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# Wanted Woman: A Search for the Missing Subject in News Coverage of the Connie Lindburg Case

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On Valentine's Day this year, a woman was lost to us. The newspaper photograph could have placed her in a Victorian novel, in a bath oil commercial, in a gilded frame as someone's mother or aunt. "Missing ... tourist ... kin ... woman ... vanishes." Anxiety turns to excitement as I discover that a woman lurks among us in the hot summer crowds of Honolulu, a secret in her pounding breast. One of these happy tourists is not what she seems.

Connie Lindburg is missing. Even before I learn that she hails from Elmhurst, Illinois – two train stops away from the monotony of my suburban childhood – and that she is close enough in age to be a passing smile at some long-forgotten pep rally, I am seized with the desire to find her.

The days pass. She is located. A couple of weeks later she is interviewed. But something about the story won't leave me, unsatisfied by the easy resolution of the "weird," "mysterious," "strange," and "bizarre." For me, Connie Lindburg is still missing.

I mount my own search through the layers of text and context. What I discover, in the end, is her absence – Connie as the pointing finger, the accusation, the

mirror in which I see reflected my own desire to understand the process of transformation. How can identity be formed, or changed, through language?

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News reports are, of course, no less open to interpretation than any other type of text. And in Honolulu, far from the influence of the world capitals, they may even more readily express the values and anxieties of an entrenched local elite. Tom Koch has noted in his study of news as a myth-making process that the way news is gathered serves to encourage construction and to perpetuate the dissemination of the dominant ideology – that "newsmen and their sources *know*, and that police and officials *care*."<sup>1</sup> Koch's analysis points to one of the first flags marking the Connie Lindburg stories as "bizarre" even from a conventional journalistic standpoint: the abandonment of rules governing attribution.

To take one (loaded) example, it is never made clear whose version of events is being reported in the first of the five stories that appeared in the Honolulu Advertiser from February 14 to March 4, 1996.<sup>2</sup> We cannot ascertain the source of the

information related by Ted Barnett (Feb. 14): "On the second night, [Connie] is screaming loudly, walking outside the house, nude... She was so weird, they told her to leave the next morning." Who could have supplied this information? Not Connie herself. Most likely the people who rented her a room in Waimānalo told the cab driver, who told police, who told Barnett, who told the reporter, who then wrote an abridged account that wound its way through several layers of editing before being interpreted by the reader. "Naked, screaming" Connie then becomes an index for madness that is repeated on February 17 and March 4.

Even more problematic from a journalistic standpoint – and what makes the Connie stories especially inviting of deconstruction – is the sensational crime-reporting formula imposed on a situation in which no actual crime has been committed. It's not even accurate to say that Connie Lindburg is "missing." Story I accounts for her whereabouts (albeit through hearsay) right up to the previous day. Yet any questioning of these circumstances by the reader is foreclosed by the story's status – front page, above the fold, with headline spanning five columns – and by the metonyms used to mark the drama over the next three installments ("missing," "elusive," "massive," "vanished"), which define the incident from the outset as unique, bizarre, and mysterious, rather than rational and predictable.

To put Connie's "disappearance" in perspective, let us imagine for a moment that it is Russell Lindburg who failed to catch his plane and is

subsequently seen sleeping on park benches and eating in restaurants around O'ahu. Would this make for a "mystery no one can understand" (Feb. 14)? Would relatives suggest that Russell "may be a danger to [him]self" (Feb. 15)? Clearly, what turns a prosaic instance of running away into a front-page story has something to do with Connie's status – defined by the text as white, tourist, housewife, mother – and with its localization in Hawai'i.

Editors at the Honolulu Advertiser admitted that the Connie Lindburg stories generated controversy in the newsroom. They said the incident came to their attention when Russell Lindburg's family asked the paper to intervene. Unlike most news events, then, Connie's story was not generated by official (state) interest. In fact, police and authorities prove reluctant to throw their weight behind the search.<sup>3</sup> Deprived of the foundations on which formulaic crime stories are built ("police said," "authorities allege"), attribution and signification slide out of control in the Connie series as the text is pulled along by the desires of the players.

Following my own desire, as reader, to find the missing woman, I next question the sources. Their motivations appear to frame a mediated communication between Russell Lindburg, his sister, and her husband, on the one hand, who feed information to the reporter in the hope of reaching Connie; and on the other end the implied recipient of this communication, the Connie who would be reading about the search in the paper. It is with her position, as readers, that we are implicated.

Notice that the apparent subject of the story, "Connie Lindburg," is absent. She does not exist in the present-tense reality of the news story (contiguous with the reporter) until she is interviewed on March 4. Most often she is treated as a body, clothed and unclothed, needing warmth or shelter. With no voice or mind attached to the signifier, "Connie" simply names an absence that others try to fill with their words and images, until an ATM photo provides the first real "evidence" (Feb. 17) – already three days old. Meanwhile, Connie-as-reader continues to slip ahead of her pursuers, leaving only textual traces – sightings, film images, ATM withdrawals, others' testimony – while her ghostly presence reads beside us, accomplices to her voyeuristic diversion.

In this sense, Connie truly is "missing" from the text. But not in the reading pressed upon us by the text's repetition of the word, used (in all its grammatical variants) 16 times in the series. In order to justify a police hunt for a legally autonomous adult, the newspaper resurrects the language of "missing children," shaping Connie's traces into the figure of insanity. She is conjured as "really lost" or "fallen from some mental cliff." "[B]y all accounts, Connie Lindburg was a stable, caring mother who didn't drink, abuse drugs or fight enough with her husband to leave him like this"; *ergo*, "[m]aybe at some level, she was deeply depressed" and "may have snapped" (Feb. 14). All these statements originate with Russell Lindburg or his family, who by all accounts cannot conceive of Connie as an autonomous individual capable of walking out

on her husband. Indeed, the Barnetts arrive in Honolulu "convinced... we were here to identify a body".<sup>4</sup>

Connie's actions end up sounding far more reasonable when we finally hear her account on March 4. "[S]he felt like a single parent. Responsibility gripped her. I cleaned house, made dinner, took care of my kids. I didn't sit down from dawn to dusk," she says of her life at home. During what Russell Lindburg calls "the best trip we ever had," the couple fought about money. "On Māui she wanted to buy a \$20 sarong and he threw a fit." According to Connie, "her husband chastised her when she didn't buy something on sale." In other words, despite the long hours she put in as full-time servant to her family for four years, Connie Lindburg had little spending money and no economic freedom. Her vacation, when she finally got one, was fully chaperoned by her Master.

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Projection and pity lead me to put aside any will to professional objectivity at this point and declare Connie Lindburg's life a case of modern-day indentured servitude. A closer look at the signifiers associated with her does, in fact, unearth a telling signified: The reason Russell Lindburg is angry with police and their slow progress in finding Connie – the reason the story is framed as a crime at all – is because the man's *property* has gone missing, and he expects police to recover it. Most "missing" accounts overflow with gratitude and admiration for authorities, whether or not the

family of the missing hiker or kidnapped child is the source of this gratitude. By contrast, we have here Ted Barnett, "disappointed" by police (Feb. 15), who believes his sister-in-law is alive but "in a bad state" – words aimed to strike dread in the local tourist industry, whose vigilance over the discourse on crime brings us news coverage of every purse snatching in Waikīkī.

The association of Connie Lindburg, or Wife, with Russell's property plays itself out in the movements of the Lindburgs' ATM card, which make explicit the symbolic link between the man's *property* and his *potency*. Russell orders access to the card blocked, according to an account in the Honolulu Star-Bulletin,<sup>5</sup> even though withdrawals at ATM machines are providing the best clues to Connie's whereabouts. He is then compelled to restore access in an attempt to "capture" Connie on camera in the act of "stealing" herself, as it were (Feb. 16) – for who else would withdraw \$100 every few days at the same machine? To Lindburg, wife and property are the same – yet he is being confronted by a split in which one has "mysteriously" broken free of her body and continues to siphon his resources through the conjugal act of automated banking and an "enormous cellular phone bill," (Feb. 18).

Entertained by the spectacle of Russell Lindburg outwitted, we come to realize that he is the only possible subject of a story that is *actually being written by Connie*. Through her "disappearance," she has turned the public focus on him – the only one we can know, because it is he who speaks for her. After years of being on display as Wife and Mother,

watched and guarded in the confines of her domestic domain, Connie is now incorporeal, "vanished," an invisible force drawing us along the "traces" of her ATM withdrawals (a trope for writing) while forcing Russell into the role of childcare provider<sup>6</sup> – a sentence originally assigned to her. "Men escape from their routine lives all the time," the reporter paraphrases her, "so why can't she?" (Mar. 4).

Connie has turned the tables on the Master, pulling back the curtain – as Toto does to the Mighty Oz – to expose the injustice at the root of Russell's power. He can be the king of his castle only because he is supported and defined by Connie's unpaid labor. As Wife, she is written into the capitalist system as commodity, not agent; as the fruit of labor, not its producer. Marx maintained that everything is interchangeable in the capitalist system under the "logic of substitution," whereby the social products of labor are transformed into fetishized commodities, masking their true (productive) relationship. A study by Laura Donaldson helps illustrate this point.<sup>7</sup>

Donaldson draws on two models of exchange, Levi-Strauss' inscription of woman as the unit of social exchange, and Marx's critique of commodity fetishism, to propose a semiotic model of woman as commodity. In an analysis of Olive Schreiner's novel From Man to Man, Donaldson cites Luce Irigaray's observation that, "[l]ike all women bound by capitalist and patriarchal exchange, Bertie becomes 'reduced to some common feature – their current price in gold, or phalluses – and of which they would represent a plus or minus

quantity."<sup>8</sup> Since the exchange abstraction "requires that its objects remain immutable during all phases of its transactions," time is erased from Bertie's consciousness, "because its very existence poses a threat to the necessarily ahistorical network of exchange."<sup>9</sup>

We see the same process at work in the Connie stories, where "Connie" names something material, static, unchanging – a body, a photograph, a site ("Māui. Waimānalo. Mānoa."), or a label ("caring mother," "missing tourist") whose rupture with the past can be explained only in terms of falling, breaking, or snapping (Feb. 14), like a doll.<sup>10</sup> To compensate for her absence – Connie-as-lack, the distressing spectacle of Russell Lindburg castrated – we are offered in exchange her fetishized body. The hunt for Connie then parallels the hunt for the missing phallus, or ATM card, whose debauched philandering ("withdrawals," "deposits," attempts at "access") elicit voyeuristic attempts to capture Connie "in the act." Despite reassuring signs (to male readers) that Russell befell his fate because he is cheap, or his wife is crazy, a clear anxiety propels this marital spat into the public sphere.

The unequal balance of power in the Lindburgs' marriage sets the text into play and provides its ongoing dynamic. For Connie does not simply force a narration of Russell. While he may be the protagonist in the first four stories, readers are pulled along by their desire to find Connie, or to see her found – a desire set up by the text and frustrated by Connie herself. Omniscient, invisible, tracing her own tracks as a reporter checks the morning paper for the

previous day's work, Connie gives birth to herself as text in a development similar to Lacan's "mirror stage." Once split from her identity as Russell's property, Connie enters the symbolic order of *narrative*. "You have to lose yourself to see yourself," she says of her transformation (Mar. 4).

Her struggle against Russell, once she has left him, moves to the level of narrative as a fight to take control of signification. The battleground is, of course, Connie-as-body. In the textual gap left behind by her escape, the reporter quickly installs the signifiers Wife, Mother, Tourist, by which is signified (for men, anyway) "Your happy life back home on the Mainland" – the post-honeymoon wife carried over the threshold of one's suburban home, the children she will care for, the occasional island holiday – all paradigmatically conjured by the image of Connie alone, naked, cold, screaming, run amok with a credit card like a demonic ex-wife.

If the text continually seeks shelter in such middle-class values, condemning Connie on grounds of respectability, Connie responds by throwing those very values into question. Her transgression into the forbidden zone of "homelessness" and the charity of strangers – where the middle class dread falling<sup>11</sup> – generates the anxious summoning of bourgeois icons. When she reveals that she has willingly foregone security, wealth, safety, even motherhood – all the amulets of the Master's power – in favor of "spiritual" values, Connie exposes Russell for what he is: dated, domineering, privileged, limited, "company man," the dinosaur of a dying era. And her will to overturn the existing order comes,

ironically, through the discourse of New Age enlightenment.

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A contemporary reader could scarcely miss the irony in Connie's implication of Deepak Chopra, Oprah Winfrey, and Forrest Gump as sources of inspiration for her flight. These are hardly seditious influences on middle America. To the contrary, Chopra and Winfrey are millionaire entrepreneurs, the very embodiment of rags-to-riches American success.<sup>12</sup> As the daily fare of tabloid talk shows, women's magazines, and the mass-marketing of self-help, New Age discourse demonstrates how an emergent cultural practice can be incorporated by the dominant culture and repackaged as a repository for "the difference that allows the culture to represent itself against, while allowing minimal actual difference," as Judith Williamson says of the category Woman.<sup>13</sup> The culture that makes a prisoner of Connie thus delivers, via subversive media messages aimed at women, the keys to her escape.

In The Way of the Wizard: Twenty Spiritual Lessons in Creating the Life You Want, which Connie has "virtually memorized" (Mar. 4), Chopra distills the main tenets of Eastern, non-dualistic philosophies into a series of conversations between Merlin and Arthur, Western archetypes from the Arthurian tales.<sup>14</sup> Although the overall effect is somewhat Disneyesque, the book is rich in metaphors for writing and authorship, which brings us back to Lacan's model.

For what Connie undergoes when she steps out of her unary

role as wife and mother is not unlike the transformation in an infant facing its reflection in the mirror. The double she sees composed through narration is both more coherent and profoundly Other than she apprehends herself; it reifies her escape, giving birth to a being-through-narration that becomes as addictive as checking one's reflection in the mirror. This need to keep writing oneself into existence, as it were, seems to be driven by an unresolvable tension between the play of signification set in motion by narration, and the lure of the timeless, all-encompassing "stop" of the transcendental signified<sup>15</sup> – which Connie strives to attain by way of Chopra's promise of reunification with "the unlimited self."

Simply put, once one begins writing, no signifieds are truly satisfactory. The composite in yesterday's paper cannot be oneself, the one reading. Eventually one longs for that idealized state beyond language where signification may stop and the body unite with pure consciousness. Between the unary signifier and the split subject stands a matter of life and death, Lacan has said, for "when the subject appears somewhere as meaning, he is manifested elsewhere as 'fading,' as disappearance."<sup>16</sup> In the words of Chopra's wizard,

Who am I? is the only question worth asking and the only one never answered. It is your destiny to play an infinity of roles, but these roles are not yourself. The spirit is nonlocal, but it leaves behind a fingerprint, which we call the body. A wizard does not believe himself to be a local

event dreaming of a larger world. A wizard is a world dreaming of local events.<sup>17</sup>

Kaja Silverman uses similar terms to describe the Lacanian subject's desire to fill the lack resulting when the plenitude of being is foreclosed by the subject's emergence into the symbolic order:

Desire has its origins not only in the alienation of the subject from its being, but in the subject's perception of its distinctness from the objects with which it earlier identified. It is thus the product of divisions by means of which the subject is constituted, divisions which inspire in the subject a profound sense of lack.<sup>18</sup>

While the Lacanian model casts the split of the unified self unequivocally as a "fall," one must consider in Connie's case the liberating effects of authorship, which she manages to signal past the censuring tone of the final story. Connie herself maintains: "My family is still in a whirlwind, but I am not... I am writing all this down from a women's [sic] point of view. I'm going to do things I want to do. I used to work at a bank, but now I may sing at a nightclub." The visual metaphors she uses to describe her transformation emphasize the positive aspects of mirroring, which allow her to begin writing "from a women's point of view": "Now I view things from a different light," she says. "You have to lose yourself to see yourself... You have to let go of all the stuff going on around you before you can see clearly" (Mar. 4).

According to Merlin's teaching:

To see yourself truly you need to see yourself as having these three aspects: sender, receiver, and medium. There are many variations on the theme: you are the wish, the wisher, and the granter of wishes. You are the observer, the observed, and the process of observation. This threefold state is known as unity.<sup>19</sup>

We might add that Connie has become writer, reader, and subject of the text – or on the visual level, the voyeur, viewed, and process of "seeing herself."

Novels written by and about women are especially rich in images of splitting, mirroring, and reunification, scores of which have been documented by Jenijoy La Belle.<sup>20</sup> Barbara Hill Regney detects an archetypal pattern to the development of female creativity via the trope of madness, which she analyzes in the works of Bronte, Woolf, Lessing, and Atwood. I quote her at length here for the numerous parallels with Connie's story:

The processes by which the protagonists [in the feminist novel] achieve [a redefined identity] have their prototypes in the mythic patterns of spiritual journeys as well as in the procedures for psychoanalysis... Each protagonist begins her search for self in a psychological 'dark wood,' where she is beset by (feelings of) selflessness...

Each protagonist... comes to a conscious recognition... that she has lost a self somewhere among the socially prescribed false selves which she has assumed, willingly or

unwillingly... In panic at this realization, she searches for some rationale, some agent or helper to heal the divided self – a mother....

It is only through recognition of this doppelganger and thus the confrontation with one's mirror self that the psyche can be diagnosed as split. In these novels, then, the doppelganger serves an essentially positive function... [Depicted as] 'the wild and holy woman,' [s]he acts as a guide in the exploration of the wild places of the self, the acceptance of which is always crucial...

Upon recognition of the doppelganger, each protagonist begins a descent into actual madness, or at least into the vicarious experience of madness... Having descended... into the flames where she consciously recognizes herself as 'insane' or potentially insane, each protagonist, phoenixlike, is able to surface as sane, equipped with an integrated self, an identity.<sup>21</sup>

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Connie does not write her own text in the Honolulu Advertiser, of course. Her authorship is mediated by the reporter, the news organization, and Russell's family. In the first four stories, the interests of the patriarchal order remain hidden beneath a show of concern. (Russell: "I want to tell her how much I care... how much the children miss her," Feb. 17.) But once Connie makes her appearance in the final story, the rage of the Master erupts in an excess of verbiage and signaling.

We get a hint of Russell's state from the observation that police have chaperoned all conjugal visits (Mar. 4). Standing in for the wronged, enraged, silent husband, the reporter<sup>22</sup> now exacts revenge for having seen his own authorship usurped, filtering information about Connie through a mediating context of crushing censure. Abandoning its previous tone of melodrama and concern, the reporter's voice on March 4 turns flip, satirical, and belittling, recasting events in an entirely new light. Whereas her absence signified the infantilized (inert) victim, Connie's presence is now everywhere inscribed with the code of the "bad woman" – a harlot who fluffs her dyed red hair and smiles, calling life "one big party."

"Connie Lindburg wasn't missing," the text sneers. "She was having the time of her life." "Fantasy" appears six times in this context, contrasted with four instances of "responsibility" flouted. Connie "gave no explanation," but "decided to vanish" because she "says she needed a break. So she took one. Didn't tell a soul. Just walked away from everything." The "missing tourist" in the February 14 headline is now a "missing mother" – *mere manquee*. "I am a better mother and will be a better mother when I return," Connie offers, to which the text thunders back, "If she returns. If they take her back." Unable to contain itself within the mandated bounds of objectivity, the Master's rage spills over into a superfluous sidebar ("Many have fantasy, but few run away," March 4), which serves no discernible purpose other than to condemn.

Connie's appearance as an active agent, in other words, can

mean only that she is the criminal who "stole" the missing Wife and Mother. Her transgression of these roles is implicit: While there is no overt reference to sex, "Strangers had taken her to restaurants. She had sung karaoke. Three people in a Temple Valley townhouse had invited her to move in and she had, for \$150 a month, even though she didn't have a job" (Mar. 4). If this were a movie, we would read a clear romantic interest to come from the phrasing of this invitation and agreement.

In fact, if this text were a movie, it would belong to the genre that includes Desperately Seeking Susan or Thelma and Louise as chronicles of bored suburban housewife on an adventure. Connie tries to assign a *spiritual* connotation to her "journey," but the insistent repetition of "fantasy," "escape," "escapism" in this context evoke something more along the lines of the female road movie – a code prefigured by the "female cab driver" (Feb. 14) who initiates her odyssey (why are we told she is female?). Seen through the overt ideology supplied by the male frame, Connie appears to be operating at a level of naive romantic fantasy where Hawai'i equals Happy Isles, a place to "live your dream," a place to shed old roles along with your clothes, like the Japanese tourists who buy bright clothing to wear only during their stay here, because they can.

As tropical island "getaway" marketed by the tourism industry, this Hawai'i belongs squarely within the dominant repertory of symbols as "the difference that allows the culture to represent itself against." Like the category Woman, the tropical vacation

rewards and opposes work. Implied in this identification is the understanding that when the vacation is over, one goes home, life returns to normal. Connie's refusal to abide by this rule represents the transgression for which she must be punished.

At a subconscious level, however, the association of Hawai'i with leisure, reward, the domain of home, love – and thus Woman<sup>23</sup> – speaks to a far greater anxiety that illuminates the swift suppression of Connie's claim to independence. The figure of "white man's property stolen" resonates in the imaginary register with the imminent potential loss of the Hawaiian islands to native calls for sovereignty. In both cases, there is a question of property rights and usurped productive capacity.

Like Woman, the tropical island getaway serves to concretize values suppressed and denied by the capitalist system, such as the exotic, primitive, natural, and mysterious.<sup>24</sup> In the space opened up by colonization and the suppression of native culture, a repertoire of manufactured images has been assigned to Hawai'i as commodity. Just as Connie's body is easily made the site of the signifiers Wife and Mother, the islands become a travel destination for the welcoming embrace of aloha, girls in grass skirts, frothy fruit drinks served in coconut halves by happy natives – the white man's right and reward. As Williamson expresses the equation, "What is taken away in reality... is re-presented in image and ideology so that it *stands for itself* after it has actually ceased to exist." In both cases, Woman and Island, the insistence on symbolic difference serves to obscure the

real productive relationship: The Master, IBM employee, capitalism, grows rich on the labor of the Other while seizing control of the imagery, robbing "those 'primitives' – women and foreigners... of their own meanings and speech."<sup>25</sup>

Who is stealing from whom? The crime report never asks this question, as the discourse from the outset denies Woman autonomy (as body) and agency (through enslavement). To play out the logic of Connie-as-island, the woman cannot be given independence, *regardless* of the merits of her legal claims to sovereignty, because she, like Hawai'i, is financially dependent ("begging" Russell for financial support, March 4). Enchanted by the utopian rhetoric of a dark-skinned opportunist, the native will become a burden to society unless she recognizes when the "party" is over.

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At the very moment Connie is "found" by the reports, she is lost to me again. We never get anything but substitutes. Indeed, in the Master's text, woman is "almost always a 'space' of some kind (over which the narrative has lost control)... a reading effect or woman-in-effect who lacks stability and the permanence of historical identity."<sup>26</sup>

How strangely liberating. If woman is, as Roland Barthes put it, "a metaphor without brakes," "Connie Lindburg" will eventually come to signify my own transformation. It's probably no accident this story caught my attention as I was contemplating quitting my job, leaving journalism, staying in Hawai'i, and writing a new kind of

existence beyond the protective frameworks provided by job and mate. "Missing" is a temporary identity, falsified as soon as it is uttered. In the space left by its silence, a vast and boundless freedom.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Tom Koch, News as Myth: Fact and Context in Journalism (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 90.

<sup>2</sup>"Missing tourist's trail takes weird twists: Kin trace woman to Ala Moana, Waimanalo before she vanishes," Honolulu Advertiser, Feb. 14, 1996, A-1;

"Missing Illinois woman baffles both family and authorities here: Kin fear she had breakdown," *ibid.*, Feb. 15, 1996, A-10;

"Bank video shows missing wife: ATM camera captures elusive tourist," *ibid.*, A-3;

"Missing' woman just wants away from family: Massive search finds mother from Illinois just fine," *ibid.*, Feb. 18, 1996, B-25;

"Life's a party for woman who vanished," *ibid.*, March 4, 1996, A-1;

"Many have fantasy, but few run away," *ibid.*, A-2.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, Feb. 14, Feb. 15, Feb. 17, Feb. 18.

<sup>4</sup>Even the name of the homeless man they interview – Willard *Stalker* – projects an image of their fears for this body, while disguising the fact that it is *they* who are stalking their sister-in-law. Meanwhile, the reluctant Missing Persons Unit police officer, Joseph *Self*, hints at another kind of search taking place in the text.

<sup>5</sup>"Missing woman's credit card used," Honolulu Star-

Bulletin, Feb. 16, 1996, A-4. The evening paper, of much smaller circulation, ignored the Connie Lindburg story except for a few police-generated briefs – the more orthodox treatment of this type of incident. Whether the Bulletin recognized that it could not equal the competition (as Advertiser editors claimed) or saw problems with giving the case more attention, I do not know. Connie Lindburg's disappearance did not merit mention in the paper of record back home, the Chicago Tribune.

<sup>6</sup>Advertiser, Feb. 14, Feb. 17, Feb. 18.

<sup>7</sup>Laura E. Donaldson, "(ex)Changing (wo)Man: Towards a Materialist-Feminist Semiotics," Cultural Critique 11 (Winter 1988-89): 5-23.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 10. From Luce Irigaray, "Women on the Market," *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985): 175

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>10</sup>The image of a doll comes to mind with the dressing and undressing of Connie in the text, where she is alternately freezing cold (Advertiser, Feb. 14); gives away a watch and bracelet (*ibid.*); is photographed wearing a sleeveless blouse and a sweater around her neck ("Police confirm Illinois woman used ATM card," Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Feb. 17, 1996, A-4); fights with Russell over a sarong (Advertiser, March 4); is seen nude and screaming (*ibid.*, Feb. 14, Feb. 17, Mar. 4). There is also a fascination with her hair, which is transformed from a prim Victorian bun in the Feb. 14 photo to a wild frizz on Feb. 17 to tinted red on Mar. 4. But mostly it is something about the emotions set up in relation to Connie that



reminds me of the way children play with dolls – from our desire to possess her, to our jealousy over those who have seen her, to the ultimate disregard for her in the final story, similar to the way a child tosses away a favorite doll in disgust.

<sup>11</sup>Barbara Ehrenreich, Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989). Ehrenreich sees this as the defining anxiety of middle-class values and culture.

<sup>12</sup>Recall that Chopra is marketing manager to former Beatles guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who introduced Transcendental Meditation to the United States. The Indian-born physician is best known for his books advocating Ayurvedic principles, and for his Quantum Healing seminars conducted at an Ayurvedic center owned by the Maharishi.

<sup>13</sup>Judith Williamson, "Woman Is an Island: Femininity and Colonization," in Tania Modleski, ed., Studies in Entertainment (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), 112.

<sup>14</sup>Deepak Chopra, The Way of the Wizard: Twenty Spiritual Lessons in Creating the Life You Want (New York: Harmony Books, 1975). The teachings of "the wizard," Merlin, focus on the need to rid oneself of self-image (the ego); to see things fresh, without names or expectations; to see God/self/friend in everything. You are not your thoughts, but the One who reads/hears/thinks. You are timeless being, energy, which has no beginning or end. We exist in eternity; time and space are illusions. Separation exists only in language; it is an illusion of ego. Setting it aside, we can touch

universal consciousness. In detachment lies true freedom. "Every state of being ... depends on the observer," according to Chopra's wizard (32). "You are the world. When you transform yourself, the world you live in will also be transformed" (80).

<sup>15</sup>Kaja Silverman defines Jacques Derrida's concept of the central transcendental signified as "a term which is essential to the articulation of a given signifying system, but which is itself understood as existing independently of that system." Examples include God, or Chopra's pure consciousness.

"The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and play of signification indefinitely." Kaja Silverman, The Subject of Semiotics (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 32-3; Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 20.

<sup>16</sup>Jacques Lacan, "The Subject and the Other: Alienation," The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1978), 218.

<sup>17</sup>Chopra, 35.

<sup>18</sup>Silverman, 176.

<sup>19</sup>Chopra, 69.

<sup>20</sup>Jenijoy LaBelle, Herself Beheld: The Literature of the Looking Glass (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988). In many of the cases she found, however, the fractured self is not made whole again.

<sup>21</sup>Barbara Hill Regney, Madness and Sexual Politics in the Feminist Novel: Studies in Bronte, Woolf, Lessing and Atwood (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 120-122.

<sup>22</sup>By "reporter" I am referring to the textual entity rather than the actual writer(s), not least because news copy passes through so many hands that it's impossible to say which meanings originate with whom – even if readers could reach a single understanding, which of course they do not.

<sup>23</sup>Williamson, 112.

<sup>24</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>Alice Jardine, Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 25.

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