# Rhetorical Aspects of Tony Blair's Speeches as an Example of Effective Persuasion Political

**Abstract**

The article examines the rhetorical strategies employed by Tony Blair, former British Prime Minister and Labour Party leader (1997-2007), focusing on his integration of Aristotelian *ethos* and *pathos* within a socialist "rhetoric of conviction" tailored to modern media demands. Analyzing speeches delivered at Labour Party conferences from 1994 to 2006, sourced from www.britishpoliticalspeech.org, the study underscores Blair's adept use of classical rhetorical techniques to construct a credible and emotionally resonant political persona. Drawing on classical rhetoric as a framework, the article highlights Blair's strategic use of ethos – projecting good sense, moral character, and goodwill – to establish himself as an approachable yet authoritative leader. Through personal anecdotes, family-oriented language, and references to shared experiences, Blair crafted an image of an empathetic "everyman" while maintaining moral gravitas. His pathos-driven rhetoric leveraged emotional appeals, employing figures such as anaphora, antithesis, and rhetorical questions to evoke communal values like equality and solidarity, often framed within socialist ideals. These strategies were amplified by vivid metaphors, particularly those of conflict and journey, which imbued his speeches with moral urgency and epic narrative. Blair's style blended formal and informal registers, balancing clarity and emotional resonance to engage diverse audiences. His use of repetition, syntactic parallelism, and slogans ensured memorability and media compatibility, reflecting influences from American political communication, notably Bill Clinton's citizen-centric approach. The article also explores Blair's confrontational rhetoric against the Conservative Party, using irony, hyperbole, and *inter se pugnantia* to expose opponents' contradictions and reinforce his ethical stance. Grounded in ethical socialism, Blair's rhetoric reified abstract concepts like justice and equality, presenting them as tangible political goals. His quasi-religious language and emphasis on community and moral purpose positioned politics as a space of ethical conflict, enhancing his ethos as a leader of conviction. However, this simplification of complex concepts risked epistemological dilution, prioritizing emotional impact over nuanced argumentation. In conclusion, Blair's rhetorical efficacy stemmed from his ability to merge classical persuasion with modern media strategies, crafting a dynamic, inclusive, and morally charged discourse. His speeches exemplify a transformative approach to political oratory, blending tradition with innovation to resonate with contemporary audiences while advancing a socialist vision of collective responsibility and moral pragmatism..

**Słowa kluczowe:** rhetoric, political rhetoric, political discourse, speech

**Streszczenie**

Autorka analizuje strategie retoryczne stosowane przez Tony'ego Blaira, byłego premiera Wielkiej Brytanii i lidera Partii Pracy (1997-2007), koncentrując się na integracji arystotelesowskich pojęć *etosu* i *patosu* w ramach socjalistycznego „dyskursu przekonania", dostosowanego do wymogów współczesnych mediów. Praca obejmuje przemówienia wygłoszone na konferencjach Partii Pracy w latach 1994-2006, zaczerpnięte ze strony www.britishpoliticalspeech.org. Autorka podkreśla umiejętne wykorzystanie przez Blaira klasycznych technik retorycznych do budowania wiarygodnej i emocjonalnie angażującej persony politycznej. Opierając się na ramach klasycznej retoryki, autorka uwypukla strategiczne użycie etosu przez Blaira – projekcję zdrowego rozsądku, moralnego charakteru i dobrej woli – w celu przedstawienia siebie jako przystępnego, lecz autorytatywnego lidera. Poprzez osobiste anegdoty, język odwołujący się do rodziny oraz odniesienia do wspólnych doświadczeń Blair stworzył wizerunek empatycznego „człowieka z ludu", zachowującego jednocześnie moralną powagę. Jego retoryka oparta na pa-

tosie wykorzystywała emocjonalne odniesienia, czego świadectwem są takie figury, jak anafora, antyteza i pytania retoryczne oddające wspólnotowe wartości, takie jak równość i solidarność, często osadzone w ideałach socjalistycznych. Strategie te wzmacniały żywe metafory, zwłaszcza konfliktu i podróży, nadawały przemówieniom epicki charakter i oddawały naleganie odnoszące do moralności. Styl Blaira łączył rejestry formalne i nieformalne, równoważąc klarowność z emocjonalnym oddźwiękiem, aby zaangażować zróżnicowane audytorium. Użycie powtórek, paralelizmów składniowych i haseł zapewniało zapamiętywalność i zgodność z mediami, odzwierciedlając wpływy amerykańskiej komunikacji politycznej, zwłaszcza podejścia Billa Clintona skoncentrowanego na obywatelach. Artykuł analizuje także konfrontacyjną retorykę Blaira wobec Partii Konserwatywnej, wykorzystującą ironię, hiperbolę i figurę *inter se pugnantia* do obnażania sprzeczności przeciwników i wzmacniania jego etycznego stanowiska. Zakotwiczona w etycznym socjalizmie, retoryka Blaira reifikowała abstrakcyjne pojęcia, takie jak sprawiedliwość i równość, przedstawiając je jako osiągalne cele polityczne. Jego quasi-religijny język i nacisk na wspólnotę oraz moralny cel pozycjonowały politykę jako przestrzeń konfliktu etycznego, wzmacniając jego etos jako lidera retoryki przekonania. Jednak uproszczenie złożonych pojęć niosło ryzyko epistemologicznego rozmycia, przedkładając efekt emocjonalny nad zniuansowaną argumentację. Podsumowując, skuteczność retoryczna Blaira wynikała z jego zdolności do łączenia klasycznych technik perswazji ze współczesnymi strategiami medialnymi, tworząc dyskurs dynamiczny, inkluzywny i obfity w treści odnoszące do kwestii moralnych. Jego przemówienia są przykładem zmiany podejścia do oratorstwa politycznego, łączącego tradycję z innowacją, tak aby rezonować ze współczesnym audytorium, jednocześnie promując socjalistyczną wizję zbiorowej odpowiedzialności i moralnego pragmatyzmu.

**Keywords:** retoryka, dyskurs polityczny, retoryka polityczna, mowa

## Introduction

The purpose of this article is to investigate the rhetorical potential of Tony Blair's speeches, delivered as a British politician associated with the Labour Party and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1997 to 2007. Blair adeptly integrated two Aristotelian concepts – ethos and pathos – within the framework of socialist discourse, specifically the "rhetoric of conviction", while adapting to the demands of modern media. Examining the specificity of these elements will illuminate the modus operandi of a politician who effectively and skillfully employed tools of classical rhetoric.

The starting point for this analysis is the premise that classical rhetoric remains a valuable interpretive tool for studying contemporary political oratory. B. Mortara Garavelli (2023) aptly underscores the relevance and enduring applicability of classical rhetoric, noting:

> Classical rhetoric, the product of two millennia of tradition, stands in contrast to "neo-rhetoric", which gained prominence only from the mid-20th century. The core of this classical corpus is formed by ancient Greek and Roman rhetoric, encompassing both theoretical foundations and structural frameworks, as well as the most significant texts dedicated to the art of rhetoric. In later periods, these ancient theories were revisited, more or less critically, but rarely surpassed.

The analysis focuses on the interplay of persuasive strategies, particularly those imbued with emotional resonance, as well as formulations that shape the speaker's

image and reveal their convictions and values. The convergence of figures that build credibility and evoke emotional engagement appears to be a hallmark of Blair's oratory.

This article examines all of Blair's speeches available on www.britishpoliticalspeech.org, delivered at Labour Party conferences in Blackpool (1994), Brighton (1995, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2005), Blackpool (1998, 2002), Bournemouth (1999, 2003), and Manchester (2006). Unfortunately, access to audiovisual recordings of these speeches is limited.

## 1. Rhetoric

Numerous studies have attempted to explain this notion of rhetoric. Plato considered rhetoric a category of deception and "an art which leads the soul by means of words" (Lynn, 2010). For him, who values logical reasoning, rhetoric is merely a flattery that distorts facts. For Aristotle, rhetoric was the "counterpart of dialectic"(Aristotle, 2018); therefore, there is an agreement between common opinions and truth. He also considered rhetoric an art of seeing what is possibly persuasive in a particular case. Persuasion is a crucial term here, as it means the knowledge of the audience's reaction and effective methods of presenting facts of high importance. It is worth mentioning that he did not consider the issue of the rhetorician's nature (good or bad) or his purposes.

Another rhetorical theorist and orator, Cicero, in *De oratore*, perceived rhetoric to be "one great art comprised of five lesser arts: *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, and *pronunciatio*"(Cicero,1942) and, similarly to Aristotle, a "speech designed to persuade". Cicero deemed that the union of logical and rhetorical reasoning is feasible; thus, in *De Optima Genere Oratorum* (1949), pragmatically stated that an eloquent man must "speak to teach, to delight, and to persuade". It seems that he aspired to reconcile Aristotle's and Plato's views on truth in rhetoric. For Quintilian rhetoric is the art of speaking well" (Quintilian, 1920). In *Institutio* he wrote: "If whole of rhetoric could be thus embodied in one compact code, it would be an easy task of little compass: but most rules are liable to be altered by the nature of the case, circumstances of time and place, and by hard necessity itself"(Quintilian, 1920).

## 2. The Appeals of Persuasion

*Logos* (reason), according to Aristotle, is the most important appeal of persuasion, he wished all arguments to be formed in terms of *logos*. It has to be mentioned that reasoning is manifested implicitly or explicitly by premises and is connected to the topic of invention that will be further mentioned. Here, the figures will be given, reflecting rather explicit reasoning: *promologia* – admission to weak points emphasizing a strong one; *contrarium* – composition of opposites; *antypophora* – reasoning aloud by raising and answering imaginary objections; *enthymeme* – informal reasoning by implied premises; *raticinatio* – reasoning by asking oneself questions.

The second appeal is a *pathos* appeal to emotions. Aristotle and Cicero were concerned about emotional opposites as: anger/calm, love/hate, fear/confidence, shame/shamelessness, compassion, pity/indignation, envy/emulation, joy, hope (*Rhetoric, De Oratore*). These sets should provide rather clear characteristic of pathos, however, it is also worthy presenting main figures: *adhortatio* – commandment, promise or exhortation intended to move one's consent or desires; *adynaton* – impossibility of expression; *epanorthosis* – cancelling the first thought to emphasize the second; *perclusio* – a threat against something or someone; *paenismus* – expressing joy for blessing or evil avoided; *inter se pugnatia* – pointing out contradictions in person's character and often between his behaviour and words. Judging from mentioned states and figures, the link between *kairos* (appropriate opportunity for action) and audience outlines itself, what finds confirmation in Aristotle's words from *Rhetorica*: "When people are feeling friendly and placable, they think one sort of thing; when they are feeling angry or hostile, they think either something totally different or the same thing with a different intensity"(Aristotle, 2018).

Aristotle also wrote that: "There are three things which inspire confidence in the orator's own character – the three, namely, that induce us to believe a thing apart from any proof of it: good sense, good moral character, and goodwill". (Aristotle, 2018) In this statement, the philosopher implicitly defines *ethos*, the third appeal. *Ethos* concerns the orator's character. For Hermogenes of Tarsus, ethos was associated with a style that reflects the idea that the rhetor manifests himself in the whole speech (Hermogenes, 1987). As Quintilian observed, "the qualities which will most commend him are courtesy, kindliness, moderation and benevolence. But, on the other hand, the opposite of these qualities will sometimes lead to a good man. He may hate the bad, be moved to passion in public interest, seek to avenge crime and wrong"(Quintilian,1920). Any such references and suggestions to own reputation, behaviour and moral strength should be analyzed regarding establishing a credible and reliable image. They might give the impression of being informed about the issue, present a good background, supply information to the audience, and reduce the distance with the audience by identification or not, using the first and second grammatical person. Every figure may be used to show authority, but there are two specially designed for it: *anamnesis* – citing the author from memory and *litotes* – deliberate understatement.

## 3. The Style

The style – the extraordinary usage of words – concerns three issues: the virtue of style, the levels of style and ornaments. Generally, the levels of style are connected to a formal or informal register. For the Ancient, there were high style or grand ones that were to move; the goal of middle style was to please and low or plain style to teach.

According to ancient rhetoricians there are four virtues of the excellent style of a speech: correctness means using proper words and complying grammatical rules;

clarity is identified with the usage of ordinary words; the orator was obliged to be precise and adjust his language to audience, using jargon or even dialect; propriety signifies taking into consideration cultural standards, occasion, subject and the audience; it was connected to *kairos*; ornament represents extraordinary use of language. Hermogenes of Tarsus (1987) considered seven types of style: clarity, grandeur, beauty, rapidity, character, sincerity, and force.

Persuasive figures of thought are questions (*interrogatio*) that can excite pity, embarrass, belittle or besmirch opponents. The special type of these is rhetorical questions (*erotema*) with their modifications – *anthypophora* and *subjectio* (presenting own authority by providing answer to own question) and *psyma* (asking of a lot of different questions successively) that suggest obvious answers and make the impression of the participation of the audience in the speech. By repeating objections and linking them by using questions, the rhetorician presents his reasoning, emphasizes its clearness or can easily manipulate facts.

The rhetoric can also depict future facts as already existing (*prolepsis*). Here, the speaker anticipates and responds to possible allegations. As equally popular an instrument of the speakers is *dubitatio/aporia*, expressing the word choice of opponents' arguments. It aims to show the adversary's weakness. Quintilian considered this figure to give "an impression of truth to our statements" (Crowley, 2004). Another means closely connected to the above is *correctio* – substituting one's own words with more precise ones. The rhetor may present here his formal reflection on the situation and provide the deduction. For the audience, he may appear to be transparent in his reasoning, reflective and intelligent.

Interestingly, there are also figures of thought that can arouse emotion: personification – giving inanimate objects human qualities or presenting an absent person as present; *enargeia* – vivid demonstration; irony - exposing the sense of the rhetor's humour and diminishing distance.

The second figures of speech include well-known synonyms (words similar in denotation, that, if used artfully, in moderation, amplify the given subject) and figures of repetition. Accumulation of synonyms has both emotional possibilities and perspicuity. It is important to notice that synonyms which vary subtly in meaning can be the instruments of manipulation. Emphasis, clarity, amplification, or emotional effect can also be achieved by repetition. The common figures of repetition are: *epanaphora*, repeating words at the beginning of the sentences; *antithesis*, juxtaposition of opposite words; antimetabole, repetition of words, in successive clauses, in reverse grammatical order symploce, the combination of anaphora and epistrophe; *diacope*, repetition of a word with one or more between, usually to express deep feeling; anaphora, repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive clauses, sentences, or lines; alliteration, repetition of the same letter or sound within nearby words; *coenotes*, repetition of two different phrases - at the beginning and at the end of successive paragraphs; *epanodos*, repeating the main terms of an argument in the course of presenting it; *mesodiplosis*, repetition the same word or words in the middle of successive sentences; *auxesis*, arranging words or clauses in a sequence of increasing force; *epexegesis*, interpreting what one has just said; *epistrophe*

that by repetition of a word or phrase at the end of successive sentences or clauses, reinforces main ideas, makes speech memorable and gives it a rhythm

One of the most important terms of ornaments, tropes, is the metaphor. This notion, as it will be seen later, has had a great career in politics due to its power of associating issues by employing a well-known analogy. Metaphor "highlights certain realities and hides others" (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003). For Aristotle metaphor "will save the language from seeming mean and prosaic, while the ordinary words in it will secure the requisite clearness[...] " and "good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilarity" (Aristotle, 2018). Moreover, metaphor "gives style clearness, charm, and distinction as nothing else can: and it is not a thing whose use can be taught by one man to another" (Aristotle, 2004). A more explicit comparison is the simile.

## 4. The Power of Ethos

Tny Blair's affable appearance, charm, modesty, and conciliatory nature earned him the endearing media moniker "Bambi". However, an analysis of Blair's rhetorical strategy cannot overlook the profound influence of Margaret Thatcher, both as a political symbol and a master of persuasive discourse. In a 1991 interview with *The Fettesian*, Blair described Thatcher's removal as the Conservative Party's gravest error, recognizing her as an exemplar of effective leadership characterized by self-assurance, a distinct identity, and resolute determination (Charteris-Black, 2005). Despite his ideological divergence from conservatism, Blair consistently adapted elements of her rhetorical approach, constructing an ethos of a leader capable of dominating and shaping public debate. As noted by his biographer John Rentoul (2001), Blair internalized Thatcher's method of aligning common-sense discourse with societal values.

This approach was transposed onto center-left terrain, where Blair's "rhetoric of conviction" blended moral gravitas with performative confidence, allowing him to distance himself from conventional party disputes and craft a distinctive leadership narrative. Shaped by personal experiences – such as family illnesses and the death of his mother – and inspired by discourses of resilient individuals, Blair adeptly tailored his rhetorical style to varying communicative contexts. In formal settings, he abandoned his characteristic gentleness and uncertainty, adopting the role of a moralizing orator, akin to a preacher, who spoke from a position of authority. This duality in his style, described as a tension between consensual "lamb" and aggressive "wolf" (Fairclough, 2006), underscores the strength and complexity of his presence in British political life.

From a rhetorical perspective, Blair emerges as a politician who leveraged both the ethos of a leader and the pathos of moral authority, navigating the space between consensus and dominance. This ambivalence, a hallmark of his style, defines his rhetorical efficacy. Blair's adviser, Philip Gould, identified distinguishing traits of his leadership, noting his freshness and sense of change, positioning Blair as a novel type of politician reconciling contradictions (Fairclough, 2006). Gould observed:

> His weaknesses were that he could be perceived as "too gentle", "too soft and not tough enough", and "inexperienced". In response, it was stated: "Tony Blair should not pretend to be someone he is not. That will not work and will backfire. He should not hide his youth by acting overly serious, nor avoid the impression of softness through excessive aggression. He should build his strength on his own merits and create a political identity consistent with his positions. He must be a complete, coherent, and authentic politician.

Blair portrayed himself primarily as a compassionate family member ("father", "son", "grandson"):

> As a father, as a leader, as a member of the human family, I ask this question about Britain's future. My father was a very ambitious man. [...] This taught me the value of family, as my mother worked for three years to help him learn to speak and walk again. (Blackpool, 1996); I know how important my children's education is to me, and I will not tolerate our children... (Blackpool, 1994).

A key feature of Blair's rhetoric was his consistent use of strategies to connect with audiences and evoke emotional engagement. This is evident in his frequent use of first-person pronouns ("I", "my") and vocabulary related to family life, which reduced communicative distance and presented the speaker as credible and authentic through personal experiences. References to social and familial roles enabled Blair to craft an image of a leader who was approachable yet deeply rooted in communal values. These references served both pathetic and ethical functions, fostering emotional solidarity with the audience while underscoring the moral foundations of his message. Aristotle's conception of ethos, where character is shaped by habits (*hexis*), moral practices, and social reputation, is pertinent here. By presenting the family as a site of moral identity formation, Blair embodied these ideals.

Blair's references to shared experiences were a rhetorical strategy for identification with audiences. Phrases such as, "Your child in need is my child, your sick and suffering parent is my parent, your unemployed and helpless friend is my friend, your neighbor is my neighbor", deliberately blurred the boundaries between individual and collective. This persuasive device, also seen in Barack Obama's 2004 speech, emphasized the communal dimension of social issues and bolstered the speaker's credibility. Blair's image as an "ordinary man" – a leader attuned to citizens' voices yet competent and pragmatic–was central to his ethos. Per Aristotelian theory, a credible speaker demonstrates goodwill (*eunoia*), practical wisdom (*phronesis*), and moral virtue (*arete*). Blair met these criteria by presenting facts and arguments judiciously, inviting collaboration rather than imposing solutions: "What leads us to how we create rules and how we decide what is right and wrong in enforcing them".

Blair further constructed credibility by drawing on diverse knowledge sources. He emphasized listening to people (e.g., "I hear the anger of people over fuel charges", Brighton, 2000), cited empirical data (e.g., "Many people are pleased to see that after 18 years of decline, the share of British GDP allocated to foreign aid is rising again", London, 2001), and invoked literary and cultural authorities. Quoting John

Milton – "We are not a slow or dull nation, but a people of quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit..." (Brighton, 1997) – reinforced his image as an erudite leader capable of realizing an inspiring national vision.

Blair's adept use of humor was another distinguishing feature. For instance, in Manchester (2006), he remarked: "I know I look much older. That's the price of being the leader of the Labour Party. But if you look around, some of you look a lot older". Such statements align with Cicero's view that humor builds rapport with audiences, reflects rhetorical intelligence, and mitigates tension or deflects attacks that cannot be countered rationally (Cicero, 1942). In Blair's discourse, humor balanced his moralizing tendencies, projecting an accessible and self-deprecating leader. His biographer, John Rentoul (2001), described him as an exceptional showman and actor, highlighting the theatrical nature of modern politics. Norman Fairclough (2000) notes that contemporary politics requires leaders to perform roles, sometimes "living a lie", not necessarily cynically but as an inherent aspect of political communication. Blair's charismatic, physically appealing, and media-savvy image was thus crafted through both rhetorical strategy and deliberate self-presentation, often described as "nice" or "charmingly sweet" (Rentoul, 2001), blending rational discourse with emotional and aesthetic appeal.

Fairclough (2006) identifies a defining trait of Blair's and New Labour's discourse: the avoidance of overt polemics. Blair consistently presented himself as moderate, cultured, and a "normal person", aligning with a model of friendly, inclusive public communication. However, Fairclough cites Labour strategist Philip Gould, who noted that in 1994, Blair had not yet developed the traits of a strong, decisive leader ("tough"). Notably, in his 1990s speeches, particularly during his rise to Labour leadership, Blair employed confrontational rhetoric marked by criticism of the Conservative Party. These speeches were expressive and dynamic, featuring agonistic elements such as imperatives, rhetorical questions, semantic contrasts (*contrarium*), *antypophora* (posing and answering questions), enthymematic reasoning, and *ratiocinatio* (reasoning aloud). These devices underscored a forceful message and dramatized the opposition between the Conservative government and Blair's proposed social order. An example is his 1994 Blackpool speech:

> Let us look at Britain 15 years after Mrs. Thatcher stood on the steps of Downing Street. Do you remember that time? Where there was discord, is there harmony? Where there was error, is there truth? (Delegates: "No"). Where there was doubt, is there faith? (Delegates: "No"). Where there was despair, is there hope? (Delegates: "No"). Harmony? When crime has more than doubled. Truth? When they won elections on lies about us and lies about what they would do. (Applause) Faith? When their betrayal devalues politics. Hope? When three million are unemployed, nearly six million are on income-related benefits, and one in three children grows up in poverty.

This passage employs binary oppositions with strong axiological weight: truth–lie, harmony-discord, hope-despair. Blair used classical rhetorical figures to lend abstract concepts (e.g., "faith", "justice") empirical weight by juxtaposing them with

measurable social indicators (e.g., unemployment, poverty). The use of rhetorical questions with immediate audience responses (*antypophora*) creates a powerful illusion of community and consensus, reinforcing the speaker's ethos as a representative of collective convictions. This strategy simultaneously generalizes issues (invoking universal values) and concretizes them (citing data), enhancing persuasion by blending emotional engagement (*pathos*) with rationality (*logos*).

Blair's use of emotionally charged rhetorical questions, paired with empirical facts and axiological oppositions such as truth-lie, faith-doubt, harmony-chaos, or justice–injustice, is a significant element of his rhetoric. This practice fosters an atmosphere of openness and transparency while grounding abstract moral-social categories in concrete realities. This creates a paradoxical effect: the speech, though operating with broad concepts, achieves high communicative precision by anchoring them in social and political facts.

A notable instance of this strategy is the use of *antypophora*, where the speaker poses a question and provides the answer. Blair employed this to strengthen his position as a prescient, resolute, and competent leader. A 2001 Brighton speech illustrates this:

> What is the answer to the current crisis? Not isolationism but uniting the world with America to form a community. What is the answer to Britain's relations with Europe? Not withdrawal, but being leading members of a community where we gain strength in alliance with others. What is the answer to Britain's future? Not each acting for themselves, but working together as a community to ensure opportunity for all, not just the privileged few.

Here, Blair employs the language of benefits, promoting a positive vision of community and social solidarity. Terms like "community", "strength" and "success" contrast with negatively charged "isolationism" and "acting for oneself". By controlling the structure of the discourse – anticipating questions and providing answers – Blair projects competence and clarity, aligning with classical ethos and logos while evoking emotional resonance, fitting the broader "rhetoric of conviction".

Blair's rhetorical style prominently featured repetition, serving both stylistic and persuasive functions. Often witty and rhythmic, repetitions amplified political messages, reinforcing memorability and emotional impact. Blair favored repeating short, recognizable elements (pronouns, adjectives, modal verbs, negations, and basic nouns/verbs). Though seemingly simple, this technique highlights key content and demonstrates oratorical skill, enabling "loud reasoning" that allows audiences to identify main ideas as responses to their own questions. Repetition also fosters syntactic parallelism, lending Blair's speeches rhythm and suggestiveness. The "rule of three" and *antimetabole* (symmetrical inversion of phrases) are frequently used to emphasize priorities:

> If you asked me my three main priorities for the government, I would say: education, education, and education. (Blackpool, 1996)

The triple repetition of "education" underscores its centrality to Blair's agenda, creating a suggestive focus on a singular goal. In a 1999 Bournemouth speech, Blair used anaphoric repetition to critique opponents:

> Under John Major, it was weak, weak, weak. Under William Hague, it's weird, weird, weird.

This repetition of negatively charged epithets stigmatizes political adversaries, amplifying emotional judgment over factual argumentation. Another example, from Brighton (1995), employs *antimetabole*:

> We deliver what we promise; we do not promise what we cannot deliver.

This figure reinforces coherence and logical inevitability, crafting an image of a resolute, accessible leader. Blair also used *symploke* – combining anaphora and epiphora – with modal imperatives like "we must", creating a rhythmic, inclusive tone. Modal phrases with first-person plural pronouns ("we must") foster collective responsibility. In his 1994 Blackpool speech, Blair states:

> Market forces cannot teach us or prepare us for life in a world of rapid technological and economic change. We must do this together. You cannot buy your way to a secure society. We must earn it together. You cannot pay to choose whether to grow old. We must plan it together. We cannot protect ordinary people from the abuse of power by leaving them to themselves; we must protect each other. This is our insight. Faith in society. Working together.

This passage showcases a complex rhetorical structure, with *symploke*, antithesis, and syntactic parallelism. Repeated phrases – "cannot", "we must" – build dramatic contrast between inadequacy and necessity. Categorical assertions using "to be" ("we are not") lend an air of unassailable judgment, despite lacking deductive grounding, due to structural and emotional intensity. Blair constructs community as the sole guarantor of hope and security, a recurring theme in his rhetoric. Audiovisual records (Labour Party Conference 1994, Blackpool, YouTube) reveal that Blair delivered these repeated phrases with a softened tone and deliberate pacing, tempering the assertive content with empathy and concern for collective welfare, balancing firmness with emotional appeal.

In a 2002 speech, Blair employed aphorism and paradox:

> The radical decision is usually the right one. The right decision is usually the hardest.

This enthymeme – a condensed syllogism with implied premises – bolsters the speaker's authority, suggesting readiness to make tough, morally justified choices. The antithesis ("right" vs. "hardest") leads to an ethical imperative of leadership, reinforcing Blair's ethos as a responsible leader acting for higher social values.

Repetitions in political discourse serve both elocutionary and ideological functions, carrying visions of the future rooted in ethical and emotional values. In a 1998

Blackpool speech, Blair's narrative resembles the *locus amoenus* topos – an idealized space of peace and fulfillment – echoing Martin Luther King Jr.'s *I Have a Dream* in structure (anaphora) and ideology (moral and emotional projection):

> I want for my children the Britain you want for yours. Of course, I want them to succeed and earn a decent living. But I want more. I want them to grow up in a country they are proud of. I want to build for them a country where their children can play safely in the park and come home at night without fear. A country where every school is a good school, and every child has the chance to fulfill their potential. A country where every skin color is accepted, and every member of every race can fulfill their potential. A country where the sick are cared for, and the weak are supported by the strong. A country where every parent values their children when young, and every child cares for their parents in old age. That kind of country is a source of pride.

Repetitions are a key tool for Blair, lending speeches rhythmic structure and dramatic intensity. The anaphoric "I want" frames individual desires within a collective vision, with the child–a classical topos of innocence, future, vulnerability, and potential–enhancing Blair's image as both an empathetic father and a caring leader. The parallel structure, centered on the repeated noun "country", fosters a rhetoric of community and inclusivity, particularly significant in the context of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, which ended decades of conflict in Northern Ireland. Blair, representing the Labour government, shifted from confrontational to consolidatory rhetoric, employing language of unity, care, and shared responsibility.

Through concise, imperative phrases, Blair crafted unequivocal, emotionally charged messages, projecting determination. A 1995 Brighton speech exemplifies this:

> We will be a nation that stands up for the rights of other nations–as we did in Bosnia; a nation that stands by our allies when they are right, and takes a stand when they are wrong–as we did, unhesitatingly condemning France's decision to conduct nuclear tests in the South Pacific. We will be a nation proudly welcoming our friends from abroad–as we did on Thursday during Thabo Mbeki's visit. And we are doubly proud that we were ready to support them in prison, not just in government. We will be a nation that never sacrifices our foreign aid budget for the world's poorest people for short-term electoral gain. Let the Tories be ashamed for suggesting such a thing. We will be a young nation ready for the future...

The anaphoric "We will be a nation…" strengthens communal identity, projecting a future-oriented vision and mobilizing audiences to co-create it. Blair employs the rhetorical topos of existence, referencing historical events and policy decisions as evidence of his party's moral consistency. This constructs an image of a proud, agentive, solidaristic, and ethical nation. The future tense ("we will") serves a projective function, embedding listeners in a morally charged national narrative where Britain is a space for collective good.

Blair's later speeches reflect an anti-elitist, pro-social orientation:

> People want individual services for themselves. They want a government accountable to them, not lording over them. They want a government that empowers them, not controls them. (Blackpool, 2002) The answer is people. The future is people (Bournemouth, 1999).

Here, Blair uses syntactic parallelism and simple, inclusive language to align with ordinary citizens, not political elites. Antithesis ("empowers, not controls") intensifies the message, while repeating "want" creates proximity to societal needs. Through repetition, anaphora, parallelism, and antithesis, Blair constructed an emotionally charged rhetoric, crafting an image of a moral, empathetic, and future-oriented leader committed to communal values and collective progress.

## 5. Audiences and Communication

Tony Blair's publicly delivered speeches were directed not only to the party assembly but, more importantly, to the broader public opinion. This communicative orientation – focused on the average citizen – marked a significant departure from the rhetoric of previous Labour Party leaders. Blair's discourse was characterized by a distinct shift toward a citizen-centric political narrative, moving away from the more technocratic and internally focused party communication of the past. Scholars attribute this transformation to the influence of American political strategies, particularly the rhetoric of President Bill Clinton and the communication practices of the Democratic Party in the United States. As J. Rentoul (2001) observes, Blair's style drew heavily on the American model of media-driven politics, which emphasized personalized messaging, emotional narratives, and a strong focus on direct engagement with the audience as citizens rather than as members of a specific electorate or institutional structures.

A hallmark of Blair's rhetorical approach was his consistent appeal to the experiences of so-called "ordinary people": public sector workers (nurses, teachers, police officers), the elderly, children, youth, and the unemployed. This strategy embodied the principle that a speaker should evoke the audience's emotions by addressing their everyday concerns and direct experiences. Blair skillfully recognized this dynamic, particularly by employing the figure of the child as a symbol of innocence, hope, and social sensitivity. A striking example of this approach is the personification of a political opponent in his 2002 speech: "We will push more children into poverty, but this time we'll feel genuine guilt about it" (Blackpool, 2002). Blair also utilized the motif of unemployed youth, portraying them as victims of unjust Conservative policies. Such statements were overtly emotive, designed to foster communal emotions, much like narratives built on personal anecdotes from Blair's encounters:

> A lone parent I met had been unemployed for years and couldn't find work. Now, thanks to the New Deal, not only does she have a job, but she's been promoted. Or take the boy from Merseyside I met while he was being treated for cancer – a

> parent's worst nightmare. His parents couldn't speak highly enough of the care and treatment provided by the National Health Service (Bournemouth, 1999).

Such individual, concrete, and emotionally charged examples served as realizations of the rhetorical figure of *exemplum* and classical *pathos*, enabling Blair to persuasively demonstrate the effectiveness of his policies. In doing so, he reinforced his *ethos* as a socially sensitive leader who not only understood citizens' problems but actively worked to address them. However, Blair did not rely solely on classical persuasive techniques. His rhetoric was closely aligned with the characteristics of contemporary mass media, which prioritize brevity, simplicity, and emotional resonance. As Blair himself noted:

> In our times, news arrives instantly, devoid of subtleties or qualifications. If you can't sum it up in a single sentence or even a phrase, forget about it (The Independent, 11 September 2009).

Consequently, Blair employed a language of slogans and repeatable phrases, facilitating memorability and widespread acceptance. Examples of such formulations include:

> Our party – New Labour; our mission – New Britain. New Labour, New Britain (Blackpool, 1994), Terror rules. Retaliation follows. The result is chaos and slaughter (Blackpool, 2002), I say to the Tories: enough is enough! Finish up and go! (Blackpool, 1996).

These succinct and unambiguous slogans served not only as campaign identifiers but also as tools to disarm opposition and bolster the leader's political image. In communicating with a mass audience, Blair also demonstrated a need to control the interpretation of his words. To this end, he employed *epexegesis*, a strategy that allowed him to clarify statements and avoid misinterpretations, as exemplified in his 2005 speech:

> Let me not be misunderstood: this should be the duty of every justice system. But surely our primary duty should be to ensure a safe life for those who abide by the law. This requires a complete shift in mindset. It does not mean abandoning human rights; it means deciding whose rights take precedence (Brighton, 2005).

The rhetorical strategy of preemption and ethos redistribution, combined with the use of classical rhetorical devices to defend a morally controversial thesis, presents an intriguing case. The introductory phrase ("Let me not be misunderstood") functions as *prolepsis* (anticipation of objections), preempting criticism related to potential human rights violations and preparing the audience for a redefinition of axiological priorities. In the core of the statement, Blair introduces a dichotomy between universal (systemic) and particular (citizen-oriented) duties. Through this opposition, he reframes ethical reasoning, prioritizing the safety of law-abiding citizens. In doing so, he indirectly redefines justice – not as an egalitarian principle of universal protection but as a system of hierarchically distributed obligations. The phrase

"this requires a complete shift in mindset" serves a meta-rhetorical function: Blair not only advocates a specific policy decision but also calls for a broader mental transformation, enhancing the deliberative impact of the speech. This statement aligns with a rhetoric of change, as Blair underscores the need to transform the collective moral-legal paradigm. The culmination of the passage – "It does not mean abandoning human rights; it means deciding whose rights take precedence" – employs an emotionally and dramatically charged antithesis. This safeguards the speaker against accusations of moral relativism while openly suggesting a hierarchical approach to rights, diverging from an absolutist interpretation of human rights. This strategy reinforces Blair's *ethos* as a pragmatic and decisive leader capable of formulating firm diagnoses and prioritizing values for the common good.

Blair's speeches thus exemplify a synergy of classical rhetoric and contemporary media strategies. As a speaker, Blair effectively leveraged emotions, collective identity, and linguistic tools tailored to the media audience's perception. By crafting an image of an empathetic, resolute, and relatable leader, he enhanced the effectiveness of his message within a dynamically evolving public discourse.

A particularly prominent feature of Blair's rhetoric was the deliberate simplification of complex political and philosophical concepts. Phrases such as "the philosophy is simple", "the simple truth" or "simple values" were not merely stylistic choices but served a critical persuasive function. Blair consistently shifted the semantics of terms typically reserved for intellectual discourse toward accessibility and everyday understanding. By doing so, abstract concepts – values, truth, philosophy – were "citizenized", presented as transparent, unambiguous, and "obvious", which, paradoxically, risked semantic oversimplification. This strategy constructed an opposition between the supposedly convoluted and elitist rhetoric of opponents and Blair's narrative of "simple good" versus "simple evil". Examples such as "Our vision is quite simple" (Brighton, 1997) or "My political philosophy is simple" (London, 1997) reveal a deliberate appeal to an *ethos* of sincerity and clarity, as well as an effort to forge a communicative bond with the mass audience. Similar functions were served by phrases like "obviously" and "let's be honest". These expressions presuppose rhetorical self-evidence and a shared value system between speaker and audience. The phrase "let's be honest", particularly in emotionally charged contexts – e.g., "Let's be honest, straightforward, and realistic…" (Blackpool, 1994) – has an appellative and unifying function, serving not only as an introduction to a key thesis but also as an act of communal validation of its significance.

Blair operated within classical rhetorical oppositions (good–evil, beneficial–detrimental, just–unjust), adapting them to the model of mass communication. Following Louis Althusser's concept of interpellation (Kułyk, 2010), Blair's audience was not treated as an autonomous subject but as a social construct – "interpellated" into the discourse, shaped by its logic and language. The audience was thus less a dialogue partner and more an addressee of a pre-defined identity position.

Blair consistently constructed a collective *ethos* of community, employing terms of belonging and partnership: "partners" (London, 2001), "my friends" (Blackpool, 1994), "citizens", "community" (Brighton, 2001), "nation" (Brighton, 2005). These

terms, reinforced by the use of the first-person plural, created an illusion of direct audience participation in the political process, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and pride in belonging.

Stylistically, Blair frequently employed classical rhetorical figures. The use of *exuscitatio*–an emotional call to engagement – was characteristic of his method for evoking empathy: "We stand at a crossroads: the party, the government, and the country…" (Blackpool, 2002). Similarly, *ekphrasis*, a vivid imaginative description, enabled emotional engagement through narrative simulation of decision-making scenarios: "Imagine you are the Prime Minister…" (Bournemouth, 2003). Both figures encouraged the audience to internalize the message, experiencing the situation alongside the speaker.

Blair's rhetoric often emphasized emotional identification with the audience – he spoke not from a position of authority but as someone sharing their emotions, concerns, and aspirations. References to shared values ("hope", "courage") and motivational imperatives ("be strong", "feel it") underscored the appellative nature of his speeches. Combined with emotional distancing from opponents – described with terms like "stupidity", "frustration" or "anger" – this discourse created an emotional-axiological polarization, reinforcing Blair's image as a leader of justice and moral order.

## 6. Socialist Discourse

A comprehensive understanding of Tony Blair's rhetoric necessitates consideration of both his audience and the ideological context in which he operated, namely the socialist discourse and its core tenets. Blair's speeches are deeply rooted in the tradition of ethical socialism, with their structure predicated on the promotion of universal values. These ideals serve not only as the foundation of his argumentation but also as a legitimizing tool for his political decisions. Crucially, analyzing Blair's rhetoric requires situating it within a broader political context, as its convergence with the style of American Democrats (Rentoul, 2001) indicates influences beyond the traditional rhetoric of the British Labour Party, despite a shared ideological core.

Within his socialist ethos, Blair frequently invoked the central concept of this doctrine – "equality"' Although he does not explicitly claim this term for himself, his statements construct an image of a tolerant and egalitarian leader. Phrases such as "the equal worth of all", "in a society that treats us all the same" or "equal worth, equal opportunity, equal access, equal rights and responsibilities" craft the persona of a leader who positions himself as "one of us".

Blair's rhetoric consistently drew upon the reservoir of symbols and values of ethical socialism – equality, cooperation, and the common good – which were intertwined with moral principles such as justice and fairness. From a rhetorical theory perspective, Blair employed classical *topoi*: judicial (justice-injustice), deliberative (benefit-harm), and ceremonial (virtue-vice). This approach enabled him to create a

coherent axiological framework in which society is envisioned as a unified collective of equal partners. This is exemplified in the following statement:

> This is not the socialism of Marx or state control. It stems from a simple view of society, from a sense that the individual thrives best in a strong community of decent people with principles, standards, and shared goals and values. We are the party of the individual because we are the party of the community (Blackpool, 1994).

A particularly significant aspect of Blair's argumentation was the construction of ethical contrasts. Justice, understood as social equality, was juxtaposed with its absence, thereby serving as a tool to foster an axiological community. As Charteris-Black (2005) notes, "moral contrasts pave the way for a rhetoric of conviction", the persuasive power of which derives from opposition to morally questionable alternatives. Blair's emotionally charged and subjective rhetoric relied on strong value judgments, employing terms such as "unpredictable", "dramatic", "audacious" and "breathtaking" to reflect his emotional engagement.

Within this framework, the mythologization of the struggle between good and evil – "confronting evil", "forces of evil", "rooting out evil" – imbued his speeches with a quasi-religious dimension. Blair did not rely on empirical data; his authority stemmed from personal convictions, experience, and faith. By referencing the opposition, he emphasized the existence of a "moral purpose" achievable only through cooperation and community. In his 1995 Brighton speech, he stated:

> It is the moral purpose of life, a set of values, a belief in society, in cooperation, in achieving together what we cannot achieve alone. It's the way I try to live, the way you live – simple truths – I am not worth more than anyone else, I am my brother's keeper, I will not pass by on the other side.

This discourse is characterized by personalization ("the way I/you live"), generalization ("simple truths"), and ethical proximity ("my brother's keeper"), facilitating audience identification with the speaker. Blair thus positioned himself as the *logos* of his message–the source of rationality, ethics, and morality, which also justified his political decisions. His religious affiliation was not inconsequential: his membership in the Christian Socialist Movement (from 1992) and his conversion to Catholicism after resigning as Prime Minister in 2007 are reflected in his language. Phrases such as "I believe", "I love", "I've had enough" and "I strive with dedication" are emotionally, morally, and ideologically charged. Blair's rhetoric thus deliberately leveraged emotional discourse as a legitimizing form of reasoning. In this framework, faith, conviction, and conscience became equivalent to rationality, and political decisions were presented as expressions of personal moral commitment. In his final speech as Prime Minister, Blair declared: I decided we should stand shoulder to shoulder with our oldest ally. I did so out of conviction. The word "conviction" replaces the earlier, more definitive "I believed" signaling a degree of caution but also underscoring that his decisions were driven by ethical belief rather than calculation. Consequently,

Blair framed any errors not as negligence but as the product of honest action rooted in fallible yet sincere faith. This strategy – rhetoric grounded in emotional resonance and moral authority – proved particularly effective.

In Blair's rhetoric, concepts such as "true equality", "values" and "justice" underwent a process of reification and semantic simplification. Abstract notions were transformed into quasi-concrete entities, their epistemological status equated with tangible social phenomena. As a result, they became not only ideological postulates but also attainable political goals – concrete, palpable, and empirically graspable. This rhetorical strategy is illustrated by the statement: "And this is not theory. We have living proof of it here in Britain today" (Blackpool, 1994). Such assertions aim not to justify a position but to performatively convince the audience that the world of moral values has already been realized in political practice. Blair consistently employed language that facilitated the inclusion of a broad audience, particularly those identifying with everyday, "ordinary" civic values. By deliberately concretizing normative categories, he built moral and ethical credibility, presenting politics as an extension of ethics. As Charteris-Black (2006) observes, for Blair, politics appeared as a space of moral conflict, with ethics reduced to a form of political choice. This discursive construction not only reinforced the speaker's *ethos* as a morally engaged figure but also imbued his speeches with an epic quality: the orator spoke not as a technocrat but as a teacher, prophet, and interpreter of moral order.

This style, though marked by a high degree of engagement and rhetorical intensity, could lead to some epistemological dilution of argumentation. The use of abstract concepts – often drawn from religious language – in the context of political decisions frequently introduced tension between the proclaimed clarity of the message and its actual complexity. Ultimately, Blair emerged as a speaker who bridged transcendental values with political practice, persuading audiences that morality, politics, and community were inseparable elements of the same reality.

## 7. Metaphors

Notably, Tony Blair rarely employed similes, possibly due to their explicitness and limited interpretive potential, favoring instead complex conceptual metaphors. According to Lakoff's framework, a conceptual metaphor involves "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff, 1988). Blair's rhetoric is replete with metaphors drawn from the semantic field of conflict – terms such as "battle", "struggle" and "fight" – which not only heighten the dramatic effect but also reflect his fundamental conviction that morality is inherently conflictual.

In this context, Blair did not merely describe political reality but normatively constructed it, defining – based on his own values– what is good or evil, just or unjust. In doing so, he provided his audience with a moral "compass" to navigate the complexities of political decision-making. For Blair, politics was not a realm of technocratic management but a space for ethical decisions arising from the confrontation of opposing values.

The metaphors Blair employed often drew on primal, culturally embedded experiences, such as journeys or conflicts, which served a dual purpose: they fostered a connection with the audience while motivating morally charged action. Consequently, politics was framed as an act of moral interpretation, articulated by the speaker based on personal convictions, often expressed through suggestive yet indeterminate metaphors. Blair's discourse thus took the form of an epic narrative, in which the speaker not only charts the course but also positions himself as a participant and guide in the collective moral journey. This rhetorical style not only reinforced his ethos as a leader with a mission but also constructed politics as a space of heroic engagement, where every choice carried the weight of moral testimony:

> There are no values of old Labour or new Labour. There are Labour values. These are what make us the party of compassion, social justice, the fight against poverty and inequality, freedom, and fundamental human solidarity (Brighton, 1997). The class war is over. But the fight for true equality has only begun. [...] The 21st century will not be an era of battle between capitalism and socialism but between the forces of progress and the forces of conservatism. [...] Those who do not understand that creating a new Britain of true equality is no more a betrayal of Britain's history than the values of new Labour are those of old Labour. [...] Those who believe in a society of equal opportunity and equal responsibility. Those who have the courage to change. Those who believe in the future. The battlefield, the new millennium. Our values are our guide (Bournemouth, 1999).

In the speeches of the former British Prime Minister, terms such as "conflict", "struggle", "battle" or "fight" functioned not as elements of rational discourse but as components of a highly emotive pathos. By aligning with the tradition of epic rhetoric, Blair crafted an image of a heroic leader, enhancing his ethos as a resolute and determined figure. Particularly significant in this context is the figure of energeia, which imbues statements with dynamic, vivid imagery (e.g., "The 21st century will not be a battle between capitalism and socialism but between the forces of progress and conservatism"), and auxesis, a gradational amplification that transitions from concrete concepts ("struggle") to abstract ones ("forces", "ideology"). Blair also employed synonymy, juxtaposing near-synonymous terms ("struggle", "battle", "skirmish") to modulate the intensity of his message, and epitrope, using suggestive conditional appeals ("If you believe in…"), which draw the audience into a shared value system. His discourse also featured dichotomous schemas, where opponents – such as the Conservative Party or Saddam Hussein – were hyperbolically portrayed as personifications of evil, further reinforcing the narrative of good versus evil.

Blair's rhetoric of pathos incorporated animalization, a stylistic device that dehumanizes adversaries by ascribing predatory traits to them. This technique was particularly significant in statements addressing terrorism-related threats: "These two threats – rogue states with weapons of mass destruction and terrorism – will not vanish on their own if we do not confront them. They will feed and grow on our weakness" (Glasgow, 2003).

Blair's rhetoric was further enriched by drawing on lexicon and metaphors from religious discourse, elevating his message and imbuing it with moral and spiritual dimensions. This strategy served to construct a robust ideological identity, intertwining politics with ethics and leadership with a moral imperative:

> This is the way I try to live, the way you live–simple truths–I am not worth more than anyone else, I am my brother's keeper, I will not pass by on the other side. We are not just individuals confronted with eternity, but members of the same family, the same community, the same human race (Brighton, 1995); [...] it is no longer just our cause of social justice. It is the nation's only hope for salvation (Bournemouth, 1999).

The rhetorical model emerging from Blair's discourse drew inspiration from religious language, adopting a natural and unmediated form. The speaker foregrounded universal ethical values, such as "social justice" and "humanity", while invoking communal categories like "brotherhood" and "family", characteristic of socialist tradition. In this framework, the individual was situated within a societal or moral community, fostering a symbolic bond between speaker and audience. This narrative encouraged communal attitudes and mobilized the audience to identify with values such as justice, goodness, solidarity, and nobility. An illustrative example is the statement: "Justice is not just about punishing the guilty but about carrying the same values of democracy and freedom to people worldwide" (Brighton, 2001).

This mechanism gained rhetorical efficacy when noble values were interwoven with the convictions of "ordinary people", relating to equal rights, cooperation, and social partnership. This fusion of abstract values with individual experience was achieved through *reification*– the objectification of intangible concepts. The rhetorical materialization of mental states and moral categories aimed to lend them credibility, though from a logical perspective, this is considered a cognitive fallacy.

One of the most prominent metaphors in Blair's rhetoric was that of the journey or path. Following Lakoff (1988), this metaphor emphasizes both direction and progress toward a defined goal. Blair employed constructions based on nominal appositions ("the path of renewal", "the path of change", "the path of progress", "the path of conviction" ,"the path of modernization") or post-modifications ("the journey toward the renewal of our country"), organizing his message around themes of movement, transformation, and development. In this context, the journey became a figure for reform–particularly of the Labour Party itself – and a promise of reward for endured effort.

Complementing the journey metaphor was lexicon related to creation, renewal, and life, often used by Bill Clinton (Charteris-Black, 2005). Blair frequently framed change as an act of creation or renovation–not only of political structures but of society itself. Statements such as "This is their renewal. [...] What began with the renewal of the Labour Party ends only with the renewal of Britain" (Blackpool, 2002) or "Labour governments have never before succeeded in renewing power as we have renewed ourselves to gain power" (Bournemouth, 2003) exemplify this rhetorical strategy, portraying political change as an inevitable outcome of moral and structural

regeneration. Such language not only bolstered the speaker's ethos as a transformative leader but also crafted a narrative of a collective journey toward a better future.

Positive associations with verbs and nouns drawn from life ("renewal", "renew", "life") reinforced Blair's argumentation, legitimizing his policies. By activating this semantic field, Blair highlighted a distinctive quality of governance. Moreover, he evoked the spirit of a new era, a new nation – a new world. This is evident in collocations such as "creating the right opportunities" (London, 2001), "building a society" (victory speech in the 2001 general election), "enterprise creates the jobs people depend on" and "it can generate wealth only through the strength of the mind, not low wages and sweatshop labor" (Brighton, 2001).

## 8. Register

One of the most distinctive features of Tony Blair's rhetoric was his adept use of an informal register, manifested through frequent employment of colloquial expressions and everyday language. An illustrative example is his statement: "I'm proud that New Labour is taking on the role of the party of law and order in Britain today" (Blackpool, 1996). This approach served to forge a connection with the audience, aligning the speaker with "ordinary people" and dismantling the barrier of distance typical of formal discourse.

As Norman Fairclough aptly observes, Blair's rhetorical strength stemmed from his ability to seamlessly blend formal and informal elements: "he also speaks informally to ordinary people, and the power of his style partly lies in his capacity to combine formality with informality, ceremony with emotion, and openness with intimacy" (Fairclough, 2000). This communicative strategy resulted in a discourse where elements traditionally associated with high style – such as Latinate lexicon ("transform" ,"modernize", "consider", "intervention", "doctrine") or Greek-derived terms ("dogma" ,"ideology", "anomaly") – coexisted with colloquial, emotionally charged expressions (e.g., "come off it", "What nonsense!", "no more messing about"). This stylistic dualism – the tension between formal and colloquial registers – lent Blair's speeches a distinctive dynamism and enhanced their persuasive impact. Formal language was predominantly used in official contexts, such as international addresses, exemplified by his Chicago speech, known as the "Doctrine of the International Community", where it facilitated precise articulation of complex political and global processes.

## 9. Adversaries

In the face of political confrontation, Blair employed antagonistic rhetorical devices. The errors of opponents were not merely highlighted but amplified through hyperbole, repetition, and wordplay, which not only ridiculed adversaries but also increased the memorability of his message. In this context, the use of emphatic pronouns and rhetorical questions played a significant role, engaging the audience by

suggesting a shared sense of values and thought. Rhetorical figures such as symploke (combining anaphora and epiphora), alliteration, and the epithet "natural" – which in English also connotes "normal" – served to intensify pathos while constructing an image of "normalcy" in contrast to the "otherness" of political opponents. The Conservatives were portrayed as "weak" and "strange", lacking roots and incapable of representing the familial values central to the national community. This accumulation of rhetorical devices not only showcased the speaker's stylistic inventiveness but also underscored the deliberate emotional charge of his message, enhancing its impact on the audience's imagination and emotions.

The following two excerpts are pertinent examples of pathos in action:

> Just as Scotland is not natural Tory territory.
>
> Just as Wales is not natural Tory territory.
>
> Just as northern England is not natural Tory territory.
>
> Just as big cities are not natural Tory territory.
>
> Just as Harwich, Hastings, and Hove are not natural Tory territory (Bournemouth, 2003).

> The Tories have pretended for too long to be the party of the family. But they are no more the party of the family than they are the party of law and order in Britain. Their contribution to undermining family stability in this country is greater than that of any government we can remember (Applause). The Tories' view of the family is the same as their view of the individual: you're on your own. But the essence of family life is that you're not alone, we're in it together, and families work best when their members help and support each other. The same can be said of communities and nations (Blackpool, 1994).

Blair's first speech exemplifies highly organized and deliberately crafted political rhetoric aimed at delegitimizing the Conservative Party by systematically undermining its ideological, moral, and pragmatic credibility. His rhetoric was polemical, emotionally charged, yet grounded in classical structures. In the first excerpt, Blair employed a stylistic device involving alliteration (more pronounced in English) and syntactic repetition – "Just as… is not natural Tory territory". This anaphoric construction not only rhythmized the discourse but also built an argument through accumulation–by multiplying geographic examples, Blair did not merely state but constituted the perception that the Conservative Party was politically alien to many regional communities in the United Kingdom. This is a subtle yet highly effective form of *ex consuetudine* argumentation, appealing to the presumed alignment of beliefs and traditions of specific social groups. By doing so, Blair framed the Conservatives not only as political adversaries but as socio-cultural outsiders. This effect was amplified by juxtaposing large administrative units (Scotland, Wales, northern England) with local towns (Harwich, Hastings, Hove), reinforcing the perceived universality of this phenomenon.

In the second excerpt, Blair shifted to a redefinition of the concept of "family", which became the crux of an ideological dispute. Employing *epanodos*– the re-

peated and transformed use of the word "family" – he polemically challenged the Conservative narrative that positioned them as defenders of family values. Blair redefined family as a community rooted in reciprocity and solidarity, contrasting it with Conservative notions of self-reliance. This semantic shift extended the concept of "family" to a socio-national dimension, enabling Blair to transform this *topos* into a universal justification for his communitarian policies.

In subsequent sections of his speech, Blair intensified his accusatory tone, employing a range of rhetorical techniques to ridicule and expose his opponent. The statement, "Look at them–this tax-cutting party that caused the biggest tax increase…", exemplifies irony and the figure of *inter se pugnantia*, or the juxtaposition of contradictions. This device highlighted the internal inconsistencies in the Conservatives' actions and claims. Blair also used *dubitatio*, feigning surprise at the Tories' contradictions, which in reality served as a rhetorical accusation. These techniques undermined the opponent's logos – their rationality and ideological coherence – as well as their ethos, or moral credibility.

The most critical moment of the speech was an emotional appeal grounded in socio-economic data, activating the audience's pathos. These enumerations were not merely factual but embedded in a rhetoric of moral accusation. Blair also employed an anecdotal argument referencing "the price worth paying" – a climactic counter-argument that deconstructed the Conservative narrative of necessary sacrifice for a greater good. In Blair's framing, this "price" was morally unacceptable and socially destructive. This argumentation blended rationality with empathy, leveraging statistical data while imbuing it with existential and ethical significance.

Blair's overall discourse demonstrated rhetorical dexterity in integrating classical persuasive techniques with modern political language. His style was both polemical and demystifying yet structured and rooted in the conventions of ethical and socially responsible rhetoric. The use of oppositional figures and reiterated axiological contrasts enabled him to position himself as a representative of the national and moral community while portraying the opponent as a discredited, internally inconsistent, and socially indifferent entity.

Another rhetorical mechanism Blair employed was irony, which served a distinctly pejorative function:

> Look at them – this tax-cutting party that caused the biggest tax increase in peacetime history; this law-and-order party that doubled crime rates and gave us a Home Secretary who deserves to be on trial far more than the people he's supposed to lock up; this party of farmers that brought us mad cow disease (Blackpool, 1996).
>
> Never forget that during 18 years of Tory rule, unemployment tripled. Three-generation families have no one earning a living. Record youth unemployment. And what did they say? It was a price worth paying. Unemployment is never a price worth paying. [...] The Tories, who claimed only they could manage the economy, went from boom to bust. The Tory party that said it would be tough on benefit claimants ended up spending more on welfare than on schools and

> hospitals combined. The Tory party that claimed to defend the family caused even greater instability, increased the number of lone parents on benefits, saw truancy rise, and juvenile crime soar – and all to levels higher than under any other party in history (Brighton, 2000).

Through ironic constructions, Blair highlighted contradictions between the Conservative Party's claims and the outcomes of its governance. The figure of *inter se pugnantia* (juxtaposing internally contradictory claims) served not only to ridicule the opponent but also to convincingly expose their hypocrisy. By employing rhetorical questions, exclamations, and hyperbole, Blair underscored the absurdity of Conservative narratives: the party that promised tax cuts delivered the largest increases; the law-and-order party fueled crime and appointed a Home Secretary whose actions warranted scrutiny; the farmers' party triggered an epidemiological disaster. These juxtapositions deliberately constructed a grotesque image of the Conservatives as an incoherent and incompetent entity.

Concurrently, Blair consistently employed anaphora and syntactic parallelism, creating a rhythmic, suggestive structure that amplified the impact of his message. Repeated constructions such as "the Tory party that…" or "this party that…" not only reinforced his argument but also facilitated a rhetorical accumulation of charges. This multilayered gradation of accusations generated intense rhetorical tension, leading to a conclusion about the systemic nature of Conservative governance failures.

On the level of logos, Blair drew on historical and socio-economic data: tripled unemployment rates, multi-generational families without employment, record youth unemployment, increased lone parenthood, and rising juvenile crime. These facts were not presented neutrally but filtered through the lens of moral values and social responsibility. Blair framed them not as inevitable outcomes of economic transformation but as results of the government's malice or ignorance. A notable technique was his invocation of the cynical Conservative claim that "it was a price worth paying". Blair refuted this not only factually but also ethically, presenting unemployment as an unacceptable political cost with profoundly destructive social consequences.

Equally significant was the construction of ethos. Blair crafted an image of himself and the Labour Party as honest, responsible, and citizen-focused. This opposition was delineated not only through enumerating Conservative failures but also by ascribing pejorative traits to them: "arrogance", "mediocrity", "cynicism", "propaganda", "a quasi-state in the dustbin of history". These terms aimed not at rational critique but at moral degradation of the opponent in the public's eyes. Blair left no room for ambiguity – the Conservatives were not only failing as rulers but were unworthy of trust as individuals and politicians.

These techniques served not only to negate past governance but also to implicitly (and at times explicitly) call for change. Although Blair did not outline a detailed program, his speeches contained elements of *adhortatio* – exhortations to action, political decision-making, and opposition to the continuation of Conservative policies. A symbolic expression of this stance is his concluding pledge: "I make this promise to them now: I will do everything in my power to get rid of those Tories, and I will

dedicate every breath, every muscle, to ensuring that your grandchildren live in a new Britain, in a new, better world". This heroic rhetoric, oriented toward the future as a shared goal and ethical obligation, positioned Blair as both accuser and leader-guide. His rhetoric belonged to the *genus demonstrativum*, rooted in condemnation and praise, yet also incorporated elements of the *genus deliberativum*, characteristic of deliberative rhetoric. In this model, the past served as a space for reckoning, the present as a moment of decision.

## Conclusions

The persuasive strength of Blair's speeches lay in their flexibility. He adeptly adjusted tone and register to suit the context, shifting from gentle, almost sermonic inclusivity to sharp, confrontational rhetoric. His ability to transition from conciliatory to judgmental modes was a key source of his rhetorical effectiveness and adaptability as a political leader.

Charteris-Black's (2005) observation regarding Blair's skill in oscillating between oppositional instruments – reification and metaphor – captures the essence of his style, which applied classical rhetorical figures to synergize ethos and pathos:

> Blair's adept use of neutral reification reinforced his image as "one of the lads" – not an aloof or overly intellectual thinker but someone capable of addressing issues in the language of the pub, the staffroom, or the office coffee break. This linguistic approach reflected the will to wield power that characterized Tony Blair and New Labour, marking a stylistic shift from the more assertive use of metaphor typical of Blair's rhetoric of conviction when addressing issues like global poverty, international terrorism, or weapons of mass destruction.

On the level of ethos, Blair consistently crafted an image of an approachable leader with high moral capital, grounding his credibility in values such as family, social responsibility, and straightforwardness. By presenting himself as an "ordinary citizen", he skillfully employed figures like anamnesis and litotes, constructing an image of someone relatable yet trustworthy. Blair's ethos was both inclusive and authoritative, balancing emotional proximity with decisive leadership, making him an "empathetic yet resolute" leader.

Pathos was a fundamental tool for mobilizing audiences. Blair leveraged communal motifs (e.g., family, children, nation) and stylistic figures such as anaphora, antithesis, and exemplum to create an emotionally and ideologically charged message. Narratives about specific individuals, metaphorical images of suffering and hope, and references to collective experiences enabled him to engage listeners in a narrative where politics was portrayed as a space of moral choices.

In terms of elocutio – style of expression – Blair's rhetoric was characterized by clarity, rhythm, and inclusivity. Using simple yet vivid language, he employed repetition, syntactic parallelism, and antymetabole to highlight key theses and enhance memorability. His style was firmly rooted in media culture – accessible to a mass

audience, inspired by American campaign models, yet deeply anchored in British socialist tradition.

Blair also operated within the so-called rhetoric of conviction, which prioritizes moral judgments over debate. His speeches prominently featured axiological contrasts: good-evil, justice-injustice, truth-falsehood. This language was infused with quasi-religious metaphors, appeals to duty, conscience, and ethical mission. Blair did not merely seek support but appealed to the conscience of the political community, constructing an image of a determined leader acting not for partisan interests but for a higher social good.

His overall strategy aligned with the values of ethical socialism, which provided the ideological framework for his message. Blair did not present himself as a revolutionary but as a leader of moral pragmatism, blending concern for the individual with faith in the power of community. The ideals of equality, partnership, reciprocity, and co-responsibility were not only the content of his speeches but also the structural foundation of their rhetorical form.

Tony Blair crafted a modern, persuasive form of political communication fully attuned to the media-driven, emotional, and social demands of contemporary audiences. His speeches demonstrate that rhetorical effectiveness in the 21st century lies not in breaking with tradition but in its intelligent and conscious transformation into a tool of political agency. Blair thus emerges as a new type of orator – a moralist, pragmatist, and performer in one – whose rhetoric not only persuaded but also shaped the way politics was perceived as a space of shared values.

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