



Legacy Now:

How Political Memoirs Ensure the Past Fits the Present

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Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Relevance	6
Initial Thoughts	6
Theory & Knowledge	8
Method	11
<i>Form</i>	15
Blair's Portrait	16
Mandelson and Presentation	18
Clarke's Luxury	21
The Curious Case of Malcolm Rifkind	24
A Format's Promise	26
<i>Structure</i>	29
Kaleidoscopic Journey	31
Mandelson and Beyond	34
Clarke's Blues	38
Who Speaks for Rifkind?	40
Setting the Stage	44
<i>Reflection</i>	47
A Journey in Supersession	48
Discussion Mandelson's Position	52
Clarke and the People	55
Rifkind in Position	58
Assessing Movement	61
Conclusions	65
Works Cited	69

Abstract

The political memoir has remained a problematic matter in the field of life writing, with its liminal position between reality and fiction resulting in them being difficult to analyse. This thesis attempts to resolve this issue by applying theories by Smith & Watson and Genette to discover how selected books employ the life writing format to present an ideal version of their subject. This thesis asks: how do the compositions of the political autobiographies by Tony Blair, Peter Mandelson, Ken Clarke and Malcolm Rifkind ensure their subjects' past emphasizes their political legitimacy in the present, on both a general and personal level? The books in question were, respectively, *A Journey* (2010), *The Third Man* (2010), *Kind of Blue* (2016) and *Power and Pragmatism* (2016). The paratextual elements these books employ set the tone for what kind of narrative the audience will be reading should they decide to continue reading. The structure of the books is designed in such a way that readers are guided into specific modes of thinking, which allows the narrators to position their subjects in relation to events according to their preferences. The idealised version of the subject was then achieved by the narrators through engaging with personal and national memory, a process based on the narrators' own explicitly stated ideology. On the way, this thesis has considered the importance of genre and genre distinctions for the future of the political memoir in life writing studies, concluding that it is deserving of its category of study, and suggested other future studies as well.

Keywords: life writing, autobiography, political memoir, Smith & Watson, Genette, Blair, Mandelson, Clarke, Rifkind, memory, paratext, structure.

Introduction

Of all the topics that people may discuss in newspapers, on the radio, in their daily commute or at social gatherings, few are as ubiquitous as the topic of politics. It can define a nation, or indeed an era. The methods by which political topics enter the larger discourse are hardly ever random, although they usually do so through an intermediary. By and large, this intermediary will be the media in various forms. In other words, a politician is unlikely to be able to speak directly to their audience on a daily basis (not in the least because of time constraints). They do, however, desire to direct the flow of conversation in a way that furthers their goals, or at least paints them in a positive light. One method by which a politician may attempt to seize, or retain, a prime position in political discourse is to write about their past (and generally, current) life through the process of writing an autobiography. These memoirs allow them to explicate their position on crucial topics of the past and the present, as well as provide them a means with which they may justify their rise to public office. Their tale of 'how-we-got-here' may be telling of how they see themselves, or how they want others to see them. The language, imagery, tone and focus are telling for what they might be trying to achieve in their life writing.

This is no less true for the political scene in the United Kingdom. More so perhaps than in other countries, as Britain has more of a tradition of life writing, especially for those who are about to retire from office. It is also possible for politicians to write about themselves while still actively pursuing a (political) career, as is the case for the subjects of this thesis. It is unlikely that politicians write a book about themselves, of considerable length, for the fun of it. They must benefit from it some way, other than the extra bit of money. With this thought in mind, I wondered how one might go about creating such an image for oneself in an autobiography. This thesis will attempt to dissect the texts and uncover their methods. The research question is thus: how do the compositions of the political autobiographies by Tony Blair, Peter Mandelson, Ken Clarke and Malcolm Rifkind ensure their subjects' past emphasizes their political legitimacy in the present, on both a general and personal level? This thesis will engage with literature on life writing, autobiography and modern politics and apply a method by which these memoirs may be read, so that the underlying narratology within them may be better understood. The research will pay special attention to the nature of the format itself, the narrative structure in the books on both a small and a large scale, and the manner in which the text deals with (self-)reflection (i.e. whether the reflection is concerned

with the individual, the nation or the party).

Relevance

Public attention for politics has been at a record high in recent years, following some profound changes in the international political scene. Donald Trump has been elected President of the United States, the right-wing political parties of Europe are gaining popularity and Britain has just voted to leave the European Union. These issues (as well as many others, of course) are characterised by the way the instigators of the various movements have attempted to frame their agendas. An example unrelated to this thesis is how the American Republicans have consistently referred to former president Barack Obama's large-scale healthcare system as Obamacare, rather than its official name, the Affordable Care Act. This process, and its potential implications, are exactly the sort of thing this research wants to explore. This time, of course, within the context of British politics. Life writing and autobiography have seen extensive study throughout the years, but seldom has the focus been on recent (or indeed slightly less recent) publications by prominent politicians. These fields are brought together by this thesis, and it explores the possibility of combining literary analysis with modern day politics. Of course, it is not just the field of literary analysis that would be enriched by this thesis' presence. The outside world can always benefit from the reserved, more nuanced view that close reading provides. It explores what a text or person might really be saying, rather than relying on the emotion that brought it into the world.

Initial Thoughts

Autobiographical works and memoirs, though ostensibly written with the intent to tell the truth, have historically not been one-hundred percent factual (see the section on Theory for reasons why). This is partly because someone's experience with a particular event is subjective, and partially because the omission or alteration of certain details would present a more agreeable portrait of them. This is especially true for those with a political agenda, and it is likely that this is not so different for the chosen subject matter. The question is not 'if', but 'how'. Elements and topics to look out for when analysing the memoirs will be elaborated on in the section regarding the methodological framework, but even at this early stage it is possible to imagine a few likely outcomes. The method and structure of framing their

narrative will likely portray the subject in such a way that it will seem that they always did the best they could in any given situation. They could also claim to be a victim of circumstance, or stuck between a rock and a hard place, or spin the story another way entirely. Thinking of the biographies' content, I suspect that the Labour memoirs will have a larger focus on the needs of the community (i.e. the social interest), while the Conservative memoirs revolve more around what is the best for the country (the country at large, rather than its inhabitants).

What counts as a major topic in political discussions changes over time, so the primary texts have been selected not only for being written by authors with a reasonable degree of experience, but also because they were only recently published. The two Conservative memoirs (Clarke and Rifkind) were both written in 2016, and the two Labour books (Blair and Mandelson) are from 2010. Of course, the situation has changed considerably in those six years between publications, but the major themes that this thesis examines will likely be present in all four books. The reason the coalition government is still included in the research despite it occurring more or less synchronously with the publication of the Labour texts, is because it was the first coalition since Winston Churchill's wartime government. With regards to the context of examining recent British politics, it is also the period this thesis has as its starting point. It is thus important to keep in mind that while the coalition government had only just been installed when the Labour books were published, it was on its way out by the time of the Conservative publications. The Second World War and subsequent loss of Empire were pivotal moments for British identity, and how Britain saw itself at and since this time is a theme this thesis explores as well. Pivotal questions in recent British politics, and how these authors write about them, will be telling of a text's function. These questions will include topics such as austerity governments, the Blitz spirit and Britain's diminishing role as a world leader (i.e., the aftermath of Empire). For the books that cover it, their take on what the coalition government meant for Britain will also be discussed. I suspect that from the discussion of these topics it can be concluded that these politicians have a strong political motivation for writing their books. In other words, I suspect that these books are written not so much for an objective look into the private lives and decision making processes of the politicians (though that will also be a part of it), instead mostly serve as a foundation by which the authors can enter (or in some cases, re-enter) their favoured topics back into the political discourse, while also explicating their subjects' expertise on those subjects.

Theory & Knowledge

The framework chosen will need to have a sound theoretical basis while retaining practical applicability. It will be based on pre-existing theories on autobiographies, while accounting for the differences between historical (and specialised) autobiographies and more modern memoirs-like books such as the ones this thesis will read. The focus of this research is how the texts themselves operate, and so no attempt is made to discern what the author may have intended to say. In other words, what authors *wanted* to say is not nearly as important as what the text eventually *ended up* saying (and more importantly, how it did that).

This thesis will function, essentially, as an intersection of two separate topics: that of life writing (in its various forms) and that of contemporary politics. Hence, both topics will be briefly introduced before moving on to the methodological framework of the thesis proper.

The writing of political memoirs, though an interesting subject, needs to be placed within the broader context of life writing in general before it can be fully explored. Life writing as a field of study is one marked by a number of fundamental questions that every text on the subject must answer before an analysis can be made. These include the question of definition, the question of reliability and the question of intention, though not all of these questions are not necessarily vital for this thesis, as is shown later on. The scholar must ask what kind of text they are reading, and within what temporal context. For instance, a Romantic poet such as Wordsworth utilised his *Prelude* to assert literary legitimacy, and is much less concerned with how he was perceived by others (Anderson 2011), while a Victorian autobiography might be more concerned with presenting a certain picture of their private life. More importantly in the problem of definition is the manner in which the text classifies itself. It could be the autobiography or memoir as mentioned earlier, or one of the many other possible genres. As Smith & Watson (2010) show, these include the addiction narrative, apology, confession, diary, prison diary, ethnocriticism, slave narrative, and sports memoir, among others. The boundaries between genres are minor at times, but relevant. For this thesis it is initially relevant to examine the differences between autobiographies and memoirs. The terms “memoir” and “autobiography” are used largely interchangeably, though there are some subtle differences. Memoirs tend to focus more on the (social) environment of the subject, and their relation and interaction with others. They also rarely provide a comprehensive overview of their subject's lives. Autobiography, by contrast, has a more

inward focus. There are as many definitions for either term as there are differences between them, both of which have changed considerably throughout the past couple centuries.

Regardless, they both fall under the life writing category. Most crucially is the comment made by Laura Marcus in her book *Auto/biographical Discourses* on autobiographies and memoirs in various forms: "...the future writer of his memoirs is enjoined to describe the significant influences upon his life, in order, ostensibly, that he, the writer, may understand what has shaped him, and to establish the extent to which 'identity' remains constant despite changes in feeling and opinion" (20). In other words, personal development and the comments thereupon are vital for the form.

The crossing of genre boundaries is important to keep in mind when approaching life writing, and the texts this research looks at will likely draw from several possible modes of life writing. Regardless of definition, the books have a focus on making public that which was essentially private before (Rak, qtd. in Smith & Watson). Within the field of life writing, most scholarly work has been performed on either historical, canonical texts such as Augustine's *Confessions*, important texts on literary criticism by Derrida or Lacan, or autobiographical texts within a certain socio-cultural focus such as those Caruth's *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) or Miller's *Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writing* (1988). There have been few academic studies into (current) political autobiographies, and so every source must be critically examined with respect to its relevance to the topic at hand. It is nonetheless possible to draw from previous literature on the topic. Authors are not always reliable in their accounts. Take for example the comment on the reliability of the author made by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson in *Reading Autobiography* (15): "Life narrators may present inconsistent or shifting views of themselves. They may even perpetrate acts of deliberate deceit to test the reader or to hint at the paradoxical "truth" of experience itself". It is doubtful that any of the books selected for this thesis will attempt such a subversion of "truth", but they may nonetheless distort the truth, intentionally or otherwise, to present a more appealing picture of themselves or a particular event they may have been a part of. Whether or not the author *intentionally* drifted away from the truth is difficult to determine and not the focus of this research. The text itself is disseminated, rather than the author or his intention.

The nature of life writing, and the study thereof, has changed considerably over the past centuries. As can be seen from the many forms or genres the texts in this area of writing may take, the reasons for writing can vary considerably from text to text. Medieval

autobiographers sought salvation, seventeenth-century writers explored body and mind, and more modern authors could attempt to give a voice to an oppressed community (such as in *Country of My Skull* by Antjie Krog, 1998), among many other forms. What has remained since the early days of life writing is that the texts always have a certain purpose to their existence. As Linda Anderson put it in her 2011 book *Autobiography*: “all autobiography [...] is tending towards a goal, the fulfilment of this one achieved version of itself” (8). The purpose of a political memoir has as of yet not seen much scholarly discussion, and some aspects which seem intrinsic to the study of other (canonical) autobiographical works may not be as relevant for this research. The notion of agency, for example, is more reserved for disenfranchised voices than for established political figures. The questions thus become: what are we looking at and how does it work?

This thesis will attempt to ascertain how the memoirs are built up, and what picture of the past they present. It is much easier to see when a picture is framed a certain way when one knows what (subtle or unsubtle) changes have been made to make history fit the narrative. Therefore this thesis will engage critically with sources on contemporary political developments, as well as sources on the history and nature of British politics since the Second World War. It is a rich history with many twists and turns, and its many intricacies allow for many different viewpoints. When considering the multitude of possible interpretations, it is useful to be able to rely upon some credible impartial sources. For the period from the end of the Second World War up to the early Nineties, this thesis will employ David Childs' in-depth book *Britain Since 1945: A Political History* (1992). The factual basis provided by this book makes it possible to test any claims made by the authors of the memoirs to be checked for their veracity. In order to determine whether or not their narratives fit within a tradition of their respective parties' ideology, this thesis will draw upon scholarly articles detailing party history and direction. These articles include, but are not limited to, Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska's “Rationing, Austerity and the Conservative Party after 1945” (1994), Kenneth O. Morgan's “Chapter Ten Experiences: Old and New Labour” (2015), Crewe and Searing's “Ideological Change in the British Conservative Party” (1988), and Mark Wickham-Jones' “Signaling Credibility: Electoral Strategy and New Labour in Britain” (2006). With these articles on contemporary and historical British politics, this thesis can determine the position of the Labour and Conservative parties in Britain on numerous issues, past and present. The issues examined will be the ones that garnered major coverage, the ones that are seen as era-defining. In other words, the issues that benefit most from political spin. Even if these events

are firmly in the past, the way politicians and their parties position themselves in regards to them in the present is telling. This is also true in the negative sense: if a major event occurred at a given time that should have been included in the memoir, but for some reason was not, then that is equally telling. Note that not all of these sources will return in the form a citation in the running text, as they will only be drawn upon when necessary or relevant.

When engaging with the secondary sources (as well as the primary sources), there are a number of key concepts in recent British political history that benefit from additional attention. These include The Blitz (the aerial attacks on Britain during the Second World War), the “Blitz Spirit” (the alleged mentality of the British during the Blitz), austerity (the major spending cuts to reduce government debt) both in the past and in the present, and feelings or imagery of nostalgia. These concepts are key because they occupy a prominent place in the greater political discourse, and they are often invoked to comment on recent or current policy making (see Owen Hatherly's *Ministry of Nostalgia* for examples). There is considerable historical evidence of their invocation, such as for example in David Childs' examination of the austerity years, just after the Second World War. Secretary of State (for Foreign Affairs, and of Labour) Ernest Bevin attempted to convince his fellow members of Parliament to agree on a (financially crucial) vote by appealing to the “spirit of 1940” (Childs 1992). Note that these questions may also be portrayed in a negative light. The Blitz spirit, for example, had both an uplifting side and a depressing side: on the one hand it was a time where people were willing to help each other and stand together against the Germans, but on the other hand the level of crime was immense, and the situation was readily taken advantage of by criminals. This thesis will combine the efforts into life writing analysis with the study of modern and contemporary politics to determine the manner in which politicians frame their histories. The degree to which these concepts will be employed as pivotal or vital phenomena will vary between books, but given their place in the collective memory of the British in modern times, these items make for interesting points around which to base a discussion. Although it is likely these themes will be present, it is not necessarily the case that they will all present at the same time. What matters is the manner in which these topics are engaged with, not whether they are all present.

Method

There is a great deal that can be said about autobiographies when studying them, and

for that reason it is important to have some guidelines in one's analysis. This thesis will employ the tool kit for analysing memoirs as provided by Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson (in *Reading Autobiography*, 2010) in order to comprehensively answer a number of subquestions raised by the research question. Their method, which is fairly all-encompassing, has been adapted to fit the sort of questions this research raises. A selection of apposite topics from Smith and Watson's list of categories will be divided among the subquestions, which will allow for a logical collection of questions and answers. Each of the three subsections will examine all four of the texts.

The first subquestion is that of the form itself: how does the choice of the format itself help frame the narrative? This question deals with paratextual elements of the books. Every method of publication has its benefits and disadvantages, and this section examines the advantages of the life writing format. This research follows Gérard Genette's theory that the choice and appearance of the books themselves contribute to the picture the books attempt to present (*Introduction to the Paratext*, 1991). One of the main benefits of an autobiographical text is direct control over which paratextual elements are included with the book (albeit with the consent of the editors and publisher). The section on Paratextual & Graphics in Smith & Watson's toolkit details how these extra-textual elements help contextualise and frame a narrative. These books make use of material beyond the text itself, such as forewords, prefaces and notes from the author, but also such elements as the front cover, photographs in the text and recommendations by others (generally in the form of a short text blurb on the back of the book, though not always). The selection of people who are given room to praise a book is not random. A recommendation by Jeremy Clarkson, for example, will not have the same connotation as a recommendation by Christopher Hitchens. In this sense, the extra-textual elements not only guide the text but also relay to the audience what sort of reader they expect. The books can then adapt their content to fit the 'need' of this reader, with regard to their perceived interests and level of education, if they so desire. Those who engage with political matters for a living will want a different experience than those who want a voyeuristic look into the private life of a major political figure. It is entirely possible that the books share major similarities between them with regard to paratextual elements, but that in itself also allows for some discussion: where are they the same? Where are they different, and how?

The actual narrative construction cannot be ignored of course, and so the second question is: what sort of structure is given to the narrative itself? To answer this question,

several elements of Smith & Watson's toolkit are used. These include narrative plotting, coherence & closure, temporality, voice, and space & place. Narrative plotting is a focal point in this research. It identifies the manner in which the narrative is told. This plotting is essential for the eventual shaping of the story. From beginning to end, events and locations are carefully selected to provide a certain mould that the author's life has filled. As an example of contrast, a self-made man's life will have a decidedly different build-up from early age than the story of a man fighting for his community. Additionally there is the question of the story as a coherent narrative, i.e., the question of whether or not the story seems to move to an actual ending, without digressing too much on the way there. This is merged with Smith & Watson's section on temporality, as it, too, details how a narrative is structured. Dealing largely with chronology (or lack thereof), temporality also examines differences in tone of voice between events. It is important to be reminded here of the points mentioned previously of the differences between various shades of life writing. Although it was decided that the books probably do not adhere to a strict definition of either autobiography or memoirs, the texts do have to make a choice between presenting either a comprehensive account of their respective subjects' lives, or only selecting key moments. The physical locations space & place are closely linked to these topics of temporality and narrative plotting, as well as to genre distinctions. These spaces exist ostensibly largely as a background to the events in the books, but they tell much of the method of framing. These topics will require close reading in order to be fully examined. The 'skeleton' of the narrative will be laid bare, and it will be visible which phases of one's life the text deems important. These 'skeletons' will make it possible to compare the memoirs to other forms of life writing, such as the *Bildungsroman* (for example) to more aptly describe the differences between the texts.

The third subquestion is multifaceted. How do the texts reflect on their subjects' influences? On the one hand, this section examines how the key terms identified in earlier sections of this introduction have influenced the politicians with regard to their motivation. The Blitz, austerity, and nostalgia for the post-war times are crucial in the current political climate, and it is unlikely that these topics will be ignored in the autobiographies. These topics may, for example, serve as a call-to-arms, serving as a reason for joining politics in the first place or as a means to justify any (controversial) plans made while in office. They could, for instance, claim an unpopular decision had to be made in order to save the country from economic collapse. The manner in which the books invoke the terms will be telling for the

shape of the narrative. On the other hand, this section examines how the texts self-analyse the events that transpire. Life writing is by design a reflective endeavour, and this thesis suspects that it is at these moments of self-reflection that the political layer is added in these texts. In order to investigate this, the texts must be close read with attention to how the text reflects on the events that transpired within the narrative. Ways in which this may take shape is in the form of postulative statements regarding to the state of the country then and now (for example). This will be analysed with assistance from Smith & Watson's toolkit with regard to Memory. Different texts will have different emphases when reflecting upon the past (both general and personal), and identifying the varying aspects the texts emphasize will allow for a deeper understanding of how the text works. The manner in which the text reflects on events on national level, or within the party, can be checked against sources dealing with those topics (see the Bibliography section for examples of sources) to see how interpretations differ from person to person. The degree to which a major event influences the narrative (and arguably, the subject) varies between texts and this section makes visible how the books take different approaches to the interpretation of their respective subject matter.

These are the things the next three chapters will attempt to make clear. The subsections of the main research question will be handled in the order outlined above, and every subsection will analyse all four of the books. Although the books are thus examined four times over, the chapters each have a distinct focus and the degree of overlap will therefore not be as severe as it might seem. This approach will allow for a more comprehensive answer to the research question, as well as provide plenty of ground for discussion. Following these three chapters is a more general concluding chapter, closed off by the bibliography. The answers that this research hopes to find will hopefully make it clearer how even non-fiction narratives by prominent community figures employ methods of framing to their story more ideal for their purpose.

Form

A proper academic analysis of the message that the selected books attempt to present starts where the casual reader would begin as well: with the existence and appearance of elements outside the text. These elements, collectively known as the paratextual elements, present the text to its reader. This chapter concerns itself with extra-textual aspects that are nonetheless still contained within the book (or packaging), or “peritext” as Gérard Genette defines it in contrast to the “epitext”, which lies outside the books and concerns interviews, reviews or other private communication (262-264). Within this contrast lies also the distinction between the “official” words by the author (and possibly his editor) and the “officious”, for which the writer holds no responsibility. These terms refer to peritext and epitext respectively. In his *Introduction to the Paratext*, Genette emphasizes the paratextual value that both illustrations and textual elements bring to a text's presentation (265). The paratextual may present itself in a number of forms, ranging from minor editorial preferences in font, to photographs the size of a page. These also include illustrations, acknowledgements and the dust jacket (and all they contain) that comes with a book. Whether a preface or foreword is or is not part of the text itself is debatable, but regardless of the choice these elements make use of self-referential language. In other words, they look at a composition of text (divided into chapters in this case) with the only question being if they themselves are part of the collection looked at. Regardless, they may make statements on the composition. The paratextual elements are what make the text approachable and, ideally, appealing to a potential reader. Genette ascribes a notion of non-randomness to every aspect of the book's presentation, even to the title: “*Novel* does not mean “this book is a novel,” [...]but rather: “Please consider this book a novel”.” (268). The attempt to influence, or guide, the reader has already been set in motion from the outset. Assuming that the books achieve their appearance through chance would be a naïve assumption. The paratextual material may seem neutral, but as Smith & Watson explain (100), they can affect dramatically the interpretation and reception of a book. Every facet of the paratextual construction is in service to the greater goal of the text (269). The decisions made regarding a book's appearance thus have a profound effect on its interpretation. With this in mind, it is time to turn to the books themselves, starting with Tony Blair's *A Journey*.

Blair's Portrait

The front cover of *A Journey* is a case of carefully deliberated simplicity, featuring only three elements: a page-size photo of the author, Tony Blair, his name at a distance of about one-eighths from the bottom in large, white, capital letters that span the breadth of the cover, and the title of the book in a slightly smaller font size, in red capital letters. The photo is one of Blair at his current age (late fifties at the time of the book's publication), immediately suggesting that the journey the book promises is, for a considerable part, over by the time the book was written. Rather, it presents a man who is looking back at his own personal journey with the wisdom of the years. The front cover does not have to explicate that it is an autobiography – as this flows naturally from the presentation and from Blair's status of a politician (who seldom write works of fiction). The picture seems to want to steer away from the stereotypical image of the stuffy politician in a suit, instead opting for a more casual dark blouse with the top button undone, to present a more relaxed, down-to-earth personality, who has left the world of politics behind and is now reflecting on it. The background of the front cover is remarkable in its complete lack of substance: it is a featureless grey. This seems to indicate that there will be no distractions: the book contains the story of Tony Blair, and nothing else.

The back side of the book takes a markedly different approach in telling its audience about the content: it employs an archive photo of Tony Blair walking into 10 Downing Street, which takes up the entire back cover. The photo is in black and white, to further emphasize that it is firmly in the past. The photo is of the start of the journey, rather than the end of it where Blair is now. This statement is backed up by a quote taken from the opening of the first chapter (after the acknowledgements and the introduction):

On 2 May 1997, I walked into Downing Street as prime minister for the first time. I had never held office, not even as the most junior of junior ministers.

It was my first and only job in government.

While the quote is lifted from the opening of the first chapter, it is also slightly adapted: in the introduction there is no added space between the two sections. It is brought to the reader's attention that this tale is an exceptional one. The quote is added to the act and image of

walking into 10 Downing Street, the reflective aspect of the format being present threefold on the back cover through the quote, the image of Blair and his literal reflection in the extraordinarily shiny door, the quote, and the word “autobiography” in the left-hand corner. The assumption raised in the introduction to this thesis regarding genre is already somewhat justified at this stage: while the book calls itself an autobiography (or asks the reader to view it as such, at least), Blair refuses an easy label either way. “I wanted this book to be different from the traditional political memoir”. By saying this, Blair also establishes that there is such a thing as a traditional political memoir. His account will be different, as his leadership was different as well. It serves as an invitation to and indication of the New Labour journey that Blair championed.

A Journey comes with a dust jacket, beneath which the book is entirely undecorated. It contains only the author's name and the title. The flaps that fold into the book are more interesting, as they contain information relevant to the book. This introductory text details some brief biographical information and name-drops some major figures and events (Princess Diana, Gordon Brown and Northern Ireland, among others). The text is divided into a number of short paragraphs, and on the few occasions these start with “Tony Blair” or “A Journey”, they are emboldened in red capital letters – as opposed to the other paragraphs where no special emphasis is added at all. Where the frontside flap tells of Blair's time in office, the backside informs of what he has done since (incidentally also the only information the paratext provides that is not otherwise present in the book itself). This paratextual element, though part of the book's packaging and inescapably part of what is being sold, still places itself firmly outside the text proper. It does so through the following passage: “Amid the millions of words written about him, this book is unique; his own journey, in his own words”. The exception to this is the outside of the book the audience is now reading. Through all this, the reader is guided into what kind of book they are reading: by whom, and what sort of content to expect. Simultaneously the text exalts some of Blair's achievements: the historic victory in 1997 and his position as a “dominant political figure” (taken from the book's dust jacket). Following Genette's theory, the book's dust jacket seems to want its audience to approach *A Journey* with the thought in mind that it is a comprehensive account, and the definitive account of Blair, by Blair (see Genette 268).

This position is enhanced further by the inclusion of several pages' worth of pictures. These pictures are grouped together loosely by their date, with a batch of photos appearing roughly every quarter of the book (or approximately every 130 pages). The first collection

contains old family photographs and highlights from Blair's early political career. Most important is that from the third page onwards (out of a total of approximately thirty-two) there are no more home-made photographs, only those made by official press from a wide variety of media institutes. In other words: there was no need to look for domestically made pictures, as there were plenty available of professional quality. The latter three groups of photographs feature Blair alongside various world leaders, as well as some political opponents. For every major event covered in the book there is a picture of Blair being engaged with that matter in a serious, engaged manner. Neither the book nor the picture section shies away from addressing the controversy of the Blair government. This extends to the subject of the Iraq war, possibly the most controversial aspect of Blair's legacy. A picture of a protest against Iraq is added, including a poster saying "B.liar", a nickname which he was given during his time in office by the public and the media. The pictures in *A Journey* serve as a way to both underline Blair's prominent position and to summarize the content, in a method that both enhances the text by making it visual, and makes it easier for potential readers flipping through the book to ascertain what manner of content they will be dealing with for the considerable length of the book.

An aspect outside the text proper one would expect to find on either of the covers, or in a blurb somewhere, is conspicuously absent: the recommendations by fellows, reviewers or experts. The only exception is the general recommendation by the publisher, implicitly present in the dust jacket text and only telling of the author's greatness, rather than the book's greatness. Although *A Journey* contains several pieces of text before the main body, none of these are written by a party other than Blair or his publisher. This emphasizes the notion of *A Journey* being "his own journey, in his own words" as mentioned in an earlier paragraph: nobody may speak with the same degree of authority on Blair as Blair himself.

Mandelson and Presentation

Peter Mandelson's *The Third Man* at first glance appears to take a similar approach to its front cover as *A Journey*, but on closer inspection it presents its subject matter in a somewhat different manner. The title of the book and the picture of Mandelson are given equal prominence on the cover, with the title appearing on the right half of the cover and Mandelson on the left. The author's name, in capital letters like the title, is in a distinctly smaller font size when compared to the title and placed at the bottom of the page. The

colours, red for the author's name and white for the title (and subtitle, located just below the main title) are an inversion of those seen on the cover of *A Journey*. The background to the front cover is a darker grey, turning back at the upper and lower end of the page. The darker background and *Third Man* title, combined with Mandelson's black suit, present from the outset the image of a man who operates in the shadows, rather than at the forefront of politics. This theme, as well as the origin of the book's title, will be expanded on greatly in further chapters. However, this manner of presentation is established from the earliest possible point. Mandelson would have been well aware of this portrayal of his person. Not only does he propagate the image of a man working outside the public eye in the text proper, the front cover image sees Mandelson straighten his tie as he looks the reader in the eye. The importance of this becomes more apparent with the following passage in mind, taken from the latter pages of the book: "...a basic presentational rule: appearing in public, or on television, with his tie properly done up and centred" (Mandelson 556). Peter Mandelson is a man keenly aware of presentation and the role the media plays in the formation of an image surrounding a person. This book will serve as an exemplification of how the media shaped his story, and how he shapes his story.

The back cover enhances the "third man" idea, by showing Mandelson in a picture of a pre-press briefing with just himself, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, the other two major figures in the Third Man paradigm. The photo, in black and white just as the back cover image of *A Journey* was. A colour image was probably an option in both cases, given that the photographs were made in the late 90s, but in this way it is emphasized that these events occurred in the past, in contrast to the contemporary front image. The image itself takes up roughly half the page from top to bottom, and the entire breadth of the page. It is positioned slightly above the midway point of the page, and the spaces not taken up by the photo are entirely a dark shade red, featureless otherwise. Red is, of course, the colour of the Labour Party. Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, arguably the two largest figures in the Labour Party at this time, are visible from the thighs up. Peter Mandelson, positioned to their right and at an angle, is hidden from the shoulder down behind another man, who just walked by when the photo was taken. The Third Man is decidedly less visible than the first two men, but is nonetheless firmly present.

The Third Man also contains picture sections, though it has decidedly fewer photographs in total, divided over three sections rather than four. The collections do not conform to the strict Third Man image that the book has thus far so strongly advertised. They

focus instead on Peter Mandelson's persona, and initially also the persona outside of politics. The picture sections, then, seem to provide a period of respite from the relations between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown the overall presentation and the narrative focus on so heavily, and add a degree of visual relaxation that focus on the lighter side of Mandelson's political career. The light-hearted tone of the pictures adds to this idea (with the exception of one or two depictions of protest marches). The tone of the book, and its presentation, have up to this point had a serious tone to them. The addition of colourful, cheerful photographs that are immediately visible to readers browsing through the book could have been decided upon to make the book appear less grim, and thus more accessible.

The distance between text and paratext as it was present in *A Journey* exists in a similar form in *The Third Man*. It is first visible in the aforementioned back cover photograph of Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, and Peter Mandelson in an innocuous manner: in the caption below the picture all three men are named with name and surname. Here, and in the dust jacket, Mandelson is referred to either by his name or in the third person exclusively. This is in contrast to the book, told by Mandelson, which is strictly in the first person (this includes the captions in the photo sections). The dust jacket fulfils a role similar to the one in *A Journey*, with the left-hand flap providing a summary of Mandelson's public image and career, and the right-hand flap naming a selection of qualifications and job titles. The last paragraph on the left side contains the same promise as Blair's memoirs of a text solely by the author, as opposed to the usual writings *about* them. The paratext, too, is about Mandelson rather than strictly by Mandelson. The reader is then promised an honest tale by a man otherwise characteristically in the shadows, known for telling his own version of events. The paratext thus provides the actual text with legitimacy in contrast to the usual coverage of Peter Mandelson, which this book dismisses by implicitly stating that Mandelson has no part in the formation of those texts. The dust jacket, then, provides the narrative contained in the book with authenticity (see Smith & Watson 101). Incidentally, *The Third Man* is the only one of the four books examined which at no points attempts to label itself. The other three refer to themselves at various points as being either memoirs or autobiographies, but this book refers to itself only ever as “this book” (Mandelson xiii, xvii, and 565).

Another point of similarity between Tony Blair's book and *The Third Man* is how neither one allows for an outside voice to comment on the text. Again, this fits the image of the author that is being created, albeit that the image is somewhat different in this instance. Many others have spoken about Peter Mandelson but this account is “the unvarnished truth

from the man itself' (source: the blurb text flap). The decision to include a recommendation by another party would have created another level of voice in a package that already has two. At the centre is the text itself by Peter Mandelson, and around that is the dust jacket text and the front and back covers, which together tell a specifically crafted story. Including the words of a third party would have meant fundamentally changing the build-up of the collective appearance, drawing attention away from the Peter Mandelson story the book as a whole attempts to sell. Instead, the image portrayed has access to the reader's undivided attention.

Clarke's Luxury

The third book, Ken Clarke's *Kind of Blue*, shares some similarities with the previous two books but it is also different in equally as many regards. The front cover has an altogether more luxurious feel to it when compared to the first two books. This stems from its dark blue background, the choice of font, and the gold-like lettering at the top, where the author's name, the title and the subtitle are placed. These typographical choices, too, have an aesthetic effect which has a deliberate reason (Genette 265). The first line (the author's name) is spaced more widely than the title and the subtitle, which adds some emphasis to the author himself where there is otherwise very little emphasis in general on this front cover. This general lack of emphasis is seen also in how neither the author's name nor the title are in bold or fully capitalised: only the first letters of major words are capitalised. This is in contrast to the relatively loud Labour memoirs of previous paragraphs. Additionally, the photographs on the front covers of those books were relatively large in comparison to the one on *Kind of Blue's* front cover. The picture is one of Clarke at his current age, though a degree of make-up was probably involved to make his appearance seem less aged. He is seen from the waist up, with his arm leaning on an indiscernible surface of a colour identical to the front cover's background. The picture is placed at the bottom of the page, with a considerable amount of space left unoccupied when compared to the more crowded Blair and Mandelson covers. The space, luxury, and warm colours of the front cover portray a man who is more at ease with his political situation, above the turmoil of some other politicians. Clarke is seated towards the audience, carrying a sympathetic visage, which enhances his more calm and collected approach to matters. Clarke himself is wearing a blue suit with a light-blue shirt and a spotted dark-blue tie. While these are all blue, of course, they are not the traditional darker suits worn by those in the House of Commons. His current clothes are, however, a kind of blue. The

significance thereof will be examined in more detail in a future paragraph. Based on Whitlock's discussion of paratext (qtd. in Smith & Watson 100), which concerns itself with the immediate presentation of a book's outside, it may be said that the overall picture seems to invite a different mode of reading, or indeed a different audience, when compared to the previous two books.

The back cover of *Kind of Blue* continues this subdued tone of presentation, in that it is even more sparsely decorated than the front. It contains no text (bar an innocuous email address in the bottom right), and has the same dark blue background as the front cover. Ken Clarke himself features much more prominently here, with a larger photograph of him looking at the viewer, from a slight angle. Clarke relies on his established role as a prominent politician to let the book sell itself. By providing nothing but a picture of the author, the book seems to suggest to the reader that Clarke needs no introduction. The appearance of his name on the front is therefore more akin to a reminder what his name is, rather than a first encounter. The book is confident that the subject is at least somewhat familiar to the reader. The attitude is not entirely unjustified, as Clarke is currently the longest serving Member of Parliament (47 years this June, half of which also in various ministerial positions), and is known for his mellow demeanour. Lord Deben, fellow Conservative party member and best man at his wedding, has mentioned in an interview that “Ken [has a] relaxed attitude. He feels strongly about things and cares about a whole series of issues, but he carries it very lightly” (Parkinson 2013). This is a sentiment the book's outside transmits as well.

The dust jacket employs a simple white text on the blue background, in which it summarizes Clarke's career on the one side, and some achievements and government positions on the other side. The mellow aspect of Clarke's approach is toned down from this point onward in the presentation, instead focusing more on his political leaning. The title of the book, *Kind of Blue*, is not only a reference to the 1959 Miles Davis album but also to how Clarke wants to be seen in relation to the political spectrum. He is definitely blue, by which is meant Conservative, but not always the exact kind of blue the party line would demand. His style of Conservatism (which will be explained in detail in the coming chapters) is thus brought together with the image of a politician who has served adequately for over 4 decades. This places Clarke above or outside any strict view on the Conservative party as a person whose own convictions range beyond that of party doctrine, with the experience to back it up.

Kind of Blue mentions its genre from the outset: it is a memoir. However, the author immediately qualifies this statement, both in the title and in the foreword preceding the

narrative. Calling the book *A Political Memoir* complements the earlier premise of a long-standing politician who has now written his memoirs for all to see. The more crucial comments on the form are found at in the foreword's initial paragraph. Clarke establishes his book as being a memoir (as opposed to other terms such as autobiography) with the justification that is “a conversational recollection of a lifetime spent actively engaged with politics and government with some asides about my personal life [...] By and large, it concentrates on the political narrative” (ix). The narrative thus claims that it is uninterested in the private (defined here as non-professional) aspect of its subject's life – only the strictly relevant will be mentioned. The majority of events will be related to politics or matters of importance to all citizens. They are all viewed through the focus of Ken Clarke and his interpretations, however, and as such the book may be considered not just a *political* memoir but also a *politician's* memoir. The distinction lies in the origin of the interpretation. Anyone can examine major events, but it is exceptional to hear it from one who was at the forefront of many of the nation's recent major events and reforms. The inside view is combined with and enforced by the politician's personal convictions. This, in Clarke's words, “underline[s] my driving commitment to my political principles and to my view of the national interest of the United Kingdom” (ix). This intention or desired interpretation is “the cardinal function of most prefaces” (Genette 268), as can also be seen in the other three books. The book thus delivers the promise of a narrative by a senior politician about his, and the country's, political life. To divert from the promise and delve into Clarke's personal life outside politics would be a disservice to the mission statement given to the reader.

These guiding principles formed in the book's appearance and foreword carry through to the picture sections. There are fewer of these sections in total when compared to both Tony Blair's and Peter Mandelson's books, down to two sections of eight pages of pictures in *Kind of Blue*. The majority of the non-business photographs are in the first few pages of the first section, with some photos backing up claims of where Clarke grew up, and what his housing situation was like, although there also some non-political pictures throughout. They provide a visual reference to an anecdote or event detailed at some point in the book. The political and non-political images together provide an overview of Clarke's life for a person browsing through the book. The proportion of one to other is tilted in favour of more personal pictures when compared to the books' content, which makes the book seem more approachable for a general audience. Clarke promises in the foreword to not dwell on the private life so much, and this is more true for the text than for the picture sections. The promise of a long-standing

politician is kept nonetheless, with pictures of Clarke alongside the largest British political figures of the past few decades.

The Curious Case of Malcolm Rifkind

The layout of Malcolm Rifkind's *Power and Pragmatism* marks a clear difference in design philosophy when compared to the previous three books. The front cover has been neatly divided into two sections, with the top section taking up roughly two-thirds of the page and the bottom section around one-third. Malcolm Rifkind himself adorns the top half, though the selected image is an archive photo, as Rifkind has aged around twenty years since that photograph was taken. Presumably this photo was selected as it is one the potential audience might easiest recognise, given that Rifkind was a minister for eighteen years and his appearance resembled that of the cover photo for most of them. It is possible that his current appearance shows signs of ageing to such a degree it was felt people might not recognise the subject as being Malcolm Rifkind to a comfortable degree. Rifkind has been a member of the Conservative Party throughout his career, with their traditional blue colour. Regardless, the background for the top section of the front page is a deep red. The contrast between the grey photo of Rifkind and the blue background would have impacted the altogether visibility of the top section, essentially blurring background and photo together. It is possible no neutral colour could be found that provided the necessary visibility to the cover image. The bottom section has no such issues, employing large capital text on a white background. It is the title especially that is designed to grab the attention: the major words of the title and subtitle (*Power, Pragmatism, Malcolm Rifkind*) are considerably larger than function words and half the subtitle (*and, the memoirs of*).

The back cover features a departure in design from the previous books from a different perspective. While the background itself is a featureless black (in contrast to the contentious red of the front), the text placed on top the background is more interesting. *Power and Pragmatism* is the only book of the four that allows for an outside voice to comment on the book or its contents as a whole. The paratext is generally considered to be the same voice placed on a different level, as explained in an earlier paragraph, and the exception to this assertion is the use of quotes by third parties. In the case of Rifkind's book, these are Madeleine Albright and John Major, the quotes by both of them are placed on the back cover (and nowhere else in or around the book). The inclusion of a quote by John Major is not a

surprise in and of itself, as he led the Conservative Party for many years, including as a Prime Minister over Rifkind, and was a colleague in the Cabinet under Thatcher for a number of years. Incidentally, Major also published his own memoirs, and so has at least some authority on that aspect as well. These recommendation are the first things a potential audience sees (after the front cover, generally), so a more renowned political voice singing praise over Rifkind's achievements, and memoirs, will help the audience place the book in a context that most suits the author. It allows for the audience to draw upon their knowledge of John Major, the senior Conservative and former Prime Minister, to infer what kind of content they might be dealing with. The other voice is that of Madeleine Albright, former US Secretary of State and chairman of the Aspen Ministerial Forum, a group of former Foreign Secretaries of various nations, of which Rifkind is a member. She carries considerable weight in American political circles, though she is less known in the United Kingdom. The inclusion of her recommendation, then, may be an attempt to give the book legitimacy to potential American readers by providing a known reputable voice.

Power and Pragmatism again provides fewer pictures than the previous books, down to two sections of 4 pages each. The pictures themselves fulfil a similar role to those in *Kind of Blue*, showing old family photos as well as some lighter moments of Rifkind's life. Even in these, Rifkind is pictured alongside bigger figures (at the time or in general, depending on the photograph), such as with Princess Diana, or as a student with Members of Parliament. Other pictures show Rifkind in his various occupations or similar, usually to provide a visual reference to an event or anecdote in the text itself. The tone of the photographs is light, making for a pleasant perusal if one is just browsing the pictures before deciding on a purchase. This is not unjustified, as the book has a fairly light tone in general, including the front cover image of Rifkind carrying a mischievous smile.

The choice for such a humorous disposition throughout could be considered odd, considering Rifkind's position of power throughout some of Britain's more stressful years under Thatcher and his declaration of power in the book's title, but the cheerful anecdotes provide contrast to the at times dull and at other times thrilling segments of Rifkind's life. The overall tone is nonetheless fairly jolly. The power and pragmatism claimed on the title is firmly present in the book, but the subject matter is divided between the serious and the light-hearted (as is the front cover). Malcolm Rifkind's personal beliefs and how to follow them are explained, both in the narrative and in the foreword preceding it, but it has to share the stage with his manner of experiencing life. In Rifkind's words: "All of us who tread the political

path are either conviction politicians or pragmatists. I am one of the latter and have been so throughout my public life. This book, the reader will be relieved to know, is not just about pragmatism and politics” (ix). Rifkind does not only promise to divulge his ideals and political methods, he also proclaims how he has lived through his career from a personal point of view. *Power and Pragmatism* is thus a two-pronged approach to the writing of memoirs: both the personal aspect and the political ideals as embodied by Malcolm Rifkind are presented, in a narrative format.

A Format's Promise

This chapter has attempted to chart how the selected political memoirs present themselves to potential readers using the various means at their disposal. They might opt for a front cover that immediately seizes the audience's attention with big capital letters and a heavily emphasized author name and picture, or choose to rely on a popular media image of the author and expand that. The reader is guided into a certain mode of viewing by the selection of included elements, such as the aspects emphasizing a journey in *A Journey*, or the colours and photographs suggesting an elder statesman in *Kind of Blue*. The ways these memoirs take shape are decidedly non-random, and every element serves a clear purpose. As such, it can be stated that the books do want to be read in a certain way, and the methods employed to achieve this goal vary from book to book.

All four books make use of a dust jacket, the text on the inside generally being a brief summary of their subjects' career, achievements since leaving office, and other contextual information. They also all attempted to add energy to the books in the same physical location: the bottom left paragraph of the inside flap of the dust jacket. Blair's “his own journey, in his own words”, Mandelson's “unvarnished truth from the man himself”, Clarke's “political memoir at its very best” and Rifkind's “shrewd, humorous and frank memoir” are all found in this section of their respective books. Interestingly, all four books were published by a different company that nonetheless all decided that this was the best location for this information. Through these jackets and the other paratextual elements, a promise is made to the reader over what style of content, and over what sort of person, they will be reading. The indications of the personal, the political and the presentational together form the paratext which has as its ultimate goal to serve the interest of the text proper. Each book has made its own unique set of choices, and arrives at its respective goal through entirely different means,

but the paratextual elements employed still exist as functional aspects by which the text is presented. The essential qualities of the paratext are determined by their role in assisting the primary text (Genette 269).

Structure

The previous chapter has established the methods by which the paratextual elements set the tone of each of the four books. The general feeling present in each of them has become visible, and so the focus may now shift to what is being said in the text itself. In order to properly determine this message the underlying narrative structures must be examined, so that their methods and nuances become visible. This chapter will attempt to chart the building blocks of the plot, to see how and where the plot moves, and how different phases (or indeed chapters) of the narrative are linked together. The method by which the texts are analysed is based on selected elements of Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's guide to interpreting autobiographies, *Reading Autobiography* (2010). This book, as well as providing a historical overview of the autobiographical form and autobiographical criticism, presents a number of aspects and questions by which an autobiography may be read, or questioned. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, not every aspect of this toolkit is equally relevant, and so only the most pertinent elements have been kept.

The elements this thesis employs from *Reading Autobiography* are the topics of narrative plotting, temporality, voice, space, place, coherence and closure. These topics themselves do not serve as a checklist of which every element can be utilised in order (for an example of where this is the case, see the previous chapter). The books and selected segments will be analysed in light of one or more of the topics, as there is a degree of overlap between the topics. Narrative plotting examines the patterns underlying the books. The intent of narrative plotting is to reduce the broader chapters and events into small, observable pieces which, when spread out next to each other, provide a clear picture of where the story begins, how it changes over time, and how it ends. It is important to note that this is not a summary of events, but rather an examination of how the story progresses over time, and builds up its image of the subject by focusing on specific elements of the subject's life. It examines how and when the chapters move from one topic to another, and how they make use of the change in both physical and temporal location. The origin and method of change are telling of the presentation of a subject. A change might occur, for example, through the subject's determination, by coincidence, or the actions of a third party, on which the subject will likely comment. The books do not always employ a strictly linear approach to the detailing of their subjects' careers, and as such the chronology has to be explained. Although every year is equally long (approximately 365 days), this does not necessary feel as such when

remembering the past. Some phases of the subject's life will be expanded on greatly (naturally those vital to the plot), while other years might be reduced to a footnote or an offhand comment. The topic of voice is strongly related to that of temporality, especially so in life writing. This is due to the inherent link between the author and subject, and the difference between time of writing and the timeline of events. Analysing who speaks and about what contributes to the understanding of narrative focus. The movement between, and choice of, topics and major events is telling for what the subject has determined to be the most vital and interesting aspects of their life. This is especially true when it causes the chronology to break. The reason why voice is considered to be part of structure is because voice is an “autobiographical act” (Smith & Watson 63), by which the life narrative is given shape, which directly assists the other subjects listed here. An analysis of voice may prove vital in understanding how autobiographies are built up, as the insertion, as well as number, of multiple voices determines the shape of a narrative.

The themes of space and place are different forms of this same idea. The physical aspect is considered, rather than the temporal, but is analysed in conjunction with temporality. The addition to this is that the narrative places its subject in relation to others, in that way inhabiting a kind of 'space'. Boundaries between factions are drawn up, and the narrator has to negotiate between them. The differences between them “are both constructed and redefined in the acts of self-representation and in communicative exchanges with the imagined addressee(s)” (Smith & Watson 249), and as such may exist for a great part solely in the mind of the subject. As will be shown in paragraphs below, it is through this that different narrators see different factions within the same group of people. Lastly, the narrator may comment on the story's completeness. An autobiography can logically not be finished, as the author is still alive when writing it (and ends when the author dies, at which point it becomes difficult to continue writing). Nevertheless, the story has to end at some point for it to be publishable: “the autobiographer, now at the end of a major curve in [their] development, finds [...] a still point in which [he] can write out [his] life” (Abbott 1988). The narrative must therefore be considered to be satisfactorily complete before the author can decide to package it and present it to an audience. On the other hand, it might continue still, but the author may have decided at some arbitrary point to stop writing. The comments on this continuity of the narrative inform of the narrator's own opinion on the completeness of the package and thus reduces the topic of coherence and closure to a single question: does the narrator see their autobiography as comprehensive? It is important to note that not all aspects are always

necessary to draw conclusions from a given book. At times, one aspect is more dominant than others, and may even be the crucial factor for how the narrative is structured to such a degree that including too many other aspects would obfuscate any reasonable explanation. The following pages, then, attempt to understand how the structure of the books is given shape, based on the topics detailed above.

Kaleidoscopic Journey

Tony Blair's *A Journey* uses a layered approach to the telling of its story, to both inform and convince the reader. As the narrative progresses from topic to topic, the more notable events are supplied with jumps in time (such as flashbacks and flashes forward), and comments on leadership and personal development. A baseline of narrative structure is formed, from which the narrator (Blair) occasionally departs to provide an anecdotal or didactic interlude. These comments and their significance will be analysed in great detail in the next chapter. The baseline is rooted in pivotal events that span chapters and the book's uncertain chronology becomes apparent in the first chapter, which concerns Blair's accession to the Prime Minister position. The first chapter functions as an introduction to the narrator's line of thinking, while simultaneously summarising the challenges a new leader and its party face when changing from opposition to government. It establishes Tony Blair as he was then, from which the rest of the narrative flows, and against which future chapters may compare and contrast. *A Journey* is the story of a changing person. In Blair's own words in the introduction: "This is a personal account; a description of a journey through a certain period of history in which my political, and maybe to a certain degree my personal character evolves and changes" (xv). The change is fractured and not necessarily fluid or gradual, rather relying on watershed moments for the differences to take visible effect. Between turning points the narrator may establish or reinforce his convictions or ideals at that time. That is to say, Blair is essentially unchanging between landmarks. This presents some circular reasoning to get its characterisation across: Blair changes through watershed moments and in the downtime remains his current self, but the defining characteristic of a watershed moment is that it changes him fundamentally. It does, however, neatly divide segments of the narrative. Blair's formative years (up to him ascending to the position of Party Leader and Prime Minister) may thus be condensed to a single segment of establishing the narrative's 'initial' Blair – the

qualities he possesses when elected Prime Minister (“What sort of leader was I at that point?” 26).

One of the ways the segments may differ in tone from one another is through the spaces the narrative inhabits, with locations shifting in physical, rhetorical and political form (see Smith and Watson 43). Different events occur in different locations and the various forms in which a boundary may take shape enhance the differences in setting. Following the first segment, the narrative moves away from Blair's early days in office as a fledgling Prime Minister to engage with a number of topics that together sum up his first term, but are otherwise unrelated. These include Princess Diana and her death, peace in Northern Ireland and the war in Kosovo. Within the segment of Blair's first term, these are contrasted with the chapters on the furthering of New Labour policy and reform. This contrast can also be characterised as a difference in events which is enacted by Blair (policy and reform) and those he has to react to (crises). The physical presence of Blair changes position for each topic, which places him at the centre of focus for each of the events Blair takes part in. The Prime Minister would naturally have many other duties to attend to during these events. These have been omitted on some occasion or moved to another chapter in other cases, to preserve a degree of narrative flow in their respective chapters by not distracting from the matter at hand (“There is a range of events, dates, other politicians absent [...] not because they don't matter, but because my aim was to write not as a historian but rather as a leader”, xv). The chapter on Northern Ireland thus sees most meetings take place in Northern Ireland, and the chapter on Diana('s death) visits more estates and palaces. New Labour reforms and governmental struggles are fought in locations such as 10 Downing Street and the House of Commons. The intentions of these chapters are similar to one another: to present the duties and crises a new Prime Minister faces across the many interests of British politics, both domestically and abroad. The chapters are at this point in the narrative self-contained, appearing almost episodic in nature. A number of themes, such as the relationship with Gordon Brown or American presidents, are established here before becoming the major focus of later chapters. The decisions Blair has to make throughout this first half of the book are punctuated by references to his political philosophy, based on his personal convictions and religion. The first term segment is bookended by the narrator looking back once more, at a chapter's end: “when I look back and reread the papers, reminding myself of the sheer horror, depth and scale of the crisis, it is a total miracle we came through it” (312). This ends not only the chapter on domestic crises (and the section on foot and mouth disease specifically),

it ends the first term segment as well. The text has to pause before a new chapter can begin, and this pause serves as a natural barrier which enforces the narratological distance between sections of a book. This act of suspension is enhanced by the chapter ending on a reflective note (“look[ing] back”, 312), which takes the reader out of the segment's chronological flow, reminding the audience that they are reading a person's reflection on events. The reader is thus prepared for any potential change in tone or setting for the next segment by being temporarily taken out of the narrative flow.

A Journey employs two more segments (and an epilogue) to structure its narrative, and they are both characterised by their use of spatial differences. The first of them, the block of chapters dedicated to the Iraq War and other Middle East affairs, sees the shift in opinion visible not only in the media and the public, but also within the Labour party. This segment sees Blair as being synonymous with government and New Labour. The profound effects of the changes in the Middle East in the early 2000's led to media outcry, but also to disruptions within the party as many found themselves against Blair's international interventions. The strength of unity that enabled New Labour to reform Britain so much diminishes as the narrative progresses, against the backdrop of the continuing situation in the Middle East. As the segment on Iraq closes, the temporal distance between event and writing employed in previous segments is utilised once more, this time on both sides of the chapter boundary. This emphasizes the difference in focus between the two chapters, moving from a narrow foreign affairs focus to the strictly domestic focus of the book's final chapters. The various factions present in the narrative have at this point been established. Some have changed over time and some have passed entirely, but the one constant faction that has been pressing on the narrative takes centre stage in the book's final segment, which is Gordon Brown (and his team). Gordon Brown functions as a constant promise in the narrative, sometimes a positive influence and sometimes negative. The continuous reminders of his influence existence exerting a pressure on the narrative. As a faction, Brown is continuously visible and growing within the narrative, eventually becoming the sole topic of discussion as it determines the strength of Blair's leadership and New Labour's political viability. The climax of the Gordon Brown situation feels inevitable from a narratological perspective.

Blair asks of himself not whether his life story is complete, as he continues his work in the Middle East, but whether the journey is completed (“I had evolved. I was not a changed person, but I was a changed leader”, 603). The question of being fulfilled is thus different between Blair's life and *A Journey*. The principles that drive Blair exist in both, and

continue beyond their existence in the text. The simultaneous existence of Blair's legacy and *A Journey* makes it so that while the journey is over (and thus publishable), that which allowed the narrative to be remains strong as ever. Remember the passage quoted earlier where Blair sees himself as a leader, not a historian. Many events and dates are absent when compared to 'reality', but in the narrator's eyes that which is preserved is all that is necessary to tell a complete story.

The narrative plotting (in combination with the temporal difference between the event and time of writing) allows Blair to let the reader judge him not only on what he did, but also on his rationale. The structure allows for Blair to clarify himself twice. First, on the action in the moment in temporal context and second, on its justification, with consistent punctuation of every event by Blair's political convictions, principles, and religious sentiments and the wisdom of hindsight. The crucial point is that a distance exists between the circumstance as it was then, and Blair's reflection and rationalisation now. Blair does not pretend he is without error, but he does provide himself with two voices with which to tell his version of the narrative.

Mandelson and Beyond

The narrative structure of the initial chapter of *The Third Man* at first glance appears to be similar to that of *A Journey*, as it too takes a watershed moment of the narrative and places it at the start of the book. The overarching narrative and progression of the books are vastly different, however. The first chapter to an extent summarizes the major talking points of *The Third Man* (Mandelson's personal development and his relation to Gordon Brown) while assessing the political situation within the Labour Party in the latter half of 2008. It signals Mandelson's second return to government, though the nuances of his third manifestation in government are not immediately visible on a first reading. The degree of summarisation intensifies at times in this chapter, with one passage describing Gordon Brown's entire development throughout the lion's share of *The Third Man* in only a few lines. It does effectively establish where in the narrative this particular chapter takes place, and throughout this chapter the narrative's major figures, spaces and places are introduced. Mandelson reflects on the potential impact of his return to government, underlining how his link to both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown become characteristic for his role in government. The first mention of Mandelson's personal political interests and background beyond his

position as a third man to Blair and Brown is here at the end of the chapter, just before the narrative is transported to Mandelson's upbringing. From there, the narrative becomes strictly chronological as the story moves through Mandelson's youth and career.

The Third Man has a comparatively episodic approach, more so than *A Journey*, which is in part due to its initial serialised appearance in *The Times*. Opting for serialisation has had an effect on the product as a whole. On the one hand, it was seen as a cash-in by certain outside voices, such as *Guardian* journalist Andrew Rawnsley: “most of what's worth reading has already been mined by the extracts in *The Times*” (*The Guardian*) or as an unnecessary addition to the mounting problems within the Labour Party, as Labour MP Peter Hain claims: “most people who will never read the book in its entirety have already formed a firm opinion of it on the basis of a big-money newspaper serialisation” (*The New Statesmen*). For the narrative structure, the most noticeable effect is in chapter transitions. The narrative has a natural progression to it, and the transitions between chapters feel like arbitrary breaks within this flow. These pauses do at times reflect on (or summarize) the previous chapter, but they mostly signal the topic of the next chapter: “I needed to resume a course I had abandoned, in disgust at the shambolic extremism of London Labour politics. I would seek election as a Labour Member of Parliament” (115) are the final words of a chapter. The next chapter then sees Mandelson running for the Hartlepool seat and ends on “It had never occurred to me that Gordon wasn't up to leading Labour [...] For now, it was not really relevant. But then, quite suddenly, all of that changed” (157). The transitions between chapters do allow for jumps in time, but these jumps are neither more radical nor a further distance than any given temporal leap within chapters.

The Third Man does not benefit greatly from a chapter-to-chapter view. Instead, general threads can be discerned by taking a broader view of the narrative. Two themes are consistently visible across the book's numerous topics and events: that of the “third man” and that of Mandelson's personal development. As the narrative progresses from Mandelson's early life in a politically engaged family and neighbourhood to his entry into local and nationwide politics his own political convictions take shape, and there is a general rise in his political standing and ability as events unfold. It is his drive that has him form a bond with Tony Blair and Gordon Brown to reinvent Labour into an electable party after their disastrous defeat in 1987. At this point, the three are working in harmony to achieve their common goal of a modernised party but the pivotal death of John Smith, then party leader, shifts the dynamic as either Blair or Brown has to take charge. As their roles within the party develop

after the leadership contention, it becomes apparent that they each have their own places. Blair and Brown are met only in locations they have control over (10 Downing Street, Chequers, the Treasury) and rarely on neutral or common ground. By contrast, Mandelson is relegated to various houses and departments, seldom finding himself in the same spot for long. The position as Blair's right hand man in particular becomes a stigmatic burden at this point, as Minister Without Portfolio he feels “that I did not belong in the flag-waving crowd to whom Tony would address his first words as Prime Minister [...] I could have joined the party inside number 10, [but] I did not feel I belonged there either. Nor was I a member of the cabinet” (219). Blair acknowledges Mandelson's problematic position within the Blair-Brown-Mandelson dynamic, and relegates him to a department separate from more vital government posts. Here, Mandelson may exert some will and policy of his own but is then sacked (the first exit from government) for reasons mostly dealing with Blair and Brown. An oppressive force is felt in the narrative, which muffles the narrator's attempts to delve deeply into that part of him which lies outside the “third man” paradigm. It is exemplified by the following segment, which sees Mandelson attempt to cope with the role the paradigm plays in his life:

The more my political life was defined in terms of my relationship with Tony, the more difficult any real reconstruction became. [...] In a diary note I reflected, 'The trouble with writing a journal is that any time I think of anything interesting it revolves around Tony Blair.' [...] Breaking free of this, or at least branching out from it, would not be easy. But it was essential. (282-283)

Up until this point, his career moves have been largely through the movement of others, mostly Blair and Brown. It would take until his second sacking for Mandelson to take real initiative. His sense of being betrayed and abandoned by the both of them leads him to take up a job as EU Trade Commissioner, and in this time he realises how his proximity to both Brown and Blair underpinned his inability to satisfactorily partake in government. So long as the “third man” paradigm exists, Mandelson cannot be present at Westminster.

He decides, therefore, to move to Brussels. Prior to this movement he has inhabited mostly the hectic workspaces of Labour and government offices. The physical distance away from this fast-moving world has a profound effect on Mandelson's demeanour. He moved away from the volatile nature of British politics to the relative stability of working in Brussels

wherein his political prowess shines through, and is able to further his policies, now on an international level. Mandelson, then, is able to finally achieve meaningful growth and a meaningful position. As Friedman argues, location includes, and has a profound effect on, “being and becoming” (qtd. in Smith & Watson 2010). A difference in location can significantly alter a person's perception of the world and themselves and this is as true for the narrator in this occasion as it is for anybody else.

Blair's time as Prime Minister comes to an end, and the “third man” saga with it. Mandelson, having spent time apart from British politics and growing as a politician and a person, is able to return to government under Gordon Brown. Free of the paradigm he may meld into Brown's spaces and the boundaries between factions in the Labour party dissipate, explicitly not just as a result of Blair's exit but primarily because of his time away: “I had finally become a front-line politician in my own right, achieving things in my own way [...] I was no longer the third man, and I relished it” (442). With this, the overarching narrative and themes introduced in the first chapter come to a close. Mandelson employs a lower level of voice (from a narratological point of view) to close the chapter, the arc, and most of the narrative. He quotes himself in the first person in his speech at a party conference in 2009, summarising his career in a few words but most importantly bringing an end to the tumultuous years of New Labour that are now in the past. The narrator turns his gaze, and that of the party, forward. This, in turn, allows the narrative to look forward too, in spite of its apparent conclusion and the fulfilment of Mandelson's development. It thereby goes beyond the statement made by Linda Anderson in her book *Autobiography* (2011) that states how “all autobiography [...] is tending towards a goal, the fulfilment of this one achieved version of itself” (8) by propelling its subject further, into what was then the future (specifically, the upcoming election and its effects on the British political scene). The attempts to attach the narratological arc and Mandelson's personal development to the contemporary political situation are the result of the narrator's desire to affirm New Labour's continued legitimacy and relevance through the repeated opening of new chapters after the seemingly final one. Mandelson notes in the introduction how he attempted to provide an untrimmed and truthful account, but found that the New Labour narrative has not yet ended. This is effected by the final chapter asserting New Labour's legacy and importance, followed by an epilogue doing the same.

Clarke's Blues

Kind of Blue delivers a simple promise in its foreword: a political narrative that sidelines Clarke's personal life in favour of a recollection of his involvement in political events. A recollection that also underlines “my driving commitment to my political principles and to my view of the national interest of the United Kingdom”. What follows then is a strictly chronological affair that indeed follows that plan. The relative clarity of the narrative effects a certain transparency in Clarke's arguments and convictions, as will be shown in the coming paragraphs, and the building blocks of the narrative structure make this possible. The episodic approach occasionally visible in *The Third Man* is much more visible in *Kind of Blue*. The first three chapters discuss Clarke's working class upbringing and student days, and every individual chapter after that details his various offices or significant reassignments. The smaller jobs tend to result in shorter chapters, contrasted by other high profile assignments such as Health Secretary or Home Secretary which require considerably more space. The boundaries between chapters, then, are negotiated largely through job relocations and reassignments. These seldom result in a jump in time, instead employing not just the literal chapter boundary to move between episodes but also Clarke's moving to a different physical location within the narrative (a change in office, moving to a different department etcetera). The final page or pages of a chapter at times signal what the next chapter will concern, or what major change will be the centre of focus, but most development of a topic is implemented within the confines of a single chapter. Chapter 14 serves as a prime example of how *Kind of Blue* builds an argument. The situation is laid out in broad terms (the state of John Major and his cabinet in the days just after Major attains leadership), and Clarke provides some humorous anecdotes. The 1992 election is to take place shortly, and Clarke reflects on how events unfolded in the way that they did. He assesses the situation in fairly neutral and factual terms, examining how Labour was essentially unelectable with its radical left-wing policies, insufficient leadership and lack of unity within the party and then shifts the focus to the continuing problems the Conservative Party faces. At this point, the chapter is no longer narrating events. Rather, Clarke places the 1992 election within the context of a changing Conservative Party, increased Euroscepticism and a changing media landscape, all furnished with respective causes and effects. The chapter has gone so far down the rabbit hole of investigation that in order to return to the flow of events, Clarke's analysis has to be halted. This is accomplished by inserting a line break, punctuated by an asterisk, and brief recap

(“This, then, was the background for the newly re-elected Conservative government in 1992”, 262) to place the narrative back on rails and signal the topics of one or more of the coming chapters.

The book's consistent build-up makes it so that the reader can readily see the rise (and change) of various factions within the narrative, and Clarke's relation to them. One crucial aspect of the narrative is the various divides within the Conservative Party. In Clarke's early days at university he did not, in his own words, know what his political convictions were (23). In a timespan of only a few years (and indeed only three pages), he had become a convinced supporter of the One Nation line of thinking, which desires a certain degree of state intervention, welfare to those that need it and a belief in free market economy. One Nation Conservatism most importantly led to the formation of the National Health Service. As the narrative progresses, the imperialist line of thinking within the Conservative Party is faded out and replaced with a Eurosceptic hard right that results not just in party division but also directly to the unelectability of the Conservatives in the late 90s: “The ferocity of the internal disagreements and their prominence in political debate steadily made the government ever less popular and ever less credible, making its ultimate electoral defeat inevitable” (262). This hard right wing of the party becomes a greater source of dissent in the party even than the split between Thatcher's supporters and opponents in the last days of her premiership (known as 'wets' and 'dries' respectively). Another faction's rise which is given considerable mention is that of the media, or rather the changing media landscape. This change manifests itself as a change from merely reporting the news to framing news stories through a specific lens: “[Rupert Murdoch] insisted that his newspapers reported the news and campaigned in a way which promoted these views” (259). The line of thinking shared between the Eurosceptics, the papers that share their view, and the Conservative hard right allows for the narrator to place the main subject at hand in the book (that is, Ken Clarke) to position himself in direct opposition to these two forces which are described as having such destructive and regretful qualities. Whether or not these two 'parties' truly agreed with each other is irrelevant, as the point in *Kind of Blue* is to provide a narrative which places Clarke (and those that agree with him) on one side, and the changed media landscape and the Conservative right on the other. This opposition shaped by the narrator, then, does not so much negotiate the boundaries (see Smith & Watson, and the quote in this chapter's second paragraph) as it constructs them, in order to more clearly tell of the subject's position towards them.

Kind of Blue relies on repeated callbacks to its core principles. These principles are initially signalled in the book's foreword, described as prosperity and social equality through free-market economics and fairness, and are made visible through the narrative's flow of events and Clarke's reactions towards them. The purpose of these repeated references to social justice and a fair market is not only to illustrate how they have guided Clarke's policies and conduct, but also how they resolved any given crisis. The various events throughout Clarke's career exemplify the strength and legitimacy of his convictions, and also provide a backdrop against which the narrative may judge events that have either very recently transpired, or those that will occur in the near future. British politics, the media, and their attitude to the European Union may have changed, neither Clarke nor his principles have. The narrative becomes less and less about Clarke's involvement with government as the narrative reaches its later chapters. The sections that describe the contemporary situation of the Conservative Party, of Britain, of the press, and their changing relation to the European Union eventually come to dominate as the timeline of *Kind of Blue* approaches the present day (the second half of 2016). The issues raised are contemporary, and extend beyond the timeline of the autobiography. Their necessity and utility are amplified as the general debate on the EU turns more and more to the right following the rise of the right wing newspapers and the influence of UK Independence Party leader Nigel Farage. Clarke at no point claims his tale is a complete, finished account of a life in politics, emphasizing rather what it is not: an erudite historical text or candid picture of an elder politician's private life. The cue to write *Kind of Blue*, Britain's departure from the European Union, is implicitly regarded as sufficient reason for Clarke to write what is essentially a reminder of the values and benefits of a Britain that is in the European Union, compared to the chaos and uncertainty of Britain's departure from it. Clarke's personal life or his career thus do not require a coherence narrative, or a fulfilment thereof, as they are not considered to be the most vital aspect of its *raison d'etre*. The absence of coherence in terms of Clarke's career or private life amplify the emphasis the narrative places upon Britain's exit from the European Union.

Who Speaks for Rifkind?

Power and Pragmatism, like the previous three books, employs an introductory chapter to set the tone and signal some of the book's major themes. It foregoes any acknowledgements, instead immediately asserting the underlying values that its subject

adheres to. This introduction summarizes the key events within the narrative as well as examining in detail the importance of what the subject stands for. While this is similar to the foreword of *Kind of Blue*, the introductory chapter here is remarkable in its length – almost three times as long. It functions then not merely as a signal for the principles Rifkind exhibits, it also a justification and a foundation for them. The narrator is explicit in providing the audience a mindset by which the book may be read, and invites the reader to view the events in *Power and Pragmatism* (and Rifkind's position in relation to them) with these thoughts in mind. This preface to the narrative proper, then, is not necessarily part of the narrative as a chronological sequence of events, but it nonetheless has a profound effect on the audience. The explicit nature of this introduction helps to reduce the need for intrusive reminders of its subject's politics (although they are still present) and ensures the narrative itself feels less like an essay on pragmatics and conviction in politics.

The narrative opens with the date of his birth, but places considerably more emphasis on the location of his birth, Edinburgh. Before *Power and Pragmatism* attempts to inform the reader of its subject's upbringing or childhood, it imprints on its audience a feeling of what it is like to be born in Edinburgh specifically or Scotland in general. It combines this with an assessment of the British attitudes towards identity and his being Jewish. This first chapter also sees Rifkind and some family members travel to Lithuania in 2003 to discover where their family came from before migrating to Britain. The only aspect that sets this chapter at the chronological inception is the mention of Rifkind's birth at the start. Like the introductory chapter, it focuses more on what the subject stands for and what principles guide him, as opposed to a string of events occasionally punctuated by an reference to these principles. As the narrative moves into the next chapters, the structure becomes more like the string of events as it appeared in the three previous books. The narrative follows a chronological thread that pulls the narrative forward, though it is often deviated from in order to insert an anecdote or make reference to a future (related) occurrence. The earlier chapters, those dealing mostly with Rifkind's education and travel to India before entering politics, at times refer to events or moments later in time. The anecdote telling of Rifkind's brief career as an extra in the Prague Opera Company in particular is linked to two events (where he tells foreign dignitaries of this employment specifically) that occur much later in his life. The later chapters, however, rarely look back on Rifkind's earlier life, instead preferring to employ diary fragments that comment on the situation at hand. Rifkind provides the reader not only with his recollection of events as he remembers them at time of writing the book, but also

with his view on the situation within its temporal context, essentially viewing it twice. In either form, the reader is made aware of the distance between the telling of the event and the event itself by emphasizing the scale on which *Power and Pragmatism* operates (in terms of years, that is). Those sections of the narrative that propel toward the future earlier in the book disappear as the narrative seems to catch up to itself: the moments in time the narrative refers to become the present. The diary fragments, then, are references to the present, from a narratological point of view. The illusion of a purely present tense is removed by the narrator's voice telling the story to the reader in 'real' present (or time of writing, which is 2016).

The different levels of voice may thus be characterized as a voice of the past (the diary portions) and a voice of the present (of the narrator himself, who also introduces and ends the narrative). To use terms suggested by Smith and Watson, the past voice is the “narrated I”, while the present voice is the “narrating I”. It is important in life writing to understand how the narrated I has no power over the discourse – the narrative is told through the narrating I's recollection and the audience has to take his word for what is being said. *Power and Pragmatism*, however, manages to seemingly eliminate the narrating I on brief occasions (i.e. the diary passages) by letting the audience read directly the words of the narrated I. That being said, it is the narrating I that chooses which sections of diary (and by extension, the historical life of Malcolm Rifkind) to include in the narrative and which to exclude. Smith and Watson therefore argue that “the narrating “I” produces a narrating “I” that then becomes his or her agent of narration” (75). Smith and Watson's theory asserts that the narrating I is never a completed, unified person. Rather, it is a summation of disparate voices. In *Power and Pragmatism* these include the voice of a Scotsman, a Brit, and the politician, among many others. These all have their own distinct (if occasionally somewhat similar) voice, and it is the collection of these voices in conjunction with the narrated I that provide the reader with a picture of Malcolm Rifkind.

There is one aspect that Smith & Watson's toolkit does not cover extensively, which does feature prominently in *Power and Pragmatism*, namely that of outside voices brought into the narrative (i.e. it goes further than their discussion of voice). Smith & Watson do analyse external voices, however the topic as they describe it only concerns other characters in the narrative which are given dialogue or appear in conversation otherwise. These are also present in *Power and Pragmatism* but only minimally. That which this thesis determines to be 'outside' voices are those voices which Rifkind inserts into the narrative as a reference to

himself, which are not interacted with otherwise (speeches, newspapers, etcetera). The difference between 'outside' and 'external' voices is that external voices take part in the events, while outside voices only comment on them. In other words, outside refers 'outside the narrative', while external refers to 'outside Rifkind('s narrated I)'. In order to provide the audience with the comprehensive picture of Malcolm Rifkind, the book employs a number of outside voices which appear sporadically to comment on Rifkind's role in events. In a sense, they fulfil a similar to the diary fragments described above. These outside voices are generally in the form of contemporary news articles praising (and occasionally damning) the narrator. They emphasize the importance of the narrator's role (and his actions) within the narrative and legitimize any claims the narrator may have made as regards his quality as a statesman (or Scotsman, or father, see above). The sheer amount of levels of voice *Power and Pragmatism* employs is visible in the following extract:

Our visit to Poland had been successful. *The Times*, in an editorial headed 'Mission Accomplished', was kind enough to say that I had completed my difficult mission 'admirable authority and skill'. They quoted the words that I had spoken at Father Popieluszko's graveside: "[...] we hope that the values that he stood for will continue to flourish in accordance with the wishes of the people of Poland". This, *The Times* said, was a model piece of democratic statesmanship. (188)

This extract sees Rifkind (as the narrating I) insert the voice of a contemporary newspaper article praising the work of the narrated I, then allows for an appearance of the narrated I. It then moves up one layer of voice again to that of *The Times*. Both of these remain firmly in service to the picture the narrator attempts to display to the audience. The introduction to *Power and Pragmatism* implies that this level of control over the narrative and the effects it has on the presentation of the subject to the audience is deliberate:

I very much agree with Arthur Balfour, who once remarked, 'I am more or less happy when being praised, and not very comfortable when being abused, but I have moments of uneasiness when I am being explained.' The only way one can try to avoid this is by explaining oneself. (xiii)

The uneasiness the narrator feels when being explained is then overcome by usurping the

voices of those who would explain him, turning them into agents of narration similar to the relation between narrated I and narrating I. They are employed to explain Rifkind on terms set by the narrator, rather than any of their own. Whatever agenda the outside voices may have had are nullified through this reappropriation. *Power and Pragmatism* thus employs a structure that relies on clear principled foundation, a chronological sequence of events (some some references to and fro) and multiple layers and sources of voice to present its preferred version of Malcolm Rifkind. Who, then, speaks for Rifkind? In *Power and Pragmatism*, everybody does.

Setting the Stage

This chapter has attempted to discover how these four examples of life writing employ a certain structure to their narrative to achieve various ends. *A Journey* attempt to explain, rationalise or justify some of their more controversial decisions in its titular journey. It did so by making use of the distance allowed by a temporal difference between event and telling, as well as an unchronological account. It allowed the narrator to explain himself both in the moment and in the present, in an attempt to convince the reader on two fronts at once. *The Third Man* tells the story of a man unable to freely develop for a considerable portion of his life. These years were also the years in which the general public was most aware of his existence, and it is possible that this coincidence was the cause for the books creation. It could then be viewed as a form of catharsis for the narrator to finally be able to close off that part of his life. The book employs constant reminders of the oppressive force throughout the narrator's more tumultuous years in its spacing and use of fictions. *Kind of Blue* is considerably less 'closed' than either *A Journey* or *The Third Man*, as it attempts to attach its narrator's beliefs, convictions and principles to the present day. It is a narrative that has entangled itself with Britain's relation to Europe, which the inability of *Kind of Blue* to close out its narrative reflects. A fiction-based approach is utilised to slowly but surely establish the dangers modern day Britain faces. The book's strict chronology does not allow the narrative to deviate from the topic at hand, proceeding linearly through its subject's life and arrive at the present day. It takes the reader by the hand, showing how the current predicament came to me (and who were responsible). *Kind of Blue* is therefore not just a portrait of Ken Clarke, but also that of Britain as he sees and saw it. *Power and Pragmatism* has a narrator that is undoubtedly in control over any and all voices that appear in it.

Anything said about or to its subject has been carefully selected, and with confidence. None of the other three books allowed outside voices to comment on their subjects to the degree *Power and Pragmatism* does. All four books use either a foreword, an introduction or an introductory chapter to set the tone and background for the narrative. This, in combination with the paratext, leads to the audience being guided into specific modes of reading before the first (ostensibly 'real') chapter has even begun. The combined approaches of paratext, introductions and narrative structure together allow the books to posit their subject to the audience.

Reflection

While this chapter is titled “reflection”, “appropriation” might be equally apposite. The narrators are at a late enough stage of their lives that they feel comfortable, or at least able, to write about their past (see the quote by Abbott in the previous chapter), but also in writing about public history. It is important to understand how the past in these autobiographies is effectively an imagined past. It is difficult for humans to be completely factual in reconstructing what has happened, and as Daniel L. Schacter suggests, “memories are records of how we experienced events, not replicas of events themselves” (qtd. in Smith & Watson 22). Remembering events, in the form of a written account presented to an audience, gives them (new) meaning and is at best an approximation or interpretation of the past. The version of the past that the books present is added to the 'legacy' of a historical event or time period. As Linda Anderson mentions in *Autobiography*, “history is never safely 'out there', to be defined in opposition to fiction, but instead can, at any time in the future, disrupt our understanding” (14-15), thus, in addressing these events, the books may add meaning, or 'make' meaning, to their origin or consequences. Major events logically have had more voices comment upon them and these autobiographies are in a sense only one of many, but the authors' relatively strong or influential roles in relation to them adds gravitas to their telling (varying between both speaker and event, of course).

The political legitimacy these texts seek to attain is enabled through reflection on, and pre-established key positions in, the events they describe in their narratives through what Smith & Watson call “the politics of remembering” (*Reading Autobiography* 24): who is remembering and what is remembered is telling of a text's position in relation to history. The books allow themselves to be read with attention to contemporary cultural norms and perceptions precisely because the narratives are so deliberately intertwined with dominant cultural and political themes of their respective times. This is where the four examples of life writing this thesis examines attach their personal recollection (or indeed interpretation) to that of the nation as a large community. They exert an influence on both the events through their descriptions of it, and on their own legacy through their role they had in these affairs. At this intersection of personal and collective remembering the narrators of the respective books may challenge, accept or adapt history as they see fit for a variety of purposes, as will be shown in future paragraphs. This chapter will attempt to answer how these autobiographies engage with national culturally significant events, as well as how the subjects of the books navigate

between personal and political party interests, which together answer how the subjects assert political legitimacy in the past and the present.

The autobiographical format has the advantage of taking the reader by the hand through numerous pivotal points of a nation's history, effectively employing a self-affirming function of political legitimacy for the subject. The narrative is attached to contemporary affairs, which reaffirms their importance at the time (i.e. if they were unimportant, they would not have been brought up). The subject is positioned in relation to them, and the audience joins the narrator in the (more or less chronological) course of events. The reader is thereby allowed to witness circumstances and timelines they would otherwise not have experienced from this particular angle, or at all. The reader, and arguably the nation, is provided with what Alison Landsberg (qtd. in Smith & Watson) calls “prosthetic memories”, which are “individually felt and may evoke empathy and reorient people politically” (26-27). The memories presented in life writing thus do not only describe events, they take the reader through them, and let them feel what the subject felt as they experienced the affairs first-hand. Opinions towards events are then revealed through the language the narrator employs, as Steinberg suggests: “the storied nature of much political discourse rhetorically bounds ideological accounts of injustice, inequality and the necessity and promise of responses to them “ (846), the 'storied nature' here referring to ideologically charged recollections of events. This chapter will examine how the four books engage with concepts such as the changing position of (Northern) Ireland, the war in Iraq, or the state of the National Health Service, but more importantly analysing the qualities ascribed to them and how their angle of focus shifts the topic into particular directions and away from others. Additionally, the methods by which the narrator asserts the consequences which particular choices may have had in regards to themselves, their careers or their parties will be covered, in order to determine how the narrators attempt to steer their memories to invite a particular mode of thinking in their audience. Together, this answers the question of how the books assert the state of Britain, as well as their own position within Britain('s political circuit). This in turn emphasizes the importance of their selected issues and their own role in them.

A Journey in Supersession

Tony Blair's career as a Prime Minister has placed him at the forefront of many domestic and international affairs, and *A Journey* reflects this position throughout its

narrative. A number of key events have been selected in order to properly answer the questions set out above. The first topic to discuss is that of Princess Diana. In the chapter dedicated to this topic, the narrator explains what Diana stood for, how she engaged with others, as well as Blair's relation to her. This examination of her character is then brought in line with *A Journey's* own ideological inclination:

Of course, she was much too smart to give her support to any political party, but in temperament and time, in the mood she engendered and which we represented, there was a perfect fit. Whatever New Labour had in part, she had in whole. (132-133)

The book is at this stage repeatedly asserting the values of the New Labour program, and here ties the national memory of Princess Diana's personality to a New Labour outlook. As Smith & Watson mention, remembering is an "activity situated in cultural politics" (25) and the Diana episode shows this cleanly. Some lines before the above quote, the narrator mentions how the British public on the whole has changed, and how Diana's qualities exemplify the new system of values. There are then presented as similar to what Blair and his party attempt to achieve. The chapter is marked by its calls to ideals New Labour and Tony Blair stand for, and this link to Diana early in the chapter seems to indicate that the narrator wants to tell the reader that Diana would have agreed with the New Labour policies and reforms. Note that Diana herself is given no room to speak for herself (in other words, no voice) within either this chapter or the narrative as a whole to disagree with Blair on any position.

Blair has a clear vision of how Britain is changing, and whom, in his opinion, these changes affect most. *A Journey* employs constant intersections between Blair's personal convictions and national trends. These are made to overlap, essentially pulling each other forward. As an example, the narrator explains how his demands in reforming the NHS and the schools were essentially the same as that of the public:

Most people are ambitious for themselves and their family and don't feel guilty about it. Neither should they. It's just they should not begrudge such ambition or achievement for others and should feel a sense of obligation to help bring it about for those less fortunate or successful. (272-273)

Blair's thoughts on personal and private ambition in relation to the obligation towards others,

worded in fairly general terms in this excerpt, are made to sound as if they are a general truth the general public adheres to, in what is described as the “middle class mentality” (272). This 'middle class' view of Britain which Blair claims to have is attached to desired changes to the NHS and the school system: “I thought six months [waiting time] totally unacceptable. I knew I wouldn't stand for my own loved ones waiting that long. Why should anyone else?” (272). Blair's description of national trends tend to remain fairly general, relying on the middle ground of the population generally wanting things to be 'better'. The reasons for any desired change are constructed by Blair, and then also brought about by Blair.

Autobiographical narratives allow for signalling and reading in terms of larger cultural issues (see Smith & Watson 25), and these relatively large-scale trends are then brought into Blair's fold.

The narrator in *A Journey* is in a unique position with regard to how he may explain his decision making position. Over the course of the narrative, Blair has to take a large number of decisions, but the role he assumes for each of them differs and is a careful choice. These varying positions stem from the different sets of challenges the settings in question present to Blair. The kind of figure the narrator wants to present to the reader is exemplified in the potential outcomes. These outcomes establish which groups are affected, but also which aspect of Blair is affected. Consider the words of Gubrium & Holstein, who say that “personal accounts are built up from experience and actively cast in the terms of preferred vocabularies” (163). The 'preferred vocabularies' here take shape in the discussion of the ideological consequences of events, both for related parties and for Blair in his modes of being. Specifically these are his positions as Prime Minister, as a (middle class) man, as a political party of which he is the head, the founder of the New Labour project, or as a government (as a whole). In dealing with various parties Blair must also negotiate between the various factions of the Labour party, which is divided on various levels, most importantly between Old Labour and New Labour factions. Take, for example, the aftermath of Peter Mandelson's resignation. Blair's eventual decision to allow him back into government is illustrated as being vital: “The point is not actually one about friendship or loyalty. It's about the country. [...] His absence from my government was a huge loss; his presence in any government is a huge asset” (221). Mandelson had until that point been described largely as a boon for the Labour party and the New Labour project, but is now recast as also being the cornerstone of an effective government. Blair in this section sees himself as taking government-wide (and countrywide) decisions, rather than merely at the party level. The

usage of varying positions is reminiscent of how *Power and Pragmatism* utilised disparate voices to present the whole Malcolm Rifkind, however in *A Journey* it is consistently the same Tony Blair, with the crucial caveat that he each time inhabits a different space within the political paradigm. The position the narrator has Blair take per topic sets the level at which a given event unfolds, thereby allowing for shifts in the relative importance each topic has. The interplay between levels Blair may inhabit allow for topics to become greater or smaller than they may otherwise have been. Furthermore, there does not seem to be a single defined direction this may take. *A Journey* seems to employ these redirections on an ad hoc basis, steering and pushing but without an overarching goal, in sharp contrast to that of *Power and Pragmatism*, see below. It is, then, a tool, rather than a determined means to an end.

There is one exception to this, however. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Iraq war and its aftermath take up a considerable portion of the book. The intervention in the Middle East has come to define Blair's time in office. To a considerable extent, *A Journey* serves as a means for Blair to explain himself, and his reasons for going to war. Throughout this section of the book, Blair does not describe himself in the earlier terms of Prime Minister or father or any such. Rather, the emphasis on his personal conviction (see previous chapters) shines through. That is to say, the existence of a political paradigm is downplayed in favour of a system which relies solely on the narrator's own reasoning to justify his order of events. Despite ostensibly having to navigate between the many different spaces of a political person, the narrator establishes his core values which overrule any other interest. This is achieved through a method of first presenting Blair's own moral code as being that of the nation, and then allowing this morality to directly affect judgement and foreign policy:

I had enlarged the concept of national interest, arguing that in an interdependent world, our national interest was engaged whenever injustice or danger existed. So I came to this new challenge with what was already a highly developed instinct for the bold approach and for being prepared to intervene rather than let be. (368)

The narrator establishes a 'greater good', in light of which decisions have to be made. Even the political security so heavily emphasized in earlier chapters of the book is sacrificed in order to uphold Blair's values: "I tried to work out what was the right thing to do. I was past expediency, past political calculation, past personal introspection. I knew this could be the

end politically. I just wanted to know: what is the right thing?" (412). Any collateral damage, material or immaterial, seems to be less important than the state of the principle. The point of this crucial section of *A Journey* is to emphasize how in this pivotal global affair, Blair did not act to save himself, his party or his premiership but to uphold the moral doctrine he ascribes to and believes all should ascribe to. It asks to be read as if it were somewhat like what Smith & Watson call the "*testimonio*" (282), as *A Journey*, too, draws upon both legal and religious witnessing, and active investment from the reader. Blair only asks that we judge his words, not the words others have written about him (see the chapter of Form). Note the difference between this testimony and Smith & Watson's definition of the *apology*, wherein the author must assert that they are at fault (255-256) – Blair does not. For similar reasons, it cannot really be classified as a *confession* as that, too, requires the acknowledgement of sin and redemption (265). The testimony thus becomes the closest apposite descriptor.

Discussing Mandelson's Position

In *The Third Man*, Mandelson, too, makes reference to a number of national memories. As above, this section will begin with the narrator's comments on Diana. Surprisingly or unsurprisingly given the New Labour angle, these are similar to those found in *A Journey*. Mandelson confesses not to have known her very well (and indeed spends considerably more time discussing Prince Charles' situation) but is nonetheless able to find common ground between himself and Diana: "I always found her enjoyable company, and felt that her ability to touch a chord with the public had modernised the image of the royal family in much the same way that New Labour had reconnected us with the lives of British voters" (232). Note how Mandelson does not imply that Diana and New Labour agreed on any particular political front, just that their efforts of modernisation of their base (the monarchy and the Labour party, respectively) had a similar response in the eyes of the public. He affirms Diana's connection to the public (and how exemplary it was for that time) and connects with the New Labour public-focused ideology. This excerpt serves as an example of how a relatively small section of a book can influence the presentation of its political ideology, by employing brief comparisons and connections in a narrative largely dealing with other affairs. It is an almost off-hand comment that nonetheless enforces a particular view of, in this case, the legitimacy of the New Labour project.

The book does not discuss the coalition government, or its larger impact on British

politics, in great detail. Instead, the narrator prefers to examine the result of the 2010 election from a Labour and New Labour perspective. The changing, aspirational, middle class New Labour wanted to appeal to in the 90s had moved on, Mandelson explains, and believed that New Labour had lost touch: “What these votes meant by fairness was [...] issues on which they felt we were now either speaking a different language than we had in 1997, or no longer had anything to say at all” (561). He goes on to explain that in spite of this alleged public opinion towards New Labour, it was not the ideology that is at fault. Rather, it is the method by which it is delivered (or by which it was not delivered sufficiently). Discussing the outcome of the 2010 election through this lens reinterprets the position of the public at the time. Rather than the election result being a beating for the Labour party, it establishes how the core ideology of New Labour remains as true to voters' demands as ever. The insider's perspective the narrator brings allows readers to experience the full timeline of New Labour's ideology almost first-hand. According to the theory by Landsberg explained above, this then “suture[s] possibilities of political engagement” (qtd. in Smith & Watson 27), ultimately suggesting to the reader that New Labour is in no sense dead.

The 9/11 attacks were arguably one of the most pivotal moments in recent international history, and the method in which Mandelson discusses them could therefore be considered odd. His analysis of the mood of the national and international public is remarkable in its absence – no attachment to national memory or discussion of the daily lives of people present or future is made of any kind. Instead, the narrator assesses the situation in light of one man only: Tony Blair. The “third man” narrative, then, usurps some of the book's ability to investigate national memory. Consider again the following excerpt, which also featured in the previous chapter:

The more my political life was defined in terms of my relationship with Tony, the more difficult any real reconstruction became. [...] In a diary note I reflected, 'The trouble with writing a journal is that any time I think of anything interesting it revolves around Tony Blair'. (282)

Mandelson, through writing his autobiography, seems to be able to acknowledge how, willingly or otherwise, his political career became obsessively linked to Blair. Note that in this stage of his life, Mandelson's career is tied in a multitude of ways to Tony Blair and his team, and the writing in those sections of the book where this is most the case has a restless

feel compared to the clarity of the portions where the link is decidedly smaller.

Autobiographical writing has a therapeutic effect, according to Smith & Watson, which may assist in “resolving troubled memories” (28), and Mandelson may thus be writing to make peace with these portions of his life. The book's overarching goal of enduring the 'third man' problem therefore seems to overrule the narrator's ability to guide its audience into particular modes of thinking so far as more public affairs are concerned.

The discussion of the narrator's involvement with Northern Ireland as Secretary of State touches upon several of this chapter's areas of interest. Mandelson is at a point in his career where, though still serving Tony Blair's larger interest, he is some distance away from him and allowed to operate with some autonomy. As such, his ability to comment on public affairs is in a more active state. The pages dedicated to Mandelson's time in Northern Ireland focus mainly on the viewpoints and interests of the various political parties (including those of the government). The narrator paints the picture of a man negotiating between these factions, doing his utmost best to reach an appreciable consensus. He describes himself as a person who was willing to risk his own political career in order to resolve the situation, exemplified in this excerpt where the narrator is quoting a speech made by Mandelson at the time: “I will stand by you. I will not allow you to take the burden of the blame for failure. I will do it myself” (294). One of the few times public interest is alluded to is in the protests against either Mandelson or one or two particular Northern Irish parties. Certain measures had made him unpopular with a portion of the local populace and in the words of Gerry Adams, quoted in-text by the narrator: “Don't take it personally,' he said. 'but you're going to become public enemy number one” (298). By incorporating the popular (and/or media) image of Mandelson at the time, the narrator acknowledges the 'truth' over his subject then, but explains to the reader how it came to be. Mandelson understands why he was so disliked at the time, and does not deny it, but seeks to explain to the audience why he felt the causes of his eventual public disapproval were ultimately entirely justified. In other words, what is being remembered is unchanged (see Smith & Watson's discussion of *The Politics of Remembering* above), but the ideological underpinning is redirected, and may reorient the audience's line of thought on the matter (see Landsberg).

Taking a step back and examining the narrative as a whole, it becomes apparent that the narrator in *The Third Man* rarely makes reference to the will or demands of the public. On the few occasions that it does, it is used a device by which New Labour's (continued) legitimacy is reinforced. In terms of public affairs, or other day-to-day engagements, the book

generally examines the consequences in light of either New Labour, or Tony Blair. As has been shown in this chapter and the previous chapter, only when the 'third man' theme is less oppressive may Mandelson truly self-investigate. It seems to be closest to a *Bildungsroman* in its narrative of development and breaking free from 'third man' shadow. It may indeed be read as an attempt to attain his own “emerging identity” (Smith & Watson 263), as Mandelson is finally free to examine his role in British and international politics without having to consider how Blair is affected.

Clarke and the People

It will have become apparent at this stage that there are few nostalgic appeals to an idealised past within any of the books. The narratives are more preoccupied with their overarching themes and reflection upon their respective journeys as a whole, rather than look back on how much better things used to be, in the good old days. In assessing cultural trends or the development of the British public (or electorate) in general, there is no invocation of or reference to the Blitz spirit or a post-war sense of community. One of the few arguably nostalgic passages is in *Kind of Blue*, and there the nostalgic imagery is combined with the narrator's views on his party's connection to the European Union:

As I travelled with and got to know the group, though, it was brought home to me how much most of the Conservative Party was gripped by excited support for the European project, [...] I look back and contrast that atmosphere of a new dawn with the growing cynicism and pessimism of later years and the nostalgic yearnings for an older nationalism which were later to divide and consume my party. (69)

As has been established, *Kind of Blue* is for a great deal the story of the Conservative Party's relation with the European Union in its various forms. This passage sees the narrator step out of the narrative('s chronological) flow to reflect on how the situation has developed since the days the Conservatives welcomed the EU. The previous chapter has shown how the life writing format allows for these breaks with narrative flow in order to make a point on a larger scale. Curiously however, *Kind of Blue* uses nostalgic imagery to lambaste Clarke's contemporary Conservative opponents' use of nostalgia in the debate over Europe. Note how Clarke employs some anti-nostalgic language in a later sequence as well: “I'm not a man

given to nostalgia and I had no desire at all to return future generations to the rather grim atmosphere of post-war England” (279). Nostalgia, then, is in *Kind of Blue* largely framed in the negative: living in Britain used to be bad, it needs to be better, and the narrator is here to tell how he intends to achieve that.

The narrator frequently uses appeals to current (i.e. contemporary) and future generations to defend his policies past and present. The importance of these policies is never clearer than in *Kind of Blue's* discussion of the National Health Service. Whether or not the NHS can be considered an 'event' is debatable, but its prominent position in British society and public debate is difficult to ignore. For example, John Kinnaird writes in the *Journal of Public Health Policy* of “the esteemed, well-nigh sacrosanct position which the National Health Service has occupied in the eyes of the British public” (388). As such, it is not unusual for politicians to include their thoughts on the NHS in their writing. More so perhaps for Clarke, as he was Secretary of State for Health for a number of years. In *Kind of Blue*, the NHS (and health care in general) is described as “the most emotional political subject in just about every Western democracy” (122). Throughout Clarke's career in dealing with the NHS three themes rise to the surface: first, that the NHS is in a permanent state of needing dire reform, second, that those in charge generally object to any reform, and third (crucially) that those working in the service (especially those in the lower ranks) are doing an exemplary and thankless job (“the congenial, civilised people who worked for it which compensated for the heat of the battle” 144). The method by which the narrator engages with topics within the NHS follows a pattern of affirming these established roles. The description of the NHS as an undeniable boon for society reminds of Smith & Watson's “cultural uses of remembering” (22), wherein specific aspects of public affairs are foregrounded in particular. In the case of the NHS, it would seem that its purely positive influence on day to day life makes it difficult for any author (or politician) to position themselves in opposition to the general practices of the NHS. Enacting change in the NHS would then thus require an opponent which is not the NHS as a whole, in itself, but some other party. *Kind of Blue* accomplishes this by finding opposing factions on the fringe of, or outside the NHS against which he may test his proposed policies. It is never framed against a (non-managerial) employee or the general populace, however, which is also visible in the following topic.

Clarke's discussion of the miners' strikes of 1984-1985 is an example of how the blame never rests on the public, especially when the situation at hand is deemed socially unfair. Although the strike of 1984 was a multi-faceted issue with many parties involved, the

principal blame lies with the trade unionist Arthur Scargill: “In my view it was a blatant bid by Arthur Scargill to use militant action to topple a democratically elected government” (224). The strikes are described as disastrous for social unity, dividing communities and families. Clarke's analysis of the strikes is one occasion in which he directly links his own political view to the combating of social unrest:

Families were divided, friendships broken and communities embittered for years to come. [...] I strongly believed, however, that a liberal democracy could not allow itself to be derailed by the violent force of a politicized trade union. That is why moderate One Nation Conservative ministers like me never wavered in our support for our policy (225)

This excerpt sees the narrator firmly attach his own moral code to the needs of the public and the nation. The national affair of the strikes is thus brought into the narrative to strengthen the legitimacy of Clarke's political inclination by affirming its beneficial role for the public, which is often stuck in a passive role. The public is rarely the cause of any problem, but they are affected and must therefore be assisted. The narrator then sees at his plight to resolve the situation following his own moral and political code to the best of his ability. *Kind of Blue* makes considerable effort to find a cause (be it a trend, a faction or a person) for the public's behaviour. Margaret Thatcher's role in fuelling the riots in 1990 exemplifies this: the narrator explains the root causes, his own stance on the matter (it was socially unfair) and his own attempts to relieve the situation, unsuccessfully in this case. The public, then, is either in the right when it rises up, or in a role wherein it can do very little. One of the few ways in which the public's voice can be heard is through polls and election results (and not through the media, see previous chapter). This, too, may then be explained in terms preferred by Clarke, and largely in a way that highlights how his political disposition transcends party doctrine. Public affairs are thus described not only in terms of their consequences for the government, the Conservative Party or Ken Clarke, but also for their effect on the British public which the narrator may then use to further his own agenda and viewpoint.

In choosing his own strand of politics over that of the party or the government as a whole, Clarke is occasionally hindered as he climbs the party ranks. His strength and ability carry him through the rougher patches of his career. It is difficult to pin down precisely what sort of autobiography *Kind of Blue* fundamentally is. Though it contains elements of various

genres of autobiography, including the personal essay and the journal, it cannot be defined in terms of one specific genre. It may then just be a *memoir* as Smith & Watson define it, in their paraphrasing of Nancy K. Miller: “the double act of recalling and recording” (275). Arguably the book is exactly what it says it is on the cover: a political memoir, as every event in either British history or Ken Clarke's history is defined in terms of its relevancy and importance to Clarke's personal political view of Britain, recalled by Clarke to his audience and recorded into a tape recorder.

Rifkind in Position

Malcolm Rifkind, too, mentions Princess Diana in his autobiography. The topic is alluded to only briefly at a chapter's end, more or less removed from the narrative otherwise. Diana needed Rifkind's advice on a non-specific matter, and no real details are provided. The narrator concludes his relation to Diana by saying that she “had many problems and challenges in her life but she could not be faulted on her courtesy and consideration” (362). Princess Diana, as a topic, is fairly innocuous then in *Power and Pragmatism*. It shows, however, how much weight Diana had in the eyes of the public, as the narrator feels the need to include her in his story despite her having very little to do with the narrative, if any at all. Princess Diana acts as a rhetorical device for these authors, in that they may derive some credit from having met her (and arguably from interacting with her), while simultaneously reaffirming the public image of Diana, as in the quote above.

Power and Pragmatism, unlike the other three books, does refer to empire a number of times. It focuses on the role the United Kingdom has in relation to the rest of the world now that it is no longer the world power that used to be. Rifkind is not particularly nostalgic about the past in this regard, rather seeing it as a factual development of the United Kingdom. Rifkind does not provide an in-depth analysis of empire or how it came to disintegrate. Rather, the narrator refers and appeals to the United Kingdom's decreasing role as an empire or world leader, or more importantly, how much good it still can do for the world despite the loss of its prominent position. The combination of both this reduction of empire and its implications for its effect on the rest of the world serve as a source of inspiration for the narrator, as in the following excerpt:

What attracted me to politics and Parliament as a young man was partly a deep

interest in foreign policy; in how the United Kingdom, no longer the British Empire, could continue to make a distinctive contribution to resolving world problems, and whether I could play some significant part in that process. (108)

As Rifkind discusses empire on the global scale of international relations, the emphasis lies firmly on the benefits, foregoing the more negative aspects of colonialism. This is not too strange as the narrator is not arguing for a revival of empire for Britain's future, but rather discussing how Rifkind can add to the United Kingdom's continued role in international relations. Returning to the this chapter's goals, Rifkind thus does ascribe qualities to empire as such, but highlights an aspect of Britain (i.e. being the former world power) and makes it so that aspect becomes part of his persona as well.

The poll tax, or community charge, was a tax reform initiated by the Thatcher government, replacing a proportional tax (based on the value of a house) to a tax that applied to each individual, made to fund local government. This tax was extremely controversial and led to major protests and a number of riots. Rifkind was Secretary of State for Scotland at the time, and the poll tax topic is given considerable attention in *Power and Pragmatism*. The narrator does not deny his support for the tax at the time, but insists that it was the “least bad” (218) alternative to the current rate paying system. Rifkind notes how the rate system was unfair (especially in Scotland), but also that Margaret Thatcher saw the poll tax as the only means by which the spending of the left-wing councils (i.e. the local government mentioned above) could be controlled. Agreeing that the rates were unfair, Rifkind nonetheless places the largest of the blame for the need for the poll tax on these left-wing councils:

The inherent unfairness of the system was that certain high-profile, left-wing councils who were determined to increase their spending put the whole burden for paying it on ratepayers and local businesses, assuming that most of them were not Labour voters anyway. (217)

As the cause at the root of the problem is shifted from Thatcher's policy to left-wing local government, the ideological foundation of the problem moves as well. No longer is the poll tax a government ploy to extract more money from the poorest in society, instead it is an answer to questionable fundraising by (essentially) Labour councils. Consider again Alison Landsberg's comments on public memory, and how the reliving of national events through

life writing may redirect and indeed “evoke empathy and reorient people politically” (qtd. in Smith & Watson 27). The narrator in *Power and Pragmatism* combines his personal memory of the politics with the unfairness the public felt at the time to offer an alternative view on the origin of the poll tax. Similar to *Kind of Blue*, no particular member of the public is to blame, with the narrator frequently assuring the audience that the final version of the tax became too heavy for the poorer especially, and how the proponents of the tax among the middle classes could not have foreseen the eventual disastrous results.

Notable in Rifkind's discussion of the poll tax is how he himself had no hand in its creation (though he did initially support it). His analysis serves as an exercise in redeeming the Conservative government at the time, even though the narrator was not involved in this particular decision. Throughout the story, the narrator has to navigate between party interests and the interests of the various positions Rifkind inhabits (see previous chapter). At the same time, the narrator has a desire to elaborate on his personal system of pragmatic politics. The result of which is that the narrator has to make careful use of which words he employs to enhance his legitimacy with regard to the parties at hand. For example, in the following excerpt Rifkind navigates the Conservative Party through a decision which may split the party if handled incorrectly:

I went on to say that if the national interest required a decision now, we would have to take one 'regardless of the political implications for the party'. By this I meant, as was well understood, the Cabinet split, and the likely resignations that would have followed if we had rejected the euro. [...] I asked the conference to be patient. 'Tories,' I said. 'do not put party before country. The Conservatives will always represent the national interest'. (373-374)

Rifkind, then, employs his pragmatic view on politics to, ideally, preserve not only national interest but also the interest (and survival) of the Conservative party. By extension, this also includes the survival of the Conservative government. The narrator's goal of personal acclaim is achieved implicitly, as his approach and goals are not only described but also attained. *Power and Pragmatism* sees the narrator aligning himself with or instigating beneficial turns in the party and in government, and rejecting or downplaying his involvement when the situation is less bright by occupying one of the other positions Rifkind may inhabit within the narrative (that is, he may align with a different interest or party when playing a different role

may reflect poorly on his person). In theoretical terms, Rifkind creates replicas of events that place him in one context rather than another, which is an active endeavour. As Smith & Watson show, this purpose of life writing sees the author “actively [creating] meaning” (22) in their memory, shaping their preferred image of themselves.

Power and Pragmatism then seems to draw from several genres of autobiographical writing. Aside from the obvious similarities to journal and diary forms, it also bears a relation to the *personal essay* as *Power and Pragmatism*, too, “is a testing of one's own intellectual, emotional, and physiological responses to a given topic” (Smith & Watson 276). It is still not a perfect fit however, as this book looks not so much at the emotional or physiological view on events as much as it relies on the intellectual and political influence. It may then be the quintessential political memoir, similar to *Kind of Blue*, as every public affair is considered in the light of the subject's pragmatic mode of thinking. Where Ken Clarke chose to focus his narrative on the two topics of the changed media and Europe & the Conservatives, Rifkind rests every topic on the foundation of a pragmatic approach.

Assessing Movement

A Journey makes frequent use of popular images to enforce and enhance his own position and politics. It navigates between the various positions Blair must take as a politician and sets the importance of events in accordance with them. However, he is at all stages of the narrative able to assert his own beliefs as also being those of the general public. The exception is in situations of international intervention, where his own personal and religious moral code takes precedence over what the people (or indeed his fellow party members) may prefer. *A Journey* states, then, that Blair knows what the people want, even if the people do not know what they want, and sees it as his duty to do what is right for them. The narrator in *The Third Man* knows how to utilise national memory to steer public thought, and employs descriptions of a man sacrificing his own position in order to strengthen the Union, the party, or New Labour to present a portrait of a selfless man who chooses the interests of others above his own. The struggle felt in the shadow of Tony Blair hampers his abilities greatly. His selflessness becomes a disadvantage, effectively demonstrating his inability to exercise politics at the top, and the book serves as a means for the narrator to make peace with this inability to function as an effective minister in British politics. However, as the narrative ends at a stage where Mandelson is no longer bound to Tony Blair, he is eventually at least able to

comment on the state of the nation again.

Kind of Blue has a clear connection between the narrator's political conviction and the public interest. The public, while not given much voice, is presented as benefiting greatly were it to follow Clarke's beliefs in social justice, fairness and the free market. Indeed, there are no issues presented in *Kind of Blue* which cannot be solved by adhering to these tenets. The nation thrives when it follows these ideals and whenever the nation steers away from them, unrest looms. As Clarke is himself presented as readily equipped to realize these ideals, his political legitimacy (and that of these ethics) is demonstrated throughout *Kind of Blue*. The political foundation of *Power and Pragmatism's* narrative is strengthened by its use of popular and occasionally global affairs to more aptly describe the full extent of Malcolm Rifkind's character. The narrator moves deftly between the spaces of party, government and other interests, which allows him to always place Rifkind on the winning side. The method by which the narrator incorporates these events with the pragmatism inherent to his (political) being together serve as a bedrock, a foundation from which any decision made by Rifkind may be justified or explained. The level of authorial control felt in the previous chapter is visible here as well, as the narrator seems to have a clear presence at every level of the narrative.

This chapter has additionally attempted to classify the four books, assigning them a label based on the extensive list provided by Smith & Watson. This was done in part to test whether or not the toolkit provided in that guide (which this thesis has drawn from considerably) is sufficient for interpreting autobiographies that lie just outside its scope, and in part to demonstrate that it cannot comprehensively do so. While similarities may be drawn between these books and other genres of life writing, political memoirs as such are not included in the list as a separate genre. This is odd mostly because the list is rather extensive otherwise. The sports memoir, for example, is included. The political memoir then is either deemed not important enough to warrant its own category (or include at all), or a subsidiary of a larger category. The boundaries between genres of life writing are often blurred, but the question is what other genres the political memoir resembles, rather than which genre it belongs to. In other words, the political memoir is a genre in and of itself, distinct enough to warrant its own sphere of discussion. It is possible that political memoirs are more difficult to categorize, as they occupy a unique place somewhere between fiction and reality, different to other modes of autobiography, the extent of which life writing studies has not yet been able to reconcile. The political memoir is unique in that its author must explicitly have a particular

ideology in writing the book (i.e., their reason for entering politics in the first place). Based on this research, it is arguable that the life writing format allows politicians to propagate their ideology in the guise of autobiographical writing. The political memoir that then ensues may borrow from other modes of life writing, such as the *apology* or the *Bildungsroman* but is not subservient to them. Of course, there are many authors that have an ideology in writing about themselves (arguably all of them), but the political memoir is unique in its delivery of its ideology from the outset.

Janssen s4237161/64

Conclusions

This thesis set out to confirm the idea that the presentation of a book consists of a series of deliberate choices, and sought to determine what sort of methods may be employed to present an author or his story in a particular way, employing the recent political memoirs by Tony Blair, Peter Mandelson, Ken Clarke and Malcolm Rifkind as case studies. Specifically, the question was: how do the compositions of the political autobiographies by Tony Blair, Peter Mandelson, Ken Clarke and Malcolm Rifkind ensure their subjects' past emphasizes their political legitimacy in the present, on both a general and personal level? The research question was to be answered by looking at both the inward and the outward characteristics of the books, examining the interplay between them as well as the purely textual implications of the books' composition. Secondary literature on the nature of life writing had to be employed to ensure a satisfactory framework was available by which these cases might be analysed. The guide to reading life narratives by Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography*, proved to be a vital addition to this research. It, together with literary theorist Gérard Genette's thoughts on extra-textual elements, and other secondary literature, allowed for comprehensive answers to the various questions raised in this thesis.

The hypothesis was that the books used frequent appeals to public and popular topics such as the Blitz, austerity and nostalgia (or nostalgic imagery) to enter or re-enter their favoured topics into public debate, in turn also affirming their own proficiency in handling these topics. The first half of this, the use of topics, was only true to a comparatively small degree, not least because the selection of topics by the authors was so diverse, ranging from Princess Diana to miner's strikes. By and large, the authors opted for different topics than what was expected, though this did not hamper the research as the topics they did choose were equally fit for analysis. The latter part, the affirmation of skill, did prove to be true, as the narrators in the four books managed to carefully detail their own expertise on various subjects, including that of party politics. Indeed, navigating party politics and knowing when to assign or redirect blame and commendation proved to be an important tool for these authors to establish their own continued legitimacy. The various major topics the authors chose to incorporate in their text were made to fit, or explained along the lines of, the political ideology preferred by the authors. They draw upon various other genres of autobiography such as the *testimony* or the *Bildungsroman* to enhance their position on

certain matters and employed structural arrangements to strengthen their argument and reflection.

The authors are deliberate in the setting of the tone and intention of their memoirs, often explicating what mode of reading they desire their audience to be in before reading. The temporal distance between events and the narrator's reflecting upon them allows the narrators to interpret them twice, and thereby provide themselves with two levels of voice with which they may attempt to influence the reader, as both the circumstances in the moment as well as the position of the narrator looking back years later is considered. This is true especially for Tony Blair's *A Journey*, which feels it has to justify its moral position on several contentious and high-profile issues throughout the narrative. Peter Mandelson's *The Third Man* paints the picture of a man with great ability in politics and public relations but hampered by his role in Tony Blair's shadow. His ability in the present, then, is enacted through his finally casting off the shadow of Blair and being allowed his own career. Ken Clarke's *Kind of Blue* employs a strict chronology that continues to run into the present (i.e., after the book's ending) that refuses to let anything overshadow the author's principles, no matter what the future may bring for Britain or the Conservative Party. Malcolm Rifkind's *Power and Pragmatism* employs its titular pragmatism to propel the subject's career to incredible heights, informing the audience of how pragmatism is an eternally beneficial quality in a politician, and how Rifkind is an ideal example of it. Not only has his career thrived on it throughout his many years in politics, so too have his party and his country thrived, both Scotland and the United Kingdom.

The presentation of the books themselves adds to these ideas, as the presentation itself sets the tone for the books. This is true in the greatest part for *Power and Pragmatism*, as its use of voice and occasional humorous side, combined with a non-standard layout, accurately sum up the book's content. In *Kind of Blue*, Clarke's position as a senior politician whose ideals are continually relevant are explicated from the outset through both the visual and the textual elements of its presentation. Blair's *A Journey* is explicitly his own journey in his own words, reflecting the stance in the book that this is the definitive work by which Blair is allowed to be judged. *The Third Man* is in a seemingly odd position, as the image of a man pulling the strings from the shadows is emphasized. The oddness derives from the fact that the narrative contained within the book is a subversion of this image, as it is described largely as a hindrance to Mandelson, rather than a boon.

The continued legitimacy of the authors is on both a personal and a general level is

attained through different means varying per author, though there is some overlap in the methods they employ. The presentation, structure and methods of reflection allow the authors to present their preferred image of themselves to their audience by shifting attention to certain topics and away from others, also taking deliberate stances in relation to events that paint both the discussed and the discussor in a certain light, guiding the audience into a particular mode of thinking by adapting memory and remaking the meaning of these memories (see Smith & Watson 22-27)

A recurring problem in writing the thesis lies with the memoir format itself, specifically the political memoir. It is at times strangely undefined, and can fit a multitude of possible modes of life writing. While life writing and its various forms of autobiography have been studied extensively, there are still many gaps in its collective knowledge. This is especially true for the more 'public' side of life writing, chiefly written by people who are otherwise not strictly writers. One issue is the degree to which the memoir may be regarded as either fiction or non-fiction. Many answers to this question have been submitted over the course of life writing studies' history, but no definitive answer has been found. This is no less true for the political memoir.

Another problematic side is the lack of credible sources that have discussed either the political memoir format (especially the memoir as a standalone piece of work) or any of the four books this thesis is concerned with in an academic setting. Instead, this research has had to rely on sources that discuss life writing on a more general level. Identifying which parts of the available literature on life writing fit (or could fit) a discussion of the political memoir ended up providing substantial food for thought, and invites the coming together of further fields of study. As an example, consider the statement made by Marc W. Steinberg, who was mentioned previously in the introduction to the *Reflection* chapter. Steinberg, historian and sociologist, examined how discursive constructions may assist in framing, constructing and modifying reality as they do so (851). It is reminiscent of the "meaning-making" of memories which Smith & Watson refer to (22), but does not specifically consider life writing. The subject of a future study could be how political memoirs serve as a discursive construction that assist in framing the terms of a conflict, with the memoir serving as a tool made available exclusively through the politician-author.

Janssen s4237161/68

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