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 Semiotics for Creators of Popular Culture  
 Semiotic Analysis #9  
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 Media: Eagle Eye | “We The People” - Clip



**Signifier:** The rows of television sets are one of the main signifiers. A long time member of the American household, TV's are purchased as a means to watch entertainment via network. Here the role is switched as the TV becomes the portal of which Jerry and Rachel find out they are being watched. The vast, never ending circular motif of ARIIA's design and chamber are contributing signifiers as well. Lastly, another subtle signifier is her resemblance to an eye.

**Signified:** The signified is ARIA, a government prototype intelligence computer. At first thought to be a person, it's revealed that she is a extremely intelligent surveillance tool.

**Overall Sign/Metaphor:** We are always being watched in a never ending cycle of surveillance that we can't escape. As we watch the television for amusement, the government watches us, collecting data for our personality profiles that can be called upon for later use.

**Image:** A dark circular room, several televisions projecting previously recorded surveillance footage and documents, a camera (off screen), and a huge circular dome with millions of golden glowing orbs.

**Symbol/Icon/ Index:**

**Television:** The TV was invented as a means for family's to watch movies and cable shows. It's a symbol of the American lifestyle. Yet here, it's original purpose has been perverted in a sense that the watchers have become the watched and their lifestyles invaded upon.

**The Chamber:** ARIIA's chamber resembles that of a magnified beehive. Circular, vast, and with cocoons of digital information stored all around her in the golden orbs. The TV room that she reveals herself in also seems to resemble a mini-hive as well as it still retains a bit of circular geometry. She's the queen bee and will not stop to get what she wants, even if that means enlisting and threatening ordinary citizens under the guise of the Preamble.

ARIIA's design resembles an eye and bears significance to the Eye of Providence. This is extremely significant since she sees all through the technology of the digital era.

**Denotation:** Here are two strangers watching parts of their lives play out on screen.

**Connotation:** ARIIA is revealing who and what she is. She's proving that she knows all about Jerry and Rachel and that nothing escapes her watchful eye. In return, they feel violated, as if there is no privacy in their life. It's pretty invasive.

**Diachronic/Synchronic Analysis:** This film was made in 2008. While the events in films are thought to be purely fictional, the facts of the film could be more realistic and closer to home. This could actually happen because of the digital and technological advancement of our time that acts like a double edge sword. While we're able to connect with loved ones, the networks connects with us as well and robs us of our privacy.

**Syntagmatic Analysis:** Jerry and Rachel have been through hell thus far and demand to know who ARIIA is and that she stop hiding. ARIIA doesn't argue and simply states she's not hiding and instructs them to go to a electronic store. It's in this store, this technological den, that she reveals who she is: a computer. All this time Jerry, Rachel, and the audience have had suspicions of an all powerful organization watching them from behind secret doors. Come to find out, its a machine that's been manipulating them.

Jerry realizes she's a computer and the scene that follows takes us to her chamber in Washington D.C. While ARIIA has revealed who/what she is, she didn't loose her power as the main antagonist but in fact gained more by belittling Jerry's personality in the scene to follow.

**Paradigmatic Analysis:** What if ARIIA was been an actual person? I think she would have lost her intimidation factor. It's the fact that she can't be seen that makes her intimidating. Her power lies in being able to see you while you can't see her. She claims she isn't hiding, and she's right.

**Intertextuality:** "We the People." ARIIA justifies her actions with the beginning statements of the Preamble. By enlisting ordinary citizens she plans to overthrow the current state of government. This text is so effective because one of the pivotal documents that our government has been founded upon. Now come to find out it's

being used for evil purposes is mind blowing. I remember getting chills in this scene because something pure has been corrupted.

**Codes:** We Are Everywhere: Through the various portals of technology, ARIIA is able to access vision from any device on a network. She's the "all seeing eye" that is always watching.

**Interpellation/Jingoism:** While not many of us have been called to service by extreme force, we are operating on the system of data gathering. ARIIA gathers her data from technology we use on a daily basis: email, social networking sites, and cellphones. We don't want to be the lucky ones ARIIA picks next but we don't want to give up our cellular pleasures.

Additionally, ARIIA threatened Jerry and Rachel with death to themselves and to ones they love. We can all relate to not wanting to lose our loved ones and ARIIA pulled from that protective instinct for force people into action.

**Ideology:** It's the in power of people to take action. ARIIA's twisted ideology of citizens acting on behalf of overthrowing the government puts them in danger but she protects them as well. In an earlier car chase scene, she was able to change all the traffic lights to green to allow Jerry and Rachel to escape the cops. While she protects them, she also enforces a "do or die" agreement threatening to harm them or their loved ones if they don't comply.

**Obfuscation:** ARIIA speaks with voice that's almost human, so that it's familiar and not robotic. She calls "activated" citizens from an unknown number. This allows her to connect with people on the initial activation because they will assume it's a person talking to them, not a computer manipulating them into action.

**Auteur Theory / Structuralism:** In the genre of thrillers, the greatest enemy is one you can't see and one you can't escape. ARIA doesn't reveal who she is until midway in the film, and even after she does so, she's virtually everywhere due to the world being linked to the internet. She's able to be everywhere at once and you can't escape her. This allows her to retain the power of the upper hand in keeping the audience on the edge of their seats.