

***The Manchurian Candidate* by Richard Condon**

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Discussion Questions

1. In both film versions of *The Manchurian Candidate*, the main character is Ben Marco instead of Raymond Shaw. What differences between the novel form and the movie medium cause Marco to be a better choice as leading man than Raymond Shaw?
2. Raymond's mother was sexually abused as a child, and afterward uses sex as one method of controlling the men in her life. What other aspects of Eleanor Iselin's personality might have their roots in this early experience?
3. Despite Raymond's hatred for his mother, he gives in to her requests even while not under the influence of the mental trigger. He agrees to be photographed with her at the Medal of Honor ceremony, and even travels with her to Europe. What do you know about Raymond (or his mother) that would explain this?
4. The Communists control Raymond Shaw by means of subconscious mental conditioning, but Marco's meeting with General Jorgensen confirming Marco's promotion at the expense of his dignity illustrates that the US military can also cause men to behave as machines. In what ways is this a desirable mechanism? How might the army operate if an officer's orders were not binding? Other than the scene illustrated in this book, what dilemmas might arise because of this structure?
5. Compare the political climate of *The Manchurian Candidate* with the current situation in the United States. Is there a Senator Iselin in today's America? If so, who? If not, name a strong political personality known beyond his or her home state and describe the nature of this person's charisma and power
6. Popular psychology has grown in the time since Condon wrote *Manchurian Candidate*, and psychiatric medication has become a hot topic of debate. If Yen Lo were operating today, what would be his tools? How would he employ today's theories and drugs to control Raymond Shaw?