**Name of politician:** Andrew Jackson

**Title of Speech:** Message Regarding South Carolina Nullification of Federal Legislation

**Date of Speech: January 16, 1833**

**Category: Famous**

**Grader:** McKinney Voss

**Date of grading:** 10/28/17

**Final Grade (delete unused grades):**

0 A speech in this category uses few if any populist elements. Note that even if a speech expresses a Manichaean worldview, it is not considered populist if it lacks some notion of a popular will.

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|  | **Score here (0, 1,2)** | **Populist** | **Pluralist** |
| Manichaean vision | 1.4 | It conveys a Manichaean vision of the world, that is, one that is moral (every issue has a strong moral dimension) and dualistic (everything is in one category or the other, “right” or “wrong,” “good” or “evil”) The implication—or even the stated idea—is that there can be nothing in between, no fence-sitting, no shades of grey. This leads to the use of highly charged, even bellicose language.    In my opinion, both purposes are to be regarded as revolutionary in their character and tendency, and subversive of the supremacy of the laws and of the integrity of the Union. The result of each is the same, since a State in which, by an usurpation of power, the constitutional authority of the Federal Government is openly defied and set aside wants only the form to be independent of the Union.  The right of the people of a single State to absolve themselves at will and without the consent of the other States from their most solemn obligations, and hazard the liberties and happiness of the millions composing this Union, can not be acknowledged. Such authority is believed to be utterly repugnant both to the principles upon which the General Government is constituted and to the objects which it is expressly formed to attain. | The discourse does not frame issues in moral terms or paint them in black-and-white. Instead, there is a strong tendency to focus on **narrow, particular issues**. The discourse will emphasize or at least not eliminate the possibility of natural, justifiable differences of opinion. |
|  |  | The moral significance of the items mentioned in the speech is heightened by ascribing **cosmic proportions** to them, that is, by claiming that they affect people everywhere (possibly but not necessarily across the world) and across time. Especially in this last regard, frequent references may be made to a reified notion of “history.” At the same time, the speaker will justify the moral significance of his or her ideas by tying them to **national and religious leaders** that are generally revered.  The occurrences of the past year, in connection with our domestic concerns, are to be reviewed with a sentiment of fervent gratitude to the Great Disposer of Human Events; that tributes of grateful acknowledgment are due for the various and multiplied blessings He has been pleased to bestow on our people; that abundant harvests in every quarter of the State have crowned the exertions of agricultural labor; that health almost beyond former precedent has blessed our homes, and that there is not less reason for thankfulness in surveying our social condition.  It would indeed be difficult to imagine oppression where in the social condition of a people there was equal cause of thankfulness as for abundant harvests and varied and multiplied blessings with which a kind providence had favored them.  The rich inheritance bequeathed by our fathers has devolved upon us the sacred obligation of preserving it by the same virtues which conducted them through the eventful scenes of the Revolution and ultimately crowned their struggle with the noblest model of civil institutions. They bequeathed to us a Government of laws and a Federal Union founded upon the great principle of popular representation.  After a successful experiment of forty-four years, at a moment when the Government and the Union are the objects of the hopes of the friends of civil liberty throughout the world, and in the midst of public and individual prosperity unexampled in history, we are called to decide whether these laws possess any force and that Union the means of self-preservation. | The discourse will probably not refer to any reified notion of history or use any cosmic proportions. References to the spatial and temporal consequences of issues will be limited to the material reality rather than any mystical connections. |
| Populist notion of the people | .2 | Although Manichaean, the discourse is still democratic, in the sense that the good is embodied in the will of the majority, which is seen as a unified whole, perhaps but not necessarily expressed in references to the “voluntad del pueblo”; however, the speaker ascribes a kind of unchanging essentialism to that will, rather than letting it be whatever 50 percent of the people want at any particular moment. Thus, this good majority is romanticized, with some notion of the common man (urban or rural) seen as the embodiment of the national ideal.    It is to be regretted, however, that these conditions, even if they had been offered in the same binding form, are so undefined, depend upon so many contingencies, and are so directly opposed to the known opinions and interests of the great body of the American people as to be almost hopeless of attainment.  It will be freely conceded that by the principles of our system all power is vested in the people, but to be exercised in the mode and subject to the checks which the people themselves have prescribed.  it can not be overlooked that there is no sufficient cause for the acts of South Carolina, or for her thus placing in jeopardy the happiness of so many millions of people.  The decision of this question by an enlightened and patriotic people can not be doubtful. For myself, fellow-citizens, devoutly relying upon that kind Providence which has hitherto watched over our destinies, and actuated by a profound reverence for those institutions I have so much cause to love, and for the American people, whose partiality honored me with their highest trust, I have determined to spare no effort to discharge the duty which in this conjuncture is devolved upon me. | Democracy is simply the calculation of votes. This should be respected and is seen as the foundation of legitimate government, but it is not meant to be an exercise in arriving at a preexisting, knowable “will.” The majority shifts and changes across issues. The common man is not romanticized, and the notion of citizenship is broad and legalistic. |
| Evil elite | .3 | The evil is embodied in a minority—more specifically, an elite—whose specific identity will vary according to context. Domestically, in Latin America it is often an economic elite, perhaps the “oligarchy,” but it may also be a racial elite; internationally, it may be the United States or the capitalist, industrialized nations or international financiers or simply an ideology such as neoliberalism and capitalism.  I regret to inform you that these reasonable expectations have not been realized, and that the several acts of the legislature of South Carolina which I now lay before you, and which have all and each of them finally passed after a knowledge of the desire of the Administration to modify the laws complained of, are too well calculated both in their positive enactments and in the spirit of opposition which they obviously encourage wholly to obstruct the collection of the revenue within the limits of that State.  Thus South Carolina presents herself in the attitude of hostile preparation, and ready even for military violence if need be to enforce her laws for preventing the collection of the duties within her limits.  the authorities of South Carolina seriously meditated resistance to the faithful execution of the revenue laws  It is not to be disguised that the power which it is thus enjoined upon the sheriff to employ is nothing less than the posse comitatus in all the rigor of the ancient common law. This power, though it may be used against unlawful resistance to judicial process, is in its character forcible, and analogous to that conferred upon the marshals by the act of 1795. It is, in fact, the embodying of the whole mass of the population, under the command of a single individual, to accomplish by their forcible aid what could not be effected peaceably and by the ordinary means. | The discourse avoids a conspiratorial tone and does not single out any evil ruling minority. It avoids labeling opponents as evil and may not even mention them in an effort to maintain a positive tone and keep passions low.  It is also true that in his message to the legislature, when urging the necessity of providing "means of securing their safety by ample resources for repelling force by force," the governor of South Carolina observes that he" can not but think that on a calm and dispassionate review by Congress and the functionaries of the General Government of the true merits of this controversy the arbitration by a call of a convention of all the States, which we sincerely and anxiously seek and desire, will be accorded to us." |
|  |  | Crucially, the evil minority is or was recently in charge and subverted the system to its own interests, against those of the good majority or the people. Thus, systemic change is/was required, often expressed in terms such as “revolution” or “liberation” of the people from their “immiseration” or bondage, even if technically it comes about through elections.  The whole revenue system of the United States in South Carolina is obstructed and overthrown,  It is the acknowledged attribute of free institutions that under them the empire of reason and law is substituted for the power of the sword. To no other source can appeals for supposed wrongs be made consistently with the obligations of South Carolina; to no other can such appeals be made with safety at any time; and to their decisions, when constitutionally pronounced, it becomes the duty no less of the public authorities than of the people in every case to yield a patriotic submission.  But the measures of the Government are to be recognized as valid, and consequently supreme, until these remedies shall have been effectually tried, and any attempt to subvert those measures or to render the laws subordinate to State authority, and afterwards to resort to constitutional redress, is worse than evasive. It would not be a proper resistance to "a government of unlimited powers," as has been sometimes pretended, but unlawful opposition to the very limitations on which the harmonious action of the Government and all its parts absolutely depends. South Carolina has appealed to none of these remedies, but in effect has defied them all. | The discourse does not argue for systemic change but, as mentioned above, focuses on particular issues. In the words of Laclau, it is a politics of “differences” rather than “hegemony.” |
|  |  | Because of the moral baseness of the threatening minority, non-democratic means may be openly justified or at least the minority’s continued enjoyment of these will be seen as a generous concession by the people; the speech itself may exaggerate or abuse data to make this point, and the language will show a bellicosity towards the opposition that is incendiary and condescending, lacking the decorum that one shows a worthy opponent. | Formal rights and liberties are openly respected, and the opposition is treated with courtesy and as a legitimate political actor. The discourse will not encourage or justify illegal, violent actions. There will be great respect for institutions and the rule of law. If data is abused, it is either an innocent mistake or an embarrassing breach of democratic standards.  while the Government is disposed to remove all just cause of complaint as far as may be practicable consistently with a proper regard to the interests of the community at large, it is nevertheless determined that the supremacy of the laws shall be maintained. |

Overall Comments: In this speech, Jackson responds to the South Carolina initiative to “nullify” federal legislation. His language is extremely Manichaean and at times bellicose; as the state of South Carolina is preparing to enforce their aims with violence, he also plans to use force. He condemns them for their insubordination, and ascribes cosmic proportions to the conflict; he invokes the past and the intent of the founding fathers in strengthening the case of the justice of the federal government as representatives of the will of all American people. There is still not a hugely strong appeal to a populist notion of the people as much more than the honest citizens of America. However, their will is more strongly identified as preserving justice and the supremacy of the laws, in this instance. The evil elite is personified in the representatives of South Carolina, who are actively subverting the general good for their own benefit. However, he does give them some credit in acknowledging that they, at least, in their rhetoric, claim to hope for a peaceful solution, and the conflict is actually pretty localized. This speech is very nationalist, and though it has populist elements, probably earns a score of .4.