

Electronic Media and the Feminine in the National Security Regime

The Manchurian Candidate before and after 9/11

By Mark E. Wildermuth

Abstract: The 1962 and 2004 versions of *The Manchurian Candidate*, although critical of the oppressive national security states of their times, fail to interrogate the sexist epistemic informing those states. They thereby unwittingly support the ideology informing regimes that, as Iris Marion Young indicates, typify “a logic of masculinist protection” that reduces citizens to the roles of helpless women and children. Both films revive a sexist trope that as Jeffrey Sconce says, equates “femininity, electronic presence, and the televisual” with “oblivion,” and a “loathsome passivity” associated with brainwashing and control of the (feminized) masses. By embedding itself in countercultural rhetorics that express concern for the impact of electronic media on the masses, this trope disguises the militant antifeminist thrust of its logic and finds renewed life in visual representations that are not as subversive as they seem.

Keywords: 9/11, Cold War film, feminism and the media, informatics, the posthuman, security regimes.

Since its release in 1962, John Frankenheimer’s *The Manchurian Candidate* has been hailed by scholars such as Stephen Whitfield and Margot Henrikson as an effective

satire of McCarthyism and as a successful critique of the hypocritical cold war consensus that could not sustain a lucid ideological distinction between the security regimes of the East and those of the West (see also Krajewski; Rogin). However, in the wake of such studies as Robert Corber’s *In the Name of National Security*, which demonstrated how the cold war consensus linked communism to internal security threats such as women, gays, and other underrepresented social groups, attention has shifted to the film’s gender subtexts. Hence, Tony Jackson’s 2000 study concludes that the film “imagines masculinized women and feminized men to be the real source of cultural failure” (6) in concurrence with misogynistic cultural attitudes popularized after World War II by Philip Wylie and others. Likewise, Kevin Ohi’s 2005 queer studies approach to the film points to the threatening nature of femininity and eroticism in this film that argues that even “heterosexual flirtation is [. . .] potentially indistinguishable from mind control” (163).

Indeed, the film reinforces sexist tropes that denigrate the feminine and the feminization of mass culture, as does its successor, Jonathan Demme’s 2004 version of *The Manchurian Candidate*. Both films, although critical of the potentially oppressive national security states of their respective times, fail to interro-

gate the sexist epistemic informing those states’ politics and thereby unwittingly support the ideology informing regimes that, as Iris Marion Young indicates, typify “a logic of masculinist protection” that reduces citizens to the roles of helpless women and children (223–25). Both films revive a sexist trope that Lynn Spigel and Jeffrey Sconce identify in the postwar era; one that, as Sconce says, equates “femininity, electronic presence, and the televisual” with “oblivion” and a “loathsome passivity” associated with brainwashing and control of the (irrational and feminized) masses (153–54). Both films argue that electronic media are linked to the feminine as a dangerous subversive force that configures signs as disembodied, self-referential icons that can manipulate the subconscious minds of the masses—using a feminized informatics that stands in stark contrast to masculinized norms of communication that link the sign with the objectified referent.

Although the misogynistic trope’s vigor is evident in the first film, its renewal and intensity are equally clear in the second—a product of a new post-9/11 security regime culture that, as James Berger says in a recent *PMLA* article, often denigrates multivalency in its postapocalyptic rhetoric in which “the world of semantical and moral ambiguity has [. . .] been swept away” because the “logic and desire of terror-

ism and antiterrorism” seek “to restore [. . .] perfect correspondence between word and thing” to assert cultural hegemony (343). Moreover, as Berger argues in *After the End*, such postapocalyptic cultural tropes also typically denigrate feminism and femininity: “post-apocalypse in fiction” sometimes “causes a reversion to a kind of natural aristocracy, in which such decadent luxuries as feminism, democracy, and social justice must be jettisoned in favor of more natural values more suited to survival” (8). Moreover, the “problematic position of [. . .] women’s sexuality is an enduring feature of apocalyptic discourse,” for “there is an important strand of apocalyptic imagining that seeks to destroy the world expressly in order to eliminate female sexuality” (11). Thus, this context helps explain the survival of this misogynistic trope in our culture despite the feminist critique of sexism in media. By embedding itself in countercultural rhetorics that express concern for the impact of media on the masses, this trope disguises the antifeminist thrust of its logic and finds renewed life in visual representations that are not as subversive as they seem.

Misogyny and Mass Media in *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962)

Before the rise of the 9/11 regime’s postapocalyptic culture, the misogynist trope was nurtured in earlier instantiations of media cultures that similarly denigrated the masses and the feminine. Andreas Huyssen argues that mass culture was often gendered as feminine in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries with the purpose of denigrating the mass culture industry. Thus, the “fear of the masses [. . .] is always the fear of woman, a fear [. . .] of the unconscious, of sexuality, of the loss of identity, and stable ego boundaries in the mass” (52). Nevertheless, with the coming of postmodernism, “such notions belong to another age” for after “the feminist critique of [. . .] sexism in television” and other media, and with the political and social successes of women, “the old rhetoric has lost its persuasive power” (62).

Be that as it may, the trope, as Spiegel’s scholarship indicates, did survive

in the twentieth century. Spiegel shows that Wylie’s 1942 book *Generation of Vipers* indicated that “American society was suffering from an ailment called ‘momism’” [a cultural motif cited as a major influence on *The Manchurian Candidate* by post-1980s film scholars] in which “American women had become overbearing, domineering mothers who turned their sons and husbands into weak-kneed fools” (51). Moreover, they “had somehow gained control of the airwaves,” using radio to control the minds of the now feminized masses (51). In the 1955 edition of his book, Wylie claimed a new menace, television, “would [. . .] turn men into female-dominated dupes” (52). It is therefore not surprising that Wylie, as Michael Paul Rogin says, would eventually lay the blame of McCarthyism at the feet of the momist televisual conspiracy (243).

Wylie’s philosophy, however, as Spiegel also shows, was only the tip of a larger mediated cultural iceberg. It was a widely held notion during the 1940s and 1950s that the new electronic media, and television in particular, “threatened to contaminate masculinity, to make men sick with the ‘disease’ of femininity” (50–51). Linked to this “disease” is the larger cultural trope identified by Huyssen that extended, according to Spiegel, into the postwar era: “Mass amusements are thought to encourage passivity, and they have often been represented in terms of penetration, consumption, and escape” (51). Hence, “Broadcasting [. . .] was shown to disrupt the normative patterns of patriarchal (high) culture and to turn ‘real men’ into passive homebodies” (51).

As Sconce has shown, these concerns about the impact of the media on human behavior link cultural theory with popular entertainment in the cultures of late-modern and postmodern society. Sconce shows that the impact of mass media (electronic presence) on our culture is enormous; indeed, “postmodern [cultural] theory is in itself simply another in a long series of occult fantasies inspired by electronic media.” Hence where “there was once the ‘real,’ there is now only the electronic generation and circulation of almost supernatural simulations” (170). After World

War II, the world consists of “increasingly schizophrenic subjectivities. [. . .] Where there was once ‘meaning,’ ‘history,’ and a solid realm of ‘signifieds,’ there is now only a haunted world of vacant and shifting signifiers” where “‘the sign *is* everything but *stands* for nothing” (171; emphasis in original).

Thus, after the war, there emerged large implications, epistemologically and culturally, for the confusion of electronic (mass-mediated) space and reality spaces, as well as the gendered boundaries that were associated with them, implications reflected in many aspects of contemporary culture. The blurring of electronic and reality spaces, plus the deconstruction of the public and the private, have become major motifs in the cultural schemas of postmodernism. As Sconce shows, this is evident in Jean Baudrillard’s descriptions of the implosive quality of social space in postmodern life, where the exterior and the interior no longer can be distinguished (182). This is also discernible in postmodern conceptualizations of informatics, as described by N. Katherine Hayles. For Hayles, postmodern informatics leads to the “denaturing” of human subjects, the core of what she and others term the *posthuman*—the deconstruction of the human subject on the grounds that the main elements of human experience (language, context, space, and time) are cultural constructs rather than natural creations (265). Baudrillard’s theory that human beings now live in a culture of simulation, says Hayles, parallels similar posthuman conceptualizations of space where “context is seen as a construction to be manipulated rather than a preexisting condition” (274). “Like cyberspace, [Baudrillard’s conception of] the hyper-real [simulation] presupposes a radical erosion of context” leading to a denatured reconfiguration of spaces (275–76). In short, a new anxiety emerges in postwar informatics over the denaturing of context, language, time, and space that adds to the isolation and alienation of the human subject that must struggle to cohere. As Hayles asks, what do these perceptions of our mediated age tell us “if not that the disappearance of a stable, universal context *is the context*

for postmodern culture?" (272; emphasis in original).

Anxiety over denaturing shapes the paranoid sexist rhetoric of *The Manchurian Candidate*. Its sexist trope that links the feminine with mass media reflects a fear that in such a mediated culture, boundaries of public and private, real and unreal, masculine and feminine will disappear along with the now denatured and similarly deconstructed figures of space, context, and identity. The film's conceptualization of women reflects the denaturing process—as purveyors of the collapse of these distinctions, women “unnaturally” usurp the masculine public sphere via a nonrepresentational discourse that, like the brainwashing techniques of their Asiatic Communist doubles, allows them to subvert the consciousness by appealing to the subconscious mind. They replace masculinized referential public discourse with a demonized, posthuman semiotic of mediated totalitarianism. The sign is emptied of its meaning to serve the purposes of a totalitarian code, a monopoly of meaning; as Baudrillard says, “The sign [. . .] approaches its true structural limit which is to refer back only to other signs. All reality then becomes the place of [. . .] manipulation, of a structural simulation” (128). The self-referential sign becomes the basis of the misogynist trope in *The Manchurian Candidate* of 1962 that associates it with the denatured, oppressive informatics of femininity and totalitarianism.

The trope appears throughout Frankenheimer's film, and its presence can be illustrated with select scenes that establish the critique of feminized media. It is evident in the brainwashing scenes in Manchuria that link the feminine, mass media, and mind control via multiple cuts that show how men can be manipulated when contexts can be constructed and deconstructed at will as the conscious mind, identity, and conscience are subverted through the mediated manipulation of the subconscious. Nothing is stable in this denatured space created by the jarring cuts; Yen-lo of the Pavlov Institute, the architect of this brainwashing, appears in both a lecture hall and in a hotel with a women's garden club; here the audi-

ence is sometimes composed of garden club ladies and sometimes Communist servicemen. It is the perfect place to construct assassins—without contexts, without physically stable boundaries, how can one define oneself as a subject, or resist? The American soldiers are oblivious to referents and contexts; they sit calmly while Yen-lo instructs Raymond Shaw (Laurence Harvey) to kill fellow soldiers before the audience of totalitarian enemies disguised by Yen-lo's brainwashing techniques as benign matriarchs attending a lecture on hydrangeas.

The brainwashing scenes show how easily behavior can be manipulated when the sign's reference has been destroyed and, with it, meaning, in a denatured space among denatured subjects where information and identity are made infinitely malleable. Moreover, it foreshadows the film's examination of television as a coercive medium. Brainwashing and television are connected when Yen-lo says that the “bizarre tobacco substitutes” in the American soldiers' cigarettes make them effective mind-control devices because they “[t]aste good—like a cigarette should,” an allusion to the then current commercial for Winston cigarettes. The allusion to commercials is fitting because, as Hayles says, commercial interruptions and disjunctive information flow create the impression in the televisual realm that information exists independent of any context stabilizing reference and meaning. Yen-lo creates such a denatured space where men such as Bennett Marco (Frank Sinatra) and Raymond lose any capacity for rational thought or self-control under the influence of the seemingly benevolent maternal Communists.

In a similarly significant scene later in the film, the feminized media's role in deconstructing space and context becomes even more evident when Raymond's stepfather, Senator Johnny Iselin (James Gregory), under the guidance of his wife (Angela Lansbury), challenges the Secretary of Defense whom Ben now serves as liaison. Here, a frame-within-the-frame technique establishes the feminine menace even more clearly as Mrs. Iselin symbolizes the power of

feminized media to exert control over the masses. The scene pointedly illustrates the medium's coercive tendencies as the Senator's assault on the secretary is presented as a bizarre disruption of physical space. In the hearing room, Johnny initially appears to be a small figure among many as he assails the secretary, but on the TV screen, in the middle ground of the shot, he is the only person visible in close-up, and he clearly dominates the scene. The secretary is seen only in long shot on the TV screen from a higher angle that makes him look impotent—his voice is barely audible against Johnny, who is shouting into the microphone, “There will be no covering up,” addressing the mass audience via the electronic medium—unlike the secretary who still addresses only the audience in the room. The entire presentation is schizoid: nothing on the TV screen in the room looks like the space of the hearing room itself.

A shot of Mrs. Iselin precedes this scene; she looms in the foreground, anticipating her husband's carefully orchestrated words about Communist conspirators in the government and subsequently hustling him out of the room. The point is clear: a medium that denatures space, time, and context can render information into something infinitely malleable and thereby manipulative because it exists independently of a physical referent, a stable frame of reference, and anything like an objective truth. Images and the signs they mediate have primacy over things; hence the danger. It all happens under the auspices of Mrs. Iselin who is linked in several ways with the totalitarian menace. She has, after all, usurped the masculine space of public rational discourse with the “unnatural” (or denatured) assertion of her influence via television that allows her to manipulate perception as deftly as Yen-lo manipulates the minds of her son and his comrades. In later scenes, she scripts all of Johnny's performances to manipulate the media and the American people in preparation for her bid for power that she claims will make “martial law look like anarchy” when her brainwashed son kills the presidential candidate and Johnny takes his place—after making the speech that

she says will rally a “nation of television viewers into hysteria” that will sweep her and her husband into the White House.

Even the female protagonists in the film are associated with brainwashing techniques and self-referential signs. This is made clear in the scene on the train where Ben and Rosie (Janet Leigh) meet for the first time. Ben is in the dining car where Rosie observes his nervous attempts to smoke a cigarette—which leads him to seek privacy in a passageway between two train cars. But it is a strangely configured space; Ben presses himself up against a wall in the foreground, while in the background, the landscape is a furious blur through another frame, a window. It is as if we see an objective correlative of the turmoil of Ben’s inner being—as if this image within the image, like the TV screen earlier, represents a window on two worlds, the inner and the outer, a violation of this man’s need to find privacy and stability that cannot be realized in this world where contexts are as fluid as the landscape outside.

Rosie casually invades this already deconstructed space as she steps into the frame with Ben and associates herself with this denatured environment by positioning herself squarely in the frame of the exterior world that is his interior, offering him a cigarette (a Winston?) and further violating the sanctity of space by pointing out “Maryland is a beautiful state” as the struggling, logocentric Ben says, “This is Delaware.” She holds her denatured ground and says, “Nevertheless, Maryland is a beautiful state.” Her frequent puns (she tells him anyone in railroads is really in the “railway line”), non sequiturs (she says she was one of the original Chinese laborers who worked on the railroad) and repetitions (used to brainwash him into remembering her name, address, and telephone number) all ally her with the feminine menace, as does her profession. She is “production assistant for a man named Justin who had two hits last season,” and she lives near the “Museum of Modern Art—of which I am a ‘Tea Privileges’ member.” This dialogue links her to the media culture industry (music) and another aspect

of momism that Spigel describes: “the threat of femininity could just as easily be associated with the foreign [. . .] threat of both European and American modern art” (279).

Indeed, both Rosie and Josie, Raymond’s lover (Leslie Parrish), are linked to such mind-control motifs. Josie temporarily undoes the control of the mother, for example, by wearing a costume of the red queen, which is associated with the brainwashing technique involving his “dearly loved and dearly hated mother,” as Yen-lo describes her. Nevertheless, these women are not seen as menacing as the mother, as they do help the male protagonists—but not because, as film critic Bruce Krajewski avers, they represent an alternative to everyday discourse used to brainwash them (228). It is not everyday discourse that brainwashes men; rather, it is the use of mediated icons and symbols to subvert reason through self-referential semiotics that replace the icon’s capacity to point unambiguously to things and ideas. Thus, Rosie and Josie help the male protagonists when they increase Ben’s (and the audience’s) awareness of the self-referential semiotics of the subconscious in a less threatening context that later allows Ben—with the help of an Army Intelligence psychiatrist—to analyze its methods and thus resist the technique. Although both women are brainwashers, they clearly accept a more traditional role than Mrs. Iselin, even though they physically resemble her, as if they were serialized signs in her feminized semiotic. They are the key to establishing how the links work via their playful, erotic invasion of the male territorial space that does not lead to public hegemony as in Mrs. Iselin’s effort to acquire power. She, in turn, can only be stopped by Ben’s efforts to provide Raymond with a rationale and means to reestablish his masculine role at the end of the film when he destroys her and makes the icon of the Medal of Honor a true sign of masculine valor and integrity rather than a self-referential figure enabling the enemy to deploy Raymond as an assassin.

Thus, the male protagonists, Raymond and Ben, use what they learn about the empire of self-referential

signs to strike back. Ben takes control; holding a false deck before Raymond, he seems to emphasize the emptiness of the feminized sign by underscoring its cheap serialized quality, its utter lack of substance. They are so many cue cards like the ones Johnny uses, the ones that come into view after Ben remembers “that fat cat [Yen-lo] standin’ there like Fu Manchu” and says that the red queen associated with the mother is the “second key” to clearing the mechanism in Raymond’s mind. It is thus that Ben says “this is me, Marco talking,” and he and fifty-two queens are “tearin’ up the joint” and taking out all of the links via this masculine discourse that puts these icons and their feminized controllers into their place. Yes, the film suggests, these men may live in a world of empty signs, but they can play along with it, using its own tactic of denatured simulation to resist.

Thus, Raymond pretends in the end to play the role of his mother’s dupe and simulates conformity to her will, but assassinates the Iselins instead of the presidential candidate. Afterward, he calmly dons the Medal of Honor, which he now has earned. He thereby reasserts the hegemony of the masculinist sign—the medal speaks the truth now unambiguously; the sign reflects the heroic significance of his sacrifice realized in his suicide and eulogized by Ben. But Ben’s speech raises questions about the long-term efficacy of Raymond’s gesture. Ben loses control while delivering it, and, dissolving into tears like a stereotypical woman, can give only irrational utterance of the body as he sobs, “Hell, *hell!*” Ben and Raymond have not erased the larger cultural threat; the mediated mechanism of oppression can still be used to destroy men like Ben and Raymond who are the only characters in the film that fully understand the nature of the evil they combated.

A New Security Regime Film Revives the Trope

As if in rejoinder to this pessimistic ending, the 2004 remake reiterates the misogynist trope in a context where the only evident change is in the variety of information technologies to be associ-

ated with the feminine. At the center of the maelstrom is once again, the mother, now Senator Eleanor Prentiss Shaw (Meryl Streep), who has not remarried but instead is free to dominate Raymond and the other men in her life with the help of information systems that range from the televisual to the biogenetic, as she collaborates with Manchurian Global, the firm that is associated with a new but still feminized informatics of domination. This time, she requires no red queen of diamonds to condition her son; merely the sound of her voice—usually over a telephone—is enough to trigger the conditioning that gives her control not only over Raymond (Liev Schreiber) but over Ben (Denzel Washington) as well.

Raymond is controlled by the media and his mother, which cultivates his self-contempt and scorn for the masses. He feels Ben should not envy him because he is not a real man; Raymond sees himself “posing and grinning like a goddam sock puppet” before the media because his mother has taken his identity, the thing no one can see, “what my mother has made me—a Prentiss—ferociously a Prentiss.” He speaks these words after seeing a photo of an Iraqi woman in traditional black garb with veil, her hand over her mouth. Raymond then holds up a photo of himself and his mother on the cover of *Fortune*, which features the phrase “Shaw and Shaw,” linking him to his mother in the oppressive mediated milieu.

This dialogue connects to earlier scenes in the film where the link between the feminine and media is made horrifyingly clear. Ben’s fellow serviceman Al Melvin shows him a scrapbook of images and diary entries—proof that they were brainwashed to think that Raymond was a hero. Al also reveals a self-portrait in which his face is covered with bizarre calligraphy, and his hair is long and straight, giving him a feminine appearance.

The image begins to make sense only when Ben, after watching Raymond on TV and seeing another GI speak of him as the “kindest, bravest” man he has ever known, mouths the same words and then dreams about the hallucinogenic conditioning that prompted this

hero worship of Raymond. Amidst the cacophony of images, two immediately stand out: a shot of Al holding a television with the image of his own head on the screen; and images of Iraqi women, one holding an enormous red tomato and praising the “revolutionary science of biogenetics” and another holding a red human brain and saying, “note the complexity of the frontal lobe,” while others chant “bravest, warmest” in the background. The women wear traditional burkas but their faces are covered in calligraphy rather than by veils—echoing Al’s self-portrait.

The images set up the collusion among informatics, the feminine, and what Edward Said identified as the “Oriental threat.”¹ The bioengineering of Atticus Noyle, who began his work manipulating genes in tomatoes in South Africa, enabled the brainwashing. The tomato and the television in the scene are thus equated with manipulation of information that creates the image of Raymond as a hero. The Iraqi women, through their dress and manner, symbolize enslavement to radical Islam. The calligraphy on their faces symbolizes the veil of informatics used to manipulate belief just as the genes in the experiment are manipulated to control the human subject, as if the boundaries of identity were deconstructed—reinforcing the same hysterical drive for control that possesses the Ayatollahs, greedy Global Manchurian businessmen, and moms who run for the Senate.

As in the first film, other female characters conform to the sexist ethos informing the mother’s villainy. Josie is a mere cipher in this version, appearing in only two scenes (including the one in which Raymond murders her), and Rosie is configured in a conflicted fashion that underscores her association with feminized informatics. Ostensibly an ally of Ben’s, she purportedly possesses a more contemporary style of agency than the earlier Rosie as an African American federal investigator. Nevertheless, she proves to be a character of ambiguous value. When Ben first meets her on a train, she engages in the odd banter of the first film, and the visual treatment of her character, plus the recurring image of the window with

its whirring landscape, create the same bizarre, denaturing effect. Ben first sees not Rosie but the civilian contractor who betrayed him in Iraq. The man disappears, and Rosie, peeking from behind the train seats (and dressed in dark apparel recalling the Iraqi women in the dream sequences), seems almost to take his place. She is briefly linked to the brainwashing scenes when Ben imagines he sees blood pouring from her forehead like an American soldier he was forced to shoot in Iraq. When she asks Ben, “Why not reach out and touch someone?”—alluding to the old AT&T ad—she links herself with Eleanor’s tendency to use telephonic and electronic communications to control people. Even more bizarrely, later in her apartment, Rosie offers Ben a glass of tomato juice.

Perhaps she is a “red” herring—at one point, it seems as if she is conducting surveillance for Manchurian Global—but the associations nevertheless reiterate the film’s take on questions of gender and informatics. This is especially noticeable in the film’s climax when Rosie cannot foil the assassination plot—that is Ben’s job, man’s work—and, more significantly, she shoots Ben just after he and Raymond have saved America. Moreover, she seems to collude in altering the videotapes of Ben so that it appears a Manchurian Global employee perpetrated the killing. This video doctoring is one of the film’s most conflicted gestures, as the manipulation of information via self-referential signs and images is equated with villainous behavior until the end where the message is that using informatics to distort reality and shape public opinion is acceptable if good men, real men—like Raymond and Ben—do the manipulation.

In the end, the film suggests that the solution is a masculinism associated with unambiguous discourse, what Raymond calls the ability to distinguish between “what is real and what is not.” This forms the basis of the masculine bond between not only Ben and Raymond but also between Ben and Thomas Jordan, the senator that rushes to their aid (Jon Voight). Thomas seems to trust Ben mainly because, as they

say in their conversation, both men know that battles are won “one bullet at a time.” Similarly, Raymond tells his mother that he trusts the paranoid Ben because in battle, he learned “he was a good man.” In an equally significant gesture, when Raymond speaks to Ben prior to the assassination, Raymond hands his Medal of Honor to Ben and says, “I don’t deserve this.” Despite the differences in their circumstances, the fortunate son and Ben are equals; their masculine bond seems stronger than the mother’s informatics of domination. Thus it is that, as Ben draws a bead on the presidential nominee, a single look from Raymond in the mindless crowd conveys a clear message to Ben—shoot mother and son both, and in this Oedipal spectacle of love and death, this effeminate society of informatics and its corrupt actions can be destroyed.

However, as in the first film, there is some question here of what the gesture means in the long run. In the film’s final scene, Ben says, “There’s always casualties in war”—perhaps implying that the first casualty here as in other wars is the truth. Whatever died here, this much is certain: the new *Manchurian Candidate*, a less stylistically proficient film than the first, is nevertheless a film that requires as much critical attention as its predecessor, raising renewed concern about the issue of gender in security regimes. Frankenheimer’s film, after all, was made a full year before Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* would alert men and women in America to the problematic nature of America’s gender politics. The 1962 film’s politics cannot be dismissed or excused, but they do reflect the consensus of an earlier time. Moreover, as a film that identified many postmodern issues that emerged from the shadow of the atomic bomb, it showed considerable sophistication. The same cannot be said of the second film—a film that offers little

value except confirmation that philosopher George Santayana was right when he said that those who forget history are condemned to repeat it. The second film clearly offers something else: evidence that interrogating a security regime is something unlikely to be conducted successfully unless its critics recognize the deeper significance of gender, identity, and cultural politics in the context of an informatics that warrants further study as the current security regime culture continues to evolve.

NOTE

1. Enemies from the Orient are often stereotyped as the antithesis of Western rationalist norms and as sexual threats. See Said 284–328. The 2004 version of *The Manchurian Candidate* focuses on Middle Eastern enemies associated with these types; the 1962 film makes similar associations with Asians and Eastern Europeans.

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