

Q & A: Mark Silk on Palin-palooza

Michael Sean Winters | Dec. 1, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

We continue our examination of a potential presidential run by Sarah Palin with comments from Mark Silk, a professor at Trinity College and author of the blog [Spiritual Politics](#) [1] that has become daily reading for those of us concerned about the estuary where religion and politics meet.

Mark Silk:

No one should judge the likelihood of a major political figure running for president without visualizing that person getting up in the morning, peering into the mirror, and murmuring, "I could be looking at the next POTUS." Based on such a visualization, I'd say Sarah Palin's running.

Once upon a time, she was just a clever and ambitious local politician, prepared to take on whatever powers-that-stood-in-her-way, be they the Wasilla City Council, the Alaska Republican establishment, or the government bureaucracy in Juneau. But out of the ordeal of running as John McCain's designated culture warrior she has emerged as the avatar of Tea Party resentment. Resentment, you will recall, is the emotional mechanism whereby Judeo-Christian victims demonize their elite masters, thereby transforming themselves into paragons of virtue. Nietzsche didn't think much of them, but it's made for a helluva sense of moral superiority.

In the videogame that American politics has become, Palin is Frontier Sarah, pious and fertile, wielder of fishing rod and shotgun and chain saw, champion of ordinary folks against those un-American elitists who sneer them down. She sneers pretty good herself. Her adversary is African Lord Barack—a bi-racial, bi-national Ivy Leaguer who wins effortless entry to every elite club he seeks to enter, from Columbia University to the U.S. Senate: "Vote for Barack? He's Better Than You Are." The match is mythic.

Can she get through the prelims to take him on? I wouldn't bet against her. She's the only true star in the Republican firmament today—rivaled only by the likes of Rush and Glenn, and they're not running for anything. But that's as far as she gets. The criticism her primary opponents will have to throw at her won't stick with the GOP electorate, but the independents will be appalled. The result: an Obama smackdown. Pow!

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[1] <http://www.spiritual-politics.org/>