

Black Faces, Witches, and Racism against Girls

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Between summer 1998 and summer 1999 *kogyaru* suntans began to get darker. The personality of the style veered from that of the slatternly coquettishness of dropout schoolgirls toward that of moody punk divas. Girls involved in this climactic phase of Shibuya, Center Gai street fashion used self-tanning crème and tanning salons to tan their skin as dark as they could, if possible to a chocolate brown color. Dark skin was highlighted with pearlescent colored eye shadow and lipstick, which, until the beginning of the decline of the look in late 2000, was used to paint thick white rings around the eye sockets and over the mouth. White-socketed girls redefined their eyes with dark eyeliner and false eyelashes cemented with lashings of mascara. The glamorous big hair of *kogyaru* style, streaked or dyed light red brown, made way for heavily highlighted whitish-blond hair arranged in shaggy dos, and in some cases tonged and piled-up into bouffant arrangements. This powerful assemblage was overlaid with colors: metallic lame face glitter on the cheeks and around plucked arching brows; glittering face stickers in the shape of tear drops, stars and hearts; and equally well-encrusted fingernails and painted extensions. White-on-brown was accessorized with any of a range of generally theatrical props, from ubiquitous clusters of artificial tropical flowers strung on bracelets, necklaces, and hair slides; to colored contact lenses; temporary tattoos; cowboy hats; character merchandise and bulky ethnic jewelry.

In the press the terms “nega-film,” “nega-make” (photo negative make-up), and “panda-make” were used to describe the facial expression. Girls became referred to unanimously as “black faces” (*ganguro*)¹ and girls sporting its most extreme affectations were called “witches” (*yamamba*). Racial innuendo joined, and to some extent displaced, the priapic innuendo (“loose socks” or loose sex?) paying court to *kogyaru* fashion. Three girls in particular, nicknamed Buriteri, Akoyoshi, and Fumikko, received brief media fame as the darkest witches on the streets. In addition to “black faces” and “black face girls” a range of hyperbolic temporary terminology, such as “mega-black” (*gonguro*) and “mega-girl” (*gongyaru*) was concocted

to emphasize the tonal violence of the style. Interestingly the unflattering moniker *yamamba* is an antique term in current usage for the archetypical “mountain witches” or “hags” that appear in folklore and Nō theatre, and in ukiyoe wood-block illustrations of the plots of the latter² (see Copeland in this volume). In the male press the word *yamamba* in particular, embodied a barely disguised slur, which accurately reflected the common editorial sentiment of abusive animosity toward this self-involved and ostensibly frightening stage of *gyaru* fashion. Except in jokes and parody, “witch” (*yamamba*) was not the word chosen to describe girls’ style within *kogyaru* magazines like *egg*, which became specifically dedicated to the radical and tanned look from 1999.

Weekly news magazine headlines and television report anchor men reacted in tones of exaggerated horror, but even a cursory backward glance through the decades of girls’ comics, literature, theater, and fashion magazines, demonstrates that girls’ culture and fashion in Japan has been riddled with wayward racial affiliations and pseudo-ethnic expressions throughout its propagation from the early twentieth century. What is more, a rummage through both near contemporary and historical writings and social policy on girls and young women, illustrates that rather than being a novel concern, maintaining a national stock of racially pure, sexually chaste, and ethnically Japanese young women, and then protecting them from the damaging temptations of foreign travel, foreign female behavior and fashion, and racial miscegenation, has been a longstanding concern. A complex antiphony has evolved between ideological, literary, and aesthetic proscriptions of virginal, obedient, gentle, and maternal *ideal* Japanese girls, emanating almost entirely from the educated male camp, and what might be called the “anti-Japanese” tendency of girls’ culture. Throughout the many genres and forms of girls’ culture, both subtle and theatrical expressions have been generated of dynamic girl characters with invented hybrid ethnicities.³

The much commented upon aura of sexual inexperience and purity which underpinned prewar *shōjo* and postwar cute cultures respectively, was in reality a posture with both sexual and racial coordinates. Virginal prewar girls’ culture and asexual and individualistic postwar cute culture have, with some minor exceptions, been implicitly bourgeois, European and white, in orientation. Prewar *gāru* (and *modan gāru*) culture and contemporary *gyaru* culture emerging from the 1980s, through which is bridged a certain continuity, have been characterized, by contrast, as assertive, brazenly sexual, and oriented toward exotic, urban, and tourist locations, and white and black American music and style, from jazz to hip hop.⁴ If the eventual value of the exaggerated postures of either untouchable guileless virginity, or overbearingly frank and precocious sexuality, has remained unresolved, and if girls’ culture in Japan has been cleaved accordingly into two main streams rooted in the different habitus of middle and working class life and employment, the element which has remained constant across and throughout the different modes of girls’ culture, and which serves to articulate it, finally, as a single tide, has been its consistent turning away from the trappings of traditional Japanese femininity, ethnicity, and idealized female Japanese looks.⁵ Young women displaying their enthusiasm for either the closeted spheres of girls’ culture and communications, or more cosmopolitan styles of female behavior have, in turn,

been singled out and stigmatized as racial and cultural traitors to Japan. The continual surveillance of girls' mores and fashion by an eagle-eyed "male press" (*oyaji zasshi*), that has taken upon itself the task of charting and disciplining signs of feminine evolution and contrariness, has simultaneously provided a rapt national audience and receptive stage for entertaining cultural digressions undertaken by the more brave-hearted of young women.

Little Girls (*kogyaru*), Witches (*yamamba*), and Black Faces (*ganguro*) in the Media

Articles distributed in 1999 and 2000 protested that black faces and witches were an affront to the tastes of male readers. "Big Survey of Aesthetic Taste: Teenage Witch Girls Should be Worried!" warned *Spa!* magazine. The *Weekly Jewel* demanded "We Want to See the Real Faces of Our Black Face Daughters!"⁶ The same slough of weekly magazines targeted at male readers, that had connected radical girls' fashion to casual prostitution earlier in the mid-90s, now complained that black faces and witches were trying to sell themselves but were repelling male customers. "Cabaret Clubs Have Become Lairs for Those Ugly Witches" grumbled the *Weekly Post*, while *Focus* magazine protested, "Are We Going To Have Even More of These Witch and Black Face Porno Videos!?"⁷ These articles framed their judgment and damnation of this particular girls' street style in terms of an unequivocal sexual rejection.

Though rooted in the wily rump of the self-consciously male press (e.g. *Shūkan bunshun*, *Shūkan post*, *Shūkan gendai*, *President*), caustic derision of black faces and witches became a prototypical position enthusiastically taken up by other sections of the public. *Ganguro* was received less as style than as cultural "travesty."⁸ Leading female artist Tabaimo has portrayed a schoolgirl in uniform squatting to defecate on the national flag (*Japanese Zebra Crossing*, 2000). During fieldwork observation carried out in winter 1999, Toshio Miyake, noted that "More and more of these girls flaunt themselves, regroup on the streets, and adopt provocative attitudes, by which they expose themselves to verbal abuse from passersby, physical violence, the prurient winks of older men, and getting headhunted by scouts working for the sex industry."⁹ In an article published in the respectable organ *Bungei shunjū* and thought suitable for translation and abridgement for the *Japan Echo*, one female writer ridiculed the risible aesthetic faux pas committed by black faces and witches. "In all honesty" she confided, "I have seen very few girls sporting the style that brings me even close to thinking, 'Without that makeup, she must be a beauty, what a waste.'"¹⁰ Pursuing this attack, Nakano Midori suggested that stupidity was the key to the style: "Nothing about it is pretty, elegant, or stylish; the main effect, I would say, is to frighten. These girls almost seem to be wearing placards that say, 'I'm stupid.' Meeting someone who so overtly insists on her own idiocy tends to scare people. It overpowers them." The allegation that witches and black faces were ugly *and* stupid, circulated widely and formed a base stereotype, underlying more intricate considerations of their hygiene and racial origins: "From *Kogyaru* to Witches, Platform Boots, Black Face, Idiot-ization: *Kogyaru* On

the Darker and Dirtier Program.”¹¹ On television shows much play was made of “moron black faces” (*ōbaka no ganguro*) and taciturn specimens were filmed replying to probing questions from anchor men with the single monosyllable “..eeeh” (“I dunno..”).

Several photographic projects on *ganguro* carried out around the turn of the century, seemed to share a similar instinct to present black faces and witches as pitiful, and déclassé. In Ōnuma Shōji’s portrait of the black faces of the summer of 1999, the viewer is invited to see the disheveled and lopsided appearances of the girls’ faces beneath their bedazzling first appearances.¹² Ōnuma focuses on unflattering details: the way in which tan foundation crème is sliding off hot oily skin, or the way in which skin rashes can be seen protruding through layers of lame glitter. These imperfect surfaces seemed to imply that, rather like Impressionist portrayals of French prostitutes, *ganguro* is a style soaked in the aura of cheap and failed glamour. Another series of enlarged facial portraits of black face girls without their make up, taken by young female photographer Sawada Tomoko, was exhibited at the *Futuring Power* Cannon photography competition held at the Tokyo Photography Museum in September 2002. Sawada’s large, fine-grained pictures show six pudgy adolescent faces with slightly unfocused and confused gazes. Each face has pimples, badly plucked eyebrows, and blotchy, discolored skin. Among other things, the photographs seem to suggest to the viewer that *ganguro* girls using tanning salons to change their appearances are dimwitted young creatures engaged in an egotistical folly.

Yamamba and Ganguro as Primitives and Animals

Interpreting the brown skin cultivated first by *kogyaru*, and subsequently pursued to extremes by *ganguro* and *yamamba*, provided the occasion for a particularly perverse squall of journalistic pontification on the zoological, racial, and ethnic origins of girls. Rather than reading black face as an intelligent style, as a clearly deliberate instance of sartorial communication (à la Hebdige),¹³ it was merrily misinterpreted as a form of animal coloring or tribal decoration. Girls who could not afford tanning salons were said to be using oil-based magic markers for eyeliner and coloring in their faces with dark brown marker pens.¹⁴ An irreverent vein of reportage in the male press adopted a mock scientific tone and colonial language to claim that radical girls were a kind of species prone to natural selection. The magazine *Modern* (Gendai) for example, presented: “Professor Kashima Explores the Heisei [1989–] Jungle in Search of ‘Uncharted Regions of Everyday Life’ 3: ‘Platform Boot Witches’ No Longer in the Lead in Shibuya.”¹⁵ The notion that the energy and desire associated with *kogyaru* and black faces, was in some way primitive and animalistic, circulated around men’s magazines and around girl’s magazines themselves. Freelance writers, researchers, and contract editors were an important vector shunting ideas between readerships representing different sections of society with quite different attitudes. Several of the major and minor *kogyaru* magazines for example,—*egg*, *Popteen*, *Street Jam*, *Happie*, were produced by editors, mostly men, previously engaged with making pornography for men, in several cases in adjoining offices of

the same company. One freelance female writer specializing in producing articles about *kogyaru* for the male-centered press and television, as well as working with *kogyaru* magazines for teenage girls, confidently imagined that “they are like primitive people who don’t use words or language or books, people who just exist by means of images, their appearances, and their body adornment. If they want something they just take it, they are material animals, they are not interested in culture or society, they are only interested in money.”¹⁶ Another article in the liberal weekly *AERA*, described the sexual exploits of the “Terrifying Drunken Tiger Girls.”¹⁷ In other articles a connection was insinuated between black face girls and witches, and Africans or Southern people: “Is it the Influence of Global Warming, Evolution, Or a Passing Trend? Probing the ‘Latinization’ of Japanese Youth! Witch girls in monster make-up, lax about time and appointments, kissing and arguing in public, relaxed about sex.”¹⁸

Smug references to the skin color, lifestyle, and possible ethnicity of black faces and witches bled into one another in a manner that illustrated the continued co-mingling, at least in popular journalism, of anthropological ideas about culture and biological conceptions of race. For tanning their skin and adopting new attitudes, hair color, and clothes, girls were indiscriminately accused both of African mimicry and in fact of being, or becoming, tribal, primitive, black, or a new ethnic breed. As Jennifer Robertson has remarked upon, these types of essentially Lamarckian ideas about the possibility of acculturation into a racial way of being were quite typical of prewar racial consciousness internationally. In the Japanese case “race” (*jinrui*), and “ethnic group” or “people” (*minzoku*), were, and in the context discussed here, continue to be, viewed as largely interchangeable concepts.¹⁹ Furthermore, commentary about the race, tribe, and skin color of girls, was sometimes entwined with a derogatory and pseudo-Darwinian commentary about dark-skinned girls, which implied that they were a kind of species or animal.²⁰ Classified as dark-skinned primitives and animals, girls daring to wear black face and witch outfits sometimes became subject to a racist assault on their humanity.

The previously mentioned photographic portrait of black face girls by Ōnuma Shōji is titled *Tribe (Minzoku)*. In a short afterword by Tad Garfinkel, the girls are variably described as primitives and animals: “Like all the animals walking on the continent of Africa they have their own style. Just like Giraffes and Ostriches. Shibuya is a Safari! They shout out loud and clear ‘We are a tribe!’ Well done! That’s right! You are the Japanese gypsies.”²¹ A review of this book posted on the website of the *Gendai nikan* newspaper suggests that it is a photographic testimony of “a sudden change in *kogyaru* DNA that lead to the birth of a new subspecies of the Japanese race (*minzoku*).”²² Less explicit intimations that *kogyaru*, black faces, or witches, could be approached as a kind of jungle-dwelling tribe of anthropological interest were present in the widespread technique of presenting “uninitiated” readers with labeled anatomical line drawings of girl specimens, and elaborate vocabularies of girls’ slang presented as a foreign language. Comic artist Koshiha Tetsuya included an explanatory anatomical diagram of his lead character and a list of “*kogyaru* terminology” on the inside back cover of collected volumes of his popular men’s comic series about a *kogyaru*, *Tennen Shōjo Man* (Wild Girl). Another extensive vocabulary of *kogyaru* language (much of which

appeared on closer examination to be comprised of preexisting slang terms in wider public circulation), was published in the sedate older man's magazine *dacapo*.²³

The editorial of the men's trend watching magazine, *Dime*, invented the term *gyanimal* to describe "girl-animals" in an article titled "Gyaru + Animal = Gyanimal Breeding." The article proposes that girls wearing animal prints, gold lame, metallic fabrics, and other brightly colored items, were trying to attract and snare men.²⁴ An insert column by a specialist of girls' cultures suggests that in his opinion, "this fashion is very similar to an animal rutting season," in that, "lipstick in wine red color is in vogue, and that is precisely the same color as the vagina of a female monkey on heat." Positioned among this animal behaviorist commentary is a full-length photograph of a model decked out as a *gyanimal*. On the next page the model is stripped of all trace of self-tanning cream and animal-print micro skirt, and this pale and plainly dressed incarnation, most closely resembling a polite office lady, is presented as an *anti-gyanimal* and *Dime* editorial's own "ideal girl." On the next page, writer, Mori Nobuyuki (author of the *Tokyo High School Girl Uniform Fieldbook*) makes the only slightly less risqué suggestion, that *kogyaru* fashion comprises a collective "warning color, which, like the bright markings of tree frogs, say to potential predators 'I have poison. Eating me is dangerous!'"²⁵

An innovative article about *ganguro* and *yamamba* fashion published in the *Weekly Playboy* applied a mixture of Darwinian theory, Native Ethnology (*minzokugaku*), European colonial fantasy about Africa and jungle primitives, and contemporary politically correct ideas about the social inclusion of ethnic minorities.²⁶ Pithily titled "Witch Girls Must be Classified as National Cultural Property Before it is Too Late," and subtitled "Is There a Danger of Shibuya Street Girls Becoming Extinct?," the writer intimates that the girls are a kind of ethnic minority, which may, like an endangered species of animal, "become extinct." The article is accompanied by a pyramidal diagram titled "The Shibuya Hierarchy," which illustrates in ascending order the evolutionary stages, from *gyaru* at the bottom, through *gangyaru* and *gongyaru*, to *yamamba* at the apex, who are presented as a kind of dark skinned female über race, reigning over earlier evolutionary forms. In this diagram, gender difference literally shades into racial difference. *Weekly Playboy* goes on to argue that by pursuing black identity, black faces and witches have arrived not so much at a semblance of contemporary black culture, as at the primary stage of human evolution, which is rooted in Africa, and is based on the principle not of money but of "black magic." However, making a case for the enlightened tolerance of this primitive girls' ethnic group in modern Japan, the article ingeniously cites "an African think tank" which has calculated that "in view of the falling birth rate, in order for Japan to maintain its current level of economic development in the twenty first century, it will have to admit up to six million foreign workers a year." This article captures the imaginative association of primitive African tribe, the native folk of Japan, and contemporary girls' culture, which are elided into one continual formation. The writer concludes that: "As Japan entered modernity it underwent homogenization. Holding dear the illusion that homogeneity = good, Japan lost the ability to activate the people... the *yamamba* may be a warning to Japan. Will the girls' culture be protected or will it be eliminated? The future of Japan rests on this question."²⁷ *Playboy's* ham

statement that the future of Japan is bound up with coming to terms with the ethnic status of Japanese *ganguro* girls is considerably less preposterous than it might at first appear. The precedent for this intriguing dissolution of female sociology into female ethnicity was established both in semi-academic analyses of girls' culture produced from the mid-1980s, and in popular portrayal of girls in art, animation, and culture. Moreover the deeper logic underlying this cultural imagination rests on twentieth century theories and feelings about a quite distinct Japanese race or people, whose survival hinges upon the successful sequestration of pure-blooded and dedicated young Japanese mothers.

Girls' Studies

What might be tentatively considered a new sub-discipline of Girls' Studies emerged in a number of books published from the mid-1980s, which sought to investigate the concept and lifestyle of *shōjo* and *gyaru*. Girls' Studies was concerned with explaining contemporary girls' cultures, such as cuteness, or the so-called *gyaru* subcultures, *bodikon* (body-conscious) and *oyaji gyaru* (man-girls), of female college students and office ladies. With the exception of the work of Honda Masuko, editor of *Girl Theory* (*Shōjoron*, 1988),²⁸ Girls' Studies was pioneered by male scholars²⁹ and tended to analyze contemporary girls in the context of national history and culture. Widely read works in this little oeuvre include: Ōtsuka Eiji's *Native Ethnology of Girls*, 1989; Yamane Kazuma's *Morphology of Girls' Handwriting*, 1989; Honda Masuko's *The Alien Culture of Children*, 1992; Yamane Kazuma's *Structure of the Girl*, 1993; Masubuchi Sōichi's *Cuteness Syndrome*, 1994 and Kawamura Kunimitsu's *The Body of the Maiden*, 1994.³⁰ Girls' Studies demonstrate a thematic convergence between contemporary Cultural Studies and Native Ethnology or folk studies, a field incorporating aspects of religious studies, psychoanalysis, and cultural anthropology.³¹ Hovering between academic analysis and popular non-fiction writing, the majority of these pop-ethnologies function less as descriptive academic studies and more as the *ur* texts of cultural professionals, journalists, and *otaku* ("obsessive fan") critics.

In 1989 a young journalist trained in cultural anthropology and connected to, what at the time was still a largely underground network of reclusive young men producing Lolita complex (*rorikon*) subculture, published a book about the mysterious nature of Japanese girls. The main argument of Ōtsuka Eiji's *Native Ethnology of Girls: End of The Century Myths About The 'Descendants of the Miko'* is that there is continuous anthropological lineage from the ancient *miko* shrine maidens to the cultural rituals of contemporary teenage girls. Ōtsuka describes aspects of girls' culture of the 1980s as a tribal or ethnic system of culture and connects contemporary girls to Yanagita Kunio's "common people." Ōtsuka postulates that through the transformation of a rural peasant society into an urban consumer society: "Modernity has changed the Japanese folk (*jōmin*) into girls (*shōjo*)."³² The logic of this thesis is that active, unmarried, urban young women, a group that has historically represented a toxin to holistic national ideas predicated upon a pure and traditional Japanese femininity, can be effectively collapsed back

into Japan. A unifying rusticity has been located in the ritual behavior of urban girls, so that, rather than the countryside, girls themselves have become the vehicle of a mysterious living nativism in the midst of the city.³³ Honda Masuko also reminds readers of the ancient practice of female shamanism, in a poetic treatise about the magical and aesthetic qualities of girl children.³⁴ Honda describes girlhood as “the quivering” (*yureugokumono*)—an aesthetic trace of a “different world” that is not absolutely real. Girls, Honda proposes, are complicit in their own outsider status and the segregation of girls’ aesthetics and pastimes from the rest of modern culture. Incarcerated in schools and dormitories, girls are otherworldly beings that are implicitly foreigners: “Theories of the everyday order can not even formulate the words required to discuss this gypsy-like sensibility.”³⁵

Between 1981 and 1984 a cram school student waiting to re-sit his university entrance exams carried out fieldwork on schoolgirls in uniform at one hundred high schools in and around Tokyo. *The Tokyo High School Girl Uniform Fieldbook* (*Tokyo Joshikō Seifuku Zūkan*), which became a classic text of Lolita complex subculture, was described by well-established *otaku* critic Nakamori Akino, as an example of “cultural anthropology,” neatly demonstrating, most of all, the interweaving of academic social sciences in knowingly low-brow, male entertainment. Mori, however, chooses to contradict Nakamori, and states that in truth his inspiration came from his boyhood fascination with illustrated picture books about birds, fishes, or insects. The humor upon which the book’s entertainment value rests is its deadpan categorization of schoolgirls as a species of naturally occurring national fauna. Akasegawa Genpei, a ubiquitous figure of the postwar avant garde, jokes in an enclosed review that he “had realized that high school girls in Tokyo were breeding. But I had not realized that they constitute a separate species.”³⁶ The reactionary attitude of the book toward girls gained critical attention from unexpected quarters, when The Japan Uniform Manufacturers lodged complaints against the *Fieldbook*, which they claimed “treats schoolgirls as objects.”³⁷ Allusions to schoolgirls as animals in mass formation crop up in early academic studies of girls’ and in contemporary film (e.g. Sono Shion’s *Suicide Club* [*Jisatsu circle*], 2002) and in the visual arts (e.g. Aida Makoto and Matsukage Hiroyuki’s *Gunjōzu* [*Ultramarine-scape*], 1997).³⁸ In his essay, *Girl as Subject*, Kohama Itsurō suggests that the cliquey habits of girls are essentially those of “pack animals” (*guntai dōbutsu*), who “exhibit their eroticism not as individuals, but as a solid collectivity.”³⁹

Meanwhile in the *Structure of the Girl*, freelance scholar, Yamane Kazuma noted that changes in girls’ behavior during the 1980s, led them to drink, smoke, and begin walking about on the streets at nighttime. Bold girls began to meet foreigners in nightclubs and to gather in Roppongi on “streets that brimmed with stateless power.”⁴⁰ Yamane compares *gyaru* of the 1980s to the less Teutonic races of the Southern hemisphere: “The active mode of girls today is similar to that of Latin people in the South. The figure of a *gyaru* in a disco, clad only in a mini-skirt, a tight-fitting outfit, or even literally half-naked, sweating as she dances furiously away, suggests scenes from the Rio carnival. Southern people are extremely cheerful, happy-go-lucky and hedonistic. Sexually liberated too, they act almost as if they had never experienced suffering. Southern people thoroughly enjoy their

lives and Japanese *gyaru* today are beginning to proximate the culture of the South."⁴¹ Yamane goes on to suggest that as a country in the Northern hemisphere, Japanese society is correspondingly governed by the erstwhile European and Protestant principles of "industriousness" and "self-denial." In the midst of this industrious society, girls' culture was revealed as an alien element, as a "Southern race" within.

Female artist, Mariko Mori, picks up the theme of the Japanese girl as post-modern national shaman in her photographic portrayals of a mystic native place, centered about the presence of sacred girl characters. *Nirvana*, a 3-D animation presented at the Venice Biennale in 1997, featured ex-model Mori posing as Amaterasu, the Goddess of Japanese creation, seated within a computer animation of a lushly-colored primal Japanese landscape. In another animation, *Shaman Girls' Prayer (Miko no Inori)*, 1996, Mori, wigged in white and donning white contact lenses, proposes herself as a futuristic Japanese female creature with shamanic powers, which allow her to interact telepathically, with the advanced technology of Osaka International Airport. Girls transformed into mythological Shinto spirits, *miko* shamans, and rustic maidens in kimonos, have become exceedingly common in boys' and mens' comics, animation and computer games, such as Takahashi Rumiko's *Inuyasha* (serialized in *Shōnen Sunday*, serialized from 1996) or Samura Hiroaki's *Blade of the Immortal (Mugen no Jūnin)*, serialized in *Afternoon*, serialized from 1994). In Miyazaki Hayao's animated films, little girls are the heroic defenders of ancient Japanese tribes and their lands. Aspects of the rural arcadia, common folk and mysterious animistic characters of Yanagita's earlier writings seem to reemerge in Miyazaki's fantastic stories. *Princess Mononoke* (1997), for example, is a wolf-child who wears a red mask with markings and a cape of white fur attached, during her battles with armies invading the countryside. In this oversized mask, a white tunic and a dark blue skirt, *Mononoke* most closely resembles a Japanese schoolgirl dressed as a tribal primitive. Equivalently successful in communicating to another international milieu, artist Aida Makoto has continually returned to the image of a schoolgirl as a key symbol of his nation. In a painting entitled *Azemichi (Paddy Path)*, 1991) Aida presents the back view of a schoolgirl in sailor uniform walking between rice paddies. A central parting dividing the girls' hair into bunches, forms a vertical line at the center of the painting, which is continued into the line of the footpath she is walking. The girl traverses and is incorporated into an archetypical site of traditional or native Japan.

Dark Skin, Race, and National Purity

The dual and interchangeable categorization of girls, as either the saviors of Japanese folk culture and national ethnicity, or as an unpleasant alien racial sub-presence within the nation, illustrates the previously indicated, continued mental proximity of cultural ideas of ethnicity and lifestyle, with scientific ideas about biological races. Scientific racism came to dominate the social and natural sciences of Europe and America during the same decades in which the Meiji government sought to import modern Western learning to aid Japanese enlightenment and

militarization.⁴² Meiji intellectuals, such as the preeminent Fukuzawa Yukichi, subscribed to the theory that humanity was arranged in a natural hierarchy, in which yellow people occupied a middle position, and black and dark skinned people, occupied the bottom position, next to apes.⁴³ The cycle of association between yellow and brown skin, human primitives, and apes, strengthened through the prewar and wartime period, in both Japanese cartoons of its Asian neighbors and colonial subjects as dark-skinned, and sometimes fat-lipped and unintelligent too,⁴⁴ and in the "simian image"⁴⁵ of Japan itself, which became ubiquitous to wartime coverage of the Japanese in Britain and America. While the relative inclination toward ranking and characterizing race according to skin color has fluctuated according to other political affiliations, and over the duration of Japanese colonial expansion, occupation, and recovery,⁴⁶ John Russell suggests that the simple notion of black people as an ape-like and subhuman species, which gained an early root in the modern Japanese imagination, was still in circulation in late postwar popular culture.⁴⁷ Nakasone Yasuhiro's infamous comments in 1993 about a "mongrelized race" problem weakening the moral cohesion and work ethic of the United States,⁴⁸ also illustrate that blackness and signs of so-called racial mixing continue to be associated in certain powerful circles, with antisocial and subhuman behavior. Those most closely associated with black people and culture in postwar Japan have been women and girls working as prostitutes, and wayward young women choosing to identify with black American culture.⁴⁹

Notwithstanding particularly invariant and fetishistic characterizations of people of African descent, conviction in the fuller idea of a racial hierarchy determined by skin color was understandably ambivalent, and often muted, within Japan in the twentieth century. Rather than skin color, theories of the Japanese race (*yamato minzoku*) developed in the Meiji period and expanded through the prewar, centered upon blood and sexual reproduction. Maintaining the purity of the "bloodline" (*kettō*) of the nation, primarily through the continuous interbreeding of racially and culturally pure Japanese, has positioned the sexual and reproductive activity of young Japanese women at the center of national racial defence.⁵⁰ Jennifer Robertson reports that the "central focus of the Japanese eugenics movement concentrated on the physiques and overall health of girls and women," who were perceived anew as "the biological reproducers of the nation." The ongoing program for the protection of the reproductive maternal body, and the stigmatization and racial rejection of young women appearing to flirt with foreign cultures or engage in sexual relationships with non-Japanese men, are conjoined facets of the tendency to manage female sexual reproduction. Defensive "ethnic national endogamy"⁵¹ required Japanese girls to dedicate themselves to their future Japanese husbands alone, making virginal schoolgirls the natural and enduring counterparts and mythological partners of heroic young kamikaze pilots setting off on their missions during the Pacific war.⁵²

A eugenic program that regarded Japanese girls as the bodily vessels of national ethnicity, regarded hidden, unlicensed, or casual prostitution (of which "compensated dating" [*enjo kōsai*] is the contemporary correlate), as the main vector through which unsuitable racial mixing might take place. Through the system of licensed prostitution under police surveillance, prewar governments sought to segregate chaste and pureblooded Japanese girls and mothers, from those

working in the brothel trade. In her work on colonization and female sexuality in Imperial Japan, Sabine Frühstück has argued that the use of incarcerated Asian females, many of school age, as well as overseas Japanese prostitutes, as comfort women in Japanese military brothels, "was an extreme form of the colonization of sex and was closely intertwined with debates about and practices of the control of prostitution in civilian society at the time."⁵³ Prostitutes bearing features considered the signs of racial purity were assigned to have sex with a higher rank of Imperial soldier, and vice versa. Government fears in August 1945, that Japanese womanhood would be raped and impregnated indiscriminately by the imminently arriving Occupation army, or that they might become the "concubines of Blacks,"⁵⁴ informed the rapid assemblage of special brothels dedicated to American servicemen stationed in Japan.⁵⁵ Impoverished and often homeless young women were invited to serve the nation by volunteering themselves to what was conceptualized as a "blockade" of prostitutes' bodies, providing sex to foreigners and thereby heading off the threat of generalized racial mixing.

Despite government attempts to enforce national objectives, Japanese women expatriated from military brothels in China and Korea, domestic prostitutes, and young women stranded without a means of survival, flowed on to the streets of destitute, defeated Japan and began conducting business for themselves.⁵⁶ Girls who slept with white and black American soldiers were nicknamed *panpan*, and became an emblematic figure of early postwar society, treated with both fascination and contempt for their "bold and subversive" opportunism.⁵⁷ Liaisons between young Japanese women and American soldiers preoccupied the prurient and painfully emasculated male imagination of the early Occupation period, forming the blueprint for a traumatic conflation of libertine women with national military defeat, and the threatening presence of a foreign (sexual) power.⁵⁸ In particular a "classical association"⁵⁹ developed in postwar imagination between black men, blackness in general, and prostitutes. John Dower has commented that "race hates did not go away," after the Pacific war, "rather they went elsewhere."⁶⁰ One place where traces of a racial system of thought have resurfaced in the ongoing social war inside postwar Japan is in the discourse about youth, from "tribes" to the "new breed," and in the distinctly racialized characterization of "yellow cabs,"⁶¹ "black faces," and other fashionable young women.

Anti-Ethnic Girls

Though stimulated to a fever in journalism bating girls decked out as black faces and witches at the end of the 1990s, the entertaining innuendo that *ganguro* and *yamamba* girls were in fact a primitive tribe or species of animal, was not entirely novel, nor separable from the ethnic terms of analysis of semi-academic studies of girl's culture. Serious and tongue-in-cheek commentary on girls as animals and dark-skinned aliens predated the fashions adopted by some teenage girls in the 1990s by several decades.

In the flamboyant polycultural tastes of *kogyaru*, and the dark-skinned, white-lipped, blue-eyed mischief of *ganguro* and *yamamba*, the trajectory of female

cultural imagination and experience, which has crystallized around an ongoing ambivalence toward traditional culture, reached an explosive stand off. It was the more remorseless of the critics who appeared to appreciate the experiential origins of *ganguro* and *yamamba* style most precisely. Says one writer who preferred not to beat about the bush: "The effect is such that it makes me want to ask, 'Are you a prostitute from some foreign country, or what?'"⁶² Rocked in the cradle of a society literarily and literally dominated by male cultural and intellectual production, girls' street fashion, managed albeit, by young, culturally informed, and hip magazine editors sympathetic to what has been coyly referred to as "girls' feminism,"⁶³ secreted a silent, stylistic response, which caught up, echoed, contradicted, confused, and incited the barrage of male journalism and broadcasting, peremptorily accusing girls of sexual and racial delinquency. Radical girls' style is demonstrably rooted in the same ideological framework as that of its critics, and responds closely to the ethnocentric preoccupations of discourse about young women. To use the words of an early British deviancy theorist: "the latent function of subculture is this—to express and resolve, albeit magically, the contradictions which remain hidden or unresolved in the parent culture."⁶⁴ Peculiarly racialized sartorial gestures worked to a baroque acme by *ganguro* and *yamamba*, and in unnamed future forms, constitute an intimate and knowing reply, to the fearful and reactionary fantasies about the dangerous and exotic behavior of girls, allowed to saturate national communications during the 1990s.

Notes

1. "Black face" is translated as two words, so as not to conflate it directly with the American term "blackface." See Nina Cornyetz, "Fetishized Blackness: Hip Hop and Racial Desire in Contemporary Japan," *Social Text* 41 (Winter 1994): endnote 2.
2. The *yamamba* is a mountain witch of prodigious strength who lives as a bitter recluse in the mountains. Her superhuman power was often made available to assist men. See Mariko Tamanoi, *Under the Shadow of Nationalism: Politics and Poetics of Rural Japanese Women* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 122. The *yamamba* has been adopted as a proto-feminist figure by some women, such as the novelist Ohba writing in the 1970s. See Minako Ohba's story, "The Smile of the Mountain Witch," in *Stories by Contemporary Japanese Women Writers*, ed. Noriko Mizuta Lippit (London and New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1982), 182–196.
3. Miriam Silverberg argues that the prewar modern girl "who was both Japanese and Western—or possibly neither—played with the principal of cultural or national difference. Seen in this way, she highlighted the controversy over adoption of non-Japanese customs into everyday life and called into question the essentialism . . . that subordinated the Japanese woman to the Japanese man." In "The Modern Girl as Militant," *Recreating Japanese Women 1600–1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 245, and 263. Laura Miller documents the signs of cultural hybridity in *kogyaru* fashion in "Media Typifications and Hip Bijin," *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal English Supplement* 19 (2000): 176–205; and "Youth Fashion and Changing Beautification Practices," in *Japan's Changing Generations: Are Young People Creating a New Society?*, eds. Gordon Mathews and Bruce White (London and New York: Routledge/Curzon Press), 83–97.

4. As E. Taylor Atkins records, consciousness of the black social roots of jazz music were muted in prewar Japan. Jazz cafes and dance halls were nevertheless linked to a suspected collapse in female sexual morality. *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 121–123, 110–111.
5. Read more about the complex interaction of “cross-dressing and cross-ethnicking” (132) in girls’ theatre in the colonial period in Jennifer Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 89–138.
6. “10dai yamamba gyaru osoru beki bi-ishiki dai chōsa!!” in *Spa!* (September 1, 1999), 136; and “Ganguro musume no sugao ga mitai!” in *Shūkan hōseki* (April 14, 2000), 54.
7. “Kyabukura wa yamamba mitai busu no ni natta,” in *Shūkan post* (October 8, 1999), 63; and “Tadaima AV ni mo zōshokuchū ganguro, yamamba tte ii!?” in *Focus* (March 8, 2000), 24.
8. Toshio Miyake, “Black is Beautiful: Il Boum Delle Ganguro-Gyaru,” in *La bambola e il robottone: Culture pop nel Giappone contemporaneo*, ed. Alessandro Gomasasca, (Torino: Einaudi, 2001), 111–144.
9. Miyake, “Black is beautiful.”
10. Midori Nakano, “Yamamba,” *Japan Echo* 27, no.1 (February 2000): 62–63.
11. “Kogyaru kara yamanba e: Atsuzoko, ganguro, bakkaka. Kogyaru wa shidai ni kuroku, kitanaku,” in *Spa!* (July 1, 2003): 26.
12. Ōnuma Shōji, *Minzoku* (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2001).
13. Dick Hebdige, *Subculture, The Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979).
14. “Ima koso yamamba gyaru mukei bunka sai ni shite,” in *Shūkan Playboy* (May 2, 1999), 198.
15. “Heisei jungle tanken—Kashima kyōju, ‘nichijōseikatsu no hikyō’ o motomete kyō mo iku 3,” in *Gendai* (February 2002): 326.
16. Uchida Kaoru, interview in the Hitotsubashi publishing district (November 8, 1997).
17. “Toragyaru osorubeki enjo kōsai: Joshikōsei saisentan rupo,” in *AERA* 9:16 (April 15, 1996), 62.
18. “Ondanka no eikyōka? soshite ichiji no boom ka? shinka ka? Nippon wakamono no Latin-ka genzō o saguru!” *Spa!* (February 9, 2000), 47.
19. Jennifer Robertson points out that “Like their international counterparts, Japanese eugenicists tended to collapse biology and culture, and, consequently, held either explicitly or implicitly Lamarckian views on race formation and racial temperament.” See “Blood Talks: Eugenic Modernity and the Creation of New Japanese,” in *History and Anthropology* 13, no. 3 (2002): 196.
20. The frequent elision of black and simian imagery until as late as the 1980s, is discussed by John Russell in “The Black Other in Contemporary Japanese Mass Culture,” in *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture*, ed. John Treat (Richmond: Curzon/University of Hawai’i Press, 1996), 24.
21. Ōnuma, *Minzoku*, 2001 (no page numbers).
22. *Gendai nikan* online at <<http://www.bookreview.ne.jp/list.asp>>.
23. See “Shōjotachi no shingo, ango, ryūkōgo,” in *Dacapo* (October 15, 1997): 88. Researchers Maruta Kōji and Fujii Yoshiki likewise found little evidence of a “schoolgirl language” and conclude that it was a fiction of the mass media. See Maruta Kōji, “Giji-ibento to shite no enjo kōsai,” *Osaka jogakuin tankidaigaku kiyō* 30 (2000): 210. Laura Miller examines the controversy over girls’ language in “Those Naughty Teenage Girls: Japanese Kogals, Slang, and Media Assessments,” *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 14, no. 2 (December 2004): 225–247.
24. “Gyaru + animaru = gyanimaru zōshoku,” in *Dime* (January 1998): 10–11.

25. *Dime* (1998: 11). Sociologist, Miyadai Shinji, criticizes the tendency to caricature schoolgirls as a species in his analysis inflected by rational choice theory. (*Seifuku shōjotachi no sentaku* [Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1994], 283.)
26. *Shūkan Playboy* (May 2, 1999): 198.
27. *Ibid.*, 201.
28. A fine-grain, monochrome photograph of a naked pubescent girl posed against a black background is featured on the cover of *Girl Theory* edited by Honda Masuko (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 1988).
29. For a closer examination of one strain of male cultural investment in girls see: "Fantasies of a Female Revolution in Male Cultural Imagination in Japan," by the author, in *Zap-pa (Groupuscules) in Japanese Contemporary Social Movements*, ed. Sabu Kohso and Nagahara Yutaka (New York: Autonomedia, 2005).
30. Ōtsuka Eiji, *Shōjo minzokugaku* (Tokyo: Kōbunsha, 1989); Yamane Kazuma, *Hentai shōjo mōji* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1989); Honda Masuko, *Ibunka to shite no kodomo* (Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 1992); Yamane Kazuma *Gyaru no kōzō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1993); Masubuchi Sōichi, *Kawaiii shōkōgun* (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 1994), and Kawamura Kunimitsu, *Otome noshintai* (Tokyo: Kinōkuniya Shoten, 1994).
31. Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), 66.
32. Ōtsuka, *Shōjo minzokugaku*, 246.
33. Marilyn Ivy looks at related connections forged between urban young women and native Japan in the Discover Japan advertising campaign. See *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 29–65.
34. Honda's preliminary essay on this subject in *Shōjoron* (1988) is expanded in *Ibunka to shite no kodomo* (1992).
35. *Ibid.*, 180–181.
36. Akasegawa Genpei in Mori Nobuyuki, *Tokyo joshikō seifuku zukan* (Tokyo: Kuritsusha, 1985), 208.
37. Mori Nobuyuki interview, Ryōgoku, Tokyo (March 20, 2003). Mori's approach bears a family resemblance to the ethnographic diagrams generated by urban folk studies or modernology (*kōgengaku*), pioneered by Kon Wajiro during the 1920s. Interestingly, Kon himself apparently noted a similarity between his own method of intensive visual observation of his subjects, and that used by "botanists and zoologists." From Harry D. Harootunian, *History's Disquiet: Modernity, Cultural Practice, and the Question of Everyday Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 186. Mori's zoological taxonomy of schoolgirls exploits the dehumanizing potential of this older disciplinary ambiguity.
38. Descriptions of girls as a "numerous and undifferentiated pack, devoid not merely of humanness and individuality," were, in common with accounts of their primate-like behavior, somewhat reminiscent of wartime racial stereotypes propagated in Allied media, of the Japanese per se. See John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 93.
39. Kohama Itsurō, "Shutai to shite no shōjo," in *Shōjoron*, ed. Honda Masuko (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 1988), 98–97.
40. Yamane, *Gyaru*, 60.
41. *Ibid.*, 61.
42. Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 204.
43. Russell, *The Black Other*, 24.
44. Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 210.
45. *Ibid.*, 86–87.
46. *Ibid.*, 218–219.

47. Russell, *The Black Other*, 19.
48. Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 315.
49. The actual and the fantastical relationship of young women with black American soldiers in the Occupation period became a self-conscious theme of feminine photography (e.g. Yoshida Ruiko's *Hot Harlem Days*, 1967) and fiction (e.g. Ariyoshi Sawako's *Hishoku* [Colorless], 1967), by the 1960s. And, as Nina Cornyetz has documented in "Fetishized Blackness" (1994), hip hop attracted clusters of girl fans through the 1980s.
50. Robertson, "Blood Talks," 198–199.
51. *Ibid.*, 192.
52. Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 232. Ironic references to virginal schoolgirls and young soldiers continue to crop up throughout avant garde genres. For a contemporary parody of the protagonist archetypes, see artist Aida Makoto's comic story *Mutant Hanako* (Tokyo: ABC Shuppan, 1999). Read Linda Angst encountering this mythology in Okinawa in "The Sacrifice of a Schoolgirl: The 1995 Rape Case, Discourses of Power, and Women's Lives in Okinawa," *Critical Asian Studies* 33: 2 (2001): 243–264.
53. Sabine Frühstück, *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 41.
54. John Lie, "The State as Pimp: Prostitution and the Patriarchal State in Japan in the 1940s," *Sociological Quarterly* 38: 2 (1997): 256–257.
55. John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (New York: Norton /The New Press, 1999), 126–130.
56. Sheldon M. Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life* (Princeton University Press, 1997), 197.
57. Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 132.
58. Joanne Izbicki discusses both the perceived impotence of Japanese men and the simultaneously overt sexualization of Japanese women in "The Shape of Freedom: The Female Body in Post-Surrender Japanese Cinema," in *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal English Supplement* 12 (1996): 109–153.
59. Nina Cornyetz, "Power and Gender in the Narratives of Eimi Yamada," in *The Woman's Hand*, ed. Paul Gordon Schalow and Janet Walker (Stanford University Press, 1996), 444.
60. Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 311.
61. Aki Hirota criticizes the rumor popular in the Japanese media that Japanese girls abroad are so easy to pick up, that they have been nicknamed "yellow-cabs" by English-speaking foreigners; see "Image-makers and Victims: The Croissant Syndrome and Yellow Cabs." *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal English Supplement* 19 (2000): 83–121.
62. Nakano, "Yamamba," 2000.
63. Enthusiastic, that is, about the emergence of active girls, but less interested in organized opposition to institutional sexism. See Ōtsuka Eiji, *Etō Jun to shōjo feminism-teki sengō subculture bungakuron* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1998).
64. Phil Cohen, "Subcultural Conflict and Working-class Community," in *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* 2 (Birmingham: CCCS, 1972), 23.