**Name of politician:** Andrew Jackson

**Title of Speech:** Sixth Annual Message to Congress

**Date of Speech: December 1, 1834**

**Category: International**

**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 | 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.        There is but one point of controversy, and upon that the whole civilized world must pronounce France to be in the wrong. We insist that she shall pay us a sum of money which she has acknowledged to be due, and of the justice of this demand there can be but one opinion among mankind.      That Government, by doing only what it has itself acknowledged to be just, will be able to spare the United States the necessity of taking redress into their own hands and save the property of French citizens from that seizure and sequestration which American citizens so long endured without retaliation or redress. If she should continue to refuse that act of acknowledged justice and, in violation of the law of nations, make reprisals on our part the occasion of hostilities against the United States, she would but add violence to injustice, and could not fail to expose herself to the just censure of civilized nations and to the retributive judgments of Heaven.  If by a collision with France in a case where she is clearly in the wrong the march of liberal principles shall be impeded, the responsibility for that result as well as every other will rest on her own head. | 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.  I propose at an early day to submit, in the proper form, the appointment of a diplomatic agent to Venezuela, the importance of the commerce of that country to the United States and the large claims of our citizens upon the Government arising before and since the division of Colombia rendering it, in my judgment, improper longer to delay this step. |
|  |  | 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.  It is not possible that any Government and people could be more sincerely desirous of conciliating a just and friendly intercourse with another nation than are those of the United States with their ancient ally and friend. This disposition is founded as well on the most grateful and honorable recollections associated with our struggle for independence as upon a well grounded conviction that it is consonant with the true policy of both. The people of the United States could not, therefore, see without the deepest regret even a temporary interruption of the friendly relations between the two countries  Free from public debt, at peace with all the world, and with no complicated interests to consult in our intercourse with foreign powers, the present may be hailed as the epoch in our history the most favorable for the settlement of those principles in our domestic policy which shall be best calculated to give stability to our Republic and secure the blessings of freedom to our citizens. | 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 | 0 | 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.    Our institutions are essentially pacific. Peace and friendly intercourse with all nations are as much the desire of our Government as they are the interest of our people. But these objects are not to be permanently secured by surrendering the rights of our citizens or permitting solemn treaties for their indemnity, in cases of flagrant wrong, to be abrogated or set aside.  In that event every day's delay on our part will be a stain upon our national honor, as well as a denial of justice to our injured citizens. | 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.  The distracted state of the country rendered unavoidable the postponement of a final payment of the just claims of our citizens.  Frequent causes of just complaint have arisen upon the part of the citizens of the United States, some times from the irregular action of the constituted subordinate authorities of the maritime regions and some times from the leaders or partisans of those in arms against the established Governments. |
| Evil elite | 0 | 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. | 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. |
|  |  | 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 history of the accumulated and unprovoked aggressions upon our commerce committed by authority of the existing Governments of France between the years 1800 and 1817 has been rendered too painfully familiar to Americans to make its repetition either necessary or desirable. It will be sufficient here to remark that there has for many years been scarcely a single administration of the French Government by whom the justice and legality of the claims of our citizens to indemnity were not to a very considerable extent admitted, and yet near a quarter of a century has been wasted in ineffectual negotiations to secure it. | 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.”  The laws of nations provide a remedy for such occasions. It is a well-settled principle of the international code that where one nation owes another a liquidated debt which it refuses or neglects to pay the aggrieved party may seize on the property belonging to the other, its citizens or subjects, sufficient to pay the debt without giving just cause of war. |
|  |  | 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.  The avowed grounds upon which the bill was rejected are to be found in the published debates of that body, and no observations of mine can be necessary to satisfy Congress of their utter insufficiency.  The idea of acquiescing in the refusal to execute the treaty will not, I am confident, be for a moment entertained by any branch of this Government, and further negotiation upon the subject is equally out of the question.  That Government, by doing only what it has itself acknowledged to be just, will be able to spare the United States the necessity of taking redress into their own hands and save the property of French citizens from that seizure and sequestration which American citizens so long endured without retaliation or redress. If she should continue to refuse that act of acknowledged justice and, in violation of the law of nations, make reprisals on our part the occasion of hostilities against the United States, she would but add violence to injustice, and could not fail to expose herself to the just censure of civilized nations and to the retributive judgments of Heaven. | 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.  I derive, therefore, the highest satisfaction from being able to assure you that the whole course of this Government has been characterized by a spirit so conciliatory and for bearing as to make it impossible that our justice and moderation should be questioned, |

Overall Comments: In this speech, Jackson reports to Congress on the state of foreign affairs, including on a tricky situation with the government of France. France, despite continual terms of negotiation, delayed payment on a debt to the United States. Some aspects of this speech are populist; Jackson portrays the struggle in a Manichaean way, that there is only one side that is just and righteous, while the other is clearly wrong and in a morally unjustified position. Given the circumstances, the French forfeit some of the protections of democracy. Yet, the entire government of France does not really constitute an evil elite. They are not conspiring to take advantage of or subvert the will of the people. Moreover, a populist notion of the people as anything more than simply citizens of the U.S. isn’t really referenced. Overall, this speech merits a score of .4.