

Kyoko Okazaki's *Pink*

In Kyoko Okazaki's *manga* comic, *Pink*, the heroine Yumi murmurs the words, "I love the color pink." The Japanese cartoonist Okazaki is popular among young intellectuals. She concentrates on the characteristics of youth, and her writings are studded with modern jargon.

In *Pink*, Yumi works as a prostitute. We see her being called on the telephone, and having sex in a hotel with her male customers. Although it is prostitution, she enjoys certain aspects of the job, including giving pleasure to others. Yumi finds, however, several facets of the job repulsive. Sometimes, customers preach to her by saying, "Just how long do you intend to continue working at this job?" or "You need to get your act together, you know." She has no choice but listen to such statements, and this makes her increasingly unhappy. She hates that these men, after all, patrons of prostitution, should preach to her like this. Her heart hardens and she starts to look at people with a critical eye. Yumi buys a bunch of roses. She places it in her own room. The scent envelops her as does their pink color. She becomes happy, and murmurs, "I really like pink."

Yumi keeps an alligator in her apartment. The cost of feeding the creature increases, and the girl must earn more money. She works in an office by day, but because her wages are low, she works as a call girl by night. Working in an office is quite normal for young Japanese women, but keeping a pet alligator, and being a prostitute makes Yumi stand out. The young girl, however, feels like a typical, young Japanese woman except for, of course, her unusual pet, and her call girl occupation. In truth, few girls are like Yumi, although many can empathize with her. Young girls love their "something," symbolized by her alligator. Young people tend to identify with "wild at heart" natures, which, unfortunately, have disappeared from today's urban society. Although the average girl doesn't work as a call girl, she often plays on her sexuality. Almost everyone, thus, has a bit of Yumi in them.

Yumi likes pink. It probably still is the favorite color of Japanese girls. Their bedrooms are decked out in pink: pink walls, pink bedding, pink accessories, and pink stuffed toys. The color pink is really a girl thing. Yumi buys a bunch of