RHETORIC, POLITICS AND SOCIETY
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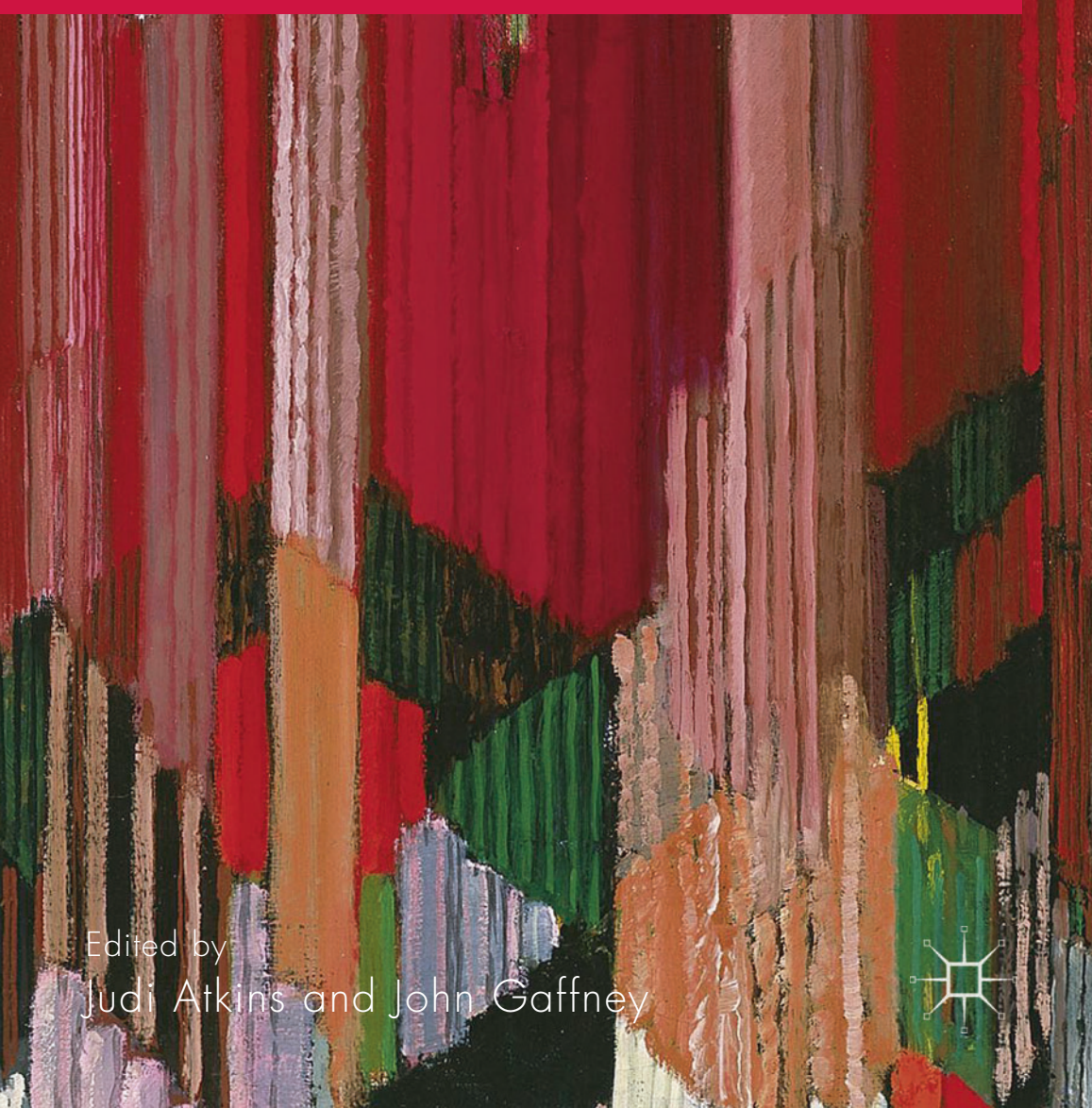
VOICES OF THE UK LEFT

Rhetoric, Ideology and the Performance of Politics



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Rhetoric, Politics and Society

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Voices of the UK Left

Rhetoric, Ideology and the Performance of Politics

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Rhetoric, Politics and Society
ISBN 978-3-319-51901-2 ISBN 978-3-319-51902-9 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51902-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017933857

Cover illustration: © Heritage Image Partnership Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Acknowledgements

First, we must thank the contributors for their commitment and co-operation, and for responding to our suggestions and comments on drafts. We must also thank the Leverhulme Trust who funded the workshop, which formed part of a wider project on political leadership, at the Aston Centre for Europe in September 2014. Several of the contributors joined the project subsequently, which allowed us to widen and deepen the range of our enquiry into the rhetoric and performance of the left in UK politics. Four people took a real interest in the project and offered comment and advice that was greatly appreciated: Katharine Dommett, Alan Finlayson, Amarjit Lahel, and James Martin. We also thank SAGE Publications for permission to publish parts of Judi Atkins's chapter on social security reform, the Palgrave editorial team for their support, and Palgrave's anonymous reviewer whose positive review and helpful suggestions have made this a better book.

Judi Atkins
John Gaffney

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CHAPTER 1

Rhetoric and the Left: Theoretical Considerations

John Gaffney

My analytical focus in this chapter is on the role and the potential of rhetoric in the political process, and in particular their place and importance within the British left. A related concern is to understand the relationship between rhetoric and performance: how the left—and especially the Labour Party—'imagines' or 'constructs' itself and the world, and rhetorically makes claims for its national leadership vocation; and how left wing political figures use these 'imaginings' and 'constructions' rhetorically to project themselves and their doctrines and ideas in a range of ways (and with varying degrees of success) to claim, assert, or strengthen their own left leadership status, or else influence debate and its outcomes, and fashion and communicate practical policy proposals, and achieve other targets like widening support or winning votes.

If rhetoric has political effects, this raises the central question of its use, its practice, and—most importantly—its potential. Specifically, if political rhetoric does not simply move us but moves us to act, or persuades us even to shift from one rational or emotional position to another—and this on a scale of responses that runs from indifference to allegiance, from hostility to followership—then this poses a series of important questions regarding good (consequential) rhetoric as opposed

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J. Atkins and J. Gaffney (eds.), *Voices of the UK Left*,
Rhetoric, Politics and Society, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51902-9_1

to bad (or not so good). It thus raises also the questions of: (a) rhetoric's relation to ideas; and (b) its relationship to agency.

Therefore, two discussions are needed: first, to identify what we mean by rhetoric and to demonstrate and justify its importance and role; and second, having I hope shown how it is a creative and agential part of the political process, what this means for an analysis of the UK left, and—in particular—the British Labour Party.

Rhetoric: What Is It? What Does It Do?

I want to make four initial points. A first issue concerns rhetoric's relationship to the ideas it expresses and the 'rhetor's' scope for using it to purpose, to effect. This raises questions of rhetoric and ideology and, in performance (Parker and Kosofsky 1995), the relationship between—and play of—structure and agency. What I aim to show is that political rhetoric demonstrates not the dominance of structure over agency or vice versa, but their interrelationship and the conditions of possibility for agency's *use* of structure. This is understood as the influence of ideas on rhetoric, the role of agency in the interpolation of ideas, the institutional and cultural conditions of rhetorical performance, and therefore—in the performance of rhetoric itself—its scope for exploitation and transcendence in the forging of new political relationships and change. For the purposes of analysis here, rhetoric's definition is simple: it is the performance of words.

Second, the emphasis within rhetoric—epideictic, forensic, deliberative, and demagogic (we are modifying the Master already; see Aristotle 1991)—on persuading people to do, think, or feel something other than what they are doing, thinking, and feeling (or to remember or relive already-experienced thought or feeling) brings us to a related issue. The analysis of rhetoric is ever-subject to an understanding of, and the evolution of, the social, cultural, institutional, and political conditions of rhetorical production and the relationship between speaker and hearer, both in the minds of each and in the rhetoric itself (Kane 2001).

Third, in order to understand the tale, we must inevitably understand the teller or at least his/her relationship to those they are telling their tale to, so that a concern with the relationship between (or rather, imagined relationship between) speaker and listener (writer and reader or message/image sender and receiver) is a constant (Gaffney 2001). This raises the question of the ideas surrounding ethos, which I discuss in more detail below.

Fourth, while the normative does frame rhetoric, even and especially when we include demagoguery in our definition, it should not—although it often does—frame its study. Distinct from, but close to, the normative is the emotional, which is at the core of rhetoric. Emotions (Goldie 2000; Marcus 2002) such as desire (to be persuaded or delivered or included), sorrow, need, exhilaration, trust, and so on are always present in and around rhetoric. This brings us to Aristotle's categories of ethos, pathos, and logos (Aristotle 1991). Classical rhetoric tends to use ethos as a preface to logos and pathos, and in particular how—to good or bad purpose—argument and emotion interact with one another to consequential reaction. What was less focused upon in the contemporary period—taken out of the Aristotelian triptych and treated separately as 'image', persona, or character, particularly (from c. 2000) in studies of the 'new age' of 'celebrity politics' (see e.g. Street 2004, 2012)—is ethos. What I want to do is bring the three together as 'actors': the standing of ethos is not just a justification of and for the rhetoric that follows (classical rhetoric); nor is the rhetoric only there to serve 'leadership persona' (celebrity politics). Rather, both approaches are two sides of the same rhetorical coin.

This said, and more importantly, today the rhetor has become a veritable 'character' in the speech, like a character in a novel, and this often to the point where the rhetorical deployment of the ethos of the speaker is one of political rhetoric's essential functions ('I have a dream today!' is about both 'I' and 'dream'). In this new complexity, ethos is not only about ethos as part of a rhetorical strategy, but also contributes to the fashioning of both ethos's identity and that of the audience (and vice versa). Here I should stress the importance of Finlayson's point (Finlayson 2012: 752) that 'characterizing' the audience is now as consequential as characterizing the speaker: the 'success' of the rhetor is strictly dependent upon how the audience—after being invited to be depicted or by being depicted in a particular way—imagines *itself* (Gaffney 2017).

Acts of rhetoric and their expression are 'acts', and they are launched into the political space as 'projectiles' (Martin 2015: 26). This bold imagery serves to underline the idea, adding further to Hay's argument (Hay 1998), that consequential, cognitive ideational frames intervene in the political (and are themselves instances of action), and that the use of rhetoric as 'acts' means that 'frames' are less stable (and therefore less determining) than they appear (and yet, though less stable, can be no less important as formative conditions of performance). One could argue from this that the structure–agency debate is itself highly misleading.

If we take 'frames' in this instance as structure, as Hay has argued (Hay 1998), as has Sartre (regarding *le vécu*, or 'lived experience'; see Sartre 1960, 1969), then structure and agency *interact*. The point here is that these are not really in opposition to one another, but are mutually dependent (Corner 2000). I return to this below.

In parenthesis, I should stress that rhetorical re-enactments (e.g. the discourse and rhetoric of a bureaucracy, the 'routinized processes and behaviours of social and political systems'; see Martin 2015: 33) are, in fact, also acts of agency. Although 'layers of custom' (Martin 2015: 31) are resistant to change—they 'constrain' (Martin 2015: 32)—they nevertheless still 'perform' the status quo in order to maintain it; reproduction is a form of production. On the other hand, the chances of rhetorical acts being able to effect change, or even affect or effect their immediate desired outcome (e.g. to be a good and well received speech; see Atkinson 1984), are dependent upon many things other than the performance of rhetoric itself. Structure weighs, and different structures and conventions weigh differently. Nevertheless, the transcending of the reductionist nature of much of the structure–agency debate is crucial here. Structure is the formative context but also the resource of agency. The role of the analyst is to identify the degrees of their interaction and their relative respective strengths.

I do not here mean that the past-as-structure treated in this way means that agency is 'free'. It is free in the sense that it can be creative and consequential, but it is not free of its constraints nor of its past. As William Faulkner said, 'The past is never dead. It's not even past'; or, with more emphasis upon the illusions of context, Mallarmé: 'Deluded is the man who thinks he is a contemporary of his time'. And in a doctrinally rich and deeply ethical tradition, this is even more the case (see Robinson's chapter in this volume). It is important, then, to see the UK left itself as the *resource* of agency, but one which has to be seriously taken into account by its rhetors. In the UK left, as well as being *in* the present and performing *towards* the future, the past also needs to be performed *to* (or against), and if Faulkner was right—and he was—*in*.

So what we have (or would like to have) is a rhetorical action which stresses agency without denying the role of structure, or rather replaces the two with 'conditions of performance' and 'performance'. Conditions and performance, like Martin's 'inventive re-figuration' (2015: 26), involve a certain reimagining of political performance. And the conditions are many and constitute 'the stage' upon which rhetoric

is performed. This takes us back to March and Olsen (1984) and the idea that institutions have a formative culture, itself related to wider cultural ideas informing whole institutional and political systems. So, historical conditions inform rhetorical traditions and, as I have argued, factors informing continuity can become the conditions of (innovative) rhetoric and performance: 'rhetoric combines continuity with provocation' (Martin 2015: 28). What we need to theorize—in line with Martin's idea of rhetoric's *disturbing* capacity (Martin 2015: 25, 28)—is the idea of rhetoric as a creative as well as 'just' a reproductive act (in the Bourdieuian sense; see Bourdieu and Passeron 1970).

This brings me to a further concern and potential confusion. The term 'ideology' is quite widely used in contemporary rhetorical studies (and elsewhere—that's the trouble). Today, it often refers (and in this volume) to ideology as defined or characterized by Freeden (1998): a 'core' cluster of central ideas, some 'adjacent' and others on the 'periphery'. Here and in rhetorical studies generally it is akin to, although not synonymous with, political doctrine; ideationally it is arguably 'further down' (socially, psychically) than doctrine. The problem here and a possible source of conceptual confusion—particularly regarding the relationship of structure to agency and rhetoric to power—is that 'ideology' plays an even more fundamental (even further down) role in discourse analysis, in Marxism and post-Marxism, and in critical theory. So let's be clear what it is and what it is not for us here. Louis Althusser's seminal article on ideological state apparatuses is *not* what I mean. For Althusser, outside class struggle, which is itself more a consequence of a mode of production rather than being agential, our capacity to act is 'overdetermined' (Althusser 1970). For the purposes of analysis in this volume I shall take ideology to mean, in part, what it means for Freeden, as well as doctrine and the mythologies—fables, narrative stories, myths, and rhetoric (which includes particularly ambiguity)—that surround and inform it. I say 'in part' because I want to address some questions to Freeden's view: I think ideologies are or produce narratives and, because of that, may be more 'fluid' than they are for Freeden, and create even what we might imagine as 'wormholes' between 'ideational universes'. I shall come back to this and other hesitations, particularly as one could argue that his characterization does not preclude these. I also say 'in part' because there is no three-line whip in this volume on what each of us takes ideology to mean: nuances between us are indicated where appropriate. And besides, when people like me say 'for the purposes

of analysis, I shall take ideology to mean …' they are usually trying to steady their thought because, as with everything, I might be wrong.

An extremely thorough and penetrating discussion of Freeden's ideas is Judi Atkins's (the same!) introductory analytical chapter to her *Justifying New Labour Policy* (2011). She might well disagree with my own analysis here, so I recommend the above for perhaps a fuller view—she also has the final chapter in this volume so will, literally, have the last word. Atkins explains that, for Freeden, it is at the periphery—marginal ideas and those at the perimeter of an ideational cluster—where change takes place or can take place, and also that 'core' ideas can themselves travel to the edge (and vice versa). My point about what I call 'wormholes' is that in some cases—and 'socialism/Labourism' is just such a case—it is not just at the edges that clusters are ideationally porous, and that even core ideas or 'deconstestations' of them can sometimes travel into other ideational clusters due to the very nature of thought, language, narrative, and rhetoric and their performance (and the psyche, but I should perhaps stop there).

An illustrative recent example of this is the way in which French socialism as if 'plunged' into the core ideas of French Gaullism; or rather, it was the other way round but the *agent* was socialist rhetoric using: (a) the deep references in French culture to strong leadership; (b) the 'presidential' nature of the French republic after 1958; and (c) the rhetorical performance of a 'self' who aligned ideationally and performatively with both a socialist and a Gaullist 'template'. By gathering around himself a socialist rally of opinion from 1971 onwards, François Mitterrand hauled into socialist rhetoric the main elements of Gaullism, particularly the notion of the providential leader. Let me explain how this is possible, because part of the answer to the puzzle lies in the nature of Gaullist ideology itself. In truth, Gaullism as an ideology or doctrine—perhaps to distinguish our view from that of Freeden we should call these here 'core commitments'—despite the thousands of hours and books devoted to its analysis, is quite modest. It contains one accommodation and five core 'concepts' or 'commitments', or what we might call doctrinally informed imperatives. The accommodation is the acceptance of the republican tradition and, paradoxically, the 'recognition' of all the other French traditions (with a question mark over Vichy). The five commitments or principles are: national independence; a strong currency; a commitment to national defence (in practice, an independent nuclear deterrent); a strong interventionist state; and social cohesion

via the political mechanism of 'participation' (of citizens in refashioned social and political organizations and institutions and relations). The way in which Freeden constructs ideologies (equality, justice, and so on) flow *from* these in Gaullism. For example, we could argue that a strong interventionist state is—in Freeden's terms—about wealth distribution to promote greater equality of outcome; an independent nuclear deterrent an expression of Gaullism's view of France's role in international relations. However, these commitments are also—even more so—linked to France's sense that without a strong state there is no France, and the fact that French historical vulnerability led to an assertion of 'virility', even though in practice it became directed at the Soviet Union rather than at Germany.

The 'unvoiced' ideological core concept of Gaullism, however, is none of these. It is the concept that there exist in history—in particular in moments of crisis—providential individuals who, through their will, impose themselves upon a national destiny. These individuals have two further qualities. The first is that they 'envision' 'true' reality where others cannot (and so are, Cassandra-like, right before their time). The second is that they have a special relationship to a notion of, here, France, rather than with the people; but the people recognize the providential individual as having this relationship, and therefore confer both legitimacy and authority to act upon him (to date, him). To the Anglo-Saxon, this might seem more fairytale than ideology, but it lies at the heart of most French ideologies (and I suspect all ideologies). François Mitterrand used all of Gaullism's core concepts in French socialism's own, most importantly the mythology of the providential leader. Freeden might call this a national myth rather than a concept, but that then raises the question of the relationship of myths to ideologies and, sequentially, mythically informed ideologies to policies and commitments.

Like Martin, Finlayson's concern is to dynamize the study of politics by making political science 'see' the political process in a new way, by demonstrating that the 'articulations' of political ideologies—what we might call the rhetorical moments in the political process or political space—are 'creative acts' (Finlayson 2012: 752) and are arguably the most important elements of politics. Central to Finlayson's characterization (and development) of the rhetorical conception of political ideologies is his addition of the crucial idea of political argument to Freeden's and Laclau's (2014) conceptions of, respectively, ideology and discourse.

In so doing, Finlayson, like Martin, 'shakes up' our perception of ideology, in that argument and its rhetoric make the systems of thought more fluid, more negotiated in the moments of their expression, adding a vigour to Freeden's 'relatively determinate but nevertheless shifting organizations of political thought' (Finlayson 2012: 752). But for Atkins, as for Finlayson, as for Freeden (as for me, although I would stress their narrative performance as a major agent of mutability), ideologies offer coherent ways of understanding and rhetorically politicizing the world while allowing for—indeed requiring—elements such as ambiguity to create a movement and range within thought, and certainly within rhetoric. A classic example of this latter is, once again, French Gaullism and its ambivalent rhetorical reconciliation of republicanism and personal leadership (Gaffney 2012). The essential point, however, is that ideology and its rhetorical performance is not a diversion from or a malfunction of politics, but is one of its essential properties (Finlayson 2012: 753).

As Atkins notes in her account of Freeden's theory (2011: 13ff), most ideologies contain all of the main political concepts—equality, justice, rights, liberty, democracy, and power—and each, defined or perceived in different ways, includes conceptions of moral ends, views of social structure, and so on—even views on 'human nature' (one might say especially human nature). For Freeden, the core of socialism is comprised of 'the constitutive nature of the human relationship, human welfare as a desirable objective, human nature as active, equality, and history as the arena of (ultimately) beneficial change' (Freeden 1998: 425–426). Variations on additional concepts—and whether they are perceived as core or adjacent—will produce variations of socialism. Then, of course, there is the movement (evolution over time) of concepts to and from the centre. Typically, this process is gradual, and clearly a core cannot vacate an ideology if it is to survive. As I have argued regarding French socialism, ideologies can, however, sometimes be joined by new versions of 'ineliminable' concepts through rhetoric and performance.

Ambiguity links up or allows ideas to coexist that might not necessarily follow logically or even epistemologically, and in this serves the political function of potentially widening support for or understanding of a claim or appeal. Thus, it is not only Aristotelian enthymeme, but also a rhetorically rich association of apparently incompatible dispositions that enable other ideas to 'travel', often using pathos as a bridge. One can take this further and say that ambiguity in rhetoric mediates not only incompatible, but even perhaps irreconcilable, concepts and approaches:

irreconcilable 'outside' an ideology but, through what we might call rhetorical reconciliation or 'conceptual negotiation', 'inside', through ambiguity or other means of travel. One example that I have already mentioned would be French socialism's use of François Mitterrand's persona to reconcile opposites. If this is the case, it may also be the case that these opposites coexist *within* ideologies, particularly when these are given narrative, rhetorical 'voice', although, as Atkins has noted (2011), Freeden argues that logical and *cultural* adjacency may account for this. We should also be aware that Freeden does allow for the co-existence of apparently contradictory ideas even within the cores of ideational clusters (Atkins 2011: 16). My point is probably trivial, or I have misunderstood; but let us assume that—because of ideas themselves, language, 'events', time, rhetoric, performance, and people themselves—ideologies are more permeable than is generally assumed. Several of the case studies in this volume seem to bear out this crucial role of performance.

Whatever is the case, one is struck by the fact that compelling ideologies, belief systems, and doctrines *all* seem to mediate—at least the narration of—opposites: mercy/retribution, trials/deliverance, individual/collective, penance/celebration, journeys/arrivals, darkness/light, sorrow/joy, kindness/severity, millenarianism/pragmatism, individual courage/succour, tolerance/justice, temptation/fortitude, struggle/resignation, and so on. This is perhaps another of the bridging functions of the 'play' of things such as ambiguity, together with—as Freeden and Finlayson point out (Finlayson 2012: 755)—the need to persuade an audience of the *actual* or 'true' meaning of an idea or term in a particular rhetorical instance. Here, ambiguity enables a signifier to act as an agent between (at least) two signifieds; for example, 'justice' as the 'agent' of both retribution and mercy, even revenge. A related point is that a lot of the binary issues I mentioned above relate not only to ideology or doctrine but to myth and, as I have argued, to the (inclusive? contradictory?) nature of belief systems.

Regarding Freeden's 'core', 'adjacent', and 'periphery' concepts, rhetoric puts this threefold entity into 'movement', as it were (as Atkins, Finlayson, and Martin argue): ideologies are more vulnerable to influence than they would have themselves because of the nature of rhetoric. This is perhaps, in part, how they change over time. I would also argue—I already have—that it is not only at their edges that they interact with other ideologies (i.e. at their least 'ideological' point), but also in adjacent and core ideas because of the ways these are conceptualized and performed in rhetoric. Within

a chapter of this length I cannot go into this in detail, but it would help explain how apparently contradictory ideas co-exist, as we saw earlier. It also would help to explain how certain ideational clusters interact—e.g. socialism and nationalism, republicanism and Empire, feminism and socialism, feminism and conservatism, or feminism and political Islam. Freeden also discusses this (1998). My point is really to stress that it is rhetoric and narrative which facilitate shifts in, and the creation of, what Freeden calls hybrid ideologies.

Left Rhetoric: What Is It? What Does It Do?

In the second part of this chapter, I examine Labour Party and left rhetoric and ideas from the perspective of my theoretical discussion so far—in particular from the perspective of my account of doctrine, narrative, and ideology and their rhetorical deployment. I am, therefore, concerned here with what constitutes left doctrine/ideology and the myths and fables informing it, but perhaps even more so with how doctrine impacts rhetorically and performatively in the public space and in the imagination.

The left in Britain—and especially the Labour left—has a doctrinal tradition that is rich and textured, and this beyond its pragmatism and union roots (themselves rich and textured). For a hundred years and more *before* the emergence of the Party itself (1900), a series of—not just Labour—thinkers and activists created what we might call a landscape of ideas that would become formative of a compelling rhetoric, and a very 'British' one: inter alia William Wilberforce, Tom Paine, William Hazlitt, Percy Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft, John Ruskin, William Blake, William Morris, Harriet Martineau, John Stuart Mill, Millicent Fawcett, Emmeline Pankhurst—the list is endless. It was a socially reformist response that informed swathes of national sentiment (and doubtless diminished the influence of Marxism). Moreover, unlike much of European leftism—which also was often virulently secular, both ideationally and morally (in part because hegemonic, continental Catholicism was so right wing; social Catholicism, outside 1930s intellectual circles, was a post-Second World War phenomenon)—the UK left was very much coincident/aligned with British cultural values, as well as with religious ideas (in particular non-conformist Christianity and, again in particular, Methodism) and with a deep moral emotionalism reflective of an emerging Dickensian/Elizabeth Gaskell-style and very publicly pronounced 'social conscience'. The developing doctrine of 'Labourism'

was, therefore, vast and coherent yet extremely eclectic. Many issues brought out melodrama (quite rightly) and emotion in the national conscience: 'dark satanic mills', children as young as 5 down the mines or up the chimneys (this—paradoxically—a 'conscience' issue because the middle classes had themselves 'invented' childhood), and so on; the horrors were legion. This ideational and rhetorical development accompanied a series of major events relevant to the movement—the Matchgirls' strike of 1888 and the 1889 London Dockers' strike among others—which shaped social attitudes and particularly influenced the sympathies of the politically influential middle classes.

This eclectic ideational, rhetorical, and emotional/ethical tradition was carried and amplified into a dominant paradigm that could not be countered (certainly on the British mainland). It had a commanding and, in a Gramscian sense (I can't believe I just said that), socially and intellectually hegemonic rhetoric which triumphed in 1945 because of Labour's participation in the wartime coalition; the myriad consequences upon daily lives of the 1930s and of the war itself; the major influence of liberal and left intellectuals; and, I would argue, the paradoxical effects of Churchill's own patriarchal but highly popular and emotional wartime narrative. Indeed, this rhetoric became the essential element of a post-war discursive settlement *across* the political spectrum, in part through the 'Butskellist' settlement (a blend of the policies and approaches of Rab Butler and Hugh Gaitskell), for the next 30 years. So a 'left discourse'—begun in earnest in the 1930s regarding the role of the state, the trade union relationship, the welfare system, working people's rights (health and safety, leisure), the democratization of education (and culture—this also began in earnest in the 1930s), and variations within these, but all within a 'family' of received ideas—gained national traction. Co-operativism, pacifism, anti-fascism, communities, the Workers' Educational Association, libraries, self/collective-help, Friendly Societies (begun in the nineteenth century), Clarion cycling clubs (1894) (and don't forget the Woodcraft Folk), evening classes, Ruskin College, the Left Book Club (1936), Welsh miners' choirs, and a myriad of other initiatives all became part of the national 'voice'.

Over and above this, or rather, perhaps, *against* these (and—as well as the points I make below regarding the *doxa*—this re-opens Freeden's issue of 'coherence'), there were, from the birth of the labour movement, other ideas associated with this landscape of ideas; and these too were often very 'British' ideas. They included, for example, attitudes

to Germany, to Europe generally, to Temperance, to the Russian Revolution and emergent Soviet Union, to Ireland, to Marxism, to women and to the family, to strikes even—to everything. There was also, in spite of this British character of leftism, a certain left radicalism informing Labour discourse which echoed the Marxism of European socialism (and the Second International and later Third). In part, this gave further rhetorical range and an insurrectionary flavour—the *Red Flag* was adopted by the party at its beginning and is still sung today (reluctantly by some). Moreover, Clause IV—calling (arguably ambivalently) for the nationalization of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and which lasted from 1918 until 1994—was Marxian in essence. Such a radical rhetorical register also existed throughout the twentieth century in significant parts of the trade union movement (and in the near-Frankfurt School intellectualism of *New Left Review*), and saw perhaps a last defiant (and heartbreaking) hurrah in the ill-fated 1984–1985 Miners' Strike. Supporters of Jeremy Corbyn, elected Labour Party leader in 2015 and again in 2016, would of course point to the inaccuracy and inappropriateness of my expression 'last hurrah'….

Overall, however, the party's radicalism was muted, if not its emotionalism. Having said this, Labour discourse (perhaps because it was, as I mentioned above, for a long time close to—reflecting—the prevailing national *doxa* of 'popular' ideas) also had a darker side—its 'dark matter' almost—which, it has to be said, has often caused rhetorical difficulties for mainstream Labourism, particularly in the more 'politically correct' atmosphere of the twenty-first century; for example, it contains aspects of severe social conservatism. The 'dark side' lay within or close to Labour's ideational frameworks precisely because of its proximity to common sense (itself not always sensible) and the *doxa*: negative attitudes to immigration, a historical 'little Englander' trait (captured in the 2000s by the UK Independence Party), sexism (male-centrism at least), anti-cosmopolitanism, a tendency to 'bossism' (particularly in some trade unions), and in 2016 the bizarre entry of anti-Semitism into the matrix of Labour's rhetorical range (so much for Cable Street), and so on. So we can see that if the *ideology* of Labourism is conceptualized as the *narratives* of Labourism, the rhetorical conditions of left/Labour discourse are extremely complex. This raises the question, also addressed throughout this book, of the contemporary relevance of such complexity.

Having pointed to a rich tradition that runs from the eighteenth century, or even from the seventeenth (the Levellers, the Diggers, the

Putney Debates, and via Peterloo and the Tolpuddle Martyrs), a paradoxical point to make is that although Labour has a rich doctrinal tradition, today this is often (always, sometimes, never) neglected (rhetorically), and therefore becomes a rhetorical resource for others from all sides of—and outside—the party. This is in part because of the changing nature of the party and of society, and in a sense one can see how a Sandel (2012) or Thomas Piketty might have more to offer a modern UK Labour Party than Beatrice Webb and R.H. Tawney (but ignore them at your peril).

From the 1950s through to the 1990s, what we might call the party's theoretical modesty was challenged by the 'New Left' (Davis 2006, 2012; Rutherford 2013), and a certain theoretical (and generational) import from continental socialism/s which added to and heightened attention to deeper social and economic analyses across the party, but mainly on the left (Hall 1980; Williams 1987). This was accompanied by a widespread increase in academic interest and academic involvement in the party, and the revitalization of the Fabian Society, and later a range of thinkers (inter alia Giddens 1994, 2000; Marquand 1997) who would quite radically 'update' party thinking in the 1990s (on the right of the party); and later still the emergence of a range of 'think tanks' associated with or close to the party. To a certain extent, much of the intellectual life of the party—even policy elaboration—passed to the think tanks for some time during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

A further point we can make is that the party's doctrinal richness-yet-eclecticism was paradoxical in that it intensified—usually at major moments of change—doctrinal clashes within the party. This is a kind of inversion of Finlayson's point that they are all talking more or less about the same thing; such richness *increases* disagreement—sometimes of the how-many-angels-on-a-pinhead type, but no less consequential for that. Ideationally and rhetorically, a recent and illustrative context of such difference (clash) was the phenomenon of 'Bennism' (the influence and rhetoric of Tony Benn) in the 1980s particularly, whereby the main rhetorical device was essentially moral—evangelical even—*and* Marxian (Benn 1980). That is to say, factional conflict took strident moral form, of the type: *We are more radical, more courageous, more moral; you are complicit, dazzled by false idols, and in collaboration with the forces that would deceive and dominate the people and 'the Good'*. This still informed the party strongly in the recent period, as any Corbynista would tell you; although moral indignation and appeals inform all 'wings' of the party;

although it could be argued that the 2015–2016 Corbyn leadership 'clash' was not just such, but a crisis.

Doctrinal 'clashes' are often organized around intellectual *and* sentimental allegiance to: '1945', the 'Third Way', or an earlier pre-war socialism; or, pre-1997 Labour, the Greater London Council; or the Christian tradition which strongly underpins the ethical register in leftist rhetoric; a national 'vocation' and the characterization of a range of imagined social 'models' (how society should be organized 'for the people of this country'); and finally to an associated and rhetorically penetrating range of myths and legends that are linked to the wider myths bristling throughout the social *doxa*. These are often performed as stories: 'I met a man the other day who told me about growing up in the East End before the War […]'; myths and stories relating to courage and heroism, solidarity and sacrifice, kindness, fortitude, justice and deliverance. It is Labour discourse's traditional proximity to this prevailing mythology, as well as its fundamental optimism as a philosophy, which lends it its potential as a compelling national rhetoric (not always rhetorically fulfilled of course).

The Ideational Framework Today

Taking into account all I have said regarding the historical, ideological, and mythical sources of Labour's narrative and rhetoric, let me gather them and their implications into a list of what we might call 'ideational consequences':

- UK Labourism/leftism is fundamentally an optimistic ideology, but it has constantly to 'propose'.
- Its attitude to leadership is muted and negative; and its understanding partial, and therefore vulnerable.
- British Labourism is British: English for the most part, but with strong Welsh and Scottish discursive sources—a muted Irish input. It is not 'Continental' to any significant degree, with the exception of its presence in European institutions, which have had effects, and its elites' interest in European socialism and social democracy.
- It has a 'Mission' to right wrongs, even to offer deliverance, and its rhetoric is infused with ethics, even righteousness, which can turn in on itself and deploy—often destructive—notions of 'betrayal' of an Iago or Judas type.

- Its 'humour' is usually based on caricature/derision of its opponents, and is therefore of limited rhetorical value. It is quite archaic ('These Tories […]'), even pantomime—'Let's talk about Boris'—'Oooh! Aah!' (*sneers and boos and laughter*), but is given subtlety and a contemporary flavour through *personal* humour—for example, at the Conference fringe, or through self-deprecation by, say, a Miliband (e.g. recounting funny encounters with members of the public), or lately through the association of comedians like Eddie Izzard or Jo Brand, and the generation who (quite rightly) find them hilarious.
- It has a dual concern with (and tension between) the State and the local. This is a real rhetorical resource, but it can become a site of internal rhetorical conflict.
- It is Christian in much of its ethics, and Christian and Humanist ethics underpin much of its moral thrust.
- It is reformist (and this sometimes in a near-Reformation Protestant sense). Today, Social Catholicism too informs the supporters of the 'Common Good' revival in and close to the party.
- It is Millenarian, and this co-exists with its pragmatism; ironically, the one often 'justifying' or legitimizing the other rhetorically.
- It is sometimes rhetorically insurrectionary. This is present rhetorically, although it has historically been mitigated by an inherent 'caution'. Within the party, the former is often used against the latter rather than against 'real' adversaries.
- There are many doctrinal strains within Labourism, but it is always preoccupied with the Old, the New, 'new times' (Atkins 2015), renewal, finding the true (original) path, making 'the Journey' towards a better place, being true to an original purpose—and all of these in relation or contrast to the practical (rhetorical) exigency of gaining power.
- The lack of a clear *direction* is part of a constant condition—possibly a rhetorical flaw, possibly a rhetorical advantage of Labourism. But it is difficult to negotiate and renegotiate the constraints and demands of its attitudes to, for example, markets and the imposition of a leftist social project; and it believes in the reality of 'social projects', although less so than some of its more rhetorically transformative European counterparts.
- Labourism/the left is (rhetorically) committed to and informed by feminism (of both 'middle class' and 'workerist' types and registers)

and anti-racism, and is against discrimination on the grounds of disability, and so on. Yet it has a history of indifference, forgetfulness (often with regard to disability), and patriarchal attitudes to some of these issues. This is perhaps in part inevitable/understandable, given that it drew its strength from deeply traditional communities which expressed hostility to the 'middle class' sources of suffragism/feminism and perhaps even in some quarters the nature of feminism itself (Banks 1993). In fact, the relationship between the 'working class' and 'middle class' sources of Labourism/the left has never really been resolved.

- It would have itself 'politically correct', has rules and conventions (and therefore rhetorical no-go areas; e.g. the immigration debate poses real problems).
- It embraces the Collective, the Welfare State, the State Education System (undermined by some of its prominent figures using private education), and Modernization ('1945' Labour, in part the Wilson years, and New Labour particularly). But, given the traditionalism I referred to above, 'Modernization' is often equated with capitulation to capitalism (in part because it is used as a euphemism by capitalists …).
- It would have itself morally (and technologically, practically, and so on) exemplary.
- It is imbued with 'memory' (Wickham-Jones 2013; Robinson 2012), as well as with legends and myths (from a range of sources—national, religious, fairy tale, chivalric, inter alia); and myths involving adversity, journey, arrival, deliverance, and triumph, which inform its doctrine, its 'imaginings' and, by extension, its rhetoric.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have established a kind of doctrinal cosmology (left Creationism at one end and Chaos Theory at the other—just kidding, I think). It is a cosmology or map underpinned rhetorically and framed ideationally not only by doctrine and ideology, but also by myths, legends, dispositions, and the 'dark matter' we identified and, in particular—often related to this—the things implied and the things that cannot be said. For left ideology is about what is unsayable, as well as what is sayable or imperative to say—and sometimes it is not clear what is not acceptable until it is said (comment by James Martin 2015). The

essential point, however, and we shall see this in each of the chapters—whether they deal with ideas, text, speech, iconography, or image—is that Labourism/the left is a rhetoric performed.

Acknowledgements This chapter, and this book, owes much to a workshop held on 16 September 2014 on 'Voices of the UK Left', which was hosted by the Aston Centre for Europe and funded by the Leverhulme Trust as part of a wider project on the UK Labour Party. The workshop comprised Judi Atkins, Katharine Dommett, Alan Finlayson, John Gaffney, Amarjit Lahel, James Martin, David Moon, Emily Robinson, and Ben Worthy.

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PART I

The Rhetoric of the British Labour Party

CHAPTER 2

‘I’m Telling You, and You’ll Listen’: Ethos in the Rhetoric of Neil Kinnock

Simon Griffiths

Neil Kinnock was elected leader of the Labour Party in October 1983 and stepped down almost 9 years later, after his party lost its fourth consecutive general election—the second under his leadership. In electoral terms, Kinnock’s tenure was a failure. Yet, by the time he resigned, the party was almost unrecognizable from the one Kinnock had inherited: less divided, with a set of policies more attractive to the wider electorate and better presented. It was on the cusp of its biggest electoral victory since 1945 and its longest period in office.

Kinnock’s rhetoric was also the subject of seemingly paradoxical interpretations. On the one hand, Kinnock was seen as ‘arguably the finest orator in modern British politics’. On the other, Kinnock was attacked as a ‘Welsh Windbag’ (Kellner 1992) and often seen as ineffective in Parliament—particularly against Margaret Thatcher (see e.g. the discussion in Westlake 2001: 390). As Peter Kellner writes: ‘even his closest friends wince at his tendency to stretch a succinct statement into an elasticated tangle’ (Kellner 1992: 1). It is this paradox that makes Kinnock’s rhetoric a fascinating subject of study.

This chapter focuses on the importance of ‘ethos’ as a mode of rhetoric. I begin by discussing ethos as a mode of persuasion, arguing for a broad understanding of the term. I then set out the way in which

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J. Atkins and J. Gaffney (eds.), *Voices of the UK Left*,
Rhetoric, Politics and Society, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51902-9_2

Kinnock's ethos was a product of his background—a background with which his audiences would have been largely familiar. I argue that Kinnock's ethos gave him the authority to take on the left in the Labour Party during his early years as leader. However, that same ethos meant that Kinnock's rhetoric was less effective in reaching out *beyond* the labour movement and led some voters to question his suitability to be Prime Minister. As a result, Kinnock's later rhetoric as Labour leader drew less obviously on his own ethos and more on other rhetorical modes: a transformation that created a degree of mistrust. I conclude with some brief comments on the importance of a broad understanding of ethos in the analysis of rhetoric.

Ethos and Rhetoric

This exploration of Kinnock's rhetoric draws on the classical modes of persuasion discussed throughout this collection: pathos, logos, and—particularly—ethos. Roughly speaking, these modes correspond to an appeal to an audience's emotions, to logic, and to character respectively (Toye 2013: 42). So, when Kinnock cautioned his listeners in 1983 that 'If Margaret Thatcher wins on Thursday […] I warn you not to fall ill. And I warn you not to grow old', he was using pathos, seeking to fill his audience with fear concerning the human consequences of a Conservative victory (Harris 1984: 208). In 1987, when he argued that 'there is no collision between affluence and socialism', he was using logos: there was no logical contradiction between a wealthy society and a just one (Kinnock in Kellner 1992: 129–133). When Kinnock told Parliament in his maiden speech that he was 'the first male member of my family for about three generations who can have reasonable confidence in expecting that I will leave this earth with more or less the same number of fingers, hands, legs, toes, and eyes as I had when I was born' (Kinnock in Harris 1984: 23), he was using ethos. Kinnock was letting his audience know that he was born into the working class and the labour movement, and that he would seek to represent them (Kinnock in Kellner 1992: 129–133). Orators will use a balance of modes to persuade their audience.

There is a debate about how widely the idea of 'ethos' should be conceived. In Aristotle's narrow definition, the ethos of a speaker is established in the speech itself: 'This kind of persuasion […] should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of this character before he begins to speak' (Aristotle 2014: 2155). Prior reputation

is not a factor in rhetoric. The audience should make a judgement based solely on the speech. In contrast, I argue that a broader interpretation of ethos provides a more compelling account of how rhetoric functions. As Isocrates argued, a speaker's ethos was related to their character and reputation: 'the argument which is made by a man's life is more weight than that which is furnished by words' (Isocrates 1982: 278). Speakers, particularly politicians working in a media age, rarely come to us as strangers. As an audience, we listen with preconceived ideas about who they are and what they have done in the past, and this shapes our reception of their speech. The approach taken in this chapter takes this wider view of ethos. *Who* a speaker is becomes as important to their rhetoric as *what* they say. With regard to Kinnock, his ethos included those aspects of his character and history known to the audience before a speech had begun. As such, his background mattered because it shaped his ethos. There is a further, related sense in which the concept of 'ethos' is used. It can be used to describe the guiding beliefs or ideals that characterize an entity, such as a community, an ideology, or a political party. People talk about the 'ethos' of the Labour Party, for example, when describing its guiding beliefs. This latter use is the root of our word 'ethics'.

Kinnock's Ethos

According to David Marquand, 'in a sense true of surprisingly few of his predecessors, Labour's ethos is also [Kinnock's] ethos. He is unmistakably and unaffectedly a product of the working class culture of the South Wales valleys, with all the strengths and weaknesses that that implies' (Marquand 1991: 205–206). Kinnock was born in 1942, into a working class, South Walian family. His father, Gordon, was a coal miner—a member of the 'labour aristocracy'—and his mother, Mary, a district nurse (Westlake 2001: Chap. 2). Asked about his political awakenings, Kinnock noted the high level of 'civic consciousness' in the family. He recalls his mother impressing upon him the importance of being a 'good citizen'—a favourite term of hers (Kinnock 2011). In this vein, the historian Kenneth Morgan writes: 'Unusually among Labour leaders, he is an authentic proletarian in the people's party, with his mother's insistence on short haircuts and polished shoes as a further tribute to South Wales' working class canons of respectability'. Contrasting Kinnock with his intellectual, middle class predecessor as party leader, Michael Foot, Morgan notes, 'No donkey jacket at the Cenotaph for him' (Morgan 1992: 335). The family was not particularly active in Labour Party

politics but, Kinnock notes, they did have 'huge regard for Jim Griffiths and other heroes of the pantheon' and 'worshipped' the Welsh socialist, Aneurin Bevan (Kinnock 2011). They were part of the labour movement in the broadest sense.

Place and tradition shaped Kinnock's rhetoric. He noted that he was 'immensely fortunate in where I happened to be born' (Kinnock 2011). For David Moon, the Welsh word 'hwyl' is useful in understanding Kinnock's oratory. There is no clear translation of the term in English, and Moon argues that 'hwyl' is four things: a mood of enthusiasm or fervour; a medium involving musical cadences and lilting notes; a style of speech familiar to the Welsh nonconformist preacher; and a drive, like a sail filled with wind, that carries the oratory forward (Moon 2015: 129). When the 'new religion' of socialism came to displace the chapel in the Welsh valleys, the style of evangelizing remained the same (Deacon cited in Moon 2015: 129); the rhetoric of socialism was also recognizably the rhetoric of the pulpit. The passion, musicality and drive of Kinnock's oratory were in part the product of his Welsh roots.

Kinnock's apprenticeship in public speaking came through the labour movement and student politics. He joined the Labour Party at 14, partly under the influence of Bill Harry, a local councillor. In 1961, Kinnock was admitted to University College, Cardiff—as he later commented 'the first Kinnock in a thousand generations to be able to go to university' (Kellner 1992: 8; Thomas-Symonds 2006)—obtaining a degree in industrial relations and history in 1965. More importantly, he became active in student politics, joining the university's Socialist Society and later becoming President of the Students' Union. During these years he met his future wife, Glenys. Reflecting on that time, he commented:

> Fate can be dominated by the most miniscule of things. I wanted to impress her. She *en passant* really said how much she thought debating and public speaking was important. So I took on a role in the debating society in Cardiff University which was immensely active and had huge attendances, overcame my terror, made a speech […] won the debate and as a consequence was thrust into a much higher profile political role. (Kinnock 2011)

University was followed by a postgraduate diploma in education and, between August 1966 and May 1970, almost 4 years as a tutor for the Workers' Educational Association (Harris 1984: Chap. 3; Kinnock 2011).

Kinnock's political rise in the Labour Party was impressive. After university he remained active in local party politics. Aged just 27, he squeezed victory over more established candidates as the Labour nominee for his local constituency, Bedwellty (later Islwyn), in June 1969. He was elected to Parliament on 18 June 1970. It was through his rhetorical abilities that Kinnock first made a name for himself in the national party, through a series of well-received conference speeches during the 1970s (Morgan 1992: 337). Following the general election defeat of 1979, James Callaghan appointed him Shadow Education spokesman (Westlake 2001: Chaps. 6, 8) and, 4 years later, Kinnock was overwhelmingly elected to the party leadership. Seen as a candidate from the left—although no longer the hard left—Kinnock was elected with over 71% of the vote, winning in every section of a college of unions, MPs, and party members. As Kinnock spoke to thank 'the movement' for choosing him as the next party leader, his words were filtered by the perceptions his audience already had of his character and roots.

Early Leadership: Ethos and Authority

Kinnock inherited a Labour Party in existential crisis (Whiteley 1983; Seyd 1987; Jefferys 1993). The party had gained just 29% of the popular vote in the 1983 general election. It had campaigned on a manifesto committing it to further nationalization, withdrawal from the Common Market, and unilateral nuclear disarmament. In Kinnock's view, these policies made the party unelectable. Looking back, he argued that, by the beginning of the 1980s, there had to be 'huge policy changes': Labour 'was travelling in orbit around the realities with which people lived […]. And that meant that the messages that they did have […] simply lacked credibility. And therefore, those policies had to change, and be changed'. He went on to say that 'The problem in politics, of course, is that policies become 'religified' […] and in a relatively short time go as deep as conformist religious doxologies. And so changing those policies is like changing faith. It's absurd' (Kinnock 2011).

Policy tensions went hand in hand with organizational tensions. The party had split after 1981, as 28 MPs from the right followed the 'gang of four' into the new centrist Social Democratic Party (SDP). After 1979, the left had sought to 'change Labour's Constitution in order to make the leadership more accountable to the party outside Parliament' (Garner and Kelly 1998: 114). The result was a shift in power away

from the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) and towards party activists. Mandatory reselection of MPs by Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) was introduced (Koelble 1991: 101ff). Many of the Labour MPs who had defected to the SDP were threatened in their local parties with deselection in favour of candidates from the Militant left. Militant, a Trotskyist entryist group, gained significant control of Labour councils in the mid-1980s, notably in Liverpool. As Peter Kellner puts it, 'When Kinnock became its leader, the party's long-term survival was in doubt' (Kellner 1992: 10).

These tensions came to a head at the 1985 party conference in Bournemouth, when Kinnock attacked Militant. It was arguably the finest example of his rhetoric and is worthy of further analysis. The context for the speech was the decision by Liverpool City Council to deliberately budget for an illegal deficit, in order to provoke a crisis that would force central government to offer extra aid to the city. This strategy was designed to demonstrate to working people that revolutionary politics could succeed where parliamentary politics had failed. In August 1985, officials warned Derek Hatton, the leading Militant figure on the Council, that Liverpool would run out of money to pay its staff by the end of the year. This meant that it would have to issue 90-day redundancy notices to all 31,000 of its employees. This was the crisis that Militant was looking for. Hatton assured workers that Council jobs were safe, and that the government was posturing, but the main unions representing Council staff were unconvinced and refused to distribute the redundancy notices to members. As a result, Hatton commissioned a fleet of 30 taxis to deliver the redundancy notices to workers (Kellner 1992: 73–77). Kinnock's conference speech confronted the situation head-on.

On the platform, Kinnock's rhetorical skills were used to remarkable effect. He improvised with the written text he had in front of him, treating it—as was often the way—more like a draft. Indeed, the text underlined in the passage below was not in the copy of the speech given to journalists, but was improvised by Kinnock on the podium (see Kellner 1992: 1). With leading figures from Militant barracking him from the conference floor, Kinnock told his audience:

> I'll tell you what happens with impossible promises. You start with far-fetched resolutions. They are then pickled into a rigid dogma, a code, and you go through the years sticking to that, out-dated, mis-placed,

> irrelevant to the real needs, and you end up in the grotesque chaos of a Labour council – a LABOUR council – hiring taxis to scuttle round a city handing out redundancy notices to its own workers. (Quoted in Kellner 1992: 3, 91)

Commentators have noted how the use of the word 'scuttle', in the passage above, adds to the image of the already-insectile black cabs. Aristotle explores the power of metaphor to communicate an idea by bringing something vividly 'before our eyes'. Reflecting on his rhetoric, Kinnock would agree, noting that 'I wasn't embarrassed about painting pictures with words' (Kinnock 2011). In this metaphor, Militant's entryism becomes an unwelcome infestation that the party must deal with (British Political Speech, n.d.). Kinnock's extemporization in his speech also draws, probably unconsciously, on powerful rhetorical techniques, such as repetition ('a LABOUR council'), and tricolon ('out-dated, mis-placed, irrelevant to the real needs')—a favourite technique of his. Kinnock continued:

> I am telling you, no matter how entertaining, how fulfilling to short-term egos – I'm telling you, and you'll listen – you can't play politics with people's jobs and with people's services or with their homes. (Quoted in Kellner 1992: 3, 91)

It is the interpolation in this section—'I'm telling you, and you'll listen'—added verbally to the text during the speech, which demonstrates the force of Kinnock's rhetoric. The phrase calls attention to Kinnock's power in the party, not just in a formal sense as leader, but as someone with a particular authority. I argue that the authority to confront the left came from Kinnock's background: the Welsh, working class ethos. This narrative was made explicit in the closing sections of the speech, when Kinnock drew on his own character to argue:

> I say to you in complete honesty, because this is the movement that I belong to, that I owe this party everything I have got – not the job, not being leader of the Labour Party, but every life chance that I have had since the time I was a child: the life chance of a comfortable home, with working parents, people who had jobs; the life chance of moving out of a pest and damp-infested set of rooms into a decent home, built by a Labour council under a Labour government; the life chance of an education that went on for as long as I wanted to take it. (Quoted in Kellner 1992: 93)

Kinnock's ethos gave him authority to reject rival conceptions of socialism. As Moon explains, Kinnock's delivery 'emphasized his character and as such provided reassurance to Labour members and supporters as it clothed him with an aura of trustworthiness—he was […] *one of them* and as such a figure who could be trusted with the movement, to do it right, even as his actions might hurt. An individual such as [Deputy Labour Leader] Roy Hattersley—avuncular and literate as he was and is—could not have performed this task, not without engendering the real prospect of the party irreconcilably splitting' (Moon 2015: 135). Kinnock's rhetoric demonstrated pathos ('I owe this party everything I have got') and logos in its arguments for credible policy solutions, but it was his ethos that provided him with authority in the internecine party wars during his first term. However, it had a number of limitations when reaching out *beyond* the labour movement, as I explore next.

The Limits of Kinnock's Ethos

While Kinnock's ethos gave him authority in the labour movement, the rhetoric he used could alienate those outside it. As David Marquand has written, 'The language of "our people", which can so easily sound false or patronising, comes naturally to him because they really are his people. The myths and symbols of labourism, which he manipulates with such artistry, are his myths and symbols: that is why the artistry is so successful' (Marquand 1991: 205–206). For those who appreciate the 'myths and symbols of labourism' the speeches were moving and convincing; for voters outside the labour movement the ethos was becoming increasingly alien, and indeed outdated.

By the mid-1980s, the section of the electorate who felt part of this movement was shrinking. This was due to a combination of factors, including industrial decline, unemployment, and political attacks diminishing the power of the trade union movement; the falling numbers of people who joined political parties and an increase in partisan dealignment; as well as the partial replacement of class with other forms of identity—such as gender or ethnicity—in shaping political debate. All of these factors meant that the labour movement, understood as the representation of the working class as a relatively homogeneous group, was weakened and that appeals to it as an electoral bloc reached smaller numbers of the population than in the past. In short, socio-economic change meant that Kinnock's labourite ethos was decreasingly that of the wider electorate.

Furthermore, 'the argument which is made by a man's life' (in Isocrates' account of ethos) is not objective, but reaches the audience through intermediaries—notably, in modern society, through the media. Kinnock was ruthlessly attacked by much of the popular press. In his review of Labour, the tabloids, and the 1992 general election, James Thomas argues that between 1979 and 1992, the popular press was more hostile to Labour than at any time in the post-war period (Thomas 1998). Unflattering media accounts of Kinnock's ethos give a rather different interpretation of the persona that had served him so well when taking on the left. Kinnock was caricatured as brawling and boisterous, most at home in a working men's club. There is a strong element of class snobbery in this account. For those inside the labour movement, Kinnock's ethos gave him the authority as 'one of us' to take on the left; for those outside, that same working class ethos meant he lacked the gravitas to be Prime Minister.

Nationality was an important part of Kinnock's ethos, and there was also an anti-Welsh element to the media's reporting of Kinnock. A week after the 1992 election, the former Labour Minister, Barbara Castle, wrote that: 'I was interested to detect some racist undertones emerging during the campaign. Neil's "unfitness to govern", it appeared, had something to do with his being Welsh. Tories don't respect the Welsh whom they regard as a nation of plebs and poets' (quoted in Jones 1994: 14). John Humphrys similarly claimed that 'There is a kind of latent anti-Welshness among the English and that is his bad luck, that and his [ginger] hair colour' (quoted in Jones 1994: 17). As James Thomas argues, Kinnock suffered from this anti-Welsh rhetoric far more than other Welsh politicians because his personality traits lent themselves to anti-Welsh caricature. While he used his 'brawling boyo' image and rough working class Welsh background to his advantage, the image also made him an easy figure for the press to portray as 'an unstatesmanlike, intellectually lightweight, over-emotional figure' (Thomas 1997). Reflecting on these caricatures, Kinnock notes that, 'there are other people who say as long as you walk round with the accent that you've got, and the hair colour you've got, and the reputation, falsely built in some way for being a bruiser, there's an element that was never going to listen in any case. And if I was true to the caricature I wouldn't bother with me' (Kinnock 2011).

One explanation of the negative depiction of Kinnock's class and nationality in the media was that it was ideologically motivated. Kinnock

was certainly no friend of Rupert Murdoch. Martin Westlake recounts that Murdoch had described Kinnock as a 'menace to freedom' because of his pro-union views. In response, Kinnock told Murdoch that *he* was 'a menace to democracy; not press barons in general—they come and go—but you personally' (Westlake 2001: 712). Although Kinnock did not believe that Murdoch would have remembered the incident, he conceded that part of the attack upon him could have been attributable to his views on press ownership (Kinnock 2011). After all, the 1992 manifesto committed a future Labour government to 'establish an urgent inquiry by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission into the concentration of media ownership' (Westlake 2001: 712). Thomas concludes that while there were more fundamental reasons for Labour's defeat in 1992, the tabloid press campaign almost certainly made the difference between a Conservative victory and a hung parliament (Thomas 1998). The ethos of the rhetor—that argument 'made by their life not their words'—is open to interpretation and re-interpretation according to the ends, ideological or otherwise, of those who present it.

Later Leadership: A More Inclusive Ethos

Kinnock was aware of the way in which his character was presented in much of the popular press, and he tried to counter that narrative with a more positive one. The efforts to change the media story on Labour—and Kinnock in particular—were in part carried out through the professionalization of Labour's media machinery. Peter Mandelson was appointed the party's first Director of Campaigns and Communications in 1985. He brought in Philip Gould, a public relations consultant, and they began to assemble a Shadow Communications Agency, the role of which was ratified by the party's National Executive Committee in 1986. Mandelson enjoyed close relations with Kinnock's office. The Shadow Communications Agency pioneered the use of qualitative surveys—'focus groups'. Mandelson in particular cultivated close contacts with chosen journalists, 'spinning' stories in ways favourable to the leadership, sometimes at the expense of the left (Heffernan and Marqusee 1992: 212–213). Fruits of the investment in public relations were seen in the party's presentation: the Labour rose replaced the red flag; there was better staging of conferences and political broadcasts were better produced—particularly 1987's 'Kinnock: The Movie', which was directed by Hugh Hudson, who had recently gained fame for his work on *Chariots*

of Fire. This broadcast painted a picture of Kinnock's early life and family, portraying him in a far more flattering light than did the right wing tabloids. The investment in public relations was one part of the effort to put forward a more positive interpretation of Kinnock's ethos.

During his later years as leader, Kinnock revised his style to reach a wider audience. Many commentators, particularly after Labour's failure to make any significant breakthrough at the 1987 general election, observed that Kinnock seemed to be subjugating the more ebullient aspects of his personality to appear more statesmanlike. Eileen Jones, for instance, notes that 'Kinnock heard what the critics said, and it may well be that during 1987 and 1988 he made such attempts to become the serious statesman that the appealing lighter side of his personality was hidden. Certainly after the election defeat of 1987 he was accused of becoming withdrawn and remote' (Jones 1994: 124). To Leapman, writing at the time, Kinnock 'deliberately strips his speeches of vivid imagery and pyrotechnics, giving them the arid texture of academic lectures' (Leapman 1987: 184). Evidently Kinnock's rhetorical strategy changed considerably after 1987.

The notable slip was Kinnock's performance at the Sheffield Rally, just days before the 1992 general election. As Heffernan and Marqusee note, 'Carried away, he cast aside 8 years of self-imposed gravitas to disport himself before the adoring throng in the manner of a pop star or a boxing champion […] Sheffield proved a public relations disaster' (Heffernan and Marqusee 1992: 319). Kinnock himself said that he had unthinkingly responded to cheering supporters with a yell of 'We're alright!' in the same way that he had seen The Everly Brothers and Johnny Cash doing. As he told the BBC, 'This roar hit me and for a couple of seconds I responded to it; and all of the years in which I'd attempted to build a fairly reserved, starchy persona—in a few seconds they slipped away' (BBC 2009).

In his later years as party leader, Kinnock could still be a powerful speaker, but the modes of persuasion were different. The best known sequence during his speech in Blackpool at the 1988 party conference, for example, was constructed almost as blank verse and combined rhythm, repetition, and mockery to attack Margaret Thatcher's claim that 'there is no such thing as society' (quoted in Kellner 1992: 7, 155):

> 'No such thing as society,' she says.
> No obligation to the community.
> No sense of solidarity.

> No principles of sharing or caring.
> 'No such thing as society.'
> No sisterhood, no brotherhood.
> No neighbourhood.
> No honouring other people's mothers and fathers.
> No succouring other people's little children.
> 'No such thing as society.'
> No number other than one.
> No person other than me.
> No time other than now.
> No such thing as society, just 'me' and 'now.'
> That is Margaret Thatcher's society.
> I tell you, you cannot run a country on the basis of 'me' and 'now'.

Kinnock's later rhetoric, as this example shows, relied more on logos and pathos to persuade his audience. Gone were the claims to a particular authority based on his ethos seen in earlier speeches. This deprioritization of ethos as a mode of persuasion in Kinnock's rhetoric is implicitly backed up in quantitative research. Robin Pettitt studied the extent of self-referencing in speeches by several Labour leaders and found that, in contrast to Foot, Blair, and Brown, Kinnock's speeches became progressively less self-referential the further up the party he moved (2012: 125). Pettitt asked: 'What explains Kinnock's low, and declining, use of the first person singular?' He suggests two answers: first, faced with a divided party, Kinnock emphasized unity in his rhetoric by shunning the first person singular; and, second, that Kinnock's reluctance to use the first person singular was part of his political personality, rather than in specific circumstances (2012: 126). I believe a more persuasive answer would be that Kinnock's declining use of the first person singular in his conference speeches reflected his declining use of ethos as a mode of persuasion. His own life, while helpful as a source of authority to unite a divided party, was not the best form of rhetoric to reach the wider electorate. After all, following the triumph over Militant, Labour's priority was to broaden its public support.

The rhetorical shift led to accusations of untrustworthiness. To James Thomas, Kinnock was vulnerable to this attack because he had moved to the right on a number of issues, such as disarmament and nationalization, during his leadership. Ken Livingstone, later Mayor of London, argued that voters never entirely believed this front. Discussing Kinnock's

appearance on the satirical show *Have I Got News for You?* after the 1992 election loss, Livingstone commented: 'He went back to being the Welsh boyo as if there hadn't been an intervening nine years. Of all the non-professional comedian guests they've had on, I thought he was the best, with all these snappy one-liners he'd forced himself to drop. And one of the reasons people didn't want Kinnock was because they recognized the person they were seeing was false, he had shed half his personality' (quoted in Jones 1994: 17). Kinnock had toned down his rhetoric (losing the 'hwyl' as Moon terms it) to appeal to an audience that was not necessarily Welsh or working class. However, these efforts made him sound less authentic, and consequently his rhetoric was received with a degree of mistrust.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the importance of ethos as a mode of persuasion in rhetoric, and argued for the use of a broad understanding of the term in rhetorical analysis. In particular, it demonstrates that the perceived character of the speaker can, at times, drown out the words they utter. This understanding of ethos recognizes that our response to a speech is filtered by what we know of a speaker in advance—'the argument of their life, not just their words'. For Kinnock, as I have argued, this personal history gave him the authority to take on the left in the Labour Party during his early period as leader.

However, in modern society, what we know of a speaker's life comes to us filtered through various media, particularly the press. These filters are partly ideological—any life story is open to a variety of interpretations. In the UK, the popular press during Kinnock's time as leader was overwhelmingly anti-Labour. The ethos that aided Kinnock within the movement now hindered him: his Welshness made him a 'boyo', his working class roots meant that he 'lacked the gravitas' to become Prime Minister. To counter that narrative, Kinnock's rhetoric in the later part of his leadership became subdued, more dependent on logos and pathos and less a product of his ethos. Yet in shifting his rhetorical approach, Kinnock lost some of his power and authenticity.

Every Labour leader has brought their own ethos to their rhetoric, which allows them to persuade some listeners but not others. It was not until Tony Blair became leader that the party was able to successfully reach out beyond the labour movement to the wider electorate, but this came at a cost: the ties that bound the Labour leadership to the working

class communities that originally created the party had become increasingly frayed.

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CHAPTER 3

Recapturing Our Traditions? The Rhetorical Shift from New to One Nation Labour (and Beyond)

Emily Robinson

At the most basic level, political speech is a way of (re)describing where we are and where we have come from, and of projecting an idea of where we are heading next. This involves telling stories about particular political traditions—identifying forebears, lost prophets, dangerous diversions, and true believers. It also requires us to adopt an appropriate attitude towards the passage of time, emphasizing either the value of change or the virtue of conservation. The importance of this task can be seen in the names given to factions in all political parties: modernizers and traditionalists; progressives and conservatives. This chapter examines the dynamics of this process within the Labour Party over the past two decades. During this period, party leaders have used their varying relationships to Labour's past as a way of defining both their own leadership and the audiences to which they have hoped to appeal.

Telling stories about the past has been particularly important to Labour politics. In his 1979 study of the *Doctrine and Ethos of the Labour Party*, H.M. Drucker explained that the latter revolved around 'the uses of the past'. In his words:

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J. Atkins and J. Gaffney (eds.), *Voices of the UK Left*,
Rhetoric, Politics and Society, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51902-9_3

> This sense of its past is so central to its ethos that it plays a crucial role in defining what the party is about to those in it. Labour's sense of her past is, of course, an expression of the past experience of the various parts of the British working class. It is these pasts which dictate that Labour must be a party of the future and what kind of future politics it will tolerate. (Drucker 1979: 25)

This interplay between past and future, between remembrance and evangelism, is at the heart of socialist politics. It is what Walter Benjamin has called 'messianic' time, where the present is filled with possibility of both realizing the future and experiencing a direct connection with the past. It is immediate, experiential (Benjamin 1999). Both Drucker and Benjamin contrast this with social democratic time, which is focused on the idea of progress and modernization. In losing its responsibility to the past, it also capitulates to the present.

In constructing itself as New Labour and dismissing all that went before as 'Old Labour', Tony Blair's party not only embraced social democratic views of progress but explicitly rejected socialist understandings of time. As Judi Atkins explains elsewhere in this volume, Blair, like Harold Wilson before him, described the present as 'new times', defined by technological, social, and scientific change. The logos of this position was that it was essential to revise 'the old class divisions, old structures, old prejudices, old ways of working and of doing things that will not do in this world of change' (Blair 1999). However, the ethos of the New Labour project was not only about being optimistic, modern and open to change; it also involved shedding Labour's obligation to the past—drawing a line 'between honouring the past and living in it' (Blair 1994). This imposed a break between past and future, which had not previously been present even in the party's most modernizing moments.

In the period immediately following the Labour Party's defeat in 2010, many of those most closely associated with its process of renewal suggested that it needed to revise this modernizing ethos. Rather than suggesting that 'change was always good and, in any case, inevitable' (Purnell in Rutherford and Lockey 2010: 72), the party now needed to 'dig deep into its own political traditions' (Rutherford in Rutherford and Lockey 2010: 77). Labour's new leader seemed attuned to this argument, which fuelled discussion of a fundamentally different temporal attitude within Labour. As one columnist put it, 'Where Tony Blair despised "the forces of conservatism", Mr. Miliband appears to embrace them' (Riddell 2012).

However, as this chapter will argue, the idea of a 'turn to the past' is not as straightforward as it appears. First, it misrepresents Blair's rhetoric, which was by no means ahistorical. Blair's preferred strategy was to manipulate and destabilize Labour's understanding of its past, rather than to deny its power altogether. Second, it overlooks the way in which Labour's post-2010 rhetoric self-consciously echoed that of early New Labour—with the 'One Nation' idea itself being the most obvious example. And, finally, it does not distinguish between the different voices that were present in One Nation Labour. While Jon Cruddas, Maurice Glasman, and Tristram Hunt proposed a 'radical conservative' attitude to the past, Ed Miliband did not adopt this language. He used historical examples to illustrate his arguments, but preferred to talk about 'moving on' from Labour's past, rather than recovering or reviving it. Under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, a more pronounced reversal in Labour's temporal positioning took place. The idea of undoing the New Labour project was a key part of Corbyn's appeal. Yet again, this is more complicated than it seems, not least because there is no 'pure' Labour tradition to which the party can return. Corbyn's use of history drew on a particular strand in Labour thinking, but had no more claim to authenticity than that of his opponents.

Narrating New Labour

In the wake of the 2010 general election defeat, the Labour Party began the task of understanding and unpicking its recent past in an attempt both to reconnect with its members and to renew its appeal to voters outside the party. John Gaffney and Amarjit Lahel have traced this process through its first two years, showing how it worked as 'a story and a plot, with origins, journeys, false starts, returns, trials and upheavals, reflection, heroes, desert crossings, hope, gatherings, migration and (the promise of) triumph' (2013a: 330). 'One Nation Labour' was the outcome of that narrative. The texts which Gaffney and Lahel identify as being part of a 'false start' focused on policy and organization, rather than 'doctrinal or ideological renewal'. They were, therefore, 'rhetorically and ideationally inadequate' in constructing a new narrative for the party (2013a: 333). Those which formed the origins of the One Nation Story were published in the first year after the defeat: *Labour's Future* (Open Left/*Soundings*, July 2010), *The Labour Tradition and the Politics of Paradox* (Oxford London Seminars, July 2011) and *The Purple Book: A Progressive Future*

for Labour (BiteBack, September 2011). These three pamphlets were associated with different parts of the party: *Soundings* grew out of the New Left, *The Labour Tradition and the Politics of Paradox* marked the appearance of 'Blue Labour', and *The Purple Book* was produced by Progress, a think-tank strongly associated with New Labour.

Despite these differences, however, there was some overlap in authorship between the pamphlets, and also a surprising degree of similarity in approach. All three were explicitly framed around the need to understand Labour's defeat, address its failings, and reconnect with the party's central purpose. And all argued—if to varying degrees—that in order to do this Labour needed to look into its past, reconnect with its traditions and 'recover its historic sense of purpose' (Glasman et al. 2011: 11). A great deal of this was to do with its way of speaking. As the Introduction to *Labour's Future* explained, 'Labour talked about policy because it has lost the art of talking with people' (Rutherford and Lockey 2010: 8). It therefore needed to 'evolve a more ethical and emotional language for its politics, reviving its traditions to become once again the party of association and mutualism, rather than of a centralizing and controlling state' (Rutherford and Lockey 2010: 6). The other key argument was, as this passage indicates, that New Labour had been too dependent upon a strong central state. This was heightened by the idea that 'Cameron has been allowed to steal our traditional values of mutualism, association and relationships for his Big Society' (Rutherford and Lockey 2010: 7).

Two things are striking about the arguments put forward in these pamphlets. First, they did not depict New Labour as adrift from the party's heritage. Instead they placed it very firmly within a lineage running straight from the 1918 writing of the party's constitution to the 1945 victory, though Crosland's revisionism in the 1950s and Wilson's election in 1964, to the founding of New Labour. According to these narratives, 'the victory of 1945 was the trigger for [Labour's] long-term decline' (Glasman 2011: 29); it 'was the moment when the cooperative, decentralist, localist and municipalist traditions within British socialism were trampled under the boots of central planning, state control and nationalized corporations' (Richards in Philpot 2011: 52). Crucially, revisionism was seen to have compounded these mistakes. The 'Croslandite-New Labour model' (Hunt in Philpot 2011: 68) created 'a politics that was too individualistic', too focused on policy solutions, not human relationships (D. Miliband in Glasman et al. 2011: 50–51).

Moreover, it did not deliver what it promised: 'As long as growth remained uninterrupted all these assumptions could hold. As long as Crosland was right, it was fine. But Crosland was not right and neither was Brown' (Collins in Rutherford and Lockey 2010: 49). The consensus that New Labour had been too tightly constrained by its post-war inheritance was overwhelming. Only Frank Field, writing in *The Purple Book*, suggested that it had betrayed the past in the way it 'tore up' the welfare contract which Attlee's government established with the British people (in Philpot 2011: 158–159). For all the other contributors, the problem with New Labour was that it had not done enough to break with the party's mid-twentieth-century heritage.

The second interesting feature of this debate was that contributors to all three pamphlets suggested that Labour needed to recover a similar part of its heritage. Co-operativism, guild socialism, mutualism, and ethical socialism were frequently mentioned, with R.H. Tawney playing a prominent part in all the discussions. However, a fault line emerged over the role of liberalism. In *Labour's Future*, Philip Collins suggested that it was to the 'radical liberal' tradition that Labour needed to turn, noting that 'the radical liberals have always struggled to get heard in the Labour Party above the din of the social democrats, but that relative silence is to the party's detriment' (Rutherford and Lockey 2010: 50). However, liberalism did not feature in Glasman's account of Labour's 'family history', except in his argument that 'Labour is a paradoxical tradition, far richer than its present form of economic utilitarianism and political liberalism' (Glasman 2011: 15). Other contributors to the volume reminded him that 'the Labour tradition was an open and pluralistic one, which developed from and overlapped with various forms of radicalism and liberalism' (Jackson in Glasman et al. 2011: 40). However, for Glasman, liberalism was always part of the problem. This was the point at which his critique of Labour's past departed from that previously offered by New Labour.

New Labour's Pasts

Although New Labour is now described as a continuation of Croslandite thinking, its architects laid no claim to that tradition. Peter Mandelson and Roger Liddle explicitly distanced themselves from it, observing that 'ever since the publication of Anthony Crosland's *The Future of Socialism*, in 1956, social democrats in his tradition have equated high

levels of public spending with progress towards a more equal society'. However, they continued, one cannot 'measure progress towards equality by the proportion of gross domestic product accounted for by public expenditure' (Mandelson and Liddle 1996: 26). Although Blair was always keen to legitimate his own reforms with reference to Labour's history, it is notable that he did not construct a lineage of social democratic revisionism, leading from Crosland and Gaitskell to himself. Indeed, Philip Gould observed that 'the language used by Gaitskell in public and others in private is *uncannily similar* to that used by Tony Blair and other modernizers a generation later' (Gould 1999: 33, emphasis added), as if this were simply a coincidence. Even when a 50th anniversary edition of *The Future of Socialism* was published in 2006, the Foreword was written by Gordon Brown, not Blair. This seems to have been because the example of Gaitskell's attempts to change Clause IV carried a narrative structure of failure and compromise. Also, Blair was cautious about being associated too closely with the Social Democratic Party (SDP), who had depicted themselves as the heirs of Crosland and Gaitskell. As Steven Fielding has argued, this meant that 'highlighting New Labour's revisionist debt was much more hazardous than paying compliments to New Liberalism' (Fielding 2000: 383).

However, Blair was by no means shy of associating himself with the party's previous election victories. He claimed that '1945 was new Labour, 1964 was new Labour […] because both had the courage to take the values of the Labour Party and use them, not for the world as it was, but for the world as they wanted it to be' (Blair 1995a). As Atkins notes, he was using party tradition to reassure supporters that reform 'is in harmony with the party's ideological heritage, and that modernization will not come at the cost of Labour's soul' (2015: 23). It allowed Blair to nod towards the party's ethos of paying tribute to its past, while simultaneously undermining exactly this tendency in order to appeal to the country beyond Labour. As he put it in a speech on the 50th anniversary of 1945: '[Attlee's] was a government for its time. Our challenge is not to return to the 1940s but instead to take the values that motivated that government and apply them afresh to our time' (Blair 1995b: 3). This could be seen as a neat tactical manoeuvre, allowing him to associate himself with Labour's greatest moment and wrong-foot the critics who said he was ditching the party's past, while also underlining the need to abandon its historic commitments. Previous revisionists had adopted similar tactics; as Crosland put it, 'nothing is more traditional

in the history of socialist thought than the violent rejection of past doctrines' (Crosland 1956: 97).

Blair did not stop there, however. Rather than attempting to escape Labour's heritage, he tried to redescribe it, 'purposefully displacing the context' (Martin 2015: 26) within which the Labour tradition had been understood. Blair drew explicitly on the work of David Marquand (1979, 1991) in order to 'reorient' party members to their own past and to present ethical socialism, co-operativism and the Edwardian Lib–Lab alliance as a more authentic tradition than the planning and nationalization of the post-war years. He presented 1918 as the beginning of a wrong turn, which had continued to haunt the party even in the moments of its greatest success: 'Labour in 1945 overcame but did not resolve fundamental issues of ideology and organization facing the Labour Party' (Blair 1995b: 2–3). His break with the past was not simply one more in a line of 'violent rejection[s] of past doctrines' (Crosland 1956: 97); it was a return to the true path of Labour's history. As he explained in his Fabian Society speech, 'in the rewriting of Clause IV […] far from escaping our traditions, we recaptured them' (Blair 1995b: 4).

The recovery of the ethical socialist tradition is, of course, exactly the approach proposed by Blair's more recent critics (although, as we have seen, the alliance with New Liberalism was rejected by Glasman). And they were well aware of that. In his contribution to the Blue Labour e-book, Jonathan Rutherford emphasized that 'The early years of New Labour—the pluralism, the ethical socialism, the stakeholding economy, the idea of a covenant of trust and reciprocity with the people, the emotional language that reignited popular hope—created a powerful and successful story' (2011: 91). Cruddas also spoke of the need to reclaim and reinvigorate the founding ideals of New Labour, which he described as a rich, complex, textured, and romantic movement, rooted in the ideals of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), before it gave way to a cold and destructive rationalism, with a 'sink or swim' vision of modernity (University of Nottingham 2012). To return to Gaffney and Lahel's account of One Nation Labour's story-making, we can see that the journey really begins with New Labour—not as a wrong turn, but as the original false start. Blair here becomes a prophet rather than a false messiah. Although New Labour started on the right path, the circumstances in which it was founded left it unable to shed Labour's big-statism, to challenge vested interests, or to create a true politics of the common good, rooted in human relationships rather than in institutional structures.

One Nation Labour (Again)

Mark Wickham-Jones has outlined the parallels between Ed Miliband's use of the phrase 'One Nation' and that of Blair. He lays out an extraordinary case, which is worth quoting at length:

> It was a bold speech by the party leader at the annual conference, one that mapped out an ambitious 'One Nation' agenda. A few days later, Labour's deputy leader picked up on the theme explicitly: 'we are the party of the people, One Nation Labour, the party that speaks for the whole of the country, that will govern for the whole of the country'. The *Guardian* noted that 'the project of Britain's first one-nation socialist is just beginning'. *The Times* referred to Labour's goal of recreating 'One Nation (thanks to Disraeli)'. Will Hutton described 'One Nation Labour' as an 'audacious attempt to wrap a red rose in the Union Jack'. He later remarked that the Labour leader had stolen 'the robes of One Nation Conservatives'.
>
> Pause briefly on those comments. They do not refer to Ed Miliband's 2012 address to the Labour conference. Each dates from 1995. Each refers to a particular aspect of Tony Blair's New Labour project. (Wickham-Jones 2013: 321)

Wickham-Jones suggests that these parallels were no accident. Instead, they represented a deliberate attempt to learn from Labour's immediate past, undertaken by men who had been closely involved with New Labour's own positioning, particularly Stewart Wood and Jon Cruddas. One Nation Labour could, then, be seen as their attempt to restart this project, in a way that avoided falling into the traps that turned New Labour towards managerialism, rational universalism, and big-statism.

Although the themes of localism, co-operativism and community empowerment were central to the rhetoric of New Labour, the tone of One Nation Labour was different. In response to the criticisms of New Labour's managerial language we have already noted, the new approach was deliberately pitched on a more human level. Cruddas spoke, for instance, about valuing 'the local, the parochial and the magical as sources of political agency and power' (Cruddas 2014). Localism here was not about the more efficient delivery of public services, or the proven benefits of social capital; rather, it was about the very nature of being and belonging. The past was not mobilized to provide justification for change, or to string together a lineage of heroic modernizers. It was its own

inspiration and justification. And when Cruddas spoke of being 'both radical and conservative', he meant it (Cruddas 2013a: 6). His review of Conservative MP Jesse Norman's biography of Burke, for instance, praised what he saw as 'a patriotic tract and an act of great leadership' as 'an immense critique of the present […] driven by a deep sense of personal obligation'. The basis of this critique was its opposition to the 'rapacious economic liberalism that threatens the Conservative Party', which Cruddas described as 'a national tragedy played out in real time' (Cruddas 2013b).

Even at its most utopian, its most communitarian, New Labour was never a conservative creed. Where Rutherford, Glasman, and Cruddas spoke of preserving traditions and protecting ways of life, New Labour valorized change itself (Finlayson 1998; Randall 2009). Blair recognized the pathos of conservatism, but responded with the logos of modernization:

> People want to be proud of Britain, but they have lost confidence. They want us to be strong, but they sense we are losing an old identity without finding or developing a new one. They know in their hearts we cannot do this by looking back. They know that the riskier but ultimately more satisfying search for a new future is necessary; but they want us to be convinced that we can keep the best of the past as we move forward. (Blair 1996: ix)

In January 2013, LabourList published *One Nation Labour—Debating the Future*, edited by Cruddas. This could be seen as a development of the 2010/11 pamphlets, and indeed it included several of the same contributors. As Gaffney and Lahel have noted, it was 'the first substantial textual expression of the Policy Review Mark II' and marked both a move towards 'the "actual imagining" of society' and also a further development of the 'high rhetoric' of the project (2013a: 336). The central idea of the pamphlet was the possibility of creating a politics that was 'both radical and conservative'. This was expressed explicitly by Cruddas, Glasman, and Hunt, but also ran through many of the other contributions.

Unlike the previous pamphlets we have looked at, there was no discussion of the need to recover an alternative tradition from Labour's history. The only allusion to this line of argument was Cruddas's observation that 'One Nation politics belongs to the Labour movement's traditions of collective self help, co-operativism and self improvement' (2013a: 7). Even this was prefaced with the statement: 'it is an idea rooted in the history of the country.' One Nation was framed not as the rediscovery of a

particular part of the Labour tradition, but of 'a tradition from within our nation [sic] history' (Glasman in Cruddas 2013a: 14). It was an explicit attempt to speak to an audience beyond the Labour Party. To underline its departure from internal traditions still further, it was described as not only a conservative but also a Conservative idea that could be 'retrieved, from what [Miliband's] Dad might have called the "dustbin of history" and put to radical ends' (Glasman in Cruddas 2013a: 14). As Hunt put it: 'Many may feel queasy about pilfering the ideas of a Conservative, even one such as Disraeli. But there is no need to recoil. A proper understanding of Disraeli shows that in extreme social contexts it is possible to be both radical and conservative' (2013: 10).

Miliband and One Nation

The 'One Nation' idea had been unveiled several months before this publication, in Ed Miliband's speech at the 2012 Labour Party conference. This had been strongly promoted as a move into Conservative territory. The fact that he would be referencing Disraeli was trailed on the morning news broadcasts and widely seen as an 'audacious raid deep into Conservative heritage' (Wintour 2012). We have already seen that this was less novel than it might have seemed, but that did not diminish its success. The speech itself has been analysed in depth by Gaffney and Lahel (2013a, b). Miliband began by establishing his ethos—as father and son, as second-generation immigrant and patriot, and as a man with an extraordinary political background but ordinary common sense values. The significance of this was underlined by his homely introduction: 'OK, look only one problem, where's my speech? I want to do something different today. I want to tell you my story. I want to tell you who I am. What I believe. And why I have a deep conviction that together we can change this country' (Miliband 2012a). As noted above, the need to tell human stories had been emphasized by all the 2010/11 pamphlets and was seen as one of the crucial things that had been lost by New Labour's reliance on policy mechanisms.

Rather than the romanticism of Cruddas's rhetoric, however, Miliband used the past in a more prosaic way: to provide legitimacy, lessons, and precedents. His 2012 reference to Disraeli was introduced with riffs on both his political position ('He was a Tory. But don't let that put you off') and also the general strangeness of the past (Disraeli's speech lasted for three hours, during which time he drank two bottles of

brandy). The speech slipped easily between Disraeli, the Blitz, the 1945 Labour government, and the London Olympics, but stepped back from unpicking the specific implications of these various inheritances with the reassurance that he 'didn't become leader of the Labour Party to reinvent the world of Disraeli or Attlee'. The past was employed to lend authenticity to Miliband's argument and to his character, and to conjure a set of values and a range of cultural memories—although Disraeli was unlikely to be a familiar reference for many listeners, on right or left, the reference to the London Olympics invoked a recent national experience, with strong resonances for a very broad section of the population. At the same time as reaching out beyond Labour in this way, however, Miliband also used the history of 1945 to weave a story of national identity with Labour at its heart:

> Britain has given my family everything. Britain and the spirit, the determination, the courage of the people who rebuilt Britain after the Second World War. And now the question is asked again: who in this generation will rebuild Britain for the future? Who can come up to the task of rebuilding Britain? Friends, it falls to us, it falls to us, the Labour Party. As it has fallen to previous generations of Labour Party pioneers to leave our country a better place than we found it. Never to shrug our shoulders at injustice and say that is the way the world is. To come together, to join together, to work together as a country. (Miliband 2012a)

Throughout much of the twentieth century, the Conservative Party was able to present itself as the embodiment of the national spirit, above the ideology of other parties. As Quintin Hogg famously put it, Toryism was 'only another way of being British' (Hailsham 1957: 9). Miliband directly contested such assumptions by casting Cameron's Conservatives as a sectional and divisive party. Just as Disraeli's *Sybil* aimed to correct perceptions that the 'condition of England' question was the natural terrain of Radicals and Socialists, so Miliband challenged the Conservatives on their own ground:

> You can't be a One Nation Prime Minister if you raise taxes on ordinary families and cut taxes for millionaires. You can't be a One Nation Prime Minister if all you do is seek to divide the country. Divide the country between north and south. Public and private. Those who can work and those who can't work. (Miliband 2012a)

This was not a new tactic. In the inter-war years, Labour had mounted a direct challenge to Baldwinian conceptions of 'the public' by presenting itself as the truly national party, speaking for the 90% of citizens who were workers of one kind or another. As Jon Lawrence (2011) has suggested, this was the basis upon which the idea of the 'People's War' could later be built. Later, Wilson did much the same thing. Miliband's adoption of the One Nation motif, then, should not be taken to indicate a shift towards conservative values—or even radical conservatism. It was, however, an attempt to emulate the governments of 1945 and 1964 which both, in Lawrence's words, 'constructed a broad, inclusive politics which explicitly sought to marry the needs of the poor and the aspirations of the more fortunate within a single vision' (Lawrence 2013: 11). Miliband's use of the *national* (including the Conservative) past was an intrinsic part of his own attempt to construct an idea of the public beyond the Labour Party.

With this in mind, it is also worth noting that Miliband did not privilege any one strand of Labour's past. None of his speeches talked about reclaiming the tradition of ethical socialism. Neither did he take a particular position on the Attlee government. He did not renounce the idea that 'the victory of 1945 was the trigger for [Labour's] long-term decline' (Glasman 2011: 29), but he did not restate or endorse it either. He talked about the moment when 'we' (the party and the nation) rebuilt Britain after the war, not the point when the first majority Labour government adopted a programme of nationalization and centralization. Unlike Blair who, as we have seen, countered his praise for Attlee's government by distancing it from the present, Miliband preferred to bridge that gap. As he put it, 'The National Health Service was not just the right idea for 1948. It is the right idea for today' (Miliband 2014). He also drew an equivalence between that Labour government and his plans for the next:

> The 1945 Labour government, in really tough times, raised its sights and created the National Health Service. I want the next Labour government to do the same, even in tough times, to raise our sights about what the health service can achieve, bringing together physical health, mental health, and the care needs of the elderly: a true integrated National Health Service. That's the business of the future. (Miliband 2013)

The difference in content between Miliband's position and that of Blair was minimal. Both were talking about upholding the ideals of the

National Health Service and adapting its structures to the needs of the present and future. But the difference in tone was marked. Miliband did not need to spell out that his government would not be returning to the shibboleths of Attlee's day. Those battles had (or at least seemed to have) already been won. The past he did have to address was the legacy of New Labour itself.

The Politics of Memory

In his examination of the politics of memory within New Labour, Nick Randall notes the importance of generation. The architects of New Labour were all born after Attlee's government had left office and were politically socialized during the 1960s and 1970s. These memories underpinned their determination that 'There would be no "revisiting the political Passchendaeles of the 1960s and 1970s industrial relations trench warfare"' (Mandelson 1998, quoted by Randall 2009: 193). The narrative they constructed of this time, though, was based on a partial memory which excluded, for instance, the 1949 and 1967 devaluations, the IMF crisis, and Labour's support for entering the ERM in 1990. The narrative that was constructed about 'post-war misrule by the trade unions' also 'misrepresent[ed] the character of corporatism, overstate[d] the power of trade unions and neglect[ed] the responsibilities of successive Labour Cabinets in triggering industrial unrest' (Randall 2009: 193). Randall draws on studies of political memory which suggest that contentious issues can only be re-opened successfully once they are at a sufficient distance from the present and 'a degree of political stability and consolidation has been secured' (2009: 195). He suggests that New Labour was therefore able to abandon Labour's formal aim of public ownership, to accept Thatcher's trade unions legislation, and to commit to establishing macro-economic stability, because these issues had been effectively resolved under Neil Kinnock's leadership.

Ed Miliband's perspective on this history was somewhat different. Born towards the end of Harold Wilson's first government, he spent his teens campaigning for the party under Foot and Kinnock, and his 20s working for New Labour and particularly Gordon Brown. Many of the questions with which New Labour had to grapple in its early days appeared to have been settled, while others had arisen. Instead of trying to reduce the power of members, for instance, he struggled to find a way of *Refounding Labour* as a mass movement (Labour Party 2011).

Rather than trying to persuade the public that Labour was not just the party of the industrial working class, of the north and of the public sector, he needed to address perceptions that it had neglected exactly those constituencies, and that it had become the party of vested interests, of the metropolitan elite, of high finance. One of the ways of doing that was by establishing a different relationship to Labour's past. This was not a question of policy. There was never any expectation that Miliband's Labour Party would be reinstating the old Clause IV, establishing a significantly different industrial relations policy, or returning to a large-scale programme of nationalization. But because these issues seemed to have been settled, Miliband could afford to take a more conciliatory stance to the politics of memory.

However, as Jeremy Corbyn's leadership later revealed, there is no such thing as a completely closed question in politics. Slightly older than Blair, Corbyn was born while Attlee was still Prime Minister, but was similarly socialized into politics during the 1970s, when he worked as a trade union organizer and served as a Labour councillor. He was elected to Parliament in 1983, the same year as Blair. While Miliband was able to 'move on' from both 'old' and New Labour, for Corbyn the struggle over the direction of the party in the 1980s remained both raw and unsettled. Again, this was an argument about history—and not just the history of the 1980s and 1990s, but also the longer stretch of labour movement history, reaching back into the nineteenth century and beyond. The section of the left to which Corbyn appealed prides itself on its connection to socialist history, and depicts New Labour as having betrayed that legacy. This position was perhaps best summarized when Corbyn appeared at the Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival during his leadership campaign wearing the official festival t-shirt with the slogan 'back to our roots'. There was little attempt here to speak to a broader public who do not share in the cultural memories or rituals of the labour movement.

This should not, however, be understood as a straightforward division between upholding and ignoring Labour's history. Corbyn's use of the past was linked to a particular strand of socialist history, which developed in the 1960s and 1970s and was strongly associated with the academic turn towards 'history from below'. But—as we have already seen—other branches of the party have their own historical traditions and their own cultures of memory. While the former focus on remembering the traditions of the labour movement, the latter is rooted in the history of the Parliamentary Labour Party. The debates over the renewal of the Trident

nuclear deterrent are a prime example of these tensions. On the one hand, the left pointed to the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and longstanding traditions of pacifism within the party. On the other, the right invoked the great heroes of the party who established Britain's nuclear deterrent in the post-war years.

The Mining of Tradition

One of Miliband's most explicit engagements with Labour's past was his speech to the 2012 Durham Miners' Gala—something which Blair had refused to do, despite representing the former mining constituency of Sedgefield for over two decades, on the ground that 'it would damage his image' (Benn 2003: 293). Miliband's image, on the other hand, depended upon paying tribute to this past. In his speech he was keen to emphasize that he was there to honour the tradition of the Gala itself, of the North East and of the labour movement. He was 'humbled by the history' of the Gala, and by the list of Labour leaders who had addressed the meeting and in whose footsteps he was 'proud to follow'. In addition to praising Labour's heroes of the distant past, he drew parallels between the divisions of the 1980s and those of the present, casting them as an example of the 'same old Tories' who were creating another 'lost generation of young people' (Miliband 2012b).

Miliband's speech was widely described as a return to 'old' Labour and 'handing his party back to Kinnock' (BBC News 2012). This was wrong on two levels. First, it misrepresented the past: Kinnock's appearance at the 1984 Gala, during the Miners' Strike, ended in humiliation, with most of the audience walking away while he was speaking. Even before that, relations between the Labour Party and the miners were often far from cosy. In 1947, for instance, when Hugh Dalton announced the nationalization of coal, the *Durham Advertiser* reported that his speech was met with 'stony silence' as Labour's plans stopped far short of the miners' demand for control of the pits (Temple 2011). Second, it misrepresented the present. Miliband's aim was not to discard New Labour and return the party to its former state; instead, he explicitly drew on both elements. His appearance in Durham came in the same week as his praise for Tony Blair at the Labour Party Sports Dinner. Apparently Miliband felt there was a 'synergy' between these two events (Prince 2012). Rather than appearing to return to either of these pasts, his intention seemed to be to enfold them into a coherent narrative of reconciliation.

A similar impetus underpinned the resurrection of the Gala itself in the early 2000s, after the decline that began in the 1960s and 1970s. The reappearance of the old banners and commissioning of new ones was a deliberate and self-conscious attempt to use a sense of shared heritage to heal rifts that continue to divide villages and neighbours in the wake of the 1984–1985 Miners' Strike. For instance a Miners' Banner Partnership has been established in New Herrington, a village in which the majority of miners went back to work. This is not about romanticizing the past, but about moving on from it. This process has been called 'emotional regeneration' and, crucially, it revolves around the memories of the strike itself. It was the need to overcome the trauma of the 1980s that made it necessary to reclaim and redefine the past (Stephenson and Wray 2005). Miliband's appearance at the Gala could be seen in the same spirit—not attempting to return to a past that no longer exists, but invoking a sense of shared heritage as a way of moving on from the uncomfortable reality of history. It is arguably this attitude that made his reform of the party–union link far smoother than might have been expected.

During his bid for the leadership in 2015, Jeremy Corbyn also appeared at the Durham Miners' Gala. His approach was rather different. Instead of appealing to Labour's heritage in general terms, his speech explicitly linked the martyrdom of those who died 'in the brutality of the struggle to get trade union rights' to the achievements of the post-war period and beyond:

> On the backs of the work of trade unions over the years, not only have we just achieved the National Health Service and the welfare state, we also achieved the Equalities Act, the Human Rights Act and a society where we oppose discrimination, blaming minorities, of scapegoating of anybody at any time. (Corbyn 2015)

He envisaged this struggle as continuous, running through the General Strike (recalled by 'those who are old enough') to today's politics, conceived as an ongoing 'struggle for decent wages, a struggle for decent conditions, a struggle for trade union rights'. Corbyn thus defined his audience by its participation in a shared, and ongoing, narrative of British history. But this was not just a history of events, it was a history of struggle. While both Blair and Miliband used the past as a way of enhancing their images of the present and future, in a way that resonated

with widely shared images of national identity, for Corbyn it was a way of setting out a distinctive tradition *in opposition to* these established narratives of (largely conciliatory) historical progress.

While Corbyn demonstrated a fundamentally different ethos to either Blair or Miliband, his use of the past also employed a different logos. Both New Labour and One Nation Labour focused on what Blair called 'the British dream' (Labour Party 1996: 6) and Miliband described as 'the promise of Britain—the expectation that [the] next generation will do better than the last, whatever their birth or background' (Miliband 2011). In contrast, Corbyn's logic was ethical rather than temporal. He did not argue that the present and future should necessarily be better than the past, but instead claimed simply that 'It is wrong, it is immoral, unnecessary, that anybody should be sleeping on the streets of Britain, that any child should be homeless, that anyone should be hungry, we are a rich enough country to conquer those inequalities and those miseries' (Corbyn 2015). While the past imposed an obligation on socialists to continue the struggle, it did not carry any inherent promise of progress.

Conclusion

Under Ed Miliband's leadership of the Labour Party, the question of the relationship between the party and its past came to the fore. In contrast to the modernizing ethos of New Labour, the voices most associated with the journey towards One Nation Labour—Maurice Glasman, Jon Cruddas—made romantic and utopian appeals to the spirit of 'radical conservatism', not arguments about the need for rational liberal modernization. However, once Ed Miliband took authorial possession of the project, in the way that Gaffney and Lahel have detailed, it became clear that his use of the past was markedly different from theirs. Rather than reviving or recovering Labour's traditions, he talked about 'moving on from New Labour. But not going back to Old Labour' (Miliband 2014). It was the distinction from New Labour that gained the most attention because this past was still open; the break with Old Labour appeared to have been achieved.

Whereas Blair needed to recast Labour's history in order to legitimate his programme of modernization, Miliband was able to use it less problematically. References to the 1945 government, to the Chartists, and to the founders of the Labour Party were employed as evidence that

'when the voices of hope have been ranged against the voices of fear, the voices of hope have won through' (Miliband 2013). But this was not a story about avenging the past or mourning its loss. It demonstrated neither a socialist nor a (radical) conservative attitude towards time. Since Miliband's resignation, we have seen a partial rehabilitation of the socialist use of the past within Labour. However, this should not be understood as a turn to sentimental nostalgia. The past functioned within Corbyn's rhetoric not simply as a demonstration of ethos; it also carries its own logos. This is the point that modernizers have always struggled to grasp.

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CHAPTER 4

The Rise and Fall of the One Nation Narrative

John Gaffney

The focus in this chapter on the Miliband leadership period, 2010–2015, is on the nature of the relationship between leadership and language; more precisely, rhetoric and its relationship to leadership 'performance' and leadership's public 'voice' and voicing. In order to do this I shall examine, in turn: leadership with regard to the Labour Party; the wider contexts of leadership performance; the contexts of Ed Miliband's leadership; the development of the One Nation narrative; the central elements of the One Nation narrative; Miliband's One Nation Conference speech; the Q&A of the following day; and what became of One Nation between 2012 and 2015.

In this chapter, I will refer to 'the Labour Party', but sometimes to 'the left'. I recognize that these are not the same (as this book demonstrates only too well), but for the purpose of the analysis I use them somewhat interchangeably, in part because some of the points I make apply to the left generally, some to the Labour Party more specifically. However, I should make it clear that in this particular chapter I refer essentially to the party at a particular moment of its and the left's history: the Labour Party in the 2010–2015 period. Before doing this, I need to make a range of preliminary remarks, some theoretical, some empirical,

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J. Atkins and J. Gaffney (eds.), *Voices of the UK Left*,
Rhetoric, Politics and Society, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51902-9_4

and some anecdotal—or rather, perhaps, several remarks that contain elements of all three.

Leadership and the Labour Party

My first two observations are somewhat stark: the left does not like leadership—often does not even like thinking about it; the second is that it understands it even less than it dislikes it. The party's relationship to its leaders has been a tortured one from the start. 'Following leaders' is not in its DNA; in fact, mistrusting them is. For the Labour Party, 'the collective' is both the object of desire and the method. Ideologically, the individual is associated in the left's imagination with self-interest and with selfish interest. And underpinning these perceptions are ancient myths (and truths) of tyrants and the cult of the leader. The UK left is (or would have itself) collective and therefore, by definition (like socialism, republicanism, social democracy, and so on), posits an impersonalism. And the memory of Ramsay MacDonald's 'betrayal' in 1931 has haunted the party ever since, and lent certainty to its suspicious attitude. This makes the exercise of party leadership an extremely difficult issue because the party is a complex organization, competes for government, and has a national as well as a sectional and a local vocation. So the question of leaders and leadership can never go away, however much it is disliked and ill-understood.

I want to make five further related points before proceeding to my case study analysis. First, although the Labour Party and the left generally have only an inconsequential knowledge of the relationship between leadership and rhetoric, the labour movement has a long tradition of—and indeed admiration for—leadership and 'tribune' oratory. From Hardie to Kinnock and beyond, this tradition has been part of the fabric of Labour Party life. MacDonald too was a rousing speaker. In fact, his oratory and leadership dominance came later to be seen as evidence of his dangerous, ruinous self-regard; hence, in part, the choice of the meek, barely audible Clement Attlee over Morrison in 1935 (Clarke and James 2015; Clarke et al. 2015; Crines and Hayton 2015).

Second, as the performance of leadership was refracted through the media in the twentieth century—hustings, radio, halls, conference, newspapers, newsreels, and so on—and the electorate evolved too, leadership performance itself had to evolve, particularly in its rhetorical style. The epitome of this adaptation was Tony Blair. This is important to

our analysis because he was the (almost) immediate predecessor of Ed Miliband. Blair's style—until the gathering clouds after Iraq: open, regular guy, tea mug in hand, welcoming, fluent, open to the new and 'modernizing', and so on (Finlayson 2002)—represented the New Labour tradition (some felt deviation) that Miliband was so set against. This dilemma has been largely ignored by observers but, as I shall argue, was an unseen trap both for 'One Nation' and Miliband's leadership performance, and in fact prospectively/retrospectively for the Third Way as well.

Third, on the left, as well as 'rousing' rhetoric there is also the restrained, pragmatic, or subtle style of, say, a Callaghan or Alan Johnson, or the 'forensic' courtroom style epitomized by Gaitskell or John Smith. So the clue is what you get roused about, and what you are subtle or practical or forensic about. And this was one of the challenges of Milibandism and for our grasping it: how to use modes of discourse to leadership purpose and for the enhancement of the image of both the party and the leader.

Fourth, the main 'frame' today is not the 'big speech' but the television set or computer screen. The 'small screen' changed the conditions of political rhetoric and personalized its context. These new conditions were well understood by Tony Blair. A related consequence of this is that 'the anecdotal', once the stuff of the 'silly season' (the tea mug, the bacon sandwich), are no longer so because they 'tell us things' about the (perceived) character or personality of the subject involved. They reinforce, undermine, remind, reassure, lampoon, or counter 'our' received appraisals of the individuals concerned, making 'personality politics' more central than ever.

Fifth, going back to my above remarks regarding Labour orators, a point of importance is what they orate; that is to say, the relationship between the oratory and the underlying ideology or narrative. The Labour Party has had a host of orators from all wings and factions. As I mentioned above, activists would argue that Labour's was an oratory of impersonalism. Hardie, MacDonald himself, Bevan of course, Foot, Kinnock, Blair (and in a different—although still developing, and therefore intriguing—style or set of styles, Jennie Lee, Barbara Castle, Shirley Williams, and a new a generation of women like Stella Creasy and Jess Phillips) were/are all excellent and persuasive speakers; but the supporters of each would argue (quite wrongly) that they were 'tribunes' of a more fundamental Labour narrative that was not about the speaker

him/herself, except as parables of deeper truths. This betrays a misunderstanding of the nature of leadership rhetoric. Its apparent aim (and this is widely held as being true) is to distinguish itself from the hero worship of the right or hard right because on the left, believing it has no personality cult, orators distinguish themselves by 'performing' and being seen as the orators of underlying truths: they are giving voice, literally, to a collective will or desire, or are identifying injustice, offering deliverance, and so on. But they are not, or rather they are—that is what all orators do whether left or right, ancient or modern. The further right we go, the more intellectually problematic and—further still—sinister this becomes, but it is a continuum not an opposition. In fact, the untranscendable Aristotle is the culprit here (I know this is almost as sinful as saying Dylan's latest album wasn't that good). To depict the tribune as the opposite of the demagogue is a category mistake. But it is an echo of Aristotle's own distinction between rhetoric and demagoguery—one artful but good, the other emotionally devious and bad (Aristotle 1991). Rhetoric is rhetoric. Normative distinctions are not relevant. 'Performance' and its effects are. I should mention in passing here that such a category mistake exists in leadership studies, too. I have dealt with this extensively elsewhere (Gaffney 2014), but—driven by the same moral concerns—leadership studies also suffer from 'good' and 'bad' appraisals of leadership along normative lines rather than the question of 'success' or effectiveness.

Leadership, Culture, and Performance

As I argue in Chap. 1, rhetorical performance—particularly leadership rhetorical performance—takes place within a configuration of institutions and events, each of which is embedded in a particular culture (to be defined) and set of traditions and audience 'memory'. The 'tools' for the analysis of leadership as rhetorical performance are also the same: What is the leader's rhetorical depiction of the world? What is 'the story' told? What is the persona of the narrator? Is the narrator a narrator or/and the protagonist of the tale told? And what are the rhetorical devices used in the performance of a leader or would-be leader to appeal to the emotions of an audience? And what kind of a relationship is established (rhetorically or in the imagination) between speaker/leader and listener/follower? And how is it established, and how deeply, and for how long, and why? But the UK left has never made the connections

between the elements involved in leadership performance, nor even thought about these connections. Some in the Labour Party have understood these many issues regarding the exigencies and complexity of leadership performance, and the concomitant need for a level of emotional and ideational interaction between leaders and their speechwriters. Jon Newbegin, Kinnock's speechwriter, helped create Kinnock's evolving persona through a creative, dynamic interaction. The same can be said of Philip Collins and Tony Blair. I shall refer to Marc Stears below but, overall, the almost inexplicable synergy between John F. Kennedy (JFK) and Ted Sorenson, where Sorenson's words 'become' Kennedy's character, is an isolated and undervalued phenomenon in UK politics. A good illustration of this incomplete understanding was media and academic reaction to Labour's defeat in 2015. All observers referred (quite rightly) to the failure of the Labour Party's economic 'narrative', and the public perception of Ed Miliband as not 'prime ministerial'. Virtually no observers or commentators linked the two, namely, that Ed Miliband failed to persuasively perform a narrative about the party's intentions that was *also* a narrative about himself. And the floods of post-election comment within the party were even less enlightening.

There is constant emphasis by politicians and party activists and members on the distinction between 'empty rhetoric' and 'personalities' on the one hand, and ideas and sound policies on the other. There obviously are interconnections between ideas, ideologies (in Freeden's sense; see Freeden 1998) and policy thinking, policy elaboration and policy proposals, but all of these—from ideas through to proposals—are dependent (totally) upon language and its articulation. Even policies have a rhetoric. Policies and leadership politics are narratives performed; narratives about the narrative *and* the narrator. So, as we go into our case study, we should be aware of two exigencies: the first is to understand what exactly constituted the 2010–2015 One Nation narrative and, second, what was Ed Miliband's personal relation to the performed narrative of One Nation, and to 'himself' or his projected, performed persona.

Narrating and Performing One Nation

For Miliband, it was the leadership crisis of 2010 that brought him to power. The context was the perceived failure of Blairism, the dramatic fall in Prime Minister Brown's popularity after 2009, the MPs' expenses

scandal, the severe decline in the public popularity of politicians, and the result of the 2010 general election. That was the context of a new performance. New leadership invariably involves a new narrative. Miliband's 'surprise' win over his older brother David accentuated this need for a new image and narrative. After a faltering start (Miliband and his team were well primed for the leadership contest, but quite unprepared for leadership itself), a narrative began to emerge, and leadership performance began to follow, culminating in the stunning 2012 One Nation Labour Party Conference performance. Elsewhere, I have examined this period in Labour Party history from the perspective not only of leadership studies but also, almost underlying this, narrative theory and performance studies (Gaffney and Lahel 2013a, b; Gaffney 2017; see also Bale 2015; Goes 2016). Let me here tell the 'One Nation story', bearing in mind that in a chapter of this length I cannot go into the detail of a research monograph.

Ed Miliband was elected as party leader in 2010 after Gordon Brown's resignation following Labour's heavy general election defeat. Three things that would take on significance in terms of Miliband's leadership performance and rhetorical scope were: first, that he was an unexpected winner and the younger brother of the expected winner, former Foreign Secretary, David Miliband. Second, his victory over his brother was tiny, beaten in the Constituency Labour Party (CLP) and MPs' colleges and inched over the line by the trade union vote. Third, although he 'only just' beat David, both were way ahead of their rivals Ed Balls, Andy Burnham, and Diane Abbott, so the whole event was seen as (and was, particularly in its aftermath) a family drama. These three things meant that: (a) Miliband's legitimacy as leader, though clear—he won—was fragile; (b) this fragility was compounded by the fact that 'only' the union vote had given him a majority, the party members (CLPs) and the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) had not; and (c) the focus upon the mark of Cain aspect would rise and fall on the scale of public attention and, even more importantly, make the discursive reconciliation between New Labour (represented as if by David) and the as yet undeveloped new narrative extremely problematic. Nevertheless, Miliband was the new leader and, as such, needed a new 'voice' and narrative sense of direction—particularly as 'Blairism' and 'Brownism' appeared worn out and their two central representatives were 'fallen'. There was therefore enormous discursive room for manoeuvre, enormous discursive and rhetorical space and opportunities to exploit.

Most left parties since their creation (particularly socialist and communist parties in the twentieth century) have coped with change by moving back and forth between 'old' and 'new', between the traditionalists and the modernizers, between radicals and pragmatists/moderates, between going forward to new challenges and back to forgotten truths. Miliband could not easily follow this logic, as 'Old Labour' (beer and sandwiches, smoke-filled rooms, union deals) was now as discredited and out of step as New Labour had become. In order to go forward, he might need to go even further back.

And Miliband was the (unexpected) *new* leader. He immediately called for a Policy Review (as had Neil Kinnock on his election to the leadership). This is a commonplace in political parties, the exception being the 'steady as she goes' new leaders. But all this activity puts an inordinate focus on the personal aspects involved: this was *his* review, as well as the party's. In its first two years it was headed up by Liam Byrne with input from Peter Hain, but it was essentially a review of the organization: making the party more responsive, open, connected, and so on. To a limited extent this was fine, but 'Team Miliband' rapidly realized that it provided *no narrative*. In 2012 Jon Cruddas became the new Policy Review chief. And everything changed—not, I must stress, away from organization to policy, but from organization to narrative and ideology. I am jumping the gun here but I can emphasize that although this was a masterstroke, it too would turn out to be necessary but insufficient: at some stage the narrative or ideological revisionism would have to morph into a real Policy Review—as the *product* of the ideational revision—but it did not. We return to this later in the analysis.

Back to the Future

It became clear very early on that, rhetorically, much more had to be done, and that somehow the leader himself had to take 'authorship' of a new and dynamic narrative equal to those of the past. There was in fact a wealth of sources available (and sources that went deeper down to other sources); it was like an underground sea of ideas that would be converted to leadership purpose. It began, in fact, before the 2010 defeat (this is essential to the 'story', namely that there were those who 'saw' the coming catastrophe). In 2009, James Purnell had started a project, Open Left, with the think tank Demos in an attempt to 'rethink' Labour, the left, and their purpose in a changing society. Maurice Glasman had

begun (again before the 2010 defeat) to rethink Labour's role and—highly significantly—where it had lost the 'true path' and to where it might return; where was the crossroads at which the wrong road had been taken. This was later elaborated into 'Blue Labour' by Glasman and others (Davis 2011; Glasman 2011, 2013; Glasman et al. 2011). We can see here that what was being assembled were the elements of a 'story' that would feed into Milibandism and One Nation.

In the moment of the (crushing) defeat in the 2010 election, a group of the party's intellectuals—Ben Jackson, Jonathan Rutherford, Stewart Wood, Marc Stears, Stuart White, and many others (several of whom were close to Miliband)—began a series of seminars in Oxford (principally at University College) and in London (all their findings and discussions later published; see inter alia Glasman et al. 2011), in order to analyse the 2010 defeat and rethink Labour and the left and talk about *everything*. Other ideas were emerging, for example on the politically beneficial lessons of the German Social Democrats' (SPD) experience (championed by Stewart Wood, Miliband's close friend). Among these were apprenticeships, regional banks and workers' participation—leftist aspects of political interventions which contributed to a successful economy and a non-conflictual society.

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), a think tank close to the Labour Party, began to produce a lot of research, harnessing some of this intellectual effervescence. Many 'forgotten' aspects of left thinking were also being explored or revisited, such as the lessons of an earlier intellectual left best expressed by *New Left Review*, or again the works of E.P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, and others. And the ancestral gods made a huge comeback: Keir Hardie in particular, but also George Lansbury. As regards thinkers, Ruskin, G.D.H. Cole (particularly), R.H. Tawney, and others all came, once again, centre stage. These were not all necessarily gathered into One Nation, but became part of a 'new' expression of ideas all lending themselves to a sense of party 'renewal'.

There was a deluge of textual activity and meetings, seminars, and so on, and most undertaken by a 'new' political generation. The 'older' order—essentially New Labour—gradually moved offstage, though there were a few conversions to Milibandism. Rhetorically, and ultimately politically, this failure to keep the old guard (and its ideas and expertise) onboard and involve it in the new task was a major rhetorical and political miscalculation. What became *The Purple Book* in late 2011 was the last time New Labour contributed significantly to the revision of party

ideology (Philpot 2011). After that it was ignored. I return to this in my conclusion.

All said and done, however, the development of One Nation was a masterstroke. Essentially, Cruddas, Glasman, Rutherford, Stewart, and the 'Common Good' activists, 'fellow-travellers' like Phillip Blond and David Goodhart (inter alia Blond 2013; Goodhart 2013) and a large swathe of MPs (now sometimes called the One Nation MPs) elaborated and 'offered' the new narrative to the leader, almost as if it were his own creation. By 2012, then, the party had an emerging new narrative (containing within it a very old narrative that I will come back to). It was not plain sailing, however. Glasman (ennobled by Miliband) was outspoken and somewhat eccentric, and there was also polemic regarding Blue Labour's ideas, particularly criticisms of its (implicit?) attitudes to women, and more overtly to immigration. In some ways this was advantageous to Miliband, as Emily Robinson points out in this volume, in that by folding Blue Labour into One Nation along with the Policy Review, IPPR thinking—at this time embarking in particular on two *major* pieces of relevant research (Cooke and Muir 2012; Lawton 2014)—and much other input, it facilitated the idea that all these initiatives were part of a gathering rally of opinion around Miliband and *his* One Nation vision. Let a hundred flowers bloom.

The Central Elements of the Narrative

Given the limits imposed by a chapter of this length, I cannot go into the constituent elements of each of the 'schools of thought' that fed into One Nation—inter alia Blue Labour, Wood's ideas and the journal *Renewal*, Cruddas, Rutherford, a myriad of conferences and workshops, 'Together for the Common Good', the 'new localism' (inspired by 1920s Poplarism) and much besides. What I can do here is, from these many sources and influences, identify the central elements of what would become Ed Miliband's One Nation rhetoric:

- A wealth of new thinking and input.
- A return to the idea (or the rhetorical assertion of the idea) that ideas themselves mattered (and—*sous entendu*—that New Labour had forgotten this).
- Notions of social inclusiveness and harmony (which had been disrupted by a Pied Piper myth of seduction, particularly after 1997).

- The need for some kind of 'return' (and of wrong roads travelled).
- An Arcadian feel to 'this England' (very attractive given the misery in so many formerly prosperous—imagined 'happy'—communities). And it is worth emphasizing here that the 'feel' of Blue Labour was of a near-lost England rather than UK.
- The using of old ideas of community, particularly pre-Second World War society to address contemporary problems, all of these brought up to date—particularly by Cruddas (and Miliband)—as lessons from the past *to inform the future*; for example, more devolution to local communities. One Nation also used successful local Labour administrations like Hackney and Newham as exemplars.
- IPPR—the idea that 'the best and the brightest' were also involved in this. And to these were added Stewart Wood's ideas regarding the SPD and apprenticeships, banks, and so on.
- A link was made not just between New Labour straying from the true path but between it and Thatcherism, so that New Labour was depicted as part of a neo-liberal project that ran from 1979 to 2010. Some—Glasman most notably—took this even further and marked the date of the wrong road taken as that of 1945 … a return (see above) to the pre-war thinkers, especially G.D.H. Cole, R.H. Tawney, and a range of others (though not the Webbs).
- A revival in the discussion of a range of thinkers like E.P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, Karl Polanyi, the *New Left Review* people—and even Antonio Gramsci. Miliband added to this list by referring to modern thinkers like Michael Sandel (who spoke at the 2012 Conference) and bringing in Arnie Graf (Chicago community activist) and others. What united almost all of these thinkers was the preoccupation with community, with finding it and nurturing it.
- The projection of One Nation as a post-war Third Wave—after (first) Crosland's revisionism, and the (second) Third Way (so this Third Wave was a return to pre-First Wave).

By 2012—only two years after Miliband's election to the leadership—One Nation, with all its rhetorical and ideational input, had become the party's narrative. This was a major achievement. We can, however, make two points here, or rather caveats. The first was that for 'rally rhetoric' to be successful, everyone has to rally to it. And many did not, particularly within Miliband's own Shadow Cabinet, which sowed the seeds of

trouble. Second, before 2012, Miliband himself had not managed to lift his own popularity in the polls or within sections of his party, and the authoritative image of a rally leader is essential to success. There were quite a lot of rumours, grumblings, leaks to the press about Miliband's leadership, and the almost constant questioning of whether the older brother would have been the better choice. Ed Miliband went, in fact, to the 2012 Conference at an all-time low in his personal popularity (Populus 2012). And yet he left Manchester in triumph. Miliband's leadership image changed overnight. Let us see how this was achieved.

The Performance of One Nation: The 2012 Speech

2012 was the perfect illustration of the personalized and successful rhetorical performance of a narrative. It began a few weeks earlier with a few interviews, for example a 'casual' one in Miliband's back garden with friends outlining his ideas (Cowley 2012). Then, the day before Conference, the family travelled (standard class) to Manchester, photographed first on the train with Justine and the children and their toys, then walking down the platform, one child on Ed's shoulders, the other on Justine's hip. The essential image Miliband gave was of being relaxed, confident, and a modern dad. Moreover, he was 'everywhere' at the Conference's evening events, saying a few words at each then exiting (with Justine) tall, slowly, through the friendly crowds, smiling and relaxed, and stopping to chat as they left.

Then, on the Tuesday, came his Conference speech to a packed auditorium (that had been queuing for two hours). And in this there actually was a kind of Sorenson/JFK event. Marc Stears, Miliband's speechwriter, was also his close friend, and what was performed was not just what came to be known as the One Nation speech; it was also the Ed Miliband speech. He spoke for over an hour with no notes, walking around the low stage. He elaborated all the One Nation ideas (see above) using the term over 60 times; but more importantly—and this was often missed in comment at the time—he performed the persona of (a new) Ed Miliband. He talked about his parents (refugees from Nazism). David got one mention ([the parents] 'brought up David and myself'). He talked at length about his childhood, his birth in an NHS hospital (the same hospital where his own children would also be born), his comprehensive school (and one of his teachers, Chris Dunne, was

in the audience—mercifully, not 'Mr. Dunne'), and the origin of his political commitment (anger at the assassination of a family friend by the South African secret services). He used emotion of this kind, but also humour throughout: self-deprecation, jokes about his children, for example. He elaborated all 'his' ideas about One Nation policies, and showed also his intelligence and grasp of all the issues. The whole speech was structured as a kind of personal quest that began in childhood (as a reaction to injustice) and led to *his* vision of a One Nation Britain that he was now sharing/performing; the child as the father of the man.

His exit from the hall with his wife was reminiscent of the star couple exit from a US Democrat or Republican Convention through the dense crowds and an army of photographers. His speech was the only topic of conversation in the meetings and the pubs, hotel bars, and restaurants that evening. More importantly, the media and press coverage the following day was full of praise, even from the press that had vilified and/or laughed at him for two years (Red Ed, Wallace, back-stabber …). So, the only topic the following morning was that of the amazing press coverage. Here is some of it:

> 'Game Changer' (Beattie 2012a); 'Rhetorical tour de force' (Milne 2012); 'a barnstorming conference speech without notes' (Dunn 2012); 'finally he looked like the boss […] the moment he became leader of the Labour Party, de facto as well as de jure' (Hoggart 2012); 'Geek-tastic Ed triumphs by nicking a Tory mantra' (Treneman 2012); 'Labour leader takes leaf out of PM's book with bravura conference speech delivered without notes' (Grice 2012); 'Ed's display of style - and substance – will worry the Tories' (Richards 2012); 'He's a real showman' (Suphi 2012); 'Geek God. Ed becomes Labour legend yesterday' (Beattie 2012b); 'And now it's personal – Miliband the leader steps into the limelight' (Watt 2012). 'The Labour faithful depart from the north west confident that they have not elected a dud as their party leader. This week Ed Miliband answered the doubts within his own party over whether he has what it takes to lead them back to power. Many feared they had chosen an unelectable intellectual as their leader. But he gave a good speech that showed he has grown into his role, the gawky stiffness replaced by a more relaxed style that he has thus far kept private' (Landale 2012). 'At the end of this week, Ed Miliband is safe in his job, he has shown he can rise to the occasion, he has raised morale in his party and they leave with a spring in their step' (Landale 2012). (quoted from Gaffney 2017: 144–145)

The Performance of One Nation: The Q&A

And there was more to come. The following day, this near-euphoria was dramatically increased in the question-and-answer (Q&A) session in the afternoon (to a once again packed Conference hall). I have analysed this in detail elsewhere (Gaffney 2017: Chap. 4). We can say three things here. First, Miliband was in total control, answering question after question on One Nation ideas and policies. Second his use of 'self'—humour, emotion, reflection, analysis—was as great if not greater than the day before, so much so that the whole session took on a carnival-like atmosphere of celebration. Third, what the Q&A symbolized was a kind of One Nation *in practice*: a supportive community talking to itself, exchanging ideas (as if) ultra-democratic, looking to the future in a kind of communion with its relaxed (no jacket), confident, approachable and 'listening' leader the centre of attention (referred to several times as 'the future Prime Minister' by members of the audience), but on first name terms (he asked every questioner their name and repeated it). There was no reference to the party and its policy-making bodies or organizational structures, as if the only essential (and decisive) relationship was the *unmediated* one between himself and his audience. This is the quintessence of effective leadership.

The following day, Miliband had left the building. Depending on how one measures or analyses success, Manchester 2012 was arguably one of the most successful Labour Party Conferences ever. One Nation had become two things. It was the evocation of society depicted or imagined in a new way, and it was about how Miliband had become the embodiment and voice of that new society being called into being. Given, therefore, the total defeat of 2015, a whole series of questions are raised about what happened after 2012 and why. Let us address some of the issues.

What Happened to One Nation?

I want to make several points here and I have grouped them into two general categories of analysis: the first observations relate to the strategic/rhetorical, the second to the personal/performative.

First, One Nation was a very clever undertaking, but a downside was that it would involve strategic and rhetorical planning over years, and especially *after* 2012. And it was pretty much abandoned after 2012. George Osborne's 2012 'Omnishambles' Budget was seen as one reason (see below). Or perhaps the improving economic and unemployment

situations forced a revisiting of the One Nation narrative; its mild Marxian 'immiseration' undertones (cost of living crisis) seemed contested by the facts and figures. These, however, should have been the *context* of rhetorical adaptation, not the causes of abandonment. Moreover, any narrative—here the 2010–2012/2015 'story'—needed to be ready for any changes in the economic, social, and political situations.

One of the major rhetorical failings of One Nation was its failure to paint pictures. There were some excellent evocations of a more harmonious society, and many of Cruddas's efforts were designed to paint not just the past but the future too. But after 2012/2013 there was nothing, or very little—a radio programme here or there, a Fabian lecture, some House of Commons seminars—on how to 'imagine' One Nation. Crucial to the success of the 'story' was the depiction of the 'task'; for example, the first hundred days of a One Nation government. None was forthcoming. From every Shadow Cabinet spokesperson the answer to this question was of the disastrous 'We won't know until we form a government' type; the 'We can make no promises' type. In terms of offering an image of a different society, this was rhetorically suicidal.

From dominance of this kind of high point, the aftermath of '2012' would have been the perfect moment to have 'taken back' New Labour/Third Way into Miliband's narrative and truly unite the party. There was a whole series of ways this could have been done: via personnel, of course, but also by blending aspects of the Third Way with the 'practical' aspects of One Nation and, say, Wood's SPD approach. One of the most respected texts in the 2010–2015 period was *The Purple Book* (2011), an enterprise which saw all the wings of the party engage in dialogue.

A final remark concerning the strategic-rhetorical: Miliband was frequently attacked from the 'left' by figures such as Len McClusky and those who (unexpectedly) would take over after Miliband resigned, as well as by 'centrists' who felt the party was not getting anywhere. This is a complex issue, but One Nation only ever works if it comes from the left; this is true for the Conservatives too, from Benjamin Disraeli to Theresa May. Otherwise it only acts rhetorically—and therefore to real damage in terms of personal image—to maintain an unequal class, economic, and social status quo. There are many who would argue that that has always been its true political function …. But Ed Miliband won in 2010 *from the left*. In order to take the party with him, One Nation would have had to spread rightwards while retaining its radical origins. I mean this rhetorically (as regards both spread and

retention); but allowing figures like McClusky to depict One Nation as a rightist deviation, as a betrayal of some kind, made the task infinitely more difficult.

Second, as regards persona and performance, Milibandism should not have been only about Miliband and his performance, which is what it became. Abandoning One Nation meant that every focus and criticism between 2013 and 2015 landed on *him*. In order for it to work, Milibandism had to be the performance by Miliband of the One Nation story. Neither was consistent or sustained; therefore there was no story, but also, therefore, a diminished Miliband.

A further point we can make here, and no one seems to have foreseen this, is that the party's success—because of the 2012 triumph—became *reliant* upon performance, particularly leadership performance. This would have been mitigated if One Nation had really added depth to its 'text', developed policies, and 'shared' all these with key elements of the party. Instead, and by the end of 2013 *without* a One Nation identity, *all* success would be measured by Miliband's rhetorical performances. His 2013 Brighton speech was good (but not as good as 2012), and 2014 a bit of a disaster (he was clearly very tired after the Scottish referendum campaign). This also meant that without a narrative and with performances of diminishing effectiveness, the camera—paradoxically—would focus *even more* upon Miliband as a 'character'. To put it another way, 2012 could only have been a lasting success if 2013 and 2014 had been even better performances. And, with hindsight a real mistake, he did both the 2013 and 2014 performances with no notes, as he had in 2012. Now, however, because of 2012, he had raised the stakes and therefore the potential for mistakes (in 2014 he missed out key areas of his poorly memorized speech). The media reaction in 2014 was as critical as it had been congratulatory in 2012.

After 2012, One Nation began to falter—not only because it was not developing a series of concrete policies elaborated as growing out of the One Nation narrative, but because it was fast losing its lyricism. Many arguments have been put forward to explain this. George Osborne's 'Omnishambles' Budget is often cited: the Tories were making such a mess that the Labour Party simply had to stay quiet and it would win in 2015. For others, One Nation was only ever just a slogan without foundation. We have seen that it need not have been this. Another possible explanation is that its authors, promoters, proponents, and those around Miliband did not fully realize the performative and ideological/policy-related exigencies

of an undertaking of this kind, and even less what the consequences would be of abandoning it. You simply cannot do a One Nation and then leave it; better to just develop a straightforward social democratic approach. Ironically, the latter was actually far closer to Miliband's real views than the blend of leftism, centrism, localism, populism, nostalgia, and millenarianism that One Nation would have itself as being. So perhaps One Nation was not taken seriously enough by others, but also by 'the players'. The idea that its very clever 'authors' did not grasp what it involved and what was required is plausible. Some have argued that even by the 2013 Conference, the party was already in its 'retail offer only' mode (Goes 2016). I do not think that was the case at this point, but it would become so (Brighton 2013 was a confused mix of the two)—and Cruddas's growing disillusion at this time was visible.

Conclusion

I said above that for One Nation to be successful it had to, put simply, enable 'us' to 'see' it—what French politics calls a *projet de société*. A mini-version of this would have been a painting of the picture of the first 100 days of a One Nation government, offering a vision and including a raft of policies seen as emerging from the One Nation narrative. Possibly of equal importance was that, as I noted earlier, it had to be rhetorically enacted so that One Nation 'became' Ed Miliband and Ed Miliband became One Nation. There are many examples of this across the political spectrum: Castro, Thatcher, JFK, Peron (perhaps Eva rather than Juan) are all examples of a person *embodying* a narrative or an idea. Novelists understand this (Kress 1999: 40). For Henry James, 'character' *is* 'plot' (e.g. the way in which the main character reacts to events establishes the plot). More mechanically, because in tales there is not much 'character' in the nineteenth century novel sense, characters in the folk tale still have to enact the tale told to exhibit both their qualities (*Game of Thrones*) and the structure of 'story'. Without a 'teller' a tale cannot be told; but, more importantly, without a tale (One Nation) there is no teller (Ed Miliband).

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CHAPTER 5

One Nation Labour and the Case for Social Security Reform

Judi Atkins

In his speech to the 2012 Labour Party Conference, Ed Miliband appropriated Benjamin Disraeli's idea of 'One Nation' to convey his vision of a united Britain. This address was delivered against the backdrop of rising unemployment, higher public borrowing, and the Conservative–Liberal Democrat government's ongoing austerity programme (Miliband 2012). Six months later, on 1 April 2013, the Coalition's welfare reforms came into effect, accompanied by a storm of controversy and an increasingly punitive public discourse. While these changes were popular with some sections of the electorate, others raised concerns over the unfairness of certain measures—notably the removal of the spare room subsidy from Housing Benefit recipients of working age, a policy its critics dubbed the 'bedroom tax'—and the demonization of benefit claimants by the tabloid press. Nevertheless, both sides acknowledged that the welfare state was in need of reform.

This chapter examines the moral arguments employed by the Miliband Labour Party to promote its social security reforms. It focuses on the period from 2012 to 2013, when One Nation ideas had the greatest resonance and their influence on policy development is therefore easily discernible. Using the theoretical framework I elaborated elsewhere

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J. Atkins and J. Gaffney (eds.), *Voices of the UK Left*,
Rhetoric, Politics and Society, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51902-9_5

(Atkins 2010, 2011), I explore the processes underlying Labour's justificatory strategy, taking into account the party's ideological commitments; the requirements of argumentation in the area of welfare policy; and the need to achieve hegemonic advantage over opponents. Here, I identify three narratives mobilized by the advocates of One Nation—party traditions, 'new times', and national renewal—and I locate them within Labour's ideological and rhetorical traditions. In so doing, I demonstrate that while the party's moral arguments for One Nation social security were broadly congruent with its ideological platform and were appropriate to the policy area, the convergence of the three narratives in Miliband's political persona ensured that the fate of the project and that of the leader were inextricably linked.

One Nation Social Security

For the proponents of One Nation Labour, social security reform was inseparable from economic reform. As Rachel Reeves, the Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, explained, 'it's only by getting more people into work and creating better paid and more secure jobs, that we'll tackle the drivers of rising benefits bills and ensure the system is sustainable for the long term' (2014). At the same time, the party was committed to protecting the dignity of work, and to this end it advocated a policy programme consisting of four strands: overcoming unemployment; rewarding work and addressing the problem of low pay; investing for the future; and recognizing contribution (Miliband 2013a).

The centrepiece of Labour's strategy for tackling worklessness was the Compulsory Jobs Guarantee (CJG). This initiative built on the Future Jobs Fund and would provide guaranteed employment to young people who had been claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for 12 months or more, as well as to claimants aged 25 or over who had been receiving JSA for at least 2 years. All participants would be required to work for 25 hours a week, for which they would receive at least the National Minimum Wage. They also had to undertake a minimum of 10 hours' training per week, including help with basic skills if needed (Reeves 2014). After 12 months, participants would be obliged to accept a job or face losing their benefits. Crucially, the scheme would be administered at the local level, in order to ensure that 'there can be advice and support suitable for the individual who is looking for work and tailored to the particular needs of businesses in the area' (Miliband 2013a).

The One Nation approach to social security also targeted parents and people with disabilities. Miliband explained that unemployed parents would be expected to take advantage of their existing entitlement to free childcare and prepare for a return to work when their youngest child reached the age of 5. These preparations might include undertaking training or attending interviews at the Job Centre (2013a). Additionally, Labour was committed to reforming the Work Capability Assessment to ensure it distinguished between disabled people who could not work, those who required support in finding a job, and those who were able to work without assistance (Miliband 2013a). For the latter two groups, Labour would 'make [the] right to work a reality whenever it's possible', while guaranteeing the most vulnerable members of society the security they needed (Byrne 2012).

To make work pay, a Labour government would reintroduce the 10p starting rate of income tax, thus benefiting 25 million low- and middle-earners (Balls 2013). Moreover, it would strengthen the Minimum Wage by restoring its real value and introducing tougher sanctions against employers who refused to pay their workers accordingly (Balls 2013; Reeves 2014). Alongside these measures, the party would actively promote the Living Wage by 'offering temporary tax breaks to employers that commit to paying it, and requiring transparency of large companies, so employees, consumers and campaigners can hold them to account' (Reeves 2014). Taken together, Reeves argued, Labour's proposals would not only help to raise living standards, but would cut the social security bill by 'reducing our reliance on tax credits and housing benefits to make up for inadequate or irregular wages' (2014).

Labour also advocated investment for the future, particularly in childcare. As Ed Balls explained:

> Childcare is a vital part of our economic infrastructure that, alongside family support and flexible working, should give parents the choice to stay at home with their children when they are very small and to balance work and family as they grow older. (Balls 2013)

To this end, he continued, the next Labour government would increase free early education provision from 15 to 25 hours a week for 3- and 4-year olds in England, and offer guaranteed childcare from 8am to 6pm for all primary school children. This policy would remove a key barrier that prevents parents from finding employment, and thus 'make work pay for families' (Balls 2013).

Finally, One Nation social security recognized the contribution of people who were of working age. This was the least developed element of Labour's agenda, but it incorporated proposals to extend the qualifying period for contribution-based JSA from 2 years to, say, five, and to pay a higher rate of benefit to people with a long work history. Similarly, it guaranteed a decent basic state pension, which would provide dignity in retirement to those who had paid into the system throughout their working life. However, Miliband extended the contributory principle beyond paid work to encompass 'some of the other kinds of contribution people make, like mums looking after very young children and children looking after their elderly parents'. This, he claimed, would 'send a signal about the real importance that the next Labour government attaches to recognizing contribution' (2013a).

The Ideology of the Miliband Labour Party

According to Mark Wickham-Jones, One Nation offered 'a potential narrative about Labour's identity, one that might be contrasted with the pragmatism (and the emphases on particular isolated policy measures) that had dominated [New] Labour's time in office between 1997 and 2010' (2013: 322). Moreover, with its concern for unity over sectionalism, One Nation distinguished the party from both 'Old' Labour and the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition. These differentiation strategies were evident in Miliband's statement that Labour 'must be the party of the private sector just as much as the party of the public sector' (2012) and Balls's promise that One Nation economic policy would work 'for the many and not just a few at the top' (2013) respectively. As we will see below, the Miliband Labour Party not only contrasted these three opposing perspectives, but transcended them by formulating a fourth standpoint that incorporated a number of elements from, and yet went beyond, the original positions (adapted from McAnulla 2010: 292). We can perhaps refer to this technique as 'rectangulation'.

The core concepts of Labour's ideology can be identified as social justice, inclusion, cohesion, and mutual responsibility. Social justice was decontested as a commitment to tackle inequality, to 'build a country whose productivity, prosperity and common life are based on "the many, not the few"' (Wood 2013: 317). In Miliband's words, One Nation was about 'everybody having opportunity' (2013a); it was 'a country where prosperity is fairly shared' (2012). Labour also advocated the devolution of power to the local level, which was intended to promote inclusion

by ensuring that every citizen 'feels able to play their part, not left on their own' (Miliband 2013c). This rejection of the statism associated with 'Old' Labour echoed Tony Blair's assertion that New Labour would 'give power back to the people, and in return we expect them to take on greater responsibility for themselves' (1996: 262). It also informed David Cameron's idea of the 'Big Society', which sought to promote inclusion by encouraging social responsibility (2010). For Miliband, however, this goal was to be achieved primarily by combating inequalities of power and opportunity. Thus, social justice and inclusion were closely linked to the concept of localism.

In accordance with the traditional social democratic commitment to co-operative action, the concept of cohesion was defined as a belief in the importance of a common life. As Miliband put it, One Nation is a country where 'we have a shared destiny, a sense of shared endeavour and a common life that we lead together'. However, he continued, One Nation can be realized only if people across society accept the responsibilities they owe to each other (2012). This represented a departure from the New Labour era, in which government was 'too silent about the responsibilities of those at the top' (Miliband 2012) and, moreover, subordinated our civic duties to the rights of individuals (Atkins 2011: 181–183). It also differentiated Labour from the Conservative-led Coalition which, Miliband claimed, 'preaches responsibility. But do[es] nothing to make it possible for people to play their part […] They talk about a "big society". But then it makes life harder for our charities, our community groups' (2013c). In contrast, Labour would ensure that everyone—from the richest in society to those on social security benefits—fulfilled their responsibilities and so played their part in rebuilding Britain as One Nation (Miliband 2013c); the concepts of cohesion and responsibility were mutually dependent.

While Labour's ideology exhibited a high degree of coherence on a theoretical level, there arises the question of whether this was sustainable in practice. Thus, the next section will assess the extent to which the party's social security reforms, and the arguments used to support them, were congruent with its ideological commitments.

Ideology and the Case for One Nation Social Security

Although One Nation social security offered a number of proposals to address the electorate's most pressing concerns, such as the cost of living, it largely comprised a framework of principles around which

Labour would construct its policy programme. That this agenda was evolving over time is clear from the prominence of the concept of full employment during Liam Byrne's tenure as Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary (see Byrne 2012, 2013a, b). Byrne's repeated use of this term may be indicative of his 'Blairite' sympathies, given its presence in several of Blair's early speeches (Blair 1996). However, while Blair defined full employment as opportunity for all (Atkins 2011: 85), Byrne utilized it in its conventional sense of 'high and stable levels of employment'. This is clear from his assertion that: 'The faster we return to full employment, the faster we can pay down our debt, and the faster we can put the something for something back into social security' (2013a). Significantly, neither Balls nor Miliband (both of whom were noted 'Brownites') ever used the term and, after Byrne's demotion in the 'purge' of Blairites from the Shadow Cabinet (Grice 2013), full employment vanished from Labour's lexicon.

For Balls, the goals of Labour's approach were to 'get people back to work and strengthen our economy, cut out waste and focus relentlessly on our priorities, and make sure difficult choices are not ducked, but are rooted in our values, in fairness and in common sense' (2013). Its flagship policy, the CJG, sought to address the 'denial of opportunity that comes from not having work' through locally administered support for young people and the long term unemployed (Miliband 2013a). As such, the scheme accorded with Labour's commitments to social justice and localism. The former concept was also present in the party's pledges to make Britain 'a country where childcare problems don't hold anyone back if they want to get a job' (Byrne 2012); to provide basic skills training for those who need it; and to give people with disabilities 'the resources and support that can empower them to contribute and participate equally and fully in society' (Reeves 2014). These promises reflected the close connection between social justice and inclusion in Labour's ideology, and indeed the same values motivated the recognition of forms of contribution beyond paid work. Thus, Labour's reforms would ensure that 'all do have the opportunity to play their part, not just a few' (Miliband 2013c).

The One Nation plan for social security and the arguments used to justify it also displayed a commitment to mutual responsibility. As Stewart Wood explained, Labour 'rejects the idea that obligations to others are limited only to those on benefits, and demands reciprocity across society'

(2013: 319). Hence, government was duty-bound to enforce Minimum Wage legislation, promote the Living Wage and provide jobseekers with opportunities for training and work, while employers would be obliged to pay decent wages and refrain from exploiting zero hours contracts (Miliband 2013a). Meanwhile, individuals would have a responsibility to work, thereby ensuring that those who are unable to do so can receive the support they need. Such shared endeavour would promote social cohesion, and so realize Labour's vision of One Nation Britain (Byrne 2012; Miliband 2012).

Also present in Labour's ideology was the concept of desert, which found expression in the recognition of contribution. This principle had a strong presence both in Labour's social security reforms and in the oft-repeated claim that One Nation was about rewarding responsibility (e.g. Byrne 2012; Miliband 2013a; Reeves 2014). Therefore, a Labour government would offer short-term tax breaks to employers who committed to paying the Living Wage, which in turn would ensure that workers were adequately rewarded for their efforts (Reeves 2014). In addition, Labour would 'recognize contribution by supporting elderly women and men who have contributed to our country throughout their lives'. This pledge was intended to correct the perception that 'some people get something for nothing and other people get nothing for something—no reward for the years of contribution they make' (Miliband 2013a).

While these reforms appeared to be consistent with Labour's ideological platform, a potential difficulty was present in the practical implications of its plans to strengthen the contributory principle. As Tim Bale puts it, these proposals would have involved:

> A profound shift towards redistribution over the life-cycle rather than between rich and poor, making it a relatively hard sell to those in the party (and there are many of them) who still like to think of themselves as socialists. (2013: 348)

In other words, Labour's belief in the importance of desert conflicted with its core commitment to social justice, which was understood as a fairer distribution of wealth. It was unclear how this tension would be resolved, but it risked leaving the Labour leadership vulnerable to attack from both within and outside the party.

Labour's Moral Arguments for Social Security Reform

Politicians 'typically make the case for welfare reforms by reference to the amount of well-being or the positive consequences they will produce'. This is due to the congruence between consequentialism (broadly conceived) and the area of welfare policy, which makes this mode of moral argument particularly suitable for justifying such initiatives (Atkins 2011: 106). Although leading Labour figures indeed used consequentialist reasoning to promote One Nation social security, their primary concern was to highlight the negative effects of the Coalition's policies. This was consistent with the party's role as the Official Opposition, but their diagnosis of problems within the system also provided a starting-point from which to advance Labour's alternative programme.

In Miliband's view, a failure to reform the social security system would be detrimental to Britain as a whole. As he told his Party Conference in 2012:

> With one million young people out of work, we just can't succeed as a country. With the gap between rich and poor growing wider and wider, we just can't succeed as a country. With millions of people feeling that hard work and effort are not rewarded, we just can't succeed as a country.

By repeating the same word at the beginning, and the same phrase at the end, of several successive clauses (the techniques of *anaphora* and *epiphora* respectively; see Lanham 1991: 11, 16), Miliband established a logical connection between these concerns while seeking to make his message more memorable. He also implied that One Nation could offer a solution to these problems, which would be beneficial to individuals and the economy alike.

Although Labour's plans were in their infancy, the party was keen to explicate the anticipated good outcomes of its more developed policies. Reeves, for instance, argued that the Basic Skills Test would benefit individuals by ensuring that they have 'the skills they need to get a job and keep a job [… and so] give them a better chance of earning a better wage and building a career'. This initiative would also have positive economic consequences, as it would help to 'prevent more people falling into long term unemployment, or "low-pay-no-pay" cycles, that build up

more costs to our social security system and undermine the strength of our economy' (Reeves 2014). Thus, the Basic Skills Test would promote opportunity while reducing social security spending, and so help to build a One Nation economy (see Miliband 2013d).

The same consequentialist justificatory strategy was present in Labour's case for the CJG. Here, Reeves again emphasized the positive outcomes for participants in the scheme, claiming it would give back 'a chance for a better life to hundreds of thousands of people who under this government have been written off […] and so limit the scarring effects [of long term unemployment]'. In this way, the policy recognized the dignity of work, which Reeves identified as Labour's 'central belief'. Furthermore, by helping young people and the long term unemployed into work, the CJG would prevent further increases in welfare expenditure, and so benefit Britain's economy (Reeves 2014). This argument was consistent with Miliband's contention that 'controlling social security spending and putting decent values at the heart of the system are not conflicting priorities' (2013a); in other words, economic efficiency was reconcilable with social justice.

Like New Labour's case for the New Deals, the argument for One Nation social security incorporated a secondary deontological strand based on the concept of rights and responsibilities (see Atkins 2011: 106–109). This value was given expression in Byrne's statement that 'the right to work brings with it the responsibility to work if you can' (2012), but it is worth highlighting that, in accordance with Labour ideology, responsibility took precedence over rights in the speeches of Reeves and Miliband. Both contended that everyone who is able to do so has a responsibility to find a job and, in return, government has an obligation to ensure that they receive the help they need to find suitable training or work (Miliband 2012, 2013a; Reeves 2014). However, in a departure from New Labour's approach, there was little mention of the sanctions that would be imposed on individuals who failed to fulfil their obligations (but see Balls 2013; Reeves 2014). This may have been because Labour's programme was still in development, but equally it may have reflected a desire to adopt a more measured tone in response to the Conservatives' increasingly punitive policies and the tabloid hysteria over benefit 'scroungers'.

Narrating One Nation: The Quest for Hegemonic Advantage

For Alan Finlayson, ideologies 'provide actors with a series of locally established "commonplace" arguments which must be adapted to the demands of the situation' (2012: 759). As such, it is unsurprising that One Nation was rooted in the modernizing traditions of social democracy, and that it built on the discourses articulated by the British Labour Party in recent decades (Wickham-Jones 2013: 327). The remainder of this chapter examines the narratives mobilized by leading Labour figures to make the case for a new approach to social security, namely party traditions, 'new times', and national renewal.

In arguing for social security reform, Labour figures sought to locate their approach within the party's ideological traditions. Although not unique to Labour, this rhetorical strategy comes to the fore during periods of renewal, when a party is required 'simultaneously to appeal to the past and to break with it. These two requirements need not only to be balanced but to be integrated through an appropriate rhetorical invocation of an ideological narrative' (Buckler and Dolowitz 2009: 14). To fulfil the first requirement, a political actor may make references to luminaries from the party's past, and thus establish identification between their ethos and that of the movement they represent. Then, after showing due deference to the past, a party leader can 'seek to reinvent that tradition so that their leadership becomes its self-evident culmination' (Atkins and Finlayson 2016: 174).

A typical example was present in Miliband's case for the application of Labour's core concept of mutual responsibility to the welfare state. Here he invoked one of the key architects of this scheme who, though a Liberal, is held in high regard by many social democrats: 'As William Beveridge envisaged 70 years ago when he founded the social security system we need to understand that there are three sets of people with responsibilities: Government. Individuals. And the private sector, including employers' (2013a). Similarly, Liam Byrne drew on party traditions to demonstrate that the One Nation social security agenda—based as it was on a belief in the dignity of work—was consistent with Labour's fundamental values:

> The story of our fight for jobs is the genesis of our credo. When Keir Hardie stood up in Parliament as the first Labour MP, he spoke to insist on

> the principle of work or maintenance. 'Useful work for the unemployed' was the call of our first manifesto. And it is our call today. (2013a)

Here, Miliband and Byrne located their approach within Labour's traditions, reaffirmed their commitment to its core principles, and cultivated ethos by allying themselves with pioneering figures from its past. Taken together, these appeals to tradition were designed to reassure supporters that the One Nation social security agenda was in harmony with the party's ideological heritage, and that modernization would not come at the cost of Labour's soul.

The same justificatory strategy was deployed by Blair to present himself as the successor to Clement Attlee and Harold Wilson, while positioning the New Labour project as the logical next step in an ongoing process of party renewal:

> 1945 was new Labour, 1964 was new Labour—both new Labour because both had the courage to take the values of the Labour Party and use them, not for the world as it was, but for the world as they wanted it to be. New Labour now is ready in 1995 to build new Britain. (1995)

Two years later, Gordon Brown would claim that 'it is because like generations before us we are applying great ideals, Labour's enduring values, to new circumstances and new challenges that we can genuinely say we are modernizers', before recalling the achievements of Keir Hardie and Aneurin Bevan (1997). By emphasizing these key moments in Labour's history, Blair and Brown assumed the mantle of modernization from their predecessors, and so sought to enhance the legitimacy of the New Labour project in the eyes of the party faithful. Although such references may have limited appeal for the wider public, it is worth noting that 'a party seen more broadly to have become divided or to have lost the confidence of a significant part of its membership is likely to be regarded with suspicion by the electorate'. The affirmation of ideological identity is, therefore, central to the process of party renewal (Buckler and Dolowitz 2009: 13–14), and ultimately to the struggle for hegemonic advantage.

Whereas the above narrative emphasized One Nation Labour's fidelity to party traditions, a second stressed the necessity of breaking with its past. Here, Labour figures employed logos to characterize the present as 'new times', so that 'what will be is shown logically to follow' (Finlayson 2012: 762). This was achieved by means of two periodizations, the first

of which was ideological and proceeded from the assumption that the certainties of the New Labour era were swept away by the global financial crisis of 2008. Miliband explained that:

> There was an old way of running the economy that saw financial services as the bedrock of our prosperity […]. In the way we live together in communities, there was an old certainty that globalization and economic change would open up aspiration and benefit all […]. None of these certainties any longer hold. (2013b)

As we will see below, this is an example of strategizing which, in James Martin's words, entails 'formulating interpretations of a situation such that audiences are moved to respond in certain ways rather than others' (2015: 30).

According to Miliband, 'One Nation Labour learns the lessons of the financial crisis […and] adapts to new times'. Although it recognized the achievements of New Labour—notably the National Minimum Wage, the introduction of tax credits and increased investment in public services—it understood that New Labour was too cautious in its economic reforms, that it neglected the responsibilities of those at the top of society, and that it 'did not do enough to change the balance of power in this country'. To rectify these mistakes, Miliband continued, One Nation Labour would reshape the economy to create shared prosperity, devolve more power and resources to the local level, and ensure that all sections of society fulfilled their obligations (2013c). In so doing, it would be bolder than its predecessor in its efforts to realize Labour's commitments to social justice, mutual responsibility, and cohesion. Thus, by portraying New Labour's approach as ill-suited to 'new times' and the project itself as only a partial success, Miliband was able to frame party renewal as the only viable alternative while laying the foundations of the One Nation agenda.

The second periodization was socio-economic and used logos to detail the changes Britain had undergone since the inception of the welfare state. As Byrne put it, 'full employment has gone. The job for life has gone. Industry is radically restructured. The labour market is all different […]. Female employment has risen by over 50% since 1971'. Consequently, Labour must 'renew [social security] for the twenty-first century and not freeze it in the past' (2012; see also Miliband 2013a). To this end, the next Labour government would help people into

employment through the CJG, the Basic Skills Test, and increased childcare provision; make work pay by enforcing the Minimum Wage and promoting the Living Wage; and reward contribution. These initiatives reflected the close connection between social justice and inclusion in Labour's ideology, and so would ensure that 'all do have the opportunity to play their part [in building One Nation], not just a few' (Miliband 2013c). In short, Labour would 'keep the theory, and update the practice' (Byrne 2012). Implicit in this commitment to find new means of realizing the party's traditional goals was an acknowledgement that 'Old' Labour's approach was inappropriate to these 'new times', which in turn ruled out a return to past policies.

This idea of 'new times' was also invoked by Blair and Wilson in their arguments for ideological renewal. For the architects of New Labour, the social and economic changes wrought by globalization represented a significant challenge both to Britain and to the party's ideological tradition. To address it they advocated the 'Third Way', which stood for a 'modernized social democracy, passionate in its commitment to […] the goals of the centre-left, but flexible, innovative and forward-looking in the means to achieve them' (Blair 1998: 1). Likewise, Wilson depicted the early 1960s as 'a time of […] rapid scientific change', in response to which 'we are redefining and we are restating our Socialism' (1963). These logos-based constructions of the present as a period of upheaval served to justify ideological revisionism, which then laid the foundations for a Labour government to enact its programme of national renewal.

By emphasizing its continuity with, and departure from, party traditions, the previous two narratives positioned One Nation Labour in relation to both 'Old' and New Labour. A third narrative completed the rectangulation process by distinguishing the One Nation approach from that of the Conservative-led coalition government. Here, Labour figures presented the party's renewed standpoint as 'suitable to rectifying the mistakes of those whose recent hegemonic dominance it is seeking to challenge' (Buckler and Dolowitz 2009: 15). To this end, they employed pathos and antithesis to contrast the alleged failures of the Coalition with the One Nation agenda, and thereby asserted the superiority of Labour's response to the challenges posed by 'new times'.

In Miliband's view, the Coalition stood for 'a privileged few at the top. We know that they will never create an economy that works for working people. It is not what they believe' (2013e). Here, he called

attention to the divide between the wealthy and the rest of society—the 'two nations' in Disraelian terms—and used pathos to induce a sense of injustice in his audience. Reeves's attack on the Conservatives' 'complacency' about rising unemployment was consistent with Miliband's critique, as was the emotive claim that long term worklessness has a 'devastating effect on people's employment prospects and earnings through the rest of their lives'. Unemployment also has significant economic costs, she continued, given that 'over 5 years the government is spending £1.4 billion more on Jobseeker's Allowance than they originally budgeted for' (2014). This violated the Coalition's pledge to drastically reduce public spending and, for Labour, provided proof that its policies were fundamentally flawed.

In contrast, Labour's programme was founded on the belief that Britain is at its best when it challenges separation and exclusion (Wood 2013: 317). As Byrne put it:

> They offer us the politics of division when we need the politics of unity, the politics of One Nation, to pull our country through. Ambition. Compassion. Dignity. Duty. We use these words as the foundations for a country we love. They use them as a punchline. And that's why we need to win government in 2015. (2012)

These principles were manifested in Labour's One Nation plan for social security which, Reeves argued, would create a system that 'meets genuine need and rewards responsibility, while keeping costs under control over the long term' and ensuring that work always pays (2014). Moreover, with its emphasis on unity and inclusion, the One Nation agenda aimed to disrupt the Conservatives' efforts to pit one section of society against another, as exemplified by the crude antithesis of 'strivers versus skivers'. One Nation thus approximated a 'projectile' that was intended to 'shift the terms of debate' (Martin 2015: 28), and so wrest hegemonic advantage from Labour's opponents.

As we have seen, the idea of One Nation was appropriated from Disraeli, whose conservatism emphasized social responsibility and offered 'a vision of Britain coming together to overcome the challenges we faced' (Miliband 2012). From this starting-point Miliband constructed a narrative of One Nation, into which he interpolated the post-war Labour governments in a bid to appeal to his party's supporters:

> We heard the phrase again as the country came together to defeat fascism. And we heard it again as Clement Attlee's Labour government rebuilt Britain after the war […]. We built the peace because Labour governments and Conservative governments understood we needed to be One Nation. Every time Britain has faced its gravest challenge, we have only come through the storm because we were One Nation. But too often governments have forgotten that lesson. (2012)

Crucially, One Nation 'doesn't just tell us the country we can be. It tells us how we must rebuild' (Miliband 2012). This representation of One Nation as a tried and tested means for overcoming the uncertainties of 'new times' was designed to confer credibility on Labour's proposals for social security reform which, as part of its wider policy programme, were intended to realize the Party's vision of a united Britain. It also challenged the Conservative-led coalition to demonstrate that it could govern for the whole of the nation, and not merely for the wealthy few.

The emotional tenor of One Nation Labour was of common endeavour and a shared destiny. This was evident in Miliband's account of One Nation as:

> The idea of a country which we rebuild together, where everyone plays their part […]. We know this idea is a deep part of our national story because we have so many different ways of describing it. 'All hands to the pump.' 'Mucking in.' 'Pulling your weight.' 'Doing your bit.' And every day we see it at work in our country. (2013c)

By expressing Labour's longstanding commitment to co-operative action in everyday terms, Miliband was perhaps attempting to bridge the gap between the *topoi* (commonplaces) of his ideological tradition and the *doxa* (opinions and beliefs) of a wider, non-party audience (see Finlayson 2012: 762–763). His language was also 'reminiscent of a kind of rallying war-time spirit' (Gaffney and Lahel 2013a: 336), which in turn established a link between the devastation of post-war Britain and the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis—both of which, Labour claimed, demanded a collective response that only it could provide.

It is worth drawing attention to the contrast between Miliband's optimism and the Conservatives' pessimistic vision of permanent austerity (see Cameron 2013). In this, he drew on the utopian strand within British social democracy, which was given expression by previous Labour

leaders in the idea of 'new Britain'. For instance, Wilson promised in 1966 that his government would 'build a new Britain [… to meet] the challenge of our times' while, as Leaders of the Opposition, John Smith envisaged 'the new Britain that Labour wants to build' as 'a country where strong communities help each one of us to live a fulfilling life' (1993) and Blair offered his 'vision of a new Britain—a nation reborn, prosperous, secure, united—one Britain' (1995). These characterizations of 'new Britain' bear a striking resemblance to 'One Nation', and indeed all afforded Labour leaders an effective means of opposing their commitment to act for the whole country to the 'sectional' approach taken by the Conservatives.

At the perimeter of an ideology, actors seek to 'embody their causes and perform their politics. A political style takes on the form of a proof that can be identified as a definitive aspect of a form of political thinking' (Finlayson 2012: 760). Such appeals to ethos are not, of course, unique to Labour leaders, but an examination of Miliband's rhetoric reveals that he positioned himself as the defender of the public good against such vested interests as the 'big six' energy companies and the Murdoch media empire (e.g. 2012, 2013b, c). In so doing, Miliband became the latest in a succession of 'reforming leaders of the left [… to couch] their appeal in populist and patriotic terms, seeking to mobilize low- and middle-income citizens against powerful elites' (Jackson 2012: 160).

This populist strategy was equally evident in Miliband's claim that One Nation social security 'reflects the values of the British people' (2013a; see also Miliband 2013c), where he constructed the public as an 'imagined community' that shared Labour's beliefs (see Gaffney and Lahel 2013b: 484). While appeals to 'the people' have long featured in British political speech, the party leaders of today must also 'prove themselves in and through the terms of the ordinary' (Atkins and Finlayson 2013: 173). To this end, Miliband frequently related anecdotes about his encounters with members of the public, of which the following was a typical example:

> I think of the young man I met in Long Eaton recently, out of work for four years, desperate for a job. The problem is this government's Work Programme can leave people like him unemployed year after year after year. We would put a limit on how long anyone who can work, can stay unemployed, without getting and taking a job. (2013a)

Here, Miliband highlighted a flaw in the Coalition's approach and derived a policy conclusion from this diagnosis (Atkins and Finlayson 2013: 170). By linking the problem to the everyday experience of an 'ordinary' citizen, he perhaps sought to adapt to the demands of populist rhetorical culture, while enhancing his ethos as a leader who was 'in touch' with—and so was fit to represent—the people of Britain.

It is important to note that Miliband articulated 'One Nation' in terms of his personal experiences and beliefs (Gaffney and Lahel 2013a: 335–336). As he told his Party Conference in 2012: 'In One Nation, in my faith, inequality matters. It matters to our country' (2012). In other words, Labour values were not simply the values of the British people; they were the values of Miliband himself. For John Gaffney and Amarjit Lahel, this is an example of the 'personalized political', which involves 'bringing the self in some way into responses to wider issues' (2013b: 487) and thus affords the speaker a populist means of inviting identification. More than this, however, Miliband's leadership 'character' supplied a point of coalescence for the narratives of party traditions, 'new times', and national renewal we considered above.

By aligning himself with historical party figures, Miliband offered himself as the present embodiment of Labour's traditions. Although he acknowledged the achievements of New Labour, which 'pioneered the idea of rights and responsibilities', Miliband rejected as ill-suited to 'new times' those aspects of its approach—notably the disregard for the duties of those at the top of society—that were contrary to his own principles. Meanwhile, 'Old' Labour's way was discarded due to its neglect of rights and responsibilities per se, which again ran counter to Miliband's values (2013b) though he endorsed its commitment to collective endeavour. In this way, Miliband was positioned both within and in opposition to aspects of his party's ideological heritage by virtue of his personal beliefs. Similarly, Miliband's convictions provided a basis from which to criticize the 'unfair' policies of his opponents. This was evident in his assertion that: 'I will tell you that we need to protect the dignity of work and make work pay. He [Cameron] will hit the low-paid in work' (2013a). The three narratives thus converged within the leadership persona of Ed Miliband, creating a rhetoric that was 'self-referential and "about him", [and which] inform[ed] the way "he" talks about issues, policies and events' (Gaffney and Lahel 2013b: 499).

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the Miliband Labour Party's case for One Nation social security reform. An analysis of Labour's ideological platform reveals that both its justificatory strategy and the proposals themselves were broadly congruent with the party's core values, while highlighting a potential conflict between its belief in social justice and the concept of desert. Meanwhile, an examination of Labour's use of moral argument shows that a primarily consequentialist strategy was appropriate to a policy programme in the area of welfare, and that its early proposals were less punitive than those enacted by either New Labour or the Coalition. Finally, an assessment of Labour's techniques for securing hegemonic advantage uncovers the narratives mobilized to win support for its renewed standpoint, locates them within the party's rhetorical traditions, and demonstrates that they coalesced within the persona of Miliband himself.

This analysis reveals a number of problems with Labour's approach. As Michael Jacobs observes, 'the willingness to wrap every possible idea […] under the One Nation blanket [was] irresistible, the inevitable consequence of sloganization. But it [had] a deadening effect on ideological clarity' (2013: 315) and risked rendering the idea of One Nation meaningless. Furthermore, the 'new times' narrative failed to create sufficient distance between One Nation Labour and its immediate predecessor, due to the presence of several former New Labour ministers in the Shadow Cabinet. That Miliband was among their number also weakened his personal credibility, on the ground that the previous Labour government was still widely blamed for causing the crisis that ushered in these 'new times'. Similarly, Labour's capitulation to Coalition policies such as the benefits cap and the abolition of universal child benefit (Miliband 2013a) threatened the integrity of the One Nation narrative and, by implication, of Miliband's leadership character. At the same time, 'One Nation became vulnerable through personal attacks upon or undermining of [Miliband's] persona' (Gaffney and Lahel 2013a: 339); the two stood or fell together.

As Gaffney notes in his contribution to this volume and elsewhere (Gaffney 2017: 154), the narrative and performance of One Nation started to diverge in 2013. In the area of social security policy, this decoupling was manifested in a lurch towards the tough approach associated with New Labour and the Coalition. Of particular note is Miliband's *Condition of Britain* speech, where he pledged

to withdraw JSA from 18 to 21 year olds and replace it with a 'new youth allowance' that was 'dependent on young people being in training' (2014). Despite Miliband's assertion that this was a 'progressive' reform (2014), Labour's then Policy Review Co-ordinator, Jon Cruddas, denounced it as 'punitive' and accused the party of offering 'instrumentalized, cynical nuggets of policy to chime with our focus groups and our press strategies and our desire for a topline in terms of the 24 hour media cycle' (quoted in Holehouse 2014). This apparent opportunism can be attributed in part to the lack of a narrative—One Nation is conspicuous by its absence from the speech—which in turn undermined Miliband's ethos as a principled politician. Whereas in 2012 he was seen as a prime minister-in-waiting, Miliband now had an image of 'proposing little and embodying less' (Gaffney 2017: 156); his leadership credibility had declined in tandem with the One Nation project.

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CHAPTER 6

Jeremy Corbyn and the Limits of Authentic Rhetoric

Mark Bennister, Ben Worthy and Dan Keith

When Jeremy Corbyn walked up the steps to the stage at the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre to deliver his first words as Labour Party leader, he set the tone for his tenure:

> We go forward now as a movement and a party, bigger than we have been for a very long time, stronger than we have been for a very long time, to show everyone that the objectives of our party are intact, our passion is intact, our demand for humanity is intact, and we as a party are going to reach out to everyone in this country to go on that journey together, so that no one is left on the side, everyone has a decent chance in life, a decent place in our society. (quoted in Prince 2016: 345)

For Corbyn and his supporters this moment was not simply the election of a new leader, but a major achievement in terms of the development and harnessing of a *movement*. Buoyed by an extra-party and extra-parliamentary organization (Momentum) feeding the campaign, Corbyn's leadership

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J. Atkins and J. Gaffney (eds.), *Voices of the UK Left*,
Rhetoric, Politics and Society, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51902-9_6

was rooted in the mythology of collectivism and 'the movement'. As well as Labour's radical history, Corbyn's leadership campaigns of 2015 and 2016 drew on the anti-austerity and anti-establishment activism and sentiment epitomized by Podemos in Spain and Syriza in Greece. Unlike these other anti-austerity movements—challenging from the outside—Labour under Corbyn used anti-establishment rhetoric to challenge from within the party system. Corbyn's rhetoric initially had two opposite effects. As supporters, both new and returning, joined the party in significant numbers, other parts of the Labour Party experienced something along the lines of an existential crisis. On the one hand, Corbyn's consistent message and folksy, authentic demeanour had the potential to be enticing. On the other, critics bemoaned Corbyn's lack of basic leadership skills, a concern that opened up a chasm between his sizeable support base, and the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) and the wider electorate.

Corbyn's victory in Labour's September 2015 leadership election made him an unlikely and perhaps accidental party leader (Diamond 2016; Prince 2016; Richards 2016; Seymour 2016). His political career had been concentrated on the backbenches and he was known in Parliament for his rebelliousness. He had no prior leadership experience, and his parliamentary rhetoric was characterized by a campaigning zeal that thrived on his being awkward, unclubbable and on the political fringe. Yet outside Parliament, he had been at the centre of political campaigns such as the Stop the War campaign and a plethora of internationalist, trade union and human rights causes. Corbyn only stood in 2015 because a small band of left-wing PLP members agreed that it was 'his turn' (Hattenstone 2015). He was unexpectedly propelled to power by an institutional change that allowed the selectorate to open up beyond the three-way electoral college of votes for trade unions and affiliated organizations, Labour Party members, and the PLP (Russell 2016).[1]

Corbyn's rise may have been surprising and dramatic, but what of his words and ideas? There is little analysis of his oratory, as emerging scholarly work has largely focused on his election as leader and the impact on the party. Atkins and Turnbull (2016) examine how Corbyn's critics framed his rhetoric, dismissing him as an extremist or a demagogue, while others analyse his populist appeal (Blakey 2016; Blakey et al. 2016; Salutin 2015). In this chapter, we study how Corbyn used rhetoric in his efforts to persuade his audience. Having operated throughout his political career in extra-parliamentary campaigns and on the backbenches, Corbyn's greatest challenge lay in convincing those inside the party to

help him transform it by embracing his brand of activist politics, and to believe that this could revive its fortunes.

Decorum is the key to devising rhetoric that meets the expectations of audiences. An audience must have a reason for listening, and *decorum* is critical when tailoring the appropriate combination of seriousness, intensity, argument and emotion to suit time, place and circumstance. Once leader, Corbyn continued to use tools and techniques that were already familiar to him. His approach was that of an MP talking to his Islington North constituency or campaigning at a rally. As such, articulating his brand of leftist politics to appeal to a broad audience was not a preoccupation for Corbyn; he did not seek to present a narrative that would shape people's perceptions of him. Critics claimed he knew only one way to communicate, while his defenders argued that he stuck to a winning approach that distinguished him from other politicians as part of a longer-term strategy to build a mass, extra-parliamentary movement. If it is the latter, then Corbyn's rhetorical style followed the path set out by Ralph Miliband (father of David and Ed) in *Parliamentary Socialism*:

> Leaders of the Labour Party have always rejected any kind of political action […] which fell, or which appeared to them to fall, outside the framework and conventions of the parliamentary system. The Labour Party has not only been a parliamentary party; it has been a party deeply imbued by parliamentarism. And in this respect, there is no distinction to be made between Labour's political and its industrial leaders. Both have been equally determined that the Labour Party should not stray from the narrow path of parliamentary politics. (Miliband 1972: 13)

Corbyn's thinking was rooted in the leftist ideas that emerged from the 'Corresponding Society'. This group was formed by Tariq Ali and Ralph Miliband in 1981, following Tony Benn's defeat in Labour's deputy leadership contest, and its members included Corbyn, John McDonnell, and Benn himself. Corbyn eagerly pursued this extra-parliamentary path, and he did not deviate from it on becoming leader as he mobilized rallies and increased the grassroots membership, so strengthening his (legitimate) grip on the party (Power 2016).

Corbyn's straight talking, honest politics was central to his appeal, and it requires further investigation given that his rise to the leadership had such a dramatic effect on the Labour Party's membership. Using material from Corbyn's speeches before and after he became leader (up to July

2016), we deploy the classical approach to studying oratory, utilizing the three appeals based on character (ethos), emotion (pathos) and reason (logos). Corbyn's leadership had two distinct consequences. On the one hand, he reversed decades of declining membership, giving Labour one of the highest numbers of supporters of any party in Western Europe. On the other hand, his net approval ratings with the electorate in his first year as leader were deep in negative territory, and over 80% of his MPs expressed no confidence in his leadership in June 2016. Supporters argued that Corbyn was uprooting and challenging convention and past practice, while opponents claimed he was either unwilling or unable to appeal beyond the constituency that propelled him to the leadership and sustained him there. We analyse Corbyn's rhetorical strategies in his public communication to explain how such very different standpoints might have emerged. Moral certainty and conviction come to the fore, but less evident are techniques to persuade his followers that these ideals are within reach. Did Corbyn create a strong counter-narrative, offering a purpose and direction to his new 'movement'? Or was the purpose, as critics claim, one of perpetual opposition and protest?

Ethos

The appeal to ethos is 'at its simplest […] the attempt to convince an audience of something by reference to your own character—your authority as an expert or trustworthy person'. Politicians try to achieve this 'rather crudely, by recounting their personal history or discussing their family life […] such appeals work to the extent that the character one presents as "good" connects with an audience's ideas of what is good' (Finlayson 2014: 433). However, the roots of Corbyn's ethos lay in four areas that differ somewhat from the conventional 'life' or personal history narrative that modern politicians favour (see Finlayson 2014). They are: his time as a backbencher; his 'outsider' image; his ability to secure a large mandate; and his claim to represent a 'core' Labour lineage.

Corbyn as Backbench Parliamentarian

Corbyn was a backbench MP from his election in 1983. Over three decades he demonstrated steadfast support for a series of touchstone far-left issues, fighting for human rights, opposing privatization and military intervention, and strongly supporting the Palestinians over

the Israel–Palestine conflict. As such, 'Corbyn's leadership offered an authentic re-embrace of a socialist analysis of the failures of capitalism' (Crines 2015), while his past was proof of his 'lifelong loyalty and conviction' (Richards 2016: 5). Doubt, conciliation, and negotiated consensus were absent; he was 'a candidate with certainty—all the certainties formed in the late seventies and early eighties' (Richards 2016: 4).

Outdated or not, Corbyn's long experience formed a narrative of moral steadfastness. As he put it, 'all my political life I have stood for tolerance, debate and the democratic determination of policy' (Corbyn 2015a). Corbyn drew on this to warn of the consequences of military action against so-called Islamic State in Syria and Iraq:

> I've been in Parliament a long time and I've seen many decisions taken. And in moments of clamour and moments of fervour, decisions are made – go here, invade there, bomb there, do this, do that […]. Tragically wars don't end when the last bullet is fired, or the last bomb is dropped. (Corbyn 2015b)

Similarly, his long championing of human rights issues gave him an authentic voice other politicians could only claim to have, since he had 'met hundreds of these very brave people during [my] lifetime working on international issues' (Corbyn 2015c). Drawing on this narrative, Corbyn presented his activity in Parliament as a 'moral' duty. For instance, in September 2015 he told the Trafalgar Square crowd: 'I have to leave straightaway […] because I want to be back in Parliament to vote against their attempt to cut the tax credits that act as a lifeline to millions of people' (Corbyn 2015d).

Shortly after the EU referendum, Corbyn faced down an attempt by Labour MPs to unseat him with a no confidence vote on 28 June 2016. This display of stoicism, even with 172 voting against his leadership, surprised many. For Corbyn, however, it was consistent with his refrain that his mandate came not from the PLP, but from Labour supporters. After the vote, he reiterated:

> I was democratically elected leader of our party for a new kind of politics by 60 per cent of Labour members and supporters, and I will not betray them by resigning. Today's vote by MPs has no constitutional legitimacy. We are a democratic party, with a clear constitution. Our people need Labour Party members, trade unionists and MPs to unite behind my leadership at a critical time for our country. (Corbyn 2016a)

Corbyn's uncompromising language towards his detractors within the PLP deepened the chasm between those MPs and his supporters. The failed coup gave him a cause to fight, so the Labour MPs who remained with him were praised as those who 'didn't walk away', while his rival, Owen Smith, was criticized at hustings for not supporting the leadership. Indeed, Corbyn was happy to claim that the MPs who opposed him were not working in the interests of Labour. Potential 'splitters' were not just against his leadership, but were also against the historical lineage of the party:

> If people want to split the Labour Party then they're splitting something that was the creation of pioneers to bring about social justice in Britain – with a party that brought the National Health Service, that brought human rights, that brought the Equalities Act of Britain. (Corbyn 2016b)

Corbyn as Outsider

Corbyn's image as an outsider stems in part from his apparent discomfort in what Finlayson (2014) calls the 'political moments' of the conference speech and the State Opening of Parliament. He was wary of the institutionalized context that frames such speeches, proving more comfortable at impromptu rallies. Indeed, his style was part of an assumed persona as a 'humble amateur' running against the conventional approach in British politics. There is a slow, prosaic cadence to a Corbyn speech. Unaccustomed to the set piece event of the party conference address, he thanked individuals at length, stumbled over the autocue, and lacked obvious sound bites and oratorical skill. This fed into Corbyn's image as a humble servant, rather than a leader.

Corbyn frequently spoke about the distance of 'people' and 'the public' from Westminster. This helped to cement his outsider persona, despite his having spent 30 years in Parliament, and he presented himself as someone who could see issues from the perspective of 'ordinary people'. As he put it, the electorate was 'alienated and distant from the political class' (Corbyn 2015e), and 'to many, it's felt like a small cabal in Westminster decides' (Corbyn 2015a). This allowed Corbyn to portray himself as someone committed to 'breaking open the closed circle of Westminster and Whitehall'. Though it has become common for politicians to frame themselves as outsiders or as challengers to the Establishment, Corbyn's inexperience of office and his rebellious past

strengthened his claim: it was 'precisely Corbyn's lack of conventional qualifications' for leadership that shaped his 2015 victory (Diamond 2016: 16).

Mandate

The size and nature of Corbyn's mandate established legitimacy for his leadership and, in his eyes, gave him moral authority to draw on when challenged by his opponents. In 2015, he attracted support not only from Labour members but also from a new wave of affiliates, and he increased his mandate across all three sectors a year later. Justifying his position as a proponent of change and the leader of a movement, he spoke of his mandate from 'an electorate of 558,000 people, the largest electorate ever for an internal party election. The number of votes that were cast for me was more than twice the total membership of the Tory Party in the whole country'. This, he added, 'is something to savour' (Corbyn 2015f). Subsequently, he argued that 'I was elected with almost 60% of the votes of members and supporters in the leadership election' (2015e). This mandate, backed by numbers, flows into his change argument: 'I've been given a huge mandate, by 59% of the electorate who supported my campaign. I believe it is a mandate for change' (2015c).

Seeking to echo progressive movements elsewhere, Corbyn presented his 2015 victory as a challenge to the centre-left: 'social democracy itself was exhausted. Dead on its feet. Yet something new and invigorating, popular and authentic has exploded' (2015c). In the same speech, the weight of numbers emphasized the nature of the movement. As Corbyn put it, 'more than 160,000 have joined the Labour Party. And more than 50,000 have joined since the declaration of the leadership [and] in my own constituency, our membership as of last night had just gone over 3,000 individual members and 2,000 registered supporters' (2015c).

Corbyn's Roots in Labour's Traditions

Corbyn distanced himself from the profile of a conventional leader, instead presenting himself as a conduit or symbol of 'core' Labour principles: 'I was elected Leader not for who I am, but because members wanted a re-commitment to our values' (2016a). He repeated in the same speech that 'the leadership contest wasn't about electing me, Jeremy Corbyn, it was about the party reasserting those values,

reasserting itself as a campaigning social movement' (2016a). It is worth noting here that the claim his election was about policy rather than personality is itself a rhetorical device, one that was often employed by Tony Benn (Gaffney 2015).

More than recent leaders, Corbyn rooted himself in Labour's moral and ethical struggle of the past century and in the rich traditions, symbolism, and language of the left. This is clear from his frequent mentions not only of Keir Hardie, but also of recent totems of the radical left, such as the Greater London Council under Ken Livingstone (Gaffney 2015). In an example of *decorum*, these references were often tailored to both his audience and his geographical location. Like his mentor, Tony Benn, he mentioned the Tolpuddle Martyrs when visiting the South West of England, drawing a link to 'the travesty of the poll tax'. In Scotland (at the Scottish TUC) he name-checked trade unionist Jimmy Reid, and in Wales he referred to the founder of the NHS, Aneurin Bevan.

Corbyn positioned himself firmly within this long Labour lineage. Hardie's notion of the 'Sunshine of Socialism' closed several speeches, while Corbyn deftly managed to invoke two great figures of left Labour history when he told his audience that: 'Tony Benn had Keir Hardie's chair in his house—I sat in it many times. It was extraordinarily uncomfortable' (Corbyn 2016c). He also drew parallels with his own situation and that of Hardie: 'Keir Hardie took a lot of jibes and he wore them with pride', but 'he came to Parliament to represent working class people and he took that responsibility seriously' (2016b). In this vein, on being mocked by David Cameron at Prime Minister's Questions, Corbyn again used Hardie in his defence, saying:

> [When Keir Hardie] first took his seat in 1892 [… he] refused to wear the 'parliamentary uniform' of black frock coat, black silk top hat and starched wing collar. Instead, Hardie wore a plain tweed suit, a red tie and a deerstalker. He was lambasted in the press, "cloth cap in Parliament" said one headline. At least we have moved on from such trivialities today. (2016c)

Pathos

Corbyn's appeals to pathos were based primarily on a rekindling of Labourism. He sought to move his audience by constructing a vision of unity, evoking the 'spirit' of the labour movement and the restoration of socialism. Corbyn made appeals designed to spark emotional responses

from activists, yet such appeals left him vulnerable to the criticism that he was paying insufficient attention to rousing a broader audience.

A United Movement

A significant element of Corbyn's rhetoric was the mythification of the audience, a technique frequently deployed by political leaders (Finlayson 2014; Finlayson and Martin 2008). To unite his audience in a common cause and foster a sense of belonging, Corbyn referred to them as 'friends', 'sisters, brothers', and 'comrades' (Corbyn 2015g, f). The collective 'we' was also prominent: 'I say we, not me, because we are standing up against the austerity budget, *we* are standing up against what the government is doing in its budget' (2015h). Thus, the speaker and listener became part of the same struggle, thereby lessening the divide between them: 'we have all been in this square [Parliament Square] many times' (2015i). This participatory aspect was a major theme. For example, Corbyn praised his audiences for taking part in demonstrations, as these are vital to the development of a progressive society:

> The people who marched in this square in the 1850s with the People's Charter didn't achieve very much that day, they were dismissed as out of date, out of time and irrelevant. Within 50 years, we had a national insurance system, within twenty years we had a universal education system […] and within a hundred years we had a universal health service. Those people were the real visionaries. (2015j)

In Corbyn's view, protest can bring about political change, and he has argued that 'every stage that democracy has developed, social change has come after that. It is a historical process' (2015k). However, Corbyn also reassured protesters that even if changes do not come immediately, their efforts are worthwhile as 'no matter what happens, we are a hope and inspiration for the next generation' (2015a). Participation in protest is virtuous because 'discussion' and 'interaction' bring solidarity (2015a). Thus, Corbyn invited the audience to revel in a sense of achievement and shared purpose; the emotional connection between action and outcome was strengthened.

Corbyn's rallies were organized to promote a sense of excitement, with his leadership campaigns galvanizing supporters to engage with new possibilities for activism. The 2015 campaign was portrayed as a turning

point: '*all* of us have marched before in disputes, *all* of us have demonstrated before, *all* of us have demonstrated in the steel strike, the Miners' Strike, and many other campaigns against something, this is a campaign that is about bringing people together' (Corbyn 2015l). Indeed, this campaign brought many people to their first political event (Corbyn 2015i) and, furthermore, Labour's new members were claimed to share a sense of 'optimism and hope' (Corbyn 2015f).

Appeals to 'the People'

For Corbyn, extra-parliamentary protest was superior to parliamentary politics. Consequently, the understanding of the people was placed above that of elected politicians, with whom Corbyn avoided any realistic accommodation:

> All the great achievements that any of us have ever benefited from […] how we got the NHS, how we got council housing, how we got free education, how women got the right to vote, how we got the Race Relations Act, all the great achievements didn't come around from the smartness of my colleagues sitting around a table in the House of Commons, they came because of people on the ground everywhere […] marching, demanding. (2015h)

In this, Corbyn was influenced by Benn, who had advised him that: 'everyone you meet, whoever they are, whatever they do, whatever their job is, however small, weak or powerful they are, you can learn something from them' (Corbyn 2015i).

Despite distancing himself from convention, Corbyn did not completely avoid the classic rhetorical appeals. The personal and emotional are evident in his recollection of meetings, such as those with flood-affected residents in 2016: 'I met the families who had lost their personal possessions: their photos, children's toys, family pets—in homes that now have the foul stench of sewage-polluted floodwater' (Corbyn 2016a). He went on to give this an anti-austerity twist:

> I met too with the councils who told us about flood defence schemes cancelled or left unfunded […] Environment Agency staff who complained about the cuts […]. Fire and Rescue Service personnel […] who still don't have the statutory responsibility for floods that would mean they had the equipment and kit to better respond. (2016a)

Although his speeches were peppered with stories of the people he had met, there were few references to Corbyn's own life. A rare exception came when he mentioned his mother in an address to the National Unions of Teachers conference: 'Why do I understand it so well? Because my late mother was a maths teacher and a member of the National Union of Teachers' (2016d).

Unlike other party leaders, Corbyn eschewed the 'median voter' to focus on the *ordinary* people whose knowledge was allegedly devalued. Speaking to trade unionists, Corbyn argued that: 'Skills at the workplace, skills of *ordinary* people, the knowledge of *ordinary* people […]. The elite in our society look with contempt on people with brilliance and ideas just because they don't speak like them or look like them' (Corbyn 2015f). For Corbyn, 'ordinary people' were part of a common struggle and morally superior to the elite: in his words, 'we as ordinary, decent people stand up to our government' (2015d). These efforts to portray the 'ordinary people' as workers or protesters appealed to those who attended his rallies, but they reached only certain parts of the body politic.

Corbyn's speeches were invariably affable, genteel and self-deprecating, yet they used humour sparingly. He was much more comfortable and relaxed with smaller, intimate audiences. Occasional impressions of Ian Paisley and Tony Benn entertained activists (Corbyn 2014), he made use of Benn's many quips (e.g. Corbyn 2009), and he sometimes derived humour from his outsider status. For example, Corbyn highlighted how his leadership campaign secured the necessary nominations from MPs with only one minute and 50 seconds remaining, and he joked that there was 'No corporate funding for the campaign […] but we haven't been offered any either' (Corbyn 2015k). Jokes that journalists 'are all human I'm sure' (Corbyn 2015m) were clunky, especially as his leadership struggled to communicate effectively with the (albeit heavily anti-Corbyn) media, and he made little effort to win over journalists (Goes 2015; Diamond 2016). However, Corbyn struggled with humour as a rhetorical device; his naturally taciturn and downbeat demeanour—particularly when engaging with the media—made him appear humourless. His attempts to soften this with an appearance on Channel 4's *The Last Leg* in June 2016 merely exposed how much he struggled to adapt to different environments, a key function of *decorum*.

The 'Spirit' of the Movement

Corbyn located the Labour Party within a historical narrative, saying it 'follows in the footsteps of earlier protests' and the 'great people who protested against the odds' (such as the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the Chartists, and the suffragists) (2015n). Moreover, he observed that 'Our movement and our party was founded by very brave people in the nineteenth century, it was founded on the shoulders of even more brave people earlier in the nineteenth century' (2015k). Corbyn also tried to link his audience to these pioneers of the past by speaking of the latter as having values 'we all believe in', and he argued that:

> We should be proud of those who went before us and proud to learn from them to develop those ideas in the rest of this century to bring about the justice and equality that they dreamt of and that they fought for and this generation and the next generation can, will and must achieve. (2015o)

The 'spirit' of the movement was a recurring theme in Corbyn's speeches. For example, he appealed to pathos when he told his listeners that the story of Bevan distributing leaflets to inform the public about the National Health Service (NHS) sent a tingle down his back (2015h). Indeed, the legacy of earlier protests was often invoked in emotional perorations, of which the following is typical: 'We stand here today because of their work, but we go forward now as a movement and a party' (2015b). Thus, Corbyn sought to connect his audience with the dormant Labour soul.

While Labour history played an important role in Corbyn's speeches, he referred only occasionally to the historical inevitability of socialism. As Finlayson (2015) notes, Corbyn more often advanced moral justifications for socialism, as shown in the following extract:

> When people tell me the only thing that is practical and matters in politics, is being fiscally responsible, paying off the debt and paying off the debt in record quick time, I say this – the objectives for any society should be eliminating homelessness, eliminating power, reducing levels of inequality and investing in productive work. (Corbyn 2015j)

Corbyn also used rhetorical questions to persuade the audience of the rightness of his approach, asking, for instance, 'Is it right that people use food banks when we are the fourth richest country?' (2015j)

Restoring a Socialist Vision

The ability to offer a vision of the future is a key element of successful opposition leadership strategy (Bale 2014, 2015; Diamond 2016). However, Corbyn failed to offer a slogan that encapsulated his vision, such as a 'Third Way' or 'One Nation'. The closest he came was his notion of a 'kinder society' (Corbyn 2015f), though this vision was undermined by the more aggressive elements among his supporters. Using repetition and tricolon, Corbyn described a 'brave' society, in which:

> We don't pass by on the other side when somebody is going through a crisis, we don't pass by on the other side when a family is forced to live on the street when they can no longer afford the flat or house that they are living in, we don't pass by on the other side to leave the poorest to fend for themselves when the richest keep on getting richer and richer at our expense. (Corbyn 2015p)

Corbyn sought to ensure that this struggle took place on a rhetorical level, and he called on Labour to challenge the Conservatives' language of 'benefit scroungers' and confront their austerity narrative. For Corbyn, economic credibility needed to be redefined in terms of a society based on the sharing of wealth (Corbyn 2015q), and he wanted to restore a sense of pride in socialism (Corbyn 2015r, s). He also valued Labour's 'organic' links to the trade unions, which he claimed should be celebrated and renewed, rather than hidden from public view (Corbyn 2015l, t). Indeed, it is worth highlighting that Corbyn's vision involved a strong role for the unions in Labour's internal politics.

Logos

Corbyn's appeals to logos were rooted in the language of opposition, which is unsurprising given that that he had been against his own party leadership, the Tories, and neoliberal economics for his entire political life. The following anecdote from the Blair era sums up his political approach:

> [Corbyn] once claimed that he did not vote against the party willy-nilly, only being willing to defy the whip over three types of issues: war and peace, issues of liberty and socio-economic policy. Point out to him that this covers almost everything that the government could possibly do and he laughs. 'I suppose it does.' (Cowley 2016; also in Prince 2016: 141)

This and other accounts of Corbyn's serial rebelliousness are indicative less of a reasoned approach than of a morally driven opposition; his rhetoric was based on conviction, moral certainty, and consistency. With such belief, there was little need to convince others through reasoned argument, as the cause itself is argument enough—be it Palestine, Nicaragua, or the struggle against apartheid. Such consistent opposition informed Corbyn's use of logos in three core areas: anti-austerity, anti-war, and issues of liberty and rights.

Anti-austerity

In attempting to position the Labour Party as a social movement akin to Podemos in Spain, the Five Star movement in Italy, or Syriza in Greece, Corbyn emphasized his opposition to the austerity programme. He presented this agenda as ideological, saying, 'Let's be clear. Austerity is actually a political choice that this government has taken and they are imposing it on the most vulnerable and poorest in our society' (Corbyn 2015f). Corbyn responded to attacks on left wing 'deficit deniers' by branding these critics 'poverty deniers', and he focused his appeal squarely on the less well off:

> And there's no security for the 2.8 million households in Britain forced into debt by stagnating wages and the Tory record of the longest fall in living standards since records began. (Corbyn 2015c)

Otherwise, his speeches contained less firm evidence and rather more appeals based on moral arguments about inequality. The message was clear, but the detail and solutions were imprecise and vague: 'The richest 1% own a *great deal more* than the other 99% of the population' (Corbyn 2015p, emphasis added). Elsewhere in the speech, he employed the technique of tricolon to call attention to social injustice:

> Too many children going to bed hungry at night
> Too many people sleeping on the streets
> Too many luxury mansions kept empty. (Corbyn 2015p)

In this case, though, the impact was somewhat lost as Corbyn's solution proved rather underwhelming when he tailed off: 'we have to do something about that'.

Anti-war

Opposition to war defined Jeremy Corbyn. As a leading member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and founder of the Stop the War Coalition, he had been an integral part of the peace movement since the late 1970s. Although a constant moral representative, he lacked the charisma to drive forward these organizations himself. Speaking to the February 2003 anti-war march in Trafalgar Square, he predicted that: 'Thousands more deaths in Iraq will set off a spiral of conflict, of hate of misery of desperation that will fuel the wars, the conflict, the terrorism, the depression and the misery of future generations' (quoted in Prince 2016: 156). This articulation of the chaos that would follow the invasion now seems prescient and, some claim, formed (inadvertently) the platform for his 2015 leadership campaign. Indeed, as Prince (2016) points out, many of those involved in the Stop the War Coalition became organizers of his leadership campaign, enticing others who had left the party in 2003 back into the fold.

Until 2015, Corbyn was a largely lone voice in a diminishing band of Bennite MPs. While his contemporaries—such as Benn himself, George Galloway, Ken Livingstone, and Bernie Grant—were skilful parliamentary orators able to vivify a cause and grab the attention of their listeners, Corbyn was never (as he admitted himself) in the same league. These limitations were exposed starkly in December 2015, when the debate over whether to bomb so-called Islamic State in Syria provided Corbyn with a platform to present a logos-based argument against military action. But, overshadowed by the controversy that followed his initial refusal to give Labour MPs a free vote, his arguments fell away on the floor of the House and he was upstaged by a speech that combined the classic rhetorical elements of ethos, pathos and logos. Poignantly, it was Hilary Benn, son of Corbyn's mentor, who delivered the Labour case for air strikes. As Gaffney notes (2015), 'Benn's speech was structured and argued in such a way as to make it impossible to depict him as a Tory stooge. Corbyn, against intervention in Syria, could have done the same, but simply sounded like the spokesperson for the Stop the War Campaign'. The persuasive logic required was not about confronting the Prime Minister, but reaching out to Labour MPs who had indicated that they would vote in favour of military action. However, Corbyn made little direct appeal to these MPs, save: 'And the rejection of fourteen years of disastrous wars in the wider Middle East was a central pillar of the platform on which I was elected Labour leader' (HC Deb. 2015a).

Corbyn's final line again focused on previous military action:

> After Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, members thinking of voting for bombing should keep in mind how terrible the consequences can be. Only a negotiated peace settlement can overcome the Isil threat in Syria. And that should be our overriding goal. (HC Deb. 2015a)

We can contrast this with Benn, who based his appeal on Labour Party internationalism and turned Corbyn's own argument around:

> What we know about fascists is that they need to be defeated. It is why, as we have heard tonight, socialists, trade unionists and others joined the International Brigade in the 1930s to fight against Franco. It is why this entire House stood up against Hitler and Mussolini. It is why our party has always stood up against the denial of human rights and for justice. (HC Deb. 2015b)

Similarly, Corbyn was unable to use the force of evidence, conviction, and argument to sway Labour MPs and the trade unions on Trident, which was for him a touchstone issue.

Liberty and Rights

The fight for individual and collective rights has featured throughout Corbyn's political career. Rights and freedoms are collectively 'won' and are defended through extra-parliamentary activism, while the rights of workers are upheld by the trade unions. In contrast with Tony Blair, Corbyn did not balance rights with responsibilities, as he believed the former are worth celebrating and defending in their own right. As he told the 2015 Labour Party Conference: 'I am proud of our history. It is a history of courageous people who defied overwhelming odds to fight for the rights and freedoms we enjoy today. The rights of women to vote. The rights and dignity of working people' (Corbyn 2015c).

Corbyn's first action after becoming Labour leader was to speak at a rally in support of refugees. He justified this by saying: 'I do that because we are all humans, we all have a sense of decency and humanity and reaching out to others' (Corbyn 2015b). Unsurprisingly, he framed his support for refugees in moral terms: 'They're victims of war, they're victims of environmental degradation, they're victims of poverty, they're

victims of human rights abuses all over the world' (Corbyn 2015b). Although Corbyn was adept at demonstrating empathy and moral support, his rhetoric remained locked in a paradigm that failed to offer solutions: 'And so none of this is simple, and none of this is easy. But surely we have a principle between us all—that we are all human beings on the same planet' (Corbyn 2015b).

Conclusion: I'm not Pretending There Is an Easy Answer

As Diamond correctly points out, 'it was [Corbyn's] status as the heroic "anti-candidate" that enabled him to win' (2016: 16). In short, he challenged what we have come to accept as necessary in a party leader. Corbyn's ethos was rooted in his values; he believed in his message and, rather than standing above the crowd, he stood with them. His rallies thus became 'events' that people wanted to be part of, to share in a collective experience (Finlayson 2015); the message became secondary as the experience became central. These events were, of course, stage-managed, but their imperfect choreography served to bridge the divide between audience and speaker. Finlayson sums up Corbyn's appeal as follows:

> He is self-deprecating. He doesn't play the rock star but performs the humble amateur outsider. He doesn't spell out all the answers. He doesn't say that the government knows best. He is certainly not a great orator but his stumbles and plain style lend credence to his almost exclusively moral arguments. (Finlayson 2015)

However, *decorum* needs to work across time, place, and circumstance. Corbyn failed to make the rhetorical shift required to 'blend [Labour's] narrative or ideational strains' (Gaffney 2015), and his narrative related to a particular strand of labourism. Adding grist to the argument that he was wedded to an extra-parliamentary movement, his pathos emphasized the class struggles of others, borrowing the passion of the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the Chartists. Similarly, Corbyn championed an NHS that was not 'created by parliamentarians sitting in tea rooms'. The narrowness of his experience and appeal came to the fore when he assumed that Islington North was a microcosm of the country; his internationalism was rooted in the fact that his constituency was both globalized and multicultural.

Recollected conversations and meetings featured prominently in Corbyn's speeches, while details remained sketchy. His messages were based on moral certainties such as rights at work and rights to housing; there was little said about how these were to be realized, but plenty about 'common endeavour'. The narrative, crafted only as critical of his opponents, lent weight to the charge that Corbyn was offering a leftist populism (see Atkins and Turnbull 2016; Orr 2016). Fuelled by internal conflict and lacking the performative zeal to link protest to vision, the narrative was firmly stuck in the past. Philip Roth has called this the 'ecstasy of sanctimony'. The irony is that, in repeating the mantra 'people have had enough of the politics of personality', a cult of personality developed around Corbyn as the figurehead not of a functioning government-in-waiting, but of a movement in permanent protest and campaign mode. Labour's leftist soul may have shown an unexpected resilience, but at a considerable price.

Notes

1. The Electoral College was abandoned in favour of a 'one member one vote' system for members, affiliates and registered 'supporters' (Russell 2016), shifting power away from the PLP.

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CHAPTER 7

Red Dragon FM: Carwyn Jones's 'Welsh Labour Rhetoric'

David S. Moon

Despite its past reliance on strongholds in Wales, Scotland and northern England, the British Labour Party developed as a highly centralized, London-centric entity. This centralization was the legacy of ideology (in the form of an attachment to economic planning) and practicality (recognizing Westminster as the seat of power in a unitary UK state). As a result, while key players may have come from the 'periphery', the party machine fed institutional power into the capital. Devolution problematized this set-up. New cadres of political elites developed, operating within new, clearly defined sub-state polities with new electoral and party systems, and contesting new administrations. Internal tensions have subsequently wracked the post-devolution party.

On the one hand, in spite of recent increases in Scottish Labour's autonomy (LabourList 2015), Labour has remained largely centralized in terms of the party's formal power structures. For example, at the time of writing, of the 33 members on the National Executive Committee (NEC), the governing body of the party, there were no ex officio members from either of the specifically national-territorial party branches. Simultaneously, however, the devolved institutions provide spaces and opportunities that nurture alternative voices and offer platforms—however weak and marginalized—through which their differently accented discourses can

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J. Atkins and J. Gaffney (eds.), *Voices of the UK Left*,
Rhetoric, Politics and Society, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51902-9_7

enter internal party debates. Consequently, Labour's intra-party power structures have transformed—incrementally, asymmetrically, and in many ways *unconsciously*—into a multi-level institution.

Drawing upon a post-structuralist institutionalist (PSI) approach linked to the concept of the multi-level party (MLP), this chapter analyses one of these accented voices; specifically, that of Carwyn Jones, First Minister (FM) of Wales since 2009 and conterminously 'Welsh Labour Leader'. Through an analysis of Jones's conference speeches in Wales and England between 2009 and 2015, it explicates the manner in which he articulated a clear role for Welsh Labour within both Welsh politics and Labour itself. One wherein: (a) Welsh Labour is the party of 'the people of Wales', shielding them from Conservative assaults via active state-led interventionist politics; and (b) this 'Welsh Labour' approach both offers lessons for Labour beyond Wales and justifies further devolution of powers to the Welsh government led by Jones. Through this 'Welsh Labour rhetoric', Jones successfully positioned himself as the recognized voice of the sub-state party at the state-wide party level (offering valuable insights into the manner in which formally unitary institutions can nevertheless operate *in*formally as multi-level institutions).

At the heart of this case study is a concern with the interrelation between structure and agency, and the rhetorical route through which agents *use* structures to achieve their political ends—including the alteration of said structures. In particular, it explores how Jones's rhetoric leaned on the internal structures of the post-devolution Labour Party as support for his articulation of a 'Welsh Labour' rhetoric centred upon his ethos as leader. In doing so, it emphasizes the importance, for analysts of rhetoric, of understanding the evolution of institutional and political conditions of rhetorical production, as well as the relationships between a speaker (Carwyn Jones) and their audiences (both Welsh and 'British').

Carwyn Jones: 'Welsh Labour Leader'

Considering his status within the Labour Party, the academic attention Carwyn Jones has received is remarkably negligible (see Osmond 2015). As FM of Wales, Jones held the highest elected office of any Labour representative since 2010, and as Welsh Labour Leader he outlasted three leaders of the Scottish Labour Party (Iain Gray, Johann Lamont, and Jim Murphy) and three Labour leaders in the House of Commons (Gordon Brown, Ed Miliband, and Harriet Harman). In this time, he helped steer

Welsh Labour through two general elections (both lost) and two Welsh elections (both won). Jones's leadership role warrants academic attention not only for these successes, however, but also for the tricky questions that it raised about formal power structures within the wider party.

During the 2016 Assembly election campaign, Jones asserted his authority, declaring: 'One thing I can say is that next May, whoever is the leader in London, I'm the leader in Wales' (BBC News 2016). The reality was less clear-cut. The position of Welsh Labour Leader does not formally exist within the Labour Party constitution: in purely *formal* terms, the leader of the Labour Party in Wales is the leader of the (British) Labour Party at Westminster; *formally,* Jones's constitutional position was only Leader of the National Assembly Labour Party (analogous to the Parliamentary Labour Party). Nevertheless, the position does exist, albeit in a certain liminal state; Jones was *nominally* Welsh Labour Leader—and was treated as such by the media and party nomenclature—regardless of constitutional recognition. Attesting to this reality were Jones's annual set piece speeches to Labour's Welsh and British party conferences (held in February and September respectively). These speeches provided an opportunity to communicate the position of Welsh Labour as a particular, demarcated entity; they also legitimized and substantiated the de facto role of Welsh Labour Leader. The following rhetorical analysis identifies both the political message Jones articulated and how it established Welsh Labour and its Leader as significant entities within the wider party's internal structures of power.

Conceptualizing the Labour Party as an MLP

To understand these power structures, the Labour Party is here conceptualized as an MLP. An MLP was initially defined as 'a party of multiple territorial levels, representing competing sources of formal power as well as discursively structured antagonisms between the party's centre and its constituent parts' (Moon and Bratberg 2010: 52). Analysing MLPs focuses upon the influence of the different territorial levels on decision making at the state-wide level of the party, their autonomy from central intervention, and the ideological struggles that occur within and between these levels. This concept has since developed to emphasize political parties as, ontologically, *entirely* discursive entities (Moon 2013a). Transport House exists as a physical, corporeal building in Cardiff, for example; however, it has no extra-discursive meaning in itself. The *designation*

'Transport House', its position as the headquarters of the Labour Party in Wales, and the 'party roles' held by the people employed within, are all part of the discursive institution 'the Welsh Labour Party'.

This conceptualization is clearly indebted to discursive-constructivist institutionalists such as Schmidt (2008: 314), who approach political action as 'the process in which agents create and maintain institutions by using […] their background ideational abilities' and 'foreground discursive abilities, through which agents may change (or maintain) their institutions'. It differs, however, in emphasizing an ontological differentiation *within* institutions qua discursive constructs, namely between institutions' formal, non-formal, and informal aspects. Parties' formal aspects encompass elements such as: the separation between a leadership of elected representatives and professional appointees, and a wider membership of party members and affiliated supporters; the symbols with which a party is identified (e.g. the logo, the *name itself*); and the titles and attendant responsibilities afforded to the aforementioned institutional actors (elected and appointed) within the party's rules/constitution (MPs, Branch Chairs, Clause IV of the constitution, and so on). The non-formal, by contrast, constitutes the specific manner in which these symbols, titles, rules, and roles are articulated and subsequently interpreted by the actors who—in so doing—actively *institute* the party qua institution, of which they are members. From this epistemological perspective, the informal can be treated as a modality of the formal aspect, referring to commonly recognized and understood—albeit not *formally* instituted—rules, roles, and conventions, to which non-formal meaning is attached.

This formal/non-formal ontological distinction is neatly conceptualized via a post-structuralist institutionalist framework (see Moon 2013a; Panizza and Miorelli 2013; Bacchi and Rönnblom 2014), wherein the distinction between the formal and non-formal is analogous with the signifier (the sign) and the signified (the meaning attached to a certain signifier) within post-structuralist analyses. The intra-institutional power an institution's formal aspects (qua signifiers) hold is thus afforded by the non-formal content (qua signified) ascribed to them through the process of their articulation[1] by actors (in a process of signification), within the overall instituting party discourse.

This chapter's analysis thus focuses upon the manner in which an *informal* identity (Welsh Labour Leader) is affirmed *non-formally,* through the articulatory practices of the individual to whom that identity is attached (specifically, Carwyn Jones). In concrete terms, this involves

an analysis of Jones's rhetoric, identifying the ideological character of the articulated discourse and how this affirmed and strengthened his (informal) institutional position. As Welsh Labour Leader, Jones's conference speeches were aimed not simply at party members, but at the public also (specifically the Welsh electorate). From the perspective of this analysis, however, the focus is upon the intra-party harmonics, rather than extra-party take-home messages. This analysis covers ten speeches by Jones—five to Welsh Conference, five to British Conference. It draws out the key points that have underpinned his rhetorical appeals to members, reflecting upon their significance in terms of the political ideology communicated, how his speeches buttressed Jones's authority as Welsh Labour Leader, and the opportunities they provided for Jones to increase the sub-state party's influence and autonomy within the overarching MLP.

'Our People'

At the heart of Jones's rhetoric, at both British and Welsh Conferences, was an appeal to 'the people' that oscillated between an emphasis upon, and an elision of, nation and class. Underlying this is a tendency to articulate 'the people' and Labour as one. Hence, in his very first Welsh conference speech in 2010, Jones referred to what 'our [Labour's] ambition should be for *our people*', asserting that '*our people* deserve no less' than Labour's policies (Jones 2010a). This linkage was repeated at the British Conference seven months later, where Jones spoke of 'the spirit that binds the people to our party' and how Welsh Labour was 'reconnecting with *our people*' (Jones 2010b). Who are Labour's people, according to Jones? In both 2010 speeches, the answer was explicit: 'When we in Welsh Labour speak about our people we mean the whole of Wales' (Jones 2010a), and the 'spirit' binding the people to Welsh Labour is 'the spirit that encapsulates our modern Wales' (Jones 2010b). Articulated thus, 'our people' signified *everyone* in Wales: 'in the north, in the West, in the Valleys, in the Vales, on the borders to the East and in the cities to the South' (Jones 2010b).

This was a central element of Jones's 2012 Welsh Conference speech also. First, he attacked his opponents' comparative commitment to Wales and the Welsh:

> Every week, in the Senedd we hear the Welsh Tory obsession with what's happening in England.

> Every week, in the Senedd we hear the Plaid Cymru obsession with what's happening in Scotland.
>
> Well conference – I'm going to let you into a little secret today.
>
> You know what I'm obsessed about?
>
> Wales – and the welfare of the Welsh people! (Jones 2012a)

Second, he emphasized Welsh Labour's record of 'standing up for the language and our communities the length and breadth of our country', appealing to nationalists to support Labour:

> I say this to those people who aren't card carrying members of Plaid Cymru, but have supported them in the past.
>
> If you believe in Wales, if you believe that together we can build an even stronger nation, take our own decisions and forge a path best suited to our people – then Welsh Labour IS YOUR party.
>
> If you voted Plaid, believing them when they said they'd speak up for Wales – only to find them refusing to rule out a coalition deal with Tories, then Welsh Labour IS YOUR party.
>
> If you believe that quality Welsh jobs, good education in Welsh schools and ensuring we have vibrant communities in Wales are more important than constitutional navel-gazing, then Welsh Labour IS YOUR party.
>
> If you voted Plaid, but know, as I do, that independence is bad for Wales, then Welsh Labour IS YOUR party. (Jones 2012a)

These were 'One Nation'—or rather 'One Wales'—appeals, with all of the people of Wales defined as Welsh Labour's people. As Jones told delegates:

> I want Welsh Labour to be a party for the whole of Wales.
>
> […] I tell you that we have voters across Wales who don't know that their values are Labour values.

> […] Conference, we know that someone wanting a college or university place in Llangefni has the same aspirations as someone wanting a college or university place in Llanelli.
>
> We know that someone looking for work in Connahs Quay has the same needs and aspirations as someone looking for work in Cross Keys.
>
> We know that someone wanting to start a business in the Vale of Glamorgan has the same needs and aspirations as someone wanting to start a business in the Vale of Clwyd.
>
> […] I want to say to the people of Wales today:
>
> We share your aspirations.
>
> We speak your language.
>
> Whoever you are.
>
> Wherever you are.
>
> We are the real party of Wales.
>
> […] There's no reason why our message shouldn't equally resonate with people in Blaenau Gwent and people in Blaenau Ffestiniog. (Jones 2012a)

While an appeal to the Welsh electorate, this rhetoric also boosted Jones's informal position within British Labour. Such appeals affirmed Welsh Labour as the Welsh people's representatives not only in the Welsh party system: within the Labour MLP, Jones's Welsh Labour held primary responsibility for representing the people of Wales, not the Westminster Labour leadership.

'The People of Wales'

The phrase Jones normally employed, however, was not 'the Welsh people', but 'the people of Wales'. This is a more expansive phrase; the former delimits 'the people' by their ethnic-nationalist identity when not all

people in Wales are Welsh. When referring to 'the people of Wales', however, differing degrees of stress can be laid upon the two compositional elements: (a) 'the ***people*** of Wales'; (b) 'the people of ***Wales***'; or (c) '***the people of Wales***' (the last entirely conflating the two). This opens up wider interpretations of who constitutes 'the people' in Welsh Labour rhetoric.

Thus, during his 2011 Welsh Labour Conference speech, Jones (2011a) declared: 'The people of Wales have turned to Labour to defend them from harsh Conservatism many times over the last hundred years or so. This is why our Party came into being in the first place'. Furthermore, 'we know that our values are the same values that the people of Wales share […]. Because, this great party of ours was born out of the people—and let us never ever forget that'. The goal of the Labour Party—at birth—was not to provide specific comfort for Welsh people. It was to represent working class Britons. By referring to the nature of the party's foundation as the reason for its particular relationship with 'the people of Wales', Jones thus (re)articulated 'the people' to specify '*working class* people'.

This same articulation was present in Jones's 2012 Welsh conference address, where he declared: 'there has never been a Labour government that has looked upon inequality, and injustice and at the broken lives of the worst off and thought "let the market sort that out"', expressing this as a distinction between 'our Welsh Labour government *on the side of the people*—and the Opposition parties on the sidelines' (Jones 2012a). It also underpinned the argument, in his 2013 Welsh conference speech, that 'even though these are difficult times for Wales, we can be proud of what we're doing for our people. There remain huge challenges—both economically and socially—for this great party to address on behalf of our people' (Jones 2013a). The working class were not explicitly referred to in such rhetoric; however, by invoking the party's foundations and promising action to tackle socio-economic inequality, 'the people' came to signify them nevertheless.

When referring to 'the people', the referents—whether 'the Welsh' or 'workers'—are not usually so clear, the distinction between the two being elided as both congeal in the single signifier. As demonstrated by Jones's conclusion to his 2010 British conference speech, 'the people' is thus a double-edged concept that links Welsh Labour to the Welsh polity *and* allows its message (and authority) to carry across national boundaries: 'Conference, we're proud to be Welsh. We're proud, to be British. But above all, Conference, we're proud to be Labour' (Jones 2010b).

Jones's government policies were in this way framed as not simply Welsh policies for Welsh problems, but (Welsh) Labour policies for the betterment of the working class (both in and outside Wales).

The conflation is further demonstrated by the manner in which the floating signifier 'Welshness' was articulated, by Jones, as a vessel for the signification 'L/labour'. Welsh values thus become socialist values, as the following section from Jones's 2010 Welsh conference speech demonstrates:

> You see, the potential I want to see Wales fulfil is based on the traits of this great Party – characteristics that have shaped and built Welsh Labour since its inception.
>
> I am talking about the vision of Keir Hardie to create a fairer society.
>
> Or the doggedness of Elizabeth Andrews – fighting for better living and working conditions for workers and their families.
>
> Or the determination and tenacity of Aneurin Bevan in delivering our National Health Service.
>
> These are the characteristics that have made our Party great and served Wales in the past.
>
> I believe they are the same characteristics that will serve Wales well in the future:
>
> A self-confident Wales.
>
> A more equal Wales.
>
> A Wales built on fairness and social justice. (Jones 2010a)

Here, Wales's 'potential' is identified in Labour's radical roots, providing an answer to its people's problems and the basis for Welsh Labour policy. This message was not only for his Welsh audience. A few months later it was reiterated at the British conference with the declaration that 'Welsh Labour is now rediscovering its voice. We are restating our radicalism and we are reconnecting with our people' (Jones 2010b).

From the outset, then, Jones's message was clear: under his leadership, the politics of Welsh Labour and the 'people of Wales' stood for Labour's radical, socialist tradition that had faded from the Westminster scene under New Labour. Across every speech, Jones defended and proselytized the success of these 'classic' Labour values to the public *and* party on both sides of Offa's Dyke by pointing to their successes in Wales. He did so through rhetorical appeals to ethos, articulating interventionist socialist policies as the best means to protect 'the people' from the onslaught of their Conservative enemy; or, to select a line from Jones himself, 'only we in Welsh Labour can keep the flame of Bevan burning. Let us never, ever forget that! Let us never, ever take the NHS down the road of the Tories in England!' (Jones 2013a).

'Tory War on Wales'

As was customary, Jones's conference speeches were rich in attacks upon Labour's opponents, each approached differently. With Plaid, as discussed, there was a mixture of incursions onto their nationalist ground, whilst simultaneously lambasting their support for Welsh independence. With the Liberal Democrats, Jones was largely dismissive, even using a similar joke in his first two Welsh conference speeches. First it went:

> And now I would like to turn to the Lib Dems.
>
> Some of you may say – why bother? No one else cares about them, so why should we?
>
> I will therefore be brief. (Jones 2010a)

The following year:

> So what about the Lib Dems?
>
> I will be brief Conference.
>
> For a party languishing on just six per cent in the polls here in Wales, they can count themselves lucky they are getting name-checked at all today! (Jones 2011a)

It was the Conservative Party, however, that Jones identified as Labour's major enemy; indeed, his harshest rhetoric regarding the Liberal Democrats was a corollary of his attacks upon the Conservatives. Thus, rather than disregard the 'Lib Dems' as an irrelevance as he did in 2010 and 2011, in 2012 Jones eviscerated them for their complicity in the Conservative-led coalition government, attacking them for being 'as guilty and as responsible as the Tories for wanting to cut the benefits of the most vulnerable people in Wales […] for the closure of Newport Passport Office […] for the closure of the Swansea Coastguard station […] for not having already delivered on rail electrification to Swansea'; 'The fact is BOTH the Tories and the Lib Dems have let Wales down' (Jones 2012a).

When directly attacking the Conservatives, Jones drew everything he could from the previously identified conflation of Wales with Labour. Specifically, he identified the Conservatives as anti-worker, an identity subsequently articulated as attacking not one section of society, but the entire Welsh nation. Thus, in his 2010 Welsh conference speech, he condemned the Conservatives as a party that propagates 'casual cruelties', espousing 'dogmas which [we thought] had had their day'. In conclusion, they were 'The same old Tories—you just can't trust them!' To the latter, he added a particular Welsh declaration: that 'the people of Wales will never forget what the Tories did to our country', invoking memories of the 1984–1985 Miners' Strike by singling out their industrial relations policies:

> A Tory government intent on smashing the will of the people and insulting people's pride in order to achieve a wider goal – a goal which had no place for good industrial relations:
>
> – No room for trade unions
> – No room for dialogue
> – No room for consensus or compromise.
>
> A Tory government that thrived on confrontation and was quite prepared to use all the apparatus of the state at its disposal to stamp its authority against the people it was meant to serve. (Jones 2010a)

This linkage of the 'modern' Conservatives with past assaults on Wales was hammered home with an assertion that 'no one in this room believes

the Tories have changed and it will be our task over the coming weeks to ensure that we take that belief on to the doorsteps.' The role of the Labour Party in Wales was therefore 'to make it clear once again the inherent dangers—not just economic but also social—of turning to class-ridden politics that still grips the modern day Conservative Party' (Jones 2010a).

Class politics thus once again appeared in Jones's rhetoric but negatively, as an attack on Conservatives' anti-worker politics—of past and present—which simultaneously amounted to an assault on Wales as a whole. This message reached its crescendo with the plea to conference: 'Let Wales with one collective voice say to the Tories "never, never again!" "*byth, byth eto*!"' (Jones 2010a) The same rhetoric was deployed at the 2011 Welsh conference, where Jones criticized the Conservatives for their class-based politics, past and present:

> In the past, the onslaught from the Tories was purely class driven.
>
> Today, however, the battle is different. It's much broader.
>
> Yes, the economic and fiscal priorities of the modern day Tory Party remain shamelessly unbowed and unaltered.
>
> Small state, less taxes, supplemented by that devil-take-the-hindmost lack of compassion that is the Tories' very special hallmark.

And again this widened out into the charge that the Conservatives were attacking Wales as a whole:

> The difference in the Tories approach now is, that it's not about 'haves' versus 'have-nots' anymore.
>
> The new Tories […] draw no class distinction about who suffers and who doesn't.
>
> Conference. Here's a question for you.
>
> What have the Tories got against Wales?
>
> The St. Athan Defence Academy;
>
> The Severn Barrage;

> Newport Passport Office;
>
> The Driving Standards Agency;
>
> Removing the 24 hour Coastguard cover.
>
> I could go on.
>
> All this scrapped, cancelled or planned to be cut in just ten short months of them being in government. (Jones 2011a)

Jones framed the Conservatives as more than a mere opposition party; they were the old enemy of Wales and he sought to undermine their ethos on this basis: 'The "nasty party" aren't back. The "nasty party" never went away!' Jones declared in 2012 (Jones 2012a); they offer 'socially divisive policies', he asserted in 2013 (Jones 2013a). While the memory of police violence during the Miners' Strike was present in earlier speeches (with nods to Conservative 'onslaughts', their 'thriving on confrontation' and willingness to use 'the apparatus of the state' against trade unionists), these attacks on the Conservatives' ethos had, by 2014, developed from insinuations that they have 'got [something] against Wales' into something far greater.

Facing weekly attacks by the Prime Minister at Prime Minister's Questions on the NHS in Wales, Jones's metaphors become decisively defensive. Welsh Labour, he declared, 'find ourselves on the frontline' of a 'Tory War on Wales' (Jones 2014a) in which 'battle lines are drawn [… and] the Conservative Party ignores Scotland and targets Wales': 'Day after day we see attack after attack, on the NHS and those who work in it. On our schools, and on our teachers. On the Welsh language, on our economy, on devolution—on Wales itself.' The 'our' in these declarations—the 'people' referred to—were 'the people of Wales', with the emphasis placed on *Wales,* as Jones sought to portray a nationalist cross-border assault by an *English* Conservative Party on Welsh Labour Wales:

> This is not a competition of ideas, a conflict of political approaches, or a genuine disagreement on public service reform.

> This is a Tory elite waging war on Wales, pandering to the prejudices of some London newsrooms, in an attempt to pick up wavering votes in English marginal seats.
>
> […] We cannot – and we will not allow the Welsh public to be taken in by those who see Wales as collateral damage in their general election campaign. (Jones 2014a)

This conflict metaphor, with one side seeking to protect and the other to harm the people of Wales, was central to Jones's rhetoric, playing into the previously detailed 'One Wales' rhetoric which defined Welsh politics as the politics of Welsh Labour. The latter was portrayed as the nation's anti-Tory strike force, defending its people and fighting back in a conflict that is, in one breath, 'Welsh Labour versus the London Tories', and in the next 'the people of Wales versus Conservative Central Office'; 'a fight for the people of Wales […] a fight Welsh Labour will win' (Jones 2014a).

This message offered electoral benefits by defining the competition as being between the Welsh government and an unpopular Westminster government. Simultaneously, however, it had advantages in terms of Jones's influence within the Labour MLP. Always a boon at Conference, Jones's anti-Conservative rhetoric earned him rousing support from Welsh *and* British party audiences—especially with metaphors of war supported by electoral victories on the field. More than this, however, it helped to buttress Jones's informal position as Welsh Labour Leader by asserting his role as voice and defender of 'the people of Wales' and the scourge of the Conservatives; this defence, in turn, was linked to an argument for *active* government intervention.

'Standing Up'

Metaphors of action were at the heart of Jones's rhetorical strategy to position Welsh Labour as defender of the people. For example, in his first 2010 conference speech, Jones told assembled members:

> Conference – earlier on, I referred to how this Party will be standing up for Wales in the months and the years ahead. It will be our job to act as a shield for our people against what the Tories seem intent to inflict on us. (Jones 2010a)

Here, Welsh Labour acts to 'shield' and 'protect' the people from Conservative assaults, not by crouching down to cover them, but rather by 'standing up'. This metaphor was present again in his 2012 Welsh Conference speech, with the claim that:

> We promised last May to stand up for the people of Wales against the worst excesses of this Tory government – and that is just what we are doing. Welsh Labour. *Standing up for Wales.*
>
> […] The offer we made to our people at that conference was that if they placed their trust in us on Polling Day – we would repay them by *standing up for Wales.*
>
> I am proud to say, that's precisely what we are doing on a daily basis for the people of this country. As *we continue to stand up for Wales* in both the Assembly and at Westminster. (Jones 2012a)

This rhetorical posture continued in 2013, when Jones told Welsh Conference: 'We can be rightly proud of what we have done since the last General Election in 2010 in standing up for people right across this country' by 'working to protect the people of Wales from the worst excesses of Tory and Lib Dem devastation'. As a result, 'the people put their trust in us to stand up, on their behalf, against the worst effects of Tory policies' (Jones 2013a).

This theme was even extended to trade union politics, with the claim made to that year's British Party Conference that his was a 'Welsh Labour government standing up for workers' and 'in Wales, there is a government that is standing up for workers!' (Jones 2013b) Substantively, 'standing up' stood for active government:

> I am proud to stand here today to say that as a Welsh Labour government, we have stepped up to the plate, to do as much as we can to protect our people and to give them some hope through the economic gloom.
>
> A gloom made so much worse by the inaction and indifference of the Tory and Lib Dem government at Westminster.
>
> It would be easy, as a government, to do nothing.
>
> To just sit back and manage decline.

> But this is the difference between Welsh Labour and other political parties in Wales.
>
> This is what sets us apart as a political force. (Jones 2013a)

This was Jones's key distinction, between Labour action (standing up, stepping up) and Tory and Liberal inaction: 'unlike the Tories […]. We refuse to stand aside' (Jones 2013a).

At the heart of Jones's Welsh Labour rhetoric was a political formula boiled down to its essence in his 2014 Welsh conference speech:

> Where school performance is falling behind – we will take action.
>
> Where professional support is needed – we will take action.
>
> Where our young people are being let down – we will take action. (Jones 2014a)

Action. Action. Action. But action of a particular form, and it was here the logic of Jones's argument returned to 'classic' Labour values signified by his references to Bevan and Hardie. In preaching action, his speeches became a rallying defence of the directed state interventionism rejected outright by the small-state, free-market politics of the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats (and by the Blairite right of his own party). As Jones told the British conference in 2012:

> Conference, where WE see wrongs in our society WE will intervene to protect the vulnerable.
>
> Where our economy is weak or stumbles, we will support our businesses and our workers to help stimulate growth.
>
> And we do these things without apology because unlike the Conservatives who believe that politics is a game of chance, we believe in government as a force for good.
>
> Conference, the differences between the Welsh Labour approach in Cardiff and what the Coalition is doing in London, could not be more stark. (Jones 2012b)

The call to action was thus a call for intervention, following the understanding that when it intervenes, government is a force for good: 'Holding true to Nye Bevan's vision even after six decades' (Jones 2012b). More than this, it was the delivery of 'classic' Labour policies, as Jones delighted in regaling his first British conference:

> In Wales, we are proud to remain true to our principles on such things as comprehensive education.
>
> We are proud that the NHS in Wales is a market-free NHS.
>
> We are proud that we have free prescriptions for all.
>
> We are proud that we have free hospital parking.
>
> We are proud that we will keep our free bus travel for our pensioners.
>
> We are proud that during the darkest days of the recession, we intervened with wage subsidies for those companies in greatest danger to keep 10,000 workers in jobs.
>
> Workers who remain employed to this day.
>
> These are the things we do differently. These are things that make us proud. (Jones 2010a)

This was standing up, he told the 2013 Welsh conference: 'decisive action on behalf of our people'; 'crucial intervention on behalf of our people'; 'Welsh Labour taking action—decisive action on behalf of our young people' (Jones 2013a).

Intra-party Autonomy and Influence

In summary, then, Carwyn Jones used his Labour Party Conference speeches to articulate a consistent political message to party members both in Wales and beyond: that, by pursuing an active, interventionist politics that drew on Labour's radical traditions, Welsh Labour defended its 'people'—an imagined community embodying a Wales that is working class—from Conservative assault. But, as outlined at the start of the

chapter, there is more of interest here than the ideology being articulated; touched upon already, the second question regards the manner in which the content of these speeches bolstered Jones's informal position as Welsh Labour Leader within the overarching Labour MLP. To address this, the following sections examine how Jones used these speeches in a bid to increase the autonomy and influence of the Welsh Labour Party that he nominally led.

Autonomy, as understood within MLP, refers to 'an ability to deviate from the centre' and an 'important [non-formal] signpost is the ability of the regional branch to articulate a political discourse of its choosing free from interference from the central level of the party' (Moon and Bratberg 2010: 56–57). The latter has already been demonstrated, noting how Jones's particular articulation of 'the people of Wales' demarcated them as *his* leadership responsibility. One other element of Jones's speechifying worth noting here, however, is his linkage of this alternative discourse to calls for further devolution—and thus greater autonomy for Welsh Labour. Jones was clear: he may have attached his politics to the legacy of Welsh Labour *MPs* (Hardie and Bevan), but it was devolution that made his alternative Welsh Labour approach possible—and its successes demonstrated the need to devolve greater powers into his government's hands.

At the 2010 British conference, for example, Jones (2010b) argued that 'without the imagination and determination of a Labour government in Cardiff Bay […] and without devolution', major policies would have been impossible. Thus, if Welsh Labour protected 'the people of Wales' from Conservative attacks, this was only possible because of devolution:

> You [the Conservatives] tried to rip the soul out of Wales in the eighties and sadly, to some extent, you succeeded.
>
> However, this time – thanks to devolution – we will not let you do it again.
>
> This time – Welsh communities will now have Labour in the Assembly on their side.
>
> This time – Welsh Labour will be standing up for Wales! (Jones 2011a)

Faced with Conservative rule at Westminster, 'We are, through devolution—and for the first time in the history of modern Wales—protecting our people

from a form of ideology that acts against their interest' (Jones 2013a). Without devolution, the argument continued, 'our people' would be undefended.

This led on to a warning that devolution itself required greater defence in the form of further powers.[2] Thus, calling for a shift from a conferred to a reserved powers model of devolution in Wales (see Thomas 2015), Jones posed a rhetorical question:

> Is it right that a Tory government, at a whim, should be able to abolish the Assembly without a vote if they so wanted?
>
> Is it right that a Tory Secretary of State can prevent an Assembly Bill from becoming law?
>
> Is it right that alone amongst the people of Britain, the people of Wales don't have the right level of control over energy and water? (Jones 2013a)

Such warnings that a new devolution settlement was needed—with greater powers for Wales—increased over time; indeed, following the Scottish independence referendum, Jones's entire 2014 British Conference speech focused on the subject (Jones 2014b). Devolution provided Welsh Labour with a level of autonomy within the Labour MLP, increasing alongside the devolution of powers, and this autonomy made Jones's alternative political programme possible—as it had Rhodri Morgan's 'Clear Red Water' approach before him (see Moon 2013b). This programme, advertised at the central level through his British Party Conference speeches, in turn afforded Jones with an argument for yet further autonomy over an expanded range of devolved policies.

In contrast to autonomy, a sub-state level's influence within an MLP denotes the extent to which it is able to lean on formal opportunity structures to effect ideational change at the central party level (Moon and Bratberg 2010). The idea of opportunity is important since, as Hall (1989: 369–370) notes, in order to influence policy, 'an idea must come to the attention of those who make policy, generally with a favourable endorsement from the relevant authorities'. Illustrating this point, Jones openly sought such an influential role for Welsh Labour by using the opportunity provided by his Conference speeches to communicate his agenda to party members both in and outside Wales. Thus, in his 2011 Welsh Conference speech, he told members:

> It's our job to show – not only to the people of Wales – *but to the rest of the UK too*, that there IS a different way to the road being taken by the Tories and Lib Dems. A way that offers hope, ambition, vision and the leadership that is so necessary during these tough and challenging times. (Jones 2011a)

The subsequent Assembly elections held just under three months later saw Welsh Labour achieve a record breaking result, returning a single-party Labour administration under Jones's leadership. Speaking at the following British Conference, he told party members—suffering in opposition everywhere else—that 'importantly for this Party, [the Welsh result] sent a message across these islands':

> A message that despite the outcome of the last General Election, Labour is back in the 'saddle' – setting out an alternative vision to people right across the UK.
>
> A message that amidst the *laissez faire* trademark approach of the Tory and Lib Dem coalition – we in Wales have shown that people from all backgrounds will come out and vote positively for a set of policies that offer them vision and hope for the future.
>
> Be in no doubt colleagues – our Party can replicate the success we have enjoyed in Wales across the rest of the UK. (Jones 2011b)

This 'alternative vision' was 'the Welsh Labour way', which Jones trumpeted as a reproducible success, declaring in his 2012 Welsh conference speech that:

> We pledged we would show there IS an alternative to the destructive path being followed by the ConDems over the border.
>
> That unlike the unholy alliance of Cameron and Clegg, Welsh Labour would stand up for the people of Wales and the services they depend on.
>
> This wasn't just rhetoric or down to dogma.
>
> We can show there *IS* another way. (Jones 2012a)

This way was not for Wales only, however; as he continued:

> Labour in Wales is in a unique position.
>
> We're able to show colleagues in other parts of the UK that with ideas, a vision and a determination to protect our most vulnerable, Labour can win.
>
> We're able to prove to the public in other parts of the UK that Labour is still fighting for them and still defending them.
>
> Labour is on their side.
>
> Because of devolution, we can let people compare the Welsh Labour way – of fairness and social justice, and a more progressive way – to that of the approach of the Tories and Lib Dems at Westminster.
>
> We must not squander this moment – we must seize it for all it's worth. Welsh Labour in government must not be just about managing the country.
>
> It has to be about offering an alternative vision for ordinary people.

That 'vision'—the route to regain power elsewhere—was through the classic Labour politics already described. Thus, addressing that year's British Party Conference six months later, Jones (2012a) argued that the policies Welsh Labour enacted 'demonstrated that there is another way when it comes to growing our economy', 'proving there is a different way. A more principled way'; 'proving there is a more just way […]. In Wales, we are showing those people who cherish their NHS, who value their communities and who want a decent future for their children and grandchildren—that there is an alternative'. What was demonstrated, more than anything else, was that 'we govern Wales with Labour values. Even though we are a small country, we have big ideas. But more importantly—they are Labour ideas'. Such 'Labour ideas' were not just for Wales, they were for everyone in the room:

> What we're doing in Wales, is not just about Wales – it's about all of us in the wider UK.
>
> Wales is the living proof that as a Party we have the vision, the hope, the drive and the ambition to make a difference.

> Wales has a government that cares.
>
> Britain needs a government that cares.
>
> Conference – let's go out there and say there is a better way! (Jones 2012a)

Conclusion: Carwyn Jones's 'Welsh Labour Rhetoric'

As the above analysis illustrates, in his conference speeches, whether talking to specifically Welsh or British audiences, Carwyn Jones developed a particular 'Welsh Labour rhetoric'—framed around concepts such as the party's 'people' and a 'Tory war on Wales'—to communicate a distinct political programme being delivered by his government in Wales. Grasping the opportunity structures such formally assigned set piece addresses offer, Jones used them to validate the authority of his informal position as Welsh Labour Leader and to demonstrate the substantial autonomy he was afforded in this role.

This programme was articulated, however, not only as the best means to meet the needs of Labour's people in Wales, but—via a linkage to the defence of the working class—as a model to deliver for its people in general, regardless of national borders. In this manner, Jones showed a desire to lever these opportunities into influence over the political approach adopted by the state-wide Labour leadership. Here, Jones was helped by his position within the Labour MLP, which afforded him greater rhetorical freedom than is available to *British* Labour leaders. A primary requirement to appeal to the small, Welsh audience, with a population that accounts for just 5% of the UK population, meant that Jones could plant his politics in Labour's radical traditions, linking them to Welsh Labour heroes (Hardie and Bevan) and Welsh labour struggles (the establishment of the NHS, the Miners' Strike)—succour to Labour's grassroots—with an ease that a British Labour Leader, attempting to appeal to the more heterogeneous 92% of the population living across England and Scotland *also*, will necessarily lack.

Yet, while received positively by Conference attendees, when it came to influencing central *policy* his words appeared to have fallen upon deaf ears. Despite starting with a famously 'blank piece of paper', the 'One Nation' policy agenda developed by Ed Miliband showed little evidence of Welsh Labour influences. A continuation of the situation under

Jones's predecessor, Rhodri Morgan (Moon 2013b), this illustrates Labour's limitations as an MLP, as well as the dangers attached to rhetorical appeals tailored to a minority population in a multi-national state. While multi-level, Labour remains an overly centralized institution, both formally and non-formally. Actors consequentially operate within a culture that fails to promote the sharing of ideas between sub-state levels and the centre. Thus, although effective in securing his position within the party as Labour's leader in Wales (and the attendant autonomy this brings), Jones's 'Welsh Labour rhetoric' also facilitated the (conscious or unconscious) compartmentalization of his arguments within a box marked 'Welsh'. Within this context, as hard as Jones tried, a platform at Party Conference was no route to influence within the party, regardless of whether his leadership was founded on formal codification or informal recognition.

Notes

1. Articulation is defined, following Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 105), as a 'practice establishing relations among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice'.
2. More than this, 'our people' are those who support devolving more powers: 'Many of the people I speak to, hold hopes and aspirations for their country too. […] These are the people who will deliver a 'Yes' vote in eleven days' time. *These are the people whose side we're on!*' (2011a, emphasis added).

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PART II

Voices from Beyond the Labour Mainstream

CHAPTER 8

The Advantages of Opposition: Fracking and the Greens

Ashley Dodsworth

As the Green Party of England and Wales repositioned itself in the post-Brexit political landscape under its new leaders, Caroline Lucas and Jonathan Bartley, much of its policy was open for debate. However, it was clear that the party would continue to oppose the practice of hydraulic fracturing, whereby a mix of water and chemicals is pumped underground at high pressure in order to split apart the rocks and so release natural gas, which can then be collected. Commonly known as fracking, the process is often classed as a more environmentally sound source of energy than coal or nuclear power. The Green Party's continued strong opposition to fracking therefore appeared curious.

The Green Party's antipathy towards the practice was sincere and based on a concern for the environment, to which fracking poses several threats—such as noise pollution, the release of methane, and the potential for ground water contamination. However, I argue that there were practical benefits to this stance, as their rhetoric on the issue makes clear. Thus, although the Greens' opposition to fracking was based on principle, their presentation of this position was pragmatic. This chapter demonstrates how the Green Party used their stand against fracking to situate themselves within the political landscape. This involves

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J. Atkins and J. Gaffney (eds.), *Voices of the UK Left*,
Rhetoric, Politics and Society, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51902-9_8

identifying the phrases and techniques that were repeatedly used across a wide variety of rhetorical instances. The primary focus is on the speeches, debates, presentations, and utterances of party figures. However, given the smaller size and scale of the Green Party, I also draw upon press releases and statements as examples of their rhetoric. As these are forms of communication which are carefully considered in order to best appeal to an audience, they can be analysed through what John Gaffney has called 'the kind of hands-on rhetorical analysis' (Gaffney 2015) that focuses on how political actors endeavour to persuade and convince. Whilst the Greens emphasize individuality, a bottom-up approach, and plurality of opinions, the chapter focuses on those who were elected or who held leadership positions in order to reflect the official party response. The analysis encompasses the period from 2012 to 2016, so the chapter explores how fracking was framed throughout Natalie Bennett's tenure and the transition to the new leaders. This period also covers the expansion in the granting of licences to explore the possibility of fracking throughout the country, and the subsequent growth in the anti-fracking movement; for example Camp Frack took place in March 2012.

The chapter begins by showing that fracking played a more substantial role in the Greens' rhetoric than in their policy. It then identifies three key themes within the party's anti-fracking rhetoric during this period: distinction or antithesis, ethos, and unification. Distinction refers to the way in which opposition to fracking was used to distinguish the Green Party from the other political parties in the UK—as seen in their claim to be 'the only mainstream UK political party to oppose fracking completely' (see e.g. Green Party 2013). The second theme highlights how the party drew on one of the main elements of rhetoric—ethos—and demonstrated their character through their opposition to fracking, particularly in relation to the arrest of Caroline Lucas MP on an anti-fracking protest. Finally, their rhetoric sought to unite diverse issues and audiences through a shared antipathy to the practice of fracking, enabling the party to satisfy their environmentally conscious supporters as well as appealing to new voters. Overall, the chapter argues that whilst the Green Party was sincere in its desire to prevent fracking, its opposition to the practice provided plenty of advantages along the way—advantages that the party needed in the storm of post-Brexit politics.

Policy Versus Rhetoric

This section examines the role of fracking within Green Party policy in order to lay the groundwork for the later discussion of the themes within its rhetorical strategy. The distinction between the opposition in policy and the presentation of this is revealing, and it justifies the need to examine how the party talks about fracking and supports the argument of this chapter that the Greens' anti-fracking rhetoric serves a larger purpose.

Although the Green Party's anti-fracking stance was referred to within their policy programme, it did not take centre stage. As of June 2016, there was minimal mention of fracking within their official list of policies. Indeed, opposition to fracking was mentioned only twice in the record of policy statements, as part of the policy to 'strengthen international energy policy' and as part of the policy to 'increase clean low carbon energy generation' (Green Party, n.d.-b). In both instances, shale gas was mentioned as part of a larger list of energy sources to be resisted. This narrow focus is curious, as it restricted the Greens' antagonism to fracking to the area of energy policy, viewed strictly through that lens. Furthermore, the term 'fracking' was not used within the policy documents, and the description 'shale gas' was used instead.

Opposition to fracking featured more in the party's manifesto, but there was still minimal coverage.[1] For example, the 2015 full manifesto had a distinct section on 'why we say no to fracking' (Green Party 2015a: 22), which was part of the larger explanation of their energy policy. The mini manifesto produced to summarize the party's main position referred to fracking, albeit as part of a larger list of anti-environmental energy sources they opposed and within the section on safe climate (Green Party 2015b: 9). In the youth manifesto, meanwhile, there was one reference as part of a list of policies on 'climate change and the environment' (Green Party 2015c: 2). The term 'fracking' was used in these documents, rather than the more formal 'shale gas', and the issue certainly played a larger role than it did in the policy statements. Yet the narrow focus on energy and climate change was maintained. Thus, resistance to fracking was included in the party's larger aims regarding the production and promotion of sustainable energy, and the efforts to reduce carbon and so fight climate change.

In sharp contrast, antipathy to fracking played a far more prominent role in the party's rhetoric. This was due to the fact that their opposition

was rhetorically broader in focus, covering not only energy and climate change, but also communities, energy bills, and the implications for local transport. Furthermore, the process was almost universally referred to as 'fracking', with the colloquial term promoted over the more sober phrasing for emphasis. Therefore, while opposition to fracking was a constant for the party, there were major differences in terminology, quantity, and focus between the rhetoric and the policy. This difference is explained by the utility of opposing fracking, as it provided a means for the party both to differentiate itself and to unify environmental and other concerns in ways that other issues did not. Thus, it was elevated from its narrow place within policy to a more expansive and more prominent role in party rhetoric. Examining this rhetoric reveals three key themes that occur repeatedly, as will now be demonstrated.

Differentiation Through Antithesis

The first theme is that of differentiation and antithesis, as the Greens used their anti-fracking stance to distinguish themselves from other political parties. They repeatedly stated that they were 'the only mainstream UK political party to oppose fracking completely' (Green Party 2013, with an interesting use of the term 'mainstream'); that 'the Green Party is the only mainstream political party fighting to stop fracking being pushed through' (Green Party 2014); that the Greens were 'the only party calling for an outright ban on fracking for shale gas' (Bennett 2016); and that they were 'the only party wholeheartedly opposed to fracking' (Green Party 2016d).[2] The Green Party frequently used their stance against fracking to carve out a distinctive space for themselves, drawing on antithesis to create an 'us versus them' narrative that enabled them to claim to offer a different voice within British politics.

This need for the Greens to distinguish themselves was particularly important in the run-up to, and fallout from, the 2015 general election. Commenting on the party's performance in the election and their position within the political landscape following the Conservatives' victory, Neil Carter pointed out that 'it is possible that one or both [of the Liberal Democrats or Labour] might tack left to challenge the Greens' (Carter 2015: 1060). The extent to which Corbyn's Labour Party did so is unclear, though there was certainly an intention to do so. The issue of fracking therefore became even more important for differentiating the party and establishing their distinct identity.

Reason Versus Delusion

Beyond distinguishing the Greens from their political rivals, the rhetoric around fracking enabled them to specify the ways in which they were different. To this end, they employed the rhetorical technique of logos: logic and reasoning. Drawing on logical arguments was a deliberate choice because it enabled the Greens to stress that they were the scientifically and economically responsible party. Yasminah Beebeejaun noted that 'opponents of fracking are often derided as scaremongers, standing in the way of progress' (Beebeejaun 2013: 19), and this interpretation certainly featured in the debate over fracking in the UK. A typical example is Bernard Ingham's claim that those who are against fracking are 'blinkered' and wish 'us all to live in their yurts, tepees and wigwams in a sort of glorious save-the-planet pre-industrial squalor' (quoted in Swinford 2013). Yet the Green Party aimed to reverse this framing, presenting those who are pro-fracking—particularly within the Conservative Party—as irrational. In December 2015, Caroline Lucas described the Conservatives' support for fracking as an 'irrational obsession' which was 'driven by ideology not evidence' (Lucas 2015a), while Natalie Bennett argued that the Conservative government had a 'dangerous fracking fantasy' (Bennett 2014b). Likewise, Molly Scott Cato claimed that espousing fracking was 'dangerous and irresponsible' (quoted in Green Party 2015d) and that 'the UK government […] continues with its fracking madness' (Scott Cato 2016). Lucas similarly asserted that 'the government is turning a blind eye to reason' in their continued support for fracking (quoted in Green Party 2014), and the Party's policy briefing described the government's backing for the process as 'unfounded' (Green Party 2013). This 'irrational' championing of fracking was also said to blind the government to larger issues, with fracking said to be 'a damaging distraction from our need to focus on energy conservation and renewable energy generation. We need to be working out how to deal with the "carbon bubble", not looking for more fossil fuels to add to the problem' (Green Party 2014). In this vein, the Green Party MEP Keith Taylor described fracking as 'an environmentally reckless distraction from the work that must be done' (Taylor 2016) in order to find what Amelia Womack referred to as the 'better and safer energy alternatives' to this process (Womack 2014).

This framing reflected the focus on energy within party policy, but moved beyond this into a larger argument for the Greens' distinctiveness

and good sense. The techniques of antithesis and logos were combined within the party's rhetoric to create an opponent and then undermine their credibility, as demonstrated in the way in which the Greens contrasted their opposition to fracking with the Conservatives' support for the process. This combined technique was also used to create an alternative framing, in which the proponents of fracking (particularly the Conservative Party) were shown to be 'irrational' and, as will now be shown, the Greens were able to demonstrate their competence and concern.

Competence and Concern

The irrationality of support for fracking, said to be possible only through 'dangerous […] fantasy', was contrasted with the Green Party's opposition, which it claimed was based on evidence. This contrast was implicit in much of the differentiation rhetoric, but was brought to the fore in Natalie Bennett's leader's speech from February 2014:

> Policy must be based on facts and evidence, not just on wishful thinking and popularist pandering. The Green Party is the only party that works on that basis and for policies that work not for the good of the few […] but for the common good. And fracking is an issue that I'm convinced we will win on. (Bennett 2014a)

This emphasis on rationality and logic was linked to the Greens' claims of competence on and concern for economic issues, again playing against the stereotype that they would fail to 'keep the lights on' or bring prices down (Ingham quoted in Swinford 2013; Rudd 2015). For example, their policy briefing on fracking featured the question 'Don't we need fracking to keep energy bills down and the elimination of fuel poverty?' (Green Party 2013), which was clearly answered in the negative, and there were frequent references to energy prices (Taylor 2016). The Greens' arguments against fracking thus stressed their competence in matters of science, policy, and economics, as well as a concern for ordinary living standards, an approach encapsulated in Caroline Lucas's statement that 'not only does fracking fly in the face of climate science but mounting evidence suggests it won't lower bills' (Lucas 2015b). Once more, this contrasted with, and was used to attack the credibility of, the Conservative government in particular (a point that will also be seen in the discussion of unification).

The Green Party's anti-fracking rhetoric was therefore used to differentiate them from the other British political parties. This was most obviously achieved through the repeated use of antithesis, and the explicit comparisons which highlighted their reasoned approach and their grasp of, and concern for, economic issues. Fracking provided a unique means through which the Greens could distinguish themselves in a crowded marketplace, and emphasize their competence by challenging the perception that they were irrational and remote from practical concerns. And their rhetoric was designed to make the most of this.

Ethos

The second key theme within the Green Party's anti-fracking rhetoric was ethos, or character. As Gaffney notes, 'the imagined person of the speaker […] as an active enacting part of the rhetoric, and his/her imagined or perceived relationship to normative issues, to emotion, to argument and, especially, to the audience, are the keys to contemporary rhetoric' (Gaffney 2015). Gaffney then suggests that ethos has become less important within contemporary politics, as 'we are less interested in the standing of the speaker and whether or not he or she is worthy' (2015). The Greens sought to challenge this lack of interest, and they drew on ethos to present themselves as the alternative, as worthy candidates, the only party practising 'grown up politics', as their 2016 election broadcast phrased it. To support this claim, they developed two strands within their rhetoric on fracking—one which provided examples of their character, and a second which linked this ethos to that of the country as a whole.

The Greens demonstrated their ethos through the arrest of their co-leader, and only MP, Caroline Lucas, on an anti-fracking protest in Balcombe. Lucas's arrest was frequently discussed in terms which highlighted her character, and then linked it to that of the party. This can be seen in Natalie Bennett's conference speech, when she stated that:

> Caroline was facing trial on charges arising from a protest against fracking at Balcombe. She was standing up for her principles, putting her body on the line, saying that threatening our fields, our homes, or communities – our country – with a damaging risky technology is simply not acceptable. She was saying that we need to work out how to leave fossil fuels in the ground to prevent catastrophic climate change, instead of fracking to add to the carbon bubble. (Bennett 2014b)

This quotation reflects the themes identified in the first section, with the Greens depicted as the only party that truly understands the threat of fracking, and so is not deluded or distracted from the larger scientific problems. And this differentiation is emphasized through ethos, as shown in the repeated references to principles, defending homes and communities, and personal risk. This language was also present in Bennett's leader's speech the following year, again underlining how this ethos was repeatedly stressed. Here, Bennett noted that Lucas 'has put her freedom on the line to oppose fracking', and asserted that 'Caroline shows what voting Green delivers: passion, sensitivity and courage' (Bennett 2015a). The link between the character of Lucas, as demonstrated by her arrest for opposing fracking, and that of the party was made explicit here. Bennett also argued that the Greens could deliver many more MPs like Lucas if the electorate voted for them, emphasizing once more that this was about the ethos of the party as a whole.

Lucas's own rhetoric surrounding her arrest drew upon ethos, though not to the same extent as that of Bennett and other party members. Instead, she spoke of her arrest as growing out of principles that were shared by the country as a whole. Arguing in defence of her actions, she said: 'there is a proud tradition of non-violent action in this country and I believe that using peaceful means to try and stop a process that could cause enormous harm is not only reasonable but also morally necessary' (Lucas 2014). Here, Lucas positioned herself as part of a 'proud tradition' and cast fracking as a source of 'enormous harm' which, seen in this light, all would oppose. This rhetoric of shared values was also evident in statements published on her website, where she stated that: 'by joining the peaceful protest at Balcombe I wanted to join with others in actively opposing the exploitation of yet more fossil fuels' (Lucas 2013), and that 'I decided to join the peaceful protest to send a clear message to the government, as well as to support and join those people at the proposed fracking site in Balcombe who were standing up to be counted' (Lucas 2014).

There were therefore two strands to the development of ethos within the Greens' argument against fracking. Most prominent was the emphasis on their own character, which they believe was demonstrated by Caroline Lucas's protest against fracking and subsequent arrest. In particular, Lucas's ethos and virtues were shared by the rest of the party, just as they shared her antipathy to fracking. Second was the suggestion that these values were also shared by the electorate. It was through these

ethos claims that the Greens sought to differentiate themselves from other British political parties.

Unification

The third and final theme identified within the Greens' rhetoric was unification. When discussing their opposition to fracking, the Greens linked it to other concerns, such as community safety and climate change. This, I suggest, was a deliberate tactic designed to expand the party's appeal whilst maintaining their core support.

The Base and Beyond

The theme of unification was particularly important in the period from 2012 to 2016, given the unique position of the Green Party, the immense potential of the so-called 'Green surge', and the change in leadership. The Green Party grew out of PEOPLE and the Ecology Party, with the latter formed with a specific mandate of promoting and acting on environmental concerns. Subsequently, the Greens struggled with the question of how to present themselves—should they remain close to these roots, or try to emphasize their engagement with other issues? Too much focus on environmental concerns, and they risked being seen as a single-issue party (and an issue which is presumed to be of limited priority to voters). But if this focus were not maintained, then what was the purpose of the party? This issue came to a head in the run-up to the 2015 general election, when the party rhetoric emphasized economic and social concerns. As Neil Carter observed in his survey of the campaign, 'the major parties largely ignored the environment during the campaign and *even the Green Party talked sparingly about it*' (Carter 2015: 1056, emphasis added). Another commentator noted that 'Bennett showed that the Greens were not just about the environment', due to her 'conscious strategy' that 'clearly articulated social justice and anti-austerity positions which sucked support from disaffected Liberals and Labour supporters' (McQueen 2015).[3]

In response to this new rhetorical strategy, Green campaigners complained that the party had abandoned its purpose, arguing that it was 'too concerned about moving to the centre-ground to appeal to voters' and 'could have talked about climate change more', while Bennett 'had a great chance to talk about the issues [of climate change] at the debate

[…] but was very disappointing […]. The words "climate change" may briefly have passed her lips but she didn't make any kind of point about it' (quoted in Bawden and Morris 2015). Bawden and Morris summarized these criticisms as 'accusing [the party] of turning its back on its main mission by largely ignoring the crucial issue of climate change in the run-up to the general election' (2015). In response, Caroline Lucas noted that the Greens were 'damned if they do damned if they don't' (Lucas quoted in Bawden 2015), as a focus on climate change and environmental concerns would appease the party faithful but would be unlikely to appeal to a wider audience. However, too little discussion of these issues risked alienating their members and losing their core identity. This is a problem that all single-issue parties face and one that has troubled green and environmental parties globally. Ensuring that core supporters are kept on board whilst growing the membership is a balancing act that, if unsuccessful, can lead to the party's demise, but without which the party cannot hope to grow or gain the influence it needs to secure its initial goals. As the Greens seek to maintain and build on the 'Green surge' of new members, this task will become even more important.

This is also inherently and uniquely a problem of rhetoric. Political parties can make policies on a variety of issues, and the creation of one does not negate the existence of another. Furthermore, parties can create as many policies as they wish. But the choices surrounding rhetoric are mutually exclusive, especially for a smaller party with a lower public profile like the Greens. This means that if the party leaders discuss and promote one issue, then they are not talking about another—for example choosing to make a speech about housing means that they are not making a speech about climate change. And as the structural constraints that the party operates under (as a small political party in a first-past-the-post system) mean that the Greens have limited opportunities to speak and gain public attention, this choice becomes more acute. This problem was highlighted in a *New Statesman* profile of the Greens, which observed that 'the problem for smaller parties […] is that they often only have one prominent figure known to the public and interviewed by journalists' (Chakelian 2014). The rhetorical choices of that figure therefore carry significant weight.

The consequences of this are seen in the criticism from party members discussed above in response to the general election campaign, and particularly to Natalie Bennett's performance in the leaders' debate. By choosing to answer the questions she was asked in a way that emphasized

the party's position on economic and social issues, she was not promoting or explicitly discussing environmental concerns. Bennett deliberately chose to highlight the former at the expense of the latter, and the members quoted here both recognized this and resented it.

As the party sought to respond to the challenges of Brexit, this would be a central problem for the new leaders. Should they seek to continue with Bennett's policy of discussing the wider aspects of their policy, stressing their commitment to social justice, to 'a political system that puts the public first […] an economy that gives everyone their fair share'? (Green Party, n.d.-a. Crucially, the planet and climate were mentioned in the next sentence, third in the list of priorities.) Or should they double down on environmental issues? Yet fracking provided a unique solution to this problem. Fracking is often referred to by its supporters as a 'bridging' fuel, as it bridges the gap between intensive fossil fuels and renewable energy (see e.g. Leadsom 2015). The Greens repeatedly cast doubt on the validity of this interpretation. But, ironically, fracking enabled the party to bridge the gap between environmental concerns and other issues, and between the local and the global, and they took care to emphasize this.

Environmental Concerns and Other Issues

Critically for the Green Party, fracking enabled them to link environmental concerns with other issues. One anti-fracking campaigner described their movement in these terms, noting that 'it's not just people who have been involved in the green movement before. We're seeing farmers, landowners, parents, health workers and church groups pressing issue and concern' (Morris quoted in Bomberg 2013). The phrase 'it's not just people who have been involved in the green movement before' both summed up the party's search for new voters and encapsulated the benefits of opposing fracking for the Greens as they tried to expand their appeal and vote share. The linkage of fracking to other issues is examined next.

Opposition to fracking enabled the party to appeal to its environmentally conscious base and reflect their concerns over climate change, pollution, and resource use. But it also allowed the Greens to discuss and challenge transport and community policies, and to call attention to economic and energy concerns, and so (hopefully) to appeal beyond their core supporters. The issue of transport, for example, was often raised, with fracking said to involve an increase in the number of

heavy lorries on the roads around the fracking site. Given that these sites are often located near small communities, there was a real threat to their transport infrastructure and, the party suggested, to the safety of their roads (see Green Party 2013; Bennett 2013; Taylor 2013). The frequent references to economic concerns, particularly in the form of household energy bills and fuel poverty, were explicitly joined with environmental considerations. Lucas, for instance, stated that 'not only does fracking fly in the face of climate science but mounting evidence suggests it won't lower bills' (Lucas 2015b; see also Bennett 2013). The ordering of the points may seem curious but the aim was to highlight the connection between them, with economic concerns linked to, and given the same importance as, the environmental costs. As Keith Taylor put it, 'fracking will have negative impacts on health, land use and meeting climate change targets' (Taylor 2013). The technique of logos was used here, both for the purpose of differentiation and to show the Greens' concern for—and their scientific, evidence-driven approach to—these wider issues.

The party's rhetoric on fracking was also linked to opposition to cuts and corruption, particularly as believed to be embodied by the Conservative Party. Anger at the narrative and policies of austerity, and the perception that the Conservatives represent an out-of-touch elite that is acting for itself and not the country as a whole, is a recurring theme in left wing rhetoric. The Green Party responded to this with 'a radical anti-austerity manifesto' (Carter 2015: 1055, 1058) and presented their anti-fracking stance as part of this approach, so creating a connection between the old commitments and the new. In her leader's speech in 2016, Natalie Bennett argued that 'we cannot, we must not let David Cameron and his friends in the still out-of-control financial sector, in the oil and gas industry, in the tax-dodging multinational, continue on the current path' (Bennett 2016; see also Bennett 2015b). Here the oil and gas companies that promote fracking are linked to other unpopular groups, classed as part of a minority that is acting in its own private interests. Opposition to one is therefore opposition to all. This echoes an argument that dates back to 2014, according to which fracking was 'against the common good' and was 'being pushed through by a government that consistently puts corporate profit over people' (Green Party 2014). Fracking was thus presented as another example of government cronyism and private interest that sees a minority flourish whilst the rest endure austerity. Keith Taylor made the link more bluntly, claiming that

'the government's plan to fast-track fracking is shocking but not surprising as we all know the Tories are in bed with the fracking industry' (Taylor 2015). By joining fracking to a popular issue in domestic politics, the Greens hoped to bring it to a new audience.

This linkage reflects the findings of research on the US anti-fracking movement. Here, Boudet et al. (2016: 603) note that 'women, those holding egalitarian worldviews, those who read newspapers more than once a week, those more familiar with hydraulic fracturing, and those who associate the process with environmental impacts are more likely to oppose fracking'. Whilst the final group should come as little surprise, the connection between egalitarian world views and hostility to fracking underpins the Green Party's attempts to link their anti-austerity approach with their stand against fracking. This point reflects the findings of Davis and Fisk (2014: 1), who state that 'opposition to fracking and support for current or increased levels of regulation are strongly related to Democratic Party identification and to pro-environmental policy attitudes'. Again a link between support for domestic justice and hostility to fracking is suggested, which demonstrates the logic of the Greens' rhetorical pairing of the two.

According to Neil Carter, 'the Greens will need to reflect on whether the anti-austerity agenda—rather than an environmental and quality of life agenda—will enable the party to build on its advances across the rural and semi-urban south of England' (Carter 2015: 1060). Carter posed this as a binary choice, a zero-sum decision that would see the party choose to focus either on the anti-austerity agenda or on the more environmentally centred approach. Yet due to the nature of fracking and the Greens' careful rhetoric and positioning on the issue, they developed a way to combine these agendas, thereby appeasing core supporters whilst reaching out to new voters and reflecting their concerns.

Local and Global

There is a second element of unification within the Green Party's rhetoric on fracking, namely that which combined the global and the local. Fracking is an immediate local issue, of concern to the people living in the vicinity of the fracking site. But there are also implications for global climate change, and the Greens were careful to draw on both dimensions when discussing their opposition to fracking. This combination and approach was typified in MEP Keith Taylor's statement that 'we know

that fracking is unlikely to cut bills and that it will contribute to climate change' (Taylor 2013).

Fracking was frequently presented as a threat to communities—the policy briefing described 'how […] greens are protecting communities from fracking', and the issue of increased traffic was explicitly classed as a potential 'damage to rural communities' (Green Party 2013). Taylor also spoke of the 'communities' and 'concerned residents' who are affected by fracking (Taylor 2013), while Molly Scott Cato claimed that the policy of providing individual payment to households that would be affected by fracking 'can only exacerbate community tensions' which, the Party noted, 'would increase community divisions' (Green Party 2016d). Most strikingly, Natalie Bennett drew on pathos to frame her claim that 'no one should be worrying about a fracking drill burrowing into the heart of their community' (Bennett 2015b). Here, fracking was presented as an act of wanton destruction that spreads beyond the immediate fracking site, due to the potential for the release of methane gas and even earthquakes—risks faced by communities but inflicted by businesses that will not be affected. The Greens therefore framed fracking as an extensive threat, and one which they alone among the major political parties were arguing against and trying to prevent.

The Greens also aligned themselves with communities against this danger. Councillor Andrew Cooper, for example, stressed that 'The Green Party of England and Wales has long campaigned alongside communities in the fight to stop fracking' (Cooper quoted in Green Party 2016b), here emphasizing the local aspect of fracking and the party's support for communities in resisting this process. As Bennett put it, 'The Green Party is with you all the way' (Bennett 2013). Recalling her arrest, Lucas (and others in the party) stressed that she was joining with and supporting local anti-fracking protestors, for example by claiming that 'I know the people across Sussex will continue to campaign against fracking—and I look forward to working with them in their fight' (Lucas quoted in Green Party 2015e). The rhetoric of differentiation is again present, though here it was used to unite the Greens and local communities against a shared external threat, a unity that the party hoped would be reflected in a greater share of the vote.

This localized framing was set against a backdrop of tensions over local democracy and local decision-making, as seen in the Conservative government's decision to overrule local councils who objected to fracking (Vaughan 2015; Gosden 2015). The Greens were therefore linking

their opposition to fracking to local community politics, arguing that they alone reflected and shared their concerns. This can be seen in the framing of the emergency motion against fracking, which was tabled and agreed at the Spring 2016 Party Conference and 'calls on the Prime Minister to stick to his promise to local people and carry on letting local councils decide what is best for their area' (Green Party 2016a). This reflected Green Councillor Gina Dowding's claim that 'Lancastrians have shown they will not be dictated to by the government or big business and will fight hard to protect our county and our future' (quoted in Green Party 2015d). Here the party positioned itself on the side of the local community against central government, demonstrating their commitment to devolved government and strategy in local elections.

This emphasis on the local was balanced by repeated references to the larger global implications of fracking, as encapsulated in Andrew Cooper's description of 'climate-destroying fracking' (quoted in Green Party 2016e; see also Lucas 2014; Bennett 2014b). Indeed, the party argued that the pro-fracking energy policy 'will hasten the onset of climate chaos' (Green Party 2016d). This link was made through repeated references to 'fossil fuel lock in', or the worry that rather than acting as a bridging fuel to a low carbon energy system, fracking will prevent the development of renewable energy, with implications for action on climate change. Furthermore, the party located Conservative government support for fracking against the backdrop of the Paris Agreement on climate change, arguing that the national policy to promote fracking was undermining the global agreement to fight climate change (Green Party 2016d, and most explicitly Green Party, 2016e). Natalie Bennett also endeavoured to directly link fracking to the UK climate change target, claiming that 'fracking threatens to cause the UK to miss its 2030 emission targets' (Green Party 2016c). By balancing the local community with the global climate, fracking enabled the Greens to contribute to local politics and discuss worldwide concerns, thus raising their profile both at home and abroad.

Gaffney points out that 'rhetoric is performed to and received by an audience', whether they be a 'listener, reader [or] viewer' (Gaffney 2015). In constructing their anti-fracking arguments, the Greens joined together several issues and so sought to reach the widest possible audience. This included their base of environmentally conscious supporters, those who are concerned with domestic justice, local community advocates, and global climate activists. By depicting fracking as an issue that

affects all of these areas and concerns, the Greens' opposition to fracking could become all things to all voters, increasing their receptivity to the Green message.

Conclusion

Like other British political parties, the Green Party of England and Wales was in a state of flux in 2016. The departure of Natalie Bennett and the appointment of Caroline Lucas and Jonathan Bartley as co-leaders created an opportunity to reshape and rebrand the party, which was reflected in their rhetoric. It was clear that the party would continue to oppose the practice of fracking. But what of the rhetorical framing surrounding fracking? I argue that the Greens will continue to emphasize their stand against fracking via these three themes.

With regard to their use of differentiation and antithesis, distinguishing the Greens and providing a unique selling point for their policy will remain crucial, and they will wish to continue to challenge the stereotype of the party as irrational or irresponsible, especially fiscally. Fracking presents a unique opportunity in this regard, marking a clear policy distinction that can be easily presented to the audience. This rhetoric is therefore crucial to the party's aims and, if fracking slips down the agenda, they will need to fight to maintain its profile or face the difficult task of finding another policy to replicate this rhetoric with. The recent announcement that Corbyn would ban fracking if elected does not necessarily mean that this rhetorical strategy must be abandoned—the Greens can continue to argue that they were the first party to oppose fracking and that they are calling for a ban now. The only potential shift could be a change in the rhetoric of differentiation. Whilst the anti-Conservative rhetoric will surely remain, the potential for a progressive alliance on the left means that the rhetorical distinction between Labour and the Greens may be softened and the disagreements that still remain over the issue downplayed. If this alliance does not materialize, then the Greens will need to double down on this rhetoric to demonstrate their difference from the other parties of the left.

The Greens' stand against fracking drew heavily upon ethos, defined here as the status and character of the speaker. The arrest of Caroline Lucas on an anti-fracking protest was frequently cited by Natalie Bennett, and the return of Lucas to a more central role in the party suggests that this rhetoric will continue, possibly voiced by Jonathan Bartley.

The Greens used their opposition to fracking to demonstrate their character and to imply that all members of the party shared this ethos and would take the same action as Lucas (making themselves more appealing to the electorate). The party also presented a unifying rhetoric, seeking to build a bond between themselves and the electorate based on their shared concern over fracking, as seen from the Greens' statements regarding threat and safety. The party will undoubtedly wish to continue to stress their ethos and their commitment to principles. Lucas's arrest was a unique incident that is unlikely to be repeated in connection with another policy, meaning that fracking provides a unique way to display the party's character—especially as Lucas's profile rises once again.

The final theme in the Green Party's arguments against fracking was that of unification. Through fracking, the party could link the global and local and connect environmental issues to other concerns, such as transport. This unification was essential, as it enabled the party to appease their base whilst appealing to new voters. These links were carefully developed, as fracking offers a unique opportunity—it is a rare issue indeed that so explicitly ties together questions surrounding pollution and the use of resources with those regarding transport, community governance, national energy policy, public health, and home ownership. While the Greens will undoubtedly try to develop these linkages around other issues, this will be much harder to do. The difficulty of applying this rhetoric to other issues demonstrates how valuable their anti-fracking stance is for the party.

I argue that the Green Party will continue to draw on these three approaches to frame their opposition to fracking, though they will do so under new leaders with a new approach to leadership. The dual leader approach is unique within British political parties, leading one commentator to describe it as 'an exciting democratic model that's worth drawing the best elements from' (Mortimer 2016, in response to criticisms from other members of the party that this gave an advantage to Lucas and Bartley in the leadership contest). One of these elements is rhetoric, with two leaders potentially creating more opportunities to address the public and the option to combine rhetorical styles. Natalie Bennett was dogged by criticisms of her leadership performance and, by choosing two leaders—one of whom is the popular and experienced communicator, Lucas—the Greens in part aimed to address this. Lucas's involvement in anti-fracking protests will possibly be raised again, and both leaders will restate their opposition to fracking, particularly by drawing on the links

between the local and the global, and the environment and other issues, as they try to expand their appeal and grow the party membership. Overall, while the Greens reject fracking on principle, they have framed the issue to their rhetorical advantage and will continue to do so under their new leaders. There are, it seems, benefits to opposition, which the party will need as it seeks to move forward in uncertain times.

Notes

1. This reflects Carter's comment that 'the mini-manifesto presents the Greens primarily as an anti-austerity party, with climate change only the third of six key issues' (Carter 2015: 1058).
2. The Conservative Party policy is best described by David Cameron's declaration that the party is going 'all out for shale' (Cameron, quoted in Government Press Release 2014; see also Rudd 2015). The Labour Party had repeatedly called for increased regulation, and in September 2016 Jeremy Corbyn announced that he would ban fracking if elected.
3. How successful this strategy was in connecting with the wider electorate is debatable—despite their highest ever polling figures, support for the Green Party fell from March onwards, perhaps in response to Bennett struggling to articulate the party's position under the increased scrutiny (McQueen 2015; Carter 2015) and her performance in the leaders' debate did not turn this around (YouGov 2015; YouGov, n.d.).

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CHAPTER 9

Rhetoric and the Rise of the Scottish National Party

Mark Garnett and Martin Steven

Political parties and movements associated with 'nationalist' aspirations provide fascinating case studies for rhetorical analysis. The success of their oratory depends crucially on pathos, drawing on the evocative idea of the nation. Nationalism also tends to spawn leaders who exemplify ethos, either through their record of commitment, their personal charisma, or both. The chief difficulty for nationalist movements relates to logos. Nationalists can certainly impress their audience through their detailed knowledge of the evils that currently beset the nation. However, even if a nationalist orator has a feasible plan to overcome these evils, it is much more difficult to unveil a convincing long term strategy. At that point, the successful nationalist is confronted by questions about (for example) the accumulation and allocation of national resources. These are the questions which threaten to cause divisions even before the nationalist movement is in a position to deal with them, and to leave an audience thinking that the nationalist prospectus provides excellent material for oratory, but would never work in practice.

Even if the Scottish National Party (SNP) were an insignificant force in British politics, this long-established party (founded under its familiar name in 1934) would be an interesting subject for rhetorical analysis. In the 1960s, when the party had only one Westminster MP, it was

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J. Atkins and J. Gaffney (eds.), *Voices of the UK Left*,
Rhetoric, Politics and Society, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51902-9_9

capable of attracting considerable publicity across the United Kingdom as a whole. After the 1997 general election the SNP had become Scotland's third party, thanks to the electoral demise of the Conservatives; it held six seats compared to ten Liberal Democrat and 56 Labour MPs. Its subsequent rise was dramatic, even sensational. Contrary to the hopes of the New Labour champions of devolution within the UK, the SNP received a considerable fillip from Scottish self-government. In the first Scottish Parliament, elected in 1999, it returned 35 representatives, and in 2007 it became the largest party with 47 MSPs compared to Labour's 46. The SNP leader Alex Salmond became Scotland's First Minister, and his party formed a minority administration. In the 2011 Scottish Parliamentary elections, the SNP secured a comfortable overall majority (despite an electoral system which had been chosen to prevent this eventuality), and in the 2015 Westminster elections it won all but three of the 59 Scottish seats.

The rhetoric of nationalism always merits scholarly attention, and the SNP is undoubtedly a successful and significant exemplar. However, the question remains whether the party deserves inclusion in a volume devoted to 'voices of the left'. Much research has been conducted into the ideological flexibility of the SNP. It claims to be 'civic nationalist' rather than 'ethnic nationalist'—that is to say, its members and activists are portrayed as being interested in the politics and economics of the territory of Scotland, and not in the ethnic, racial, or religious backgrounds of people who identify as 'Scots' (see Keating 2001; but c.f. Mitchell 2009). This would suggest that the party should be considered as a legatee of the 'progressive' political tradition associated with the French Revolution (or the earlier Scottish Enlightenment). However, while intellectually clear, the distinction between ethnic and civic nationalism can sometimes become more blurred when played out in the lively arena of modern party politics. SNP politicians are usually careful to avoid using any rhetoric associated with ethnic nationalism, yet it is difficult to deny that to some extent they are the product—and indeed the beneficiaries—of an outlook which defines England (and in particular the Westminster Parliament) as an alien 'other' (see Mitchell et al. 2011; Mycock 2012). In particular, there is a tendency to project an 'imagined' (and almost invariably heroic) Scottish past, which conveys an idea of ethnic continuity. Thus, for example, for many years the SNP played a prominent role in annual celebrations of the (1314) Scottish victory over the English at Bannockburn, near Stirling, although it edged away from official involvement after it became the governing party in 2007; and Alex Salmond (party leader

1990–2000 and 2004–2014) was not only an enthusiastic speaker at the Bannockburn Rally, but also hailed the comic strip depiction of the period in the film *Braveheart* (1995) as 'truly important' (Lloyd 2012). Moreover, the SNP invokes the poet Robert Burns as if he were the exclusive property of a single nation, whose belief in a common humanity should really be translated as 'A Scotsman's a Scotsman for a' that'.

Despite this evidence of ambiguity, the SNP has been formally a party of the 'left' since the February 1974 general election, when its leadership characterized its manifesto as a 'programme of social democracy' (see Hassan 2009; Hepburn 2010). Today, the party's rhetoric entrenches that position with a commitment to 'fairness' and equality—as it argues, '[g]iving everyone the support they need to get on, while protecting the most vulnerable in our society and tackling poverty, is crucial to delivering a fairer society' (Scottish National Party 2016b). Whatever its original rationale, the SNP's preferred designation nowadays is that of a social democratic party which is also campaigning for 'self-determination', rather than a 'nationalist' party per se. Indeed, its leadership sometimes even appears to shy away from the term 'nationalist', arguing that full independence (rather than any form of devolution) is the only viable option when the Conservative Party is so often in power at Westminster (see Scottish National Party 2016a). This can often come across as a type of 'instrumentalist nationalism'—justifying the break-up of the United Kingdom on utilitarian grounds rather than as an end in itself. However, for the SNP there is no conflict between utilitarian considerations and other moral imperatives; its approach has come to rest upon the contention that social democracy and nationalism are essentially one and the same within the context of Scottish politics. In other words, the usual question which nationalists face in relation to logos—namely, 'What principles would govern the nation if we secure the independence we want?'—seems to have been resolved to the SNP's (considerable) advantage. As suggested above, few nationalist movements enjoy this luxury—and when they do, it is usually because of improbably favourable circumstances. This chapter explains how 'events' have operated to make life relatively easy for SNP orators and examines the use they have made of their favourable circumstances. Since it is impossible to study current SNP rhetoric without an analysis of the process which produced it, the chapter also serves as a critical account of the party's ideological development, illustrated by utterances in various party documents as well as speeches by prominent figures.

SNP Rhetoric Before New Labour

Opponents of the SNP have long argued that the party's obsessive priority has always been Scottish independence, as an end it itself which can be made to justify any unprincipled tactical manoeuvres. They can cite the party's constitution in support of their case, since the creation of an independent Scotland is the subject of its first article. That order of priorities is not surprising in a document of this kind, since independence was the main objective of the party's founders and is implied by its name. However, the wording of the constitution echoes many distinctly *un*progressive nationalist movements by alluding to a lost (betrayed?) nationhood: thus, independence is defined as 'the restoration of Scottish national sovereignty by restoration of full powers to the Scottish Parliament, so that its authority is limited only by the sovereign power of the Scottish People' (Scottish National Party 2016d).

As recently as the late 1970s, the party was nicknamed the 'Tartan Tories'—a sobriquet which probably reflected the prevalent political outlook in rural areas of Aberdeenshire and Perthshire that provided the SNP with its most reliable support at that time, but was given added piquancy by the fact that the votes of 11 SNP MPs helped to bring down the Callaghan government in 1979, ushering in 18 years of Conservative rule. Throughout the Conservative-dominated 1980s Gordon Wilson was the SNP leader (more properly, 'Convenor'). A former solicitor in Paisley, Wilson represented Dundee East at Westminster from 1974 to 1987. While Wilson could not be faulted in his commitment to the cause of Scottish independence, and was exercised by evidence of economic decline during the Thatcher years, the SNP under his leadership was unable to mount a convincing ideological challenge either to the Conservatives or to Labour. Indeed, an unkind critic could argue that his greatest contribution to the independence movement was his coinage of the slogan 'It's Scotland's Oil'.

Whatever his personal views, Wilson was alarmed by any suggestion that the SNP should establish a distinctive 'leftist' identity through its policy positions and its rhetoric. This was shown most clearly in his backing in 1982 for a 'purge' of left wing members of the party, notably the '79 Group which was influenced by a Marxist analysis of Scottish politics, depicting the working class as the key to an independent Scotland. Tactically, Wilson's approach seemed sensible. Since the Conservative Party's fortunes in Scotland were declining under Thatcher, a 'political

opportunity structure' (see Davis et al. 2005; McAdam 1996) had opened up, allowing the SNP to position itself as a viable option for disillusioned Tories. This opportunity would be put at risk if the party tried to outbid Labour on the left. However, despite the steady decline in Conservative support in Scotland, the chief beneficiary was Scottish Labour rather than the SNP. In the medium term this proved to be an invaluable boon to the SNP, since it encouraged Labour's London-based leaders to take the backing of Scottish voters for granted. The SNP could not afford to lose talented supporters even if their ideas were a little wayward, and members of the '79 Group were allowed to rejoin after a brief interlude. One of their number, Alex Salmond, was elected MP for Banff and Buchan in 1987 (defeating a Conservative incumbent), and quickly drew attention to himself by interrupting Nigel Lawson's 1988 budget speech, resulting in a suspension from Parliament. This incident established Salmond's ethos in two respects: he had attracted media coverage for his party out of all proportion to its parliamentary strength (just four MPs in 1988) and, for those who shared his outrage at the 1988 budget, it suggested that the SNP was more passionate than Labour in its defence of social democratic ideals. Far from using the occasion to publicize the case for independence, as other nationalists have done, Salmond had directed his disruptive comments against the perceived social injustice of Lawson's budget.

In accordance with Wilson's approach rather than that of the insurgent '79 Group, SNP manifestos of the 1980s tended to concentrate on the issue of independence without attempting to present a coherent 'left' perspective on key domestic issues. For example, the 1989 manifesto for the European Parliament elections was entitled *Scotland's Future—Independence in Europe* and emphasized the opportunities offered by resources such as oil and gas to empower the country, as well as the need for Scotland to adopt a more positive view of its role within the European Community. While the document signalled a new focus on the practical implications of independence, augmenting the logos of party rhetoric, this seemed to have been introduced at the expense of pathos. Wilson's Foreword referred to the need for Scots to 'rid ourselves of the millstone of London rule' but, given that the European Community (EC) Parliamentary elections were taking place just two months after the introduction of the so-called poll tax in Scotland, the relative absence of radical rhetoric is telling. Indeed, the feeling that the SNP was obsessed with constitutional issues and unable

to develop a clear ideological alternative to Thatcherism at a crucial time raised the possibility that it would be outflanked on the left by a new movement arising from the anti-poll tax campaign (see Chap. 10 of this volume).

Wilson stood down from the party leadership in 1990, thereby creating the possibility of a new direction. The ensuing contest to replace Wilson suggested as much, since both candidates were on the left of the party. Alex Salmond won, comfortably defeating Margaret Ewing, a much less divisive character whose campaign had been conducted with far less vigour and efficiency. Salmond was now faced with the task of keeping his forces united, and his rhetoric reflected continuity with the recent past rather than any dramatic change. In his victory speech he promised that, whatever his own views, 'the SNP needs to campaign for all Scotland'. He was happy to call himself a socialist, but recognized that the party he led was not itself socialist. There was, though, a 'progressive' label he could use without upsetting too many SNP supporters, while acknowledging the party's new attitude towards the EC. Thus, at the 1991 SNP conference, he spoke of 'evolving a party programme which would be recognizable to any of the great Social Democratic parties in Europe' (Torrance 2015: 88, 97).

Despite Salmond's public ebullience, his immediate impact on the SNP's electoral performance was limited. In the 1992 general election, the number of Scottish Conservative MPs actually went up (to 11) while the tally of SNP MPs stayed static (only three, albeit on an improved share of the national vote). The party's 1992 manifesto—entitled *Independence in Europe: make it happen now!*—showed considerable continuity from the Wilson era in terms of its language and rhetoric; it was essentially the same message, furnished with an exclamation mark. The document contains a list of points, starting significantly enough with 'independence' followed by the 'constitution'. Next comes 'jobs', but much of this section is expressed in bland language which eludes contestation, omitting sustained references either to social justice or to social democracy. However, this contrasts with Salmond's characteristic Foreword, which features the first piece of tangible evidence of a new approach. Here, Salmond wrote that 'the policies of the Tartan Tories, whether led by [the Conservative] Ian Lang or [Labour's] Donald Dewar, are the policies of Scotland's past'.

This phrase was significant, since it took a slogan often used against the SNP in its days of ideological ambiguity and threw it back at the

party's critics. Nevertheless, Salmond continued to reflect the old ambiguity in his rhetoric. Asked at a public meeting about the shape of an independent Scotland under the SNP, he replied that local people would do a better job than the current 'government by remote control'; that an independent Scotland would make a distinctive contribution in international discussions; and that the country would make the most of opportunities offered by the emerging European Union (EU). With an authority based on his earlier experiences in the oil industry, he claimed that lower business taxes could generate greater prosperity for an independent Scotland. This position could (just about) be defended from a social democratic perspective, on the grounds that it would result in higher overall tax yields to fund progressive public services. Yet as Salmond's biographer has suggested, his approach 'amounted to a Third Way between Thatcherite and left-wing orthodoxies, something Salmond chose to call "social democracy"' but which was difficult to square with the kind of radical "revisionism" associated with Anthony Crosland' (Torrance 2015: 108–109). As such, it was highly reminiscent of an approach being developed within the Labour Party at the time, by Salmond's fellow Scot Gordon Brown, and Brown's ally Tony Blair.

SNP Rhetoric in the Era of New Labour

Political opportunities ultimately lay at the heart of the New Labour project—communication, framing, and messaging became as important as policy content and direction (see Gaber 2000). When he (rather than Gordon Brown) succeeded John Smith as leader in 1994, Tony Blair realized that in order to win power, he needed to modernize his party and make it appeal to a wider cross-section of the British electorate than had been the case in the 1980s. Yet crucially, Blair had no real need to do this in Scotland, since the 1980s were a highly successful period for the party. In 1992, Labour held 49 out of 72 Scottish constituencies—well ahead of its nearest rivals the Scottish Conservatives, who were clearly in precipitate decline. The restructuring and refocusing that the architects of New Labour had in mind were primarily focused on the poor state of the party in *England*, after four straight general election defeats to the Conservatives under first Margaret Thatcher and then John Major.

Political opportunity structures and the framing of 'New' Labour produced equivalent opportunities for the SNP. The 1997 SNP manifesto was the first to try to take full advantage of the new political landscape

opened up by the different reforms introduced via Blair's adoption of an Anglo-centric version of Salmond's 'Third Way'. Labour may well have been by far the dominant political force in Scotland but it was now split internally between 'new' and 'old' Labour, with the Scottish party notorious for its infighting, factionalism, and even minor corruption in some local authorities. McAdam (1996) argues that in order to take advantage of improved opportunities, actors must consider 'the timing of collective action' as well as 'the outcomes of movement activity', pointing to the importance of 'movement form' and 'tactics'. Other scholars emphasize the need for movements to 'frame' their messages successfully (Snow et al. 1986), while Campbell (2005: 49) defines 'framing' as the 'strategic creation and manipulation of shared understandings and interpretations of the world, its problems, and viable courses of action'. If New Labour was synonymous with spin and media control, Alex Salmond's leadership of the SNP introduced similar, sophisticated, political framing techniques around this time.

Salmond's Foreword to the 1997 election manifesto established the new rhetorical tone:

> New Labour is telling us that nothing can change: that we must go on accepting Tory policies, Tory spending limits and Tory taxes. Can Tory or New Labour change anything? Can they get Scotland back to work, can they rebuild a truly National Health Service, can they help schools and our young people, can they secure new jobs? No They Can't. So Scotland needs something different. Scotland needs a return to the virtues of enterprise and compassion, which taken together make a country really great: great to live in, great to work in, great to learn in, and great to grow old in. (Scottish National Party 1997)

In the document, the term 'social justice' appears ten times, compared to previous party documents in which it was used occasionally but not developed in any detail. The manifesto is also much more geared towards outlining what Scottish society should look like, rather than trying to establish whether or not natural resources in the North Sea could make an independent Scotland economically viable.

By the time of the first devolved elections to the new Scottish Parliament in 1999, the SNP was calling itself 'Scotland's Party' and had adopted as its flagship policy a 'penny for Scotland': 'We will not implement the penny tax bribe in Gordon Brown's disastrous budget

for Scotland. We will devote the income from this penny—Scotland's penny—to education, health and housing' (Scottish National Party 1999). This policy of resisting cuts in income tax is given significantly more prominence than the sections of the manifesto on independence itself, and is used as a means of distancing the party from Blairism: 'This approach to our public finances defines the difference between the SNP and New Labour. New Labour has taken on Tory principles. Tax cuts, rather than public services, are New Labour's priority'. In short, the SNP's aspirations for Scotland were now 'quite different to the New Labour's London priorities that [were] damaging Scotland and sending the jobless figures up' (Scottish National Party 1999).

An orthodoxy subsequently developed that voters in Scotland—naturally more left wing in their values and political outlook (see Table 9.1)—became so disillusioned by the policy direction of successive British governments at Westminster that they started to support a party that offered a genuine left wing alternative, namely the SNP (see Curtice and Ormston 2011). From this perspective, New Labour could be seen as an ideological 'betrayal' of the Scottish people, compounding its sins through British involvement in the Iraq War and the introduction of private finance initiatives in the National Health Service (NHS). Indeed, Labour had ceased to be a genuine party of the left, according to its SNP critics (see Scottish National Party 2016a).

Communitarian values and rhetoric replete with references to social justice began to permeate SNP speeches and manifestos after 1997. By implication, merely by virtue of being the 'National Party' of Scotland, the SNP was by definition more 'socialist' than London-centric Labour and the irredeemable Tories; and surveys suggest that this message has been accepted by the majority of Scottish voters (McGarvey and Cairney 2008: 56).

Table 9.1 Should the government choose to reduce taxes, keep them the same, or increase taxes?

	England and Wales (%)	*Scotland (%)*
Reduce taxes	6.8	4.7
Keep taxes the same	52.0	47.7
Increase taxes	36.4	43.8

Source British Social Attitudes Survey 2015

After its astonishing success in the 2011 Scottish Parliamentary elections, the SNP could be forgiven for assuming that it had established something approaching 'hegemony' in Scotland. A latter-day Lady Macbeth could have whispered in Salmond's ear: 'Thou hast it now—pathos, ethos, logos, all', adding that if he wanted to fulfil his party's pledge of a referendum on independence, it should be 'done quickly'. In the aftermath of victory, Salmond attributed the result to Scotland's desire 'to travel in hope and to aim high. Scotland has chosen to believe in itself and our shared capacity to build a fair society' (Torrance 2015: 206–207). When the Scottish government published its 650-page White Paper to prepare the ground for the referendum campaign, Salmond claimed that 'Our national story has been shaped down the generations by compassion, equality, and unrivalled commitment to the empowerment of education' (Scottish Government 2013: viii). At the 2011 SNP conference, Salmond even alluded to Scotland's 'divine legacy', as if he were the country's High Priest. In practice, his commitment to social justice seemed more uncertain; the suggestion that the SNP government should establish a commission on 'fairness' was shelved because the First Minister was unenthusiastic (Torrance 2015: 212, 216).

The fact was that Salmond's rhetorical horizons were now unavoidably circumscribed by political responsibility. The SNP could claim that it had boosted its ethos by proving it could govern the country with a degree of competence but, by the time of the independence referendum in September 2014, critics could argue that after 7 years of SNP government there was little sign of radical redistribution of incomes and wealth in Scotland. The SNP had abolished NHS prescription charges, but the other key 'progressive' decision—the refusal to follow English policy in respect of university tuition fees—had been initiated by a Labour administration at Holyrood. This did not prevent Salmond from parading the achievements of SNP governments in his 2012 Hugo Young lecture, where he claimed that 'an independent Scotland could be a beacon for progressive opinion south of the border' before closing with the obligatory Burns quotation (Salmond 2012). Indeed, Salmond must have relished the chance to deliver his message to an audience largely composed of 'London lefties' languishing under the Coalition's regime of austerity. Any awkward questions concerning his government's own imperfections could be fended off by the claim that things would get better once Scotland achieved full decision-making authority.

Nevertheless, Salmond was not at his best for most of the referendum campaign. The fact that the poll was being held in 2014—the 700th anniversary of the Scottish victory over the English at Bannockburn—was surely sufficient in itself to tickle the tummies of 'ethnic nationalists', who would have voted for independence in any year. However, the thought of Bannockburn always seemed to lure Salmond into rhetorical excesses: in June 2014 he hailed the battlefield as the 'birthplace' of modern Scotland, a thought which would have made the combatants drop their weapons in astonishment. As if to compensate for this lapse, he also tried to derive political capital from a more 'civic' occasion—the 2014 Commonwealth Games, held in Glasgow.

In the first televised pre-referendum debate, on 5 August, Salmond appeared unconvincing in contrast to his opponent from the 'Better Together' campaign, former Labour Chancellor Alistair Darling (Torrance 2015: 240–242). The confrontation between Salmond and Darling is a fascinating case study in political rhetoric. With his bank-managerial appearance and measured diction, Darling was the personification of logos. As mentioned above, Salmond could depend, to a significant extent, on all three elements of the rhetorical triad. His decision to restrain his normal exuberance seemed to weaken him on all fronts—in particular, he was unconvincing on the future Scottish currency, where Darling's logos was strongest. 'Better Together' campaigners were fully aware of Salmond's rhetorical advantages, as well as his mastery of quick-fire debating exchanges; as a result, they were as surprised as they were elated by the first debate. Thankfully for Salmond there was a second televised encounter, on 26 August, for which he prepared more thoroughly and was rewarded by positive opinion poll ratings.

By early September, it looked as if Salmond's rhetoric had been effective in assuring a majority of Scottish voters that independence was an exciting opportunity rather than the reckless gamble depicted by Darling. The gap between the two sides in the opinion polls had been narrowing for some time, and on 6 September YouGov put the 'Yes' campaign ahead. London-based politicians seemed to be in panic, swearing a 'Vow' to increase the powers of the devolved Scottish institutions if the voters rejected outright independence. On the eve of the poll, Salmond defied his advisors and made a direct appeal to ethnic nationalists, asking the electorate to write 'a new chapter in the history of this ancient nation' (Torrance 2015: 244). On the same evening, however, he was taken on by a rival who was at least his equal in terms

of rhetorical power and authority. The former Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, exploited every weapon in his considerable arsenal, deploying the language of patriotism against the Nationalists and even (possibly unconsciously) borrowing Salmond's image of a 'beacon' when invoking the Scottish tradition of 'sharing and solidarity' as a reason for retaining the Union rather than breaking it up. In particular, Brown spoke of 'a world of social justice that people can believe in', which would be endangered by separation. Salmond had spoken of the referendum as a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity; Brown retorted that 'this is not a decision just for this time: this is a decision for all time' (Brown 2014).

Alex Salmond resigned as First Minister after the vote, in which the 'Better Together' campaign won by 55–45% on a turnout approaching 85%. The result was close enough to suggest that September 2014 had not been a 'once in a lifetime' chance after all, but it was difficult to see how a new referendum could be called without a change of leader. Salmond had always aroused strong feelings, including within his own party, but even his critics had to admit that he was quick-witted and tactically astute (though they would prefer to use the word 'cunning'). If he had been an opportunistic leader, this hardly made him unique—one suspects, indeed, that his detractors disliked him because he was so *good* at seizing political opportunities—in relation to an issue which transcended the usual political games because it involved the ever sensitive question of 'identity'. In any case, Salmond's departure was not necessarily helpful for those who rejected his policies, since the rhetorical opportunities that he had enjoyed were still available, provided that his successor were equally able.

In the 2015 Westminster general election, Salmond's former deputy Nicola Sturgeon proved a more than adequate substitute, emerging as an eloquent spokesperson for an anti-austerity approach and playing a starring role in the televised debates, where she relied for pathos on the 'progressive' message rather than on the call for independence. She was clearly casting herself as the leader of a party which provided the only remaining 'voice of the left' in Britain. Such a claim was a reflection on the other Westminster parties—the post-coalition Liberal Democrats, as well as Labour—rather than a product of the SNP's governing performance. Whatever its plausibility, it was at least not laughable, as it would have been at any time prior to the death in 1994 of John Smith, a proud Highlander, and his replacement as Labour leader by Tony Blair.

The result, as noted above, was a staggering SNP performance in the election itself, and the return of 56 SNP MPs including Alex Salmond, who had chosen to return to his first political stage now as MP for Gordon, which he won from the Liberal Democrats. Another of the new MPs was Mhairi Black, who symbolized the revolution in Scottish politics by defeating Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary, Douglas Alexander, in his seat of Paisley and Renfrewshire South—before her 21st birthday, while she was still engaged in (very successful) undergraduate studies. In itself this made Black a noteworthy figure at Westminster, and she consolidated her ethos by delivering a maiden speech which was singled out for praise amongst the other novice SNP orators (who tended to dwell on Labour's problems without noticeable lamentation). She asserted that 'the SNP did not triumph on a wave of nationalism; in fact, nationalism has nothing to do with what's happened in Scotland. We triumphed on a wave of hope, hope that there was something different'. She told the Commons that she came from 'a traditional socialist Labour family', and that 'I feel that it is the Labour party that left me, not the other way about' (*Hansard*, 14 July 2015, Vol. 558, cols. 774, 775). Whatever the merits of the speech, its reception could hardly have been a better illustration of the rhetorical opportunities that Labour had bestowed on the SNP, and which continued to make the latter party the most promising destination for any young Scot who aspired to a reputation for effective oratory.

While the first-past-the-post system used for Westminster elections had given the appearance that the SNP had annihilated all of its rivals, Nicola Sturgeon was well aware that the party continued to be a divisive force. Her best tactic after the 2015 election was to avoid triumphalism, and to use her own enhanced ethos to characterize the SNP as an *inclusive* force. Accordingly, she told her party's 2015 conference that 'The SNP's heartland is SCOTLAND […]. We truly are Scotland's party'. At the same time, Labour's travails gave her the opportunity to combine an inclusive appeal with a testament of commitment to a specific ideological position. She registered her disagreement with people who argued that 'old labels of "left" and "right" are meaningless':

> I know where we stand. We are a left of centre social democratic party–standing up for the values, interests and aspirations of mainstream Scotland–and that's what we will always be. But when people look at the SNP they don't just see left or right–they see above all else a party that always seeks

> to do the right thing for Scotland. Whether in government at Holyrood or in opposition at Westminster they see our party, united, standing up for Scotland and always making our country's voice heard. (Sturgeon 2015)

Sturgeon's logic suggested that those who rejected the SNP's form of 'social democracy' were not just outside Scotland's 'mainstream'; rather, they were not really 'Scottish' at all—unless they decided to put aside ideological differences and vote for 'Scotland's party'. One way of nudging ideological dissidents into the welcoming SNP fold was for the party to dilute what was already a fairly watery commitment to social democracy. During the 2016 Scottish Parliament election campaign, the SNP promoted the memorable slogan: 'Who benefits most from our policies? We all do'. It was, though, much more difficult to find references to 'social justice' in the document (Scottish National Party 2016c). The SNP now preferred to talk of 'fairness', a principle which had limited potential to disrupt the party's 'catch-all' (Kirchheimer 1966) appeal since few of its rivals were likely to contest an election under the banner of '*un*fairness'. The result, though, was a slight antidote to the previous year's euphoria. On 5 May 2016 the SNP lost six of its 69 Holyrood seats, leaving it two short of an overall majority. If anything, its erosion of the Labour vote had proved all too effective; the revived Conservatives were now the official opposition, making it much more difficult for Sturgeon to claim that the SNP's centre-left ideology allowed it to speak for Scotland as a whole.

However, in the following month, political opportunity seemed to come knocking once again for Sturgeon's party. This time the gift was delivered by English voters, in the June 2016 referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. Even if the SNP's conversion to a pro-European position had been opportunistic to a degree, it had happened a long time ago (before Salmond became leader) and it was now difficult to find examples of the party using the word 'independence' without adding 'within Europe'. In the May 2016 Scottish Parliamentary election, the SNP had reserved the right to hold another referendum on independence if there were 'a significant and material change in the circumstances that prevailed in 2014', specifically mentioning a 'Brexit' vote as an example of such a change.

Sturgeon's public reaction to this new development was highly instructive. Far from playing up the potential for pathos—rehearsing all the familiar arguments about Scotland's readiness to escape from the

bondage of the United Kingdom—she registered her dismay at the overall outcome of the referendum and merely noted that it underlined the political estrangement between her country and the rest of the UK. The overriding theme of her remarks was 'responsibility'. As she put it, 'Now is the time for me as First Minister to do everything I can to bring people together in common cause and to seek to lead our country forward as one'. She had already spoken to the Governor of the Bank of England and the newly elected Mayor of London, and further discussions with EU partners would be sought at the earliest opportunity. In the role of 'statesperson' rather than partisan politician, Sturgeon even found time to thank the departing David Cameron for his six years as Prime Minister, 'whatever our disagreements' (Sturgeon 2016). Unlike her predecessor, Sturgeon seemed to be unaffected by the perceived need to lose a little pathos in return for additional ethos and logos.

Conclusion

There is growing academic and media interest in how the SNP has contrived to present itself simultaneously as an anti-establishment grassroots social movement and as the government of Scotland since 2007. This chapter has sought not to analyse the merits of Scottish independence as a policy, but instead to try to explain how and why the party has become Scotland's principal 'voice of the left', replacing Labour in the process. The transformation from Labour to New Labour that took place under the leadership of Tony Blair can be identified as a crucial turning point, offering Scottish Nationalists a political opportunity to accuse Labour of losing its own left wing credentials and taking for granted the loyalty of its Scottish supporters.

Yet some unkind critics could suggest that the chief difference between the SNP and New Labour was that the latter had the decency to disappoint its supporters *before* taking office. The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that, while the SNP undoubtedly deserves a place in a study of leftist rhetoric, its commitment cannot entirely evade the accusation of opportunism. As a 'catch-all' party, describing itself as 'social democratic' on the assumption that this places it within the mainstream of Scottish opinion, the SNP's development closely resembles that of New Labour and other left of centre parties in Western Europe, as well as the Democrats in the USA. It is significant that, since September 2015, Labour has been led by North London MP Jeremy Corbyn, a genuine lifelong socialist, whom one might have expected to have been praised by

SNP supporters and leaders alike. Instead, both Nicola Sturgeon and her predecessor Alex Salmond criticized Corbyn for lacking competence and the Labour Party itself for its inability to offer a credible alternative to the Conservatives (BBC News 2015). This re-opens the old question of whether the SNP's objective of independence is potent enough to trump all other considerations, rather than being a goal which is indissolubly linked to the prospect of a Scotland which is free to implement 'fairness'.

After a decade in power at Holyrood, the SNP continued to preside over a Scotland marked in some areas by deprived housing estates and high unemployment levels—especially in the post-industrial Central Belt (Office for National Statistics 2016). At the same time, the standard of living in the more affluent commuter belt and rural areas remains as healthy as anywhere in the United Kingdom, including the South East of England. Much of 'middle Scotland' works in the service sector in Glasgow and Edinburgh, lives in the cities' suburbs, and sends its children to high performing schools and universities. There is scant evidence, either in SNP policy or (on close analysis) in the party's rhetoric, that it nurses a determination to tackle social issues in a manner which might unsettle this core part of the Scottish electorate. At present, it clearly suits the party to 'talk left' while governing from slightly left of centre; but the real ideological destination of the SNP remains an open question.

Acknowledgements The authors are deeply grateful to David Torrance for reading a draft of this chapter and offering very constructive advice. Any remaining errors of fact or interpretation are our own.

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CHAPTER 10

The Rhetorical Personas of George Galloway and Tommy Sheridan

Andrew S. Crines and Stuart McAnulla

This is the first chapter to focus on the rhetoric and associated political personas of George Galloway and Tommy Sheridan. Both figures had a history of anti-establishment rhetoric that distinguished them from what they saw as the mainstream of left wing politics in Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom. Despite their shared status as both anti-political Establishment (APE) politicians and prominent voices of the left, Sheridan and Galloway emerged from distinct left wing political traditions. Though both rose to fame within left Labour circles in Glasgow, Sheridan was schooled in Trotskyist revolutionary politics, whilst Galloway kept his distance from this brand of radicalism. After his expulsion from the Labour Party, Galloway became a leading figure in the Respect Party, which provided a focus for several political groups on the hard left and beyond to unite behind a common electoral platform. Sheridan, meanwhile, was prominent within Scottish Militant, which later became the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP).

This chapter explores the means by which Galloway and Sheridan constructed their personas through their use of anti-establishment rhetoric. First, the prospects for rhetorical agency of figures outside the left

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J. Atkins and J. Gaffney (eds.), *Voices of the UK Left*,
Rhetoric, Politics and Society, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51902-9_10

mainstream are considered. The chapter then uses the Aristotelian categories of ethos, pathos, and logos to examine in turn the ideological and political strategies of Galloway and Sheridan. Here, we analyse the way each deployed rhetoric within the context of English and Scottish politics, and identify key elements of their public personas. In so doing, we examine the abilities of both figures to capitalize on political discontent through populist appeals that were interwoven with narratives concerning their own character as left wing leaders.

Agency and the Anti-establishment Politician

It is worth reflecting on the scope for rhetorical agency of actors who (in recent years at least) were outside the Labour Party, and indeed who led small left wing parties with limited electoral support. As Gaffney explains in Chap. 1, much left wing analysis is itself rather sceptical of the independent power of rhetoric to influence political outcomes. Perspectives that emphasize the impact of material forces on politics often regard a preoccupation with leaders and personalities as one means by which the class structures of society become obscured. The logic of such a view might suggest that the rhetoric of politicians from fringe parties is likely to be marginal as a force for influencing political events in a meaningful way. Yet this is not the whole story. Left wing groups that perceive themselves as potentially acting as the 'vanguard' of progressive politics often theorize that informed rhetorical interventions in class conflict can play a role in shaping a type of class consciousness, which in turn can create an audience capable of being 'led' in revolutionary directions.

This volume resists structuralist views of political rhetoric, in which overarching linguistic or discursive formations are themselves taken to do the 'speaking' that is expressed through the speech of actors. Instead, it asserts that whilst actors are profoundly conditioned by their material and ideational context, rhetoric is a key way through which they can elaborate on, and sometimes shift the political dynamics of, that context. This can hold even for political actors who find themselves facing seemingly insurmountable constraints. Indeed, we suggest that our case studies of two figures from outside the Labour mainstream lend support to Martin's (2015: 26) view that rhetorical expressions are acts which enter political space as *projectiles*. The fact that Galloway and Sheridan were at times written off by pundits confident of their assessments of the politically possible (at one point Galloway was quoted by bookmakers as a

200-1 outsider to win the Bradford West by-election in 2012) did not prevent them from making significant interventions in public debate that in turn shook the Labour Party and the wider political Establishment. Indeed, the study of both cases supports the view that rhetoric itself is not only words, emotion, or logic, but is also an 'event' to which political actors have to respond. Galloway's berating of Tony Blair over the Iraq War, or Sheridan's passionate condemnation of warrant sales to pay poll tax charges were not merely instances of public argument, but powerful political moments in their own right. Galloway and Sheridan thus secured political successes in significant part through the 'creative acts' of their political rhetoric (Finlayson 2012: 4), which owed something to the complex ways in which ethos impacts on the contemporary reception of rhetoric.

As Gaffney argues in Chap. 1 of this volume, rhetors themselves become characters within political rhetoric, which in turn enables them to fashion their own ethos and that of the audience. Both Galloway and Sheridan presented themselves as embodying socialist ideas and, on occasions, as seeking to 'return' to principled left ideals that had supposedly been betrayed by the Labour mainstream. Yet this is a position which innumerable individuals and groups on the British left have attempted to popularize, with little success. To the extent that such actors have penetrated general political consciousness, they have struggled to be understood outside the dominant ideological frames which render them as 'extremist', 'loony left', and 'unelectable'. How, then, did Galloway and Sheridan achieve some—at least temporary—successes in turning their 'outsider' status to their advantage? Sheridan reflects that 'in the past, socialists like me were hamstrung by the absolutism and purism of dogma' (Gall 2012: 130). Indeed, a willingness to promote what might be considered a left populism is significant in the approach of both Sheridan and Galloway.

Populism can be understood as a discourse that opposes 'the people' to 'the elite' and, though often associated with right wing politics, it is also relevant to understanding the rise of left wing anti-austerity movements in Continental Europe. Yet in the cases of Galloway and Sheridan, their skilled deployment of ethos, their charisma, and the development of their public personas were essential to the political traction they gained. This involved adopting the risky approach of seeking to tie trust in a political cause into trust in them as principled anti-establishment figures of high integrity. In Sheridan's case, this even involved risking (and sometimes receiving)

imprisonment. Their radical stances attracted widespread criticism and dismissal, yet this constraint was balanced against the fact that they participated in organizations that were subject to very limited public scrutiny in comparison to mainstream parties. Galloway and Sheridan thus enjoyed a level of 'autonomy' not usually available to mainstream politicians, which was enhanced by the fact that their organizations were so dependent on their personas for their public profile. At times, this required them to encourage their audiences to place all their political eggs in the basket of their own continuing credibility as leading political figures.

However, our emphasis on the abilities of Galloway and Sheridan should not be mistaken for a 'Great Men of History' perspective. The impact of both as rhetors would have been limited had they not been able to connect with wider political developments, notably alienation from formal political processes in the UK and a sense of political disconnection within significant sections of the working class and beyond. Also key to their success was their ability to draw on longstanding features of the culture of British labourism, such as an emphasis on optimism (the possibility of progress and overcoming), millenarianism, and a tradition of being derisive in caricaturing political opponents (Gaffney 2017: 15). It should further be noted that, in both cases, political breakthroughs were usually followed by major setbacks. These were due in part to personal missteps, but they can also be attributed to the sheer 'weight' of enduring political practices (discussed in Chap. 1 in relation to Sartre's *practico-inert*) that threaten to overwhelm the influence of those who operate outside conventional political boundaries. It is important not to overstate the novelty or impact of such figures, even as they were able to command (at times) exceptional levels of political attention.

George Galloway

Galloway's political persona was intended to connect with disaffected elements of the electorate through APE rhetoric. Typically, APE actors eschew the nuances of conventional political debate and focus predominantly on single issues in which, they argue, mainstream politicians have little or no interest. As Amir Abedi and Thomas Lundberg point out, 'their more "unorthodox" organizational make-up, which is in turn inextricably linked to their populist self-understanding and electoral appeal' (2009: 72), enables populist political actors to challenge the status quo

by highlighting a division between a segment of the electorate and the mainstream. This division often relates to single issues that can subsequently be used to promote the interests of their party. For example, Nigel Farage successfully exploited the issue of immigration to secure the vote to leave the European Union in the June 2016 referendum, while Galloway attacked a broadly defined notion of Western 'imperialism'. Indeed, given the smallness of the APE party relative to the mainstream, it tends to rely more heavily on charismatic figures such as Farage, Galloway, and Sheridan to communicate its populist message.

Political Background and Ideological Trajectory

During his time as a Labour Party member, Galloway aligned himself neither with social democratic revisionism, nor with the more radical socialism associated with the Bennites during the 1970s and 1980s. Rather, he identified himself as belonging to the 'anti-imperialist left', a conception of socialism that had some sympathies with East European communism. Indeed, Galloway lamented the passing of the Soviet Union, saying:

> I did support the Soviet Union, and I think the disappearance of the Soviet Union is the biggest catastrophe of my life. If there was a Soviet Union today, we would not be having this conversation about plunging into a new war in the Middle East, and the US would not be rampaging around the globe. (Quoted in Hattenstone 2002)

Galloway consistently emphasized international issues, notably the global dangers he believed were presented by Western military power. He maintained a strong interest in the Israel–Palestine conflict and campaigned against global poverty, in particular during his tenure as General Secretary of the charity War on Want (1983–1987). Domestically, Galloway frequently argued that the interests of working class people were being ignored by the leaderships of the main Westminster parties. He was willing to work alongside revolutionary groups such as the Socialist Workers Party for periods of time (despite his antipathy to Trotskyism), on the basis of common left wing campaigning objectives. Within the Respect Party (formed in 2004), Galloway campaigned against privatization and for publicly owned services and, in particular,

called for a significant redistribution of economic wealth. Galloway's most spectacular political successes in winning the parliamentary seats of Bethnal Green (2005 general election) and Bradford West (2012 by-election) owed much to his ability to combine Old Labour appeals to parts of these constituencies with the direct targeting of certain groups of Muslim voters.

The Audience

It is worth considering those who comprised Galloway's audience in greater detail. Much of his rhetoric was targeted at anti-war protestors, traditional Labour voters alienated by the New Labour period, and youthful Muslim men (Crines 2013). The anti-war protestors were attracted to his condemnation of Tony Blair's support of the USA following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. They particularly opposed the 2003 Iraq War and any possible future action against other Middle Eastern countries, which Galloway drew on to create a sense of inevitability. Thus, he criticized the continuation of 'Western imperialism', arguing that 'the drumbeats for war with Iran are getting louder, and the escalating provocations by Western capitals are developing a logic of their own' (Galloway 2012a). Moreover, Galloway assumed an ideological continuity between the British foreign policy objectives of Blair, Brown, Cameron, and May, which he used to justify his critique of each prime minister's approach. Meanwhile, the support he attracted from former Labour voters tended to be from those who had abandoned Labour following Blair and Brown's embrace of Third Way revisionism and who, at the time of writing, were more likely to be sympathetic towards the campaigning organization Momentum.

Finally, Galloway sought to gain the support of young Muslim men who opposed Western involvement in the Middle East. While many older Muslim voters remained broadly loyal to Labour, the youthful elements tended to be attracted to Galloway's emotive rhetoric and his frequent use of grand, confrontational phraseology. A typical example of this is his wish that 'the people who invaded and destroyed Iraq will burn in the hell-fires of Hell' (quoted in Gribbin 2012). These groups represented Galloway's small yet focused target audience, which enabled him to secure political office in those constituencies where there were sufficient disaffected voters.

Public Persona and Rhetoric: Key Elements

Heroic Anti-imperialist

In order to appeal to disaffected voters, Galloway used emotive rhetoric in which he positioned himself against 'the Establishment'. 'Western imperialism', the New Labour project, and intervention in the Middle East were the 'rhetorical battlegrounds' on which he deployed his pathos-driven arguments. He also used rhetoric designed to bind these three 'enemies' together. For example, his opposition to intervention in Libya and Syria was based on a critique of the imperialism that, he argued, informed the overarching foreign policy objectives of successive prime ministers:

> Although Mr Blair had gone from office the same mindset is involved in the imperial attacks against Libya and the one that was putative attack against Syria, and also those plans that definitely existed for an attack on Iran. All of these things run out of the same stable as the Bush and Blair stable. (Galloway 2013a)

Here, Galloway sought to bring together anti-war protestors, disaffected Old Labour supporters and aggrieved Muslim youths, uniting them in opposition to the Establishment and its foreign policy objectives.

To enhance his ethos with his support base and demonstrate his anti-establishment credentials, Galloway claimed to have succeeded in preventing the UK from intervening militarily in Syria. He recalled the Commons debate on this issue as follows:

> I must say that in a lifetime in politics I don't think I ever experienced a better day, than the day that in our debate in the British Parliament, my own speech being one of two or three, perhaps four, taken at the very height of the debate definitely switched the audience, no doubt. (Galloway 2013b)

Regardless of the opposition on the Conservative and Labour backbenches, the subsequent press coverage of his speech enabled Galloway to convince his audience that the outcome of the vote was the direct result of his intervention in the debate.

Irreverent Institutional Performer

The House of Commons was one of the main 'battlegrounds' where Galloway launched his attacks on the Establishment, and he frequently used pathos-driven rhetoric to attract controversy. Indeed, during the Syria debate, he suggested that the use of chemical weapons could be attributed to Israel rather than to Assad:

> If there has been a use of chemical weapons it was al-Qaeda who used chemical weapons. Who gave al-Qaeda chemical weapons? Here's my theory: Israel gave them the chemical weapons so that they would use them so that they would bring the international community into the final destruction of Syria. (Quoted in Massie 2013)

Galloway courted further controversy by provoking his eviction from the Commons for language that was deemed 'unparliamentary' during a speech on funding campaigns in support of Iraq. Prior to being named by the Speaker, Galloway argued:

> This is a question of double standards. It is about the fact that I am being thrown out of the House for running a campaign about Iraq that sometimes used parliamentary facilities and was funded by foreigners. It is based on a complaint by a member of an organization that campaigned about Iraq, undoubtedly used from time to time some parliamentary facilities, and was funded by not one but several foreign countries. (2007)

More recently, he criticized the 'tedium' of Parliament when discussing the possibility of his participation in the 2016 London mayoral election (Chakelian 2013); he walked out of an Oxford debate saying 'I don't debate with Israelis' because 'I don't recognise Israel' (quoted in Maher 2013); and, following the death of Margaret Thatcher, he expressed the hope that 'she burn in the hellfires' (Galloway 2013a). Statements such as these reinforced Galloway's persona as an APE figure, who refused to defer to institutional and social conventions if he believed they conflicted with the interests of his audience. The controversy emanating from such incidents often enhanced his ethos among his supporters and potential supporters alike. Yet this approach risked being portrayed as beyond the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, and indeed Galloway faced accusations of anti-Semitism and bullying. More generally, his anti-imperialist stances were frequently caricatured as offering direct support to authoritarian regimes—during the later years of Saddam

Hussein's rule in Iraq, many of his fellow MPs labelled him the 'member for Baghdad Central'.

Despite Galloway's attitude to legislatures and established authority, he was always an accomplished performer in institutional contexts. This was amply demonstrated when he was called before a US Senate committee hearing to answer questions regarding allegations that he had benefited financially from the sale of Iraqi oil. Galloway exposed the lack of solid evidence against him and turned the tables on his questioners, blending logos and ethos in an impassioned attack on the perceived injustices being inflicted both on himself and on the people of Iraq:

> I have never seen a barrel of oil, owned one, bought one, sold one – and neither has anyone on my behalf. Now I know that standards have slipped in the last few years in Washington, but for a lawyer you are remarkably cavalier with any idea of justice […]. Senator, in everything I said about Iraq I turned out to be right and you turned out to be wrong – and 100,000 have paid with their lives, 1,600 of them American soldiers sent to their deaths on a pack of lies. (Galloway 2005)

As a leader of smaller political groups, Galloway enjoyed a large degree of autonomy in how he presented his political message and, in turn, cultivated his ethos. He also attempted to distance himself from conventional accountability by claiming he was familiar with the needs of working people. This distancing contributed to his anti-establishment persona by emphasizing that his legitimacy was derived from connection to his supporters, rather than from the respect of parliamentary colleagues or liberal political commentators. Indeed, in an interview given to *The Voice of Russia*, he argued:

> I don't need to consult anyone, I didn't need to consult Moscow in the old days, and I don't need to consult anybody now. I know what is in the interests of the mass of the working people, and the poor and the downtrodden of the world, and I know what is in the interests of the rulers of the world. And I'm with the poor and the working people always. (Galloway 2013b)

Morality Plays

Another key component of Galloway's political persona was his personal morality, which enabled him to attract some support among Muslim

voters. Although not a Muslim, he sought to present himself as a morally upstanding individual who conformed to specific aspects of the religious lifestyle. An extract from a letter purporting to be from the Galloway campaign during the Bradford West by-election highlights this perception as follows:

> I, George Galloway, do not drink alcohol and never have. Ask yourself if the other candidate in this election can say that truthfully. I, George Galloway, have fought for the Muslims at home and abroad, all my life, and paid a price for it. I, George Galloway, hold Pakistan's highest civil awards […] I'm a better Pakistani than he [the Labour candidate] will ever be. God knows who's a Muslim and who is not. (Quoted in Gilligan 2012)

Here, Galloway attempted to demonstrate the moral integrity of his lifestyle, while simultaneously implying that his opponents were somehow 'immoral'. Indeed, during the same campaign, he described the former regime at City Hall as 'fetid' (Galloway 2012b), using pathos to underscore his political morality. Galloway subsequently argued that his election would sweep away such impropriety from Bradford because his own morally superior character would provide the impetus required to do so.

It is important to note that the use of such moral rhetoric carries significant risks, especially as it left Galloway vulnerable to a number of accusations of being unethical in political contests. During the 2015 general election campaign, for example, he condemned the Labour candidate, Naz Shah (a Muslim woman), for allegedly having 'slandered' the Pakistani community and having played into 'every stereotype' of it (Pidd 2015). Moreover, after Shah revealed that she had been subject to a forced marriage at the age of 15, Galloway attempted to undermine her credibility by claiming that she had in fact been 16 at the time. However, Galloway's approach backfired and he was widely condemned for his tactics, including by Jeremy Corbyn (Cowley 2015). Galloway's subsequent loss of the Bradford West seat confirmed that while his rhetoric reaped considerable dividends, his divisive—and at times narrowly targeted—political approach could easily undo any gains he made.

Tommy Sheridan

On 18 January 2011, Tommy Sheridan was sentenced to 3 years in prison. In his sentencing statement Lord Bracadale commented:

> On any view you were a highly effective and hard-working politician. You supported individuals in the community; both in the parliament and in the street, you were able to use your undoubted powers of oratory to press home your cause; you led the Scottish Socialist Party to considerable electoral success; and your contributions to the anti-poll tax campaign and the abolition of warrant sales will become part of the fabric of Scottish social and political history.
>
> By pursuing, and persisting in the pursuit of, a defamation action against the proprietors of the News of the World you brought the walls of the temple crashing down not only on your own head but also on the heads of your family and your political friends and foes alike.
>
> You were repeatedly warned by the comrades that it would come to this. (2011)

In the period between 1988 and 2004, Sheridan became one of the most recognized and widely respected political figures in Scotland. In 2004, an opinion poll for the *Sunday Herald* newspaper sought to discover whom the Scottish public considered to be the 'greatest living Scot'. Sheridan came second in the poll, outperforming figures such as Gordon Brown and Sir Alex Ferguson and losing out only to the actor and former '007' Sean Connery. Furthermore, Sheridan was commonly seen as one of the most effective voices of the left, having first come to public prominence as a leading figure in the anti-poll tax campaign, before later leading the Scottish Socialist Party to win seats in the new Scottish Parliament in 1999 and 2003. The following discussion identifies key elements in the persona and rhetoric of Sheridan, which help to explain both his political success as an APE figure and also, perhaps, his subsequent reversal of fortunes. The first section establishes Sheridan's political background and ideological trajectory, emphasizing that despite various strategic developments of his politics, a continuous theme was the Labour Party's alleged betrayal of working (and non-working) people. The second section then identifies further important aspects of his projected personality and political rhetoric.

Political Background and Ideological Trajectory

It was through Sheridan's prominent role within the anti-poll tax campaign in Scotland in the late 1980s that he became a recognized public

figure. The far-left Militant group organized to lead a campaign of civil disobedience on the issue, encouraging individuals to refuse to pay the tax to their local councils, while Sheridan seized many opportunities to embarrass and denounce the 'Labour lapdogs' (e.g. Labour-controlled councils in Scotland) for 'implementing the Tory poll tax'. An important part of Sheridan's appeal was his ability to come across as simultaneously a regular working class person, yet one with extraordinary powers to inspire. His former colleague, Rosie Kane, recalls:

> When he spoke the hairs on the back of your neck stood up […]. His delivery, his generosity was second to none […] he was crossing the generations and you wanted to march under the banner […]. Without question he was your son, your brother, your neighbour. (2010)

In his speeches Sheridan made frequent use of facts and figures (logos), all deployed with the purpose of supporting his 'righteous anger' and eliciting a similar response in his audience (Gall 2012: 35). A former girlfriend reportedly commented that Sheridan spent many hours practising his delivery in front of a mirror (McCombes 2011: 4). Indeed, much of his success came from practice and preparation, including his ability to supply journalists with well-crafted, memorable phrases. For example, when the poll tax was finally defeated he declared that 'it was the punters not the pin-stripe politicians' who had won the battle; Sheridan was a master of the 'sound bite' before the term itself came into fashion (Gall 2012: 36).

Following his election as the Scottish Socialist Party's only MSP in 1999, Sheridan was highly effective in using his APE stances to secure a high public profile, and he became widely seen as one of very few 'celebrities' in the new Parliament. More substantively, he capitalized on the respect he had gained in the anti-poll tax campaign to push a bill outlawing warrant sales though the Scottish Parliament. One of Sheridan's key goals was to use this platform to demonstrate that his party could offer a credible and genuinely socialist alternative for voters dismayed by Labour's occupation of the 'centre-ground', or even its perceived Thatcherite tendencies. To this end, Sheridan combined everyday mocking phrases with emotional appeals (pathos) to a Labour-left tradition that he accused others of abandoning. In a debate on nuclear weapons, Sheridan goaded Labour MSP Michael McMahon thus:

> It is utter tosh – with apologies to the Deputy Presiding Officer – for Mr McMahon to say that the Labour party is reducing nuclear weapons or other weapons. The new Labour government has given more licences to export weapons of destruction across the world, has continued to accelerate the nuclear programme and is about to sign up to the star wars programme, which will lead to a further acceleration in nuclear proliferation around the world. Mr McMahon has to accept that his party's problems are those of a political party that used to have some principles and soul. His party has abandoned principles, including the principle of unilateral nuclear disarmament. (Sheridan 2002a)

Indeed, the Scottish Socialist Party was able to attract the support of many erstwhile Labour supporters, managing to return six MSPs (of whom four were women) in the 2003 Holyrood elections. It was a huge achievement for the party, marking one of the most successful electoral collaborations of hard-left groups in Europe.

However, this political success proved to be shortlived, as in 2004 the *News of the World* newspaper ran a story that a well-known MSP had visited sex clubs. Sheridan confessed to his 22 colleagues on the SSP executive that he had, in fact, visited the sex clubs. Yet he insisted that no good evidence of the visit existed, and he asked his comrades to support him in suing the *News of the World* if they ran stories naming him as the MSP in question. Most refused to do so, and Sheridan was forced to stand down as National Convenor.

Two court cases followed. Sheridan won the initial libel case in 2006, but he was later charged with perjury and found guilty in 2010. The court cases themselves produced the spectacular sight of members of the party executive testifying against one another. Sheridan ruthlessly attempted to defend the public image he had constructed. He was accused by many of publicly traducing the reputation of former friends to protect his own reputation and, at times, humiliating female witnesses who had claimed to have slept with him (Archibald 2012). Sheridan cast such women as 'gold diggers' and 'supergrasses', and he labelled three female SSP MSPs as a 'coven', accusing them of conspiring against him for reasons of political jealousy. Similarly, Sheridan announced after his victory that he would 'destroy the scabs who tried to ruin me' (*Record* 2006), referring to those colleagues who had testified against him. Of course, the term 'scab' is considered particularly offensive within hard-left political circles, as it suggests a moral equivalence between

those who had not backed him and those employees who fail to support strike action by their colleagues.

Public Persona and Rhetoric: Key Elements

Although Sheridan's political career had many significant turns and changes in fortune, his approach to tackling challenges and presenting his message retained strong similarities throughout.

Hero/Martyr Dramatizations (Ethos)

In part, Sheridan was the heir to a longer tradition of fiery, popular left wing individuals within Scottish politics. Clydesiders such as Jimmy Reid, and union leaders such as Mick McGahey, were working class figures who had built a public profile as self-proclaimed champions of the interests of the workers. Though Sheridan sometimes affected modesty (e.g. by claiming to be just 'a wee boy fae Pollock'), this was perhaps intended to emphasize his authenticity and to heighten people's appreciation of the rare talents of someone who had not been handed any privileges. However, the fact that Sheridan was willing to run personal risks in illegal actions against the poll tax buttressed his image as a daring 'folk hero' who would stand up to the Establishment, a perception that was strengthened considerably as he defiantly endured a jail sentence. He later described his initial libel case victory as being the 'equivalent of Gretna taking on Real Madrid in the Bernabéu and beating them on penalties' (Sheridan 2006). But when facing accusations of perjury, he sought to make an emotive connection between his supposed victimization and a tradition of state suppression of left wing radicalism, implicitly invoking incidents such as security service infiltration of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in the 1980s:

> I wouldn't be surprised if the state was involved. The state has a fine history of trying to destabilise socialist movements and trade union struggles. They do it for a living. That's why they were set up originally. When the history of this whole episode is written, I think you will find that MI5 certainly was involved. (Quoted in Carrell 2006)

The decisions of his erstwhile colleagues in the SSP to testify against him were presented as spiteful calculations by people jealous of the public profile he had achieved. Thus, Sheridan portrayed himself as the target of

a vast political conspiracy involving Rupert Murdoch, the Scottish Police, and assorted revolutionary socialists amongst others. This victim theme was underscored by Sheridan's claim that Murdoch had said he wanted 'that little commie bastard destroyed', despite no source ever being given for this supposed quotation.

Engendering Outrage (Pathos)

The anti-poll tax campaign was in many ways an ideal context for a revolutionary politics to gain a wider hearing. The tax itself struck most people as manifestly unfair, particularly on some of the poorest sections of society, and it was taken by many as a consequence of Margaret Thatcher's politics. Sheridan channelled this sense of moral outrage against the tax, and he drew media attention to the sight of authorities attempting to sell the assets of impoverished people in warrant sales. The 'Labour betrayal' narrative always featured heavily in his rhetoric, and this continued when he took up his post as an MSP. When bringing forward a bill to introduce free school meals in Scottish schools, Sheridan used a familiar rhetorical tactic, emotively explaining the neglect of the needs of those in poverty and calling attention to the indifference of ambitious parliamentarians:

> We do not means test children to allow them access to schools. We do not means test children to allow them access to hospitals. We do not means test children to allow them access to libraries. It is a disgrace that we means test children in relation to school meals. From the age of five, we divide and label kids according to the income of their parents. The apologists for such divisive behaviour euphemistically call it targeting. Those who are able to think for themselves and who are not worried about their own political careers, are honest enough to call it what it is – means testing. (Sheridan 2002b)

Sheridan never lost the habit of 'upping the ante' when political sides had to be chosen. In the midst of intense pressure in the run-up to his perjury trial, he used any available emotional tactic to besmirch his SSP opponents. In refusing to lie under oath for him, they stood condemned as 'siding with the evil Murdoch Empire'. At one point he even argued that they 'almost killed my wife and child', referencing the stress that the case had allegedly placed on his pregnant wife (Gall 2012).

Radical but 'Everyman'

Although in some respects Sheridan typified the left wing movements for which he campaigned, in others he was a quite different political animal. Comparisons can clearly be made with previous socialist firebrands (Hassan 2010), but there were ways in which Sheridan could be described as a thoroughly 'modern' politician. For instance, the radical left tends to have little time for 'celebrity' politics, whereas Sheridan played this game willingly and effectively. He was sometimes accused of vanity due to the attention he would pay to his appearance, and notably his liking for tanned skin (which earned him the nickname 'the sunbed socialist'). Even during his youthful campaigning against the poll tax, Sheridan was happier than many on the hard left to speak to mainstream journalists, and he seized the opportunity to get media coverage by providing them with newsworthy comments (Gall 2012).

In later years, he accepted offers to write columns for popular newspapers such as the *Mirror* and the *Record*, and he also agreed to speak to newspapers about his private life and outside interests. He would stress his commitment to his wife Gail and his healthy 'clean-living' lifestyle, leading Alan McCombes to claim that Sheridan 'nurtured an image for himself that made John-Boy Walton look like the gangsta rapper from hell' (2011: 34). Sheridan believed that, by presenting himself as living a regular life and having ordinary interests, people would be more likely to identify with him and thus be receptive to his political messages. However, his critics viewed such activities as 'ego-driven' and his association with other famous people as evidence that he was now 'star-struck'. In any case, the *News of the World*'s allegations against him threatened to damage years of image-construction, with the risk he would become known as an unfaithful liar. It is perhaps because he had invested so much in creating this public persona that he took the ultimately calamitous decision to sue the newspaper.

Reflection

In the wake of his conviction, Sheridan was a marginalized and largely derided figure. Recent efforts to re-ingratiate himself with the Scottish public have thus far proved largely unsuccessful, even though he used similar formulae to those which had previously made him such a successful voice of the left. As with the poll tax, Sheridan campaigned against the Coalition government's 'bedroom tax' by presenting it as an attack

on the vulnerable that should be met with civil disobedience, and declaring his willingness to once again heroically risk being jailed over the issue (ethos). His contributions to the Scottish referendum debate also employed familiar rhetorical tactics. Here, recent data suggesting that 87 individuals had more wealth than over half of the world's people (logos) were presented as a prelude to expressions of anger and outrage at the effects of neoliberalism and the alleged failure of both the Conservatives and the Labour Party to challenge it (pathos) (Sheridan 2014).

If Sheridan's approach remained consistent over many years, it is worth highlighting one shift in emphasis during his career. As his profile increased after becoming an MSP, Sheridan appeared to rely more heavily on appeals to ethos. He believed that he could reach a wider audience if people bought into his persona and, having gained an even more secure platform from which to do so, he further built up the image of Tommy Sheridan as a football-loving, humorous, family man. There appears to be evidence that, to a considerable extent, Sheridan believed in his own publicity, and indeed the constant positive reinforcement he received may have contributed to his overestimation of his ability to face down opponents over the sex club allegations. It also helped to convince Sheridan and some of his supporters that the success of the socialist movement in Scotland was dependent, to a large extent, on his good public reputation. However, like many previous celebrities—including celebrity politicians—Sheridan would eventually discover just how much media copy can be gained from reporting in detail on the demise of an erstwhile hero.

Conclusion

The cases of Galloway and Sheridan demonstrate that rhetorical advantages can exist for actors outside the mainstream labour movement. Freed from the traditions of the established parties and the demands of conventional electioneering, they are well placed to lob pathos-laden rhetorical 'projectiles' (Martin 2015) at a political Establishment that is already the focus of considerable public disdain. Yet making effective rhetorical interventions is no easy task when faced with the hostility of parliamentarians and sections (at least) of the media, not to mention the limited resources of parties and organizations at the margins of politics.

The success of Sheridan and Galloway was largely due to their success in developing a narrative of their own character that not only

asserted their ethos, but did so in such a way as to make their use of logos and pathos compelling. They both capitalized on their working class Glaswegian backgrounds to project 'authenticity' and a kind of machismo that equipped them to take on more 'effete' political elites. This involved being seen as 'down-to-earth' Scots who reflected wider social groupings, while simultaneously conveying a sense of being able to 'see' further politically than the average person, and thus to claim a leadership position. Neither was particularly shy in taking credit for political success, as both Galloway's claims regarding Syria and Sheridan's treatment of the SSP suggest. The care taken by the two men to construct their heroic political personas helps to account for the fury that each sometimes expressed when their public images were challenged by journalists, colleagues, or rivals. This perhaps reflects an awareness of the high-risk, high-reward approach they took in their efforts to demonstrate ethos through the careful development of a specific character narrative.

Yet the respective styles of these 'voices of the left' are far from identical. Galloway made rather rare use of logos, while Sheridan frequently employed it as a platform from which to launch pathos-driven attacks on the political Establishment. Similarly, Galloway rarely pretended to cast doubt on his credentials as a leading political figure, whereas Sheridan made occasional use of ostensible self-deprecation as a way of mobilizing sympathy. Finally, Galloway's focus on international issues contrasted with the 'bread and butter' domestic emphasis of Sheridan. Where these accomplished rhetoricians converged most strongly was in their ability to convey a sense of moral outrage and to connect with a wider audience than left wing activists typically reach. The fact that both independently appeared as contestants on *Celebrity Big Brother* is perhaps indicative of the ease with which both believed they could engage audiences, and of the risks they were prepared to run in doing so.

Acknowledgements We would like to thank Judi Atkins, John Gaffney, Richard Hayton, Timothy Heppell, and Thomas Brook for their comments on an earlier version of this chapter.

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CHAPTER 11

Demanding the Alternative: The Rhetoric of the UK Anti-austerity Movement

Sophia Hatzisavvidou

The global financial crisis of 2007–2009 started as a crisis of subprime mortgages, but subsequently was widely presented and perceived as a crisis of sovereign debt. However, this attempt to conceal or downplay the actual origins of the economic meltdown, as well as the policies adopted by states and international institutions in their efforts to address it, have not gone unchallenged. Indeed, we witnessed the generation of dynamic forms and instances of protest and activism against the deleterious effects of the crisis. From the Occupy movements in Europe and the USA to radical leftist parties' protests, and from the Indignados movements in Southern Europe to student protests in the UK, new sites of political resistance and identification appeared. Existing and emerging agents of social and political change aspired not only to challenge the mainstream representation of the financial crisis as a debt crisis, and of austerity as the only sound, reasonable, and viable solution to the economic predicament, but also to manifest the possibility of alternative social and political arrangements.

In the UK the anti-austerity campaign, promoted and supported both by political parties and in the form of extra-parliamentary activism, has surged since 2007. The proliferation of protests, demonstrations, and strikes in the period 2008–2015 is well documented (Bailey 2014), as also is the heterogeneous nature of this new wave of protest

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J. Atkins and J. Gaffney (eds.), *Voices of the UK Left*,
Rhetoric, Politics and Society, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51902-9_11

(Peterson et al. 2015). Indeed, Peterson et al., observe that, despite the difference in socio-demographic characteristics and class identification among participants in this recent tide of protests, a common tenet for them was the belief that austerity does not work. So, although agents of anti-austerity activism such as political parties, UK Uncut, the People's Assembly, and Occupy LSX should not be treated as comprising a single, homogeneous agent of social and political change, they can still be identified as proponents of similar political claims and as the co-organizers of a powerful national campaign against austerity policies. Paradoxically, and despite the proliferation of sites and forms of expression of dissent against austerity, the result of the 2015 general election demonstrated an undoubted failure of these agents to attract wider support and rally the public as a significant electoral force (but see Campbell 2015).

This chapter attends to this paradox not in order to resolve it, but to suggest a way to understand it. To do so, it adopts a rhetorical approach to the study of the UK anti-austerity movement. Seymour (2014: 151) proposed that the political irrelevance of leftist movements in the UK was not only the result of their 'unworldly optimism', but was also directly related to the ways in which they articulated and communicated their fetishes, ideas, and discontent. By analysing rhetorically the movement's way of articulating claims, we can assess how anti-austerity leftists responded to the challenge of expressing dissent within an already-defined framework. This was imperative, not least because the agents of the movement had to invent and employ discursive strategies and performative tools that would enable them to contest an argument that had already been successful in presenting a banking crisis as the outcome of state overspending. Furthermore, they even had to claim the right to attribute a proper name to the crisis through the creation of a clear, radically defined profile. The chapter demonstrates that this diverse movement was indeed better placed than other agents to connect with wider, non-partisan audiences, and that it attempted to do so by exploiting three rhetorical tools. Specifically, it employed a rhetorical strategy that enabled it to construct and project a distinct ethos, to articulate a clear logos, and to achieve an affective connection with its audiences, successfully appealing to their pathos. The limited impact of the movement on the outcome of the general election, it is here suggested, should be attributed to wider, structural issues, and not necessarily to the communicative strategy of the movement itself.

The chapter proceeds in three sections. First, it briefly examines the context within which the UK anti-austerity movement emerged. This task is integral to rhetorical analysis, not least because it permits the identification of any specific challenges that the discourse under study aims to address or respond to. Furthermore, this section looks at the traits of the collectivity that is characterized as social movement and identifies the major agents of the campaign against austerity in the UK, emphasizing particularly its heterogeneous character. In the second section, the chapter outlines what is specific to a rhetorical approach to the study of social movements and their discourse, providing a background for the argument made here. This section not only sketches a distinct rhetorical strategy for social movements, namely disputatious rhetoric, but also elucidates how this strategy can achieve the politicization of public issues. In the final section, the chapter identifies the most prominent elements of anti-austerity discourse in UK leftist activism and accounts for their role in the movement's effectiveness. Considering that any attempt at persuasion is always dependent upon structures and mechanisms that agents of change cannot control or influence, the study of the rhetoric of social movements points to the role of rhetorical strategies in mediating between structure and agency (Martin 2014: 98). As the discussion in this chapter demonstrates, the mediating role of rhetorical strategy can result in important political outcomes, which in the case under scrutiny took the form of the creation of a unifying point of reference for leftists.

#Nomoreausterity

Since 2008, governments have presented fiscal austerity, defined as 'the policy of cutting the state's budget to promote growth' (Blyth 2013: 2), as the direct remedy for the global crisis that threatened the very existence of the banking system. In this context, austerity was frequently portrayed as a common sense choice, and it even acquired the status of scientific truth or conventional wisdom (Dow 2015). Its tenet summarized in the Thatcherite slogan 'There is No Alternative' (TINA), austerity seemed to be the prudent choice of any government that aspired to keep the finances of the state on the track of the much celebrated—yet abstract and thus contestable—idea of growth. In the UK, austerity was imposed in the form of welfare reforms that resulted in cuts to social benefits and pensions, wage freezes, and public sector job losses, as well as in measures that impacted on the governance of education,

immigration, and health, and therefore on the everyday life of those who were reliant on the welfare state for their well-being or even survival. The impact of these measures was profound: poverty, the casualization of work, and the erosion of the social safety net are only some of the most frequently invoked effects of austerity. Following a steep increase in the number of food banks, the appearance of clothes banks across the country marked a new point of deprivation, as it became increasingly evident that austerity measures hit not only those traditionally seen as more vulnerable, but also those in stable employment (Ryan 2016). This is probably the reason that austerity has also been described as a national and class strategy (Dunn 2014; Seymour 2014). More specifically, it is a class strategy to the extent that it is a co-ordinated attempt 'to creatively respond to a crisis in a current configuration of power and class leadership by reorganizing society and further shifting the popular common sense' (Seymour 2014: 40). It was precisely as a class strategy that it sparked the creation of new sites of political enactment and new agents of resistance.

There is much discussion among scholars as regards the defining elements of a social movement. In one of the most widely accepted accounts, della Porta and Diani (2006) propose three traits that distinguish social movements from other forms of collective action such as parties, broad coalitions, interest groups, and voluntary associations. These distinctive elements relate primarily to the mechanisms through which actors engage in collective action, specifically:

1. Actors are engaged in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents.
2. They are linked by dense informal networks.
3. They share a distinct collective identity.

However, as della Porta and Diani clarify, the three elements can be combined in different ways, a fact that reinforces the fluidity of the phenomenon of social movements. In short, a social movement is more a process than a rigidly formed entity.

It is for this reason that the rhetorical analysis of social movements can contribute significantly to our understanding of their forms, strategies, and goals. Given that a social movement is a process that emerges as an attempt to address or respond to a social, political, and economic shift or challenge, it is dependent on the particular circumstances of the

historical context within which it appears. Rhetorical analysis attends to the structural shifts that give rise to a social movement, as well as to the means of persuasion it employs to channel its claims and achieve its objectives. Nonetheless, collective action is not the immediate outcome of structural changes or conflicts; the shift from structure to action is determined by several factors, such as the availability of organizational resources and the ability of the movement's leadership to appeal to and mobilize participants (della Porta and Diani 2006: 63). A certain degree of continuity—both on the organizational and on the individual level—between small and large movements proves beneficial to the effectiveness of a social movement (see e.g. Flesher Fominaya 2013). The role of rhetoric here is crucial, not least because of its mediating function between the emerging and the established.

Strictly speaking, there was no single organizational structure that coordinated the activities of the groups and individuals engaged in collective action against the cuts to public services in the UK. An assemblage of diverse constituencies, more or less loosely associated, appeared to have been involved in the anti-austerity campaign that took place from 2008 onwards. Among the most widely known and active groups were the network UK Uncut, the People's Assembly against Austerity, Occupy London, and the Radical Assembly, as well as the community-run campaign People's NHS. Together with trade unions, the National Union of Students, local grassroots initiatives, as well as political parties—namely Left Unity, Plaid Cymru, the Green Party, and the SNP—they made up a diverse yet well-established network of anti-austerity activity, which took the form of staged events, protests, and marches. Despite their ideological differences and porous boundaries (see Maiguashca et al. 2016), these agents shared a common aim: to put an end to the austerity agenda.

Together, these established networks were a forceful voice against the austerity measures of the Coalition and the later Conservative government. For example, one of the most eminent actors of the movement, the People's Assembly Against Austerity, was a group of politicians and activists, many of whom had participated in previous campaigns such as the transnational Global Justice Movement or local grassroots movements such as the British anti-roads protest. Indeed, coalition building in social movements seems to facilitate the mobilization of heterogeneous protest events, and therefore to foster the visibility of the movement. As Saunders et al. (2016) suggest, despite the differences in motivation,

ideology, and political attitudes of participants in anti-austerity protests in the UK, these diverse groups succeeded in building effective cross-movement alliances and attracting participants to their events. Although not homogeneous, then, the UK anti-austerity movement was formed around some core tenets that were shared by its diverse participants and that can be summarized in the slogan 'no more austerity', which was also used as a hashtag to promote common actions and events in social media.

It is the study of the rhetorical production of these core discursive elements that is the purpose of this chapter. The argument here is that, although leftist discourse has been accused of irrelevance, at least insofar as its translation to electoral results is concerned, the UK anti-austerity movement succeeded in creating a site of resistance to public spending cuts and functioned as a point of reference for those who wanted to take action against the TINA logic. Furthermore, by increasing the visibility of its cause through a series of events, some of which had a strong performative character, the UK anti-austerity movement took on the role of the main force of resistance to neoliberal policies that affected the most vulnerable parts of society. Therefore, an analysis of this discourse provides a good starting point for reflecting on those elements that make up successful or weak political rhetoric. Before attending to these elements, though, it is worth looking at what is specific about a *rhetorical* approach to the discourse of a social movement. If there is something distinct about social movements as agents of dissent and change, then the rhetoric of their agents is equally as worthy of our attention as their defining traits.

A Rhetorical Strategy for Social Movements

Political activism has long attracted the interest of those who study public discourse, particularly in the USA where rhetoricians have explored the rhetorical strategies employed in the discourse of social movements since the 1960s (see e.g. Cathcart 1978; McGee 1983; Simons 1970; Smith and Windes 1976; Zarefsky 1980). These scholars laid the foundations of the literature on the rhetoric of social movements, at the centre of which is the question of how the tactical use of symbols—words, signs, images, bodies—contributes to our perception of reality, and invites us to act accordingly (Morris and Browne 2001: 1). The rhetoric of activism, or what Morris and Browne call 'the management of symbolic resources', is bound up with calls for social change.

If, as has been suggested, a characteristic of social movements is their engagement in political conflicts that promote or oppose social change (della Porta and Diani 2006: 21), then rhetoricians who study social movements are right to identify confrontation as an essential aspect of their rhetoric and therefore as a key component of social change. Cathcart (1978: 246) claims that we ought to understand the act of confrontation first and foremost as an attempt to communicate moral accusation. Consequently, he suggests that any response of agents of the established order is always a moral response, one characterized by polarization and radical division. However, the problem with this particular understanding of confrontation—as a moral act—is that it over-emphasizes moral motives and challenges, as well as the moral nature of the responses pertinent to them. As a result, this view vilifies and discredits adversaries, amplifies their purposes, and renders democracy irrelevant when addressing antithetical social and political claims. We suggest here that a rhetorical strategy that is characterized by a political—rather than moral—quality, and that therefore cannot simply be dismissed as immoral but must be confronted on political grounds, is more pertinent to the negotiation of antithetical claims in public life. One must imagine the agents of this form of rhetoric not as opposing unethical 'villains' whom they wish to destroy, but as opposing political rivals whom they seek to confront and discredit through the use of a robust rhetoric that combines the forcefulness of reason with the attractiveness of affective discourse.

The rhetorical strategy that focuses on the political importance, rather than the moral quality, of a social struggle, demand, or claim can be identified as *disputatious* rhetoric (see Hatzisavvidou 2016). Two theoretical clarifications are necessary here, the first of which concerns the notion and use of strategy in rhetoric. As Martin (2015: 29) explains, in order to address a particular situation or context, to intervene in it, and to acquire control over it, political agents 'formulate a distinct set of judgements to achieve certain ends given (more or less) known constraints'. In other words, they develop 'rhetorical strategies' which intervene in the situation aiming 'to shape arguments and forge alliances in and through as well as against those constraining contexts' (Martin 2015: 32). By approaching a set of discursive data as a rhetorical strategy, defined as 'the purposeful assemblage of arguments for a particular occasion and setting in light of its anticipated effects and by means of available techniques' (Martin 2015: 29), we can consider not only structure but also agency as a force of political change.

The second clarification regards the specificity of the rhetorical strategy of disputation. To an extent, it can be argued that all rhetoric is disputatious: its appeals—ethical, emotional, and logical—take place amidst conditions of contest, attack, and counter-attack (Finlayson 2014: 433). Political rhetoric emerges precisely because of the need to form judgements and reach decisions in conditions of plurality, contestability, and uncertainty. However, the specificity of what is here called disputatious rhetoric as a particular strategy lies in the fact that it is 'shaped by a strongly competitive purpose' (Burke 1969: 60). As such, this rhetorical strategy seeks to inscribe in public discourse an issue as a common political problem that needs to be addressed, and to influence the meaning that a public attributes to actions and claims, and it does so by challenging the commonsensical character of the latter and the hegemony of their agents.

To achieve this aim of challenging hegemonic schemes, disputatious rhetoric functions through the narration or redescription of facts from a standpoint it constructs as logical and authoritative. In this sense, the articulation of truth has a distinct place in disputatious rhetoric, which frequently takes the form of truth telling, or what ancient Greeks called *parrhesia*. In the final section, we will see that truth telling was one of the defining elements of the UK anti-austerity movement's rhetoric, and indeed one that shaped its identity as an agent of frankness in public life. This tactic operates through the exposure and publicization of events and practices that involve lying, deception, coercion, or even physical violence. It also redefines a situation in a way that directly opposes the reign of a powerful social and economic constituency. Thus, disputatious rhetoric is adversarial, but not violent.

The attempt of agents of disputatious rhetoric to reclaim and redefine what is perceived as 'truth' demands the use of justified, reasonable argument rather than a religious faith-like trust in abstract ideas and principles. As a result, this specific form of discursive confrontation does not function by constructing and attacking an enemy who must be annihilated; rather, it addresses an adversary with whom it shares 'a common symbolic space' but which they 'want to organize […] in a different way' (Mouffe 2000: 13). This struggle over the appropriation of a common symbolic—or in certain cases also physical—space results in a dramatic distinction between the forces that impel the two opposing attempts to attain hegemony. In the very end, disputatious rhetoric is a discursive form which drives the formation of judgement and decision; it invites

response not on the level of impressions, gut feelings, or morality, but on that of sound argument, pragmatism, and viable or realistic solutions. It invites more politics.

It is suggested here that a discursive strategy characterized by contestation is more effective in political life when it institutes dissent not through the moralization, but rather through the *politicization*, of collective problems. The remainder of this chapter attends to the constitutive elements of the rhetoric of the UK anti-austerity movement and scrutinizes the rhetorical conventions or tools that were employed by different agents of the movement as they sought to achieve a common goal: the redefinition of a given situation and the responses available and pertinent to it. Despite its shortcomings, the communicative strategy of the campaign against austerity successfully problematized the idea that there was no alternative to it, while managing to avoid offering a gullible and naïve moralization of social figures and groups, which would have resulted in the depiction of those hit by austerity policies as merely its 'victims'. Rather, the movement's strategy succeeded in engaging these individuals and groups as political actors, attributing to them a place in political life. It therefore filled the gap left by political agents unable to undertake this disputatious role.

Contesting Austerity

Interestingly, and unlike the cases of countries in the Eurozone periphery, the implementation of austerity policies in the UK could not be justified either as a response to the imperatives of an external market crisis, or as the implementation of a strategy imposed by external institutions, such as the IMF or the Troika (Stanley 2016: 3). Although the study of the rhetorical strategy that resulted in the creation, reproduction, and circulation of images of 'undeserving skivers' and 'hardworking taxpayers' would be a separate project, it suffices to say that a major success of the austerity-imposing front was the projection of austerity as a prudent, 'commonsensical' choice that, as Stanley (2016: 13) explains, had a strong moral resonance. After all, who would like to be classed as a 'scrounger'?

The attempt to define 'common sense' was a central point of reference in the campaign against austerity. In fact, the struggle over the determination of common sense is constitutive of political life (Hall and O'Shea 2013). Any attempt to negotiate, express, and construct

common sense takes place through the articulation of claims that seek to persuade us of the general validity or 'reasonableness' of a thesis by appealing to already accepted or shared tenets. In rhetorical terms this aim is achieved through the use of *commonplaces*, or what Aristotle (2001: 69) called *common topics*, which are literally places or sources of proofs and arguments. The UK anti-austerity movement attempted to exploit this particular rhetorical convention, while seeking to redefine what counted as 'common sense' with regard to public expenditure. At the same time, in contesting the austerity-imposing front, the agents of the campaign also had to create a certain identity, one that would present them as having a trustworthy, even truth telling profile. This is where the element of *parrhesia* proved particularly pertinent, eventually becoming the central point of the ethical appeal of the movement. A final element that defined the rhetoric of the movement was a strong distinction between 'we' and 'they', which in rhetorical terms can be identified with the tool of juxtaposition (or *antithesis*). Whereas each of these three rhetorical tools contributed to framing the UK anti-austerity movement and forwarding its cause, they all proved vital—albeit to different extents—in constituting the three appeals to persuasion, namely ethos, pathos, and logos.

We will now explore the use of these three rhetorical tools—common topics, *parrhesia*, and juxtaposition—in the discourse of the UK anti-austerity movement. We will see why its rhetoric is here affirmed as disputatious, and finally we will assess the extent to which the movement succeeded in providing the stimulus for political judgement and more politics.

Commonplaces

Aristotle (2001: 69) explains that, in the same way as scientific explanations belong to education, so arguments must be contrived from the commonplaces. Literally meaning location or place, the concept of *topos* and its use suggests that we ought to conceive of commonplaces as lists where we can find arguments or the resources to create them. Ultimately, those who produce discourse that aims to persuade can employ commonplaces as conceptual starting points to develop connections with an audience, and therefore to address it in a way that connects this audience with the issue at hand. As Kennedy (1994: 5) argues, the use of topics can help a speaker to gain both the interest and the trust

of an audience, not least by stressing the importance of the case he or she is making for the wider society. Evidently, common topics can prove a particularly effective tool in the hands of those who negotiate political stakes and seek to influence political judgement, whilst striving to construct their credibility or ethos.

Since the decision to impose austerity was projected as a prudent, commonsensical approach to the crisis—which was conveniently presented as an economic rather than a fiscal or banking crisis—the challenge for the anti-austerity front was to create and diffuse a counterpoint regarding what constituted common sense. To achieve this, the agents of anti-austerity discourse had to construct an equally appealing logos, a reasonable counter-argument, that would compellingly project the possibility of responding to the crisis without cutting public expenditure. The campaigners used as resources for their logos some of the common topics of leftist ideology and tradition. For example, the People's Manifesto stated that among the commitments of People's Assembly Against Austerity are a fairer taxation system, the protection of public services, and social justice, as well as a peaceful future (The People's Assembly 2015). In a similar way, the Anti-Austerity UK Alliance said on its Facebook page that it 'demands an end to the politics of austerity, privatization, and nuclear arms' and proposed to 'support schools, hospitals, social services, civil, socio-economic and human rights, and a democratic and green economy' (Anti-Austerity UK Alliance n.d.). Finally, the grassroots movement UK Uncut sought to challenge the prevailing assumption that public expenditure cuts were a necessity, and argued that 'this government wants to destroy the welfare state and privatize our vital public services' (UK Uncut 2015).

What these different yet connected opponents to austerity shared was the aim of shaping common sense with regard to the actual meaning and consequences of public spending cuts. By appealing to ideological common topics of the left, such as fairness and social justice, support for the protection of social services and public sector jobs, and opposition to privatization and welfare cuts, the diverse agents of the UK anti-austerity movement sought to redefine a particular situation—a crisis—that had already been identified and described by its opponents in definitive terms as the result of public spending. The statement 'austerity is just an excuse to transfer public services into private hands' (UK Uncut) undermined the argument that austerity is a prudent solution, and inscribed in public discourse a counter-argument that directly connected austerity to

privatization. Furthermore, by employing commonplaces of the left, the anti-austerity campaigners argued for an alternative to austerity, defying the prevailing idea that there was no alternative.

Additionally, the use of these common topics of left discourse enabled the movement to seek connection with a variety of audiences, namely those hit by the politics of austerity, those who were concerned with environmental and peace issues, and those who were traditionally supportive of or attracted to the ideas of the left. The polyphony of the movement was reflected in the diverse background of the people who took part in demonstrations organized by the movement: workers, social and political activists, members of the hacktivist group Anonymous, as well as wheelchair users and people with buggies (Pidd 2015). Effectively, the movement's attempt to present its logos as common sense succeeded in uniting different members of the public. Importantly, the association of the demands of the movement with common topics of the left enabled it to exploit some commonly-held truths or ideas and strengthened its appeal to logos. As a result, the movement was able to present itself as a commonsensical political actor with pragmatic and realistic claims.

Truth-Telling

In its attempt to establish rapport with its audience, demonstrate that its cause resonated with the concerns and needs of the public, and attract supporters for its actions, the UK anti-austerity movement was confronted with a problem that every agent of persuasion faces: how to form and establish its authority and credibility, or what in rhetoric is called ethos. Here, the ability to appear to have a strong relation with truth is decisive, particularly where what is at stake is the redefinition of a situation and the manifestation of alternative modes of action.

The ancient Greek term *parrhesia*, which refers to free speech, frankness, and the practice of telling the truth, is relevant here. The exercise of truth telling was an integral aspect of democracy in a society where public speaking was the defining element of political life; indeed, Foucault (2001) observes that *parrhesia* was one of the virtues that citizens were expected to exhibit in public life. Although, as Foucault (2001: 20–21) correctly notes, the Socratic-Platonic tradition strongly opposes *parrhesia* to rhetoric, the rhetorical tradition treats it as a distinct rhetorical figure: the 'figure that is without any figure'. This is because *parrhesia* can be employed to intensify the emotions of an audience but, rather than being

an artful creation of the orator, it is his or her natural trait. It is as a figure that *parrhesia* is also affirmed in the present analysis. Its function is that it creates and establishes a certain relation between two opponents, in this case the austerity-imposing government and the agents who challenged the government's exclusivity in defining reality and acting upon it. It is suggested here that the UK anti-austerity movement exploited the figure of *parrhesia* in its attempt to discredit the government, refute its attempt to monopolize access to truth, and register in public consciousness the idea that there was an alternative way to respond to the crisis.

To raise their public profile, then, campaigners against austerity had to present themselves as credible and trustworthy, as agents of truth. There are several instances that evidence their attempt to do so. For example, the People's Manifesto claimed that 'British big business exports more capital abroad than it invests at home. This was true before the financial and economic crisis and it's true now'. This statement was not offered in the form of an estimate or hypothesis, but as a generally accepted truth and therefore as 'common sense'. Meanwhile, the People's Assembly presented itself as having access to a truth that elites would never reveal or explicitly state, a truth that was indeed formulated and offered to the public in the form of a compact, infallible argument. In a similar way, UK Uncut stated that its mission was to 'expose the cruelty and lies' of those who claimed that there was no alternative to austerity and who explicitly lied to the people (from UK Uncut's Blog). By presenting themselves as 'exposers' and therefore as having access to the truth, the agents of anti-austerity rhetoric constructed a daring and trustworthy profile, and so elevated the movement's credibility.

The exploitation of the identity of the 'truth teller' also enabled the movement to raise its visibility. Whilst demonstrations and marches afforded the opportunity to showcase celebrities' support for the cause of the movement, they simultaneously functioned as occasions to expose hidden agendas and to enlighten or even educate the wider public on truth. For example, in one of the biggest protests organized in London in 2015, trade unionist Len McCluskey told his listeners that 'our fight goes on to protect our communities, to defend the vulnerable, to expose spivs and speculators and tax avoiders' (Sky News 2015). In one of the most characteristic moments played out in anti-austerity demonstrations, campaigners sang Captain Ska's *Liar Liar*, which depicted the agents of austerity measures as 'liars' and therefore attacked the credibility of the government. Evidently, agents of the movement perceived

themselves as bearing a distinct responsibility that was associated with their ability to know and to understand the circumstances.

Ultimately, the exploitation of the figure of *parrhesia* played an integral role in the formation of the public profile of the movement. Employing as their overarching argument the fundamental idea that there was an alternative to cuts, campaigners against austerity sought to rigidly separate themselves from the 'lying' government and its supporters, as well as multimillionaires, bankers and 'the elite'. It is fair to say that one of the core features of the UK anti-austerity movement was its attempt to construct its identity, or ethos, as an agent who had access to objective facts and who consequently was well placed to make a strong claim for an alternative to austerity.

Juxtaposition

A rhetorical tool that is particularly effective in creating the ethos of an agent of change and dissent is *antithesis*. Indeed, Aristotle (2001: 234) considered this as one of the greatest stylistic concerns of the orator—along with metaphor and vividness—not least because it makes the argument memorable. However, there is certainly more in this rhetorical device, which can be described as consisting in 'the pairing of contradictions to display the necessity of choice between them' (Murphy and Katula 2014: 33). As Finlayson (2006: 549) explains, *antithesis* enables the orator to emphasize the opposition between two things and so to enhance his or her position. It creates the opportunity for clarifying one's thesis and, since its use can create a sense of urgency and decisiveness, it can therefore be employed to demonstrate the need for political mobilization and choice.

Evidently, in times of social and political discontent, the dichotomous presentation of a situation illustrates the existence of two opposing sides that represent different symbolic systems of thinking about reality. It is particularly in cases of public controversy, then, that juxtaposition contextualizes different forms of knowledge about the situation, altering the dynamics of certainty and uncertainty surrounding that situation. As a consequence, it heightens moral outrage, generating pressure on public institutions to act (Schwarze 2003: 315). Juxtaposition asks the audience to choose sides, to identify with agents and ideas, and to evaluate policies and practices. In this sense, it is also employed to create emotional effect and therefore to appeal to pathos.

The UK anti-austerity movement attempted to exploit this figure to enhance its contentious and credible profile, and to create affective bonds with the public by separating itself from those who sought to project austerity as an economic necessity. Juxtaposition proved a particularly effective tool in this for at least two reasons. First, it permitted a rigid distinction to be made between austerity and anti-austerity as two radically different fronts and ways of responding to the crisis, while also helping to emphasize the deleterious impact of cuts to spending on health, employment, and education. Second, it enabled the movement to personify the other side and to create a negative linkage between the government and its members, their policies, and the social consequences of the latter. Although 'the elite' was presented as the agent of the 'there is no alternative' approach, it was specifically the government that must be blamed for the cuts. In the People's Manifesto, for instance, we read that whereas 'the banking crisis was created by them' (where 'them' is identified with 'millionaire politicians, fat-cat bankers and tax-avoiding business men'), it was 'we, working people', who were now called on to pay the debt.

The use of juxtaposition does not only reinforce the ethos of an agent of persuasion; it also clarifies his or her use of logos. In this instance, *antithesis* was employed to clarify the anti-austerity movement's positions by directly juxtaposing them with the tactics and decisions of the government. For example, in arguing against the claim that austerity was an economic necessity, the People's Assembly stated that 'there is an alternative, meeting the needs of millions, rather than feeding the greed of millionaires' (The People's Charter n.d.). By suggesting that the austerity agenda served the interests of 'the elite', proponents of anti-austerity were able to associate their cause with the interests of the people. The explicitness of *antithesis*, then, contributes to the creation of clear arguments that are easily picked up by audiences.

Finally, juxtaposition can be employed to create an emotional connection with an audience. In the case of the campaign against austerity, this rhetorical figure functioned to create a sense of shared identity among those who felt left out of the system or were hit by austerity measures. By distinguishing 'the rich and powerful' from 'the rest of society'—that is, 'ordinary citizens, working people'—the use of *antithesis* created contending figures of identification, as well as affective bonds between those who saw their salaries or state benefits cut. On the one side, there were those who 'want to slash state spending, and to privatize the remaining,

potentially profitable, services for their big business friends to make even more money', while on the other there was a constellation of those exposed to the elite's plans, an assemblage of students, workers, and disadvantaged people. Two distinct sides, two different poles of identification, two different worlds. Clearly, and contrary to David Cameron's infamous sound bite, we were not 'all in this together'.

Conclusion

The study of the rhetoric of social movements enhances our understanding of the processes of generating change, of social and political contestation, as well as of political identification. This chapter argues that we can discern a distinct form of political rhetoric that may play a significant role in the promotion of causes supported by agents of resistance and social change, namely disputatious rhetoric. Its main virtue, it has been suggested, is that it can be employed to challenge policies and ideas that are advanced by hegemonic political forces as commonsensical, and that it seeks to introduce alternative viewpoints, meanings, and ways of confronting a problem. To do so, this particular form of rhetoric confronts the established order directly, using common topics to create continuity and to appeal to audiences that are already favourably inclined towards certain ideas; *parrhesia*, or truth telling, to present itself as radical and innovative, yet trustworthy; and juxtaposition to carve out a clear space for itself in the political arena. Disputatious rhetoric comes to disrupt hegemonic narratives, to provide clear spaces for identification, and therefore to call for judgement on controversial public issues.

The discussion in this chapter has also suggested that disputatious rhetoric, the rhetorical strategy more pertinent to social movements, is distinct because it institutes dissent not through the moralization, but rather through the *politicization*, of collective problems, which in turn creates opportunities for further political engagement. Thus, agents like UK Uncut were ideally positioned to stage practices of disruption and resistance in public and private spaces, from Trafalgar Square to Starbucks coffee shops. For example, Sisters Uncut, a grassroots campaigning group, 'reclaimed' a vacant council house in Hackney, London, in order to protest against cuts to domestic violence services, thereby giving voice to the concerns of thousands of women who were severely affected by austerity measures (Hartley and Atherton 2016).

Such events functioned not only as opportunities to highlight the importance of protecting and helping those in need, but also as occasions for political enactment. Those hit by austerity policies were not merely 'victims', but were themselves political actors. Even so, there is a need for caution regarding the extent to which this form of rhetoric can actually be used to mediate between antithetical political claims. As an instance of political rhetoric that creates direct confrontation between different ideas and ideologies, disputatious rhetoric is open to the charge of polarization, particularly with regard to its emotional invocations.

Nonetheless, the effecting of social and political change requires the establishment of clear lines of distinction and therefore of identification; it requires the explicitness of *parrhesia* and the clarity of *antithesis* and can rely on the exploitation of already accepted premises or ideas—that is, common topics—to achieve these aims. The UK anti-austerity campaign was successful in creating an assemblage of different contending voices that sought to challenge the prevailing idea that there was no alternative to austerity policies. Although the movement did not create the electoral tide that would realize its proposed alternative to austerity, it was able to channel political discontent in a more affirmative and productive direction, thus producing three significant outcomes. First, it created two distinct, opposing social and political fronts, and so gave members of the public the opportunity to identify with different political forces; second, it formed a consistent and powerful voice against austerity; and third, it inscribed in public discourse an alternative common sense, a different perspective on reality. It was the rhetorical strategy of disputation that contributed to these results and, despite the structural limitations, it created the possibility of political mobilization and participation. Not only did this movement succeed in filling a gap in the political spectrum by formulating political claims and staging political actions in ways that no other political actor was able to, it also created the possibility of demanding an alternative to austerity.

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CHAPTER 12

Reflections on the UK Left: Narrative, Leadership Performance, and Imagined Audiences

Judi Atkins

Social democracy is in crisis across Western Europe. The causes of its decline are many and complex, but among them are the 2008 global financial crisis and the left's subsequent failure to offer an alternative to austerity, an increasingly insecure labour market, and the rise of the populist right. In the UK, public dissatisfaction with the Labour Party resulted in a crushing defeat in the 2015 general election, while the European Union membership referendum that took place the following year revealed a 'clear disconnect between the Labour Party establishment and Labour voters in its heartland areas over the EU' (Hickson 2016: 1). Adding to this the collapse of Labour's support north of the border and the publication of a draft bill on a second Scottish independence referendum in October 2016 (see Brooks 2016), it is clear that the party needs to respond to these challenges as a matter of urgency.

Our concern in this collection has been to explore the question of why some left wing figures—such as Nicola Sturgeon and Carwyn Jones—are able to communicate their message effectively, whereas others struggle to

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J. Atkins and J. Gaffney (eds.), *Voices of the UK Left*,
Rhetoric, Politics and Society, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-51902-9_12

connect with the public. Two main themes emerge from the chapters, the first of which is narrative and political performance. Through rhetoric, politicians define situations, offer visions of the future, and present themselves as the embodiment of these narratives. In turn, such performances must be tailored to the expectations of the audience. As Alan Finlayson explains, '"the audience" is […] always in some measure a fictive creation around which rhetorical invention is built' (2012: 763), and this provides the second theme of the book. The final part of this concluding chapter considers a number of avenues for further research.

Narrative and Political Performance

Political communication has become increasingly professionalized since 1980, a development exemplified by the relationship between the Thatcher governments and the advertising agency Saatchi and Saatchi. The Labour Party, meanwhile, spent the early part of this decade in disarray due to organizational tensions and conflicts over policy. On assuming the leadership in 1983, Neil Kinnock began the process of transforming Labour, first by expelling the Militant Tendency and then working to restore his party's image. In Chap. 2, Simon Griffiths argues that Kinnock derived the authority to confront the hard left from his background as a working class South Walian who was imbued with the traditions of the labour movement. However, his ethos had limited appeal for the wider electorate and, in an attempt to address this, Kinnock downplayed his own character and relied more on logos and pathos. While intended to convey gravitas, this shift in Kinnock's rhetorical style instead came across as inauthentic to an increasingly sceptical public audience.

The reforms introduced under Kinnock's leadership paved the way for the New Labour project. As Emily Robinson explains in Chap. 3, the party sought to recover the ethical socialist tradition and used emotive language to powerful effect. This was epitomized by Tony Blair's vision of 'new Britain'—'a nation reborn, prosperous, secure, united' (Blair 1995)—which provided New Labour with a compelling narrative in its early years. However, New Labour's subsequent turn towards managerialism came at the cost of its ability to connect with the public. Following Labour's defeat in 2010, figures such as Jon Cruddas argued that the party needed to revisit its traditions, revive the ideas of association and mutualism, and weave them into a new, human-centred narrative. The outcome of these discussions was One Nation Labour. On taking

authorial possession of this narrative, Ed Miliband eschewed Cruddas's romanticism and instead used the past as a source of legitimacy and lessons for the future. Although this approach was effective in the short term, One Nation's relatively shallow roots in Labour's ideological heritage arguably contributed to its later loss of both lyricism and direction.

The past can be employed to cultivate an ethos of authenticity. This is vital in an era of professionalized politics, where overly polished performances may be perceived as fake and consequently leave audiences unmoved. In their efforts to construct a convincing leadership image, politicians may also recount stories about their family background and previous experiences (Atkins and Finlayson 2013). John Gaffney's analysis of the 2012 conference speech in Chap. 4 shows how Miliband's anecdotes about his childhood fed into a narrative of 'One Nation Britain', of which he presented himself as the embodiment. This address was the high point of Miliband's leadership but, within months, One Nation started to falter. Without this narrative, Gaffney perceptively notes, Labour's success came to depend entirely on Miliband's rhetorical performances. As the effectiveness of these diminished, so too did Labour's chances of securing victory in the 2015 general election.

Judi Atkins takes up these themes in her study of One Nation Labour's arguments for social security reform in Chap. 5. Here, she identifies three narratives that were deployed in a bid to achieve hegemonic advantage in this policy area—party traditions, 'new times', and national renewal—and demonstrates that they converged in Miliband's leadership character. Drawing on 'his' personal beliefs, Miliband both positioned the One Nation project within Labour's ideological traditions and distanced it from the coalition government (2010–2015). This coalescence created a self-referential rhetoric, which ran into difficulties as the narrative and performance of One Nation started to come apart. In the case of social security, this divergence was manifested in punitive proposals that reflected public opinion on the issue. Without a clear narrative, Labour faced accusations of opportunism, which in turn damaged Miliband's ethos as a principled politician. To echo Gaffney's conclusion, the One Nation narrative and Miliband's persona declined together.

Following Labour's defeat in 2015, Jeremy Corbyn succeeded Miliband as party leader. In many ways the antithesis of the 'professional politician', Corbyn's persona was that of an authentic outsider who stood with the people against a remote Westminster elite. Critically, his conception of 'the Establishment' included his own parliamentary party.

As Mark Bennister, Ben Worthy and Dan Keith point out in Chap. 6, Corbyn invoked Labour's radical history to present himself as the personification of core socialist values, and he inspired rallies across Britain with his commitment to re-invent the party as a campaigning social movement. However, Corbyn failed to offer a vision of the future, to develop and perform a convincing narrative to the wider public. The chapter's authors rightly attribute this failure to Corbyn's inability to imagine an audience beyond his supporters and to tailor his speeches accordingly. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that the protest rhetoric which so enthused participants at his rallies would leave large swathes of the British electorate cold.

It is starkly evident that, with the exception of Tony Blair in his heyday, successive Labour leaders have struggled to connect with audiences outside the party (see also Crines and Hayton 2015, especially Chaps. 11 and 12). For instance, Miliband's One Nation speech invoked a national past in order to reach beyond the conference hall but, as his rhetoric became increasingly solipsistic, his electoral appeal diminished. There is clearly a balance to be struck between these audiences, and some leaders are more successful in achieving it than others. To further complicate matters, the Labour leader is required to speak to—and, on occasions, *for*—the nation. In an increasingly diverse society such as Britain, the challenges are obvious, and it is here that rhetorical invention comes to the fore. This brings us to the second theme of the book, namely how political actors imagine their audiences and then adapt their rhetoric accordingly.

Imagining 'The Audience'

Devolution has created new opportunities and challenges for the UK left. Within the British Labour Party, for instance, Carwyn Jones was able to carve out a distinctive role as 'Welsh Labour Leader'. Although this brought no guarantee of influence, it afforded him freedoms unavailable to the leader of British Labour. In Chap. 7 David S. Moon reveals how Jones positioned himself as the representative of 'the people of Wales', an 'imagined community' that embodied a Wales that is working class. In so doing, he elided Welsh values and socialist values, and thereby invited his national audience to identify with Welsh Labour as 'the party of Wales'. Jones further enhanced his ethos by developing a narrative in which Welsh Labour defended its 'people' against attacks by the Conservative Party.

To this end, it pursued interventionist policies that were firmly rooted within Labour's radical traditions, the success of which allowed Jones to appeal to British audiences by presenting his party's vision as a genuine alternative to that of the Conservatives.

An important advantage for political figures within the sub-state polities is that their audiences are smaller and less diverse. This enables them to position themselves to the left of British Labour, and perhaps even to supplant it as the dominant voice of progressive politics within their national borders. In Chap. 9 Mark Garnett and Martin Steven show how New Labour's 'betrayal' of Scotland created an opening for the Scottish National Party (SNP) to do just that. These efforts culminated in a landslide victory in the 2015 general election, which saw the SNP win 56 seats and become the third largest party in the UK Parliament. Its leader, Nicola Sturgeon, subsequently capitalized on this new-found status to address the UK audience, presenting the SNP as the only credible alternative to the Conservatives and speaking for those who had voted to remain in the European Union. Sturgeon's statesperson-like leadership performance may represent an attempt to displace Corbyn's Labour as the main (if not official) party of opposition in UK politics, an opportunity that the SNP, by virtue of being a stand-alone organization rather than a sub-state party, is well placed to seize.

The question of how to reach a wider audience without alienating their membership has long troubled single issue parties. A case in point is the Green Party, whose primary focus is on climate change and the environment. Although important, these issues have little interest for the electorate and, in Chap. 8, Ashley Dodsworth explores how the Greens used rhetorical invention in order to broaden their appeal. The issue of fracking was invaluable here, as it enabled the party to tie environmental concerns to mainstream policies such as anti-austerity, community governance, and public health. Moreover, by balancing the threat posed to communities with warnings about the consequences of fracking for climate change, the Greens could link the local to the global. Such a strategy allows smaller parties to use the limited media coverage they receive to their best advantage, and potentially to increase their public support.

Looking beyond the mainstream, it is clear that populism has been gaining ground on the left of UK politics. Broadly speaking, populists claim to represent 'the people' and stand with them against 'the elite' (see e.g. Müller 2016), though these terms can of course be defined to fit the expectations of their listeners. They also utilize ideas

as 'projectiles' with the aim of provoking 'reorientation among audiences', and thereby disrupting the status quo (Martin 2015: 39). This approach is typified by George Galloway and Tommy Sheridan, two politicians of the radical left who presented themselves as the embodiment of socialist values and cultivated an ethos of authenticity and integrity. In Chap. 10, Andrew Crines and Stuart McAnulla demonstrate that these figures used their respective opposition to Western imperialism and the 'poll tax' to attack 'the Establishment', engendering outrage and inspiring audiences through their use of pathos. While Galloway and Sheridan adopted the risky strategy of intertwining trust in their cause with their leadership character, they nonetheless succeeded in appealing to a wider audience than most left wing activists can hope to reach.

Populist actors may present themselves as being on the side of truth, and thus derive credibility from their willingness to expose the 'deception' of the Establishment. Crines and McAnulla note that Galloway employed this technique in his criticisms of the 2003 Iraq War, but it was also evident in the approach of the UK anti-austerity movement. In Chap. 11, Sophia Hatzisavvidou offers an illuminating analysis of how disparate groups joined together under the anti-austerity banner to oppose the Coalition and later Conservative government's cuts to public spending, and to challenge their claim that there was no alternative. She explores how the anti-austerity movement sought to disrupt this dominant narrative through disputatious rhetoric, which employs common topics, truth-telling, and juxtaposition to redefine situations and, by politicizing collective problems, creates opportunities for political engagement. This form of rhetoric can be a highly effective tool for social movements, whose 'outsider' status affords them greater freedom to speak truth to power, but—in common with other populist strategies—it cannot be used convincingly by mainstream actors. After all, it makes no sense for a prospective party of government to align itself against the 'Westminster elite'!

Avenues for Further Research

The contributions to this collection highlight the richness of left wing rhetoric as an area of study. There is a growing body of scholarship on the rhetoric of the British Labour Party (see e.g. Atkins 2011; Crines and Hayton 2015; Fairclough 2000; Finlayson 2003), although its sub-state levels are relatively neglected (but see Moon 2013 and in this volume). The Scottish Labour Party, for instance, would be a fascinating case for

rhetorical analysis. At the time of writing, it faced pressure from the SNP on the left and the revived Scottish Conservatives on the right, and simultaneously had to manage its relationship with the central level of the party. The challenges involved in developing and performing a narrative that captures the public imagination are considerable but, unless and until they are overcome, the future of Scottish Labour hangs in the balance (see *Scotsman* 2016).

Alongside the British Labour Party, the book has examined the rhetoric of leading figures from smaller parties: the Greens, the SNP, Respect, and the Scottish Socialist Party. Scholars might build on this work by analysing the language and performance of politicians from the Progressive Unionist Party in Northern Ireland, say, or Plaid Cymru in Wales, taking into account the opportunities and constraints that confront them. Our collection also includes George Galloway and Tommy Sheridan, who straddle the worlds of politics and entertainment. These cases could provide a starting point for the study of celebrity activists such as Charlotte Church, Eddie Izzard, and Michael Sheen, all of whom use their public platform to articulate left wing concerns and, in so doing, may reach a larger, more receptive audience than mainstream politicians.

Finally, this volume lays the foundations for international comparative research. For example, the rhetoric and performance of British Labour leaders could be analysed alongside that of figures from parties of the European left, such as Sweden's Vänsterpartiet, or Synaspismós in Greece. Any such analysis would have to recognize the historical, cultural, and institutional differences between countries, and how these might shape the rhetorical possibilities available. Alternatively, scholars could compare the performance of left wing politicians within the European Parliament, perhaps focusing on a single group like the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats, or the European United Left/Nordic Green Left. Looking beyond formal structures, the period following the 2008 global financial crisis saw a proliferation of social movements. Hatzisavvidou's chapter on the UK anti-austerity movement invites comparison between this case and the rhetorical techniques and strategies employed by leftist social movements elsewhere in Europe. Given that social movements actively seek to promote political participation, such an analysis might also enhance understanding of how to foster public engagement with politics more broadly.

Conclusion

Our examination of these diverse voices of the UK left provides insights into what makes a successful rhetorical performance. A party or social movement needs to develop and perform a compelling narrative, which draws on the left's rich ideological heritage and offers a vision of the nation's future. It must then depict its policies or objectives as emerging from this narrative, and so present an (apparently coherent) agenda to its audience. The party leader, meanwhile, should perform their politics in a way that combines professionalism and authenticity, an approach that is arguably exemplified by Nicola Sturgeon. At the same time, political figures must seek to imagine an audience beyond their support base and, using rhetorical invention, present their claims in terms that are congruent with the 'common sense' of that audience. This is no easy task, but it is vital if the Labour Party in particular is to prove its relevance in these challenging times.

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