

Bernie the Blue-Eyed Liar
Fooling myself about how to exist all by myself.
There was much I had missed.
—"Song for Susan," Crosby, Stills & Nash

When Sanders declares that banking reform “ain’t complicated” (even though it’s very, very complicated) or that Wall Street’s business model is “fraud and greed” (even though Wall Street is at the bedrock of the American economy), we don’t doubt he believes what he’s saying. Sanders believes in his policies; he has convinced himself we can have universal health care and free tuition at public colleges and universities, and that the American people will embrace democratic socialism. Sanders tells us what we want to hear, not because he thinks it will get him elected, but because he has already sold himself on what he believes.

In 1887’s *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche called this “blue-eyed lying”—a phrase directed at the German Empire’s Aryan, anti-Semitic politicians, whom he despised. “Our ‘good’ men do not lie,” he wrote. “The real lie, the genuine, determined, ‘honest’ lie ... would prove too tough and strong an article for them ... it would be asking them ... to learn to distinguish between ‘true’ and ‘false’ in their own selves.” Sanders is a virtuous liar—his heart is in the right place—but what makes him a liar is that he lets his heart persuade him of beliefs his head knows to be false.

WHAT DO ALL of our liars—who-would-be-president have in common? Two of them, Clinton and Cruz, are fairly traditional political liars, with Cruz taking the lead as the truly Machiavellian. Sanders and Trump are not so much straightforward liars as candidates with personalities that seem perversely truth-averse, though Trump clearly has the lead in truthiness.

In a contest between the Noble Liar (Clinton) and the Trickster (Cruz), I suspect the Trickster may take the day: He simply has more techniques at his disposal for manipulating the populace. The Noble Liar can be tripped up by the truth, but the Trickster can always twist it into a misleading form that will work to his advantage. The danger for the Trickster is that he lies so much that eventually he is flagrantly exposed as a liar, which is politically perilous.

When the Noble Liar (Clinton) faces the Bullshitter (Trump), the Noble Liar comes out ahead because she can use the truth against the Bullshitter. His ignorance in the face of facts will eventually be exposed to his shame because, at the end of the day, the average American has a good nose for bullshit.

If the Blue-Eyed Liar (Sanders) should face the Trickster (Cruz), watch out: The Blue-Eyed Liar depends on an ignorance of the truth for the maintenance of his sincerity, and the Trickster is skilled at deploying truth as a weapon whenever necessary. All the false beliefs of the Blue-Eyed Liar will be exposed by the Trickster, while the lies of the Trickster are not part of the rhetoric of the Blue-Eyed Liar.

But the most entertaining contest by far would be between the Bullshitter (Trump) and the Blue-Eyed Liar (Sanders). Rhetoric, passion, and sophistry would burst forth in a contest the likes of which we’ve only seen in *The World Series of Comedy*, or perhaps an episode of *The Apprentice*. I’d like to believe the Blue-Eyed Liar’s naive optimism would trump the Bullshitter’s feckless fearmongering. But that may be a blue-eyed lie of my own. 🐼

POLITICS

Who Is the Hillary Voter?

In this election season of discontent, the media has all but ignored Clinton’s supporters.

BY ERIC SASSON

WE HAVE HEARD much talk this cycle about the mood of our electorate. People are angry. They are sick of establishment politicians, and are gravitating toward outsiders, revolutionaries, people who are going to “turn this country around.” They are flocking to the polls in huge numbers to make their anger heard.

The media has saturated us with profiles of the voters who are turning out for these antiestablishment candidates. There is the Sanders voter, a white, social-media-savvy millennial sick of corporate oligarchies and paying student loans. There is the alienated, white, working-class Trump voter,



threatened by immigration and trade treaties and Muslims—someone far less interested in small government and the capital gains tax than the Republican donor class would like him to be. And there is the stridently conservative, small-government Cruz voter, a dedicated, God-fearing culture warrior.

The voter we almost never hear about, however, is the Clinton voter. Which is surprising, since Hillary Clinton has won more votes in the primaries than any other candidate so far. She has amassed over 2.4 million more votes than Sanders; over 1.1 million more votes than Trump. Clearly Clinton voters exist, yet there has been very little analysis of who they are or why they are showing up to vote for her. Sure, there has been talk of Clinton's dominance among African American voters, and, to a lesser extent, Hispanic voters. Her voters seem to skew older and more affluent. But these are demographics. (And even demographics have a hard time explaining her commanding win in Ohio, or her wins in Massachusetts and Missouri.) There is almost no discussion of what is motivating these voters. If anything, the media seems to think they are holding their noses as they vote for Hillary. As a recent *New York Times* article suggested, Clinton is winning “votes, not hearts.”

We never hear that Hillary Clinton has “momentum”—what she has is a “sizable delegate lead.” No one this cycle has described Clinton supporters as “fired up”—it's simply *not possible* that people are fired up for Hillary. No, what we gather about Clinton from the press is that she can't connect. She has

very high unfavorable ratings. People think she is dishonest and untrustworthy. She is not a gifted politician. She is a phony. Hated by so many. The list goes on.

Considering that narrative, one would expect Clinton to be faring far worse in the primaries. Instead, she currently holds a popular vote and delegate lead over Sanders that far surpasses Obama's lead over her at this point in the race in 2008.

This is no accident. An examination of Clinton voters and their motivations might reveal that the narrative most media outlets have been feeding us this election cycle is dubious at best. Because if the biggest vote-getter of either party is Hillary—by a large margin—then that suggests the electorate is not necessarily as angry as pundits claim. It further suggests that perhaps some people are tired of hearing about how angry they are, and are quietly asserting their opinions at the ballot box. If Democrats are so angry, Clinton would not be in the position she is in today. Is it really so far-fetched to claim that quite a few Democrats aren't voting for Sanders precisely because he seems angry? Which isn't to suggest that people aren't angry—certainly many Republican primary voters seem to be. Rather, it is to suggest that voters who aren't angry are still showing up at the polls, despite being ignored in news stories.

Of course, angry voters make for sexier clickbait. So it's not too surprising that we're not seeing front-page headlines that scream, “SATISFIED OBAMA SUPPORTERS SHOW UP IN DROVES.” Furthermore, Trump and Sanders have seen enormous

If anything, the media seems to think people are holding their noses as they vote for Hillary.

crowds at their rallies, and exuberant support on social media platforms.

So perhaps Clinton voters don't show up at rallies so much. Perhaps they are a bit less passionate on Facebook, share fewer articles, give less money to their candidate (she does have a super PAC, after all). But what they are doing is perhaps the only thing that actually matters in an election. They are showing up to vote—in numbers that no other candidate can boast.

It's certainly curious to presume, as many do, that Clinton's supporters are somehow less enthusiastic

2000

“Clinton shrugged off the carpetbagger label and built her historic victory in the New York Senate race on the strength of her appeal to women, minorities, Jews, union members, moderates, and urban voters.” —*New York Daily News*, November 8, 2000.

2006

“I figure if she can win over Republican senators (and Bush staffers), she can probably win over 30,000 more voters in Ohio.” —David Brooks in *The New York Times*, March 12, 2006.

2008

“Our white targets are slightly more male than female, and definitely skew under age 50. ... About 20 percent of all whites are still movable to Clinton.” —April 2008 strategy memo for the Clinton campaign.

2016

"Some Democratic officials and pollsters say they fear that without a stronger strategy, Mrs. Clinton could perform as poorly among white men as Walter Mondale." —*The New York Times*, March 17, 2016.

than those of Sanders. How is enthusiasm measured, if not by actual vote count? And they are voting despite the media narrative surrounding their candidate, despite hearing very little about themselves in the media, despite her “damn” emails, despite Benghazi, despite her low Gallup favorables, and despite how everyone else is “Feeling the Bern.” If anything, Clinton might need to thank the press for consistently underestimating her. Perhaps this is why her supporters are coming out for her in such strength: to assert their existence in the face of a narrative that both overlooks them and disparages their candidate.

This, then, is the one thing the Clinton voter has in common with the Trump voter: a refusal to buy into the prevailing wisdom about their candidate. We always hear about how Trump supporters have remained loyal to him no matter what Trump says or does; their support is rock solid. We never hear that about Clinton, even though she has survived more scandals and accusations of wrongdoing than the rest of the contenders, Republican or Democrat, combined. It may very well be that Hillary voters are the most stubborn of all. Because they’ve heard it all for decades—and they are still showing up. 🐼

IMMIGRATION

Walled In

A contest to design a Trump-style border wall has prompted a fierce outcry.

BY SUKJONG HONG

CHRISTIAN RAMIREZ REMEMBERS what life was like before the border wall went up in San Diego. Growing up in San Ysidro, a neighborhood on the city’s southwestern corner, he regularly crossed into Mexico to pick up tacos and bring them back for picnics at Friendship Park, a small coastal area bisected by the border. But after September 11, 2001, new security measures fortified the border wall and extended the barrier into the ocean. “An embrace at that part of the border has been reduced to pinkies touching each other at the border wall,” he said. Now the park, which used to host bi-national religious masses, Christmas celebrations, and family reunions, is locked except for a few hours each weekend, during which federal agents monitor the crowd and people search through the metal grating for a glimpse of a loved one’s face on the other side.

So it was with dismay that Ramirez—the director of the Southern Border Communities Coalition, which works to strengthen oversight of U.S. Customs and Border Protection—responded to news that a web site is hosting a Donald Trump–inspired competition for border wall designs. “The sad reality is that the border region is still viewed as a barren land, with no history, no culture—not inhabited. And that has made this rhetoric of militarization and of iron-fisted policies acceptable as the mainstream

narrative of the border region,” he said. “Unfortunately, this sort of contest is right up that alley.”

The competition in question—“Building the Border Wall?”—has stirred up considerable debate since launching in early March, with critics accusing it of promoting xenophobia. The Third Mind Foundation—a group of “architects, designers, and artists who wish to remain anonymous,” according to its web site—is sponsoring the competition. The original challenge asked architects to “design a barrier of architectural merit that is realistically priced to build and made of materials that will not only be effective in keeping out waves of illegal immigration, but that will also be relatively inexpensive to maintain.”

Reacting to criticism, Third Mind revised the challenge, asking designers “to bring creativity and innovation to bear on the idea of a border barrier.” It also added, “If not a fence or wall, then what? Can the idea of a wall be combined with architectural activism?” Third Mind clarified, “We take no position on this issue. We remain politically neutral.”

John Beckmann, a New York–based designer who is the chief organizer of the competition and a liaison for Third Mind, was perplexed by the controversy. “Our goal is to create positive humanitarian strategies that propose ideas that move beyond

Copyright of New Republic is the property of TNR II, LLC and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.