



Over at *The New York Times*, Frank Rich has consistently demonstrated more forethought and prescience than most of his fellow columnists, at the Times or elsewhere. One of the things I love about reading his columns online is that he understands the medium, and exploits it to full effect. His once-weekly columns are about 2½ times as long as the rest of the Murderer's Row cohort, but he further leverages that by peppering his columns with links to stories in other press, historical references, etc.

Today's column is a capital example, where he simultaneously takes on the mythology of John McCain's rectitude and the futility of his current line of attack on Barack Obama. I particularly like these two paragraphs:

In desperation to land some knockout punch, some McCain supporters, following the precedent of Clinton surrogates, are already invoking Mr. Obama's race, middle name and tourist snapshot in Somali dress to smear his patriotism. The idea is to make him a Manchurian candidate, a closet anti-Semitic jihadist trained in a madrassa run by, say, Louis Farrakhan.

What repeatedly goes unrecognized by all of Mr. Obama's opponents is that his political Kryptonite is the patriotism he offers in lieu of theirs. His upbeat notion of a yes-we-can national mobilization for the common good, however saccharine, speaks to the pride and idealism of Americans who are bone-weary of a patriotism defined exclusively by flag lapel pins, the fear of terrorism and the prospect of perpetual war.

[McCain Channels His Inner Hillary - New York Times](#)