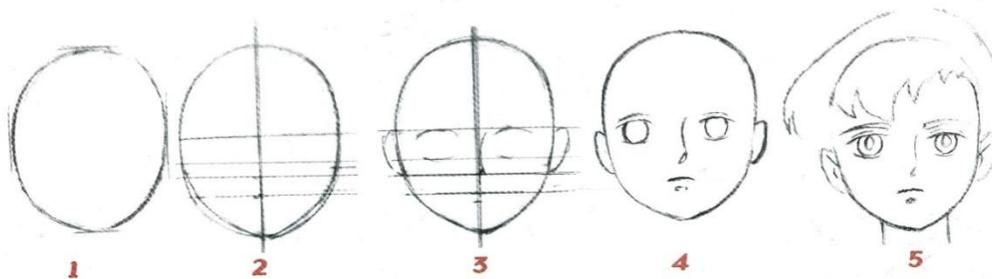
Fig. 1. Diagram from session one: Famous Artists Cartoon Course.

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THE YOUTHFUL MANGA HEAD

The head of the manga-style comic book hero differs in construction from that of its western-style counterpart in that it's usually much rounder and not nearly as angular. This is partly due to the younger age of many manga heroes. Facial proportions for young characters differ from those of adults. The eyes are lower down on the head and the chin is rounder. In teenage and adult characters, the chin is elongated and the entire face narrows. The chin is never square, but tapers to a point gently; however, even in teenage characters, the eyes still tend to be fairly low on the head, giving most manga characters a youthful appearance.

Another important thing to notice is that the eyes are generally spaced far apart on the head. This allows the manga artist to draw large eyes without crowding out the other features. Wide-set eyes also serve to emphasize the roundness of the head, which underscores the young appearance. The nose is always subtle and small, no matter the age of the character; in this way, it doesn't compete with the eyes. The mouth is also small and restrained, but as you'll see on the upcoming pages on manga expressions, the mouth can grow wildly in size to reflect a host of strong emotions.



FRONT VIEW

1 Start with a circular shape. Although it's not really an oval, it's slightly taller than it is wide.

2 Divide the face in two with a light, sketchy vertical guideline. This is crucial, because it will help you to space the eyes evenly—in a frontal view, if one eye is further away from the center of the face than the other, you're sunk. Next, add a set of parallel horizontal guidelines across the middle of the head to indicate where the eyes will go. Sketch another light horizontal guideline to indicate where the bottom of the nose will be, and one more to indicate where the lips will go. The bottom of the nose falls about halfway between the top of the eyes and the chin. Also, don't leave much room between the bottom of the nose and the lips; you want a short upper lip, which is a trademark of a youthful character. Long upper lips are reserved for older and sinister characters.

3 Start to sketch in the eyes, working large. Don't be shy on this one. The eyes are the focal point of the manga face. Use a simple, lightly drawn curve to indicate the bridge of the nose. Place the ears low on the head, falling between the top eye line and the nose line, and indicate the bottom lip with a small line.

4 Now you can erase the guidelines if you wish. Begin to define the eyelids, and draw a small shape at the bottom of the nose to indicate its underside.

5 Make a decision about how the hair should fall, either to the left or to the right, and then build it up. This adds height to the head, giving the effect of pushing the eyes further down the face.

6 The final result is a young manga boy.



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Fig. 2. Page 9 in *Manga Mania: How to Draw Japanese Comics*.

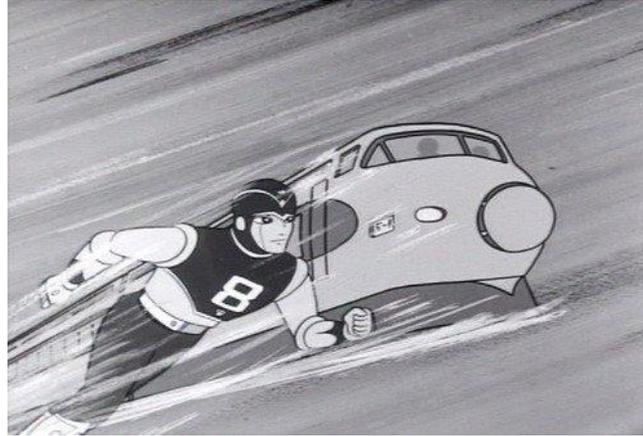


Fig. 3. *Tobor the Eighth Man*.

<https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/encyclopedia/anime.php?id=665>



Fig. 4. Page 37 in *Manga Mania: How to Draw Japanese Comics*.

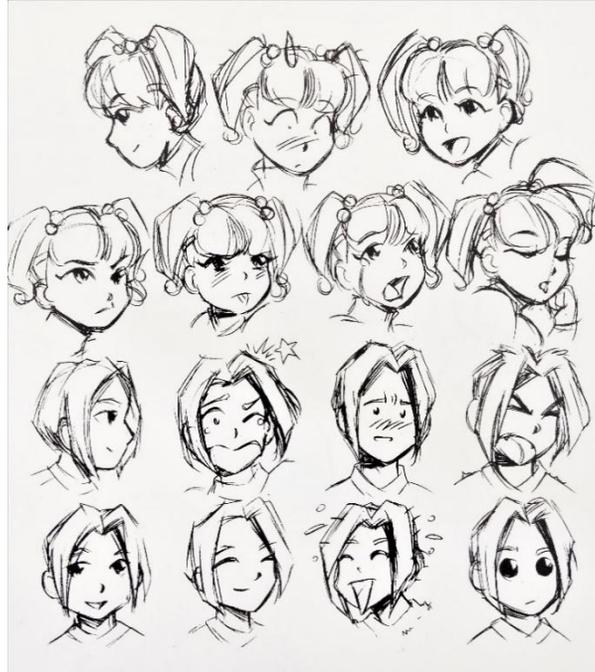


Fig. 5. Excerpt from page 23 in *Manga Mania: How to Draw Japanese Comics*.



Fig. 6. Cohn, Neil, and Sean Ehly. “The Vocabulary of Manga: Visual Morphology in Dialects of Japanese Visual Language.” *Journal of Pragmatics* 92 (2016).



Fig. 7. Page 58 in *Manga Mania: How to Draw Japanese Comics*.

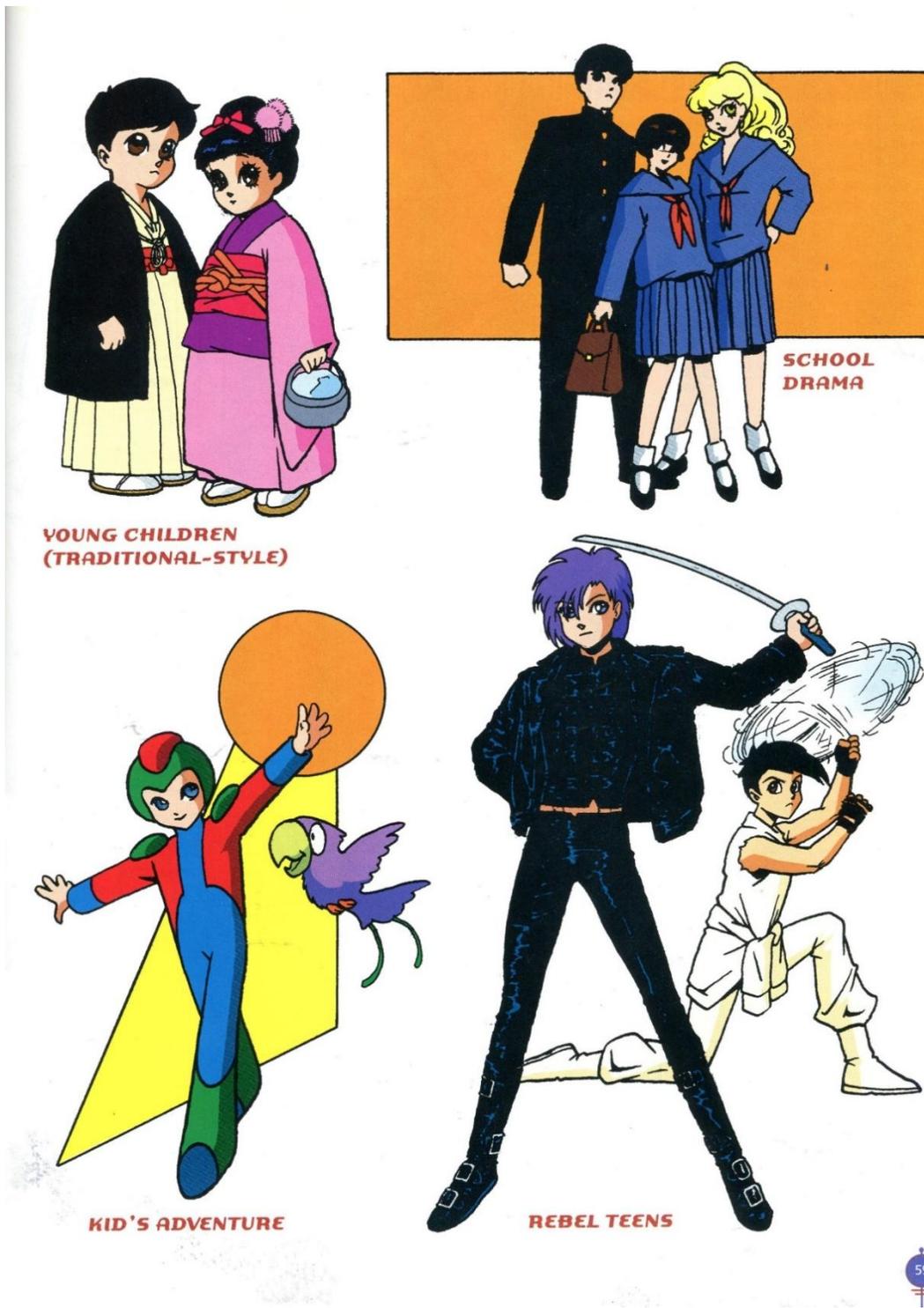


Fig. 8. Page 59 in *Manga Mania: How to Draw Japanese Comics*.



Fig. 9. Protagonist of *Pokémon*. https://ic7999.fandom.com/wiki/Ash_Ketchum



Fig. 10. Protagonist of *Digimon*. https://digimon.fandom.com/wiki/Taichi_%22Tai%22_Kamiya



Fig. 11. “Bishounen” from *Kids Draw: Manga Shoujo*, pg. 23



Fig. 12. “Maximillian Pegasus” of *Yugioh*.
https://yugioh.fandom.com/wiki/Maximillion_Pegasus



Fig. 13. *Miss Kobayashi's Dragon Maid*, (2017). https://cdn10.bigcommerce.com/s-outyna/products/2332/images/2416/MKDM0001__03291.1509386557.1280.1280.jpg?c=2



Fig. 14. *Re: ZERO –Starting Life in Another World–* (2016).

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FANTASY HEROES AND SCI-FI CHARACTERS

The characters in these types of manga fantasy tales differ completely from the magical creatures that inhabit the fantasy elfin world. It's a different side of the fantasy realm. Fantasy heroes deal with fighting and armor and warlords. It's all swords and sorcery, whereas the elfin genre deals with peaceful creatures of the forest. *Lodoss War* is a good example of the manga fantasy style.

WESTERN STYLE VS. MANGA

Western comic book artists define every sinew of muscle on their characters. There's a rugged, harsh quality to western heroes, as if they've been hardened by a lifetime of fights and struggles. Manga heroes, while certainly of impressive physical stature, retain a boyish quality. The chin isn't as squared off and tapers to a rounded point. The nose is upturned in the classic manga style. The pupils, irises, and eyebrows are all slightly larger and thicker. The neck doesn't look like it came from a pit bull. Overall, manga characters have fewer lines of definition on the face and body, and the muscles appear smoother.

If you put both these characters in shirts, the western hero would still look freakishly large, while the manga hero would simply look athletic. In addition, the western hero is an antihero, a hero figure who conspicuously lacks heroic qualities. An antihero just happens to be on the right side of the law but looks as if he's only a hair's breath away from being a bad guy himself, due to his cynical, hardened demeanor and toughened body. This is not the case with most manga and anime heroes. They look like good guys who are all pumped up. They still have emotions and believe in something larger than themselves.

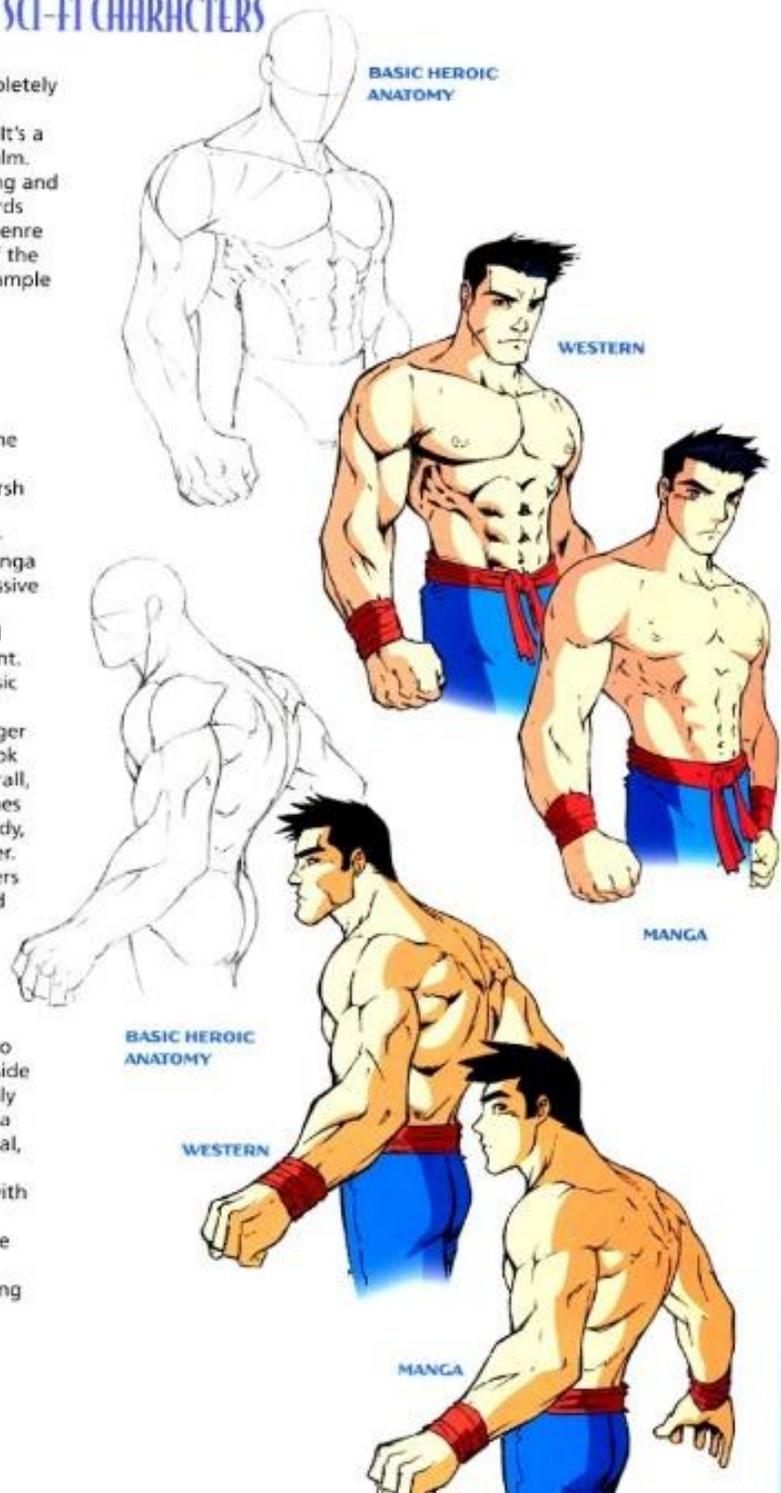
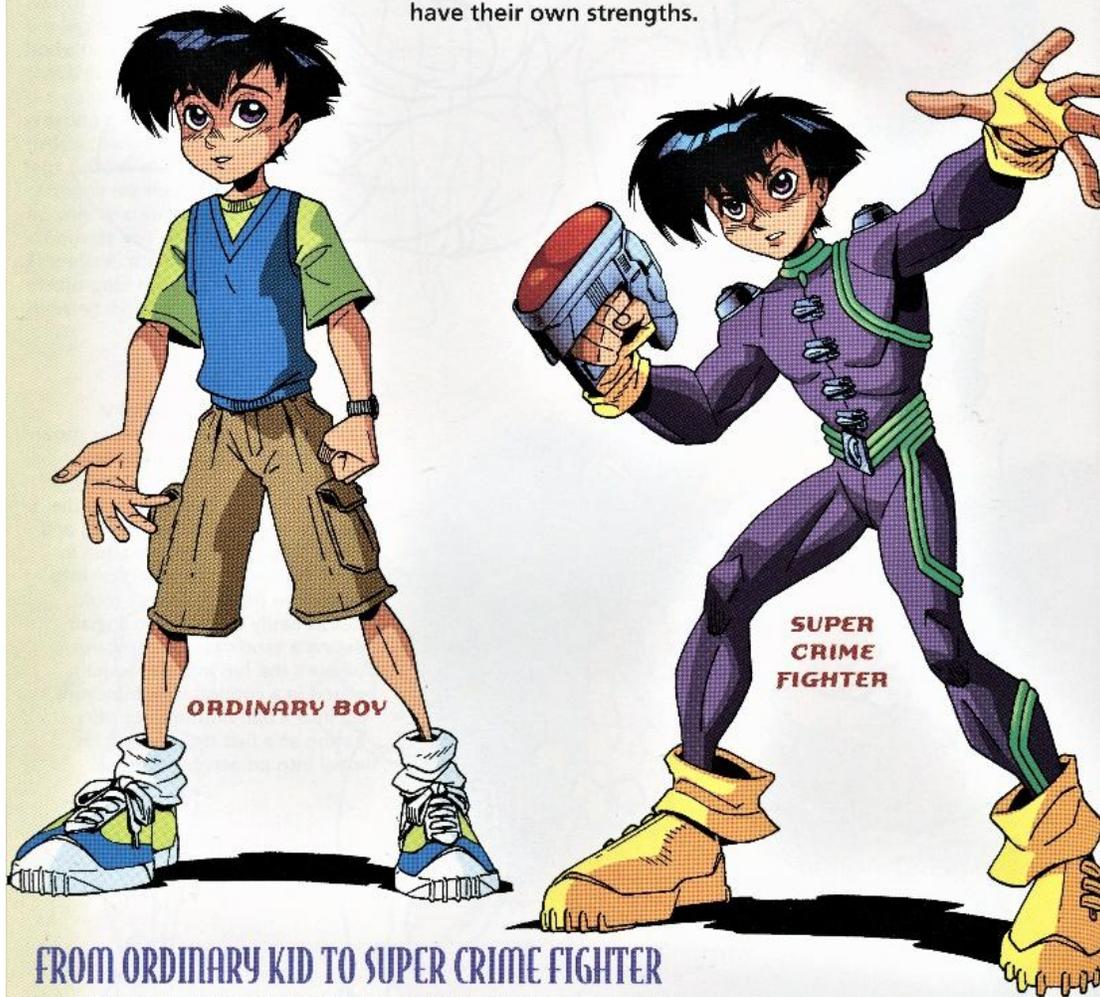


Fig. 15. Christopher Hart. Page 82 in *Manga Mania: How to Draw Japanese Comics*. New York City, New York: Watson-Guptill, 2001.

SHŌNEN MANGA

Shōnen manga means boys' comics—ones read primarily by boys. This type of manga is rougher around the edges and more action- and hero-oriented than shōjo, the girls' manga. Shōnen has become popular in America in the form of animated television shows in which kids either are crime fighters themselves or fight beings who have super powers, or in which the kids are assisted by friendly creatures who have their own strengths.



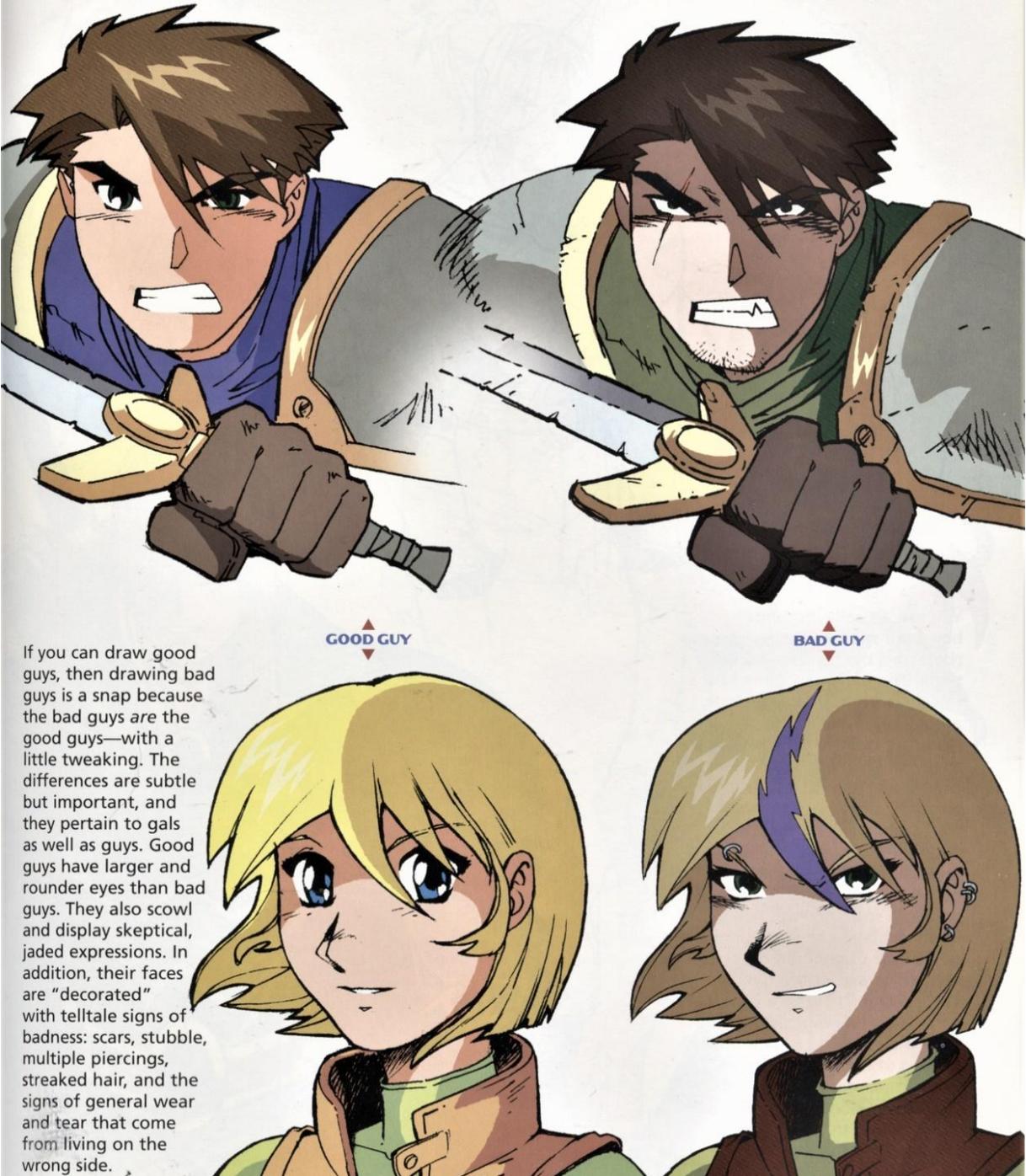
FROM ORDINARY KID TO SUPER CRIME FIGHTER

The super crime fighter shōnen kid is more muscular than an ordinary adolescent, but not massively so. It's more of a matter of giving the muscles defined shape rather than greater size. Perhaps the most important elements of super crime fighter kids are their costumes, without which they would look strangely built for their age. With the costumes, they become characters in a role, with a purpose—to fight bad guys, save the world, and make it home in time for dinner.

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Fig. 16. Page 34 in *Manga Mania: How to Draw Japanese Comics*. New York City, New York: Watson-Guptill, 2001.

FANTASY HERO FACES: GOOD GUY VS. BAD GUY



If you can draw good guys, then drawing bad guys is a snap because the bad guys are the good guys—with a little tweaking. The differences are subtle but important, and they pertain to gals as well as guys. Good guys have larger and rounder eyes than bad guys. They also scowl and display skeptical, jaded expressions. In addition, their faces are “decorated” with telltale signs of badness: scars, stubble, multiple piercings, streaked hair, and the signs of general wear and tear that come from living on the wrong side.

Fig. 17. Christopher Hart. Page 83, *Manga Mania: How to Draw Japanese Comics*. New York City, New York: Watson-Guptill, 2001.



Fig. 18. Volume one cover illustration: *The Rose of Versailles*.

https://img1.ak.crunchyroll.com/i/spire4/5491a059c5a098207c377c2db05b4d211653453888_main.jpg

THE MANGA EYE AND CHARACTER TYPES

You should base your choice of eye design on the type of character you're drawing. The style of manga eye must fit the character. If you love those big shōjo-style eyes but are drawing a villain, you must resist the impulse to use gigantic eyes for the evil character. For sinister characters, use slender eyes with sharp eyebrows.

Since manga has such a wide variety of styles, there are many eye types from which to choose. Generally, the more realistic the character, the more almond-shaped the eyes. The younger the character, the rounder and taller the eyes. For fantasy and young-girl characters, much emphasis is placed on the lashes, which are drawn individually, rather than bunched together as they appear on more mature characters and in western style comics.

Although comic book artists who work in the western style use heavy shadow to create mood and tension, that isn't always the technique used in manga. Look at the young-boy character in the lower left corner of the facing page: His eyes are heavily shaded, but the result is a more doll-like appearance, not a more dramatic one. His eyes shine like beacons of truth, conveying a palpable sense of earnestness.



Fig. 19. Christopher Hart. Page 14, *Manga Mania: How to Draw Japanese Comics*. New York City, New York: Watson-Guptill, 2001.

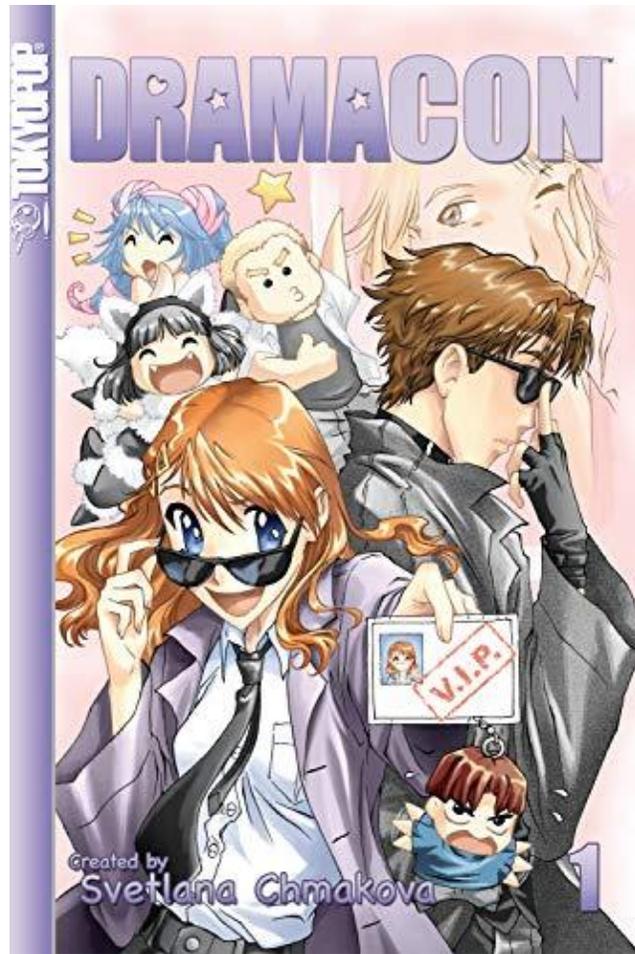


Fig. 20. Svetlana Chmakova. Cover illustration: *Dramacon* (2005). <https://images.squarespace-cdn.com/content/v1/557a0fd3e4b064e7f04db74f/1466617248059-MD7CL6Q6UD7OUP7EIMD/Dramacon1.jpg?format=500w>

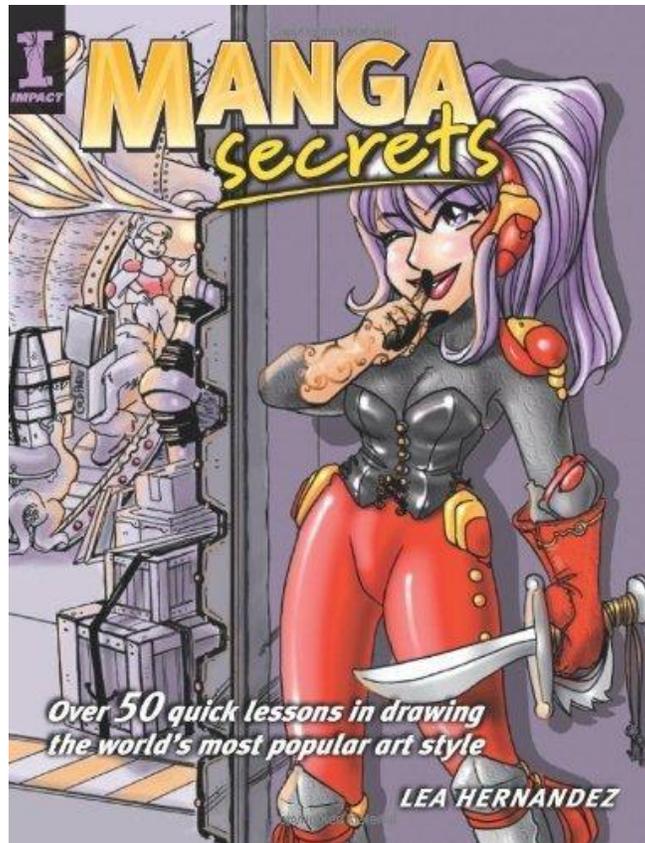


Fig. 21. Lea Hernandez. Cover illustration: *Manga Secrets* (2005). https://i.gr-assets.com/images/S/compressed.photo.goodreads.com/books/1172284866/160401._SX318_.jpg

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