'Emotional, logical... credible?'
The Art of Labour Oratory

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Abstract

The examination of elite oratory is a significantly under researched area of British political analysis. This is due in part to the focus upon groups, ideological tendencies, and collective bodies within some of the existing literature. This tendency is particularly evident in Labour studies, where historians often lean towards a broad conception of Labour as a collective movement. Oratorical analysis is thus something of an under-developed field in Labour studies.

Within the Labour Party, groups such as the *Tribune Group*, *the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy*, and *the Manifesto Group* have emerged as organisations committed to pursuing certain positions and/or agendas. Yet within such structures, leading elites emerge to champion ideological positions. Throughout Labour history, such figures as Aneurin Bevan, Hugh Gaitskell, Michael Foot, and Neil Kinnock, amongst others, each aligned themselves to an ideological tendency, and sought to uses their oratory to advance it. The analysis of these individual orators thus has the potential to be a fruitful field of political analysis, adding to our understanding of Labour Party politics and groups within it.

In addition to this, the general 'personalisation' of politics in Britain over recent decades suggests the importance of a rigorous agency-centred political analysis. This paper offers a preliminary assessment of Ed Miliband's

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performance as an orator, through a tripartite analysis consisting of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. Miliband's position in the tradition of Labour oratory is evaluated and contextualised in relation to previous leading oratorical elites in the party.

Introduction

The scrutiny of leading oratorical elites remains a surprisingly under researched area of British political analysis. Given the importance of understanding political speech, this is a significant impediment to a fuller appreciation of the tools deployed by political actors. However, it is important to note that a developing research agenda, led by Alan Finlayson and James Martin, has highlighted the importance of the analysis of rhetoric in British politics. For example, Finlayson and Martin (2008) argue that carefully crafted rhetoric has enabled political figures such as Thatcher, Kinnock and Blair emerge as prominent, or even dominant, political figures (Finlayson & Martin, 2008, p. 459). That success enabled Thatcher and Blair to garner significant electoral traction, whilst Kinnock's success can be measured in his ability to reform the Labour party. It is also worth noting that despite the evident importance of linguistic analysis, 'rhetorical and linguistic approaches, indeed, interpretivism in general, are not widely accepted approaches to the study of contemporary government' (Finlayson, 2004, p. 529). In terms of rhetoric, this is an oversight which Finlayson and Martin have sought to redress. However, Finlayson and Martin's approach is rooted in an appropriate study of linguistic *content*, whilst a focus on oratorical *delivery* is generally beyond the scope of their analysis. Given this, might greater consideration of the delivery of rhetoric also be revealing? Whilst Finlayson and Martin have developed the study of political rhetoric across a range of leading elites, a specific focus upon oratory and the delivery of rhetoric remain largely absent from the literature. Consequently, an embrace of oratorical and linguistic delivery within this article aims to initiate a remedy to this deficiency.

Whilst appropriately tied to an understanding of political rhetoric by Finlayson and Martin, oratorical analysis can be seen as distinct from it. As a particular aspect of linguistic analysis, oratory is 'the art of using words effectively and the practice of that art in public speech' (Bevan, 1986, p.82) The *use* of words goes beyond the rhetorical *content* of those words. As a skill, powerful oration enables a speaker to extend their rhetoric, to communicate it more effectively, and in turn generate substantive impact. As such, politicians who have mastered the art of oratory have historically enhanced their political career prospects (Clark, 2010) and are more likely to enjoy success in advancing their ideological position.

For this oratorical analysis, the focus upon linguistic delivery revolves upon a tripartite analysis of leading Labour elites, with Ed Miliband utilised as a contemporary case study. The tripartite approach enables a demonstration of the importance of oratory to emerge through the prism of *ethos* (credibility), *pathos* (emotion), and *logos* (logic). Each provide an insight into a specific aspect of linguistic delivery designed to enhance oratory and subsequent reception.

These devices are deployed across a sample of noteworthy orators drawn from across Labour's ideological spectrum. This will then be followed by an assessment of Miliband's leadership to determine if and how he fits into the tradition of Labour oratory through consideration of his impact across three key arenas within British politics: Parliament, the media, and the party conference. These are subsequently analysed through the aforementioned oratorical devices. By doing so, it becomes possible to determine

whether Miliband's oratorical style rests within the tradition of Labour oratory, or whether his distinctive style represents a divergent form of political communication, which legitimises further scrutiny.

On Labour Oratory

To better place Miliband into his oratorical context as a Labour leader, it is necessary to acknowledge the longevity of strong oration in Labour politics over the post-war period. This is not to suggest oratory was without impact in the pre-war period, however a fuller historical appraisal of Labour oratory is out of scope for this evaluation given the contemporary emphasis. Rather, the sampling provides an indicative example of leading Labour orators with which to demonstrate the oratorical tradition.

Oratorical impact within the Labour Party can be measured by the ability of the individual to advance their ideological arguments through their communicative skills within collective groups. Given the extent of such ideological divisions, each leading orator would inevitably be compelled by necessity to develop oratorical skills tuned to their particular circumstances and context. As Crines (2011) argues, 'since its founding, the Labour Party evolved as a coalition of different views and policy positions in which diversities coexisted. This ensured that the Labour Party would be characterised by division and debate' (Crines, 2011, p. 8). Such an environment enabled a range of individuals with an eclectic interpretation of ideological perspectives to emerge, framing their oratorical skills in the process. For Labour orators, this mechanism acted as a *de facto* oratorical nursery, from which leading figures emerged. As such, the importance of

division must be seen as highly significant towards generating debate and reinforcing the importance of oratorical skill.

For the purposes of this paper, the selected sample consists of Aneurin Bevan, Hugh Gaitskell, Michael Foot, and Neil Kinnock. At different times each of these figures delivered notable speeches with significant political consequences, if not in all cases subsequent policy attainment. They were also characterised by varied styles of oratory. Given this, they provide a useful sampling of oratorical success.[2]

The first elite orator for consideration is Bevan. His oratory drew mainly upon *pathos* to frame his arguments for a national health service, drawing from the memory of his deceased father to push for reform of healthcare in Britain. 'As he was cradling his father... the germ of the NHS was born in his mind' (Brindley, 23 September 2008). As a motivator, this provided an emotional charge, a zeal for social change, expressed through Bevan's ardent oratory. The death of his father from a preventable disease helped facilitate Bevan's emergence as a principled political actor, framing his arguments in a form of righteous anti-Conservative romanticism that he utilised against those he proclaimed to be his ideological enemies. As an illustration, Bevan's *pathos* is evident in a speech he gave to a Labour Party rally on 3 July 1948. Contesting the anti-state position of the Conservatives, he argued:

> the Tories are pouring out money in propaganda of all sorts and are hoping by this

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        For a much more developed discussion of each of these figures, see the relevant chapters by Keith Laybourn, Tim Heppell, David Stewart and David Moon in our forthcoming edited volume.

organised sustained mass suggestion to eradicate from our minds all memory of
what we went through. But, I warn you young men and women, do not listen to
what they are saying now. Do not listen to the seductions of Lord Woolton. He is a
very good salesman. If you are selling shoddy stuff you have to be a good
salesman. But I warn you they have not changed, or if they have they are slightly
worse than they were (Bevan, 1948).

Bevan's roots in the Welsh Labour movement helped him draw strongly from his *pathos*
to generate *ethos*. This form of oratory appealed to this chosen audience, who tended
more towards an expectation of anti-Conservatism based on a combative motivation.
Bevan's oratorical performances garnered their *ethos* from his background in reformist
socialism, manifest entirely through the Labour Party, targeted towards the forces of
conservatism. From such audiences, Bevan was able to frame debates and positions
towards those which reflected his own. As a result of Bevan's oratorical approach, he
tended to convince his audience of the *logos* of his arguments without drawing upon
fiscal realities, preferring the '*rightness*' of a chosen cause to carry forward his rhetoric.

Contrasting Bevan's *pathos,* Hugh Gaitskell's oratory was rooted substantially in *logos*,
which brought him into conflict with the emotional romanticism of those on the left.
Gaitskell's leadership of the Labour party was frustrated by this left-wing *pathos*,
articulated initially by Bevan and subsequently Michael Foot, who argued by distancing
the intention of a future Labour government from the principles stipulated forty years
earlier, he was 'taking down the signposts to the promised land' (Williams, 1979, p.555).
The left, therefore, argued Gaitskell's reforms were contrary to the thrust of Labour

politics. In contrast, the Gaitskell and the social democrats defended the proposed reforms to the constitution as necessary to enhance the party's credibility with the electorate (Heppell, 2010).

Gaitskell believed that force of argument and the *logos* of that argument would be sufficient to enlighten his opponents of its validity (Brivati, 1999, p. 105). This belief, which assumes an educated audience, framed his approach to oratorical delivery. To this end, Gaitskell sought to argue logically rather than emotionally, alienating him from a significant portion of the Labour movement. Heppell confirms the extent to which Gaitskell drew from *logos*, noting that in the case of Clause IV, a logical argument for revision can be identified.

> Gaitskell believed that Clause IV was politically irrelevant and electorally unattractive. It was not an accurate expression of the policy goals of a forthcoming administration that he would lead. By maintaining its privileged position within the constitution of the party, it enabled the Conservatives to exploit it and engender fears surrounding the implications of Labour occupying power (Heppell, 2010, p. 24).

This position was put to the Labour conference in 1959 by Gaitskell, where he argued that 'we do not aim to nationalise every private firm or create an endless series of state monopolies. While we shall certainly wish to extend public ownership in particular directions, as circumstances warrant, our goal is not 100 per cent state ownership' (Gaitskell, 1959). Gaitskell's saw nationalisation as a tool for economic management which should be located in practical necessity rather than ideological dogmatism. As such, he aimed to shift state ownership from being a default perspective to that of an

economic remedy. It must be remembered, however, that Gaitksell's dependence on *logos* belied the romanticism of symbolism, leading to his subsequent defeat. For Heppell, this approach demonstrated 'weak tactical sense' given he 'managed to deepen the divisions within the PLP', yet it also demonstrates an advocacy for *logos* over *pathos*, which enhanced his *ethos* as leader, if not his popularity with Labour members (Heppell, 2010, p. 24).

Michael Foot's key oratorical arena was the House of Commons. Foot, as a ferocious guardian of the role fulfilled by Parliament and the value of the debates within the Commons chamber, tended to deliver his most noteworthy speeches in that forum. In terms of oratorical delivery, two such speeches can be credited with having a particularly significant impact. The first was a contribution to the Vietnam War debate in 1966, and the second concerned the Confidence Motion in 1979. Both were contentious and decisive in influencing the potential direction of Wilson and Callaghan's respective leaderships, and each provided Foot with a compelling opportunity to orate to a large attentive audience.

Foot sought to link *pathos* with *logos* in his oratory, giving his arguments both an emotional and logical contention. This aimed to ensure the listener committed with their heads and hearts to the thrust of his arguments. This oratorical technique enabled him to advance his rhetoric, in so doing garnering *ethos*. In relation to whether British military forces should be committed to the theatre of Vietnam, Foot drew from *pathos* to illustrate his belief in the 'shamefulness' of the war, whilst incorporating *logos* to demonstrate the

political consequence of participation. Foot argued that:

> ...the reason that I would not send troops to Vietnam is that I think it is a
> shameful war, a war which I believe is being fought for the wrong reasons and
> which can never be brought to a successful conclusion. Those, surely, are
> adequate reasons for not sending British troops there. I hope that it will be
> understood by a Government in this country that they cannot send British troops
> to Vietnam, not only on the diplomatic technical grounds which my Right Hon
> Friend adduced but also because if the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary, in
> response to an American request, were to attempt to send British troops to
> Vietnam they would tear to pieces even the secure majority which they now have
> in the House (Hansard, 1966, p.610).

Foot highlighted his belief that the Vietnam war lacked clear objectives leading to reduced potential for success, conclusions he sought to base on *logos.* He drew from *pathos* to challenge the subjective morality of the war, and again *logos* to contend the government's majority may be threatened by participation, implying a realist, logical rationale for not deploying forces. In so doing, Foot deployed two oratorical techniques to enhance the credibility of his argument *vis-a-vis* Britain distancing itself from the war.

In contrast to the earnest nature of Foot's Vietnam speech, in 1979 he drew more from *pathos* in order to construct a humorous depiction of those seeking to challenge the life of the Labour government following the loss of two devolution referenda (Crines, 2011, p. 104). To that end, Foot characterised the situation as a Conservative victory over the main nationalist parties and the Liberal Party. As leader of the House of Commons, Foot sought to defend the Labour government, arguing that:

> What the Right Hon Lady has done today is to lead her troops into battle snugly
> concealed behind a Scottish nationalist shield, with the boy David holding her

hand. I must say to the Right Hon. Lady — and I should like to see her smile

— that I am even more concerned about the fate of the Right Hon. Gentleman

than I am about her. She can look after herself. But the Leader of the Liberal

Party — and I say this with the utmost affection — has passed from rising hope

to elder statesman without any intervening period whatsoever (Hansard, 1979,

pp.461-590).

By drawing from *pathos,* Foot was able to discredit those who supported the motion by highlighting their participation in the Conservative effort to challenge Labour electorally. Through discernment of human emotion, Foot also used humour to deride the youth of the Liberal Leader, insomuch as suggesting his career had begun and ended with little substantial activity in between. Foot's use of *pathos* to generate humour enabled him to characterise the Conservative leader as guileful insomuch as she was able to challenge the life of the Labour government with the support of those who would be her natural political enemies.

The final example of elite Labour oratory is Neil Kinnock, whose conference speeches were used to motivate and challenge the Labour movement directly. Kinnock's oratory was rooted in passion, drawn from his background, rooted in his sense of Welsh identity. Challenged by the formality of the House of Commons, unlike Foot, this was never his chosen arena. Rather, given the extent of division and disunity within the Labour movement during his leadership, his was an oratory that emerged during the conferences.

A significant example of *pathos*, aimed at redefining Labour, was made at the 1985 Labour conference. This speech enabled him to generate *ethos* insomuch as his attack on the hard left Militant Tendency group resonated amongst both social democratic and

moderate left wing members. Such had been the growth of hard left groups since 1973 that the Labour movement was seeking, in the context of the post-1983 electoral defeat, realignment with its moderate progressive identity (Crines, 2011). To that end, Kinnock attacked those remaining hard left advocates by appealing directly to the moderates, saying

> 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 hiring taxis to scuttle round a city handing out redundancy notices to its own workers. I am telling you, no matter how entertaining, how fulfilling to short-term egos you can't play politics with people's jobs and with people's services or with their homes (Kinnock, 1985).

Firmly attacking the ideological dogmatism of the hard left, seen to be dominating local government in Liverpool, Kinnock drew from his oratorical *pathos* to highlight their incompatibility with the aspirations of the Labour Party, attacking them for their focus on ideological irrelevancies. Kinnock's delivery and use of emotion, tied to certain belief in his argument, ensured his conference speech substantially united the divisions against the hard left.

It must be noted, however that Kinnock's *pathos* did not extend well beyond the conference. In other arena, his *ethos* as a potential Prime Minister suffered as a result of his caricature as a 'Welsh windbag'. Kinnock's capacity to frame his rhetoric in emotional imagery perpetuated his caricature amongst his adversaries. In an attempt to generate credibility beyond the conference, the imagery of Kinnock's speeches was substantially

reduced, yet this curtailed the broader impact of his oratory (Leapman, 1987, pp. 183-184). Kinnock's oratory, most effective in the conference hall, became less efficacious when modified for the non-conference audience.

These four oratorical elites provide an indicative example of how leading Labour figures advanced their arguments by drawing upon one or more of the oratorical techniques. For each, their oratory compelled their audience by drawing upon *pathos* and *logos,* which contributed to advancing individual *ethos.* Bevan's *ethos* drew from his background as a working class miner, Gaitskell's intellectualism gave his oratory a compelling *logos* to some, through *pathos* and humour Foot was able to develop a fierce Parliamentary oratorical ability tied to *logos,* whilst Kinnock's *pathos* fuelled speeches, driven by the sense of anger at those he felt prevented Labour gaining governing *ethos,* energised his audience. It is evident, therefore that oratory framed the advancement of leading elites, each with distinctive approaches dependent upon generational contexts, with skilful oratory providing the means for ideological success.

The communicative skills, developed by these elites, were formulated through the divisions and debates threaded through Labour history. Bevan against Gaitskell, Gaitskell against the movement, Foot against the leadership, Kinnock against the Militants; each provide an internal ideological division through which each orator is challenged. This provided an oratorical nursery which proved necessary for oratorical growth, compelling the elite orator to develop mature linguistic skills. As a result, over the course of the post-war period the Labour Party came to possess oratorical elites drawn from such

ideological divisions. The question remains, however, to what extent is that process still evident within contemporary Labour?

To address this, it is necessary to reflect upon the unifying leaderships of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, under which the Labour Party appeared to become more ideologically homogeneous. The unity of the Labour Party between 1994 and 2008 ensured that individuals did not engage in comparable ideological discourses, instead utilising carefully crafted language and 'displays of ideological unity' that were designed to reflect electoral expectations (White & Wintour, 2005; Fairclough, 2000, p.3). In terms of party management, the shift in emphasis was firmly towards unity. Given fewer public arguments or public debates occurred, fewer elite orators emerged. The oratorical nursery that enabled Bevan, Gaitskell, Foot and Kinnock to emerge ceased to function as fully, thereby disabling the ability of the Party to generate convincing oratorical elites.

As a consequence, the oratorical failures presently attributed to Miliband go beyond his leadership and more towards a fundamental problem facing contemporary Labour elites. Although destructive divisions are incompatible with a mature party of government, constructive divisions and debates have historically served Labour well in generating figures capable of advancing arguments which have, as illustrated above, proven effective in producing apparent political and social change. Given such demonstrated importance of oratory in the post-war period, the extent to which the current Labour leader demonstrates those skills is worthy of consideration. By again drawing upon *ethos, pathos,* and *logos* it becomes possible to see whether Ed Miliband demonstrates similar

oratorical skills that have proven effective amongst previous leading oratorical elites.

The Ethos, Pathos, and Logos of Ed Miliband

To be convincing, a party leader must have demonstrative communicative abilities which present the ideological perspective of that party in a credible fashion. The successful use of oratory can help persuade supporters that the leader will be an effective challenger to their opponents. However, the extent to which this model fully operates within contemporary Labour is uncertain. Accordingly, an assessment of Miliband's potency in the areas of oratorical ability linked to his chosen rhetoric is one important indicator of his strengths and weaknesses, and future prospects, as Labour leader.

This section of the paper offers an initial appraisal of Miliband's oratory drawing on the concepts of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. Given his relatively short tenure as Labour leader to date this assessment is necessarily preliminary in nature, however we argue that key indicators of his oratorical style are already evident. Following this discussion, we then consider the implications for Miliband's leadership more generally.

As the newly elected leader of the Labour Party, Miliband's first conference speech would set the scene for his style of leadership. It would be an opportunity to demonstrate *ethos*, and to unify the party following the defeat of the expected heir to the throne, his brother David Miliband. As seen with Kinnock, who was able to unify the party through successful conference oration, Miliband needed to reach beyond recent divisions and unify his party. To that end, Miliband drew upon *pathos* to unify the conference behind

the achievements of previous Labour generations, to highlight his conception of principled socialism to which he tied historic progress, linked back to contemporary optimism.

> We are the heirs to an extraordinary tradition, to great leaders who were above all the optimists of history. The optimism of 1945 which built the National Health Service and the welfare state. The optimism of Harold Wilson and the white heat of technology and the great social reforms of that government. The optimism of Tony and Gordon who took on the established thinking and reshaped our country. We are the optimists in politics today (Miliband, 2010).

There, he delivered a carefully crafted speech to the Labour Party conference appealing to those party members seeking a renewed Labour Party, linked towards Labour's history of social democratic ideals. It was an attempt to use *pathos* to build ideological bridges to ensure unity emerged.

To grow his *ethos,* he also aimed to connect his audience to the realist agenda by highlighting anticipated future difficulties for the party through language that reflected the rough political journey ahead. 'It won't always be easy. You might not always like what I have to say. But you have elected me leader and lead I will.' (Miliband, cited by Wintour, 2010). By positioning himself as the responsible leader, Miliband aims to convince his audience of his *ethos* in order to convey his leadership credentials.

After his first successful conference speech, Miliband was praised by commentators for his *ethos* and clear likeable character. Yet there remained 'real worries about Ed' because he was regarded as 'unknown to the majority of the public and inexperienced as a senior

public politician.' (Anderson, 30.09. 2010). This reflects the unanticipated nature of the outcome. These worries were swiftly evaluated by political commentators, who observed that 'Miliband is not yet an orator, he has neither the heft nor the charisma of the best leaders' (Ashley, 28.09.2010). Although his ability to connect through *pathos* is evident through disarming social democratic rhetoric, his failure to connect these positions to the wider audience has also been noted.

Miliband's absence of external impact can be attributed to an oratorical disconnect between himself and the electorate (*New Statesman*, 12.01.2012). This disconnect prevents his rhetoric from garnering the required external salience. Critics such as Richard Heller argue the disconnect as an issue relates to an absence of *pathos* in his speeches, which tend to be structured with linguistic barriers (Heller, 2011). 'Ed Miliband and his speech writers stuffed his peroration with stale politician-language which has been heard a million times and has lost all power to stimulate emotion or belief.' (*ibid*). Given this, Miliband's inability to engage with *pathos* in a meaningful manner outside of his core support based remains a significant hurdle for the Labour leader. Indeed, such a hurdle has the potential to undermine Labour's ability to demonstrate a socio-economic alternative to the austerity of the Conservative-Liberal coalition. *Pathos* aims for the speaker to draw out vivid imagery, descriptions and concepts – an art which Kinnock knew well – in order for the audience to construct a visual idea of the argument. For the audience to connect emotionally with the speaker, the orator must connect in their level. It is worth remembering that 'in oratory the very cardinal sin is to depart from the language of everyday life, and the usage approved by the sense of the community'

(Cicero, cited by Remer 1999). Miliband's use of dry political terminology acts as a barrier to this process and ensures he is unable to advance his rhetoric.

Rational thought, logical argument, and factual evaluation are key aspects which a successful orator must utilise. Even emotional orators such as Bevan and Foot sought to field their arguments towards *logos* following a speech drawn from *pathos*. Miliband's use of *logos* draws upon deductive reasoning to construct a convincing argument, based on a initial cause and subsequent effect. For example, his speech against Scottish independence presents an argument utilising such a deductive process.

> If the people of Scotland decide to separate, as they can, it would not affect
> Scotland alone. It will affect all of us in the four nations of this country. That is
> why I am here today. So as this campaign begins, we need to understand the
> stakes. Some people, including the First Minister, will tell you it is a battle
> between him and the Prime Minister, between the Government of Scotland and
> the Government of the United Kingdom. So let me say clearly: It is right that the
> people of Scotland decide the rules and timing of this referendum (Miliband,
> 2012).

By highlighting the stakes of the decision, and his logic for unity, Miliband is aiming to emphasise the *logos* for a democratic mandate for an independent Scotland. Miliband continued to argue that given 'unemployment at its highest in 18 years' and 'rising food and energy prices', these facts should contribute towards the argument for continued unity rather than division (*ibid*). By drawing from deductive reasoning tied to fiscal realities, Miliband seeks to frame his oratory around *logos*, to convey a logical argument.

More broadly, Miliband's use of *logos* in his oratory extends to economic matters,

arguing 'we can't spend our way to the new economy' (Kelly, 8.01.2012). Connected to the narrative of 'too far, too fast', Miliband's leadership aims to critique the speed of coalition austerity rather than the concept itself, demonstrating the *logos* of conceptual austerity. Indeed, given Alistair Darling warned Labour's austerity would be 'tougher and deeper' than those enacted by the Thatcher governing during the 1980s, the *logos* of Miliband's position is broadly accepted as orthodoxy (BBC, 25.03.2010).

The Labour Leadership of Ed Miliband

To extend this evaluation of Miliband's leadership more fully it is necessary to evaluate his leadership across a range of arenas, relating back to the oratorical criteria throughout. This will enable a focused evaluation of Miliband's leadership to emerge, drawing from the ballast of Miliband's oratorical abilities.

As leader of the opposition, Miliband's rhetoric aims to highlight policy failures of the coalition government and, where possible, present an alternative. Yet from the examples above, it is possible to discern oratorical failures in this key respect. As yet Miliband has struggled to convince, provoke appropriate emotion beyond supporters, or demonstrate economic competence as either leader of the opposition or even a potential future Prime Minister. Such failings conspire to undermine the future electoral potential of the Labour Party, whilst enabling the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties to portray Labour as economically incompetent, led by a leader of similar political incompetence. This perception is in part perpetuated by oratorical failures in three key arenas, these being the House of Commons, media engagement, and to a reduced extent the party conference.

Each afford Miliband with an opportunity to demonstrate oratorical competence, yet a prevailing narrative of incompetence tends to be frequently shown. The focus of this analysis will be to evaluate the cause and effect of Miliband's oratorical failures and how the shortcomings are manifest.

Immediately upon securing the leadership, Miliband announced that he would set about a fundamental shift in Labour philosophy by announcing a 'blank page' approach to specific policies. The *logos* of this decision was to create a clear, definitive break with the New Labour period, setting the scene for a new direction. 'I am talking about change as profound as the change New Labour brought, because the world itself has changed massively, and we did not really change fundamentally as a party, or come to terms with the changes, and have not done so since 1994' (Public Service, 2010). Reflecting the need for reform, Miliband believed that this position would demonstrate *ethos*. Yet rather than show competence, it immediately enabled the Conservative Party to demonstrate Miliband's lack of *logos*, saying 'Miliband's policy book is full of blank pages' (Goodman, 2011). By declaring Labour had a 'blank page', this immediately led to the accusation that Labour had nothing to contribute to debates on economic policy, social policy, or foreign affairs. Each of these areas, emerging as key debating grounds, were vacated by the Labour leadership, enabling the opposing parties to put forward their analysis exclusively to the electorate. By surrendering the agenda to the Conservative-led government, Miliband was unable to defend Labour's record, or attack the policies of the coalition. For any orator, having little political rhetoric is highly problematic.

In terms of Miliband's Parliamentary performance, his lack of *ethos* at the despatch box also undermines his potential impact. This can be partly attributed to a lack of consistent gravitas which an orator needs to command through either *pathos* or *logos*. Pitch, diction, manner and clarity each contribute to the oratorical technique sought. For Miliband, his *ethos* is undermined by an absence of convincing delivery. Such is Miliband's discomfort with Prime Minister's Questions that he has expressed a recent desire for reform, however his inability to explore *how* further undermines his *ethos*. 'I find the Westminster village gets much more excited about it than the population, I believe. I don't know how to change it so I'm not going to make false promises about changing it but I would love to change it if I could' (Miliband, 9 February 2012). The importance of PMQs rests in its ability for party leaders to showcase their leadership talents to their backbenchers, of which a strong oratorical ability is vital.

Outside of PMQs, it must be noted that Miliband's leadership benefited from an instance of prominence when the Parliamentary parties broadly aligned themselves in condemning the practices of News International in the phone hacking scandal. Although the three main parties united in condemnation, Miliband was effective in drawing upon both *pathos* and *logos*. His muted oratorical delivery framed the Parliamentary debate, reflecting the solemnity of the issues. By adopting a calm approach, combined with conciliatory language, Miliband spoke for the House. As a result, he was able to garner a degree of post-debate political capital, enhancing his short term *ethos*.

> He is right to take the position that Rebekah Brooks should go. When such a serious cloud hangs over News Corporation, and with the abuses and the systematic pattern of deceit that we have seen, does he agree with me—he

clearly does—that it would be quite wrong for them to expand their stake in the British media? Does he further agree that if the House of Commons speaks with one voice today—I hope the Prime Minister will come to the debate—Rupert Murdoch should drop his bid for BSkyB, recognise that the world has changed, and listen to this House of Commons? (Hansard, 13 July 2011).

Miliband's calm approach, linked to *pathos*, demonstrated a unity of purpose previously demonstrated at his first conference speech. As Hayton argues, 'Miliband successfully seized the political initiative and left the Prime Minister trailing by calling for a public inquiry, demanding the resignation of Rebekah Brooks, and tabling a motion calling on News Corporation to drop its bid for BSkyB' (Hayton, 16.07.2011). Such was the inherited political capital that Miliband earned an opportunity to potentially reshape his leadership and communicate his broader social democratic message to the electorate.

Yet, following on from his moment of prominence, he reverted to a position of failing to fully grasp the policy agenda, a necessity as identified by Hayton (2011). As a consequence of this failure, Miliband aimed to retain the residual political capital by referring to himself as 'the guy who took on Murdoch' rather than the provider of alternative positions on 'the economy, public services, and the burgeoning eurozone crisis' (Miliband, 6.01.2012; Hayton, 16.07.2011). As a consequence of this failure to *carpe diem*, Miliband's Parliamentary performances generally remain oratorically unconvincing.

Outside of Parliament, Miliband's oratory tends to rely upon a self-referencing technique to connect himself to the audience. Use of phrases such as 'and let me tell you', 'but I

have to tell you', 'and let me tell the British people' illustrate this form of reference (Miliband, 27.09.2011). Most prominent when being interviewed by the media, Miliband tends towards presenting *his* view, structuring his arguments as 'I think it would make a difference. I also say don't leave young people out of work, one in five young people out of work. What I was going to say was that I sense a real feeling of fear in this country' (BBC, 25 September 2011). As an attempt to connect himself to the electorate, the technique has value. However, the consolidated disconnect reduces Miliband's *ethos* insomuch as his arguments do not resonate with the electorate. Given this, Miliband's oratorical impact is further reduced.

Across the three arenas, Miliband's success varies. In conference, he is at his best because he is able to connect emotionally to a sympathetic audience. That audience anticipates the unifying message he delivers, presenting a clear purpose and direction for the Labour Party. This is Miliband's most effective oratorical arena. He does less well in the Commons because of the more confrontational approach, shining only when unity of purpose again emerges (e.g. in the debate surrounding News Corporation). A reliance on unity, therefore is necessary for Miliband's oration. In terms of media engagement, Miliband is disconnected from the audience by his self-referencing and lack of credibility as leader. This can be attributed to the self imposed lack of rhetoric, the lack of broader oratorical ability, and the confrontational nature of competitive politics. Miliband performs well to a united audience; whilst this may prove an effective tool for party management, it is unlikely to prove as effective more broadly.

In summary, Miliband's place in the tradition in Labour oratorical elites is unconvincing. As illustrated by the sample of leading Labour orators, successful oratory tends to be advanced through division. This enabled Bevan, Gaitskell, Foot and Kinnock to draw from the oratorical techniques to frame and advance their arguments. Given the context of New Labour unity, it is unsurprising that Miliband's oratorical education would lack similar conflicts. However, despite this, Miliband's oratory fails due to a lack of gravitas, emotional connection with the audience, an inability to convey a logical argument, which leads to a decline of credibility.

Conclusion

To conclude, this paper has argued that oratory is central to the advancement of political elites. Given the communication of rhetoric advances ideological trajectories, the significance of individual oratory is evident, demonstrated by an indicative sampling of leading Labour orators. Such oratorical impact has contributed to the formation of the national health service, controversies surrounding the debates over Clause IV, the possible role of Britain in the Vietnam War, and the future ideological direction of the Labour Party *vis-a-vis* Militant Tendencies. The use of effective oratory cannot, therefore, be understated. Through compelling oratory, leading elites have contributed to issues which were determined by the strength of argument, coupled by equally compelling rhetoric.

This article has conducted the investigation of oratory through the tripartite approach of *ethos, pathos*, and *logos,* which enables an insight to emerge as to how the linguistic tools

are deployed by leading political figures. Emotional truth, logical argument, and the credibility generated by the speaker constructs a convincing approach for oratorical analysts. Evident in the sampling of Labour elites, such oratorical tools had the potential to determine the outcome of political discourses. Yet, the unconvincing nature of Miliband's oratory and rhetoric can be attributed to a lack of *pathos* and *logos* in key arguments, undermining his *ethos*.

Miliband's areas of success tend to be those where he is orating to his supporters. The unifying arena of conference ensures a receptive audience. Given the importance of unity throughout the New Labour period, it is unsurprising such conditions prevail as the orthodoxy. Yet an understanding of the extent to which such unity retards the growth of compelling orators is vital. It is also worth remembering that Miliband garnered maximum impact for a short time during the unity he capitalised upon during the Parliamentary News Corporation debate. This enables the conclusion his reliance on unity, cooperation and agreement subvert the conditions experienced by the elite sampling, and also conspire to make Miliband ineffective under the critique of regular political heat. Addressing conference, *pathos* is a benefit, yet addressing the media or Parliament, for Miliband it remains unpersuasive. In addition, by adopting the 'blank page' approach to policy, Miliband surrendered the debate to his opponents, undermining further his *ethos* as leader.

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