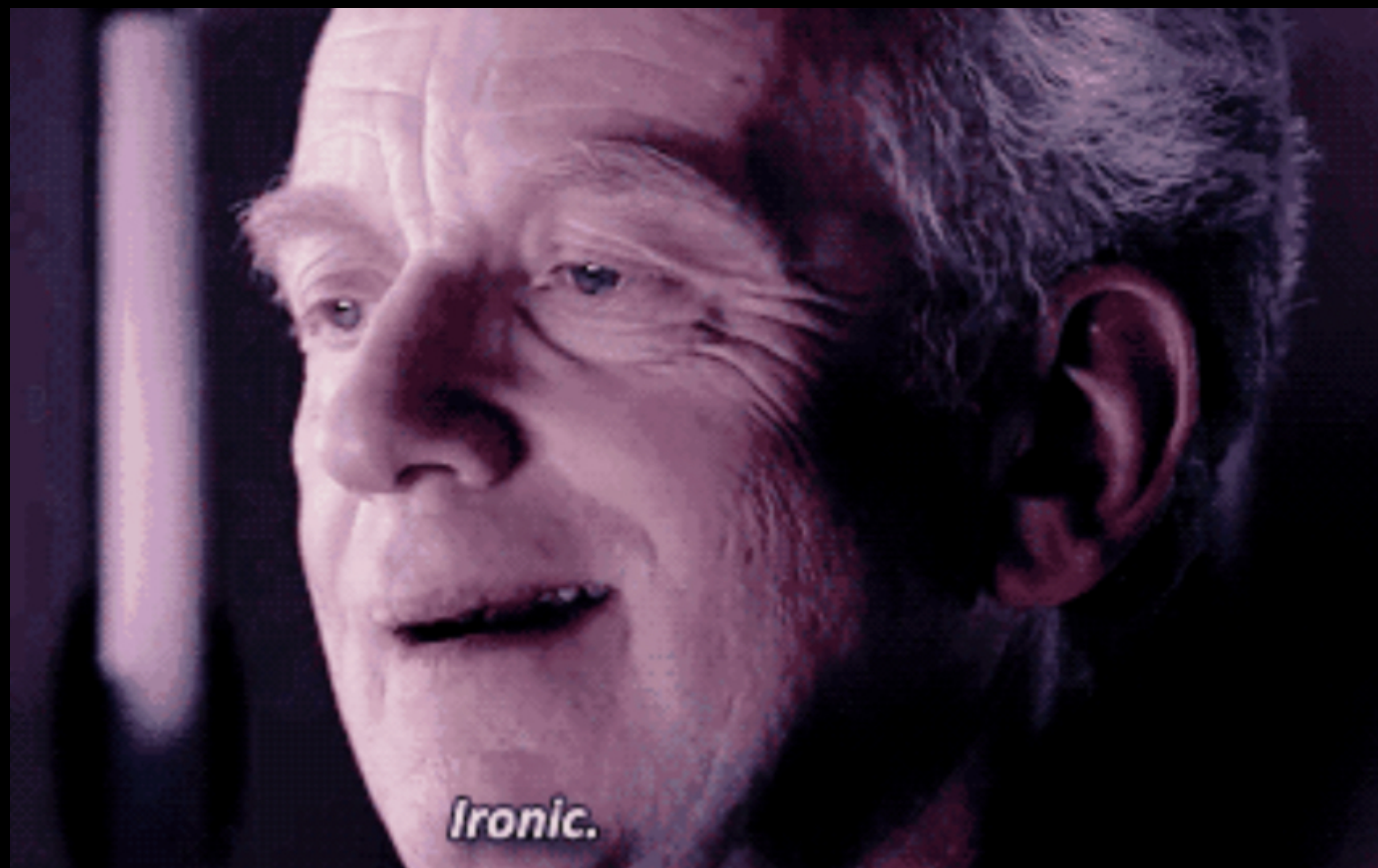


The Tragedy of William Jennings Bryan

Oh the
Irony...



A More Perfect Union

- ◆ “[F]armers... are the true representatives of the great American interests and are alone to be relied on for expressing proper American sentiments.” -Thomas Jefferson
- ◆ “[A]t the most basic level, farmers, literally tied ... to the land and dependent mainly on their own labor, are natural conservatives who resist political fad and fashion, and who value freedom and self-determination, the virtues most conducive to political independence and freedom...” -Bruce Thornton
- ◆ “...deeply and inherently republican.” -Alexander Hamilton

A More Perfect Union

- ◆ Checks and Balances- Learned from Solon the Great.
- ◆ Restriction of Executive Power- Learned from the abuse of Roman Dictatorships.
- ◆ Federalism- Initiated to Distribute Power Amongst the States.

Rhetoric

- ◊ Popular appeal was not, as we may think today, very appealing to the American founders.
- ◊ However, the times were changing and so too were the institutions...



“The Great Commoner”

- ◆ Inherited the Virtues and Ideals of the Founding from his Father.
- ◆ Jacksonian Democrat.
- ◆ “[H]is opposition to the railroads, it turns out, was remarkably consistent, and throughout his career he tried to focus widespread resentment against the big corporations into meaningful political change and greater economic opportunity for working people.”
–William G. Thomas III.

Changing Times

- ◆ The rise of the wage slave.
- ◆ The rise of popular rhetoric.

Duplicity of Bryan

- ◇ An irony of Bryan is found in the apparent duplicity of his values and his actions.
- ◇ Valued: Self-reliant determinism of common-man.
- ◇ Actions: Mainstreamed popular rhetorical strategies.

Downfall

- ◆ He was doomed from the beginning...
- ◆ Enter Woodrow Wilson – Exit everything Bryan believed in.



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