

Food and the Two Faces of America: Benevolence and Violence in *Fox Girl*

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Abstract: Scholars have analyzed Nora Okja Keller's *Fox Girl* (2002) for its critique of the United States military as an imperialist force complicit in sexually exploiting Korean women and children. However, past studies have not thoroughly explored the function of food in the novel. The novel's emphasis on food is neither incidental nor merely a product of the author's imagination but grounded in Korea's history of scarcity and the critical role food has played in sustaining imperial power. I argue that *Fox Girl* exposes American food products as a key imperial infrastructure. The novel captures the ways the US military utilizes American food products to project and uphold an image of American benevolence in Korea, though Keller subverts this infrastructure by using food imagery to produce what I call a resistant culinary aesthetic. First, by entwining American food items with scenes of venereal disease, chemical poisoning, and sexual assault, she turns them into unsettling metaphors that expose the US military's violence against Korean sex workers. Second, she scales back food imagery to mirror the protagonist's deepening disillusionment with the US. Finally, she mobilizes food imagery to underscore the historical continuity of abuse against Korean women and to mark the transpacific reach of the US empire.

Keywords: food, empire, militarization, prostitution, disease

In Nora Okja Keller's novel *Fox Girl* (2002), the protagonist Hyun Jin becomes smitten with the Ho Ho, an American-made chocolate roll. She not only savors the treats but also treasures the wrappers, which

she carefully affixes to her bedroom wall. The simple wrappers take on a special allure in her eyes. She fondly recounts, “I liked the way the shiny paper caught and flung the afternoon light around the room” (Keller, *Fox Girl* 11). Similar portrayals of the Korean penchant for American foodstuffs during the austere period after the Korean War abound in Korean and Korean American literature. For instance, in Mia Yun’s *House of Winds* (1998), set in 1960s Korea, the teenage protagonist fetishizes an empty cookie can that her uncle brings back from America: “Although the cookies were long gone, it still smelled of sweet sugar and butter. Each time I opened it, I inhaled deeply. It was that sweet buttery smell of the cookie can that I would long associate with America” (5). In her memoir *Tastes Like War* (2021), Grace M. Cho depicts her mother’s obsession with cheeseburgers, a love that traces back to her time as a bar-girl at a United States naval base in Korea. Even after Cho’s mother immigrated to the US, every year during Cho’s childhood, as the Washington rains subsided, she would eagerly “fire up the charcoal grill, throw some patties on it, and declare the commencement of ‘Cheeseburger Season’” (Cho, *Tastes Like War* 94).

Keller’s *Fox Girl*, however, stands out for its powerful critique of American foodstuffs as an imperial infrastructure of the informal US empire in South Korea. The novel reveals how the US military uses American foodstuffs to project an image of benevolence in Korea. Keller subverts that use by turning these items into harrowing metaphors for the exploitation and violence inflicted on Korean sex workers. *Fox Girl* makes it clear that it is impossible to think about the presence of American food and tastes in Korea without thinking of the haunting reality of sexual diseases and assaults brought on by US imperialism.

Fox Girl is set in America Town, a Korean village that caters to neighboring US military bases in the 1970s.¹ Narrated from Hyun Jin’s first-person perspective, the novel recounts her descent and that of her best friend, Sookie, into the world of prostitution. Sookie, the daughter of a sex worker named Duk Hee and an unknown Black American soldier, turns to prostitution for survival after her mother is held in a detention center for a sexually transmitted infection. Hyun Jin, facing suspicions of engaging in prostitution and doubts about her biological father, is

disowned by her parents and compelled to follow Sookie's path. The girls cater to Black American soldiers, which places them at the very bottom of America Town's social ladder.²

Despite their low social standing, these sex workers' regular interactions with American soldiers afford them the most direct access to American food products. Yet this access to American food comes at a steep price as they also experience the most immediate exploitation and abuse at the hands of the US military. Specifically, *Fox Girl* presents a series of scenes—the appeal of American food products in local stores, the distribution of foodstuffs by US soldiers, and the sensuous consumption of these foodstuffs by mixed-race children and sex workers—that underscore how American food products function as a key imperial infrastructure. American food also becomes a potential target for sabotage. Keller capitalizes on this potential by strategically employing food imagery to craft what I call a resistant culinary aesthetic. First, through weaving American food items into scenes of sexual disease, chemical poisoning, and sexual assault, she turns them into chilling metaphors that expose the US military's violence against Korean sex workers. Second, she gradually reduces images of American food products as the story progresses, which parallels the protagonist's growing disillusionment with the US. Finally, she uses food imagery to highlight the historical continuity of abuse against Korean women—from Japanese colonization to the era of US neocolonialism—and to emphasize the transpacific reach of the US empire, linking the exploitation of Korean women in Korean camptowns and Hawai'i.

In their analyses of *Fox Girl*, scholars have emphasized its critique of the US military as an imperialist force complicit in sexually exploiting Korean women and children. For example, Sung-Ae Lee examines how the novel subverts traditional portrayals of female monstrosity by rewriting the classical Korean fox spirit tales. Instead of following the conventional ending in which the fox spirit is destroyed, Keller reimagines the narrative to grant Hyun Jin both agency and empathy. Meanwhile, Kodai Abe focuses on the challenges and possibilities of Afro-Asian solidarity that are explored in *Fox Girl*. He posits that the sex workers and their Afro-Asian children occupy a complex terrain shaped

by nationalist notions of “pure blood,” imported American racism, violence committed by Black American soldiers, and the capitalist logic of American immigration policy, all of which impede the development of Afro-Asian solidarity. Additionally, Allison Layfield probes the reasons why *Fox Girl* is less well-received by American readers compared to Keller’s first novel, *Comfort Woman* (1997). The major reason, Layfield argues, is that *Fox Girl* compels American readers to witness how “the U.S. military plays an active role in the sex trade. U.S. soldiers directly exploit women and young girls sexually, and a U.S. presence cannot be seen as liberatory” (72). Layfield adds that the widespread awareness of “comfort women” among Americans, in contrast to the obscurity of camptown prostitution, points to the larger erasure of the US military’s sexual exploitation of Korean women.

However, these studies have not thoroughly explored the function of food in the novel. The emphasis on food in *Fox Girl* is neither incidental nor merely a product of Keller’s imagination. Rather, it is grounded in Korea’s history of scarcity and the critical role of food in upholding imperial power. During the Korean War and its aftermath, American foodstuffs such as Oscar Mayer hot dogs, Oreo cookies, and Hershey’s chocolate entered Korea in the wake of the US military. Ji-Yeon Yuh describes these American food products as “among the most important in a long litany of never-before-seen material goods that American soldiers brought to an impoverished and literally starving Korea” (34). These items, mere everyday fare for an average American, became coveted luxuries in the highly deprived Korea. They were accessible only to the rich through black markets, and US soldiers were viewed as so generous that they often handed them out freely to Korean children. Even after the South Korean economy took off, American food items remained luxuries (Yuh 34). Consequently, the meaning of these American food items (in real life and literature) extends beyond mere sustenance; they are symbols of American plenty and generosity. However, as Yuh cautions, the lure that America exerts on Koreans “is the lure that the metropole exerts on its colony. It is all the stronger because America was seen as a liberator, not a colonizer. Under the dominant discourse of America as the savior who rescued Korea from Japanese imperialism and then saved

Korea from communism, American heroism and generosity joined with American material abundance into an image of utopia” (35). Yuh astutely points out that in the asymmetrical relationship between the US and South Korea, narratives of salvation and material abundance mask the reality of neocolonial domination.

Moreover, food has always functioned as a critical infrastructure that upholds empire. Jin-kyung Lee argues that empire is not sustained just through overt military means but through what Anne McClintock calls “commodity imperialism” (69)—a process in which learning to consume the colonizer’s goods is to be colonized. Reflecting on the influx of American products through PXs (short for Post Exchange, a store on a US military base) in Vietnam during the Vietnam War—as portrayed in Sök-yŏng Hwang’s novel *The Shadow of Arms* (1994)—Lee contends that the PX’s most important function is to introduce “the taste, feel, smell, color, and sound of the empire to the ‘natives’” (70). Hwang captures this sensory conquest with biting irony:

What is a PX? . . . [I]t is a general goods store . . . that turns the natives into ridiculous clowns, one that makes them go crazy and drunk and shell out all their money. . . . A PX teaches civilization to the dirty Asian slopeheads, who would have lived happily with each other, with their bananas and just a handful of rice. It teaches them how to wash their faces with milky white soaps, and the taste of Coca Cola that refreshes their heart. It pours perfumes and rainbow-colored candies, lacy lineries, high-quality wristwatches, and gemstone rings over the barracks that have been bombed to pulp. Now Asians will have cheese on their table, instead of their own smelly foods, and the condoms that slipped out from between girls’ legs will dance on the tender fingers of children playing. (Hwang qtd. in J. Lee 70–71)

Hwang’s depiction of American food products illustrates how they are packaged with flavor, color, and the seductive promise of modernity. In this way, American food products seduce local populations into desiring, consuming, and ultimately embracing the US empire. “Not

unlike a Hollywood movie,” Lee observes, “a chocolate bar can narrate the story of fantastic America” (71). Extending Lee’s insights, I contend that American foodstuffs in Korea also serve as instruments of conquest. They construct the desires and preferences of the Korean populace, instill a yearning for the American way of life and, consequently, secure the US in the hearts of the Korean people.

Another example of food as imperial infrastructure is Spam—the canned luncheon meat produced by Hormel Foods—which has helped support the US’ extensive network of military bases throughout Asia and the Pacific. Introduced in 1937, Spam became a staple for Allied troops during World War II due to its portability and long shelf life. Imbued with the prestige of the US military victory in the Asia Pacific theater, Spam quickly gained popularity across the region. It entered South Korea during the US postwar occupation and the Korean War when it was distributed by US troops to starving civilians and used in trade and barter. With a highly visible American presence in South Korea for over fifty years, Spam has become “symbolic of America as military protector as well as, during the postwar years, economic benefactor of the country” (Lewis 97). Spam is also a dietary staple in Guam, which has the highest per capita consumption of the product—an over-reliance that has contributed to serious health issues such as heart disease and diabetes. Jodi Kim argues that Spam in Guam is “not only a metonymy for US military presence but also of a militarized dependence upon, desire for, and literal ingestion of that which produces premature death” (172). Kim highlights how food and the US empire form a fatal coupling that is mutually sustaining. The widespread consumption of Spam across the US’ Asia Pacific military bases lays bare the entanglement of food with capitalism, military occupation, and the everyday reproduction of empire—even the most mundane item can serve as infrastructure of empire.³

Ultimately, what makes food such a powerful form of imperial infrastructure in South Korea? First, food possesses a sensual power that can create lasting psychological impressions. As Cho points out, the narrative of American benevolence rests on “a mutually lived-out rescue fantasy constructed not just through ideological impositions but also

through sensory experiences that register at the level of affect” (*Haunting the Korean Diaspora* 84). The affective taste of American foodstuffs arouses a gaping desire and forms in Koreans’ minds a strong association with American generosity. Second, unlike overt military tools, food operates through ordinariness. Food—its consumption, circulation, and the shaping of consumer tastes—easily “slip[s] into the daily lives of the nearby community” (Enloe 132). In *Fox Girl*, the circulation of American food products among American soldiers, sex workers, and mixed-race children in Korea exemplifies the “everyday life of U.S. empire,” where food “shapes national and personal identities, enables empires to seep into everyday life, and sustains imperial ideology and practice” (Padoongpatt 6). Yet once exposed as imperial infrastructure, it also becomes something that can be sabotaged.

I. The Benevolent America

Fox Girl captures the strong appeal of American food in Korean camp-towns, where it not only fosters a taste for American culture but also cultivates an acceptance—and even a longing—for the US imperial presence in Korea. These moments resonate with Cynthia Enloe’s insight that “[p]ower, taste, attraction, and desire are not mutually exclusive” (9). For example, the sweet store owned by Hyun Jin’s family serves as a prominent showcase for the allure of American food within the camptown. Hyun Jin’s family operates a food store near the entrance to America Town. Due to its convenient location, the store attracts both American soldiers and Korean locals. The store’s American offerings are a magnet for the locals. Hyun Jin notes, “[O]ur best customers were the kids who liked to come by after school to look at the Juicy Fruit or Coca-Cola, then buy *yot* or wax lips for something sweet. Only the Americans and their whores could afford the *miguk* gum and soda” (Keller, *Fox Girl* 5–6; emphasis in original). This observation highlights the appeal of American food; the Korean children visit the store after school solely to “look at” these American treats. The fact that the kids are able to see the American treats implies that these American food products must have been placed in plain sight, making their visibility and desirability palpable. Keller’s use of “only” underscores the exclusivity of those who

can afford such treats—namely, American soldiers and the sex workers they consort with. By displaying these foods in full view, yet out of reach for many, the store not only intensifies the local population's desire for American foods but also heightens their envy for the affluence that these foods represent.

The presence of American appliances in this store further enhances the admiration for the material comfort associated with the US military. The food store has “a big red and white refrigerator especially for the Coca-Cola” (6). The logistical challenge of putting the refrigerator inside the store leads to its placement at the forefront of the shop. This refrigerator becomes such a focal point that locals refer to the store simply as “Coka” (6), signaling its association with the American brand and the envy it inspires. The novel reveals that it is Sookie's mother, Duk Hee, who gifted the refrigerator to the store as part of her arrangement with Hyun Jin's father (6). The acquisition of such a coveted appliance through a sex worker's ties with the US military reflects the mixed feelings toward sex workers within the camptowns—disdain for prostitution on the one hand, yet on the other, a begrudging admiration for the material benefits that come from associations with the US military.

Fox Girl also illustrates how American GIs freely distributed American food to Korean children to display kindness; however, beneath this facade of kindness lies a hierarchical relationship in which GIs occupy the role of benefactors. In the novel, Hyun Jin and Sookie, concerned about Duk Hee who has not returned home, embark on a search that leads them to the Monkey House, a detention center for those with venereal diseases. As Sookie, Lobetto, and Hyun Jin near the end of their trek, a jeep whizzes past them: “Without turning to look at us, the driver lifted his arm, releasing a handful of wrapped candies in the wake of the jeep. The candies landed like golden bullets in the dirt at our feet, and we laughed as we gathered them up. Unwrapping them, we sucked as we marched down the road, our mouths too full of sugar to sing again” (81–82). The children's eagerness to savor the sweets, as evidenced by their laughter and quick unwrapping and consumption of them, highlights their routine deprivation and longing for American treats. The

casual way the driver distributes the candy—“without turning to look at us”—suggests that this is a routine practice among American soldiers, who use sweets as a gesture of American generosity. Yet this casualness highlights the hierarchy in which American GIs can easily gift what is trivial to them but highly valuable to the Koreans.

Furthermore, Hyun Jin’s reference to the candies as “golden bullets” implies the duality of American generosity: while “golden” suggests that the candies are treasured, likening them to “bullets” conveys an undercurrent of violence linked to the military’s presence. Befitting the metaphor of “bullets,” the jeep itself inflicts violence. The dirt road that they walk on is “carved by jeep tracks” (80), a physical reminder of the US military’s imprint on the Korean landscape. The passing of the military jeep also disrupts their journey—the roaring engine silences Lobetto, and the children are forced to scurry aside, quickly becoming engulfed in the vehicle’s exhaust (81). These depictions illustrate the pervasive intrusion of the US military into the day-to-day lives of Koreans, albeit masked by occasional gestures of kindness.

Other authors also reveal the hierarchy inherent in the tactic of distributing free American foods. For instance, in Heinz Insu Fenkl’s novel *Skull Water* (2023), which similarly centers on life in Korean camp-towns, American soldiers like to photograph rural Koreans as keepsakes to take home. One soldier named Phillips takes a photo of a Korean woman in traditional attire, with a baby strapped to her back, standing in front of their rural house. In return, he offers the woman “a one-thousand-won bill [less than one dollar] and a pack of Juicy Fruit gum” (Fenkl, *Skull Water* 50). Essentially, Phillips exploits the perceived exotic nature of Koreans. Nevertheless, he presents something that holds little value to him—less than a dollar’s worth of money and American gum—as superficial gestures of kindness to soften the act of exploitation. More chillingly, Cho records the US military’s act of offering sweets to Korean children in the midst of perpetrating violence against them. Choon-ja Chun is a survivor of the Nogeun-ri massacre, in which approximately four hundred Korean refugees were killed by US air and ground forces near the village of Nogeun-ri during the Korean War due to fears of North Korean infiltrators disguised as civilians. Chun, then ten years

old, witnessed the killing of her family but later joined a group of about ten refugees who were unexpectedly spared by the soldiers. She recalls that the American soldiers offered her food, perhaps chocolate. She refused the gesture (Hanley et al. qtd. in Cho, *Haunting* 61). Sun-yong Park, another Nogeun-ri survivor who initially thought that the American planes were arriving to transport them to safety, remarks, “That day I saw the two faces of America” (Hanley et al. qtd. in Cho, *Haunting* 61). Keller, Fenkl, and Cho’s depictions of the US military offering free foodstuffs to Koreans encapsulate the contradictions of the US empire: while it seeks to entice and win over Koreans, it simultaneously treats them as expendable, exploiting their powerlessness and dependence on the US’ protection.

Additionally, in *Fox Girl*, mixed-race children and sex workers, as those closest to American soldiers and their food, become individual ambassadors of American plenitude, yet their relationship with the American GIs remains inherently imbalanced. Lobetto’s father is a Black American soldier and his mother is Korean. When his father is stationed in Korea, Lobetto enjoys the access and material benefits that come with being an American soldier’s son. He has enough money to buy his teacher “weekly gifts of coffee, cigarettes and nuts dipped in chocolate” (Keller, *Fox Girl* 76), items that are luxuries among locals. Such offerings earn him special treatment from the teacher, such as often being appointed class leader (76). Hyun Jin expresses past envy toward Lobetto: “[Y]ou were the big shot then, GI baby. . . . Everyone was jealous ’cause you were half-American. We thought you would be the one to go to America” (94).

However, Lobetto’s father can easily withdraw his power. When he leaves Korea without taking Lobetto, Lobetto is immediately ostracized by his teacher, drops out of school, and joins other mixed-race children at the American missionary school (77). Left behind, Lobetto clings to the fantasy of abundance embodied by his father’s belongings. At his home, he carefully preserves these items—“the mattress, the army lamp, the lighter, a compass with a limp arrow that hung south, a rusted knife, and two empty St. Paulie Girl bottles” (110)—in his makeshift tent. He caresses the St. Paulie Girl bottles, reminiscing about his father—“That’s

his favorite beer”—and labeling the bottles “beautiful” (110). His fond handling of the beer bottles underscores the power these American goods hold for the children left behind; they are material evidence of the American abundance these children once enjoyed, and at the same time embody a future in which they might be reclaimed by their fathers and taken to America.

Sookie, another child of a sex worker, lives in an apartment filled with an array of American food items that her mother, Duk Hee, sources from the soldiers she entertains. Like Lobetto, Sookie also emerges as a prime ambassador in enticing fellow Koreans to develop a taste for American food. For example, Hyun Jin is intrigued by the American products Duk Hee brings home. She loves to explore Sookie’s apartment, “discovering the new American knickknacks that her mother smuggled home” (11). It is here that Hyun Jin first tries the Ho Hos that she initially finds too sweet (11). During another visit, Hyun Jin offers a visceral account of tasting Hershey’s chocolate: “Sweet explosions, dark and bitter, erupted in my mouth. Delicious. American” (12–13). Here, Keller’s sensory language—“explosions,” “dark,” and “bitter”—highlights the intense flavors and the richness of Hershey’s chocolate on the tastebuds. Importantly, the final word, “American,” serves not only as an origin marker but also a symbol of longing; it encapsulates the allure of the US on Hyun Jin’s palate and imagination. After being introduced to American goods, Hyun Jin reflects on how American products like food and cosmetics reshape Korean perceptions of taste and beauty. When Hyun Jin first eats Ho Hos, she doesn’t take to their sweetness, but Sookie insists upon their desirability, claiming: “It’s a delicacy; you have to learn to like it. Really, really, it’s American so you know it’s good” (11). The logic that Ho Hos should taste good simply because they are American demonstrates the cultural sway that America holds. Hyun Jin further observes, “Slowly, though, we began to view their features as desirable, developing a taste for larger noses, double lids, and cow eyes just as we had learned to crave the chocolate candy and cakes we had once thought sweet as dirt” (14). These shifts in perceptions of taste and beauty showcase the success of American colonization of Koreans’ tastebuds and visual aesthetics.

Most significantly, Sookie's relationship with her mother's former GI boyfriend Chazu highlights the inherent power imbalance between the food bestower and recipient. When Sookie falls into prostitution and lives with Chazu in his apartment, she continues to sell the allure of American goods to Hyun Jin. At Duk Hee's request, Hyun Jin visits Sookie to try to persuade her to return to school. Instead, Sookie mesmerizes Hyun Jin with the furniture and appliances of Chazu's American-style apartment—from sofa and soap to TV sets and toilets. She especially flaunts her access to American food, asking Hyun Jin, "Want a soda pop? Coca-Cola or ginger ale?" (103). She opens a refrigerator "as tall as she [i]s," its shelves "stocked with cheese and milk, beer and more American soda that [Hyun Jin's] father could ever hope to afford" (103). To further emphasize her material superiority, Sookie adds, "Canada Dry. Real American ginger ale. Not cheap Korean *cidah*" (103). By putting American food above Korean food, Sookie reveals a perception of America's dominance. Even in their argument about Sookie's decision to become a prostitute and Hyun Jin's role in it, both characters seem to have a huge appetite for American food. Sookie is described as "gulping" the beer (103) while Hyun Jin "guzzle[s] down more of the soda" (104).

Yet, just a few pages later, the reader is reminded that all of these comforts depend entirely on the GIs, who can withdraw their favors at any time. By the time Duk Hee returns from the Monkey House after being treated for venereal disease, she has lost her sole patron, Chazu; her apartment has already been rented to another sex worker; and she is forced to live in the "fish tanks," "rows of boxes really" (114), where she must scramble to find other clients. The stark contrast between the American-style apartment Sookie shares with Chazu and Duk Hee's degrading "fish tanks" underscores the profound power imbalance, as the GIs—capable of granting or rescinding favors at will—control the sex workers' lives entirely.

Soon, it becomes evident that Chazu is offering Sookie nothing more than "leftover" benevolence—what I refer to as the US military giving something insignificant in return for loyalty and, at times, sexual favors from Koreans. The theme of Koreans receiving "leftovers" from the US is a recurring point made by Korean writers. For example, in Wan-Suh

Park's *The Naked Tree* (2023), the female protagonist Kyong Lee works at a US military base PX. Her suitor Tae-su invites her to a party thrown by the Americans for the Korean employees, where he explains, "They said there's going to be unlimited popcorn and Coke" (Park 28). Kyong responds, "I really hate Coke and popcorn, and things like that. It's like eating leftover food at a mansion. Surely, you don't mean you want to go to the party for your share like some starving beggar, do you?" (28). Kyong's sharp metaphor of "eating leftover food at a mansion" critiques how the US military only needs to offer something cheap to win Koreans' loyalty. In a similar vein, Sookie receives Chazu's "leftover" favors. While she enjoys the material comforts provided by him, she must adhere to his rules. She is not allowed to go to clubs alone, and her time is mostly spent enduring boredom, often by binge-drinking American beer or whiskey while Chazu is absent. When she ventures out to a bar, she finds Chazu fooling around with a bar girl. This leads to a fight with the bar girl and eventually with Chazu. In the heat of the fight, Sookie screams, "I'm not throwaway trash," to which Chazu responds bluntly, "What you are is a stray dog. . . . I've fed you, and now I can't get rid of you. . . . I am looking for a real woman, not a spoiled little puppy" (Keller, *Fox Girl* 137–38). Chazu's likening of Sookie to a dog he feeds makes it clear that he sees himself as her "owner," exchanging scraps for her loyalty and sexual favors. This power imbalance soon implodes as Sookie contracts VD from Chazu and is forced to go to the Monkey House. When she returns after getting caught stealing from Chazu and entertaining other GIs, he evicts her. All she is left with are a few piecemeal scraps of American food and utensils, along with injuries all over her body.

Lastly, while American food products captivate Koreans' taste buds and fuel their imagination of American abundance, Korean and Korean American authors demonstrate that this influence is not one-sided; Koreans have the opportunity to leverage the allure of American foods for economic profits. In *Fox Girl*, the refrigerator at Hyun Jin's store is provided by Duk Hee. Keller suggests that Duk Hee, in her role as a sex worker, uses her relationships with American soldiers to acquire the refrigerator via a black-market transaction. Therefore, Duk Hee is

not just dependent on the generosity of American soldiers for American goods; rather, she demonstrates resourcefulness by utilizing her connections to acquire a highly desired appliance. Similar depictions of sex workers taking advantage of their access to American goods for personal gain abound in Fenkl's camptown novel *Memories of My Ghost Brother* (1996) (120, 183). As Enloe rightly reminds readers, "[E]ven a woman who is victimized is not mindless. It is crucial to this feminist-informed investigation into unequal international relations that we not create a false (and lazy) dichotomy between the allegedly 'mindless victim' and the allegedly 'empowered actor'" (8). Although limited, sex workers' agency in sourcing American goods and selling them through black markets to locals for profit remains empowering.

II. The Violent America

Fox Girl goes beyond illuminating the ways that the US military utilizes American food products to project kindness in Korea; it completely subverts this very infrastructure through a resistant culinary aesthetic. First and foremost, Keller strategically weaves American food items into three pivotal scenes of violence against sex workers: scenes of sexual disease, chemical poisoning, and sexual assault. In these scenes, the lifelike qualities and sensuousness of the American food items transcend mere sensuality, metaphorizing the active role of the US military in inflicting violence on Korean sex workers.

At the beginning of *Fox Girl*, the American hot dog signifies the sexual aggression of American soldiers against which Korean women must protect themselves. In one scene, Duk Hee uses hot dogs she brings home from the PX as props to teach her teenage daughter how to use a condom to protect herself from STDs. The sensory details of the hot dog imbue it with a lifelike quality, as if it were an adversary on a battlefield that the sex workers must combat. Duk Hee grabs the last hot dog and points it toward Sookie, maneuvering it so that it "wobble[s] and bob[s] like a swollen, accusatory figure" (Keller, *Fox Girl* 16)—a clear embodiment of accusation and conflict. After Duk Hee dresses the hot dog with the condom and stands it upright on the table, the hot dog "look[s] like a small red soldier standing at attention in his coat and hat" (20), a simile

that reinforces a sense of readiness for battle. Hyun Jin comments, “It looks like it’s going to war” (20). Duk Hee affirms, “It is a war,” and wiggles the hot dog “like a marching soldier” (20). These images of war and soldiers crystallize the confrontational relationship between sex workers and American soldiers. When Hyun Jin finally tastes the hot dog, she solidifies eating a hot dog as an act of sexual aggression: she “roll[s] the thin plastic back up the soldier’s body, and when he [s]s naked, bit[es] the head off” (21). However, she is immediately revolted by “the taste and smell of new rubber” (21), a sensory intrusion that parallels the unsavory nature of the sex workers’ interactions with the soldiers.

Also, it is not a stretch to argue that Keller highlights the greasy texture common to both hot dogs and condoms, one which defies a simple classification as either solid or liquid, to symbolize the liminal state that sex workers are forced to occupy. Duk Hee, intending to pat Sookie, instead hits her hair with the hot dog, resulting in the hot dog’s grease “splattering her hair with animal fat” (17). Hyun Jin recounts handing the condom to Duk Hee: “I pinched the slimy ring and dropped it in her palm. The tips of my fingers felt greasy where I had touched the rubber so I rinsed my fingers in my beer as I had seen Sookie’s mother do” (20). The repeated emphasis on greasiness extends beyond the tactile, creating an association with dirt, and evokes a parallel between the ambiguous nature of greasiness and the in-between status of sex workers. As Christine Hong argues, “Unthinkable outside the geopolitics of the unending Korean War, the South Korean camptown, as a liminal biopolitical space between nations, has historically produced figures de-territorialized as Korean yet not nationalized as American” (*A Violent Peace* 217). The sex workers occupy a liminal space between Korea and America: they are sovereign Koreans, yet they are unprotected by their home country; they are Americanized as GIs’ girlfriends or wives, but still remain vulnerable and unprotected in these roles. Throughout *Fox Girl*, scenes portray American GIs treating Korean sex workers as disposable, while “pure” Koreans police sex workers: Hyun Jin’s mother, upon discovering her daughter’s treasured collection of Ho Ho wrappers, throws them away and dismisses them as “whore’s rubbish” (Keller, *Fox Girl* 11); she deliberately avoids eye contact with sex workers, whom

she disparages as “dirty animals” (52); and a local fishwife reprimands her daughter for greeting Hyun Jin (163). In this regard, the sex workers are turned into what Hong calls “at-risk subjectivities in semisovereign South Korea, figures that cast backwards and forwards in time, straddling the colonial and postcolonial, necropolitical threshold of life and death” (“The Unending Korean War” 606).

Crucially, the necessity of using the hot dog as a tool for sexual education underscores the prevalent issue of sexual diseases among sex workers. According to Katharine H. S. Moon, many sex workers have frequently undergone “bouts of depression, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and unwanted pregnancies” (“South Korean Movement” 314). During the “Clean-up Campaign” from 1971 and 1976, the VD control measures primarily regulated Korean women, wrongly attributing the responsibility for the transmission of sexual diseases to them. The Korean government mandated regular medical check-ups for sex workers and detained infected women in specialized centers (Moon, *Sex Among Allies* 74–83). I suggest that the sexual diseases the American soldiers transmit to the Korean sex workers are an example of “slow violence.” According to Rob Nixon, “slow violence,” in contrast to more immediate and sensational forms of violence, “occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” (2). *Fox Girl* shows that the slow violence of sexual diseases is both physically and psychologically traumatic to sex workers.

In the novel, contracting sexual diseases entails bureaucratic indignities and degrading treatments. When Duk Hee disappears, Hyun Jin and Sookie look for her at the local VD clinic. There, they encounter many sex workers waiting to be checked and overhear their candid discussions on sexual diseases. According to them, sex workers are required to take VD tests every week, which means losing one day’s work (Keller, *Fox Girl* 39). A sex worker, seen knitting in the scene and nicknamed “Knitting Lady” by Hyun Jin, evidently encounters problems with her medical test and stomps out of the clinic complaining about “[m]ore papers, another office to visit. Like rats in a maze” (42). Her frustration with the bureaucratic process underscores the disproportionate

responsibility placed on sex workers to navigate a complex medical system. The consequences of failing these mandatory tests are severe—sex workers are transported to the Monkey House. Another sex worker describes the procedure: “They’ll take you up to the front gate in a truck if you fail the exam” (47). Being taken away in a truck, a dehumanizing experience reminiscent of livestock transportation, highlights the indignity of the treatment process. Lobetto further informs Hyun Jin and Sookie: “They got Monkey Houses all over, *Dongg-face*. With all the GI girls in Korea, you think they got only one?” (78). The fact that there are Monkey Houses spread all over Korea reflects the extensive issue of venereal diseases among sex workers.

Fox Girl further demonstrates that the Monkey House is less a place for healing than a facility for control and segregation.⁴ When Hyun Jin and Sookie reach the Monkey House looking for Duk Hee, the institution is depicted in a bleak light: “Gray and squat as a toad, the two-story Monkey House, ribboned by a chain-link fence, looked like any other government buildings. Except that this one, far outside the town, was half-hidden in the midst of nameless hills that rose around it like burial mounds” (82). The Monkey House’s austere appearance and remote location create a sense of isolation and punishment. Inside the Monkey House, the sex workers quarantined there suffer from poor health and neglect. Duk Hee is found in a state of ill health: “[Her] face looked pale and gaunt, drawn with harsh lines of panic” (83). By inflicting further traumas on sex workers, the Monkey House serves more as a site for confinement and regulation. Jin-kyung Lee aptly characterizes these measures for STD control as a form of “militarized-medicalized discipline of the women’s body” (151).

Furthermore, in the same scene in which Duk Hee uses a hot dog as a prop for teaching sexual protection, a subtle detail associates the hot dog with chemical poisoning. Chemical poisoning unveils an additional, often overlooked slow violence of prostitution: sex workers often adopt beauty styles that can harm their health in order to attract their clientele. Between their conversations, Duk Hee “scratched at her kinky head. She’d just had her hair permed, to be more like the darkies at the clubs where she works, and her head still itched from the chemicals. As she

scratched with her free hand, the hot dog, like the hind leg of a real dog, quivered in sympathy" (Keller, *Fox Girl* 17). Duk Hee's "kinky hair" captures the practice of perming hair to mimic Black American hairstyles, a toxic beauty ritual that the sex workers adopt to attract Black American soldiers. Demonstrating Stacy Alaimo's claim that the body manifests its negative agency when it "baffles, annoys, disappoints, or falls ill" (249), Duk Hee's body exhibits a negative agency—the sensation of "itching" draws attention to her body's suffering from the chemicals used in hair perming. Unfortunately, such practices of self-poisoning in cosmetics are widespread. Mousie has a "perm-burned head" (Keller, *Fox Girl* 83), and Lobetto's mother has "her hair cut short and permed into a tight afro" upon returning from the Jeju Island (183). Sookie herself bears the marks of chemical damage and poisoning from hair perms with a "burned mop" on her scalp (206).

To further appeal to the American soldiers, the sex workers even undergo more radical procedures such as breast augmentation. Sookie returns from the Monkey House with "swollen breasts," which Hyun Jin bluntly likens to those of a cow (174). Sookie reveals that her enlarged breasts are achieved through injections by a doctor at the Monkey House, noting, "It's the newest thing at the Monkey House" (174). Yet breast augmentation comes at a cost: Sookie's breasts feel numb and unnaturally hard, akin to "a rubber ball just under her skin" (174). Sookie undergoes this discomfort only to please her American customers. She explains, "I figure Chazu will like them. He was always complaining at how small I was before" (174). Sookie's willingness to undergo such a procedure—and her suggestion that Hyun Jin do the same to attract more GIs at the bar—underscores the considerable pressures and expectations that come with the sex work.

Finally, American food also appears in the most disturbing scene of the novel in which the teenage Hyun Jin is coerced into sex work and gang raped. By skillfully juxtaposing these elements, Keller draws a parallel between the consumability and disposability of American food and that of sex workers' bodies. Cast out by her parents, Hyun Jin resorts to prostitution to earn a living. Lobetto helps broker an arrangement with three American soldiers. However, Hyun Jin hesitates and

ultimately declines to proceed. The soldiers ignore her pleas as they violently overtake her. During the rape sequence, she hears one GI calling out the word “sandwich,” which triggers a flashback to a happy time when Duk Hee returned home with “a Spam and egg sandwich from the PX” (153). Hyun Jin recalls, “I remember thinking that the fried pink meat and bright yellow yolk folded between the crusty white bread was the most deliciously beautiful food I have ever tasted” (153). Within moments, she comes to understand that the soldiers intend to make a “sandwich” with her body. By comparing the gang rape to a sandwich, Keller compels readers to confront the chilling specifics of the assault:

But instead of leaving me, the men lifted me up so that one of them could slide under me. After the other two positioned me on top of him, one climbed on my back. . . . From far away, the real me watched them open the shell of my body, ramming and ripping into every opening they could. I watched them spread the legs open, splitting the inner lips wide enough to fit two of the men at the same time. I watched them bite at the breasts and *poji* till they drew blood, and saw them shoot themselves into and over the belly, take breaks, then come at it again. (153–54)

As Layfield argues, the diction used here to describe sexual violence—terms like “cutting,” “stretching,” and “bleeding”—is deliberately chosen to eliminate any erotic connotations (75). Moreover, in contrast to a prose style that is more abstract and focuses on describing the emotional experiences of the rape victim, the “visual, literal” depiction of this scene “refuses the audience any removal from the immediate situation of the rape” (76). Furthermore, Abe comments that the description of Hyun Jin’s rape by the soldiers, who “tak[e] turns at the stations of [her] body” (Keller, *Fox Girl* 153)—with “stations” as a metaphor for war—is “a clear implication that the war continues even after the armistice in forms other than military combat—in this case in a sexualized form” (Abe 713). He highlights how imperial violence permeates intimate spaces.

I add to their analyses by emphasizing the description of the rape scene as a sandwich. In her analysis of kitchen and food culture as important sites for representing violence against Black bodies in Harriet Wilson's 1859 semi-autobiography *Our Nig*, Kyla Wazana Tompkins observes that much of the violence inflicted on the Black servant Frado mirrors the brutality toward animals that humans consume. For example, Mrs. Bellmont threatens to strip Frado's skin as if it were leather, while her daughter Mary throws a carving knife at Frado, calling her a "saucy, impudent n——" (Wilson 36) as if Frado were another piece of meat in the kitchen. Tompkins argues that Wilson's portrayal of violence offers no cushioning, aiming instead to "make bodily pain visible and legible to the readership" (119) and to "revers[e] the trope of the white mouth eager to eat the consumable black body; instead, the white appetite is confronted with its consequences" (120). Building on Tompkins' insights, I argue that Keller's comparison of the rape scene to a sandwich serves several critical functions. First, likening Hyun Jin's body to a sandwich helps readers understand the chilling specifics of gang rape. This metaphor functions as a means of articulating what would otherwise remain unspeakable. Second, as Tompkins notes, graphic depictions of violence make bodily pain visible and force readers to confront it directly. The tortured body of Hyun Jin discourages emotional distance or the pleasure of erotic consumption. Additionally, this comparison drives to the core the reduction of Hyun Jin to a powerless, voiceless, faceless piece of meat to be consumed and devoured by the American soldiers. It starkly reveals the "ephemeral usefulness and consummate disposability" (J. Lee 101) of both sandwiches and sex workers in the eyes of the US military. Admittedly, the graphic depiction of rape risks turning the female body into a spectacle, but it can launch the strongest critique of such violence, testifying to the brutality of the perpetrators.

Furthermore, this image of the sandwich reverberates back to the portrayal of comfort women as fruits in Keller's first novel, *Comfort Woman*. Soon Hyo, a main character in the novel, narrates in her diary her former life as a sex slave in the Japanese Imperial Army:

Chongshindae: Our brothers and fathers conscripted. The women left to be picked over like fruit to be tasted, consumed, the pits spit out as Chongshindae, where we rotted under the body of orders from the Emperor of Japan. Under the Emperor's orders, we were beaten and starved. Under Emperor's orders, the holes of our bodies were used to bury their excrement. Under Emperor's orders, we were bled again and again until we were thrown into a pit and burned, the ash from our thrashing arms dusting the surface of the river in which we had sometimes been allowed to bathe. (Keller, *Comfort Woman* 193; emphasis in original)

The scenes of Hyun Jin's rape in *Fox Girl* and Soon Hyo's in *Comfort Woman* share striking similarities. Both liken the bodies of Korean women to consumable food: Hyun Jin's body is compared to a sandwich, while the Korean sex slaves' bodies are likened to fruits. These metaphors anticipate and underscore the women being "tasted" and "consumed" by soldiers. Both depict the graphic torture of bodies and resist any emotional distance or eroticism. By juxtaposing rape with food imagery in these two novels—one set during Japanese colonization and the other during the subsequent era of US neocolonization—Keller interrogates a historical continuity in the objectification and abuse of Korean women.⁵

III. The Transnational America

This horrific rape that recalls the American sandwich marks a turning point in Hyun Jin's relationship to American food. As Laura Anh Williams observes, after this rape, Hyun Jin no longer refers to American commodities longingly (118). Williams argues that "[o]nly when Hyun Jin is objectified and rendered consumable by the figures of American occupation, does she lose her 'taste' for American commodities. Her commodified (and consumed) status allows her to see the violence implied by the normalized valorization of American commodities, and that which is inherent in the U.S. military/sexual relations with Korea" (120). One example of this shift occurs when Hyun Jin

chooses to buy local seafood rather than American food to nurture the pregnant Sookie (Keller, *Fox Girl* 192–93). Keller makes another intentional structural choice regarding food imagery: American foodstuffs are featured centrally early in the novel but become less dominant as the story progresses to Hawai‘i, mirroring the girls’ growing disillusionment with both American food and America.

American food products are mentioned only sparingly during the girls’ journey in Hawai‘i. Nonetheless, the sparse yet significant appearances of food reveal that the island is another dot within the expansive network of the US empire and its transnational sex industry. Annexed by the US in 1898, Hawai‘i has become a crucial American military stronghold. The military occupation of Hawai‘i brought thousands of young, single soldiers seeking leisure, and fostered the development of the prostitution industry. As Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez notes, “militarism jump-started the first tourist establishments on the islands: catering to military and colonial personnel, zones for rest and recreation cropped up, exploiting fantasies—if not always realities—of the exotic” (13). US militarism in Hawai‘i, the more overt form of colonial control, paved the way for and safeguards the tourism sector, a subtler form of colonial control in the region. In *Fox Girl*, Hyun Jin and Sookie, seeking a way out of America Town, agree to work for a pimp named Mrs. Yoon in her bar in Hawai‘i. As Abe points out, the reason Hyun Jin and Sookie are able to easily obtain their passports from American Immigration is because the agent understands the economic value of the girls’ bodies in the American “transpacific capitalist network” (715). It is no wonder that in Hawai‘i, Hyun Jin and Sookie continue to face exploitation.

Food imagery in Hawai‘i emphasizes the similar exploitation experienced by sex workers in Korea. For instance, on their flight to Hawai‘i, Hyun Jin and Sookie are offered peanuts and soda—American food products once much desired. Sookie is surprised to learn from the flight attendant that these items are “complimentary” (Keller, *Fox Girl* 253). Hyun Jin coldly remarks, “Don’t count on it. . . . Mrs. Yoon will find a way to make us pay” (253). Hyun Jin demonstrates her awareness that their life in Hawai‘i will be even more exploitative as they now owe their

pimp a large sum of money for getting them there, all while having no legal status. The smell of peanuts, once appealing to Hyun Jin, now makes her stomach “lurch” (254), signaling her growing awareness of the exploitative system hidden beneath the food’s allure.

The novel’s reference to Vienna sausages also draws a connection between the impoverished living conditions for sex workers in Hawai‘i and those in Korea. All sex workers working under Yoon in Hawai‘i live in a sinister-looking two-story building. Inside, space is a luxury as Hyun Jin and Sookie find themselves crammed against Yoon in an apartment littered wall-to-wall with futons, each a makeshift bed for one girl (257). Minnie, one of the workers, bitterly complains, “What’s she thinking, bringing in more girls, packing us in like Vienna sausages?” (258). The image of tightly packed sausages aptly captures the claustrophobic living conditions that these sex workers endure, which bear a striking resemblance to the makeshift tent at Lobetto’s that Hyun Jin and Sookie are crammed into. The image of Vienna sausages again evokes the perception of sex workers as objects merely for consumption.

Additionally, the bar where the girls are employed is in close proximity to barbecue restaurants, further emphasizing the analogy between sex workers and consumable food. After settling in the apartment and dressing up, Hyun Jin and Sookie are quickly ushered to the bar to begin their work. Upon their arrival, they find Korean bars standing side-by-side with Korean barbecue restaurants: “‘Korea-moku’ street was comprised of a string of dingy-looking bars and Korean restaurants. Signs announcing naked girls and *kalbi* glittered in English and Korean. Across the street, between a club called Rose and a *pornu* shop, I saw a market advertising kimchee and hair perms” (263). The juxtaposition of the bar and the food businesses suggests an equivalence: the Korean women are marketed like consumable commodities. The atmosphere in the bar is charged with familiar tunes from Korean Club Fuxa, and these sex workers are engaged in similar transactions to the ones that occur back in Korea: selling drinks, dances, and sex. Amidst all this, Hyun Jin reflects, “[T]hough I was three thousand miles away from Korea, I was still trapped in America Town” (269). She is ensnared in the same cycle of exploitation, merely in a different location.

Recognizing her entrapment within the sex industry gives Hyun Jin some agency. Yoon, upon discovering that Hyun Jin has brought the baby Myu Myu—whom Hyun Jin persuades Sookie to keep and later adopts—into the bar, threatens to deport her back to Korea. Unwilling to passively wait for her deportation and subsequent exploitation, Hyun Jin acts decisively—she flees, hoping to find an uncle in Hawai'i whom her father once mentioned. Though it turns out that this uncle has already moved to California, Hyun Jin meets Geraldine (Gerry), who kindly takes her and the baby in. Sung-Ae Lee contends that Gerry offers to Hyun Jin “altruistic support within a small all-female community,” which contrasts with Sookie’s “fox girl” story that depicts women as having little agency and their actions inevitably leading to destruction of themselves or of their community (142). In Gerry’s home, an asylum of nurturing, Hyun Jin begins to heal.

The final chapter describes Gerry tenderly preparing aloe gel for Hyun Jin’s flaking skin. Gerry is depicted working with care, “peeling and mashing fresh stems of aloe into a poultice for [Hyun Jin]’s hands” (Keller, *Fox Girl* 287). This fresh, home-grown aloe contrasts the processed American foodstuffs, which throughout the novel have been associated with violence and exploitation. Myu Myu, with so much tenderness, applies the aloe gel to Hyun Jin’s hands: she “puckers her lips and dips a delicate finger into the aloe. Dabbing at my shredded palms, she rubs a rough patch, and a thin ribbon of translucent skin peels away from my hand. . . . [S]he raises my fingers to her lips. ‘Does it hurt?’ she asks, and kisses each one” (289–90). This moment, rich with care and compassion, suggests that Hyun Jin’s path to healing is paved with the love of Gerry and her adopted daughter—a love that is as restorative as the natural aloe they apply to her wounds. I am not suggesting that the ending, with Hyun Jin’s escape and the healing symbolized by the aloe, mounts sufficient resistance to the devouring force of the US empire. Rather, it signifies a moment of awakening, in which the image of paternal benevolence that the US projects, often displayed through its foodstuffs, is stripped to its bloody reality, allowing Koreans to break free from the illusion and its cycle of exploitation.

Ultimately, *Fox Girl* should not be read as merely a work of fiction; it is rather a social commentary on the lived reality of sex workers in camptowns. On 28 October 1992, Yun Geum-i, a twenty-six-year-old sex worker in South Korea, was assaulted and killed by Kenneth Lee Markle III, a private in the US Army. Yun suffered brutal beating and mutilation: her body was discovered with a Coca-Cola bottle forcibly inserted into her vagina.⁶ This murder ignited a nation-wide protest against the US military in Korea. The unsettling contrast between the iconic American product, Coca-Cola, and the abused body of the sex worker eerily mirrors Keller's narrative intervention in *Fox Girl* in which American food products are entwined with scenes of violence. The presence of the Coca-Cola bottle in the murder scene, alongside the other American food products featured in the novel, levels a powerful critique of the veneer of American benevolence and exposes the violence endured by those living in the shadows of the US military.

Moreover, *Fox Girl* contributes to transnational Asian American studies by revealing the extent to which political power operates through American food products and the way food operates as an imperial infrastructure across the larger terrain of the Asia Pacific region and beyond. It also invites a rethinking of how other, seemingly mundane, depoliticized items can play significant roles in empire formation. Second, Keller demonstrates how, through authorial interventions, this imperial infrastructure can be disrupted and dismantled. Finally, by using food imagery to connect the enslavement of Korean women under imperial Japan, the abuse of Korean sex workers by the US military, and Hawai'i's sex industry, *Fox Girl* reveals the recurring, interconnected, and transnational exploitation of Korean women.

Notes

- 1 The unresolved nature of the Korean War cemented the presence of US military bases on Korean land. The farming villages near these bases have thus been transformed into hubs that offer various services for the US military, including brothels (Yuh 20–22). As Kim and Choi contend, South Korea “never had an opportunity to decolonize in the true sense of the word” due to the presence of US military bases (3).

- 2 Keller explains, “The people existing at the lowest rung of America Town’s social hierarchy were the ‘GI girls’ who serviced black soldiers. The children from these unions weren’t even on the ladder; they were invisible, considered neither Korean nor American. I wanted to acknowledge their existence, to give them a voice in *Fox Girl*” (“A Conversation” 5).
- 3 During and after World War II, the US established numerous aid policies and programs for Europe, the most prominent being the Marshall Plan, the Food for Peace Program, and the CARE program. Wagnleitner argues that these relief efforts did more than simply address the needs of war-torn European nations; they also functioned as “an overflowing shop window” that showcased “the overwhelming achievements of the American economic system” (52). The political power of food cannot be overstated. As Wagnleitner asserts, “After 1945, philanthropic relief and U.S. foreign policy goals became synonymous” (52).
- 4 In a 2019 investigative report titled “Welcome to the Monkey House,” Shorrock finds that the name “Monkey House” itself reflects the harm caused by the excessive use of medications on sex workers. The bar girls and prostitutes confined within the “Monkey House” were given such high doses of antibiotics that “their arms hung down, and they walked like this, like monkeys in a cage” (“Welcome to the Monkey House”).
- 5 Another character that highlights the historical continuity of sexual exploitation of Korean women in *Fox Girl* is Duk Hee. She was abducted by the Imperial Japanese army during WWII and forced into sexual enslavement. After the war, she discovers that her hometown has been burned to the ground and that she has been left destitute. She is forced to migrate south, where she turns to prostitution near US military bases to survive (Keller, *Fox Girl* 117–18). This link may be historically accurate. As Moon explains, some women forced into sexual enslavement during WWII later became US military prostitutes. These former comfort women, already seen as “fallen,” poor, and unmarried upon returning to Korea, likely turned to sex work for the US military (“South Korean Movement” 314).
- 6 *Fox Girl* contains a direct reference to the brutal murder of Yun Geum-i and the desecration of her body with an umbrella (138). However, Keller omits the detail regarding the Coca-Cola bottle in the portrayal. Consequently, my analysis here is limited to the factual elements of the murder.

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