

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

May 2002

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN: BOY ORATOR, BROKEN MAN, AND THE "EVOLUTION" OF AMERICA'S PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY

Troy A. Murphy

University of Michigan-Dearborn

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

Murphy, Troy A., "WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN: BOY ORATOR, BROKEN MAN, AND THE "EVOLUTION" OF AMERICA'S PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY" (2002). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 40.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/40>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Published in *Great Plains Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 2 (Spring 2002).

Published by the Center for Great Plains Studies, University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

Copyright © 2000 Center for Great Plains Studies. Used by permission.

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

BOY ORATOR, BROKEN MAN, AND THE “EVOLUTION” OF AMERICA’S PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY

TROY A. MURPHY

He wanted our religion to rest on the basis of love and not on the basis of force; and, my friends, when we get down to the root of our government, and the root of our religion, we find that they alike rest on the doctrine of human brotherhood—“that all men are created equal.”

— William Jennings Bryan, on Thomas Jefferson¹

If you would be entirely accurate you should represent me as using a double-barreled shotgun, firing one barrel at the elephant as he tries to enter the treasury and another at Darwinism—the monkey—as he tries to enter the schoolroom.

— William Jennings Bryan, on his own life’s work²

KEY WORDS: William Jennings Bryan, Cross of Gold speech, democracy, Populist myth, rhetoric, Scopes Trial

Troy A. Murphy is Assistant Professor of Communication at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. He received his Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Public Argument from the University of Pittsburgh in 1998. He is the recipient of the Gerald R. Miller Outstanding Dissertation Award and author of “American Political Mythology and the Senate Filibuster” in Argumentation and Advocacy.

[GPQ 22 (Spring 2002): 83-98]

Perhaps more than any other figure in American history, William Jennings Bryan is remembered for specific and identifiable moments of rhetorical action: the much-revered 1896 “Cross of Gold” speech and the much-maligned Scopes “monkey trial” of 1925. The dissonance between these two events, at least with respect to the ways in which political and rhetorical history has traditionally recorded them, could not be more striking. Bryan, the “Boy Orator,” was, at thirty-six years, the youngest and most left-leaning candidate ever to receive a major party nomination for the US presidency. He is often regarded as the founder

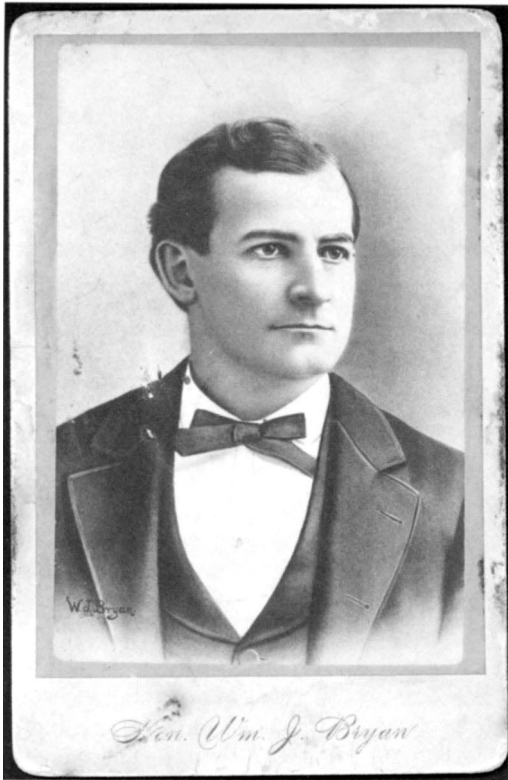


FIG. 1. The Honorable William Jennings Bryan, 1890. Courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

of the modern Democratic party if not much of modern liberalism. The causes for which the former Nebraska congressman and three-time presidential candidate fought anticipated and buttressed many of the Progressive Era's largest accomplishments. Years after Bryan's death, Herbert Hoover would note his legacy with some bitterness, saying that Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal was merely "Bryanism under new words and methods."³ Bryan would make a distinctively rhetorical mark as well. Michael Kazin calls him the first "celebrity politician," a man whose oratorical skills earned him a massive and loyal following of supporters willing to travel miles just to hear him speak.⁴ His barnstorming campaign practices and popular rhetoric changed the face of

presidential campaigning, and perhaps presidential governance, by making both candidate and message more immediately accessible to the American public. For Bryan's many admirers, he was a man ahead of his time. As Myron Phillips put it simply, Bryan was born "thirty years too soon."⁵

Yet his performance as a witness in *Tennessee v. Scopes*, the so-called trial of the century, engenders a much different perception of William Jennings Bryan. When, in the final scene of *Inherit the Wind*, Spencer Tracy laments that "there was much greatness in the man," viewers of the film version of the Scopes trial are left wondering what that greatness might have been or how a fall from grace might have occurred so dramatically. According to both popular lore and most standard histories of the trial, Bryan revealed himself as a woefully ignorant leader of small-minded fundamentalism, a man whose rigid interpretation of the Bible exemplified a backward defense of a long-past ethic. H. L. Mencken referred to Bryan variously as a "zany," a "mountebank," "a peasant come home to the barnyard," and a "poor clod . . . deluded by a childish theology."⁶ *The Nation* described Bryan's performance as that of a "pitifully ignorant old man."⁷ Taking his cue from Paul Anderson's widely circulated reporting on the trial, which proclaimed that "Bryan was broken, if ever a man was broken," rhetorical scholar Michael Hostetler describes the various characterizations of Bryan's ostensible demise in the Scopes trial as the "broken man narrative."⁸ This narrative not only interrogates Bryan's intelligence on the witness stand and his fundamentalist Christian beliefs, but is premised on an underlying assumption that his anti-evolution crusade was contrary if not antithetical to the progressive causes he so famously championed for decades. In the influential *American Political Tradition*, Richard Hofstadter ends his scathing critique of Bryan with a disdainful view as simple as Phillips's was admiring, saying that Bryan "had long outlived his time."⁹

The popular images of William Jennings Bryan that resonate throughout history are at

times as contradictory yet oddly informative as applying the adjective "great" to the noun "commoner" to describe him. Certainly, the labels "boy orator" and "broken man" are caricatures of Bryan and his career in public life. Yet history nonetheless has been inclined to distinguish between a "good" and a "bad" Bryan, or an "early" and a "late" one.¹⁰ Indeed, the ostensible transformation from the silver-tongued "Boy Orator of the Platte" to the discredited and ignorant "broken man" has enough holding power to warrant an examination of its causes and a rhetorical assessment of the events most central to its constitution.

I argue here that at the heart of the transformation lies a consistency. By examining the "Cross of Gold" speech delivered at the 1896 Democratic convention and the "On Evolution" speech prepared and widely distributed after the Scopes trial, I mean to highlight the ways in which these texts rhetorically create a consonant vision of democracy that is grounded in the republican ideals of agrarian community.¹¹ Bryan's populist rhetoric consistently defends a democratic ideal, expressed in part through the nobility of "plain people" and the moral fabric of agrarian communities, against the attacks of a rapidly changing world and the "force" of a supposed elite, whether those elites are the bankers of 1896 or the scientists of 1925.

Highlighting a measure of consistency in Bryan's rhetorical battles against both "gold" and "evolution" is not intended simply to revise or reclaim a reputation destroyed by what Edward Larson calls the "legend" of the Scopes trial.¹² Rather, the consistency in Bryan's vision of democracy illustrates an enduring strain of democratic discourse that yearns for and attempts to defend a communal and moral dimension of democracy against a "public philosophy" of political liberalism that emphasizes individual rights and "brackets" such issues from public discussion.¹³ Bryan's fundamentalism or anti-evolution crusade need not be defended today in order to understand how the impetus to defend those beliefs springs from a particular understanding of democracy, the

saliency of which is dependent on the political and rhetorical context in which democratic claims are made. I conclude the analysis of Bryan's democracy by suggesting how the ideals he articulated continue to resonate today, albeit in much different political and rhetorical forms. Before illustrating how Bryan attempts to define the preferred character of democracy in both the 1896 campaign and the Scopes trial of 1925, I begin by noting the importance of viewing democracy as an inherently rhetorical enterprise.

DEMOCRACY, RHETORIC, AND AMERICA'S PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY

Democracy is more than a form of government. It is also an idea. In his cultural history of American democracy, Robert Weibe traces the historical ambiguity associated with the meaning of democracy and how it has operated as an idea throughout American history. Calling it "America's most distinguishing characteristic," Weibe wryly comments that "Americans act as if democracy were too important to define."¹⁴ The absence of a consensus definition is certainly not for lack of trying. Virtually every major political figure and social movement has in some way attempted to utilize the ideals associated with the term to their rhetorical advantage. As an idea marked by such rhetorical elasticity, the ambiguous and malleable meaning of democracy is perhaps best understood by the discourse used to define it within specific historical contexts.

Historian Russell Hanson concurs on the centrality of discourse in understanding democracy, arguing that American democracy is itself a rhetorical tradition. While admitting that "to speak of liberal democracy as a rhetorical tradition may seem a bit odd," Hanson insists that understanding American democracy by the discourse used to define it provides a historical specificity lacking in other forms of analysis. He maintains that most Americans think of democracy as either a specific set of institutional arrangements, or, more abstractly, as that which is somehow superior

to communism or socialism. However, Hanson argues "that way of construing it has the singular disadvantage of reducing liberal democracy to a set of ideas that seem to exist apart from or independently of the political institutions and practices they inform."¹⁵

There is no ahistorical, definitive, or etymological standard capable of determining the proper meaning of democracy across historical contexts. One need not revisit the foundational debates between Federalists and Antifederalists to appreciate how America's most sacred ideal was once one of its most scorned ideas. As a rhetorical construct, democracy is historically contingent; its meaning, continuously mediated through language and thus achieving explanatory power in the minds of citizens, is always dependent on the manner in which it is articulated and the context in which it operates.

Rhetorical inquiry is uniquely situated to shed light on how the meanings of democracy are constituted, change over time, and become naturalized to the point where they are taken for granted, becoming the "common sense" that directs action within a given historical moment. Tracing the ways in which politically sacred ideals such as democracy are invoked in public argumentation across time and in different contexts is consistent with Michael McGee's influential theory of the ideograph.¹⁶ McGee posits that the link between rhetoric and ideology—between situated, practical discourse and the structures or systems in which they take on meaning—is best understood through examination of culture-specific and collectively honored ideographs. "Liberty," "freedom of speech," and "equality" are examples of such abstract, normative terms that contain and express a particular ideological commitment. McGee describes ideographs as ordinary-language terms "pregnant" with ideology.¹⁷ In their work *Crafting Equality*, Celeste Condit and John Lucaites demonstrate the ways in which the commonsense meaning of the ideograph "equality" has been "crafted" through time and by a multiplicity of voices. They describe how the term "equality" has

undergone "perpetual transformation" since it was first introduced into American rhetorical culture, continuously serving as a "discursive foundation of American public life."¹⁸

Similarly, democracy may be understood as a historically contingent rhetorical construct which is both creator and creation of a "public philosophy," a foundational set of understandings Michael Sandel describes as "the often unreflective background to our political discourse and pursuits."¹⁹ The enacted rituals and rhetorical events operating in the public arena serve as an intuitive point of reference for individuals to make sense of the world, as well as a source from which a nation might collectively form its identity.

Seeking to understand the meanings of democracy within specific historical periods thus highlights both the historical legacies and contemporary continuities that guide the meaning and manner of our self-governance. Thus, we might view democracy as a type of rhetorical collage, a mythological construct whose symbolic meanings "provide a way to understand such abstract political entities as a nation and a means (indeed the compulsion) of identifying with them."²⁰ Like a collage, the most salient features of which change with each successive layer, the meaning of democracy is imbued with layers of history, but is continually constructed anew to fit the specific context in which public arguments are being advanced.

In the sections that follow, I highlight how William Jennings Bryan attempts to create and define an understanding of democracy appropriate to the rhetorical contests and contexts in which he engaged. In the period from the mid-1890s to the end of his life only days after the Scopes trial concluded, few Americans were better known—and even fewer were more often heard—than Bryan.²¹ Between his 1896 campaign for the presidency and his role in the 1925 Scopes trial, Bryan would become the "most important figure in the reform politics of America."²² He would twice more run for the highest office and continue to speak out in favor of such issues as woman's suffrage,

a federal income tax, state initiative and referendum, a department of labor, and campaign fund disclosure.

In addition to his commanding role in politics, Bryan was one of the most recognized and popular figures in a series of adult education and community programs known as circuit chautauqua. In his history of the circuit chautauqua and its adult education predecessors such as the lyceum, John Tapia characterizes chautauquas during this era as part education, part entertainment, and part vehicle for social change.²³ Leroy Ashby concurs on the importance of the chautauqua, describing it as the “centerpiece of American mass culture from the 1890s into the 1920s.”²⁴ Chautauquas, which enjoyed the most popularity throughout the rural Midwest, provided a forum in which speakers such as Bryan commonly invoked the value of rural life and the ideal character of agrarian communities.²⁵

In both politics and mass culture, Bryan loomed on the national stage like no other public figure. William Allen White argues that Bryan “influenced the thinking of the American people more profoundly than any other man of his generation.”²⁶ His views, perhaps as important as any figure of the era, begin to map the rhetorical terrain of American democracy. I begin the analysis with his most recognized speech and the most heralded of his campaigns, the “Cross of Gold” and the 1896 presidential campaign.

THE CRIME OF '73: CRUCIFYING MAN-KIND ON A “CROSS OF GOLD”

No issue received more popular and political attention in the era immediately preceding the rise of the populist movement and Bryan’s first candidacy for president in 1896 than the “money question.” Roughly speaking, the question revolved around both the quantity and the basis of the nation’s money supply: would the US government base its monetary system on a standard of gold, a combination of gold and silver (bimetallism), or paper dollars backed by the credit of the



FIG. 2. William Jennings Bryan, c. 1896. Courtesy of Nebraska State Historical Society.

government? Throughout most of the nation’s history, the United States recognized both gold and silver, the latter metal backing the dollar at a ratio of “sixteen to one,” meaning sixteen times as many grains of silver as gold were required to constitute an equivalent dollar.

The Coinage Act of 1873 officially demonetized silver, placing the nation on the single gold standard. The “Crime of ‘73,” as it became known to populist reformers, quickly achieved symbolic status as a conspiratorial act by the monied classes, acting through the legislatures, to continue a contracted money supply, thereby effectively weighing the economy against those who borrowed money and in favor of the capital-holding class. Stabilizing the economy of a rapidly growing nation and achieving a “sound” dollar was of

course not as simple as many populist reformers believed. By the time of Bryan's campaign, various legislative actions amended and modified the original act of 1873, but the gold standard as a "crime" remained salient to populist reformers. The symbolism of gold versus silver fit quite neatly within a populist framework that Richard Hofstadter describes as "social dualism," a persistent division between "two nations," rhetorically drawn in various ways but often succinctly understood as a distinction between the "robbers" and the "robbed."²⁷

Bryan's knowledge of monetary policy was perhaps limited. He once proclaimed that he was for free silver because the people of Nebraska were for it and that he would look up the arguments later. More important to Bryan was his certainty that larger issues revolved around the money question. In his view, the money issue was about democracy and the right of people to govern themselves.

Bryan took the stage in Chicago in defense of an honored principle, a cause he described as nothing less than the "cause of humanity."²⁸ Suggesting that the contest at issue in the convention and campaign cannot be reduced to individuals, Bryan claims he is merely acting under "binding and solemn instructions" of those for whom he speaks, the "plain people" of the country.²⁹ Their judgment on the silver issue has already been rendered, and they, being "equals before the law," have come to say to the gold delegates whose supposed experience in the world of business afforded them a greater understanding of business issues, you "have made the definition of business man too limited in its application."³⁰ In a series of rhetorical divisions, Bryan speaks for the "broader class of business man," contrasting the employed and the employer, the country lawyer and corporate counsel, the farmer who "goes forth in the morning and toils all day" and the "man who goes upon the board of trade and bets upon the price of grain." He maintains that the man working in the mines is as much a businessman as the "few financial magnates who, in a back room, corner the money of the world."³¹

By broadening the definition of "businessman" to include the "plain people" of the country, Bryan expands the principle of equality to the principles of democracy and democratic decision making. While he states that "we say not one word against those who live upon the Atlantic coast," the rhetorical division, the social dualism between the robbers and the robbed, the monied interests and the hard working-laborers, the Eastern cities and the farms and prairies of the West, is clear throughout Bryan's initial development of the silver issue.³²

In his recent analysis of the "Cross of Gold" speech, William Harpine argues that the consistent and often stark divisions drawn by Bryan throughout the address are best understood rhetorically as a radical form of "polarization."³³ In this polarizing rhetoric, the gold standard serves as a "flag issue," a concrete way of symbolizing more widespread divisions through the creation of a common and identifiable enemy. While often appropriate for solidifying support among like-minded constituencies, as in social movements, Harpine maintains Bryan's confrontational use of the gold standard polarized potential voters and contributed to his electoral defeat.³⁴

While it is accurate to suggest that Bryan uses the gold standard as a flag issue in opposition to bankers and organized wealth of the East, it is equally important to recognize and appreciate that the divisions he created were based upon and symbolic of his vision of equality and American democracy. That is, Bryan's opposition to the gold standard and its supporters stemmed from his belief that both were abjectly undemocratic. In speaking for the "hardy pioneers" of the West who are as deserving as anyone to be heard in a democracy, Bryan establishes his constituency's position as both defensive and democratic. He states: "[W]e do not come as aggressors. Our war is not a war of conquest; we are fighting in the defense of our homes, our families, and posterity." This defense has been democratically waged before, yet the plain people's "petitions have been scored," "entreaties have been dis-

regarded," and their begging has been mocked. Having established these people's own democratic legitimacy by illustrating that they have indeed followed democratic procedures, Bryan can more authoritatively demand their voices be heard: "[W]e beg no longer, we entreat no more; we petition no more. We defy them."³⁵

In turning directly to the role of monetary policy in democracy, Bryan makes explicit the relationship between the money question and the principles of democracy by essentially equating the two. Intimating the historically contingent nature of democracy, he states: "[T]he principles upon which Democracy rests are as everlasting as the hills, but . . . they must be applied to new conditions as they arise."³⁶ The newest condition is the right to coin and issue money, which Bryan and his followers believe is a function of government. Again, Bryan makes the contrast clear by honoring sacred traditions and ideals of American democracy: "Those who are opposed to this proposition tell us that the issue of paper money is a function of the bank, and that the Government ought to go out of the banking business. I stand with Jefferson rather than with them, and tell them, as he did, that the issue of money is a function of government, and that the banks ought to go out of the governing business."³⁷

Standing with Jefferson and on the side of the sovereign democratic citizens of the West and Great Plains, with the "struggling masses" rather than the "idle holders of capital," Bryan asks his audience where the Democratic party shall stand. In a phrase foreshadowing debates of modern politics, Bryan states that one party believes if you "make the well-to-do prosperous, their prosperity will leak through on those below. The Democratic idea, however, has been that if you legislate to make the masses prosperous, their prosperity will find its way up through every class which rests upon them."³⁸ Bryan is not simply making a distinction between the political parties. He is also maintaining that America itself "rests" on the often less prosperous masses, which Bryan sees in particularly agrarian form. In one of the

more often quoted passages of the address, Bryan states: "You come to us and tell us that the great cities are in favor of the gold standard; we reply that the great cities rest upon our broad and fertile prairies. Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country."³⁹

Bryan returns to the claim that the issue is as great as any the country has seen, equating the battle over the money issue with the very revolution that created America: "Our ancestors, when but three millions in number, had the courage to declare their political independence of every other nation; shall we, their descendants, when we have grown to seventy millions, declare that we are less independent than our forefathers?"⁴⁰ He assures his audience that this will "never be the verdict of our people" and concludes with the phrase that gave the address its name: "Having behind us the producing masses of the nation and the world, supported by the commercial interests, the laboring interests, and toilers everywhere, we will answer their demand for a gold standard by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold."⁴¹

Several themes inherent to Bryan's vision of democracy emerge from the "Cross of Gold" speech. First, and perhaps most obviously, Bryan consistently invokes a social dualism, a rhetorical division which forms the foundation of populism. According to Kazin, populism should be viewed as "a language whose speakers conceive of ordinary people as a noble assemblage not bounded narrowly by class, [who] view their elite opponents as self-serving and undemocratic, and [who] seek to mobilize the former against the latter."⁴² A gold standard does not serve the interests of the plain people, the foundation of democracy, and is therefore itself situated as undemocratic and elitist. If Bryan engaged in polarization, he sought to draw a sharp distinction not simply between the rich and poor, East and West,

elite and "plain," but, more importantly, between those who believed in democracy and those who did not.

Second, Bryan grounds his view of democracy in what many scholars have called the "agrarian myth." This myth, often linked with Jeffersonian ideals, holds the simple yeoman farmer as the avatar of effective self-governance and democratic virtue and the small towns and farming communities throughout the land as the bedrock of democracy. In his book on the 1896 presidential campaign, historian and Bryan biographer Paul Glad argues that the "agrarian myth" was more than a theme Bryan employed in the convention speech, it was the basis of the entire campaign. Glad maintains that in the contest between Bryan and McKinley, each attempted to define democracy through competing myths: the "agrarian myth," represented by Bryan, and the "myth of the self-made man," represented by McKinley. Glad makes clear that McKinley joined Bryan on the rhetorical terrain of defining democracy, but asserted a different ideal: "[McKinley] quarreled not with the abstract idea of democracy but with Bryan's agrarian conception of it. As committed to the myth of the self-made man as Bryan was to the agrarian myth, McKinley did not question the morality that came with industrial expansion. . . . Industry built their morality around Darwinian concepts; and Social Darwinism as the new system of values came to be called, seemed plausible to those who had faith in the myth of the self-made man."⁴³ This "new system of values" begins to emerge as a public philosophy that forms an often "unreflective background" to questions concerning industrial expansion, helping to frame both the question of money and the question of democracy during the era.

Finally, these themes are emblematic of the larger mythology of democracy, a mythology that is simultaneously historical and contemporary, elastic enough to capture various ideals in various historical periods, and sacred to the meanings and identity of a particular culture. Many questioned Bryan's insistence on

defining the 1896 campaign around the money question, saying it crowded out many other issues contained in the platform of the Populist and Democratic parties.⁴⁴ Issues such as the direct election of senators or government ownership of railroads might have more legitimately alleviated the imbalance of power at the heart of the agrarian revolt. From a rhetorical perspective, however, free silver is not simply a single issue upon which voters might analyze the positions of candidates and render judgment in the campaign. Rather, the silver issue becomes symbolic of democratic decision making and self-governance, a rhetorical construct seeking to explain and define a larger reality about the importance and proper character of American democracy. Bryan said throughout the campaign that solving the money question was necessary before subsequent reforms were possible; this was true not only with respect to alleviating the power of monied interests in the development and framing of future reforms, but also because citizens who felt their voices were excluded needed to establish themselves as a part of the larger governing body.

Eighty percent of eligible voters made it to the polls on 3 November 1896; the majority of them voted for William McKinley. Bryan's popular vote of just under 6.5 million (to McKinley's 7 million) was more than respectable in light of the powers of the Republican machine and a staggering disparity in campaign finances. (While figures vary widely, contributions McKinley received from J. P. Morgan and Standard Oil alone surpassed the total fund of the Democratic party.)⁴⁵ The legacy of Bryan's campaign, however, would be more lasting. As Kazin writes: "Despite the outcome, the conviction at the heart of Bryan's candidacy lived on in more than a half-century of public rhetoric and action."⁴⁶ While the money issue itself faded, its symbolic resonance did not: "[T]he idea that the federal government should routinely take the side of wage earners and other citizens of modest means grew in popularity and was the basis for the domestic politics of liberal presidents from

Woodrow Wilson to Lyndon Johnson.”⁴⁷ Thus, while Bryan’s advocacy of free silver may not have secured him the presidency, his populist vision of democracy, an essential element underlying the entire campaign, had a fundamental impact on the understanding of democracy that moved into the turn of the century and the progressive movement.

The “Cross of Gold” speech continues to hold a hallowed place in the annals of rhetorical history, securing Bryan’s place as one of America’s great orators in the tradition of what Kathleen Hall Jamieson calls the “old style” of rhetorical eloquence.⁴⁸ Of course, Bryan would not leave his mark only with such a rousing success. If the “new system of values” of Social Darwinism was at the heart of the debate between Bryan and McKinley, it would only become further solidified as a common background for politics in the proceeding twenty years. Bryan continued to contest the view, eventually taking his battle to the place he saw as the first line of defense: America’s public schools.

THE CRIME OF '22: CRUCIFYING MANKIND ON “GUESSES THAT ENCOURAGE GODLESSNESS”

If the dualism between the plain people and the educated elite was a staple of the populist language Bryan employed throughout his 1896 campaign, a potential irony finds the first decade of the twentieth century bringing more and more Americans into both high schools and land-grant universities across the country as the progressive movement began to take shape. Citing a “phenomenal expansion” in public education, Eric Goldman reports that even a college degree was “nothing spectacular for the child of a moderately successful farmer” by the end of the decade.⁴⁹ Such enlightenment could not, however, stave off the anxiety and confusion many Americans felt toward rapidly advancing technology and the increasingly grand scale of modern industrial life. By the 1920s, influential writers such

as Walter Lippmann remarked on a crisis of democracy and the loss of an American “public” brought on by modern influences, especially the mass media. Lippmann’s *Public Opinion*, published in 1922, argued that the nature of American democracy had fundamentally changed since its inception. Given the complexity of the modern world, he contended the average American was in many ways no longer qualified to make judgments on the important matters of the day. Lippmann rejected the “democratic fallacy” of self-rule and argued that government should be directed primarily by a more elite class of experts. Lippmann would continue to question competency in his sequel volume, *The Phantom Public*, where he wrote: “The ‘omni-competent citizen’ capable of effectively acting within a modern democracy is a ‘false ideal,’ it is unattainable. The pursuit of it is misleading.”⁵⁰ In the context of a modern, urban, and industrial society, he summed up his view of the citizen: “The number of mice and monkeys known to have been deceived in laboratories is surpassed only by the hopeful citizens of a democracy.”⁵¹ Lippmann advocated bureaus of experts who would organize issues into more manageable frames, allowing for a limited form of citizen input that would more readily approximate what citizens were actually capable of providing.

If Lippmann was the most noted for his analytical insight, he was certainly not the only one questioning the efficacy of popular democracy during this period. Out of this confusion—indeed, arguably *because* of this confusion—progressive leaders began to take a more national orientation to the practice of democracy and democratic reform. Many progressives enveloped populist beliefs in widespread popular democracy, but they attempted to model democratic governance on the basis of a unified, national community whose interests were best determined through the objectivity provided by a scientific elite. James Morone characterizes the development as two competing forms of progressivism. The first group, represented in part by Lippmann, em-

braced the great scale of twentieth-century America and spoke for a constituency of a single, national people. The alternative group, representing a more traditionally "populist" vision espoused by Bryan, believed "democracy resided in the 'collective will' of small communities across America."⁵²

While often looking "wistfully to Jefferson" and invoking republican ideals associated with the agrarian myth, Morone argues that progressive practices increasingly became closer to Lippmann than to Jefferson. He writes, "[T]he Progressives pushed democracy back on the people, then seemingly snatched it safely away to the expert."⁵³ In 1925 the issue of teaching the theory of evolution in public schools stood at the center of this debate concerning the scope of democracy and the proper role of expertise in an increasingly complex world. Aside from famed writers such as H. L. Mencken who were unapologetic in their dismissal of democracy, many progressives found the distinctions precarious to manage. In a letter to friend and famed jurist Learned Hand about the Scopes trial, Lippmann wrote: "I want your advice badly on the Tennessee case." Citing others who believed the "constitutionality of the law ought not be attacked" because "such foolishness ought to be within the province of the legislature," Lippmann offered his own views on whether and when democracy ought to be followed: "Now I know this is progressive dogma as we all accepted it in the days when the courts were knocking out the laws we wanted." Perhaps speaking for many, Lippmann continued, "My own mind has been getting steadily antidemocratic: the size of the electorate, the impossibility of educating it sufficiently, the fierce ignorance of these millions of semi-literate priestridden and parsonridden people have got me to the point where I want to confine the actions of majorities."⁵⁴

In his Pulitzer Prize-winning history of the Scopes trial, Edward Larson explains the case in democratic terms. He argues, "[T]he issues raised by the Scopes trial and legend endure precisely because they embody the character-

istically American struggle between individual liberty and majoritarian democracy, and cast it in the timeless debate over science and religion."⁵⁵ Yet Larson makes clear that the "legend" of the Scopes trial that resonates through history emphasizes the debate almost to the exclusion of the struggle. That is, from *Inherit the Wind* to many of the most influential histories of the case, Bryan is portrayed as almost exclusively concerned with fundamentalist beliefs, a literal interpretation of the Bible, and antagonistic toward those who would venture to teach evolution in the public schools. The historical narrative of the "broken man" dramatizes the "fierce ignorance" of the millions, with Bryan as their exalted hero and the epitome of such ignorance, yet the issue of democracy is scarcely a part of the standard history of the trial.

While Bryan no doubt relished the opportunity to engage in a debate on the merits of evolution, it is important to frame his advocacy within an appropriate context. First, Bryan saw the Scopes case as primarily about the right of common people to decide democratically what ought to be taught in their schools. Leading up to the trial, he commented on the case: "I have been explaining this case to audiences. It is the easiest case to explain I have ever found. The right of the people speaking through the legislature, to control the schools which they create and support is the real issue as I see it." To Bryan, the issue was again about democracy. As to the question of evolution itself, he remarked: "I am not so sure that it is involved."⁵⁶

Additionally, Bryan, almost as devout a Jeffersonian as he was Christian, did not, as commonly assumed, seek to break down Jefferson's wall between church and state. Indeed, Bryan argued for neutrality on the matter of teaching evolution versus creationism, maintaining that the Darwinian "hypothesis" simply ought to be taught as theory and not fact. He did not advocate teaching Genesis within the schools. As Bryan recognized, the biblical account could not be defended in the schools. Thus, Bryan's position in the Scopes

matter was to him a familiar one of defending the common people and their way of life from the forces of an outside elite. Bryan put it simply: "If the Bible cannot be defended in those schools it should not be attacked."⁵⁷

Finally, Bryan was not the intolerant zealot he was portrayed as in *Inherit the Wind* and in other histories of the case. When the issue of anti-evolution statutes first arose, Bryan originally withheld his support of the Butler Act, the law at issue in Scopes, because he thought there should not be any penalty associated with teaching evolution. He did eventually support the Butler Act, but agreed with most, including Governor Austin Peay who signed it into law, that it would never be enforced. Indeed, Bryan consistently disagreed with any penalty and offered to personally pay the fine John Scopes incurred in the Scopes trial.⁵⁸

While history has been prone to minimize the democratic context in which the Scopes trial occurred, rhetorical studies on the trial have traditionally focused on the distinction between Bryan's preferred mode of rhetorical eloquence and the constraints placed upon his advocacy by the requisites of the legal forum.⁵⁹ Even though Bryan was once trained as a lawyer, Kathleen Hall Jamieson illustrates how the polished orator of political speeches and chautauqua addresses was ill prepared for his exchange with Darrow. Jamieson analyzes the transcripts of the trial and concludes that Bryan's "rhetorical demise" stemmed from his own self-definition as defender of the Bible and from his agreement to defend his beliefs in a legal forum that by definition emphasized Darrow's strengths as a lawyer and Bryan's weaknesses as an orator.⁶⁰ There is little doubt that Bryan was outwitted, defeated, and embarrassed on the stand. Yet Bryan eagerly anticipated his chance to define the case in his closing arguments, a rhetorical form more amenable to his talents. It was only when Scopes pleaded guilty to the charge and the defense refused their right of closing statement that the case was subsequently closed and Bryan was left hanging without an opportunity either to question

defense witnesses or to give his own closing arguments.⁶¹

Bryan was defeated and legally outmaneuvered in Scopes, but the popular account of his being destroyed and broken is questionable at best. As Lawrence W. Levine argues, "If Bryan left the Scopes Trial 'an exhausted and broken man' . . . he did a masterly job of concealing it during the five days of life remaining to him."⁶² What Bryan did do during those remaining days was to prepare a speech that he would reportedly consider his finest and that was intended to become the centerpiece of his continuing battle against the theory of evolution. Published after his death by the *New York Times* and countless other newspapers across the nation, the speech was read by millions as Bryan's response to the Scopes trial.⁶³ Known as "On Evolution," it outlines his objections to the teaching of evolution and provides insights into how, as the late Stephen Jay Gould maintained, Bryan "viewed his last battle against evolution as an extension of the populist thinking that had inspired his life's work."⁶⁴

Arguing against the broken man narrative, rhetorical scholar Michael J. Hostetler refers to this "undelivered oration" as a "complex rhetorical composition, more the work of an artful orator still in his prime than that of a sexagenarian in the throes of premature senility."⁶⁵ In a series of five indictments, Bryan outlines his objections to the theory of evolution and the negative consequences resulting from its being taught in the public schools. In what Hostetler calls an "evolution of evolution," Bryan argues that the theory of evolution represents a "moral digression." He outlines how evolution is degrading to human beings, contradicts religious beliefs and corrupts individual lives, turns the most educated citizens against society's pressing problems and efforts toward public reform, and eventually "lays the blame for World War I itself at Darwinism's door."⁶⁶

Bryan's understanding of evolution is deeply flawed, and undoubtedly more so when his beliefs are divorced from their proper histori-

cal context.⁶⁷ Yet merely refuting the errors inherent in Bryan's approach to Darwin's theory of evolution does little to achieve an understanding of Bryan that extends beyond history's already prevalent proclamation of his ignorance. To understand Bryan and how his vision of democracy is emblematic of an enduring strain of democratic discourse, Bryan's battle against evolution may be understood rhetorically as similar to his fight against the gold standard. Like the elephant entering the treasury, the monkey entering the schoolroom becomes a symbol around which Bryan's defense of democracy converges.

In "On Evolution," Bryan again claims to be speaking in defense of a "majority" of plain people against the forces of an undemocratic elite. Recognizing the Constitution, he states: "The majority is not trying to establish a religion or to teach it—it is trying to protect itself from the efforts of an insolent minority to force irreligion upon the children under the guise of teaching science."⁶⁸ In opposition to true science, Bryan casts evolution as mere "hypothesis" strung together, "guesses that encourage godlessness." Renewing the populist defense, Bryan asks rhetorically: "What right has a little irresponsible oligarchy of self-styled intellectuals to demand control of the schools of the United States?"⁶⁹ The rhetorical division evident in this contest is expressed, as it was twenty-nine years previous, as an effort to protect the common people and their way of life from the forces of an "insolent minority" of "supposedly superior intellects." In place of bankers, traders, and monied interests who "corner the money of the world" in a "back room," Bryan injects the "the inner circle of the iconoclasts whose theories menace all the ideals of a civilized society."⁷⁰ Bryan renews an 1896 populist vision of democracy by once again speaking as mere representative of a community of plain people against the forces of an undemocratic elite. At the same time, his rhetorical telos has changed; Bryan is no longer fighting for economic well-being or simple representation, he is engaged in a battle for the ideals and values of a civilized and

democratic society. In doing so, he relies on familiar dualities, contrasting the ordinary and the expert, the community and the individual, shared values and scientific hypothesis. The nobility of the ordinary man, rural virtue, and the values of an agrarian community had always been an essential part of the agrarian myth but had become increasingly lost in the context of the early twentieth century and the nationalization of the progressive ideal.

While one can certainly question Bryan's equating all of Darwinism and evolutionary theory with a "survival of the fittest" mentality against which he also waged battle in 1896, it is clear that he believed this formerly "new system of values" was no longer new and was now a serious threat to American democracy. Explicitly invoking Jefferson's distinction between brotherhood and force, Bryan writes: "Within half a century the 'Origins of Species' had become the Bible of the doctrine of the omnipotence of force." He continues, "[W]hat else but the spirit of evolution can account for the popularity of the selfish doctrine, 'each one for himself, and the devil take the hindmost,' that threatens the very existence of the doctrine of brotherhood."⁷¹ For Bryan, McKinley simply failed to question the morality of the selfish doctrine. Darwin made it popular.

Not only were evolutionists elitist enough to believe that they knew better than common people what ought to be taught in public schools, but, for Bryan, the very theory threatened the root of democracy and was a direct affront to the sensibilities and identity of common people. Bryan cites Nietzsche's condemnation of the "sympathetic activities" of the "herd," such as caring for the sick, the maimed, and the poor, all of which allow the "weak members to propagate their kind," as evidence of how such "supposedly superior intellects" view the common man.⁷² If generally adopted, the theory of evolution would not only "destroy all sense of responsibility and menace the morals of the world,"⁷³ it would also make a mockery of the common man, and, by extension, Bryan's entire vision of democracy. In-

deed, it is possible in this light to understand much of Bryan's consistent antipathy toward "atheists" and "agnostics" as being born in part from their elitist dismissal of the common man, a disbelief in democracy as much as a disbelief in God.

In "On Evolution," Bryan speaks as the representative of the plain people in defending from attack the shared values that constitute their identity against what Bryan sees as rampant individualism and moral degradation. To further understand how he relates evolution to the principles of democracy, Bryan's summary near the end of the speech is worth quoting at length:

Let us, then, hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Science is a magnificent material force, but it is not a teacher of morals. It can perfect machinery, but it adds no moral restraints to protect society from the misuse of the machine. It can also build gigantic intellectual ships, but it constructs no moral rudders for the control of storm-tossed human vessels. It not only fails to supply the spiritual element needed, but some of its unproven hypotheses rob the ship of its compass and thus endanger its cargo.⁷⁴

It is not questioning Bryan's biblical foundation or his commitment to the fundamentalist movement to suggest that underlying his crusade against evolution lies an equally exigent concern about American democracy. In what seems a thinly veiled reference to his progressive friends and their reliance on science and expertise as a means of democratic governance, Bryan maintains that the "ship" of state requires a moral and spiritual element as well as an intellectual one. Further, it is of little doubt that Bryan would have considered the Roaring Twenties a storm, and that guidance and direction for democracy were more needed than ever. And evolution, the "unproven hypothesis" of an elitist class, is intent on once again "robbing" the cargo of democracy of something central to their iden-

tity and essential to their ability to navigate that storm.

In the Scopes trial, Darrow's interrogation forced Bryan into a dialectic exchange in which his literal interpretation of the Bible was subject to intensive and widespread scrutiny. An examination of "On Evolution" illustrates how Bryan saw the issue of evolution as a danger to democracy as well as religion, and how Bryan's vision of democracy, largely consistent with his views in 1896, rests upon an enduring strain of democratic discourse that is grounded in the agrarian myth and the ideals of civic republicanism and Jeffersonian democracy.

CONTINUITIES AND CONCLUSIONS

William Allen White summed up Bryan's political career by calling him "the best political diagnostician and the worst political practitioner the country had ever seen: never had he been wrong on a single diagnosis or right on a single solution."⁷⁵ Hardly a supporter of Bryan, the noted journalist acknowledges that Bryan had a "curious instinct" for sensing "when things were wrong." Leroy Ashby concurs, saying that this "instinct had again and again guided him into the camps of people anxious about the future—people worried that the events were rendering them superfluous."⁷⁶

A distinction between diagnosis and practice in an age of democratic anxiety may provide a useful frame in which to conclude the present analysis and begin to understand how Bryan's vision of democracy continues to resonate within contemporary American politics. Assessing the "discontents" of American democracy at the turn of the twenty-first century, Michael Sandel argues that two concerns lie at the heart of present anxieties: "One is the fear that, individually and collectively, we are losing control of the forces that govern our lives. The other is the sense that, from family to neighborhood to nation, the moral fabric of community is unraveling around us."⁷⁷ From economic insecurity to a perceived loss of shared values, Sandel argues that American politics is "ill equipped to allay the

discontent that now engulfs it" because the public philosophy by which we live cannot "speak convincingly about self-government and community."⁷⁸

In tracing political and legal precedents in the creation of what he calls a "procedural republic," Sandel illustrates how the administrative or procedural form of political liberalism that frames contemporary public life has crowded out a more republican, "civic strand" of discourse that has traditionally animated the ideals of American democracy. Liberalism as "procedural republic" emphasizes individual rights over the public good and necessarily "brackets" moral and religious questions from public discourse. The state remains neutral toward what constitutes a good life, and individuals, when entering the political sphere, must free themselves of their moral identity and commit to a form of political debate in which constitutive elements of their identity are "bracketed" from public discourse.

Sandel argues that such bracketing engenders a particularly vapid and potentially harmful form of public discourse. He writes: "A politics that brackets morality and religion too completely soon generates its own disenchantment. Where political discourse lacks moral resonance, the yearning for a public life of larger meanings finds undesirable expressions."⁷⁹ In criticizing the "intolerant moralisms" of groups such as the Moral Majority, Sandel argues that a more pluralistic and tolerant form of community and public life, capable of satisfying the persistent yearning for larger meaning, is dependent first on norms of discourse that are more amenable to a liberally based understanding of community. The public philosophy operating in contemporary American politics does not allow for such a discourse. Writing in 1994, Sandel might well have been assessing the American context and prevailing public philosophy of seventy years earlier when he notes: "Fundamentalists rush in where liberals fear to tread."⁸⁰

We might recall how this same yearning for a more communally based and meaningful form of democracy, what Morone calls America's

enduring "democratic wish," framed the progressives' use of Jefferson and the agrarian ideal of community, but in practice lacked forms of organization and association that would transform such ideals into realities. Today, an important and growing element of contemporary democratic theory emphasizes related ideals of community and civic republicanism by advocating methods of achieving a stronger, more engaged, and more deliberative form of American democracy. Ranging across a broad ideological spectrum, such theorists note the importance of community and associational life in cultivating democratic citizens who both contest and complement institutions of democratic self-governance. Certainly, I am not equating the fundamentalism of William Jennings Bryan with such theories. As I have tried to show, however, an analysis of Bryan reveals that both the problems he diagnosed and the themes he invoked to address those problems continue to resonate today.

In a passage of Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech highlighted earlier, Bryan reminded the Democratic convention that "the principles upon which Democracy rests are as everlasting as the hills, but . . . they must be applied to new conditions as they arise." In assessing Bryan's less successful role as political practitioner, we might look beyond both "silver" and "anti-evolution" to appreciate how the possibility of achieving the democratic principles for which he fought would require a sustained form of democratic practice that William Jennings Bryan as beloved "celebrity politician" would be perhaps least equipped to provide. That is, a "Bryanese" democracy based on Jeffersonian principles and agrarian ideals would necessarily be more participatory, engaged, and deliberative than a traditional firebrand populism may allow. The ideals of equality and community, which Bryan helped usher into the Progressive Era and which still resonate today, may have lost their constituent ties in an age of rapid industrialization, rising consumerism, and a nationalization of the progressive movement. If democracy was

"snatched safely away to the expert" during this era, it likely remains there today, and various forms of community and associational life might provide the best hope for citizens to reclaim it again. This would put the onus for democracy directly back on citizens, requiring more peers and fewer "peerless leaders," but it would be in line with a vision of democracy Bryan consistently defended.

NOTES

The author wishes to thank Mary Beth Coltery and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this essay.

1. William Jennings Bryan, *The Credo of the Commoner* (Los Angeles: Occidental College, 1968), p. 45.
2. Quoted in Stephan Jay Gould, "William Jennings Bryan's Last Campaign," *Natural History* 96 (1987): 20.
3. Quoted in Michael Kazin, "William Jennings Bryan: The Forgotten Frontrunner," *The Wilson Quarterly* 23 (1999): 25.
4. *Ibid.* p. 25.
5. Myron Phillips, "William Jennings Bryan," *A History and Criticism of American Public Address*, vol. II (New York: McGraw Hill, 1943), p. 907.
6. Henry Louis Mencken, "In Memoriam: W. J. B.," in *William Jennings Bryan and the Campaign of 1896*, ed. G. F. Whicher (Boston: DC Heath, 1953), p. 84.
7. Editorial, *The Nation* 8 (1925): 154.
8. Michael Hostetler, "William Jennings Bryan as Demosthenes: The Scopes Trial and the Undelivered Oration, On Evolution," *Western Journal of Communication* 62 (1998): 166.
9. Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition: And the Men Who Made It* (New York: Vintage, 1948), p. 205.
10. Leroy Ashby, *William Jennings Bryan: Champion of Democracy* (Boston: Twayne, 1987), p. x.
11. Limitations of space prevent me from fully analyzing both of these "watershed" events. Given the potential for oversimplifying the significance of the 1896 campaign and the 1925 Scopes trial and because of the certainty of omitting portions of Bryan's career that ought not be omitted in assessing his impact on American politics, I leave a detailed analysis to others. I hope that my analysis of these two events provides a glimpse sufficient enough to provide the reader with both an understanding of William Jennings Bryan and how the rhetorical contests he fought continue to inform our understanding of both American history and American democracy.
12. Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p. 225.
13. Michael J. Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1996), pp. 3-24.
14. Robert H. Wiebe, *Self Rule: A Cultural History of American Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 1.
15. Russell L. Hanson, *The Democratic Imagination in America: Conversations with Our Past* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 22.
16. Michael McGee, "The 'Ideograph': A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980): 7.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 15.
18. Celeste Michelle Condit and John Louis Lucaites, *Crafting Equality: America's Anglo-African Word* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 217.
19. Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent* (note 13 above), p. 4.
20. David Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 13.
21. Ashby, *Champion of Democracy* (note 10 above), p. xiv.
22. Garry Wills, *Under God: Religion and American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), p. 99.
23. John E. Tapia, *Circuit Chautauqua: From Rural Education to Popular Entertainment in Early Twentieth Century America* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1997).
24. Ashby, *Champion of Democracy* (note 10 above), p. xiv.
25. Tapia, *Circuit Chautauqua* (note 23 above), pp. 49-60.
26. White, quoted in Dixon Merritt, "Bryan at Sixty-Five" *Outlook* 140 (1925): 182.
27. Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Vintage, 1955), p. 65.
28. William Jennings Bryan, "Cross of Gold," in *American Public Addresses: 1740-1952*, ed. A. Craig Baird (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956), p. 194.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
33. William D. Harpine, "Bryan's 'A Cross of Gold': The Rhetoric of Polarization at the 1896 Democratic Convention," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 87 (2001): 295.

34. Ibid., p. 301.
35. Bryan, "Cross of Gold" (note 33 above), p. 196.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., p. 197.
38. Ibid., p. 199.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., p. 200.
41. Ibid.
42. Michael Kazin, *Populist Persuasion: An American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), p. 1.
43. Paul W. Glad, *McKinley, Bryan, and the People* (New York: J.P. Lippincott, 1964), p. 35.
44. Hofstadter, *American Political Tradition* (note 9 above), pp. 188-89; Paolo E. Coletta, "The Bryan Campaign of 1896," in *William Jennings Bryan: A Profile*, ed. P. W. Glad (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968), p. 29.
45. Ashby, *Champion of Democracy* (note 10 above), p. 67. The most standard figures place McKinley expenditures around 3.5 million, with Bryan spending approximately 400,000. See Glad, *McKinley, Bryan, and the People* (note 43 above), pp. 166-88.
46. Kazin, "Forgotten Forerunner" (note 3 above), p. 2.
47. Ibid.
48. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speech-making* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 45-50.
49. Eric F. Goldman, *Rendezvous with Destiny: A History of Modern American Reform* (New York: Vintage, 1977), p. 55.
50. Walter Lippmann, *The Phantom Public* (New York: Macmillan, 1925), p. 39.
51. Ibid., p. 30.
52. James A. Morone, *The Democratic Wish: Popular Participation and the Limits of American Government* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), p. 113.
53. Ibid., pp. 114, 118.
54. Walter Lippmann, *Public Philosopher: Selected Letters of Walter Lippmann*, ed. J. M. Blum (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1985), p. 176.
55. Larson, *Summer for the Gods* (note 12 above), p. 265.
56. Bryan, quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 128-29.
57. Bryan, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 43.
58. Ibid., pp. 59, 129.
59. Citing a "unique alignment of dialectal and rhetorical positions," Richard Weaver uses the exchange between prosecution and defense to clarify classical distinctions between dialectic and rhetoric. See Richard Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (Davis, Calif.: Hermagoras, 1985), pp. 27-54.
60. Jamieson, *Eloquence* (note 48 above), pp. 31-42.
61. Larson, *Summer for the Gods* (note 12 above), p. 191. For legal details of the trial, see *ibid.* pp. 170-93; Lawrence W. Levine, *Defender of the Faith: William Jennings Bryan; the Last Decade, 1915-1922* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 324-57; Paolo E. Coletta, *William Jennings Bryan; III: Political Puritan 1915-1925* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), pp. 240-81.
62. Levine, *ibid.*, p. 355.
63. Hostetler, "W. J. B. as Demosthenes" (note 8 above), p. 168.
64. Gould, "W. J. B.'s Last Campaign" (note 2 above), p. 20.
65. Hostetler, "W. J. B. as Demosthenes" (note 8 above), p. 166.
66. Ibid., p. 170.
67. For a good review of Bryan's "three-fold error" in understanding evolution, see Gould, "W. J. B.'s Last Campaign" (note 2 above), pp. 16-26.
68. William Jennings Bryan, "On Evolution," in *Bryan and Darrow at Dayton: The Record and Documents of the 'Bible-Evolution' Trial*, ed. L. Allen (New York: Russell and Russell, 1967), p. 173.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid., p. 193.
71. Ibid., p. 194.
72. Bryan's strategy in invoking Nietzsche is two-fold: first, it is intended to counter his adversary Darrow, who, in the famous Leopold and Loeb case, defended his clients on the grounds that they were corrupted through university instruction in Nietzsche's philosophy. In reclaiming an argumentative stance against Darrow, Bryan also uses Nietzsche's writing to inform the broader public about how such theories impact the lives of the nation's youth.
73. Bryan, "On Evolution", p. 188.
74. Ibid., p. 195.
75. William Allen White, *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, 29 April 1925, quoted in Ferenc Morton Szasz, *The Divided Mind of Protestant America* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1982), pp. 122-23.
76. Ashby, *Champion of Democracy* (note 10 above), p. 202.
77. Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent* (note 13 above), p. 3.
78. Ibid.
79. Michael Sandel, review of *Political Liberalism*, by John Rawls, *Harvard Law Review* 107 (1994): 1793.
80. Ibid., p. 1794.