

Introduction

Analysing oratory in Labour politics

Andrew S. Crines and Richard Hayton

Introduction

The British Labour Party has been blessed – or perhaps, in some cases cursed – by a succession of commanding orators, many of whom have used the power of their speech to become highly influential figures within the movement. More broadly ‘oratory has long been a highly prized political skill, regarded as an almost essential prerequisite for political advancement in modern liberal democracies’ (Leach, 2000: 1). Since its foundation Labour has been committed to parliamentary democracy, and the achievement of its ends through evolutionary change rather than revolutionary action. The party also has a long tradition of internal (often fierce) debate about its direction, policies and ideology. The capacity to persuade others within the party and the Labour movement more generally, and indeed voters beyond it, has consequently always been a vital and valued skill for Labour politicians.

Oratory is therefore not only an attribute common to successful politicians, but a key mode of engagement and debate in a democratic society. This has long been recognised, with the art of oratory being admired, analysed and taught since the age of Athenian democracy. In modern times great orators such as Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill and Martin Luther King, to name but a few, have been similarly lauded not only for their oratorical skills, but also for their ability to inspire followers and effect political and social change through the power of their words. In spite of this, the study of oratory by political scientists, particularly in the UK, has been limited. As discussed below, a small (but growing) number of scholars have energised the study of rhetoric in British politics, and brought it more mainstream attention in the discipline. However, even this work – which this volume takes inspiration from and seeks to add to – has perhaps underplayed the oratorical dimension of the study of rhetoric. This book therefore aims to shift the focus of our analysis to a selection of leading political figures in post-war Labour Party politics. By focusing on each as individual orators, the volume concentrates on the analysis of speech, both in terms of what is said, and how it is said. In this sense oratory is conceptualised simply as the art of public speaking, while the emphasis on oratory means that we are particularly interested in the style of delivery employed, as well as the

rhetorical content of the speech itself. In the traditional canons of rhetoric, 'style' and 'delivery' (i.e. how something is said) have been distinguished from 'invention' and 'arrangement', which are concerned with what is being said. In practice, however, it is near impossible to divorce how something is said from its rhetorical content. Consequently, each chapter will utilise the three primary modes of persuasive appeal identified by Aristotle, namely *ethos* (appeal based on one's character); *pathos* (appeal to emotion); and *logos* (the appeal to reason/logic). This acts as a common analytical thread throughout the volume, and is discussed in greater detail in 'The study of oratory and rhetoric in British politics' section below.

This book examines the use and impact of oratory in Labour politics through case studies of twelve key figures in the party in the post-war era. Each chapter considers how the politician in question used their oratorical skills in relation to three key audiences: 1) the Parliamentary Party; 2) the wider party membership; and 3) the electorate. These audiences relate to three important oratorical arenas, namely 1) Parliament; 2) party conference; 3) public and media engagement (the electoral arena). As such the volume assesses how political rhetoric has been deployed in an effort to advance competing ideological positions within the party, and the role of oratory in communicating Labour's ideology to a wider audience. Through this case-study approach, the book argues that oratory remains a significant feature of Labour politics in Britain, and analyses how it has changed over time and in different contexts.

Labour Party politics in historical context

The academic study of Labour history is a well-trodden road. To name but a few Steven Fielding (2003; 2007; 2010; Fielding and Tanner, 2006), Andrew Thorpe (2005; 2006; 2008; 2009), and Keith Laybourn (2008; 2009; 2011a; 2011b) represent something of a vanguard in the field of Labour history. Scholars such as these have advanced a range of interpretations that aims to better understand the political and intellectual significance of socialism, and with it the growth of the British Labour Party. These historical studies tend to revolve their interest around trade unionism, ideological theory, and issues such as the growth and disintegration of the Independent Labour Party. Our focus, however, is on the distinctive contribution of leading orators to such debates. Consequently the focus of this volume is on the style of communication of leading Labour figures, namely Aneurin Bevan, Hugh Gaitskell, Harold Wilson, James Callaghan, Barbara Castle, Tony Benn, Michael Foot, Neil Kinnock, John Smith, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Ed Miliband. Utilising carefully crafted rhetoric, each has contributed to key debates about the direction and ideology of the Labour Party.

Given Labour was founded by a range of groups such as the Social Democratic Federation and various trade unions it can be little surprise that disagreements over the ideological objectives of the Parliamentary Party would emerge (Thorpe,

2012). In the post-war period many of these divisions were expressed through two dominant ideological traditions: the social democratic right and the broadly moderate left (Crines, 2011; Jones, 1996; Kogan and Kogan, 1982; Thorpe, 2008). There was, of course, the much larger but less cohesive group of 'centrists' who tended to avoid entanglement with either the left or right traditions (Crines, 2011). Ideologically each faction eschewed revolutionary approaches to socialist change in favour of the parliamentary route (Morgan, 2007b; Radice, 2010). Only Benn's flirtations with the radical left during the 1970s and early 1980s represent a significant shift in favour of extra-parliamentary action (Powell, 2001). As a result the orators analysed in this volume tended to frame their rhetorical arguments against their internal and external ideological enemies whilst seeking to attract greater support from the 'centrists'. For example, Gaitskell at Stalybridge in 1952 attacked the moderate left by suggesting they hid a more Soviet-inspired interpretation of socialist theory (Brivati, 1999: 103). Indeed, he also argued a number of Communists had infiltrated the party for the purpose of radicalising it towards revolutionary action. Many on the left rejected this, with Michael Foot seeing it as a British form of McCarthyism (Morgan, 2007b). However by making such a passionate and confrontational speech Gaitskell was able to present himself as a patriotic anti-Communist. In so doing he solicited the all-important support of more centrists as well as the Transport and General Workers Union, which was on Labour's right (Brivati, 2008; Crines, 2011). Conversely the speech irritated many of Bevan's ideological allies (Saville, 1980). Gaining the support of the centre was particularly important to Gaitskell given there was a growing suspicion that Clement Attlee may step down as leader thereby precipitating a leadership election in which both he and Bevan would be important players (Bernstein, 2004). In the event, Attlee would go on to contest the ill-fated election in 1955 after which Gaitskell defeated the ageing Herbert Morrison and Bevan for the leadership (Bernstein, 2004). However by striving to appear more moderate and considered Gaitskell was better positioned than his competitors for the leadership.

The divisions between the social democrats and the moderate left in this period established much of the ideological heat of contention for the coming decades as a form of tribalism (Hassan, 2009). In 1963 Harold Wilson sought to present a new direction for the Labour Party during his 'white heat' conference speech. He argued that the divisions between the Bevanites and Gaitskellites were holding the party back electorally. Moreover, by embracing a new conception of scientific socialism Labour would be better suited to capture the rhetorical value of the new technological age for the progressive majority (Wilson, 1963). By doing so he characterised the Tories as backward-looking, whilst simultaneously implying the same for some in his own party who may reject the need to renew (Wilson, 1963). He also suggested that higher education, abolition of the 11-plus, and investment in science would enable Britain to compete with the dominant global powers of the United States and the Soviet Union. However, to achieve this it would be necessary for

Labour to move beyond a mindset that was stuck in the age of heavy industry and embrace the technological future (Crines, 2013b). Wilson was consequently able to position his leadership above the two ideological factions of the 1950s, adopt a more pragmatic approach to socialist theory, and to simultaneously make Labour appear forward-looking and dynamic (Walden, 2006). It was, put simply, a performance aimed at the electorate which was designed to sell Labour as a united political force of moderates. Although it only helped secure Labour a majority of five, it was partly successful in cooling the longer running ideological battles. As Roy Jenkins argues, these were also tamed by having a (lukewarm) Bevanite as prime minister with a team of Gaitskellites dominating his Cabinet (Jenkins, 2009).

During the 1980s the Labour Party faced a cataclysmic explosion of ideological division because radical groups such as the Socialist Campaign for Labour Victory and the Militant Tendency had begun infiltrating the party since the abolition of the Proscribed List in 1973. They rose to prominence through the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and the Rank and File Mobilising Committee (Fielding and Tanner, 2006; Kogan and Kogan, 1982: 15; McCormick, 1980: 381). Without the Proscribed List individuals that were affiliated to radical groups were able to join the Labour Party at constituency level and begin radicalising the membership (Crines, 2011). After the 1979 election defeat sufficient numbers of radicals existed at constituency level for an ideological battle to take place at the conference(s) (Thorpe, 2008). This battle was between Benn's characterisation that the Labour leadership were, essentially, 'closet Tories' (BBC, 1995) and Michael Foot's argument that Labour was, and always had been, a democratic socialist party of non-revolutionary moderates (Morgan, 2007). This debate publicly dominated conferences and party meetings for a number of years, tainting the public's perception of the party at a time of economic change (Kavanagh, 2011). However, the Bennite faction ultimately went into remission after Denis Healey defeated Benn for the deputy leadership in 1981, precipitating a right-wing backlash (Heffernan, 1992). After 1983, a sizable majority of moderate social democrats and the moderate left recognised the need to renew the Labour Party which required a process of ideological change. This was accelerated by Kinnock's powerful attack on the Militant Tendency and the radicals at Liverpool council at the 1985 conference (Clifford, 2012). This speech sent the clear message that Labour was not a radical party and that militant elements were not welcome (Blackledge, 2013). It also solidified the loose bond between the moderate factions and helped lay the foundations for the emergence of New Labour ten years later (H. Smith, 2010).

Kinnock's speech and subsequent modernisation agenda were not sufficient to secure office, and following the 1992 election defeat his successor Smith argued that Labour's closeness to the trade unions was damaging its electoral image (Hyman, 2005). In an effort to counter the perception that the trade unions had too much influence over the party leadership Smith reformed Labour's constitution to end the trade union block vote and replace it with One Member, One Vote (OMOV).

However, when Tony Blair became leader he argued Smith's reforms lacked sufficient impact with the electorate and that reforming Clause IV would send a clearer message that Labour had modernised (Riddell, 1997). This was predicated on Blair's argument that the old Clause IV did not reflect the needs and values of the electorate and that it represented a hostage to fortune that Labour's opponents could use to undermine its credibility. Indeed, he strongly argued that Labour should 'say what we mean, mean what we say' (McSmith, 2006). As a result Blair's modernisation strategy substantially accelerated the earlier attempts to reform Labour as a moderate and united party through articulating a case for ideological transformation and unity of purpose. Underpinning this change was the move beyond traditional left-wing adherences and social democratic theory and more towards Third Way Revisionism (White, 1998). This shift placed greater emphasis on the role of the individual in society and that, although the state would provide certain services, individual responsibility would play a stronger part in a new social contract.

After Blair stood down as Labour leader, Brown sought to define his leadership by articulating a coherent narrative of Britishness. He argued that a greater sense of national identity would produce 'a clearer understanding of the common core of rights and responsibilities that go with British citizenship' and that these 'will help build our sense of shared identity and social cohesion' (Brown and Straw, 2008: 193). However this failed to resonate because his credibility and character were undermined by ideological infighting at the heart of New Labour (Heppell, 2008) and his premiership was soon overtaken by events in the form of the global financial crisis.

In sum, Labour's transformative journey has been substantially shaped by the delivery of powerful speeches at key moments in the party's history. Specifically, Gaitskell (revisionism), Wilson (white heat), Kinnock (renewal), Blair (Clause IV), and Brown (Britishness) have each sought to articulate new roadmaps for Labourism that attempted to change elements of Labour's ideological narrative and, as a consequence, its image with the electorate. Others such as Bevan (moderate left), Benn (radical left) and Foot (liberal left) each found themselves on the opposing side of such ideologically driven debates, yet what unites them all is the ability to deliver rousing speeches to both their supporters and the centrists.

The study of oratory and rhetoric in British politics

The academic study of the art of oratory has received relatively little attention from scholars interested in British politics. This is somewhat surprising given its clear linkages to burgeoning areas of the discipline such as the study of party leadership and ideological controversies. The study of rhetoric, however, has received an upsurge of interest amongst analysts of British politics in recent years, with significant contributions being made by academics such as Judi Atkins, Max Atkinson, Jonathan Charteris-Black, Alan Finlayson, John Gaffney, James Martin and Richard Toye.

Collectively this developing body of scholarship has shed new light on the nature of political communication in the UK.

Toye's (2013) introduction to rhetoric concisely summarises historical and contemporary approaches to the study and execution of communication. He rightly starts by reminding the reader that 'the idea of rhetoric as a distinct branch of knowledge had its origins in Athens in the second half of the fifth century' (2013: 7). He continues by highlighting the longevity of the study of rhetoric by reminding the reader that it was developed by the Sophists, Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, Hippoas and Thrasymachus (2013). It was amongst these early philosophers that the study of rhetoric first developed and gained influence. Famously, Aristotle identified the core modes of persuasion which continue to be studied today. Aristotle suggested that 'Of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three kinds. The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker; the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself' (Aristotle, 2004: 8). These modes are condensed by Aristotle into *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. For Toye, 'Aristotle's treatise was a remarkable effort to deal systematically with the problem of rhetoric, and the categorization he devised was to have a long influence' (2013: 14). Toye rightly argues that the study of rhetoric can produce valuable insights into the nature of political arguments, but that an appreciation of context is also vital as 'rhetoric is a social phenomenon, and its reception depends on the norms in operation in the society in which it is delivered' (2013: 109). By drawing upon specific modes of persuasion the rhetorical actor may prove more influential with one audience than with another: 'however good the effect on the immediate listeners, it is impossible to tell how a speech will travel and with what effects' (2013: 109). This caution rightly suggests that a written speech can be (and often is) reinterpreted after delivery which may result in unintended changes of emphasis in the political message.

To demonstrate the contemporary value of the academic study of rhetoric Toye explains the power of John F. Kennedy's rhetorical assault on global Communism, and discusses Ronald Reagan's striking performances in the presidential debates against Jimmy Carter (2013). Like most of the literature on rhetoric, Toye's embrace of the classical philosophies often draws inspiration from the more developed study of rhetoric in the United States. In the United States the study of political rhetoric is considerably more advanced 'because of the emphasis, in reality and in political science, on acutely personalized leadership itself (from Franklin D. Roosevelt onwards) as an agency of political change' (Gaffney and Lahel, 2013: 484). Yet the growing personalisation of politics in post-war Britain has led to a greater awareness of how political elites use rhetorical techniques.

Finlayson and Martin, for example, use the study of rhetoric to 'underscore the importance of speech as a form and mode of political action in its own right and highlight how the study of political speeches is of importance and interest for a range of concerns within British political studies' (2008: 446). As they note,

‘political rhetoric offers a rich seam for those seeking both to interpret and explain the interplay of tradition, innovation, ideology, action, performance, strategy and rationality in British politics’ (2008: 466). For them the study of rhetoric enables distinctive analyses and interpretations of debates and divisions to emerge. Furthermore Atkins and Finlayson acknowledge that although ‘there is not yet a single, systematic overarching research programme focused on political speech in Britain speeches are often an object of analysis and scholars are becoming more methodologically self-conscious about how best to use them in the study of political ideas, ideologies and actions’ (2013: 162). Finlayson also highlights that political rhetoric allows us ‘to think about how to bridge the gulf between what we “know” to be the case and what we think others imagine it to be’ (2012: 758). This is because the ideology of a political actor informs the kind of rhetoric they are likely to deploy. Indeed, as Finlayson notes, ‘ideologies provide actors with a series of locally established “commonplace” arguments which must be adapted to the demands of the situation’ (2012: 760). Thus the needs of the audience, the ideology of the rhetorical actor, and an appreciation of what is politically expedient may be challenges for the speaker and will likely texture their arguments. Moreover for Martin an audience can also be persuaded of an uncomfortable argument by demonstrating a logical (logos) need to embrace it whilst striving to protect core values (2013). For example, when attempting to convince the Labour conference of the need for modernisation, Blair ‘invited his audiences to perceive modernisation as the timely adaptation to a perpetually changing world, yet also securely anchored to enduring “Labour values” such as “progress” and “justice”’ (Martin, 2013: 2). By approaching the argument in this manner Blair successfully persuaded a sceptical audience of the need for ideological change that reflected the changing world. Successful persuasion of this kind can be made possible by employing specific rhetorical devices and oratorical techniques.

Presenting a credible and likable persona is a highly significant aspect of producing convincing rhetoric. By developing a political character the rhetorician may gain credibility (ethos) for their arguments. As Gaffney suggests, political rhetoric is used to construct or indeed undermine political personas and identities. For example, in the case of Miliband, both his Conservative opponents and the media rhetorically attacked Miliband’s persona in an attempt to undermine his credibility, variously describing him as ‘Red Ed’ and comparing him to Wallace from the animated comedy *Wallace and Gromit*. However, Gaffney and Lahel argue that Miliband was able to use the 2012 party conference ‘to modify his political identity as party leader, and to restore his political authority and status. By bringing “himself” centre stage, Ed also screened David Miliband out of the political narrative and out of contention as a potential rival’ (2013: 497, 498). To do this he gave an interview on the *Andrew Marr Show* before the conference which acted as ‘a prelude to the central issue that would dominate the conference: the character of the leader’ (2013: 490). He also invited Professor Michael Sandel from Harvard to give

a lecture to the conference which developed his earlier arguments on economic 'predistribution', thereby soliciting endorsement from an economic expert (2013: 491). Miliband also spent time attending and contributing to events taking place on the conference fringe ahead of giving his keynote speech. Gaffney argues this rhetorically constructed personal image enabled Miliband to fit effortlessly within a larger 'discernible structure ... of performances' which solidified his political authority over the party (2013: 498).

As well as the importance of the political persona, the rhetorician may also use anecdotes or metaphors to connect with their audience. These short 'stories' are brought into political speeches to use their own or other's experiences to support their argument. These 'witnesses', as Aristotle described them, are designed to give credence to a rhetorician's speech. Atkins and Finlayson note that the use 'of anecdote[s] in political speech has recently become more extensive' within British politics (2013: 161). This is because of a shift in audience expectations where narratives and experiences can be used to emotionalise arguments. Moreover, such anecdotes enable the speaker to avoid rhetoric that may appear overly politically abstract or dominated by logos. Instead they tell a story which they can claim was drawn from the experiences of real people. By doing so they seem more human and strive to show they appreciate the concerns of their audience. Atkins and Finlayson suggest this shift towards anecdotes and metaphors can partly be attributed to 'a populist shift in the "rhetorical culture" of contemporary British politics' (2013: 162). This enables the political actors to use such experiences as evidence to justify an argument they are striving to advance. Certainly this allows the rhetorician to claim greater authority as the anecdote carries 'force because of its presumed reality: the source confers authority, and the actuality of the events enables a conclusion about reality to be drawn' (2012: 164). This enables the political actor to enhance their authority by the virtue of their awareness of 'the real world', because such an awareness enables the actor to grow their credibility (ethos) as someone who can genuinely relate to the electorate.

For Charteris-Black metaphors embody a key part of speechmaking because they represent a significant technique that the speaker can use in persuading the audience of their case. As he notes, 'voters make decisions based on their judgements of the honesty, morality, and integrity of politicians' (2011: 1). Political rhetoric can thus be seen as a positive force that contributes to the essential lifeblood of politics because it enables parties to function by connecting politicians to the electorate. As a consequence how a rhetorical actor communicates with their audience will affect how the political process functions. Classical 'rhetoricians such as Aristotle and Quintilian recognised that different contexts required different methods of persuasion: influencing political decisions would not require the same methods as arguing legal cases or commemorating fallen heroes' (2011: 7). Charteris-Black continues: 'metaphors are very effective' in that process 'because they provide cognitively accessible ways of communicating politics through drawing on ways of thinking by analogy' (2011:

321). As a rhetorical technique, metaphors enable the speaker to construct complex arguments in a relatable fashion given the need to keep the attention of their audience. Indeed, as Atkinson argues 'the speaker who proves himself to be incapable of holding the attention of live audiences stands little chance of winning their approval' (Atkinson, 1984: 9). Such devices contribute towards keeping the attention of the audience. However Atkinson also suggests that the speaker may use applause as a barometer to measure their effectiveness in retaining the attention and approval of the audience by monitoring their responses. 'Depending on whether they are greeted by frequent bursts of applause, heckling or complete silence, they will be deemed to have had a rapturous, hostile or indifferent reception' (1984: 13).

The ability to enrapture an audience is a prized skill that serves to enhance an orator's reputation. Atkinson argues however that this is not simply a matter of possessing an innate gift, rather speakers can learn techniques to elicit support such as laying a 'claptrap' (1984: 48). Through careful timing and phraseology 'claptraps' are carefully crafted sentences where an audience is expected to respond in a specific way. As Atkinson explains, a speaker:

has to communicate with his audience in much the same way as a conductor communicates with an orchestra or choir. A single movement of the hand, arm, head, lips or eyes is unlikely to be enough to get musicians to come in on time ... but if he waves his baton, nods his head, and mouths the word 'now', synchronizing them all to occur at the same time, the chances of everyone spotting at least one of them are greatly increased. In the same way an effective claptrap must provide audience members with a number of signals which make it quite clear both that they should applaud and when they should start doing so. (1984: 48)

For the politician, these can be boasts about prior achievements, condemnations of political opponents or insults directed at political enemies. The speaker may also purposefully stress specific words or phrases through using carefully timed delivery so that the audience will respond to the speaker in the desired manner.

Dennis Glover confirms the validity of rhetorical techniques by arguing that 'the best orators are those who understand the needs of their audience and employ the right combination of logic, character, and emotion to convince, charm and sway' (2011: 56). For him, the political rhetorician needs to know their audience before being able to successfully apply any rhetorical devices. Glover also warns of the potential harm of an ineffective speech delivered to the wrong audience: 'the sudden disappearance of a forum can spell the end for a faltering politician. Like the sand rushing through an hourglass, an audience making for the exits usually signals that a leader's time is up' (2011: 63). To avoid this he argues that the strongest speeches use classical devices to keep an audience engaged. Successful speeches are delivered by those who 'combined the rules of rhetorical style – ethos, pathos, and logos' (2011: 74). Succinctly, the rhetorical devices are used interdependently by politicians but can be distinguished from each other analytically. Glover also

agrees with Atkinson that the meaning of words can be changed by their delivery, which the classical theorists divided into *tropes* (changes to an accepted meaning of a word) and *schemes* (rearranging the delivery of words to make them more appealing) (2011: 91). He rightly argues that these techniques remain relevant in analysing contemporary politicians. For example the electorate witnesses politicians using *tropes* and *schemes* 'every day when we watch the evening news: using the same word with double meaning; employing overstatement and understatement; asking a question and sometimes answering it; balancing a statement with its opposite; using the same words but in a different order; and repeating words, clauses and sounds' (2011: 95). These rhetorical techniques are, for Glover, hidden in plain sight. Indeed, 'watch a good or even moderate speaker in a political meeting or on television and you will notice that the applause tends to follow the use of these rhetorical devices' (2011: 95). The personal style of the speaker, their form of delivery, their passion and relationship with the audience are highly significant when evaluating communication, thereby suggesting that the study of oratory, which is inextricably linked to the growing field of rhetorical study, is also very important.

Structure

The following twelve chapters are dedicated case-study analyses of leading individuals during post-war Labour politics, drawing on the analytical tools discussed above. They have been selected for their noteworthy contributions to the development of Labour politics within their generational contexts. The twelve featured are Aneurin Bevan, Hugh Gaitskell, Tony Benn, Harold Wilson, James Callaghan, Barbara Castle, Michael Foot, Neil Kinnock, John Smith, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Ed Miliband.

In the first chapter, Andrew Crines and Keith Laybourn assess one of the most renowned Labour orators, Aneurin Bevan. They argue that although his fiery oratory and role as standard-bearer for the Bevanites informed his reputation as a divisive agitator, Bevan's powerful rhetoric was primarily anti-Conservative rather than aimed at fermenting intra-party ideological disputes. In Chapter 2, Timothy Heppell and Thomas McMeeking evaluate the man who defeated Bevan in the 1955 leadership election to succeed Clement Attlee as Labour leader, Hugh Gaitskell. As they point out, Gaitskell was not regarded as a great political orator and in many ways was the antithesis of Bevan, and he could also not match the communicative skill of the Conservative Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. As their analysis reveals, Gaitskell's oratorical dependence on *logos* limited his capacity to appeal to the emotions of his audience, leaving him reliant on attempting to educate and persuade listeners through rational argument. By contrast, in Chapter 3, Michael Hill notes how Gaitskell's successor, Harold Wilson, could employ varied forms of oratory to appeal to different audiences and frequently drew on pathos and a romantic

style. Wilson, Hill suggests, was able to articulate a new vision for Britain (encapsulated in his 'white heat of technology' speech) which for a time captured and helped define the zeitgeist of the age. Chapter 4 profiles one of the most acclaimed female orators in British Labour history, Barbara Castle. As David S. Moon discusses, Castle developed a rousing oratorical style which conveyed her fervently held beliefs and socialist politics, and drew on her gender and reputation as a 'fiery redhead'.

In Chapter 5, Stephen Meredith considers the more laid-back communication style of the fourth Labour leader to become prime minister, James Callaghan. Although displaying very different attributes to 'Labour firebrands' such as Castle or Bevan, Callaghan's oratory was, Meredith suggests, both effective and a key factor in his personal popularity, despite the problems his government faced in office. Callaghan's successor, Michael Foot, was already a renowned public speaker and parliamentary debater by the time he became Labour leader in 1980. In Chapter 6 David Stewart examines the development of this reputation from his election to the House of Commons in 1945, and argues that Foot's oratory has primacy over that of his peers in upholding Labour's liberal socialist idealism. Tony Benn is the subject of Chapter 7 where Mark Garnett characterises Benn's oratorical style as reflecting the tradition of nineteenth-century dissenters, and explores how in spite of his undeniable skill as a public speaker Benn was ultimately an unsuccessful radical orator. In Chapter 8, David S. Moon argues that Neil Kinnock had the consummate blend of oratorical attributes to defeat the Militant movement and shift Labour away from the hard-left towards electability. However, Moon also suggests that the very same characteristics ultimately impeded his appeal to the wider electorate. The chapter therefore offers a fascinating case-study of how oratorical skill and style can be powerful mobilisers of political change and also have far-reaching unintended consequences.

As Robin Pettitt argues in Chapter 9, John Smith's experience as a barrister lent itself to the confrontational nature of the Commons, and his success in that arena was key to his rise through the ranks of his party. Like Gaitskell, he based his oratory primarily on reason and logic, which occasionally led to the charge that he lacked ideological conviction. Smith's untimely death meant that his ability to connect with the electorate as a party leader at a general election was never tested, and the mantle passed instead to Tony Blair. As Mark Bennister contends in Chapter 10, Blair was an undeniably gifted communicator and in many ways redefined the standard for the modern British politician. However, as Bennister suggests, Blair did not come from, or become part of, a tradition of Labour oratory, but had a highly personalised form of political communication which rested on his own character and credibility. This was undermined in his later years in office as his power to persuade waned, but he remained an impressive orator. In Chapter 11 Judi Atkins evaluates the oratory of Gordon Brown, who after Blair himself was the dominant figure in New Labour politics. As Atkins suggests, Brown's impressive ability to deploy statistics and factual

evidence was central to his successful oratory as Chancellor of the Exchequer, but as prime minister he lacked the broader ability to develop a winning rapport with the electorate.

Finally in Chapter 12 Andrew Crines examines Ed Miliband's political oratory with particular reference to the emergence of rhetoric surrounding One Nation Labour. He argues that Miliband's style of communication is often effective in moments of political crisis (such as the phone-hacking scandal) or internal renewal, however more generally his oratorical abilities are held back by appearing uncertain during media encounters and, more particularly, Prime Minister's Questions.

Conclusion

In conclusion it is certainly evident that the academic study of rhetoric in British politics has received an upsurge of interest in recent years. This can be attributed in part to the growing personalisation of politics and the 'presidentialisation' of political leadership (Foley, 2000), and also to interest in analysing the role of individuals in the advancement of ideological positions. The personalisation of politics has placed greater onus on the character of individual speakers and the arguments they sought to make. As a fundamental the character of a speaker determines whether the audience is more or less likely to be persuaded by their argument. Throughout Labour history the character of the speaker has depended upon their ideological drive to advance their interpretation of socialism whilst attacking socialist traditions of rivals. These moments of disunity led to a tradition of oratory emerging that then became the mechanism through which ideological battles were fought. Indeed, the ideological discontent in the Labour Party was partly enabled by the oratory of those who sought to advance their conception of socialism. For example Gaitskell and Bevan both had very different understandings of socialism yet both used oratorical and rhetorical techniques to promote their ideas, thereby causing an ideological splintering.

The relatively recent upsurge of interest in rhetorical analyses demonstrates the twin importance of evaluating oratory and rhetoric. However thus far the focus of the literature in this introduction has been more upon the record of words (rhetoric) rather than their delivery (oratory). This focus risks overlooking some of the other major elements that can lead to effective communication. These may include their personal style, the persona of the speaker, passion, and their relationship with the audience. Of course, the tradition of powerful oratory in the Labour movement is generally recognised in those we have considered in this volume. Yet the academic study of Labour politics has also resisted focusing upon oratory itself. In part this is because it has emphasised the importance of collective action and internal ideological movements. The role of individual speakers tends to be subsumed by a more generalised approach to the study of Labourism. In fact, the advancement of

ideological traditions is traditionally seen to be the result of collective action rather than individual communicators. We would contend, however, that a more balanced approach reveals the duality of these causal factors and that communication played a significant yet overlooked role in such ideological battles. As a consequence this volume serves to fill this gap in the literature by analysing the oratorical and rhetorical techniques of twelve leading orators who have affected the evolution of Labour Party politics in the post-war period, and by doing so we demonstrate the important role of oratory.