

# Writing the Body—as Meat:

## Kanai Mieko’s “Rotting Meat” as Surreal Fable

Mary A. KNIGHTON

*Osaka University, Toyonaka, Osaka*

The writer Kanai Mieko 金井美恵子 emerged within an experimental artistic milieu dominated by male artists. Her work reflects her negotiation with this Tokyo arts scene in the late 1960s and 1970s. In this essay, I demonstrate through an analysis of her short story “Rotting Meat” (“Funiku” 腐肉, 1972) that her *écriture* owes much to surrealism’s “automatic writing” via the innovative poetry of Yoshioka Minoru 吉岡実; moreover, I contend that Kanai creates notably feminist surreal fiction in her work’s sensual and intellectual focus on the body, as well as through its wordplay.<sup>1</sup>

Tokyo then was surely a difficult place and time for Kanai to make her way alone as a writer, but it must also have been incredibly intense and vibrant for the nineteen-year-old *shōjo sakka* 少女作家 from Gunma Prefecture. Besides being near the political demonstrations against the U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty (*Anpo*) that continued through the 1960s and intensified around the time of the extension of the treaty in 1970, Kanai found a place for herself in radical art, theatre, and literary circles. Among the many prominent—some would say notorious—people she associated with were the Francophile writer and translator Shibusawa Tatsuhiko 渋沢

---

<sup>1</sup> Important studies in English on prewar surrealism in Japan include Sas 1999 and Clark 1997. In Japanese, see also Yamada 1990, from which Clark takes a great deal of his own research material.

There has been an explosion in recent years of revived interest in Dada and surrealism, particularly focused on women’s centrality to these arts movements. In part, these works have stimulated my own search for the women practitioners of surrealist arts in Japan, both prewar and postwar. For more information, see Sawelson-Gorse 2001, Rosemont 1998, Caws 2001, Chadwick 1985, and Mundy 2001.

龍彦, who was part of a long-running obscenity trial regarding his translation of the Marquis de Sade;<sup>2</sup> the artist and occasional stage performer Kaneko Kuniyoshi 金子国義, who today is best known for his erotic, and often pornographic, artwork and photographs;<sup>3</sup> Yotsuya Shimon 四谷シモン, a dollmaker in the vein of Hans Bellmer as well as a stage performer and flamboyantly gay personality, who was very close friends with Kanai;<sup>4</sup> butoh and New Theatre artists such as Kasai Akira 笠井勲 and Terayama Shuji 寺山修司;<sup>5</sup> and poets Amazawa Taijirō 天沢退二郎, and Irizawa

---

<sup>2</sup> Shibusawa Tatsuhiko's obscenity trial actually marks the case law on obscenity in art in Japan together with a similar case involving the translation of D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Shibusawa was a French scholar and writer of gothic and erotic-grotesque tales that Miryam Sas links to surrealism (Sas 1999, p. 159), but that certainly owe just as great a debt to de Sade, Poe, and Bataille (see Shibusawa's *Dorakonia* ドラコニア ドラコニア 綺譚集 [Draconia], in particular).

<sup>3</sup> In particular, see Kaneko Kuniyoshi's fantastic collection, *Arisu no garō / La Galeries d'Alice* アリスの画廊 (Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1979), from which I argue that his artwork of "precocious Alice" actually illustrates several of Kanai's stories mentioned in this essay and presented at Nichibunken's Symposium.

<sup>4</sup> In Yotsuya Shimon's *Shimon no Shimon* シモンのシモン, Kanai writes a short note about him as a close friend who is more like an older brother to her than simply a friend. The same collection includes interviews with Shimon on his gay identity, as well as interviews with Kaneko Kuniyoshi. The reader of this book gets a strong anecdotal and personal look at the close network of friends and artists in the Tokyo art and theatre circles at this time. See Yotsuya 1975. Yotsuya 1993 is a collection of photographs of his dolls, often pornographic and dismembered *shōjo* puppets that look very much like Kaneko's illustrations for the Italian edition of *Alice in Wonderland*. In this volume we find essays and interviews with Kaneko, Kanai, Shibusawa, and well-known surrealist poet Takiguchi Shūzō 滝口修造.

<sup>5</sup> Kanai's poetry collection (Kanai 1973) contains an essay by Kasai Akira, the butoh performer, who raves about Kanai and her mysterious intuitive sense of the poetic in language ("Sore was ai ka shi ka soretomo yume ka" それは愛か死か それとも夢か, pp. 136-144). He casually mentions that Kanai practiced butoh with him on at least two occasions. Mention of Kasai can be found in Sas 1999, where she notes his work in modern dance evolves out of the Hijikata Tatsumi 土方 巽 branch of butoh (p. 167).

Yasuo 入沢康夫, in addition to Yoshioka.<sup>6</sup> In August 1975, Kanai joined other more established authors such as Ariyoshi Sawako 有吉佐和子, Yoshiyuki Junnosuke 吉行淳之介, Ishikawa Jun 石川淳, and Maruya Saiichi 丸谷才一, in defense of writer Nosaka Akiyuki 野坂昭如. Nosaka was on trial for obscenity, having published a “pornographic” Nagai Kafū 永井荷風 story in the literary journal *Omoshiro hanbun* 面白半分, of which he was the editor. Kanai was called to testify, the transcripts of the trial proceedings make clear, precisely because she was young and female; the presumption was that she could speak for her generation and sex, as well as from a writer’s point of view, on changing sexual consciousness and values in Japan and Japanese literature.<sup>7</sup> From early in her career, then,

---

<sup>6</sup> Kanai met all of these important poets from her first debut on the literary scene in the late 1960s, after joining the poetry group of *Kyōku* (凶区, or “Disaster Zone,” which was also the name of their journal). Yoshioka Minoru was part of the *Wani* 鱶 (Crocodile) group of poets that included Ōoka Makoto 大岡信 and Iijima Kōichi 飯島耕一, and they formed a “surrealist study group” for the express purpose of rethinking surrealism in the postwar Japanese context (Sas, 159).

<sup>7</sup> Kafū’s work was *Yojōhanfusuma no shitabari* 四畳半の下張, originally published in August 1925; *Omoshiro hanbun* republished it in July 1972. For proceedings and trial transcripts, see Maruya 1976. Nosaka also published his own view of the trial in his journal in March of 1976. The obscenity trial earns mention in the encyclopedia of contemporary knowledge in Japan *Bungei yōgo no kisochishiki* 文芸用語の基礎知識 because the judges modified the court ruling in the Lady Chatterley case and incorporated consideration of artistic merit and poetic license when deciding what “obscenity” means. The court nevertheless ruled against Nosaka in this case, saying that Kafū’s work was basically just pornography. One thing stands out for me in my reading of Kanai’s testimony: when asked to discuss the meaning of “*waisetsu*” 猥褻 (obscenity), Kanai gave as an example a pregnant woman who walks down the street, her body bulging and suggestive of the sex act that brought about her condition. Here I believe Kanai was saying that obscenity depends on your point of view, but she was also suggesting that it is part of everyday life. Answering a written interview question I posed to her a few years ago, she said she was particularly disgusted at the court’s banning of the book based on an outdated and ridiculous law based on prewar precedents, even though most people could no longer read Kafū’s classical and literary language and so could not possibly bother with it. She mentioned that pornography with some literary qualities

Kanai was pegged as a writer of her generation and as a woman writer, and she actively took part in a controversy that centered on the political subversiveness and cultural significance of art.

Politics and surrealism have long had complex relations, with its early French and European practitioners famously activists and social critics as often as apolitical decadent artists disdainful of all “civilized” institutions. Kanai would be the first to acknowledge that she is not an activist but an artist; and yet, neither would she dismiss the power of language in creating our psychic selves as much as our lived realities. Despite stressing early on the connection between the words she writes and food on her table, Kanai has never really been interested in making her art easy to read or easy to hear. Her origins as writer amidst other artists profoundly concerned with shaking up tradition and history and making it speak to the present and to change—a milieu in the 1960s and 1970s especially influenced by surrealism, Situationist theatre, and Art Happenings—has continued to shape Kanai as an artist who finds politics in the “revolutionary” act she is best at, through writing and art where the writer can begin to derail the conventional ways of “seeing” the world. Moreover, her feminist perspective increasingly stems, paradoxically, from a refusal and contempt for labels such as “feminist” or *joryū sakka* 女流作家 (“woman writer”) that seek to align her with political or social agendas that she herself may not identify as her own.<sup>8</sup> Kanai’s essays, criticism, and even fiction – often published in women’s magazines, we should note, as well as in newspapers and not just in literary journals—openly critique sex-differentiated or patriarchal double standards that women as well as men may be guilty of

---

appeals to her, but she didn’t think highly of this particular work because it was terribly misogynistic.

<sup>8</sup> Kanai’s *Obasan no deisukūru* おばさんのディスクール (Little Old Lady Discourse, 1984) alienated not a few early-wave feminists who found her criticisms of women and feminism itself hard to take. Ueno et al. 1992 is an interesting series of conversations among feminists centering on the literary works of famous male writers, analyzing them from a feminist perspective. It seeks to relativize and mark the gendered writing of men just as women’s writing has been marked as different and as distinctly “women’s” only with the label of *joryū sakka*.



perpetuating. She recognizes that the gender “difference” exists but she is more wary of it than some, conscious that discrimination against women occurs under the same banner of “difference” as does its celebration.

In her early essays, she easily associated herself with those in the feminist camp of French literary and philosophical thought in particular; French feminist critics like Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Monique Wittig advocated an *écriture féminine* that has continuously influenced her writing in all its aspects even as Kanai has dropped the *feminine* in most references to her own writing today. As *écriture féminine* became increasingly a cliché synonymous with (and somewhat misunderstood) as “writing the body,” Kanai likely found its usefulness as a term wane as a description of her own project: what people came to mean when they said *écriture féminine* meant the neglect of writing in focusing solely on the gender of the writer, as well as the loss of attention to form in literary expression in paying excessive attention to literal content and “positive” or “negative” representations.<sup>9</sup>

Kanai has drawn her inspiration and intellectual curiosity from a wide range of sources. Her fiction is motivated by influences not only within Japan but as much, perhaps, from those outside. A brief list of eclectic influences that even a casual reader of Kanai fiction or criticism would soon discover includes American artists Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg; musician John Cage; writers Gustave Flaubert, Jorge Luis Borges, Franz Kafka, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, and Lewis Carroll; filmmakers Buñuel, Godard, Renoir, and Ford. When Kanai mentions Japanese literature that has been important to her, she invariably lists

---

<sup>9</sup> In several chapters of this study I reference the French feminist theories that were so influential in the 1970s and 1980s, in particular, just when Kanai was writing much of the fiction discussed herein. Currently, Kanai seems to prefer to think of gender issues in a “postfeminist” framework beyond what in Japan passes as “women’s lib.” And she mentions in her *taidan* book with psychologist Kimura Bin 木村敏 that she doesn’t write with her uterus or from it instead of from her head, and she finds that a curious sort of “progress” for women writers. Interestingly, in this 1983 book however, Kanai easily refers to herself as a *joryū sakka*. See Kimura and Kanai 1983.

writers Tanizaki Jun'ichirō 谷崎潤一郎, Ooka Shōhei 大岡昇平, Sakaguchi Ango 坂口安吾, Ishikawa Jun, and poets Yoshioka Minoru, Amazawa Taijirō, and Irizawa Yasuo. Although Kanai rarely mentions Japanese women writers as influences on her work, she has written essays about the powerful sensuality of language and imagery in Okamoto Kanoko's 岡本かのこ tanka poetry, and shown interest in contemporary writers such as Shōno Yoriko 笙野頼子. The artwork, stories, and poems of women surrealist artists like Dorothea Tanning, Leonor Fini, Leonora Carrington, and Joyce Mansour, moreover, have come up in my personal conversations with Kanai and her sister Kanai Kumiko who is herself an artist who has produced surrealist-inspired works.<sup>10</sup>

The force of the textual as well as visual image dislocated from conventional context and rendered through a variety of techniques that reorganize time and space in violent juxtaposition and ironic social commentary, in surrealist painting and literature as well as in New Wave film noir, cannot be underestimated in its impact on Kanai's fiction.<sup>11</sup> So while we usually think of surrealism in terms of visual art, it is important to recall the roots of surrealism first in writing and literature in 1924 Paris, where its attention to psychoanalysis, the unconscious, and the power of writing can be seen in early surrealist manifestos; the illustrations for surrealist novels and stories; surrealist word games; the Letterism of the 1940s and 1950s; and even in Conceptual Art today.

Kanai herself has always claimed that her writing is disruptive of the modern Japanese novel tradition of autobiographical narrative known as the "I-novel" and, as anti-roman writing, even against the conventions of the novel form itself. For surrealists, of course, the only basic tenet is to hold

---

<sup>10</sup> On one visit when we talked about *Boshizō* and *Funiku*, in particular, Kanai brought out books of translations into Japanese of works by Carrington and Mansour for me to read, and showed me many paintings by Tanning, Fini, and Max Swanberg.

<sup>11</sup> Kanai's volumes of film criticism make this abundantly clear, as do most interviews with her discussing her own work and stressing her composition of time and space through movement and sensual images. In particular, see the interviews included as inserts to Kanai 1992 and her essay collection Kanai 1994.

no real tenets, to revolt against convention and revolutionize the status quo in all its social, cultural, political, or aesthetic forms. We can see Kanai's notion of *écriture* as surrealist to the extent that language, or *kotoba* ことば, is said to have a life of its own, producing its meanings beyond any single author or reader's control, proliferating amidst a sea of other texts to which it alludes and in which it gets both lost and found. This kind of "automatism" of signification can be seen in remarkable works such as Kanai's mid-career *Kuzureru Mizu* くずれる水 (1981), in which syntax breaks down, metonymic association takes over, and words flesh out the text and then dissolve, moving in fluid ways to become the story itself beyond any fixed "plot" per se.<sup>12</sup> Kanai's subject matter is often extremely sensual in its evocation of sexual contact, bodies and their fluids and sensations, food, color, sound, movement in space, and even violence. Kanai herself has described her *kotoba* as *nikutai* 肉体, the meat and material body of words that ceaselessly beckon the reader to a reality that is more strangely real, more absolute, more pleasurable and dangerous than any journalistic attempt to capture "reality"—what is this if not surreality such as Andre Breton described it in his *First Manifesto on Surrealism*?<sup>13</sup>

Yoshioka Minoru, dubbed a "nonsurrealist surrealist" by critic Satō Hiroaki, would become Kanai's single greatest mentor and influence in the art of lyrical prose, beginning with her earliest fables.<sup>14</sup> The short fable-like story form took over from Kanai Mieko's early poetry writing, and would make up the bulk of her literary output from the 1970s even into the early 1990s when the three-volume *Complete Works of Kanai Mieko* (1992) came out. Although Kanai began to regularly serialize full-length novels in literary journals and to subsequently publish them as books from

---

<sup>12</sup> *Kuzureru mizu* remains one of my favorite works in Kanai's oeuvre. I discuss it in Knighton 1998.

<sup>13</sup> Breton's manifesto appears, in part, in Kolocontroni et al. 1998, pp. 307-311. Composed by André Breton, Paul Eluard, and Philippe Soupault, the classic texts on "automatic writing" remain *The Automatic Message* (1933), *Magnetic Fields* (1920), and *The Immaculate Conception* (1930), all collected in one volume by Atlas Press of London in 1997.

<sup>14</sup> Satō 2002, pp. 148-163.

the mid-1980s on, the allegorical short story that she borrowed initially from Ishikawa Jun formed the foundations of her later fiction. Indeed, one might argue that the process of writing longer works by means of serialized instalments helped to perpetuate the short story form as the building block of her fiction. Before long, however, the writing method and philosophy of *écriture* took over, becoming no longer a mere theme in her fables but itself the allegorical stuff of Kanai's novels, and its language and techniques of composition have appeared increasingly interrelated among all her works. Yet, even as her writing style has evolved in myriad, complex directions enabled by the development of her individualized *écriture*, the concerns of Kanai's early fables and later works both stem from some of the same sources, as her continued citation of Yoshioka Minoru as one of her major influences implies. Elsewhere I have argued that the ambiguous figure of the *shōjo* 少女 is one of these central concerns, one we can see in such early successes as "Rabbits" (*Usagi* 兎, 1972; tr. 1982) and "Portrait of Mother and Child" (*Boshizō* 母子像, 1972) and as recently as her novel *Rumor's Daughter* (*Uwasa no musume* 噂の娘, 2002).<sup>15</sup> Here, however, I wish to argue that "Rotting Meat" is an exemplary story that offers the reader an opportunity to examine more closely the woman character in Kanai's fables, one less in opposition to the *shōjo* than a development out of her.<sup>16</sup> In particular, comparing Kanai's *shōjo* and women characters may

---

<sup>15</sup> For more information on Kanai, see Knighton 1998, pp. 452-457; Knighton 2003; and Knighton 1991, pp. 286-299; my translation of "Rotting Meat" is Knighton 1996. See also my unpublished University of California at Berkeley M.A. thesis, "The Chiasmatic Turn: Narrative Desire in Kanai Mieko's Early Fiction" (2002), prepared with the guidance of Alan Tansman and Dan O'Neill. Stories mentioned in the present article are collected in Kanai 1992, vol. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Kanai has mentioned on numerous occasions in interviews with me that, for her, *shōjo* fictions include works like Jean Webster's *Daddy Long-legs*, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, and even Mary McCarthy's *The Group*. While I am always surprised to see McCarthy listed side by side with these "children's stories," it is nonetheless suggestive of Kanai's sense of the meaning of *shōjo*, where there exists a continuity between *shōjo* and young college women as in McCarthy's book, women whom many Anglo-European readers would tend to see as adults and not "girls." In addition, Kanai's linking of these rather disparate stories

lead us to ask new questions; for example, how does the societal fear and refusal to face not only the sexuality of girls but also their intellectual powers contribute to a persistent narrative violence, that of distorting them into two-dimensional (often heterosexual) whores or angels? What kind of violence must be done in turn to recuperate representations of female sexuality and bodies from this stagnant state? How does a “woman” become a “writer” amidst such representations? While Kanai does not offer us “role models” in her female characters—in fact, she is never hesitant to create whores and angels—she does, however, rewrite cultural fictions of love and sexuality in ways every bit as provocative as Angela Carter’s well-known reworking of the fairytales that have shaped and limited our cultural imaginations, not to mention our everyday realities.<sup>17</sup> In doing so,

---

of female development and independence imply something about “progress” for women: the stories of these young women are presented, in a sense, as tales of education about becoming a proper and normal woman (Webster), of colonial exploration and isolation (Burnett), and sexual discovery and disillusionment with heterosexual arrangements (McCarthy).

<sup>17</sup> In particular, see Carter’s collection of stories, *Wayward Girls and Wicked Women* (New York: Acacia Press, Inc., 1986), which includes the short story “The Débutante” by surrealist woman writer Leonora Carrington. Kanai herself steered me to this story by giving me a copy of it in Japanese some years back.

In this short tale, a young bourgeois woman has made friends with a hyena at a zoo. When her mother decides that it is time for the daughter to be brought out in society at a ball, the young woman goes to her best friend, the hyena (to whom she had taught French so that they could talk together), and complains about having to go to the ball. The hyena agrees to go in her stead. The girl spends all of the evening dressing the hyena in a long dress with gloves and training her to walk in heels but they don’t know what to do about her (the hyena’s) face. Finally, they call in the maid Marie, and the hyena kills her, eats her up, and preserves her face to wear as a mask to the ball. Once at the ball, however, someone complains about the bad smell and, offended, the hyena stands up and says that if there is a bad smell it is because unlike them, she doesn’t eat cake! Then she devours her (or, rather, Marie’s face) and leaps out the window and runs away. That is the end of the story. It is remarkable how this short tale speaks to so many recurring themes in Kanai’s fiction: its brevity, the bad smell as revelation, the blurring of lines between human and animal; the sexual revolt of the daughter linked to the French Revolution in the

Kanai contributes complex literary representations of female characters and sexuality that compete with, and undermine, more dominant narratives and master tropes.

### **The Smell of Cannibalistic Desire Fleshed Out: Telling the Story of Writing**

Kanai's "Rotting Meat" is a fable that, when examined in relation to Yoshioka Minoru's poem entitled, appropriately enough, "A Fable," offers as much in the way of gendered "food for thought," as for the body. "Rotting Meat" is a story within a story, and its narrative structure is very like that of "Portrait of Mother and Child"; indeed, it too pulls the outside frame into the interior narrative, formally dramatizing the thematics of a story all about consuming the outside in order to make it the storyteller's own, part of what is inside. Developing throughout a theme of cannibalistic desire, the story moves to a form that will, in the end, perform its own consumption.

The story opens with a male narrator who tells us, cryptically enough, that although he had once been to the room of the woman (*kanojo no heya* 彼女の部屋) now he will never be able to find it again, all because of having seen "that bloody, rotting meat" (*ano chidarake no kusatta niku* あの血だらけの腐った肉), from which he had fled as fast as he could. This opening paragraph sets up the first part of the outside frame narrative, and is abruptly followed by the single introductory line to the interior narrative,

---

story's class emphasis and use of the face of "Marie" for the bourgeois party; and the satiric intent (in this story made especially evident by the daughter's reading of Jonathan Swift while the hyena goes to the ball). Carrington is an artist as well as a writer, and a surrealist at that. For Kanai, this is a combination hard to resist.

One should probably look at the artwork of Kanai Kumiko 金井久美子 in more detail to really appreciate the impact of painting and surrealism on her sister's work. She has illustrated many of Kanai's novel covers, and provided illustrations on numerous occasions as well. Her work not infrequently brings together a realistically depicted collection of everyday items and juxtaposes them with dream elements. My own favorite paintings are those of young *shōjo* playing in gardens and houses, girls with giant fuzzy pink peaches for heads.

“What she’d told me went something like this.” From this point, in quotation marks, the woman’s narrative begins. We learn from her chatty self-introduction that she has different men in her room every night, and that they bring her gifts and money, which makes her happy and allows her to make her living. In short, of course, she is a prostitute. She tells us of one particular client (from among her *okyaku no otokotachi* お客の男たち) who is a butcher and once brought her a “whole, freshly slaughtered pig,” a gift that caused her no end of worry. She was upset by this gift precisely because she was unable to eat all of the meat by herself; moreover, she tells us, she felt it was not appropriate to give it to her clients—it would be a little strange to offer them slices of raw meat—and she could not imagine cooking it all for herself, much less preparing special meals for her clients. Most of all, however, she was disturbed by the word “meat” itself as the gift forced her to think too much about her relationship to words: “Besides, my way of making a living and the very word ‘meat’ seemed too much like an all too true play on words—it was as if I were selling my own body’s flesh, slice by slice” (112).

Not knowing what else to do with the meat, she wrapped it up in newspaper and plastic and stuffed it under her bed. It seems that her having received the gift of meat from the butcher marked a turning point in her life as a prostitute. After he left, as was usual with this particular client, she tells us, her body all over was too sore to take any other men for a while. At this point, her story jumps immediately to the present time, a conversation with the narrator to say how few clients ever come to see her anymore, especially compared to the good old days of before (ostensibly, the days before she got the meat). Quotation marks close her narrative and the external frame narrator takes up the story; or rather, he takes up *her* story, not his, which would be the story of the opening paragraph and his flight from her room. He continues her story, telling us what went through her mind in the good old days when she had so many clients, how she never once thought about such things as needing a reason to go on living (112). Soon, however, he interrupts himself in ventriloquizing what she said and thought in order to confess that he is supposed to be telling us what he thinks and what he did with the woman: “According to what she’d told me—but no, wait, before that, I should probably explain the circumstances

that led to my meeting her" (113). In effect, the narrator here reveals a third level of narration, one that at this stage appears to mediate between the external narrative in present time inscribing how he will never be able to find her room again and the interior narrative in the past when she told him her story. When he tells us, "Besides, why she lived such a strange life in that room together with rotting meat—in the end, I never asked" (113), we find it bizarre and disappointing on the basic level of plot, which is where our curiosity wants to be satisfied, but at another level we shift our interest to the narrator's story, understanding that her story is subservient to, and less important than his own precisely because he is the narrator and her story is contained within his as if it belongs to him. Now he begins to tell us his own story.

The narrator tells us that his meeting her was a pure accident when his only desire had been to find a place to live, or, as he clarifies for us, "rather, what I really wanted was not a room but a home of my own" (113). We learn now that the significance of the room for the narrator had everything to do with his being a writer, one afflicted by the opposite of writer's block in that he is unable to live a quiet, normal life for being haunted by the unceasing desire to write:

For various reasons it turned out that I couldn't get [a home of my own], so I had no choice but to put up with just having a "room." There I was to go about my life; no, without doing anything, I intended only to exist, quietly. Because the truth of the matter is that I wanted to escape, to escape from writing, to escape to the extreme point of not writing: yes, a life of still, vigilant waiting for death to visit me; yes, death in the guise of a young girl who looks just like me—no, a thousand times more beautiful than me (113).

In a desire *not* to write, to escape from writing, our narrator searches for a room in which to crouch and wait for "death," what we might call the "end" of the story, the "end" of writing itself. It is as if the writer is unable to bear the tension of a writing process that, as *écriture*, is self-generating and infinitely regenerative, a process that ceaselessly defers "the message" that the reader wants to know at "the end" of the story. In his room, then, he plans to force the story to a close by refusing to write. The "death" of the



story will be the death of him, he feels, but it will be worth it, for the culminating vision will be of “death in the guise of a young girl who looks just like me – no, a thousand times more beautiful than me.” Although the narrator never explicitly says he is male, but rather here asserts that the female figure of death would look just like him, we identify him as male by his use of *boku* ぼく (usually written 僕, but Kanai writes it in hiragana), the first-person pronoun popular mostly with men. The figure of death—*boku yoka senbai utsukushii osanai shōjo no sugata* ぼくよか千倍美しい幼い少女の姿—then, is consistent with the mythology of the *shōjo*<sup>18</sup> as seen in “Rabbits” and “Portrait of Mother and Child”: The site of a mysterious realm not merely androgynous but somehow before gendering (if not, however, before sexing), the *shōjo* connotes a return to childhood and the girl body as a pure and uncontaminated womb, even as the *shōjo* also gestures to the realm of the Real and Nature inaccessibly prior to the Symbolic and Culture. Once the writer had begun to define himself and his world in the sea of words, and gained access to the Symbolic, he lost sight of the shore from which signification first took off. Now, he is looking for the shore, for the point of origin, his “home,” where signification ceases and the plenitude and stasis of the Real begin. As with Kosayuri and our narrator/writer in the very last lines of “Rabbits,” the narrator/writer here wishes to end the story by stopping signification, stopping all movement in order to wait for death as a form of “rebirth” into a realm outside of language.

The writer solicits the aid of a realtor to help him find a place to live, and the realtor is most notable for breath so incredibly foul that even after he has left the writer alone to look about the room, the writer can still smell him. It takes a moment for the writer to realize, however, that it is not the realtor but another terrible smell, one in the room this time that is causing him to almost gag. Searching for the source, the writer opens the doors to a large wardrobe, wherein he discovers the woman lying on a large double

---

<sup>18</sup> See Honda et al. 1988, an insightful collection of research on *shōjo* by scholars across the disciplinary boundaries of anthropology, sociology, literature, and so on, in order to best appreciate the persistent imagery of androgyny, purity, and mysterious evil or moral ambiguity associated with this mythical figure.

bed. As if in a bad dream, we feel all is out of kilter when the writer does not so much question the woman's very existence in this space as begin to protest that this is *his* room, that he has paid for it legitimately, and that she must therefore leave (113-114). She hardly pays attention to his blustering, however, and tells him that he should never have paid the realtor but should instead have paid her directly. It is then that she begins to tell him the story we first encountered as the interior narrative in quotation marks near the opening to the story.

However, the narrator is still plagued by the increasingly terrible and strong smell and when he can finally get a word in edgewise with the woman he asks her:

"Excuse me, but isn't there some strange, bad smell in here?" I asked her.

"If something smells, it's the smell of 'meat.' It's started to rot, you see."

"You say, 'meat'? How come you don't throw it out?" Holding back my nausea, I asked her these questions and she began the story of the men who were her customers, and of the murder.

"So this smell is the meat of the pig that the butcher brought you?"

"No," she answered. "The pig was eaten up by him. A long time ago."

"Well, so what meat is rotting then?"

"The meat of the butcher who killed the pig. See." (114)

With that, the prostitute shows him the "lump of bloody, runny meat that had changed color and started to rot" (115) under her bed. He flees her room at this sight, and we realize that we are now back at the opening lines of the story. Immediately a new section and paragraph begins after the writer's flight from the room, with the writer resuming his first paragraph's narration in the present time, "But now I am looking for her room" (115). He tells us that he wants to find her, to marry her, to finally "become a slice of rotting meat to be swallowed up by her insides" (115). In the last lines of the story, he tells us how he has changed since he met the woman: "And recently, I've noticed that my own body is, from the inside out, little by

little, starting to rot. The smell of it, when mixed with the bad breath that I breathe out, is enough even to make me choke” (115).

Because the opening and the closing paragraphs are set off from the rest of the story, and both are set in the present time of “now,” as readers we tend to see the writer’s story as structuring the frame narrative for the interior story of the prostitute. However, we could argue that, in fact, consistent with the theme and conclusion of the story itself, the exterior narrative has become enclosed – or more accurately, *consumed*—by the interior narrative of the prostitute, thereby forming a story within a story within a story; that is, the narrator’s exterior story in present time contains the quoted story of the prostitute also narrated directly in first person and in present time, which finally contains the story told by the narrator himself in present tense quoting his direct conversation with the prostitute. In this last story, we see his ventriloquizing of her explanations and feelings mixed with sporadic past tense narration and commentary such as we get in the exterior narrative. When we learn in the final lines of the story that the narrator is already rotting from the inside out, that he is the source of the smell that permeates the story’s interior narrative, we as readers follow that smell to learn that the writer and his story have been turned inside out, that they were always already consumed within and as the space of “rotting meat.”

Indeed, speaking of spaces, here we should emphasize that the opening lines, and the start of the final paragraph as well, do not tell us that the writer is looking for “her” but that he is looking for “her room.” We had learned about his desire for a room as a substitute for the home (“*ie*” 「家」; Kanai’s quotation marks) he cannot have, or rather, his longing for the home to which he cannot return. At the gendered level of this discourse, this “home” is the womb, the site of the mother’s body, the fabled site of the Real. Here, then, the woman’s body has become spatialized, “she” is the space of the “room”: literally, the words in the final paragraph move from *kanojo no heya*, “her room,” to *kanojo*, “her,” to *kanojo no naizō* 彼女の内臓, “her insides,” before finally becoming his own body (*jibun no nikutai* 自分の肉体) turned inside out and rotting from the inside (*naizō kara sukoshi zutsu kusarihajimeteiru* 内臓から少しずつ腐りは始めている). The writer has returned to the “womb,” but the metonymic slide does not stop

there, continuing to expand backwards, retroactively rewriting the narrative as we the reader makes sense of what we have already read. The narrative takes in and accumulates to the signifier “womb” the woman’s sexualized flesh (*nikutai*) which eats the meat (*niku*) of her butcher client in addition to becoming his “meat” both in and under her bed, where “meat” is the all too apt pun the butcher makes at her expense by giving her the gift of meat. The woman succinctly spells this out at the end of her story to the narrator when she shows him the rotting meat: “The difference between a dead body and meat, according to her, was cut and dried: you could eat meat but you couldn’t eat a dead body. Of course, any meat [*niku*] is a dead body [*shitai* 死体] at first. A dead body becomes meat according to how it is treated” (115, *shitai ga niku ni kawaru no wa, shitai o atsukau te ni yoru no yo* 死体が肉にかわるのは、死体を扱う手によるのよ).

Signification is not uni-directional, we see here, and neither is the process of becoming meat limited to women: The narrator has become the narrated, the writer has been consumed by his own words to become the flesh of the new narrator, the woman. In seeking for her room, in longing for the *shōjo* as the beautiful body of death, the narrator has brought to life in the flesh of words, *nikutai*, the very death he longed to merge with as his own *shitai*, his own dead body become one with the *shōjo*. That is, his beautiful *shōjo* has become the “rotting meat” of the prostitute and it has everything to do with how she has been treated by the writer, signifying simultaneously the masculine idealization of the female body as death, as desexualized body, while also rewriting that blank space of the pure body as the flesh of the woman, so ripely sexualized we can smell her. This woman, herself the progressively aging and rotting flesh of the *shōjo*, really gets the last word in this story, able herself to make the killing pun of not only sexual flesh as meat but also of butcher become his own meat happily consumed by the object of his contempt. Such is, it seems, the voracious multiple-directional appetite of signification, which does not stop so simply at gendered lines or refuse voice so simply according to gendered textual subjects.

This is a disturbingly “meaty” story. For some feminist critics, Kanai is disturbing precisely because her female figures are hard to hold up as positive images of women in any sense. In contrast to this, critic Sharalyn

Orbaugh argues that Kanai is radical and political precisely because her women are so much their bodies.<sup>19</sup> In “The Body in Contemporary Japanese Women’s Fiction,” Orbaugh writes that writers such as Kanai write social critique of gender relations by making “the body” literal in their texts, an effective means of countering the intellectual abstraction of (male) “narratives of power” (153). As a feminist literary critic myself, I sympathize with the desire to make women writers’ fiction socially “useful” for feminist politics, but in the case of Kanai I would have to question this particular project; that is, it is not in making “the body” literal that Kanai subverts patriarchal power or narrative structures but in writing the female body “as meat”—not at all “literal,” as Orbaugh suggests, but rather well within the domain of the Symbolic and signification’s endless proliferation and regeneration of signifiers—that Kanai refuses to give up the female mind’s access to language in exchange for the plenitude of “the body.” Orbaugh does, however, qualify her claims for the ‘body’ over mastery of language and narratives, concluding that “Rotting Meat” is not a happy story for the prostitute who, even though she does defy her societal subjection by killing the butcher, nonetheless remains locked up in the wardrobe with a lump of rotting meat (153). This literal reading of the prostitute/women vs. men in the story, is belied by the fact that the story is an allegorical fable very much about writing itself as about the gendered stakes of that writing, and to ignore the generic terms in which Kanai creates her narrative structures and certainly abstract characters is to do a disservice to Kanai’s larger literary project: Kanai is not writing *écriture féminine* because she is writing “about” the female body, rather, she is writing *écriture* because it is one within which male and female bodies compete amidst their signifiers of difference for “authority” over a language, a Symbolic, beyond either’s “literal” control. In Kanai’s

---

<sup>19</sup> Sharalyn Orbaugh and I worked together at the University of California, Berkeley on Kanai’s early fiction. Besides my own translations and work, Orbaugh’s essays were the earliest works of criticism published in English. See Orbaugh 1996, for example. Conference presentations in recent years suggest that scholars Sakaki Atsuko and Livia Monnet are working on projects related to Kanai’s most recent novels and the influence of cinema on her fiction, respectively.

allegorical fables, the literal is anchored in the Symbolic, not the other way round.

It is with the signifier of “rotting meat” that Kanai best subverts the traditional gendered fairytale we all know, the one that all too often ends with the “happily ever after” of “true” selfhood or womanhood achieved, usually together with heterosexual satisfaction in the form of marriage or sex, all with “the good guy” who validates her true worth. In popular culture terms, it is the prostitute with a heart of gold Julia Roberts and handsome rich man Richard Gere in *Pretty Woman*. Our culture constantly writes this same fiction over and over again. And Kanai’s prostitute implies that this story too could have been such a fairytale, since the butcher was, after all, a nice guy who wanted to take her away from her degrading work and love her anyway: “As for that one, he absolutely hated me to get along with any other man but him. Give up this business, and let’s set up a household, he’d said.” The difference, however, is that Kanai’s whore does not stop there: “Am I the sort who is able to act out that bit of common pretense? Still, though, I really did love him. That’s why it was only natural that he be killed, you know” (114-115). For the prostitute, “setting up house” is only a kind of bourgeois pretense of decency,<sup>20</sup> when, in actuality, all women who suffer themselves to “play house” in such a way “prostitute” their self-sufficiency and intellects for material satisfactions and bodily favors, as Emma Goldman once argued. Indeed, the “worth” of woman in Kanai’s tale of “Rotting Meat” is a complex interplay between two kinds of exchange value, the Levi-Straussian theory of a woman’s value in being the object of exchange between men in a heterosexual and patriarchal economy, and the exchange value of words, where words move in an endless process of proximity and accumulation (metonymy), substitution and exchange (metaphor).<sup>21</sup> It is as “rotting meat” that the

---

<sup>20</sup> Again, the satiric element here renders this story even more firmly in line with Carrington’s critique of bourgeois class and gender norms discussed in the earlier note to this chapter.

<sup>21</sup> Cultural anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss’s best-known works include *The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology* and *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. One of the best feminist evaluations and readings of his

woman in the story comes to see her relationship to others in her world; with that understanding she is able to effect her revenge on an economy of exchange in women's bodies by killing the butcher, but more importantly, she also reshapes the very terms of that relationship via the exchange system of language: she takes the words ("rotting meat") from "his" (the narrator's) mouth and makes it savor of her own pungently "meaty" presence when, in the end, it is the woman, her "smell," that takes over the language and the telling of the story itself.

### The Surreal Meat of the Matter: Yoshioka Minoru's "A Fable" and Joyce Mansour's "Sarcoma"

Kanai Mieko's "Rotting Meat" is dedicated to the poet Yoshioka Minoru, so it is striking that one of his poems should take up such similar images and themes as Kanai's story. Written as part of his collection *Still Life* (*Seibutsu* 生物),<sup>22</sup> "A Fable" (*Gūwa* 寓話) reveals its correspondences to "Rotting Meat" not only in its title, but also in its subject matter: the prose poem describes a butcher shop where a cow has just been slaughtered and dangles, a slab of meat, drained of life and spirit to become—not merely dead meat but somehow even more clearly once rendered in this way, particularly *female* meat.

In order to discuss the poem in detail and at the level of its language, I offer my translation of it below, in full:

#### "A Fable"

One thousand flies around the butcher shop    cease flying  
assorted butcher knife blades    temporary dimness    step back  
to sink into a deeper world  
there is no consolation    midsummer's workshop    the heavy

---

theory in its discursive context with Jacques Lacan remains Rubin 1975.

<sup>22</sup> Poems from *Still Life* such as "Gūwa" can be found in Yoshioka 1984, pp. 82-84; this book contains many of Yoshioka's most famous works. Eric Selland translated several of these poems in the chapbook *Kusudama* (Seland 1991).

Mary A. KNIGHTON

pillar of frozen meat    hanging upside down    hung    a  
completely purified space    the fierce sounds of human chewing  
already grown faint

Now, on top of the shop front counter    no tail and no head  
one prototype of meat  
As if drawn to it    lying down

All things with ears shivering  
All things when their tongues get tied

The spirit of the stiffened meat gone off the plane of suffering  
Empty past    trying to dream of a fresh noonday sky

Sweet sun and green grass    shining inside entrails    river and  
stardust    between the horns blows a furious wind    underneath  
four legs running at full speed    scattered sunset clouds  
droppings of little birds    inside the gold straw    the cud's  
already been chewed    ecstasies of the ego

The edge of the horizon    violated by a dirty snout    atrocious  
laughter and mixed up slobber    at times, the hole in the ass of  
the female    sniff out the crimson seat of gentle coquetry    flirty  
laugh and narrowed laughing eyes ---- Ah, at last    a sea of  
muddled piss

Even the owner's cat won't take a peek    the late night backdrop  
fossilized    that is, the shop front's heavy rectangular gallows  
will be made to groan    from the shards clothing the flayed meat  
that which is catalyzed    suddenly stands up and looks around  
seeing seeing starts to take shape    portrait of a nude cow

From the clinging girder    shuddering until the dawn breaks    a  
butcher shop's one thousand flies

Yoshioka's poem echoes similar images of meat, violence, and lewd



puns on the female body as raw animal meat that we have seen in Kanai's story. In the first stanza, the violence completed and done to the cow is emphasized with the correction from the descriptive state of "hanging" to its reconfiguration as "hung." The site of death here is "a completely purified space," and it is difficult not to recall Kanai's *shōjo* figure here, where death and purity meet as the starting place to life's meaningfulness and plenitude. Intriguingly, we also get in this opening stanza the "fierce sounds of human chewing," implying not only the carnivorous butcher or other people eating meat, but the attribution of animal-like behavior to the people even as human-like characteristics are bestowed on the cow. The next few stanzas continue to "humanize" the cow somewhat, anthropomorphic in that its mind and feelings are capable of daydreaming, but it remains still very much a sensory animal running with four legs in fresh grass beneath a sunny or a starry sky. We get a pastoral image not unlike a human memory of childhood, one recalled standing in fields gazing at starry night skies, a kind of Levi-Straussian rendering of the idyllic place we lost in Nature by entering Culture as civilized humans. To really return to this "home," to the womb of Nature, we must not only move towards death and incest, it seems, but also towards animality as a space "pure" from the corrupting force of civilized humanity.

It is in stanza six, in particular, that we see the shift from meat as cow's body to the human body, an explicit linking of the cow's splayed and vulnerable body with the lascivious flesh and behavior of female bodies. The very overdetermined quality of the meat hanging in the butcher shop, its signifiers rampant, leads to this association of the dead animal body with the sexualized body of the living female. In much the same overdetermined way, the prostitute in "Rotting Meat" was so troubled at first by the gift of meat from the butcher precisely there was too much of it: In both texts, the excess of "meat" signifies beyond either speaker's control.

Yoshioka's "portrait of a nude cow" renders us, too, as reader and viewer of "the portrait," complicit in the "consumer" desire of "meat." Quite starkly in his poem, the dead cow as female—naked in the flesh, flayed for consumption, and obscenely constructed of available body parts—is rendered so as to "attract" us to it, like "flies," we might say. Indeed, "the one thousand flies" that open and close the poem remind us

that the newly slaughtered meat attracts voracious and mindless consumption, thereby implying as well that what is most contaminating and rotten here is not the rotting meat of the cow but the flies—writers, readers, us—who feed on such stagnant and rotten (*chinpu* 陳腐) metaphors.

In both Yoshioka Minoru's prose poem "A Fable" and Kanai Mieko's fable of "Rotting Meat," we get allegories of language, reading, and writing, where the power of the word (*kotoba*) in signification is beyond our, much less the characters', complete mastery. This contemporary notion of signification is put into practice with the "automatism" of the highly individualized *écriture* of Yoshioka and Kanai, mixing genres and high with low, the sacred and the profane, what Levi-Strauss called the "raw and the cooked." Even when the subject matter is "rotting meat" or "a sea of muddied piss," words are what make up our dreams and fantasies, complicating our grasp of their literal realities. Gender relations get rewritten by an unexpected route in both texts, from tales of female biological and bodily "destiny" to tales of (*hi*)*niku*, of ironic and violent punning.<sup>23</sup> In Kanai's text, in particular, but implied in Yoshioka's poem as well, the "meat" of the matter is in the power of the word in the mouth of a woman with a mind: there, we find a woman too skeptical to believe that same old stale (*chinpu*) "fable" of woman's destiny, much less her agency and subjectivity, resting in her animal body alone.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> The puns turn on variant writings of *hiniku*: 皮肉 and 非肉. See Taneda 1986, an essay in which Taneda describes the *hiniku* of Kanai's main character in this novel as one of an ordinary housewife with a daughter who wants to get married and become a housewife despite the fact that she, Sato Ema, is having an unhappy affair to get away from a routine marriage and life. On one tryst with her lover, she happens to be carrying a plucked chicken in her rucksack that her father had killed and prepared for her to take home for dinner. She is just coming out of the shower when she sees him discover it and almost lose his power to speak, it so shocks him. The meat of the chicken is exposed on the bed on which they had just had sex, making associations between meat and women's bodies.

<sup>24</sup> In my current research, building on my dissertation work, I continue to elaborate on Yoshioka's sophisticated, and sometimes misleading, influence on Kanai's work. He is best known for his innovations in the *in'yo shi*, or allusion poems, particularly with regard to Lewis Carroll's Alice boom in Japan during the 1960s and 1970s.

Speaking of stale fables, and certainly surreal fables about rotting meat, we would do well to take up at this juncture a story by the surrealist poet and writer Joyce Mansour entitled “Sarcoma” (in Japanese, *nikushu* 肉腫).<sup>25</sup> In this story is a woman of some royal stature who lives all alone, except for her boy servant, a mute who adoringly serves her every whim. They live in a decrepit mansion now that her family has all died, and this mansion with its all-but-extinct family are described in a manner not unlike Poe’s House of Usher, complete with decaying foundations and boggy surroundings. Moreover there is a bad smell that seems at first to be associated just with the general decay of the surroundings. The deaf-mute is a young boy, only twelve, and the woman is no longer young, but he finds her beautiful; or, rather, he finds “it” beautiful: the lump of flesh growing on her back and intensifying in smell day by day. He cannot take his eyes off her and the growing mound of flesh on her back that is wasting her away—growing larger and more resplendently healthy as she grows more weak and frail—and when he turns thirteen, he begins to fantasize about the woman’s “lump of flesh” (*niku no katamari* 肉の塊) and become sexually aroused by it. It is difficult to tell when the story is dream and when reality, particularly due to the contradictory information we receive from the unreliable boy narrator; for example, the mute boy sometimes speaks and he seems to hear, yet the text repeats several times that he cannot speak and is also deaf. But finally the day comes when the woman is on the verge of death, and the boy comprehends that this will be the death of him because once she dies then the lump of flesh will die too. Depicted as a sad and bittersweet moment experienced by the boy, the dying of the aristocratic

---

Alice in Wonderland was an important allusion in Kanai’s own early work, and impacted her *shōjo* characters as well. In English, see Tsuruoka 1985, especially pages 25-29. Tsuruoka emphasizes Yoshioka’s “automatism” technique, as does Satō Hiroaki.

<sup>25</sup> As with the Carrington story, Kanai gave me this story in its Japanese version to read some years ago in photocopy form without citation. Kanai knew that I was translating these particular stories (part of my M.A. thesis) and recommended I read it to better understand her work. See Mansour’s *Prose & Poesie: Oeuvre Complete* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1994). In Japanese, see Iwaya 1991.

beauty he loved is accompanied at the same moment by a full climax in glowing and radiant health for the giant lump of flesh. Suddenly, however, the boy takes in the full import of the moment and feels betrayed, understanding that she is dead and that it is the fault of the mound of flesh that has taken all away from him. The boy uses a dagger to stab the pulpy lump over and over again in a frenzy. When the police come, they have the woman examined by a doctor and pronounced dead. The boy, however, is not prosecuted or blamed since the lump of flesh was really a cancerous tumor all along. In the end, the boy goes away to live on his own—and finds that he can speak after all.

In Mansour's story, as in Kanai's, the women *are* meat, they are the flesh that is their bodies but not in some sensual and romanticized sense: on the contrary, the prostitute in "Rotting Meat" is very like the woman in "Sarcoma" precisely because both women realize the heights of sexual attractiveness to the men in the story not so much as "fleshpots" and sexualized bodies but, rather, as anonymous clumps of rotting meat. The desire of the male lovers, both of them narrators, is for the bittersweet deathlessness of the female body as *shōjo* twinned with the decaying and rotting meat of the real adult woman. For the mute boy, the lump of cancerous flesh that is so glorious and perfect is his *shōjo* that looks just like him in the prime of youth, perfection, and health. Narrating the story of their desire, the two male narrators are actually rendered mute by the real "fleshly" storyteller: the "meat" that grows and grows, signifying everything and nothing at once, until they too are on the verge of becoming meat themselves. Their sexual and spiritual union, then, imagined as a kind of death, is not with their respective *shōjo* at all; rather, it is "rotting meat" with which they finally merge, in their fantasies of plenitude and in their search for the one word that might be "Real."

## REFERENCES

Caws 2001

Mary Ann Caws, ed. *Surrealist Painters and Poets*. MIT Press, 2001.

Chadwick 1985

Whitney Chadwick. *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement*.

Little, Brown, 1985.

Clark 1997

John Clark. *Surrealism in Japan*. Clayton, Australia: Monash Asia Institute/Japanese Studies Centre, 1997.

Honda 1988

Honda Masuko 本田和子 et al. *Shōjoron* 少女論. Seikyūsha, 1988.

Iwaya 1991

Iwaya Kunio 巖谷國士, ed. *Shururearishumu no hako* シュルレアリスムの箱. Chikuma Shobō, 1991.

Kanai 1973

Kanai Mieko 金井美恵子. *Kanai Mieko shishū* 金井美恵子詩集. Gendaishi Bunko series 55. Yoshioka Minoru 吉岡実 et al., eds. Shichōsha, 1973.

Kanai 1981

Kanai Mieko. *Kuzureru Mizu* くずれる水. Shūeisha, 1981.

Kanai 1984

Kanai Mieko. *Obasan no deisukūru* おばさんのディスクール. Chikuma Shobō, 1984.

Kanai 1992

Kanai Mieko. *Kanai Mieko zentanpen* 金井美恵子全短編. Nihon Bungeisha, 1992.

Kanai 1994

Kanai Mieko. *Tanoshimi wa TV no kanata ni: Imitation of Cinema* 愉しみはTVの彼方に: Imitation of Cinema. Chūōkōronsha, 1994.

Kaneko 1979

Kaneko Kuniyoshi. *Arisu no garō / La Galerie d'Alice*. Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1979.

Kimura and Kanai 1983

Kimura Bin 木村敏 and Kanai Mieko. *Watashi wa hontō ni watashi nanoka: jikoron kōgi* 私は本当に私なのか: 自己論講義. Asahi Shuppansha, 1983.

Knighton 1991

Mary A. Knighton. "Tracing the Body of the Question Mark: Kanai Mieko's *Ai aru kagiri*." In the *Proceedings of the Midwest Association for Japanese Literary Studies* (PMAJLS), vol. 5 (Summer 1991):

Mary A. KNIGHTON

286-299.

Knighton 1996

Mary A. Knighton, trans. Rotting Meat” (腐肉). *Fiction International* 29 (1996), pp. 110-116.

Knighton 1998

Mary A. Knighton. “Kanai Mieko: Sakka annai, ryaku nenpu” 金井美恵子:作家案内・略年譜. In *Tsushima Yūko / Kanai Mieko / Murata Kiyoko* 津島祐子・金井美恵子・村田喜代子, ed. Yonaha Keiko 与那覇恵子. Josei Sakka Series 女声作家シリーズ, vol. 19. Kadokawa Shoten, 1998, pp. 452-457.

Knighton 2003

Mary A. Knighton. “Kanai Mieko.” In *The Columbia Companion to Modern East Asian Literature*, ed. Joshua Mostow. Columbia University Press, 2003.

Kolocontroni et al. 1998

*Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*. Eds. Vassiliki Kolocontroni, Jane Goldman, and Olga Taxidou. University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Maruya 1976

Maruya Saiichi 丸谷才一, ed. *Yojōhanfusuma no shitabari saiban: zenkiroku* 四畳半襖の下張裁判・全記録, vols. 1-2. Asahi Shinbunsha, 1976.

Mundy 2001

Jennifer Mundy. *Surrealism: Desire Unbound*. Princeton University Press, 2001.

Orbaugh 1996

Sharalyn Orbaugh. “The Body in Contemporary Japanese Women’s Fiction.” In *The Woman’s Hand: Gender and Theory in Japanese Women’s Writing*, ed. Paul Gordon Schalow and Janet A. Walker. Stanford University Press, 1996. Pp. 119-164.

Rosemont 1998

Penelope Rosemont, ed. *Surrealist Women: An International Anthology*. University of Texas Press, 1998.

Rubin 1975

Gayle Rubin. “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy

of Sex.” In *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter. New York: Monthly Review, 1975. Pp. 157-210.

Sas 1999

Miryam Sas. *Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Japanese Surrealism*. Stanford University Press, 1999.

Satō 2002

Satō Hiroaki, “Takiguchi Shūzō and Yoshioka Minoru: Surrealist and Nonsurrealist Surrealist.” In *Confluences: Postwar Japan and France*, ed. Doug Slaymaker. University of Michigan, 2002. Pp. 148-163.

Sawelson-Gorse 2001

Naomi Sawelson-Gorse, ed. *Women in Dada: Essays on Sex, Gender, and Identity*. MIT Press, 2001.

Selland 1991

Eric Selland. *Kusudama*. Vancouver: Leech, 1991.

Taneda 1986

Taneda Wakako 種田若子. “Kanai Mieko no *Bunshō kyōshitsu*: kōfuku na onnatachi” 金井美恵子の『文章教室』: 幸福な女たち, *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 国文学: 解釈と教材の研究 31.5 (May 1986), pp. 129-131.

Tsuruoka 1985

Tsuruoka Yoshihisa. “Yoshioka Minoru: Celebrations in Darkness...” In *Celebration of Darkness: Selected Poems of Yoshioka Minoru and Strangers' Sky: Selected Poems of Iijima Koichi*, trans. Onuma Tadayoshi. Rochester, Michigan: Oakland University, Katydid Books, 1985.

Ueno et al. 1992

Ueno Chizuko 上野千寿子, Ogura Chikako 小倉千加子, and Tomioka Taeko 富岡多恵子. *Danryū bungakuron* 男流文学論. Chikuma Shobō, 1992.

Yamada et al. 1990

Yamada Satoshi 山田 et al. *Nihon no shururearizumu 1925-1945* 日本のシュルレアリズム. Nagoya: Nagoyashi Bijutsukan, 1990.

Yoshioka 1984

Yoshioka Minoru 吉岡実. *Yoshioka Minoru: Gendai no shijin* 吉岡実: 現代の詩人. Ōoka Makoto 大岡信 and Tanikawa Shuntarō 谷

Mary A. KNIGHTON

川俊太郎, eds. Chūokōronsha, 1984.

Yotsuya 1975

Yotsuya Shimon 四谷シモン. *Shimon no Shimon* シモンのシモン.

Izara Shobō, 1975.

Yotsuya 1993

Yotsuya Shimon. *Ningyō ai/Pygmalionisme* 人形愛／Pygmalionisme.

Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1993.

Acknowledgments: I wish to thank the organizers of this symposium at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies. In particular, gratitude is extended to Jim Baxter, whose efforts contributed greatly to the success of the three-day meeting, and to Inaga Shigemi, who encouraged me in this project and pointed me in useful directions for expansion of it.