



First COAT



Second COAT

Captions (any text included): _____

Objects (list everything visible in the picture):

Action (what's happening in the picture?):

Time (when was this created / when is it set?):

Captions (explain/interpret included text): _____

Objects (explain/interpret objects used in picture): _____

Action (explain/interpret what's happening): _____

Time (what was going on in the 'real world' that prompted the artist to offer this commentary?): _____

Summary (what's the message or point of this cartoon? Note: it's almost never "to illustrate" or "to show" something – it's usually a strong opinion about something): _____



"The Populists' Trap"
(*Harper's Weekly*, 1896)

First 'COAT'

C – "The Populists' Trap" (caption), "Free Silver" (label), it MIGHT say "Populists" on one of the big tree leaves, "GOP" (label, elephant), "Democracy" (label, donkey)

O – Elephant, one leg lifted w/ sticky stuff on it, near edge of bridge, the bridge (pointed sticks?), donkey in mud or water or quicksand, broken wood, forest area, big trees – palm or other jungle-ish trees, 3 men in trees w/ spears or other weapons, hiding, various grass/fauna, more wilderness in background, header of magazine.

A – The elephant appears to have just pulled back, like he might have fallen in as well. The donkey is presumably in some distress. Men in trees are hiding and watching.

T – June 1896

Second 'COAT'

C – The Populists were the party of the 'little people', especially farmers in the late 19th century. The trap is presumably the mud/quicksand into which the donkey (labeled 'Democracy' but probably meaning the Democratic Party given the context) is 'Free Silver', referring to the Populists' call for more money to be put into circulation – 'bimetallism' and all that. 'GOP' = 'Grand Old Party', a nickname for Republicans, as verified by the Elephant. The term 'trap' suggests the cartoonists is not impressed by Populist policy – it is instead misleading and dangerous

O – We've already mentioned elephant/donkey as R/D parties. Bridge seems to be the path to this economic policy. Pointed sticks would make it difficult to turn around... not sure what that's about? Placing the Populists in the trees as savages shows disdain for their policies and suggests they're both ignorant and dangerous. These faces might represent actual Populist leaders at the time, but I have no idea.

A – The Democrats seem to have moved forward into the 'Free Silver' policy and are paying the price. Republicans stopped just in time. Populists are manipulative and dangerous.

T – 1896 was an election year, the first of two in which the Populists ran William Jennings Bryan as their Presidential candidate. Both times the Democratic Party joined them; both times they lost to McKinley, the (R).

S – Expanding the money supply is tempting, but dangerous. This deceitful demand by the Populists will do great harm to the Democratic Party as they fall for it. Even the Republicans came closer than should have to considering it.