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 have dubbed the 'bedroom tax' – and the demonisation of benefit claimants by the tabloid press. Nevertheless, both sides acknowledged that the welfare state was in need of reform.

Having specified the broad 'rhetorical context' (Martin, 2013, pp. 10-11) that gave rise to One Nation Labour and its emergent policy programme, this article will first situate its analysis within existing scholarship on British political speech and ideological renewal. Next, it utilises Michael Freeden's morphological approach to map and interpret the core concepts of Labour's ideology, before identifying the 'commonplace' arguments and rhetorical proofs with which this standpoint provides its adherents. Among these arguments are the narratives of party traditions, 'new times' and national renewal, and the article examines their role in making the case for One Nation social security reform. In so doing, it locates the three narratives within the ideological and rhetorical traditions of British social democracy, and demonstrates that they coalesce in the leadership persona of Ed Miliband. Though an attempt to respond to a populist 'rhetorical culture' (see Atkins and Finlayson, 2013), the article contends that this adaptation of the Labour narratives to the 'personalised political' (Gaffney and Lahel, 2013a, p. 487) has given rise to a solipsistic ideology that is unable to conceive of

an audience beyond itself. Labour must, therefore, imagine a wider audience, and adapt its rhetorical strategies accordingly, if it is to achieve its goal of a return to power in 2015.

Rhetoric and ideology in British politics

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in British political speech across a range of disciplines. Within Linguistics, for example, scholars have employed Critical Discourse Analysis to illuminate areas including parliamentary speech and the political interview (Chilton, 2004), the language of New Labour (Fairclough, 2000), and the use of metaphor by such figures as Enoch Powell, Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair (Charteris-Black, 2012). These studies have undoubtedly yielded valuable insights into the language of British politics but all under-theorise its relationship to ideology, either reducing it to a discourse or ignoring it altogether (Atkins, 2011, p. 6). If we accept that ideology remains an important part of political activity, this is a serious oversight that renders these accounts incomplete.

This omission is particularly problematic for the study of political speech in Britain since 2010. While many hold that the New Labour era was characterised by party convergence (see Hindmoor, 2005, p. 403), the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition has brought this period of 'consensus' to an abrupt end, and indeed is proving to be 'as ideologically radical as [the governments] of Thatcher and Attlee' (Jacobs, 2013a). Consequently, an appreciation of the role of ideology is arguably more important than ever. One approach that connects analyses of political speech with the study of ideologies is Rhetorical Political Analysis (Finlayson, 2004; Finlayson, 2007). This approach takes as its starting-point the Aristotelian categories of *ethos* (appeals based on the character of the speaker), *pathos* (appeals to the emotions of an audience) and *logos* (appeals to reason) but – crucially – perceives these three

forms of proof within specific 'argumentative contexts'. As Alan Finlayson explains, the shape of these contexts 'is in part defined by the historical development and deployment of these arguments which, if they are to survive, must win adherents in a contest of persuasive presentation' (2007, p. 559). That ideas are a vital component of any argumentative context is recognised by the existing scholarship on British political rhetoric (e.g. Atkins, 2010; Atkins, 2011; Atkins and Finlayson, 2013; Crines, 2013; Finlayson, 2012; Finlayson and Martin, 2008), to which this article seeks to contribute.

The article makes a further contribution to the small but expanding literature on the post-2010 Labour Party, which has so far focused on Miliband's leadership persona (Gaffney and Lahel, 2013a), the roots of One Nation (Jackson, 2012; Gaffney and Lahel, 2013b; Jacobs, 2013b; Wickham-Jones, 2013; Wood, 2013) and Labour's evolving social security policy (Bale, 2013). However, the morphology of Labour's post-2010 ideological platform remains unexamined, as do the narratives mobilised by leading Party figures to make the case for reform. By locating these narratives within the rhetorical and ideological traditions of British social democracy, the article provides a novel perspective on party renewal that complements the extant research on Labour Party modernisation (e.g. Buckler and Dolowitz, 2009; Diamond, 2004; Dommett, 2014; Jones, 1996).

The ideology of the Miliband Labour Party

According to Mark Wickham-Jones, One Nation offers '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, p. 322). Moreover, with its emphasis on unity over sectionalism, One

Nation distinguishes the party from both 'Old' Labour and the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition. These differentiation strategies are 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 Ed Balls's promise that One Nation economic policy will 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 contrasts these three opposing perspectives, but transcends them by formulating a fourth standpoint that incorporates a number of elements from, and yet goes beyond, the original positions (adapted from McAnulla, 2010, p. 292). We can perhaps refer to this technique as 'rectangulation'.

Freeden's morphological approach affords a useful means of mapping and interpreting the constituent concepts of Labour's ideology. On this view, ideologies are conceptual configurations, or 'morphologies', which consist of a core cluster, a number of adjacent concepts, and a periphery composed of ideas that are insignificant relative to the core. Freeden divides the peripheral elements of an ideology into two types. The first of these is the margin, which comprises concepts that are of little emotional and intellectual significance. Second is the perimeter, which consists of policy proposals and ideas and links the constituent concepts of an ideology to the social world (Freeden, 1998, pp. 77-9). Each of these concepts is rotated through 'a range of meanings until one of those meanings is held *vis-à-vis* the similarly held, or decontested, meanings of every other concept' (Freeden, 1998, p. 83), and a coherent ideological platform is generated.

The core concepts of Labour's ideology can be identified as social justice, inclusion, cohesion and mutual responsibility. Social justice is 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, p. 317). As Miliband puts it, One Nation 'is about everybody having opportunity' (2013a); it is 'a country where prosperity is fairly shared' (2012). Additionally, Labour is committed to the devolution of power to the local level, which is intended to promote inclusion by ensuring that every citizen 'feels able to play their part, not left on their own' (Miliband, 2013b). This rejection of the statism associated with 'Old' Labour echoes 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, p. 262). It also informs David Cameron's idea of the 'Big Society', which seeks to promote inclusion by encouraging social responsibility (Cameron, 2006). For Miliband, however, this goal is to be achieved primarily by combating inequalities of power and opportunity. As such, inclusion and social justice are closely linked to their adjacent concept of localism.

In accordance with the traditional social democratic commitment to co-operative action, the concept of cohesion is decontested as a belief in the importance of a common life. In Miliband's words, 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 continues, One Nation can be realised only if people across society accept the responsibilities they owe to each other (2012). This represents a departure from the New Labour era, in which government was 'too silent about the responsibilities of those at the top' and, moreover, subordinated our civic duties to the rights of individuals (Miliband, 2012; Atkins, 2011, pp. 181-3). It also differentiates Labour from the Conservative-led coalition which, Miliband claims, 'preaches responsibility. But do 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' (2013b). In contrast, Labour will ensure that everyone – from the richest in society to those on social security benefits – fulfils their obligations and so plays their part

in rebuilding Britain as One Nation (Miliband, 2013b); the concepts of cohesion and responsibility are mutually dependent.

Having mapped the core cluster of Labour's ideology, the question arises of how these commitments relate to the rhetoric of One Nation. As noted above, Freeden holds that the perimeter acts as an interface between the constituent concepts of an ideology and the social world. This enables the ideology to incorporate and respond to social change, and so plays a vital role in conceptual decontestation (Freeden, 1998, pp. 76-80). More than this, however, Finlayson argues that ideological activity at the perimeter involves 'making political claims, proving judgements and staging interventions in ways that might persuade others to assent to them'. In other words, an ideology is not simply a system of ideas that shapes political thinking, but a means for actors to 'express and embody their political thinking and communicate it to others' (2012, pp. 757-8). To understand this function of ideology, we need to enter the realm of rhetoric and argumentation.

On Finlayson's view, ideologies 'provide actors with a series of locally established "commonplace" arguments, which must be adapted to the demands of the situation'. More specifically, they supply both substantive arguments and a set of criteria for evaluating whether an argument is good or bad, whether it constitutes an appropriate or inappropriate means of persuasion (2012, p. 759). As we will see in the remainder of the article, One Nation has its roots in the modernising traditions of social democracy and, moreover, it builds on the discourses articulated by the British Labour Party in recent decades (Wickham-Jones, 2013, p. 327). Among these 'commonplace' arguments are the narratives of party traditions, 'new times' and national renewal, all of which have been deployed by previous Labour leaders to make the case for their modernised standpoint.

Ideological arguments also draw on the Aristotelian proofs of *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*, though the arrangement of these appeals and the degree of emphasis assigned to them will vary between ideologies (Finlayson, 2012, p. 759). While it is clear from the previous discussion that the definitions of concepts are of vital importance to ideological configurations, so too is their 'capacity to induce chains of quasi-logical reasoning'. This aspect of *logos* is known as the enthymeme, whereby a speaker describes a situation and incites their listeners to understand it in this way rather than in another (Finlayson, 2012, p. 762), and it plays a central role in the narrative of 'new times'. Furthermore, an ideology has an emotional tenor (Finlayson, 2012, p. 761), which derives primarily from the decontested meanings of its constituent concepts and forms the basis of appeals to *pathos*. As elaborated below, the mood of One Nation Labour is one of optimism and a shared destiny and, in their efforts to secure the assent of their listeners, party figures draw on their ideological commitments to construct an inspiring vision of a united Britain. Finally, contemporary political leaders are required to demonstrate their *ethos* and cultivate a leadership persona, which may embody the ideological commitments of their party. This is an important function of the 'personal-political' narrative of Miliband's leadership (Gaffney and Lahel, 2013a, p. 495), to which we return in due course.

The argument from *ethos* is also about the 'creation of community through forms of identification'. Here, a speaker attempts to persuade an audience that they share his or her interests, and thus establish rapport between them (Finlayson, 2012, p. 760; see also Burke, 1969, p. 46). This type of identification is evident in appeals to party traditions, whereby a leader seeks to demonstrate that their values accord with those of the movement they represent. However, as Finlayson correctly points out, '"the audience" is not a unitary or stable referent and is always in some measure a fictive creation around which rhetorical

invention is built'. That is, a speaker first imagines an audience and then presents their ideological claims in terms that are congruent with the common sense of that audience. These specifications of the target audience – which may include such constructions as the 'squeezed middle', 'hardworking families' and the 'silent majority' – are an integral part of an ideology (2012, p. 763) and, in attending to them, we can shed light on why some rhetorical performances connect with an audience whereas others do not.

Taking these insights into morphology and ideological argument as its starting-point, the article will now examine the narratives mobilised by leading Labour figures to make the case for One Nation social security. They are: party traditions; 'new times'; national renewal; and the 'personal-political' narrative of Miliband's leadership, and I consider them in turn.

Party traditions

In arguing for One Nation social security reform, Labour figures locate their agenda within their 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, p. 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, forthcoming).

A typical example is present in Miliband's case for the application of Labour's core concept of mutual responsibility to the welfare state. Here he invokes 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 seventy 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 is on a belief in the dignity of work – is 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 seek to locate their approach firmly within Labour's traditions, reaffirm their commitment to its core principles, and cultivate *ethos* by allying themselves with pioneering figures from its past. Taken together, these appeals to tradition are designed to reassure supporters that the One Nation social security agenda is in harmony with the party's ideological heritage, and that modernisation will 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 modernisers', before recalling the achievements

of Keir Hardie and Aneurin Bevan (1997). By emphasising these key moments in Labour's

history, Blair and Brown assumed the mantle of modernisation 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, pp. 13-14), and ultimately to the quest for hegemonic

advantage.

'New times' and modernisation

Whereas the above narrative emphasises One Nation Labour's fidelity to party traditions, a

second stresses the necessity of breaking with its past. Here, Labour figures employ *logos* to

characterise the present as 'new times', so that 'what will be is shown logically to follow'

(Finlayson, 2012, p. 762). This is achieved by means of two periodisations, the first of which

is ideological and proceeds from the assumption that the certainties of the New Labour era

were swept away by the global financial crisis of 2008. Miliband explains 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 globalisation and economic change would open up aspiration and benefit all … None of these certainties any longer hold (2013c).

As we will see below, this is an example of strategising 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' (2013, p. 6).

According to Miliband, 'One Nation Labour learns the lessons of the financial crisis … [and] adapts to new times'. Although it recognises the achievements of the Blair-Brown governments – notably the National Minimum Wage, the introduction of tax credits and increased investment in public services – it understands that New Labour was too cautious in its economic reforms, that it 'did not do enough to change the balance of power in this country', and that it neglected the responsibilities of those at the top of society. To rectify these mistakes, Miliband continues, One Nation Labour will reshape the economy to create shared prosperity, devolve more power and resources to the local level, and ensure that all sections of society fulfil their obligations (2013b). In so doing, it will be bolder than its predecessor in its efforts to realise 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 is able to frame party renewal as the only viable alternative while laying the foundations of the One Nation agenda.

The second periodisation is socio-economic and uses *logos* to detail the changes that Britain has experienced since the inception of the welfare state. As Byrne puts 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 per cent since 1971'. Consequently, Labour must 'renew [social security] for the 21st century and not freeze it in the past' (2012;

see also Miliband, 2013a). To meet these challenges, the next Labour government will help people into employment through the Compulsory Jobs Guarantee, the Basic Skills Test and increased childcare provision; make work pay by enforcing the Minimum Wage and promoting the Living Wage; and recognise the contribution of those who have paid into the system. These initiatives reflect the close connection between social justice and inclusion in Labour's ideology, and so will ensure that 'all do have the opportunity to play their part [in building One Nation], not just a few' (Miliband, 2013b). In short, Labour will 'keep the theory, and update the practice' (Byrne, 2012). Implicit in this commitment to find new means of realising the Party's traditional goals is an acknowledgement that 'Old' Labour's approach is inappropriate to these 'new times'; a return to past policies is not an option.

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 globalisation 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 'modernised 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, p. 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 serve to justify ideological revisionism, which in turn lays the foundations for a Labour government to enact its programme of national renewal.

One Nation and national renewal

By emphasising its continuity with, and departure from, party traditions, the previous two narratives position One Nation Labour relative to both 'Old' and New Labour. A third narrative completes the rectangulation process by distinguishing the One Nation approach from that of the Conservative-led coalition government. Here, Labour figures present 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, p. 15). To this end, they employ *pathos* and the rhetorical technique of *antithesis* to contrast the alleged failures of the Coalition with the One Nation agenda, and thereby assert the superiority of Labour's response to the challenges posed by 'new times'.

On Miliband's view, the Coalition stands 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' (2013d). Here, he calls attention to the divide between the wealthy and the rest of society – the 'two nations' in Disraelian terms – and uses *pathos* to induce a sense of injustice in his audience. Rachel Reeves's attack on the Conservatives' 'complacency' about rising unemployment is consistent with Miliband's critique, as is 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 continues, given that 'over five years the government is spending £1.4 billion more on Jobseeker's Allowance than they originally budgeted for' (2014). This violates the Coalition's pledge to drastically reduce public spending and, for Labour, provides proof that its policies are fundamentally flawed.

In contrast, Labour's programme is founded on the belief that Britain is at its best when it challenges separation and exclusion (Wood, 2013, p. 317). As Byrne puts 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 are manifested in Labour's One Nation plan for social security which, Reeves argues, will 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 aims to disrupt the Conservatives' efforts to pit one section of society against another, as exemplified by the crude *antithesis* of 'strivers vs. skivers' (see Hayton and McEnhill, 2014). One Nation thus approximates a 'projectile' that is intended to 'shift the terms of debate' (Martin, 2013, p. 4), and so wrest hegemonic advantage from Labour's opponents.

As we have seen, the idea of One Nation is appropriated from Disraeli, whose conservatism emphasised social responsibility and offered 'a vision of Britain coming together to overcome the challenges we faced' (Miliband, 2012). From this starting-point Miliband constructs a narrative of One Nation, into which he interpolates 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' is designed to confer credibility on Labour's proposals for social security reform which, as part of its wider policy programme, are intended to realise the Party's vision of a united Britain. It also challenges the Conservative-led coalition to demonstrate that it can govern for the whole of the nation, and not merely for the wealthy few.

The emotional tenor of One Nation Labour is of common endeavor and a shared destiny. This 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 (2013b).

By expressing Labour's longstanding commitment to co-operative action in everyday terms, Miliband may be 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, pp. 762-3). His language is also 'reminiscent of a kind of rallying war-time spirit' (Gaffney and Lahel, 2013b, p. 336), which in turn establishes a link between the devastation of post-war Britain and the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis – both of which, Labour claims, demand a collective response that only it can provide.

In elaborating his vision of Britain as One Nation, Miliband brings together his party's core values of inclusion, social justice and cohesion with an appeal to *pathos*:

> Friends, I didn't become leader of the Labour Party to reinvent the world of Disraeli or Attlee. But I do believe in that spirit. That spirit of One Nation. One Nation: a country where everyone has a stake. One Nation: a country where prosperity is fairly shared. One Nation: where we have a shared destiny, a sense of shared endeavour and a common life that we lead together. That is my vision of One Nation. That is my vision of Britain. That is the Britain we must become (2012).

Here, Miliband again uses colloquial language to communicate Labour's ideological commitments to a wider audience, heightening the emotional impact of his words through repetition. He thus seeks to win the assent of his listeners by inspiring them with the prospect of a better future for Britain, one that is starkly juxtaposed with the divided society he claims the Coalition's policies have created.

It is worth calling attention to the contrast between Miliband's optimism and the Conservatives' pessimistic vision of permanent austerity (see Cameron, 2013). In this, he draws on the utopian strand within British social democracy, which is 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 characterisations of 'new Britain' bear a striking resemblance to 'One Nation', and indeed all afford Labour leaders an effective means of

opposing their commitment to act for the whole country to the 'sectional' approach taken by the Conservatives.

Ed Miliband and the 'personalised political'

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, p. 760). Such appeals to the character of the speaker (*ethos*) are not, of course, unique to Labour leaders, but an examination of Miliband's rhetoric reveals that he positions 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. Miliband, 2012; Miliband, 2013b; Miliband, 2013c). In so doing, writes Ben Jackson, Miliband becomes the latest in a succession of 'reforming leaders of the left … [to couch] their appeal in populist and patriotic terms, seeking to mobilise low- and middle-income citizens against powerful elites' (2012, p. 160).

This populist strategy is equally evident in Miliband's claim that One Nation social security 'reflects the values of the British people' (2013a; see also Miliband, 2013b), where he constructs the public as an 'imagined community' that shares Labour's beliefs (see Gaffney and Lahel, 2013a, p. 484). While there is a long tradition of populism in British political speech, the party leaders of today must also demonstrate that they understand 'ordinary people'. To this end, Miliband frequently relates anecdotes about his encounters with them, of which the following is 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 highlights a flaw in the Coalition's approach and derives a policy conclusion from this diagnosis (Atkins and Finlayson, 2013, p. 170). By linking the problem to the everyday experience of an 'ordinary' citizen, he may be seeking to adapt to the demands of populist rhetorical culture, while enhancing his *ethos* as a leader who is 'in touch' with – and so is fit to represent – the people of Britain.

It is important to note that Miliband articulates 'One Nation' in terms of his personal experiences and beliefs (Gaffney and Lahel, 2013b, pp. 335-6; Dommett, 2014). 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 are not simply the values of the British people; they are the values of Miliband himself. For John Gaffney and Amarjit Lahel, this is an example of the 'personalised political', which involves 'bringing the self in some way into responses to wider issues' (2013a, p. 487) and thus affords the speaker a populist means of inviting identification. More than this, however, Miliband's leadership 'character' supplies a point of coalescence for the narratives of party traditions, 'new times' and national renewal that we considered above.

By aligning himself with historical party figures, Miliband offers himself as the present embodiment of Labour's traditions. Although he acknowledges the achievements of New Labour, which 'pioneered the idea of rights and responsibilities', Miliband rejects 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 are contrary to his own principles. Meanwhile, 'Old' Labour's way is

discarded due to its neglect of rights and responsibilities *per se*, which again runs counter to Miliband's values (2013b) though he endorses its commitment to collective endeavour. In this way, Miliband is positioned both within and in opposition to aspects of his party's ideological heritage by virtue of his personal beliefs. Similarly, Miliband's convictions provide a basis from which to criticise the 'unfair' policies of his opponents. This is 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 converge within the leadership persona of Ed Miliband, creating a rhetoric that is 'self-referential and "about him", [and which] informs the way "he" talks about issues, policies and events' (Gaffney and Lahel, 2013a, p. 499).

Evaluating One Nation Labour

The narratives of party traditions, 'new times' and national renewal proved highly effective for past Labour leaders, notably Blair and Wilson. This raises the question of why Miliband's One Nation agenda has so far failed to gain traction with the electorate. A possible explanation is that although the appropriation of this idea from the Conservatives was undoubtedly an audacious move, the Party's 'willingness to wrap every possible idea in which [it] is currently interested under the One Nation blanket – from environmentalism to gender equality, from opposing Scottish devolution to housing policy – has a deadening effect on ideological clarity' (Jacobs, 2013b, p. 315). In turn, there is a danger that such relentless sloganeering will alienate listeners, as 'simply repeating a key message or phrase [no longer] has the same resonance with electors that it once had' (Danczuk, 2014a).

A further difficulty is that the 'new times' narrative fails 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 is among their number also weakens the credibility of his leadership narrative, on the ground that the previous government is 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) threatens the integrity of the One Nation narrative and, by implication, of Miliband's leadership character. At the same time, as Gaffney and Lahel observe, 'One Nation became vulnerable through personal attacks upon or undermining of [Miliband's] persona' (2013b, p. 339). In short, the two narratives stand or fall together.

While Miliband's adaptation of the three 'commonplace' Labour narratives to the 'personalised political' may appeal to the party faithful, the electorate remain unconvinced by his *ethos*-driven rhetoric (see Crines, forthcoming, pp. 187, 190). Indeed, the Labour MP Simon Danczuk argues that the Party has 'become too comfortable with talking to ourselves, with policy announced through set-piece speeches as though in a university lecture' (2014b). Such addresses are characterised by the *epideictic* genre of rhetoric, whereby audience members are assigned the role of spectators who are there to 'experience the affirmation of values' (Finlayson, 2012, p. 763). However, this type of rhetoric serves only to reinforce the existing identification between the Labour leadership and party supporters, and so is unlikely to persuade a sceptical public to think of itself as belonging to that community. To address this, Labour needs to rely less on appeals to its own values and traditions (as embodied in Miliband's leadership persona), and instead conceive of an audience beyond the Party, imagine its common sense, and adapt its rhetoric accordingly. Many of Labour's policy

proposals are proving popular with the public (Toynbee, 2014); the challenge is to communicate them in a way that resonates with this wider audience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article has examined the core concepts of Labour's ideology and the substantive arguments at its perimeter. The analysis reveals that One Nation Labour articulates its values of social justice, inclusion, mutual responsibility and cohesion within three 'commonplace' narratives of British social democracy to carve out a distinctive position and make the case for social security reform. Like Blair and Wilson before them, leading Party figures employ *logos* to characterise the present as 'new times', a portrayal designed to justify ideological revisionism and lay the foundations for national renewal. The ultimate objective of this programme is to rebuild Britain as One Nation and, through *pathos*, Labour seeks to inspire its listeners with the promise of a better future, and so secure their assent.

It is the appeal to *ethos* that predominates within the ideology of One Nation Labour. In common with his predecessors, Miliband seeks to locate himself within his party's traditions and to offer himself as the present embodiment of its values. However, he must also respond to an increasingly populist rhetorical culture, and to this end he adapts the three Labour narratives to the 'personalised political'. Paradoxically, this strategy has created a solipsistic rhetoric that has so far failed to connect with the public; Labour's ideology is self-enclosed and cannot conceive of an audience beyond itself. The problems with this approach are obvious, and the Miliband Labour Party must imagine a wider audience, and adapt its rhetorical strategies accordingly, if it is to secure victory in 2015.

Acknowledgements

About the Author

Judi Atkins is Lecturer in Politics at Coventry University. She has published several articles on the relationship between rhetoric, ideology and policy in Britain, and she is author of *Justifying New Labour Policy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) and co-editor of *Rhetoric in British Politics and Society* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Judi Atkins, Department of International Studies and Social Science, Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry CV1 5FB. Email: *judi.atkins@coventry.ac.uk*

References

Atkins, J. (2010) 'Moral Argument and the Justification of Policy: New Labour's Case for Welfare Reform', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 12 (3), pp. 408-424.

Atkins, J. (2011) *Justifying New Labour Policy*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Atkins, J. and Finlayson, A. (forthcoming) '"As Shakespeare so Memorably Said…": Quotation, Rhetoric, and the Performance of Politics', *Political Studies*, doi: 10.1111/1467-9248.12156.

Atkins, J. and Finlayson, A. (2013) '"…A 40-Year-Old Black Man Made the Point to Me": Anecdotes, Everyday Knowledge and the Performance of Leadership in British Politics', *Political Studies* 61 (1), pp. 161-177.

Bale, T. (2013) 'Concede and Move On? One Nation Labour and the Welfare State', *The Political Quarterly* 84 (3), pp. 342-352.

Balls, E. (2013) *Speech to the Labour Party Conference*, 23 September.

Blair, T. (1995) *Speech to the Labour Party Conference*, 3 October.

Blair, T. (1996) *New Britain: My Vision of a Young Country*, London: Fourth Estate Limited.

Blair, T. (1998) *The Third Way: New Politics for the New Century*, London: Fabian Society.

Brown, G. (1997) *Speech to the Labour Party Conference*, date unknown.

Buckler, S. and Dolowitz, D.P. (2009) 'Ideology, party identity and renewal', *Journal of Political Ideologies* 14 (1), pp. 11-30.

Burke, K. (1969) *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Byrne, L. (2012) *Britain's New Bargain: Social Security for One Nation Britain*, 1 December.

Byrne, L. (2013a) *The Road Back to Full Employment – Speech to IPPR North*, 17 May.

Byrne, L. (2013b) *Speech to the Labour Party Conference*, 23 September.

Cameron, D. (2006) *Speech to the Conservative Party Conference*, 1 October.

Cameron, D. (2013) *Speech at the Lord Mayor's Banquet*, 11 November.

Charteris-Black, J. (2012) *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor*, 2nd edn., Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chilton, P. (2004) *Analysing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice*, London: Routledge.

Crines, A.S. (2013) 'An Analysis of George Galloway's Oratorical and Rhetorical Impact', *Politics* 33 (2), pp. 81-90.

Crines, A.S. (forthcoming) 'The oratory of Ed Miliband' in A.S. Crines and R. Hayton (eds.), *Labour Orators from Bevan to Miliband*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 187-199.

Danczuk, S. (2014a) 'The new "on message" is being off message', *The PRWeek blog* [online], 7 January. Available from: http://www.prweek.com/article/1226143/new-on-message-off-message [Accessed 18 April 2014].

Danczuk, S. (2014b) '"Mantra of misery" is a fool's policy: Labour won't win election by fighting defensively', *Mail on Sunday* [online], 18 May. Available from: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2631478/Mantra-misery-fools-policy-Labour-wont-win-election-fighting-defeatist-says-MP-SIMON-DANCZUK.html [Accessed 8 July 2014].

Diamond, P. (ed.) (2004) *New Labour's Old Roots: Revisionist Thinkers in Labour's History 1931-1997*, Exeter: Imprint Academic.

Dommett, K. (2014) 'Rhetoric and Party Politics – Looking Beyond the Leader' in J. Atkins, A. Finlayson, J. Martin and N. Turnbull (eds.), *Rhetoric in British Politics and Society*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 73-86.

Fairclough, N. (2000) *New Labour, New Language?* London: Routledge.

Finlayson, A. (2004) 'Political Science, Political Ideas and Rhetoric', *Economy and Society* 33 (4), pp. 528-549.

Finlayson, A. (2007) 'From Beliefs to Arguments: Interpretive Methodology and Rhetorical Political Analysis', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 9 (4), pp. 545-563.

Finlayson, A. (2012) 'Rhetoric and the Political Theory of Ideologies', *Political Studies* 60 (4), pp. 751-767.

Finlayson, A. and Martin, J. (2008) '"It Ain't What You Say…": British Political Studies and the Analysis of Speech and Rhetoric', *British Politics* 3 (4), pp. 445-464.

Freeden, M. (1998) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gaffney, J. and Lahel, A. (2013a) 'Political Performance and Leadership Persona: The UK Labour Party Conference of 2012', *Government and Opposition* 48, pp. 481-505.

Gaffney, J. and Lahel, A. (2013b) 'The Morphology of the Labour Party's One Nation Narrative: Story, Plot and Authorship', *The Political Quarterly* 84 (3), pp. 330-341.

Hayton, R. and McEnhill, E. (2014) 'Rhetoric and Morality – How the Coalition Justifies Welfare Policy' in J. Atkins, A. Finlayson, J. Martin and N. Turnbull (eds.), *Rhetoric in British Politics and Society*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 101-115.

Hindmoor, A. (2005) 'Reading Downs: New Labour and *An Economic Theory of Democracy*', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 7 (3), pp. 402-417.

Jackson, B. (2012) 'The masses against the classes: One Nation Labour and the revival of social patriotism', *Public Policy Research* 19 (3), pp. 160-165.

Jacobs, M. (2013a) 'The coalition government is proving as ideologically radical as those of Thatcher and Attlee', *British Politics and Policy at LSE* [online], 14 May. Available from: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/archives/33399 [Accessed 21 April 2014].

Jacobs, M. (2013b) 'Reflections on One Nation Labour', *The Political Quarterly* 84 (3), pp. 315-316.

Jones, T. (1996) *Remaking the Labour Party From Gaitskell to Blair*, London: Routledge.

McAnulla, S. (2010) 'Heirs to Blair's third way? David Cameron's triangulating conservatism', *British Politics* 5, pp. 286-314.

Martin, J. (2013) 'Situating Speech: A Rhetorical Approach to Political Strategy', *Political Studies* [online], pp. 1-18. Available from: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-9248.12039/pdf [Accessed 18 March 2014].

Miliband, E. (2012) *Speech to the Labour Party Conference*, 2 October.

Miliband, E. (2013a) *A One Nation Plan for Social Security Reform*, 6 June.

Miliband, E. (2013b) *Speech to the Fabian Society New Year Conference*, 12 January.

Miliband, E. (2013c) *Speech to Progress Conference*, 11 May.

Miliband, E. (2013d) *Speech to the TUC*, 20 September.

Reeves, R. (2014) *Speech on Social Security*, 20 January.

Smith, J. (1993) *Speech to the Labour Party Conference*, 28 September.

Toynbee, P. (2014) 'No poll jitters: Axelrod can help Labour hit back, and hard', *Guardian* [online], 16 May. Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/16/poll-jitters-axelrod-labour-miliband [Accessed 7 July 2014].

Wickham-Jones, M. (2013) 'The Modernising Antecedents and Historical Origins of One Nation Labour', *The Political Quarterly* 84 (3), pp. 321-329.

Wilson, H. (1963) *Labour's Plan for Science*, 1 October.

Wilson, H. (1966) *Speech to the Labour Party Conference*, 4 October.

Wood, S. (2013) 'Explaining One Nation Labour', *The Political Quarterly* 84 (3), pp. 317-320.