１９９６年３月25日 発行
早稲田大学政治経済学部
「教養諸学研究」第百号 抜刷

Desire, Self-Denial, and Dramatic Structure in Izumi Kyōka's *Yukari no Onna*

Journal of Liberal Arts [School of Political Science and Economics, Waseda University], no. 100, 1996, pp. 279-314.

Mark Jewel

Desire, Self-Denial, and Dramatic Structure in Izumi Kyōka's *Yukari no Onna*

Mark Jewel

In the following pages I propose to consider the dramatic structure of Izumi Kyōka's novel *Yukari no Onna* (A Woman from the Past, 1919-21).[1] Specifically, I intend to show the way in which the plot of *Yukari no Onna* reveals an inherent tension between two thematic motifs that is only partially resolved by the story's conclusion. Where in Kyōka's best stories these thematic strands typically join in complementary fashion to produce a final affirmation of love (either through apotheosis in death or, more positively, through the development of a more complete understanding of love), in *Yukari no Onna* they eventually fray in a manner that subverts the novel's structural framework.

That it is in fact possible to conduct a close examination of such a long novel based on its overall dramatic structure is something that has not yet been fully appreciated by Kyōka's interpreters.[2] Traditionally, Kyōka has been considered a poet in prose who drew upon the literary heritage of the Edo period to develop a highly imagistic style that exploited the full expressive potential of the Japanese language. Indeed, Kyōka's stylistic accomplishment is such that it is frequently counted the distinctive feature of his brand of romanticism, the vivid imagery of the stories being viewed as the medium through which Kyōka was able to give expression to an intensely personal vision of ideal love. Under this interpretation, the imagery itself—especially imagery centering on the depiction of a beautiful woman—becomes in a sense the main theme of the story, an external manifestation of the author's inner

desire.[3]

This emphasis on the central role of imagery in turn lends itself to a critical approach that views Kyōka's stories as a succession of relatively independent scenes, intensity of vision replacing narrative coherence as the primary standard of evaluation. It is essentially an approach designed to compensate for perceived flaws in narrative structure: the best stories are those with the most powerful imagery, and the most powerful imagery is to be found in shorter stories or in brief sections of longer ones. And in view of the implausible plots, shallow characterization, and fondness for supernatural incident that typify so much of Kyōka's fiction, this approach can indeed be seen to offer an effective method for exploring what has been called the "Eros" of his work.[4]

Still, I feel that an examination of the more strictly narrative aspects of Kyōka's work reveals the presence of unifying effects which, especially in his best stories, enrich the romantic theme by complicating it: a problematic quality is introduced that both qualifies and amplifies the emotional impact of the imagery. This is normally accomplished by relating the image of woman to the emotional growth of the chief male character so that, for example, his experience of different women – or different aspects of the same woman – contributes to a view of love that grows more complex as the story progresses.[5] In other words, these stories can be seen to trace logically the emotional growth of the male protagonist over a period of time (whether he survives the process or not), and to do so in a way that acknowledges the contribution made by each important female character or quality.

The chief thematic elements involved in promoting (or, it may be, retarding) this process of growth are the opposed pair I have here chosen to call desire and self-denial. The tension between them is the engine that generates the dramatic structure of a great many of Kyōka's works, and in each case the question of structural coherence revolves around the question of whether the tension between them has been satisfactorily resolved. Now, a

satisfactory resolution may be achieved either by one of these elements predominating over the other or by effecting a reconciliation between them (and again, these are the stories which I feel are the best – the ones in which the man is forced to recognize and adjust to altered circumstances, in effect setting limits to the extent of his desire while at the same time affirming it).[6] But it also seems clear that these two elements can be used as a tool to identify where the dramatic structure breaks down in a story, which is what I believe happens in *Yukari no Onna.*

Characterizing this breakdown in *Yukari no Onna* is the ultimate failure of the male hero to acknowledge the need for – or at least the inevitability of – self-denial, even though that need has been made obvious to him. Expressed in terms of the image of woman, the plot illustrates a fundamental inability on the part of the protagonist to respond constructively to any of the many women in his life, resulting in a moral vacuum as complete, and a death as empty, as any to be found in Kyōka's oeuvre. *Yukari no Onna* as a story, therefore, must be regarded as a prominent example of the failure to adequately resolve thematic tension despite the impetus built up toward such a resolution in the course of the novel itself. That failure will be traced here in the way in which the relationships developed between the male hero, a writer named Asakawa Reikichi, and each of six female characters broadly work to validate the pattern of dramatic structure known as Freytag's Pyramid.

This pyramid, a diagrammatic outline of the structure of a five-act tragedy, was offered as an analytic tool by the German writer Gustav Freytag in his *Technic des Dramas* in 1863. The left leg of the inverted-V pyramid consists of the rising action (further divisible into exposition and complication), the peak represents the climax, and the right leg is the falling action (further divisible into reversal and catastrophe). The exposition contains what is referred to as the inciting moment, or the event that sets the action in motion, and the catastrophe includes the moment of last

suspense preceding the final resolution. While we will naturally be concerned with how *Yukari no Onna* deviates from this pattern and the significance of that deviation for theme, in my view it does provide a firm basis for understanding the story's basic dramatic structure.

One need only observe that each of the six major female characters in *Yukari no Onna* is associated with a different subplot to get a general indication of the novel's almost bewildering complexity. Second in length only to *Fūryūsen* (The Fūryū Line) among Kyōka's works, with forty-two chapters comprising a total of seventy-one numbered sections, it has a sprawling, episodic plot that resists easy summary and can try the patience of even a sympathetic reader.[7] On the most fundamental level, however, the story concerns the trip taken by Reikichi to his hometown, Kanazawa, to claim the ashes of his parents and bring them back with him to Tokyo for reburial. The trip is prompted by the arrival of a letter from Reikichi's cousin, Okō, informing him of plans by a group of "concerned citizens" (*yūshi*) to build a park over the cemetery in which his parents are buried and to transfer all unclaimed remains to a common grave.

Reikichi and his wife, Okitsu, discuss this letter in the first eight sections of the novel, presenting the reader with a picture of a relationship based on mutual understanding and support. When Reikichi explains, for example, that he dislikes most of the people in his hometown – especially "concerned citizens" whose most pressing concern is most frequently their own interest – and that he regards the trip as an excursion into enemy territory, Okitsu responds, "You're always going on about how you can't stand your hometown. You really should try to stay out of any trouble.... On the other hand, it might be interesting to go with you and see if I could help. I wouldn't even mind getting hurt, if only just a little...."[8] And when nostalgia causes Reikichi to show Okitsu a telescope that once belonged to his mother, she shows a sympathetic awareness of his feelings by looking through the telescope and momentarily confusing his mother's image with a scroll painting of the boddisattva Fugen.

As a set piece depicting the generally lighthearted banter of a happily married couple, these sections seem to cast Reikichi into the role of a dutiful son who will bring back the ashes of his parents and thus be reunited with a loving and devoted wife. In terms of dramatic structure, then, they can be said to constitute that part of the exposition surrounding the "inciting moment" (the letter from Okō) which signals the start of the rising action.

Section 9 then shifts the scene to Kanazawa and the house of Reikichi's cousin Okō shortly after Reikichi's arrival. Okō, age twenty-seven, is the proprietress of a well-known needle shop.[9] Although married and the mother of a ten-year-old boy, she is depicted as an alluring and spirited woman overjoyed to have Reikichi staying with her; and while he is out taking a bath, she tidies up his things and makes sure the finest saké will be waiting for him when he gets back. In Section 10 she even goes so far as to take a *haori* from his bag and try it on, asking a shopworker if it becomes her.

That the relationship between Reikichi and Okō does in fact have romantic overtones is made clear in Sections 11-13, in which Okō relates to her maid several incidents from the past. Chief among these is one that took place ten years before when Reikichi, as a college student, was forced to return to Kanazawa from Tokyo because of his father's death. Struggling to support both his grandmother and himself, he visited the sympathetic Okō almost every day, giving rise to rumors of incest and adultery (she was already married at the time). One night, after some insinuating remarks made by her husband's relatives, Okō very nearly ran off with Reikichi, stopping herself only because of her religious belief in the importance of respecting life: "That the two of us are still alive isn't due to any circumspection on my part," Okō announces. "I was quite willing to throw away my life, without a care or second thought for neighbors or relatives.... It was just that I

was afraid to disobey our founder, Nichiren." [52]

Okō had demonstrated a similar impetuousness not long before this when, at the same time a fire destroyed Reikichi's house, she gave birth to her first child, a girl who later died.[10] At first Okō wanted to help fight the fire herself, especially since Reikichi was in Tokyo and she knew that Reikichi's father was hard of hearing. It was only with great difficulty that her husband and the midwife were able to restrain her. Then, disregarding warnings that the sight would affect her unborn child, the distressed Okō watched the progress of the blaze from her balcony. The girl, born the same night, did indeed have a blemish on her cheek, against which Reikichi had rubbed his own after returning and hearing of Okō's behavior. After this event, the author informs us at the end of Section 13, "Okō and Reikichi became closer than brother and sister." [88]

Despite the suggestive imagery, it is not necessary to assume an explicitly sexual relatonship to take note of the special intimacy that obtains between the two cousins (and some of the remarkable tolerance shown toward them by Okō's husband can perhaps be explained by remembering that he is a former employee twenty years her senior, adopted into the household to carry on the family business).[11] But it should be observed that of the two Okō is clearly the more dauntless, the more assertive, the more mature. She has always taken the initiative, and Reikichi has been content to rely upon her protection. Even Reikichi's rubbing his cheek against the blemished cheek of Okō's daughter is little more than a gesture, requiring no real sacrifice on his part (in contrast to Okō, who braves rumors of infidelity, or even to Okitsu, who, as we have seen, expresses a willingness to incur physical harm in support of her husband). The relationship between the two cousins has so far been mostly one-sided. Reikichi's return to Kanazawa to recover the ashes of his parents would appear to offer him a chance to show some initiative of his own; but unless he can demonstrate a similar sense of selfless

determination, he almost seems unworthy of Okō's affection — willing to take but not give.

These sections, then, while continuing the exposition necessary for an understanding of the narrative situation, also more clearly bring into play the conflict between opposing forces that constitutes the rising action of the story. Furthermore, this conflict can now be seen to consist of both external and internal components. On one hand is the conflict between a self-righteous Reikichi and his philistine countrymen already suggested in the opening sections of the story; on the other is a conflict within Reikichi himself between his past immaturity and a presumably more mature present. A homology of sorts is established between bravery and cowardice on the one hand and self-sacrifice and selfishness on the other. This twofold aspect of the conflict is itself open to further development, and indeed the extent to which it is developed may be considered the extent to which complication is present in the rising action of the story. Reikichi's return to Kanazawa represents a confrontation with the past on both of these levels, and how that confrontation is resolved will determine the course of his future emotional growth.

Sections 14-21, set in a Kanazawa public bath, introduce in the person of a superannuated former samurai a concrete representative of the external forces ranged against Reikichi. Reikichi has gone to the bath to clean up after his trip, and there he overhears the former samurai relate the history of a local succession dispute that took place early in the Edo period. In the process, the old man indignantly defends feudal tradition from the mockery of two students who happen to be bathing there. With his exaggerated reverence for feudal values, the old samurai is obviously meant to function as a symbol of the authoritarian past and its arbitrary restriction of personal freedom; but at this stage he scarcely seems very menacing, mostly because he is old and alone and the young men can tease him with impunity. Moreover, any potential for conflict dissolves in comic pandemonium after a snake is spotted

and everyone runs naked into the women's side of the bath.[12]

These sections, too, are thus best characterized as expository material, although they contain elements that later acquire deeper thematic significance and so cannot be dismissed as mere comic relief. One such element is the true identity of the old samurai, which is to be revealed shortly. Another is the brief mention at the beginning of the bath scene of a beautiful woman, the wife of one of the region's wealthiest men, who is said to have been infected by the poison of a blister beetle (*hanmyō*).[13] We are told that when Reikichi hears the other bathers discuss her plight, "the words seemed to pierce him through." [89] This woman's name, however, is not revealed until Section 39 – after what I see as the climax of the story. This suggests a close thematic connection with the falling action, and it is in that context we shall return to her. Here it seems sufficient to point out that we have witnessed – however briefly – the introduction of two important new characters into the story.

In Sections 22-31, the tone grows rather more somber with the appearance of the woman referred to by the story's title. She is Tsuyuno, a former bath attendant (*yuna*) employed by Reikichi's aunt in a hot-spring resort near Kanazawa and now in service to the former samurai Reikichi happened to see in the bathhouse. In Section 22 she calls out to Okō from the railing of a bridge over the Asanogawa River as the latter is returning home with some sweets she has bought shortly after Reikichi's bath. After identifying herself and learning from Okō that Reikichi is in Kanazawa, Tsuyuno confides that she has been drawn to the river by a dream on the night before in which she thought she could see a *kiseru* pipe Reikichi had accidentally dropped into the same stream many years ago.

Sections 23 and 24 then abruptly shift to Okō's house, where Okō describes meeting Tsuyuno and mentions her dream to Reikichi. Okō then prods Reikichi into providing a full account of the incident linking Tsuyuno to the pipe, which, after describing

its final loss in the river, he does in Sections 25 and 26. It turns out that Tsuyuno had once risked her life (at least this is what we are improbably asked to believe) to return the pipe to Reikichi after he had forgotten it at his aunt's inn on one of his trips home as a college student. He was deeply affected by her kindness, he tells Okō, but the deaths soon after of his aunt and father drove all thought of her from his mind.

The pipe may thus be said to symbolize a romantic bond between Reikichi and Tsuyuno, one that appears to have lain dormant over the intervening years.[14] Reikichi's return to Kanazawa has reactivated that bond, and Tsuyuno's attempt to retrieve the pipe represents an attempt to recapture the romantic promise of the past, a romantic promise that in her case was betrayed by fate and the straitened circumstances that eventually forced her to become the servant of the former samurai from the bathhouse, as Okō informs Reikichi in Section 27. And although Tsuyuno has hesitatingly asked Okō to arrange a meeting with Reikichi, the old man keeps such strict watch over her that a certain amount of subterfuge is required. Reikichi readily agrees to a such a meeting, and Okō's son offers to act as an intermediary to call Tsuyuno away from her master's house unobtrusively.

Tsuyuno, although she too has performed a sacrifice which places Reikichi in her debt, is different from Okō in two respects. For one thing, her relationship with Reikichi is free of the stigma of incest: she is, at least in this respect, romantically available. For another, Tsuyuno is a direct victim of the bankrupt code of morality personified by the former samurai and so heartily despised by Reikichi. As the double victim of society and Reikichi's own earlier self-absorption, therefore, she seems to provide Reikichi with an even more clear-cut opportunity – both in terms of external opposition and inner motivation – to commit himself to a course of responsible action. Reticent, young (on page 139 we learn she is some five years younger than Reikichi), and lacking the bravado of an Okō, Tsuyuno seems eminently suited to

benefit from Reikichi's protection. For this reason, the reunion between the two, which takes place the next day and is described in Sections 28-31, marks an important stage in thematic development.[15]

But even as Tsuyuno makes her entrance, the reader is presented with evidence that casts doubt on Reikichi's ability to behave in a responsible manner. First, even before Tsuyuno arrives at Okō's house, we learn that Reikichi has visited his parents' grave to "inform" them that Okō, rather than he, will preside over the actual disinterment (Section 28, pages 160-161). The reason given is that Reikichi would not be able to bear the sight of his parents' ashes being disturbed. This is certainly an understandable reaction on his part, but one that nevertheless constitutes an abdication of the duty that brought him to Kanazawa in the first place.

Then the reunion itself is made to take a narrative back seat to the arrival of a group of mountain dwellers who enter Okō's shop to buy needles at the same time Tsuyuno arrives (Sections 28 and 29). These mountain men are said to live in Shiragiku-dani (White Mum Valley), a remote location popularly believed to be the abode of spirits and demons. One of their number in particular scarcely seems human himself, presenting a huge, bearlike appearance and making what Reikichi interprets to be a wild lunge of desire for Tsuyuno. Reikichi tries to shield Tsuyuno and is dragged down by the bearish man, who is then beaten and pulled off by the group's senior member and several other men. In Section 30, the old man apologizes for the behavior of the man, whom he refers to as his demented son, and to Reikichi's surprise announces that his true target was Reikichi. He then goes on to identify himself to Reikichi as the peddler who used to bring firewood and charcoal down from the mountains to sell to the Asakawas when Reikichi was a boy; and when the memory of the old man returns (in Section 31), Reikichi is overcome with emotion: " 'Ah, the old man from the mountains,' he said, the eyes with

which he had scrutinized the old man's face filling with tears." [185]

Beginning with these last four sections, which at first seem almost incidental to the main plot, we can again observe the way in which a seemingly casual event is invested with growing thematic significance (although it must also be admitted that in this case an incredible amount of coincidence is involved). For it turns out that not only is Reikichi acquainted with the old mountain man, the man's granddaughter had been Reikichi's nanny and had in fact sacrificed her life to shield him when he was five years old and in danger of being trampled by a horse. The bear of a man who lunged clumsily for Reikichi, we learn, was only trying to demonstrate his affection for the person for whom his daughter had sacrificed her life.

This background information concerning the girl, named Oshimo, is related by Reikichi to Okō and Tsuyuno in Sections 32-33, which take place after the mountain dwellers have returned to their mysterious home.[16] Its connection with Tsuyuno (and so its structural justification for disrupting the plot line centering upon her and Reikichi) can again be said first of all to lie in the implications of her sacrifice for Reikichi's behavior. Being wholly of the past—and a more distant past—she symbolizes even more clearly than do the other women introduced so far a time when he could, without fear of blame or reproach, rely upon the favor of an older and more responsible female. As such, however, Oshimo also threatens more directly to trap Reikichi in that past—to make him a prisoner to a fanciful sense of self-importance unless he can find a way to relate his memory of her to his current situation.[17] To dwell only on the memory of the past without considering its relevance to the present would negate the very purpose of Oshimo's sacrifice: she intended for him to live and to mature. One part of the lesson her death holds for him is that with that maturity comes a measure of responsibility to look after those who cannot defend themselves—to follow her example. If Reikichi has

taken that lesson to heart (and he is certainly old enough now to have done so), he should be able to use Tsuyuno's reappearance as the opportunity to apply that lesson rather than simply to indulge in fond memories of past dependence.

The relationship established between Reikichi and Oshimo can thus be seen essentially to follow the same pattern that we have noted with respect to Okitsu, Okō, and Tsuyuno: a sacrifice, either offered or performed, on the part of the woman has incurred in Reikichi an obligation to acknowledge and perhaps repay that sacrifice. The question that once again arises is whether he has reached a level of maturity that would permit him to do so. Reikichi's increased susceptibility to the allure of the past, as well as the lack of resolve he has displayed in carrying out the duty he had assigned himself at the beginning of the story, does not seem very promising.

But even Oshimo is not the most potent symbol of the hold of the past upon Reikichi's imagination. Rather, she serves primarily to direct attention to the woman from the past who necessarily does define Reikichi's awareness of love: his mother. It therefore seems fitting that her appearance as an active character in the story should mark the climax that can be said to occur in Sections 34-36, as Reikichi continues to tell Okō and Tsuyuno about the death of Oshimo.[18] Reikichi recalls that after carrying Oshimo's body back to Shiragiku-dani, her grandfather returned to Kanazawa because his wife had asked to see the little boy for whose sake her granddaughter had died. Reikichi then traveled to the eerie spot in the company of his mother, who understood how frightened her son was of the place and wanted to comfort him. She herself, however, may have been in no less need of protection and love than he. On their second night there, Reikichi remembers, she sang a song about the difficult life of the Hokuriku district, joining her own fate to that of Oshimo and bringing tears to her eyes. Then, as she was singing, the sound of strange, animal-like breathing came from outside the room in which they were staying.

The source turned out to be Oshimo's father (his name, we learn, is Jinjirō), who was then called back to the main house by his own father.

The reason Jinjirō was lurking outside their room is made clear when Reikichi (in the narrative present) explains that the night before, when Jinjirō had been instructed to lead him and his mother to the bath, he had lingered behind so that he could watch Reikichi's mother undress. Jinjirō's motive, in other words, was lust, and so overpowering was its grip on him that the only way his father could act to subdue it was by striking him on the head with the butt of his hunting rifle.[19] This protected the chastity of Reikichi's mother (who was nonetheless so shamed by the affair that she later attempted suicide), but also turned Jinjirō into an emotional and mental cripple. Jinjirō was incapable of exerting control over his own desire, and so had to be forcibly excluded from the circle of normal human relationships.

The incident demonstrates that the only one privileged to partake of his mother's sensuality without fear of censure was Reikichi himself, and then only because he was too young to associate her eroticism with the more explicit sort of sexuality he was destined to acquire with age and which will indeed contribute to his eventual undoing. For in its denial of responsibility Reikichi's desire resembles Jinjirō's more than he would like to admit. Reikichi's mother, that is to say, symbolizes a love that at first seems untainted and pure but that can remain so only as long as Reikichi refuses to grow emotionally and come to terms with his own emerging sexuality. Her memory threatens to ensnare him permanently in the past, to cause him to view adult sexuality in a solely negative fashion, and by doing so to allow him to shirk the responsibility inherent in the normal process by which individuals learn to reconcile desire with reality. To demonstrate emotional growth, Reikichi must be shown both to accept his sexuality and to achieve a measure of control over it; failure to do so would signify that he had not progressed beyond the emotional

level of a child or mental incompetent. The symbolic sacrifice of Reikichi's mother's purity is from this reverse perspective an event that makes it theoretically possible for Reikichi to transfer his romantic attentions elsewhere. Her unselfish act (if becoming a victim can be called an act), in which Reikichi's mother exhibits more sympathy than condemnation for the perpetrator (page 216), almost seems to reflect her awareness, if not full acceptance, of the sense of betrayal she is bound to suffer once Reikichi develops his own adult sense of sexuality. She, too, is sacrificing herself for him.

The nature of the struggle within Reikichi himself has thus become quite clear by the end of Section 36. It is a struggle between immaturity and maturity, between dependence and independence, between succumbing to the memory of past desire and learning how to apply its lessons to the present. The implications of this conflict have been manifested, to varying degrees, in the romantic relationships depicted between Reikichi and the women in his life, beginning with his mother and Oshimo in the past and continuing in the present with Okitsu, Okō, Tsuyuno, and (more obscurely) the woman mentioned in the bathhouse scene. In each case the woman has been made to suffer – or is at least willing to suffer – because of her love for Reikichi, and in each case there is doubt about Reikichi's ability to respond in a responsible fashion to that spirit of self-sacrifice.

Furthermore, this inner struggle has been linked (especially through the image of Tsuyuno) to a corresponding external struggle involving Reikichi's ability to mount a direct challenge to the feudalistic values of his countrymen. Here, too, doubt about the ultimate outcome is raised at the end of Section 36 by a disturbance caused at the entrance to Okō's house by a spy sent by Tsuyuno's samurai master. The sight of the spy causes Tsuyuno to fall to her knees in terror, and suggests that the prospect of direct confrontation is imminent. Reikichi's reaction, however, as described in Sections 37-38, is merely to flee. In a

scene very much like a traditional Japanese *michiyuki,* Reikichi escorts Tsuyuno to the house of a *burakumin* headman whose wife was once Tsuyuno's nurse (though herself not originally a member of the community). The couple agree to let her stay with them, and Reikichi ostentatiously accepts a cup of "unclean" tea as a gesture of solidarity with society's outcasts. Perhaps, then, with respect to dramatic structure it might be appropriate to speak of the presence of a double climax in the story: a private one at the end of Section 36, in which Reikichi has retreated as far as possible into the false security of the past; and a public one in Sections 37-38, in which Reikichi and Tsuyuno appear to have acknowledged the prospect of certain, if righteous, defeat.

The urge to seek emotional gratification in the memory of the past placed against the moral obligation to do what is right despite overwhelming odds: these are the twin impulses which must be united thematically at the end of the falling action of the novel, encompassing Sections 39-71.[20] One formula by which this unification might be accomplished seems clear enough: Reikichi would discover the limits to the personal desire of the past, this sense of frustrated desire enabling him to develop a stronger sense of moral obligation in the present. The result would be the right to claim a moral victory in the face of practical defeat without denying the huge emotional cost that must be paid.

The sheer intricacy of proceeding on the basis of a formula such as this, given the number of women involved, helps to account for the extraordinary amount of space given over to the story's denouement. But surely the original form of publication (and possible Kyōka's own preferences) must be held chiefly responsible for what can only be called the excessive number of external references and digressions – some quite lengthy – to be found in the second half of the novel and which make it more practical from this point until closer to the end to focus primarily on thematic development rather than to offer section-by-section summaries. To mention only a few of these, Section 37, for

instance, contains a reference to the Buddhist Kishimojin (Hāriti) legend, which is subsequently recounted in detail in Section 55; a famous band of mountain brigands is mentioned in Section 38; the name of Santa Claus appears in Section 41, along with the titles of several folk and supernatural tales; the historical and legendary figures Minamoto Tametomo, Benkei, and Oniwakamaru pop up in Section 63; and various folk songs and children's songs are to be encountered throughout. The most intriguing detour from my own point of view is an account (in Sections 64-65) of the military advance on Quebec by the British general James Wolfe during the French and Indian War. Kyōka uses the incident as an excuse to insert a number of unannotated English lines from Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,* no doubt discomfiting many of his (originally female) readers.[21] The second half of *Yukari no Onna* makes it abundantly clear that Kyōka's stories tend to be more effective dramatically when the falling action is kept proportionately shorter than it is here.

In any event, the result of direct confrontation, when it does come, is hardly unexpected, given the many resources available to the self-appointed guardians of the public good. It is true that Reikichi obtains a measure of moral and practical support by allying himself with the *burakumin* headman to whose house he escorts Tsuyuno. These kind (at least to sympathetic souls) and trustworthy outcasts are able to rescue Okō, for example, when she is attacked by Tsuyuno's master during the disinterment of the ashes of Reikichi's parents, an incident described partly in Sections 48-50 and partly in Sections 57-58; and they are also on hand at the bank of the Asanogawa River to deliver Tsuyuno from the hands of a party of drunk revelers in Section 59.

Yet both incidents have the effect of showing Reikichi himself in a very bad light, for while (in the former case) Okō has chosen to be present at the gravesite despite an awareness of potential danger, Reikichi has not only stayed away he has actually gone into hiding at a local temple following an event described in

Section 44. There we are told that the old samurai had raided Okō's house just after Reikichi and Tsuyuno had fled to the *burakumin* hamlet, and that this raid had caused Reikichi to decide to return to Tokyo immediately. Deeply chagrined though he was at the thought of being unable even to carry his parents' ashes back home with him (not to mention the awkward fact that he would again be abandoning Tsuyuno to her fate), Reikichi's fear of harm outweighed his sense of duty – even the reduced sense of duty he had arrived at in Section 28. And then when he actually went to the train station the next day to buy a ticket, he was turned away by more than a dozen of the samurai's cronies and acquaintances – all representatives of the established power structure – enraged not just by Reikichi's behavior with Tsuyuno but by his reputation as the author of short newspaper pieces lampooning the local citizenry. That he is nevertheless still willing to allow Okō to be solely responsible for retrieving his parents' ashes must be seen as damning evidence of his continuing emotional immaturity no less than of his physical cowardice.[22] Indeed, Reikichi's selfishness here seems on the verge of disrupting the very structure of the story itself.

As for the incident with Tsuyuno, despite Reikichi's actual presence at the scene and the heavy-handed rhetorical flourishes of the narrator himself ("Had he simply resigned himself to being unable to oppose the violence of this mob of drunken revelers? Tsuyuno, delicate as delicate as dew on the wayside – was he simply to abandon her?" [419-420]), Reikichi is not called upon to put himself at risk. Instead he is permitted to stand by calmly, secure in the knowledge that his newfound friends will honor their promise to protect him and Tsuyuno. Reikichi is thus saved from certain, if morally honorable, defeat not through his own courage but through the intercession of others.

These two victories are therefore hollow ones, and not only because Reikichi refuses to become personally involved in resisting the values he claims to despise. At the root of his lack of physical

courage is a similar failure on the personal level to outgrow his equally selfish understanding of love. We have just seen that in his relationship with Okō he has not progressed beyond the dependence he had shown as a university student. That this attitude, in turn, reflects upon his relationship with his wife, Okitsu, is made clear in Sections 45-50, which overlap the sections describing the confrontation between Okō and the old samurai. Okitsu, in Tokyo, again picks up the telescope Reikichi had shown her earlier, and in a sleepy vision (a "true dream" is the Japanese expression) sees Okō attacked at the disinterment ceremony. She twice wonders where her husband could be (Section 45, page 350), and awakes with a start just as Okō is struck on the forehead with a ladle wielded by the old former samurai. Here, in a scene apparently meant to illustrate the sisterly concern of Okitsu, we are instead given reason to believe that in failing in his obligation to Okō, Reikichi is also failing his wife, and that Okitsu herself has been given a premonition of the unhappy end that awaits her. Neither Okō nor Okitsu seems capable of inspiring Reikichi to unselfish behavior, to the acceptance of a defeat that is honorable (and expressive of love) because it is shared.

But the essential selfishness of Reikichi's attraction to a past he should have outgrown—an attraction so strong that one is even tempted to assert that his refusal to attend the disinterment is tantamount to a refusal to accept his mother's death—is brought home most forcefully in the second half of the novel through the figure of Yukimura Oyō, the mysterious beauty first mentioned in Section 14. In Section 39, which takes place just after Reikichi has deposited Tsuyuno at the headman's house, her identity is revealed as Reikichi engages in conversation a group of fishermen who are under orders to catch a special fish which can supposedly be used to counter the virulent poison of the blister beetle that has afflicted Oyō. The knowledge provokes the following reaction in Reikichi:

> As soon as he learned [the woman's identity], Reikichi dropped to his knees among the surrounding plume grass. He felt as though the river now crashed in torrents over his soul, the sound reverberating to the moon that glowed in the sky above. The cascading river was the blood that surged through his body, the moon a reflection of his thoughts. When had he ever been free of her memory, even in his dreams, in the twenty years since he had fallen in love with her at the age of eleven?
> [265-266]

This belated revelation of such an important romantic interest in Reikichi's life is disconcerting, to say the least. Why has someone whose memory elicits such a passionate response from Reikichi (more passionate than that toward any other female character) received no more than passing mention up to this point? The only possible justification is that, despite the obvious contrivance, Oyō functions as a primary agent of the falling action in the story. In other words, to anticipate a bit, Oyō seems meant to function somehow as the direct means of linking the memory of Reikichi's mother to his treatment of Tsuyuno in the present. The trouble is that, as we shall see, she ultimately fails to do so in a way that would satisfy the demands of structural unity.

It is in fact because of her preeminent role in the ultimate resolution of the plot that even here Oyō remains at a narrative distance, discussed rather than actually present, and that the full details of her relationship with Reikichi are not divulged until the final sections of the story. At this point, we are only made vaguely aware that there may be an element of guilt behind Oyō's affliction, for, as the fishermen explain, she received her disfiguring rash after accepting as a souvenir of Tokyo a doll presented to her by "some person or other." [269] Oyō had been hanging out to dry a *haori* with which she meant to swaddle the doll (the *haori*, it is noted, was one she often wore before getting married), when a blister beetle grazed her arm. This was enough, however, to transmit the poison, which Oyō then unwittingly transferred to her

face. Since the incident she has refused to see any of her relatives, her husband included, until a cure can be found.

Now, it would surely be going too far to identify Reikichi as the actual source of the doll in question.[23] But the doll's association with Tokyo, the reference to the pre-marriage *haori* (with its echo of Okō's behavior in Section 10) and an unmistakable link created between the venomous blister beetle and Reikichi's love for Oyō (in Section 52, pages 368-369, a blister beetle puts Reikichi to flight just as he is remonstrating with himself over his "unsanctioned love for another man's wife") are compelling evidence of both the guilt and passion that characterize the relationship, at least as far as Reikichi himself is concerned.[24] The pattern with Oyō thus would seem to follow the same basic pattern observed in all of Reikichi's romantic relationships—passive love followed by a sense of guilt or obligation (even if only implied) over the necessity of somehow reciprocating that love. The major difference with respect to Oyō is that although she is a living presence like Tsuyuno, Okō, and Okitsu, Reikichi has been denied direct contact with her, and so she remains even more tantalizingly beyond his grasp.

The intensity of Reikichi's love, in other words, appears to increase in inverse proportion to the likelihood of its realization. He almost seems to feel that if he cannot have his (unattainable) ideal, he wants nothing at all: demonstrating a sense of responsibility is beginning to appear a poor substitute for an illusory retreat into self-indulgent fantasy. At least this would seem to be the reason for Reikichi's ultimate rejection of Tsuyuno, which is described in Sections 59-63. We have already seen that in Section 59 Reikichi is able to defend Tsuyuno only with the help of a sympathetic band of *burakumin*. Section 60 informs us that their promise of protection was predicated on the understanding that once Reikichi had conspicuously escorted Tsuyuno through the town, he would take her to live with him in Tokyo.[25] Such an outcome is offered as a fleeting possibility in Section 61 when,

after their rescue, Reikichi actually does ask Tsuyuno if she is willing to go back with him. Naturally, she tells him that she is. Reikichi even goes so far (on page 435) as to consider forswearing Tokyo altogether and taking up residence with Tsuyuno among the *burakumin*. Yet this gesture of affection toward Tsuyuno, one that would at least mark the beginning of a new willingness for Reikichi to act responsibly on his feelings, is destined to remain just that: an empty gesture. For no sooner has Reikichi averred to Tsuyuno that his proposal is sincere than he is distracted by the sound of a horse passing along the opposite bank of the river. On the horse is a woman whose appearance immediately causes Reikichi to call out "Mother!" before sliding down the riverbank and thrashing through the water "too frantic in his haste," we are informed at the beginning of Section 62, "to return the short distance and cross over the bridge." [437]

Tsuyuno attempts to follow Reikichi, for whom the image of the woman on horseback has overpoweringly recalled the memory of his mother in exactly the same location twenty years before.[26] Reikichi warns Tsuyuno repeatedly to go back, but realizing that it is even more dangerous now for her to stop, has her join him on an exposed section of the riverbed. The horse is retreating up the river, however, which prompts Reikichi to reenter the stream alone, commanding Tsuyuno to stay behind. It is only when he has struggled up the opposite bank that he has time to turn back and consider Tsuyuno:

> As soon as he was standing on solid ground and had assured himself that the horse and rider were still there, that it had not all simply been an illusion, he turned back to look at Tsuyuno. She remained frozen in place on the ridge of land in the great river, face down, hair tumbling over the grass into which she had weakly collapsed.
>
> "Has she fallen?" he asked himself. "Has she fainted?"
>
> But no, he knew that it was as if he had thrown her down with his own hand. [441-442]

Nevertheless, Reikichi (in Section 63) abandons her there – in full awareness of the cruelty of the act.[27] According to Freytag's scheme, this dramatic juncture would at first seem a likely candidate for the catastrophe – the decisive failure of the relationship between Reikichi and Tsuyuno, preceded by a "moment of last suspense" in which success has been briefly held out as a possibility. But all a catastrophe would seem to signify here is the puzzlingly sudden loss of interest in Tsuyuno's thematic role: the woman who is nominally the central female character, and whose treatment by Reikichi would seem to be the key for gauging his emotional growth, is dismissed as though she were a minor player in the events of the novel. Tsuyuno as a character is simply removed from the larger resolution of the thematic tension between desire and obligation, severely disrupting dramatic structure.[28] Yet, interestingly, the removal of what should have been a moderating influence in the person of Tsuyuno does open the way for an even more intense, direct conflict between desire and guilt as expressed through the image of Oyō. The result is what might be called a second catastrophe which, if no less disruptive of the structure because of its exclusion of Tsuyuno, at least seems meant to achieve its impact precisely through its affirmation of excess.

This second catastrophe begins, fittingly enough, with a second moment of last suspense. Immediately after his cavalier dismissal of Tsuyuno,[29] Reikichi hails the man leading the horse with the female rider, recognizing him as none other than Oshimo's grandfather and the woman as Oyō. The old man informs him that he had suggested taking Oyō to his valley so that she could bathe in the curative waters there, and that his proposal was accepted on the condition it be done in strictest privacy. He then entreats Reikichi to allow him to keep his promise, which Reikichi agrees to do for Oshimo's sake. One would be hard pressed to envision the outcome to *Yukari no Onna* if this brief victory of self-restraint over desire were to prove more lasting, but it does

help heighten the drama of the events to follow.

Section 64 opens the next morning, with a half-crazed Reikichi breakfasting at a tea shop on his way to Shiragiku-dani. Reneging on his promise to stay away from the valley, he has resolved to "divorce himself from all accepted norms of human behavior... and once again see another man's wife." [471] This decision, of course, not only confirms Reikichi's betrayal of Tsuyuno, it directly dishonors the memory of Oshimo and threatens equally to disgrace Okō, Okitsu, and even the memory of his mother and father (in the sense of fulfilling his duty toward them), for he believes that "he could not be helped or saved or consoled by any one of them, or by anyone at all, for as long as this deep-seated love – the love in his heart for Oyō – continued unabated." [476] Reikichi now appears to be swept up in a wave of desire that absolves him of any moral obligation whatsoever. Thus in Section 65 – when he lies prostrate with exhaustion on the mountain pass leading to the valley, tempted to let himself fall by releasing his grip on his cane – he compares his situation to that of the mortally wounded General Wolfe during the French and Indian War, supposing that "...by dying for love, he would have obtained the same unique claim on glory won by this illustrious general." [491]

And yet it must be said that Reikichi is largely deceiving himself here, for his true motivation in following Oyō is not simply unadulterated love for her as a woman in the present who is inconveniently, and perhaps unwillingly, married to another man. If that were so, his inability to overcome this merely external obstacle might somehow justify the sort of self-destructive "heroic" act he contemplates here.[30] To put it another way, Reikichi does not appear to realize that his sense of guilt regarding Oyō goes beyond that warranted by the mere violation of oppressive social norms (if this were the only factor involved, there would hardly be a compelling reason to choose her over Tsuyuno). Rather, as is evident from the emotional immaturity he has demonstrated throughout the second half of the novel, Reikichi's guilt in this

case — momentarily put aside as he fantasizes about "dying for love" — derives from a much deeper failure: a fundamental failure to resolve the conflict between maternal love and sexual love. A resolution of this conflict — which in turn implies developing a sense of self-denial that would form the basis of responsible behavior — is the prerequisite for emotional maturity in an adult. It is this element of self-deception which is brought to the fore in the remaining sections of the novel to bring home to the reader (if not Reikichi) that a guilt-free love is an impossibility for those who survive past childhood, that the very nature of emotional maturity is defined by the acceptance of frustrated desire. In those sections (Sections 66-71) that constitute the equivalent in terms of dramatic structure of the catastrophe (or more accurately the second catastrophe), we are to be shown that a mature love requires the accommodation of desire with a self-denial born of guilt, and that Reikichi's failure to acknowledge this truth proves his undoing.[31]

After being swept up by a mysterious figure — likened to an eagle or a *tengu* goblin — and falling unconscious at the end of Section 65, Reikichi finds himself in Section 66 resting on a pillow of chrysanthemums at the home of Oshimo's grandfather, the old charcoal peddler. It turns out that Jinjirō, Oshimo's father, has rescued Reikichi, and that during the five days he has been unconscious Oyō has been nursing him. She is staying at the house to the rear of Reikichi's, and several nights later, after his hosts are asleep, Reikichi goes for a secret look (this starts Section 67). As he makes his way there, he comes across the wooden tub in which his mother bathed, and also discovers the spot near the river — surrounded by white chrysanthemums — where it had been placed on that occasion. Reikichi closes his eyes in imagined embarrassment, but at almost the same instant catches sight of another human figure there.

The woman is, of course, none other than Oyō, as Reikichi discovers in Section 68, where he feels the urge to call out to her

"even though it might have been with [his] dying breath." [522] Feeling that current appearances are unsuited to such a romantic encounter, however (they are both wearing straw raincoats which he thinks make them look like "two bales of brushwood"), Reikichi turns to go back to the house. But when he turns around for one last look, Oyō lets her raincoat fall and Reikichi is drawn irresistibly toward her:[32]

> Reikichi approached swiftly, a star shooting across the sky.
> His raincoat burned a pale blue in the mist.
> From behind he called out in a choked voice, "Mother."
> Then he said, "Madam."
> Then he said, "Nē-san."
> Finally, he called out, "Oyō."
>
> [524]

It is at this point where, in a flashback, we are told of Oyō's background (at least as it touches upon Reikichi's childhood). Reikichi had been struck by Oyō's beauty the first time he saw her, as well as by her strong resemblance to his mother, and thereafter took to comparing her to the women in the illustrated storybooks he had retained as keepsakes of his mother.[3] One day Oyō asked him to show her the books, a request which led to subsequent regular meetings. At their first meeting, Reikichi burst into tears (over an episode in Ryūtei Tanehiko's *Nise Murasaki Inaka Genji* [The False Murasaki and the Rustic Genji] in which Fujitsubo consoles the young hero), and Oyō sympathized with the motherless Reikichi by promising never to leave him: "'Rei-chan, I will stay with you all my life, do you understand? I won't ever desert you.'" [534]

After this flashback, the reader is returned to the present, where once again Reikichi addresses Oyō by each of the terms mentioned above. At the end of Section 68, Oyō — who has thus far refused to let Reikichi see her face because, she says, she does not want to spoil the image he has of her — offers to do so on a

moonlit night when she can look into a mirror and see for herself that her rash is gone.

Of course, by this time Oyō's rash has acquired a significance that far outweighs its blemishing effect on Oyō's appearance. As a symbol of the guilt inspired on the one hand by Reikichi's erotic attraction to a woman who would seem to take precedence over any other woman in his life (including his mother, at least in the sense that his sexual attraction to Oyō need not be sublimated) and on the other hand by Oyō's own promise to Reikichi (her marriage, for whatever reason, to another man), the blemish both gives Oyō her distinctive individuality and links her inextricably to the circumstances of the present. Reikichi's passionate attraction to her necessarily demands that he not so much forsake the menory of the other women in his life as subsume it within the framework of his love for Oyō. In other words, for Oyō genuinely to embody the various facets Reikichi attributes to her in the passage above — as mother figure, sisterly older woman, romantic "other woman," and lover — it would be impossible for him to deny the guilt inherent in the respective substitutions of Oyō for his mother, his cousin, his wife, and Tsuyuno. To wish away that guilt would be to reject the present itself, as well as all the events that have made the present — however disagreeable — what it is.

But dealing with guilt is not the same as letting oneself be inundated by it, and it is the latter course Reikichi is taking here in his simultaneous pursuit of pure desire. To perceive guilt without perceiving a corresponding obligation to atone or compensate for it is hardly less self-indulgent than the attempt to escape blame altogether. This seems to me to be the central irony of Reikichi's position in the final sections of the story. He appears intent on regaining the passive emotional security of a mother's love (as suggested by the identification of Oyō with Reikichi's mother) without having to give up an essentially disruptive and very adult awareness of sexual desire. It is this paradoxical combination of blamelessness and guilt that would be realized

should Reikichi be united with an Oyō purged of the stigma of the blister beetle. Achieving such a union does indeed seem to be the aim of the final two sections of the story when, several nights following his original encounter, Reikichi once again stealthily makes his way to the river in which Oyō is bathing. After Reikichi has made an extraordinarily self-serving attempt to justify what is beginning to look more and more like an incipient case of genuine adultery,[34] Oyō in Section 71 at last allows him to see her uncovered face: "She looked upward to reveal features that, although slightly thinner, had lost none of the youth and vivacity of twenty years before." [548]

The sight so overwhelms Reikichi that he involuntarily reaches out and touches her foot, immediately apologizing for his forwardness in doing so. Oyō then asks him to repeat the song his mother had sung to him during his first trip to Shiragiku-dani, resting her head on his shoulder as he complies. Fixed in this romantic posture, they seem on the point of agreeing to set out on a pilgrimage together when Jinjirō, Oshimo's demented father, strikes Reikichi over the head so hard that he loses consciousness. Reikichi's final delirious act is to cling to Oyō's breast (with his teeth!) in the awareness that his own bite may prove even more poisonous than that of the blister beetle. Reikichi is subsequently taken by horse to Kanazawa (sufficiently regaining consciousness on the way to witness the retrieval of Tsuyuno's straw raincoat in the river — we are told that she had tried to follow Reikichi but was set upon by her enemies and, unlike Reikichi, succeeded in throwing herself into the gorge), and he dies in a hospital bed enjoying the dimly perceived ministrations of Okō and Okitsu. Okitsu must then cope with the onerous task of returning to Tokyo bearing the ashes not only of Reikichi's parents but of Reikichi and Tsuyuno as well. There, on the day of the funeral, Okitsu receives a parcel from Oyō containing her shorn locks and a letter which expresses her wish once again to meet Reikichi in Shiragiku-dani and suffer the bite of a blister beetle.[35]

The most significant aspect of the abrupt end which is put to Reikichi's dalliance with Oyō is the identity of Reikichi's attacker: Jinjirō, who has reversed the roles of Section 36 to become the champion of moderation while Reikichi has become the unprincipled transgressor.[36] Reikichi has apparently reached a point at which the twin impulses of guilt and desire have been carried to such an unmoderated extreme that they must be forcibly reined in. That both impulses contribute to a mature understanding of love is a lesson learned through the experience of growing older; the problem is that they can only be *constructively* joined through a process of mutual accommodation, manifested in unselfish behavior, that marks the limits of both. Reikichi is unable or unwilling to effect this accommodation, and consequently the confluence of images we are asked to acknowledge in the person of Oyō strikes me as superficial and false. In particular, to bring Tsuyuno briefly back into the story as though Reikichi somehow merited the sacrifice of her life is an unwarranted appropriation of the qualities she represents.[37]

This superficiality seems to me to mark a point where Kyōka is clearly at cross-purposes with himself in *Yukari on Onna.* He has constructed a framework in which the actions of the female characters seem meant to point Reikichi in the direction of (admittedly difficult) change and a certain measure of fulfillment in love (and even at the end there is no trace of jealousy, criticism, or self-centeredness in the female characters); and yet Reikichi's final demise leaves the reader feeling curiously empty, as though his selfishness had robbed their devotion and self-sacrifice of meaning. That is, in fact, the conclusion the disruption of the novel's dramatic structure requires us to draw, and it is signally apparent in the irony that obtains in each of Reikichi's romantic relationships at the end of the novel. Tsuyuno, whose story this ostensibly is, sought salvation in Reikichi but found in him only the means of her own destruction. Okitsu, expecting Reikichi to return safely to her, is instead required to go to

Kanazawa and escort the ashes of her dead husband back to Tokyo. Okō and Oshimo (the latter represented in present time by her family) have been able to shield Reikichi from external enemies but not from his own willful recklessness. Oyō ventures into Shiragiku-dani in the hope of restoring her normal married life but instead encounters the agent of its permanent disruption.[38] And as for Reikichi's mother, whose memory would best be honored by Reikichi's fulfilling his obligation to rebury her ashes and get on with his life, her gift of unconditional love would seem to have produced a man who is incapable of unselfish behavior.

This is the somewhat unsettled state in which the reader is left at the end of *Yukari no Onna.* To sum up by referring once again to Freytag's Pyramid, *Yukari no Onna* is a novel whose organization shows the stresses of imperfect integration, particularly between the role of the nominal heroine and the other main female characters. The result is an awkward doubling of the descending leg of the pyramid, leading to a time-delayed parallel catastrophe that is comprehensive only in its celebration of defeat. Even defeat can be respected, of course, if it is felt to be earned, but a defeat such as Reikichi's begs the question by substituting self-indulgence for self-restraint. Reikichi has not earned his defeat, and thus he also fails to merit the reader's respect.

Notes

Unless otherwise noted, the place of publication is Tokyo. Translations are provided only for the titles of Kyoka's works.

1 *Yukari no Onna* was serialized in the magazine *Fujin Gahō* from January 1919 to February 1921 and published in book form by Shun'yōdō six months after its completion. This paper is based on the version contained in volume 19 of the *Kyōka Zenshū* (Iwanami Shoten, 1988), pages 1-554.

2 In fact, there are very few critical studies at all of *Yukari no Onna,* no doubt in part because of its length. Mita Hideaki, who also makes some

pertinent comments about the less poetic aspects of Kyōka's style, finds in the novel the traditional Japanese *jo-ha-kyū* rhythmic pattern and makes a very persuasive case (as long as we restrict our attention to three of the women) for defining the structure in terms of the divisions of nō drama. See his "Yukari no Onna to Kyōka Bungaku," in *Izumi Kyōka no Bungaku* (Ōfūsha, 1976), pages 193-233. Kasahara Nobuo, in *Izumi Kyōka: Bi to Erosu no Kōzō* (Shibundō, 1975), pages 314-331, emphasizes the spatial structure of the novel in his analysis, associating each of four female characters with a different sphere of influence along axes dividing the ethereal from the corporeal and the unworldly from the mundane. The only other critic who has discussed the novel at length, remarking on its non-nō-like dramatic structure while focusing primarily on the stylistic technique of interweaving the past with the present, is Gamō Kin'ichirō, in Section 3 of *Mō Hitori no Izumi Kyōka* (Tōbi Sangyō Kikaku, 1965), especially pages 373-418.

[3] The process began as early as 1907, when the critic Saitō No-no-Hito, writing in the journal *Taiyō*, instructed the reader to look to the women for the emotional core of Kyōka's fiction.

[4] Kasahara in particular has focused with considerable subtlety on this aspect of Kyōka's work, using the word "Eros" in the titles of two of his studies: *Izumi Kyōka: Bi to Erosu no Kōzō* and *Izumi Kyōka: Erosu no Mayu* (Kokubunsha, 1988).

[5] This is the basic thesis of my doctoral dissertation, *Aspects of Narrative Structure in the Work of Izumi Kyōka* (Stanford University, 1985), which examines the thematic implications for Kyōka's fiction of the standard narrative elements of character, plot, and point of view.

[6] An example of self-denial winning out would be "Yokō Junsa" (Night Patrolman, 1895); when desire wins out, the product might be a story like "Ryūtandan" (The Dragon's Lair, 1896) or a drama like *Tenshu Monogatari* (Tale of the Castle Keep, 1917). The best examples of reconciliation (not necessarily resulting in happy endings, it should be added) would include "Uta Andon" (A Song Under the Lanterns, 1910), "Kōya Hijiri" (The Saint of Mt. Kōya, 1900), *Nihonbashi* (1914), and Kyōka's last novel, *Rukō Shinsō* (A Fresh Cypress Vine, 1939).

[7] For comparison, *Fūryūsen* (1903-04; here taken also to include *Zoku Fūryūsen*, a separately titled sequel) runs to a total of 626 pages in the *Kyōka Zenshū*. At 554 pages, *Yukari no Onna* is then followed in length by *Shakuyaku no Uta* (Song of the Peony, 1918; 463 pages), *Onna Keizu* (A Woman's Pedigree, 1907; 415 pages), *Sankai Hyōbanki* (An Appraisal of the Mountains and the Sea, 1929; 383 pages), and *Rindō to Nadeshiko* (A Gentian and a Pink, 1922-23; 374 pages). All of these novels originally appeared in serialized form, which is no doubt one reason for many passages which could easily be taken for padding. The longest unserialized work by Kyōka is the 222-page *Nihonbashi*. One further indication of the complexity of *Yukari on Onna*, if that should be thought necessary, is that even Mita (on page 202 of *Izumi Kyōka no Bungaku*) mistakenly counts forty-three chapters ("chapter" here referring to a titled grouping of several numbered sections).

[8] *Yukari no Onna*, page 29. Page numbers for further citations will be placed in brackets in the text. All translations are my own.

[9] Reikichi himself is slightly over thirty. The character of Okō is based on Kyōka's own cousin Meboso Teru, herself the daughter of a needlemaker, and to a large extent personal experience forms the basis of the relationship between Okō and Reikichi.

[10] The girl is said to have been born when Okō was seventeen, in the winter (page 85). Since we have already been told (on page 42) that Okō's second child was also born when she was seventeen, the numbers do not seem to add up—unless by "winter" we are meant to assume January or February (Kyōka would have used the traditional method of counting age, meaning that Okō would have turned seventeen at the beginning of the year and thus had time for a second pregnancy). However, since the actual Kanazawa fire on which the description is based occurred in November of 1892, this does not appear likely, and the reader must be content to pass over the discrepancy.

[11] Kyōka coyly skirts the issue of incest (further suggested by what may be a case of sexual abuse on the part of Okō's great uncle), a typical Kyōka ploy that allows him to have his cake and eat it, too. Here I think he is being rather too coy.

[12] Here again it is Okō, bringing an umbrella for Reikichi, who arrives to rescue her shaken cousin. She even feels prompted to chide him (on page

119), for being such a coward.

[13] Kyōka makes use of the same insect in "Ryūtandan," mentioned above in Note 6. Kyōka himself does not appear to distinguish clearly between a true *hanmyō* (*Cicendela japonica*, also popularly called *michi oshie* or *michi shirube*) and a *mame hanmyō* (*Epicauta gorhami*), only the latter of which is poisonous in that it secretes a substance that causes the skin to blister.

[14] It seems incredible that Reikichi could have so easily put such a dramatic incident from his mind, not only at the time but in the decade since. The contrivance of a sudden recollection on his part seems to fail even on its own terms and demonstrates the same awkwardness in handling time evident in stories like "Gekashitsu" (The Operating Room, 1895).

[15] The romantic import of the reunion is indicated in Section 28, albeit frivolously, when Okō teasingly refers to Reikichi as Tsuyuno's bridegroom (page 164 and again on page 173). It may be noted that Okō eventually makes use of an unrelated child as intermediary – no doubt a more effective way of ensuring secrecy, but also suggesting that having Okō's son volunteer in the first place was a blatant appeal to the reader's sentiment.

[16] A short time gap is inserted between Section 31 and Section 32 to heighten the suspense. This "it-turns-out-that" method of plot organization is extremely common in Kyōka's fiction (not to mention premodern Japanese fiction and drama as a whole), defining the structure not only of individual scenes but sometimes of the entire story. It is also one of the reasons that attempting a straightforward plot summary can be so challenging: plot lines are interleaved and overlapping, often making a strictly chronological account both impractical and misleading.

[17] The element of fantasy – the past serving as refuge for a self-indulgent imagination – is suggested here both by the otherworldy atmosphere surrounding Oshimo's home, Shiragiku-dani, and mention of a supposedly haunted palm tree at the corner of the street from which the horse charges toward Reikichi. (The same tree, or one like it, also appears in the 1910 short story "Kunisada Egaku" [The Kunisada Prints].)

[18] The reader is conditioned to expect the approaching climax by having

the narrator state at the end of Section 33 that Oshimo's sacrifice was not the sole reason for her father's clumsy attempt to show his affection for Reikichi. As always with Kyōka, the punch is telegraphed well ahead of time.

[19] Jinjirō's "beastly" nature is repeatedly emphasized. He is, for instance, introduced as the bear referred to by the title given to Sections 29-30, "*Iro no Shiroi Tabanegami. Hanmen Kuma*" (which can be awkwardly translated as "Hair Bound in White; Half the Visage of a Bear"), and even Jinjirō's father (on page 177) disparages him as a "brute" (*kemono-me*).

[20] In this sense, both the memory of Reikichi's mother in Section 36 and the ostensible alliance with the *burakumin* in Sections 37-38 can be interpreted as a harbingers of excessive commitment – the rough equivalent in terms of dramatic structure to the "tragic force" leading to the hero's downfall.

[21] One might add as a further aside that the date given on page 485 for General Wolfe's attack, 1795, is incorrect. The attack, and Wolfe's death in it, took place in 1759. The last two digits of the year seem have been transposed, either by Kyōka or his typesetters.

[22] The priest at the temple where Reikichi takes refuge notes in Section 42 that Reikichi's current situation mirrors the events of ten years before, when Reikichi had also sought refuge there from creditors after his father's death. He also has the good common sense to call Reikichi a coward (*yowamushi*, page 303) and to suspect that a woman is the cause of his current plight. As the reader will observe throughout the second half of the novel, comparing the main character's reactions to similar situations separated by a span of years is a common technique used by Kyōka to illustrate character development (or lack of it) and thus to shape his plots and subplots.

[23] In fact, in view of the questions Oyō later asks Reikichi when they do meet, it seems certain that they have been out of touch for years.

[24] It is also worth mentioning that Section 34 contains a direct identification of Reikichi with a similar doll: when Oshimo's father asks to take Reikichi back to the valley with him, Reikichi at first refuses to go and the mountain peddler is willing to take as a substitute a doll Oshimo had

told him about. The extent to which Oyō herself shares Reikichi's sense of guilt over their relationship is unclear. In fact, there is a great deal of doubt – never resolved – over whether Oyō has hitherto really been unhappy in her marriage, whether her rich husband ought to be included among the self-serving and oppressive band of "concerned citizens" continually denigrated by Reikichi, and whether she herself might have spent the past twenty years pining for an ideal love which would seem to involve little more than the obligation to mother someone as self-indulgent as Reikichi. This is a further indication that some elements of the theme remain unexplored.

[25] On pages 422-423, the headman suggests that Tsuyuno might be able to help with the cooking and sewing. And lest the reader worry about the possible reaction of Reikichi's wife, he adds that Okitsu, being an Edo woman, would surely understand! One might also well wonder whether trains to Tokyo would be available at this particular time of night.

Beginning with the discussion of Section 59, I am returning to a detailed section-by-section summary.

[26] Presumably this refers to the trip he took with his mother to Shiragiku-dani as a boy after Oshimo's death, although it is doubtful whether that departure would have been made at night (not that the timing here is any less puzzling). This certainly appears to be one of those scenes where the imagery plays havoc with the plot structure even on the story's own terms.

[27] The implications of his act are revealed through a memory involving an arrow shot at a red carp by a childhood friend, which in turn serves as a metaphor for a woman's death.

[28] The former samurai and his associates also effectively lose their status as an opposing force at this point, making only a further brief appearance at the end of the novel.

[29] Reikichi does wistfully hope for divine intercession to save Tsuyuno (one wonders where the *burakumin* might have gone), but his final thought is "She'll be all right. I can apologize later." [450]

[30] And even then Reikichi is finally unable to follow through on this "honorable" course of action: "His attachment to life," we are told on page

492, "seemed to concentrate itself in his grip so that his fingers hardened and held fast to his cane, refusing to let go." Still, the hope it holds out for a positive, if ultimately both unhappy and unsatisfying, outcome almost seems to make this scene yet another candidate for the moment of last suspense before the hero's final defeat. That there should be more than one candidate for this "moment" – even granting a double catastrophe – can be taken to signal yet again that dramatic structure is breaking down.

[31] A sixty-page catastrophe again seems rather overlong (even if we consider it the only "real" catastrophe), although I suppose it is only fair to note that it actually occupies only a little more than ten percent of the novel's total length.

[32] The contrast with Reikichi's desertion of Tsuyuno, also after a last look near a river, is stark.

[33] The impression given here is that Oyō is quite a bit older than Reikichi (the presumed reason for his addressing her by the Japanese term *nē-san*, used with reference to older girls as well as to real sisters and which I have left untranslated in the passage above). However, we know that Reikichi himself (in the narrative present) is over thirty and that Oyō cannot be much beyond the same age (on page 270 she is described as being thirty-one or thirty-two), so the difference presumably either reflects a child's perspective or has been exaggerated for effect, the latter possibility signaling a certain carelessness on Kyōka's part.

[34] "To say that I love both you and my wife," Reikichi tells Oyō on page 547 after revealing to her his own marriage, "is but to say that the two of us admire you as we would the moon."

[35] Everything from Jinjirō's attack to the reading of Oyō's letter is handled in the space of less than five pages. It is not clear whether the funeral service is only for Reikichi or if it includes someone else. Where, one wonders, would Tsuyuno be buried?

[36] Another example of the use of parallel narrative situations, a technique found time and again in Kyōka's work. In the same form as found here – the male hero being called upon to clarify his feelings toward a female character or characters – Kyōka frequently used it as the framework with which to explore the theme of the main character's sense of responsibility,

beginning with the 1896 story "Teriha Kyōgen" (The Teriha Troupe).

[37] A further clue to this superficiality is to be found in the citation regarding Oyō's unchanged beauty: Oyō may seem to represent a joining of maternal love and sexuality to Reikichi, but he feels compelled to see her as she was twenty years ago, obliterating not only the outward sign of their guilt but everything that has happened to either of them over the past twenty years, most notably Reikichi's own marriage, which was itself presumably for love and therefore should have already influenced Reikichi's perception of guilt and desire. (This is, of course, another way of saying that Okitsu has not been sufficiently integrated into the thematic structure.) I also feel that the pilgrimage Reikichi apparently regards as a means of reconciling the images of Oyō and his mother is not so much an accommodation as a regression: Oyō is to be enlisted in the service of honoring Reikichi's mother while denying her own individuality; Reikichi's mother is to be exalted at Oyō's expense.

[38] Oyō's gift of her hair would traditionally suggest the taking of religious vows. There is no definite proof that she has done so (the text of her final letter is, except for one sentence, withheld from the reader)—and her wish to be bitten again by the blister beetle would not appear to bode well for her salvation—but her intention to forsake life as she has known it seems clear enough.