

EDITORIAL

Obamania

The minute a mantra becomes boilerplate for any news article on the topic it describes, the thinking person should begin to critically scrutinize its veracity. Such is the case with the current conventional wisdom regarding candidate Obama's "typical" supporter. These minions — we're told no less than 200 times in the average hour of radio or television news — tend to be overwhelmingly young, hip, affluent, and college-educated. By implication, of course, anyone opposed to or ambivalent toward the Message of Hope and Change is likely a working-class rube with a favorite NASCAR driver.

To those unmoved by the simple observation that upwards of 90 percent of the chattering class is pro-Obama and pleased beyond measure to keep the myth of the hipness, youth, education, and good looks of their fellows riding high, simply start making mental notes of where it is that you're seeing the overwhelming bulk of *res Obama* in your everyday experience. For even the most casual and cursory observation will find that most Obama signs are in dog-patch yards in front of unkempt shanties and that Obama stickers are appearing overwhelmingly on junked Volvos driven by retired sociology professors in the standard issue tweed sportcoat with elbow patch, or on Subarus, Priuses (aka Smugmobiles) or newer Volvos driven by women with (a) crew cuts, (b) mullets, (c) rat tails, or (d) some clever synthesis of any two of these.

A Republican friend lamented the other day how all is surely lost, as Obama is drawing crowds of tens of thousands, which he can work with messianic grandiloquence, whereas McCain can only bring in a few hundred at a time, and is an embarrassment when it comes to his speechifying. When it is pointed out that these rallies tend to be in the middle of work days, and most McCain supporters tend to be, well, *employed*, it did little to moderate his anguish.

Because let's face it, the Message of Hope and Change is, like every other form of ethereal uplift spoken by every politician who has ever taken the pulpit, pure moonshine. Ask anyone in the throes of reverence for the young senator what the candidate actually thinks about any specific problem or issue facing the country, and you'll be mildly entertained as they squirm to answer. The more perspicacious of them will likely come up with something, though it will be untraceable to anything Obama has actually said. He hasn't actually *said* anything. He seizes upon the frustrations of those who feel — whether such feeling has any basis in their actual experience — disenfranchised and frustrated with politics as usual. He strikes a chord with the angry, the dispossessed, the drug-addled, and the deviant.

Those who feel their situation in life will be dramatically improved if the rich, who already pay more than 90 percent of the taxes, would just pay a little more, are enthralled with Obama. Those who are chronically offended believe he speaks to them, and for them.

What is it about the word “change” that inevitably provokes Pavlovian gushing in a certain percentage of the electorate? First off, rote repetition of that word is nothing new. In the 1992 campaign, Bill Clinton uttered the word at least once per long inhalation. Any time the person running is not the incumbent, “change” is likely to be the overused slogan (just as when the candidate is the incumbent, it’s “stay the course”). Yet the mere word causes Obamaniacs to get misty. Anyone who has passed through middle age knows that “change” can mean hirsute-to-bald, trim-to-chunky, and sharp-to-forgetful. Where, exactly, is the inherent good in that word? And why does it seem so ominously likely that the metaphors just listed may be more appropriate than any of us would like to think in describing what the Obama brand of Socialism Lite is likely to do to our nation?

The young, the hip, the bright, the upwardly mobile, the productive — these folks are doing what they’ve always done: making a living, raising families, and shouldering the tax burden for the tens of thousands who show up at Obama rallies at 10 a.m. on a Thursday. They’re living responsible, generally contented lives. They already have Hope, and the only Change they’d like to see would be for the government to leave them the hell alone.

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