Fielding, Steven. "The Established Order Undermined." *A State of Play: British Politics on Screen, Stage and Page, from Anthony Trollope to .* : Bloomsbury Academic, 2014. 131–156. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781472545015.ch-005>>.

Downloaded from Bloomsbury Collections, www.bloomsburycollections.com, 26 April 2023, 09:01 UTC.

Copyright © Steven Fielding 2014. You may share this work for non-commercial purposes only, provided you give attribution to the copyright holder and the publisher, and provide a link to the Creative Commons licence.

The Established Order Undermined

The number of novels glamorizing Westminster and expressing sympathy for its leading figures, as well as their adaptation for the stage and small screen, suggests that during the post-war period a significant number of Britons looked on politics in similar terms. Certainly, an unprecedented proportion of voters participated in general elections and belonged to the three main political parties at this time. These parties were moreover often rooted in local popular cultures. The Young Conservatives, for example, had in excess of 150,000 members, many of whom enjoyed a vibrant collective social life that encompassed sports of various kinds and even holidays to Spain.¹

In spite of this most Britons' relationship with Westminster politics was hardly intimate, certainly not before 1939 nor during the 1950s, and as the latter decade gave way to the 1960s and 1970s it became increasingly distant.² Hitherto Labour and the Conservatives had found class a useful means of mobilizing support and while they continued to employ class-based appeals, the rising salience of other forms of identity meant they became less effective.³ The established working- and middle-class communities in which the parties had found a niche were being transformed and replaced by the self-conscious individualism of a new kind of suburbia. Thus, by the late 1970s, the Young Conservatives – once described as the world's most successful political youth movement – had fewer than 30,000 members. At the same time, Manchester United Football Club regularly enjoyed home crowds of over 50,000.⁴

Other kinds of social change further transformed the terrain of established politics. The 1950s ended with a series of race riots and the new decade saw black immigration become a vital issue, one the main parties found difficult to address. This left the field open to those outside the Westminster consensus, notably former Conservative Cabinet minister Enoch Powell, who vividly warned of a multi-racial Britain flowing with 'rivers of blood'.⁵ By the late 1960s revolutionary students also appeared to be in the vanguard of a generation in revolt, one implacably hostile to the *status quo*, leading some

Labour ministers to fear the country was descending into chaos.⁶ Second-wave feminism also seemed to augur a new relationship between men and women, one with consequences for the home and workplace, raising issues a male-dominated Westminster did not find congenial.⁷ Even more pressingly, the former workshop of the world was in trouble, with politicians unable to reverse signs of economic decline. Harold Wilson's Labour government was elected in 1964 promising to unleash the 'white heat' of technological change but was quickly reduced to putting an ineffectual lid on bubbling industrial discontent. Wilson was even forced to devalue sterling, an act that many took as confirming Britain's relegation from great imperial power to the sick man of Europe.⁸

In this context, it did not seem to matter which party was in office: none made the situation much better, and some believed party competition actually made it worse. Such a critical view was only reinforced by changes in the media. The 1963 Profumo affair, which combined sex, secrets and Soviet spies, effectively ended Harold Macmillan's premiership. It was also an early sign that journalists were ready to lift the veil on Westminster, so long as it exposed scandal.⁹ Yet at the same time as their memberships started to collapse, the parties became ever more dependent on the same media – and television especially – to communicate with voters.

If by the 1960s most electors viewed their real politicians through the small screen, this was also the place where they mostly encountered their fictional equivalents. Given the dominance of television it was therefore significant that during this decade broadcasters started to cast many of their inhibitions aside and showed representative politics in less-than-flattering terms. Of course, political fictions had always expressed antagonism for the shortcomings of democracy, often in the hope of promoting change. But this period saw such criticism reach an unprecedented pitch and be communicated to an unrivalled number of people, while its ultimate aim – if it had one – was unclear. The picture was nonetheless mixed. The 'satire boom' and early conspiracy dramas established new tropes that would be familiar to twenty-first-century Britons. Much criticism, however, harked back to earlier times, and was in the case of that articulated by Norman Wisdom still surprisingly deferential to those exerting political authority.

Old wine in bigger bottles

At the forefront of this process were performers and writers with Oxbridge backgrounds, who made pointed and, for the time, shocking fun of politics.

Peter Cook's impersonation of Macmillan during the highly successful revue 'Beyond the Fringe', first staged in 1960, was especially noteworthy in a production described as comprising 'satirical reflections on authority'.¹⁰ Cook's rendering emphasized Macmillan's slurred speech and strongly suggested the Prime Minister was not only out of touch but also on the verge of senility.¹¹ Cook also helped finance *Private Eye* magazine, established in 1961 by a number of former public school boys who aimed to do on the page what Cook and others did on the stage.

This early 1960s 'satire boom' was evidence that the deference to authority so important to Britain's supposed 'moral unity' was breaking down, at least among some of the country's youngest and most educated citizens.¹² But it was not clear what purpose this satire served and whether mocking authority in general and politicians in particular was an end in itself. Certainly many of those doing the mocking had little interest in changing anything, leading some to describe them as 'Tory Anarchists'.¹³ Michael Palin, a student at Oxford at this time and who later became a member of the Monty Python team, described himself as 'one of that cursed generation doomed to take nothing seriously'.¹⁴ Moreover, while Cook's influence waned in the 1970s – he would repeat his Macmillan impersonation long after his victim had resigned from Number 10 – those he had inspired came to play an influential role. Jonathan Lynn abandoned the law, which he studied at Cambridge, in favour of the stage, believing that 'the most useful contribution I could make to society would be to ridicule [politicians] when necessary'.¹⁵ Lynn would co-write *Yes, Minister* in the 1980s.

Such apparently new and radical voices merged into existing, implicitly conservative critiques, of politics established well before 1945. Continuing to publish until their deaths in the mid-1970s, the worlds of Agatha Christie and P. G. Wodehouse had ossified into a permanent 1930s in which politics was always pointless and all politicians self-important. Christie's Guy Carpenter, the prospective parliamentary candidate in *Mrs. McGinty's Dead* (1952), was, of course, 'pompous' and according to no less a judge than Hercule Poirot also 'selfish, ambitious, and a man very nice in the manner of his reputation'.¹⁶ Indeed in *Hickory Dickory Dock* (1955) Christie suggests that an interest in politics is somehow un-English and a sign of mental illness.¹⁷ Wodehouse's view of politics was also caught in aspic. In *Jeeves in the Offing* (1960) it is inevitable that Aubrey Upjohn – that 'pompous ass' – wants to be a Conservative parliamentary candidate. Roderick Spode even reappears in *Much Obligated, Jeeves* (1971). Once seen as a stand-in for Oswald Mosley, Spode speaks on behalf of Wooster's pal Ginger Winship, who is reluctantly

standing as a Conservative to please his demanding fiancée, a plot that echoed William Douglas-Home's 1947 play *The Chiltern Hundreds*. Like Wooster, the good-natured Ginger finds electioneering repellent, while the appalling Spode is revealed as a 'silver-tongued orator' who has audiences hanging on his every word. As Wooster says, summing up the Wodehouse view of the subject, 'The great thing in life, Jeeves, if we wish to be happy and prosperous, is to miss as many political debates as possible.'¹⁸ This was in effect one of the lessons readers were encouraged to draw from Anthony Powell's *Dance to the Music of Time* series of novels (1951–75), a central character of which is the ridiculous, affected and overly ambitious Kenneth Widmerpool, who inevitably ends up an MP and minister.

Not all genres established during the interwar period retained the same view of politics. Historical movies had once given the British heroic versions of their political class, but the glossy Anglo-American *Beau Brummell* (1954) showed the wind was changing direction.¹⁹ It depicted William Pitt in a starkly different way from *The Young Mr. Pitt* (1942), presenting the Prime Minister as a stern figure who tries to force the Prince of Wales to sacrifice his private pleasures to public duty. Pitt is also jealous of the hero Brummell's influence, as the latter encourages the Prince to be true to himself and pursue happiness. *Brummell* raised issues associated with the emerging 'affluent' society. Its protagonist is a man of humble origins who rises up the social ladder through his own talents. No longer defined by his defence of the national interest, as he was in the wartime movie, Pitt now personifies oppressive tradition.

Instead of choosing triumphant moments from Britain's past, filmmakers also increasingly selected some of its greatest disasters. The Charge of the Light Brigade was once considered a glorious, heroic failure, but Tony Richardson's 1968 movie of that name presented it as an unmitigated catastrophe, the responsibility of an incompetent and arrogant Establishment. More pertinently, *Khartoum* (1966) has a duplicitous, cynical and what one reviewer saw as a 'candidly villainous' Gladstone attempt to maintain British 'honour' in the Sudan without giving General Gordon the resources to do it.²⁰ When the Liberal Prime Minister turns to Gordon to fulfil the impossible mission, he calculates that his appointment will be so popular that when Gordon fails the government should escape blame. If the film also shows Gordon blackmailing the Prime Minister into sending troops into the Sudan, the *Sun's* critic still saw the former – rather like Queen Victoria did at the time – as a man of principle betrayed by 'political chicanery'.²¹

Even the still-cautious BBC now felt able to broadcast satires that ridiculed past political figures – albeit on BBC Two on Saturday night and scheduled against the popular football highlights show *Match of the Day*. *My Father Knew Lloyd George* (1965) was, according to producer Ned Sherrin, ‘a fictional documentary film investigating an imagined scandal at the turn of the century’ in which the Prime Minister’s wife has an affair with a junior minister. Plausibly read as an elliptical comment on the Profumo affair, that writer John Bird also played Queen Victoria suggested it was not to be taken too seriously. But Sherrin – who had produced the contemporary satirical revue *That Was the Week That Was* (BBC, 1962–3) – claimed his 1965 drama had an important point, which was

that there are so many things in this sort of case which we can’t know about – that practically every history book which seeks to tell us the truth must be full of misrepresentations because so many facts have been suppressed.²²

Television censorship

Lord Simon claimed in his 1953 memoir of his time at the BBC – one he dedicated to Labour’s deputy leader Herbert Morrison – that after the fuss over *Party Manners*, no Chair of Governors would emulate his prohibition of Val Gielgud’s play.²³ He was wrong. Cinema increasingly tackled *risqué* themes thanks to filmmakers employing the adults-only X certificate, one of the first examples of which was the political drama *No Love for Johnnie* (1961), described by one critic as full of ‘torrid mattress capers’.²⁴ The Lord Chamberlain’s Office, before being abolished in 1968, even permitted Peter Cook’s impersonation of Macmillan to be performed on the stage. But less than two years before Cook, a BBC executive had prevented Peter Sellers giving television viewers his version of Macmillan during *The April 8th Show* (1958), provoking the comedian to vent his frustration live on air.²⁵

Even with Hugh Carleton Greene’s more permissive regime, which began when he became BBC Director General in 1960, politics remained a tricky subject for the Corporation as well as ITV.²⁶ Yet, while some remained wedded to the idea that television should protect its millions of viewers from dramatic criticism of the political order, the scope of what could be said slowly widened. David Turner’s *Swizzlewick* began its run as a twice-weekly series on BBC One at 6.30 p.m. during August 1964. Some saw the series as the Corporation’s attempt to emulate the popularity of ITV’s most successful soap operas, *Emergency*

Ward 10 and *Coronation Street*. It was however a strange choice to appeal to what the *Times* reviewer described as the ‘unsophisticated serial audience’, for Turner was a satirist in the tradition of Ben Jonson, a dramatist who disliked naturalism and a loud critic of conventional mores.^{27, 28} *Swizzlewick* therefore represented a huge leap of faith for the BBC and would test the limits of Greene’s liberalism.

Swizzlewick was a Midlands market town of which, the first episode’s opening commentary archly declares, ‘We are proud to say it is a democracy.’ At the heart of this democracy, though, is corruption. Mayor Augustus Bent, described by the *Radio Times* as ‘by trade a builder in a small and shady way of business’, looks on the council as his personal milch cow.²⁹ To that end, Bent seeks to build a community centre, the contracts for which will be distributed among fellow council members. Echoing the plot of *Vote for Huggett*, the centre, ostensibly created for the public benefit, is no such thing. Rather than a meeting place for Swizzlewick’s old and young, it will be run on purely commercial grounds, complete with wrestling and bingo nights. In this bleak, if familiar, vista there is moreover no Little Man to stand up to Bent: the Labour opposition is ineffectual and compromised while the young radicals outside the council are naïve and impotent.

The series alarmed many and was the subject of a *Times* leader, which conceded that local government corruption was not exactly a new subject for comedians. It nonetheless expressed dismay that at the very time when councils were becoming more socially active – by for example supporting the arts – *Swizzlewick* suggested councillors were systematically on the make.³⁰ Ostensibly, however, the main cause of the series’ downfall was its lewdness, as Bent’s corruption is sexual as well as financial.³¹ A lascivious, middle-aged man, he takes a shine to a comely but incompetent young council employee who he engages as his secretary. When, before her interview, she asks whether she might touch Bent’s mayoral chain ‘for luck’, only the most obtuse viewer would not have realized which part of his anatomy was being referenced.

More fatally, one of Swizzlewick’s other councillors was Mrs. Smallgood, who, according to the *Radio Times*, ‘dedicates her arid life to putting down Sex whenever it rears its ugly head’. She was Turner’s rendering of Mary Whitehouse. Turner had attended the Birmingham Town Hall meeting of April 1964 that led to the creation of Whitehouse’s Clean Up TV Campaign, during which he denounced it as a threat to art.³² It was therefore inevitable – and not entirely unjustifiable – Whitehouse would complain to the BBC that the series was unsuitable for an early evening family audience.³³

Critical reaction to *Swizzlewick* was in any case almost universally hostile. While Peter Black of the *Daily Mail* argued it was potentially 'the moment of breakaway into a new and funny TV serial', his was a lone voice.³⁴ In the *Guardian* critics felt it a 'thoroughly amateurish performance' and marked 'a new low in tastelessness'.³⁵ With the clouds gathering, Turner jumped before he was pushed, resigning after cuts were made to the script without his consultation.³⁶ Ironically, he assumed a post at Coventry's Belgrade Theatre, Britain's first civic theatre. Not all Midlands councils, it seems, were like Swizzlewick's.

If *Swizzlewick* did not last partly because it was broadcast at the wrong time, the same could not be said of Dennis Potter's *Vote, Vote, Vote for Nigel Barton*. His play was scheduled to be shown on the later evening of 23 June 1965 as part of BBC One's Wednesday Play series. It was, however, pulled just hours before transmission, officially because of unspecified production problems, although many believed the BBC was afraid it would upset MPs.³⁷ When publicizing the abortive broadcast, the *Radio Times* inadvertently put its finger on the nub of the problem, by indicating that Potter's play 'deals with the kind of subject which is more likely to turn up in *Gallery* and *Panorama* than in a comedy'.³⁸ Potter had written something BBC managers considered too close to reality.

Other than fearing a negative reaction from MPs, what the BBC mostly objected to – confirming that the spirit of Simon remained alive in some hearts – was Potter's 'dangerous' cynicism about party politics, especially as expressed by the constituency's Labour agent. Indeed one executive asked the author if he was 'some kind of fascist'. Potter duly toned things down such that, he claimed, the result 'disfigures the play in a few important ways'. In truth, however, while bemoaning the BBC drama department's 'lack of integrity', the end result hardly lacked teeth.³⁹ Thus, when broadcast six months later, *Vote, Vote, Vote for Nigel Barton* was considered, in the *Daily Express*, as 'one of the best irreverent digs at the current political scene ever seen on the usually over-timid box'.⁴⁰

Sensitivities about how politics should be depicted on the small screen were not confined to the BBC. In January 1969 ITV broadcast the stage version of *Private Eye*'s 'Mrs. Wilson's Diary' column, which purported to be an account of life in Number 10 written by the Prime Minister's unassuming spouse. Part of London Weekend Television's (LWT) commitment to show 'culture' on Saturday nights, this musical comedy had opened in September 1967 at Stratford East, the theatre run by the left-wing impresario Joan Littlewood, where it broke box office records until transferring to the West End.⁴¹ The move had been delayed by the Lord Chamberlain's Office, which took six months to approve the script, after requiring what were described as 'very savage cuts'. The Lord Chamberlain

did not, however, object to the play mocking politicians still in office and very much alive.⁴² Due for broadcast in November 1968, the Independent Television Authority, which regulated output on the commercial channel, showed that it was more severe about such matters. Authority members disliked references to the Labour Deputy Leader George Brown's excessive drinking, in particular a song in which he delivers the line 'Give me that rum back, I'm making a come-back', which they wanted excised. LWT refused to show the play under such circumstances.⁴³ Some cuts were nonetheless made and the play transmitted. Yet, even the *Daily Telegraph* critic thought 'it is more jape than jibe, schoolboy fun at the expense of well-known political personalities'. As George Melly claimed, 'If it had real edge, it would never have been shown,' while authors Richard Ingrams and John Wells admitted they had written more of an affectionate lampoon than a biting satire.⁴⁴ On the other hand, they did mock Wilson's obsession with the media and his craven desire to keep on friendly relations with the Americans, the latter of which goes badly awry when President Johnson orders his bombers to attack London.

Pop goes political

Just for Fun (1963) was a movie meant for teenagers, a vehicle for pop stars to reprise their hits. It was a superficially new kind of film for an indisputably new kind of audience, but despite any novelties, the way in which the film framed politics was as old as the hills.⁴⁵ Between the songs, the plot pitched music-obsessed teenagers against the 'Right' and 'Left' parties whose leaderships comprised a pop-hating consensus. The film starts with a Macmillan-esque Right Party Prime Minister giving teenagers the vote while at the same time rather unwisely curtailing how much pop music could be performed on television. The teenagers organize a petition in protest and while the Left Party appears sympathetic it is secretly as hostile to pop as the Right. Denied representation by these killjoys, the youngsters form a Teenage Party and stand on an election platform of 'Fun', with real pop stars and disc jockeys – including The Spotnicks, Alan 'Fluff' Freeman and Jimmy Savile – becoming candidates. Despite the combined opposition and dirty tricks of the two adult parties, the Teenagers win power, albeit with dire consequences: at the conclusion of the film Britain is depicted collapsing into the sea.

If the film did not take itself too seriously it nonetheless showed politicians as antipathetic to, out of touch with and ultimately less powerful than

popular culture. This was not in itself new. Rudyard Kipling's 1913 short story 'The Village that Voted the Earth was Flat' ended with Commons business suspended thanks to the Chamber singing a music hall song ridiculing an especially pompous MP. That politicians opposed almost anything that gave people pleasure was furthermore a cliché assiduously mined by Christie and Wodehouse among many others. Moreover, other films had already shown that when youth culture and the political class came to blows it was the latter that came off the worst. In the original four-strong *St. Trinian's* series, which ran from 1954 to 1966, the girl boarders of an infamously disreputable school – who mixed precocious teenage sexuality and pre-teen anarchy – reduced Whitehall civil servants and their ministerial masters to nervous wrecks, their formal authority exposed as practical impotence.

Angus McGill's satire of local politics in the industrial north east, *Yea Yea Yea*, was published in the same year as *Just for Fun* was released and tackled similar themes. Bury, a lazy Conservative MP, owns the local paper, which only publishes his propaganda, while claiming that 'a properly informed electorate is essential to the safety of democracy'. The council – composed of uniformly small-minded and ridiculous figures who bicker about irrelevant matters – is, however, Labour-controlled and led by Corcoran, who models himself on Mussolini. The parties consequently dispute which of them should be credited for building the town's new council houses, even though they are cramped and insubstantial brick boxes.

Bringing their conflict to a head, Bury and Corcoran oppose each other during a general election, but their campaigns leave voters cold. The election only takes fire when both vote against local boy Jimmy Heron in a talent contest and in favour of a homely girl who sings 'Bless This House'. Heron's is a terrible pop song, mostly consisting of the lyrics 'Yea, yea, yea', but in rejecting him the politicians show themselves out of step with popular culture. Looking for someone who truly represents them, the voters turn to the aptly named Julia Ryot, a fading starlet and *bon viveur* whose main virtue is that she gave Heron top marks. Deciding to stand as a Liberal, the town marches in her support, chanting 'Yea, yea, yea' all the way to the polling station.

Little man, little woman

A bridge between new and old, McGill's novel was freely adapted for the movie *Press for Time* (1966), described by one critic as consisting of 'a lot of simple

knockabout, and half an ounce of satire'.⁴⁶ The film was a vehicle for comedian Norman Wisdom, an omnipresent figure in the post-war period, who inherited George Formby's mantle as the Little Man of British cinema. As with Formby, Wisdom's films were formulaic, popular – and critically disregarded. *Man of the Moment* (1955) was fairly typical of the series, with Wisdom playing a Whitehall tea-boy who accidentally becomes Britain's delegate at a crucial international conference. Through misadventure, he plays the key role in negotiations, thereby turning the tables on those mandarins and ministers who had once patronized him. Much of Wisdom's humour derived from slapstick, usually as a result of his character desperately trying to please authority figures, instead of which he inadvertently creates mayhem and makes them look ridiculous. As a representative of the audience, Wisdom brings the officious 'Them' down to the level of 'Us'.⁴⁷ Yet, while audiences might have laughed as he poured hot tea over haughty men, Wisdom was a deferential Little Man: he merely wanted to find a place within the *status quo*, not to overturn it.

Press for Time was in fact one of a number of conservative fictional interventions produced during this period. While these suggested that something was wrong with politics, once their antagonists had exposed the issue, they withdraw in the hope the political class will respond. Co-written by its star, *Press for Time* was in most respects an archetypal Wisdom movie. Playing fast and loose with McGill's novel, Wisdom portrays the estranged grandson of a doddering Conservative Prime Minister, not a million miles from Macmillan, who harks back to the 'good old days'. Norman is happy selling newspapers outside Westminster tube station, but his lowly occupation embarrasses the Prime Minister. He consequently packs him off to become a reporter on a seaside town newspaper owned by one of his smoothly ambitious backbenchers. Wisdom, of course, brings havoc wherever he goes, in particular reducing a council meeting to utter chaos. He also attends the ceremonial opening of the thousandth new council house on the 'Keir Hardy' [sic] estate. As in the novel, both parties claim credit for this achievement, the hollowness of which is demonstrated when the house in question collapses.

As in the novel, a general election intervenes, in the midst of which in the film version a beauty contest is held. Thanks to Wisdom the competition descends into anarchy and it is during this mayhem the movie takes a serious turn, in a scene that has no equivalent in McGill's novel. Wisdom confronts the squabbling Conservative MP and Labour council leader to ask:

Don't you two ever think of anybody but yourselves? I mean, you're both intelligent men. I wish I had your brains ... [But] All you do is bicker at each other

... As I see it, you two are like captains of a people's ship of life. And they rely on you two to steer them on a safe course. But because of your own selfishness, you keep taking them into storms with big waves. And if you and all the other politicians and the leaders of the world don't work together, you know, one of these days you're going to drown all the people.

What started as a private conversation is accidentally relayed by microphone to the audience, who applaud Norman's sentiment. His having touched a nerve, the two politicians have a conciliatory drink, the implied basis for transcending the party divide. Wisdom was off-screen a man of conservative views and the speech was not meant to challenge the authority of politicians.⁴⁸ Yet the symbolism of the collapsing council house suggests that unless they put partisanship to one side Britain will be in trouble. Wisdom is still, though, expecting the politicians to act, not for the people to take action themselves. Thus, having delivered his uniquely coherent speech, Norman is soon gripped by his usual embarrassment and quickly vacates the stage.

A character of even longer standing than Wisdom's screen persona also intervened in politics at this time. John Creasey's the Toff was an aristocratic crime fighter with the common touch who first made his appearance in 1938: *Vote for the Toff* (1971) was the fifty-fifth novel of the series.⁴⁹ Creasey was not only ridiculously prolific but had been a Liberal parliamentary candidate in 1950. He subsequently formed the All Party Alliance, which during the 1960s supported the creation of industrial councils to help promote harmony at the workplace and hoped to attract the best people irrespective of party to its cause.⁵⁰ Creasey's novel propounded a view similar to Wisdom's: with Britain in decline, partisanship should be put to one side.⁵¹

After the death of a Conservative MP, the Toff is asked to stand for the party in the ensuing by-election. Despite his elevated background, he feels he can't be a Conservative because many of his East End friends are Labour supporters. Not having considered politics as a career before, the Toff ponders the matter. Britain is a divided country, he believes, and 'unless we become a united one we can't compete with other nations'. Thus, he declares:

It is time the politicians, the parties and the people found a way of pulling together ... I believe the British people have qualities just as great as in the past, but the political system in the country brings out the worst in them instead of the best.

The need for a coalition, just as in the Second World War, becomes the basis for his National Unity campaign and while he narrowly fails to win, it is clear the

Toff's intervention has forever changed politics. As in Wisdom's film, however, it is up to the party politicians to respond.

Mrs. Harris was a no-nonsense Cockney charlady who featured in four Paul Gallico novels, the third of which was *Mrs. Harris MP* (1965).⁵² Gallico, an American sometime resident in Britain, presented Harris as antagonistic to all parties, believing that every problem could be solved by the application of 'some common sense and good-will'. However, she knows nothing about how Parliament works 'beyond her feeling that all politicians were worth not very much.' Despite this, she somehow becomes the 'voice of the millions of the faceless about whom nobody gave a damn.' Hoping to exploit her popularity, the Centre Party adopts Harris as a candidate and she is elected to Parliament, but instead of taking the institution by storm, it perplexes her, for she becomes lost in

what seemed to be miles of shadowy corridors of Westminster Palace with hundreds of rooms opening off from them, innumerable staircases, the musty smell of age, the bustle, the noise, the shuffling of feet, the greetings and congratulations exchanged between old friends and veteran members who had been returned.

Despite her initial scepticism, Harris is overcome with awe for the history of the place.

For here at last she found herself close to and a part of a mystery which up to then had been contemplated only from afar. She was now brought into immediate contact with the difference between a faceless, placeless Government that one knew only as 'they', or 'them', and an active, vital body consisting of hundreds of men and not a few women milling about, the great majority of them as familiar with this warren as with their own homes. The very dynamism of it was shaking.

Realizing the depths of her ignorance, Mrs. Harris brings her parliamentary career to an abrupt end. 'There's a lot of difference between 'aving ideas rattling around your 'ead', she admits, 'and thinking you can run things better than others, and getting down to it when the time comes.'

Yet the newly respectful Harris still has an impact. In her farewell Commons speech, heard by many MPs, she 'succeeded in arousing a feeling of discomfort and in several of them a lingering nostalgia, as it were, for a Utopia lost' as 'she had forced some of them to a sudden glimpse of their own, long dormant and encrusted, early ideals and enthusiasms with which they had come to the House'. Like her male counterparts, Mrs. Harris had made the political class appreciate

where they had gone wrong: they now had to address the matter before it was too late.

The power of image

The problematic political role of the press was an issue as venerable as Dickens. Given its new prominence, and presumed power, during the 1960s, television naturally became a matter of increasing interest for those writing about politics.

In 1962 the BBC broadcast a play that depicted television as helping to sustain a politician's lies. Had the author not been Terence Rattigan, by then a prestigious theatrical figure doing the Corporation a favour by writing for the medium, it is questionable whether the play would have been broadcast, as Rattigan's plot was more subversive as anything young Dennis Potter would write. Rattigan's central character was a heavy-drinking interviewer with a show strikingly similar to the BBC series *Face to Face* (1959–62), so similar its host John Freeman later received a public apology.⁵³ Rattigan was famous for claiming that character and narrative was all that mattered in drama, but as *The Winslow Boy* (1946) proved, he didn't always practise what he preached.⁵⁴ Thus, while the interviewer David Mann and Cabinet minister Sir Stanley Johnson were believed to be respectively versions of Rattigan and his father, *Heart to Heart* also explored the relationship between politics and television.⁵⁵

Rattigan questioned the extent to which, even in the form of a series dedicated to revealing 'the real truth, the truth of the heart', television could do more than reinforce a politician's chosen public image. Mann has evidence that Johnson – 'Honest Stan', a bluff northerner with a strong line in moral probity – took a bribe while holidaying in the South of France with his mistress. Indicating the closeness of politics and the media, Johnson is a friend of the Controller of Programmes, who tries to blackmail Mann into giving the minister an easy ride. Fearing imminent exposure, Johnson hijacks the interview and, face straight to camera, looking direct at the viewer, defends himself in a way that draws parallels with how Richard Nixon dealt with accusations of financial impropriety while running for US Vice President in 1952. Instead of using a dog called Checkers to win over viewers, Johnson claims he is only guilty of loving cats and of taking his wife abroad to help her recover from the death of their favorite feline. Johnson's act as the candid politician works, the viewers are convinced and his career is saved.

Rattigan not only suggests that those running television are part of an Old Boy network which protects politicians from scrutiny but also that politicians

have the skills to manipulate the new medium. Originally intending that Johnson be destroyed by his trial-by-television, the *Daily Express* critic for one was glad Rattigan changed his mind, as this would have detracted from what he took to be the drama's moral: 'That men of sufficient wit and power can and do slip off the hook, escape the punishment they deserve and go on living among us.' He believed the play 'urges us all to do our democratic duty of suspecting our leaders, questioning their motives and resisting the smooth claims of all persuaders who seek to sell us peace or war'.⁵⁶

Not everybody took the play to heart in that way. Echoing the Victorian critic who considered Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband* incredible because corruption was something in which Westminster politicians did not indulge, the *Evening Standard* reviewer patriotically considered that while Nixon might have got away with such a ruse it would never work in Britain. The British media he believed could still hold politicians to account.⁵⁷ This, at least, is what happened on more than one occasion in the ITV series *Gazette* (1968), about a local paper in Yorkshire run by a virtuous owner and edited by a journalist of the highest ethics.

The prevailing view, however, was increasingly that the media was the tool not of truth-seekers but of power-seekers: this was certainly the argument of the 1970 movie *The Rise and Rise of Michael Rimmer*.⁵⁸ Rimmer, played by Peter Cook, is a man who comes from nowhere and uses the techniques of opinion polling, advertising and television to promote himself, first becoming a Conservative MP, then Chancellor, Prime Minister and finally President of the United Kingdom. Written by John Cleese and Graham Chapman, one-third of the Monty Python team, alongside director Kevin Billington and Cook, *Rimmer* questioned the authenticity of modern politics and posits, like Rattigan, the extent to which image had replaced reality. The basis for Rimmer's power is his ability to manipulate and even create public opinion. His success in advertising means the two party leaders – close approximations of Harold Wilson and Edward Heath – seek his services. Indicating their basic similarity, Rimmer for a time is employed by both to improve their images, but – thinking the Labour government is finished – he concentrates on helping the Conservatives, as they offer him better opportunities for advancement.

The film consequently proposes that public relations has merged into politics, that image is everything and substance nothing. Rimmer the empty vessel is the ideal politician, for he has the skills and desire to become whatever the public wants him to be. The confluence of image and politics was not quite virgin territory. Ten years before, in *No Love for Johnnie* a photographer tells the ambitious Labour politician Johnnie Byrne he could have a successful career

playing a 'middle-aged man of the world' for the camera. In a way, Byrne was already playing a role that best served his desire to rise up the greasy pole. But Rimmer takes the relationship much further. Realizing he needs a wife if he is to become an MP, Rimmer commissions a poll to discover the public's favourite woman. Forced to woo their second choice, as the Queen is taken, the result is a marriage, which, like his politics, is all appearance: as Rimmer is an empty image he is therefore, the film suggests, the perfect politician.

Conspiracies

While this period saw a lot of apparently new wine being poured into old dramatic bottles, one truly innovative genre did emerge, which suggested that relations between people and politicians were being radically re-imagined. Belief in conspiracies was supposedly something inherent to American political culture: certainly during the 1950s many in the United States believed that key government officials were Communist agents.⁵⁹ The British were, however, meant to be more trusting of those who exercised power on their behalf.

Yet, if Cold War paranoia was less evident in Britain, the Boulting Brothers' movie *High Treason* (1951) still depicted members of the British Communist party following orders from Moscow to undermine national security. There was also a variety of novels – most notably Constantine Fitzgibbon's *When the Kissing had to Stop* (1960) – that took seriously the possibility of a Soviet invasion. In fact, so popular was Fitzgibbon's novel, in 1962 ITV broadcast a two-and-half-hour adaptation. Such fictions invariably posited that even the all-powerful Soviet Union needed some assistance from traitors on the left. Thus, George Shipway's *The Chilian Club* (1971) told the story of retired senior army officers who save Britain from falling into the Soviet embrace by assassinating union militants, black radicals, trendy bishops, BBC executives and student leaders. Even the Prime Minister has to be eliminated, as he wants to sell a decisive military secret to the Russians. Their laudable vigilantism having prepared the ground for a government of a pronouncedly fascist character, the gentlemen contentedly return to their club.

Fictional conspiracies originating from within government rather than an outside force were, however, rare. Mistrust of authority in general was nonetheless expressed in various 1960s spy dramas, such as the movies *The Ipcress File* (1965) and *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* (1965) as well as the surreal ITV series *The Prisoner* (1967). If the Bond movie series (1962–present)

suggested audiences should trust Britain's intelligence services to protect them from any external threat, these dramas signified the manipulative, double-dealing nature of government officials. They did not, though, show Britain's intelligence services intervening in domestic politics: the duplicity on show was confined to the claustrophobic world of the spies themselves.

Conspiracies were common in science fiction, a genre with a well-established record for tackling tricky subjects if only because, like comedy, it could be dismissed as irrelevant to real contemporary debate. This was certainly the case with Nigel Kneale's BBC television series featuring the scientist Professor Bernard Quatermass, which ran intermittently from 1953 to 1959. Kneale had also adapted George Orwell's *1984* (1949) for the BBC in 1954.⁶⁰ Orwell's novel, which imagined a Britain controlled by IngSoc, a party claiming to represent the people while it oppressed them, set the template for many subsequent fictional conspiracies. A critical supporter of the 1945 Labour government and a committed opponent of the Soviet Union, Orwell's novel parodied aspects of both. It was not, however, a specific comment on Attlee's extension of the state, although those on the right saw it as evidence that Orwell feared Labour threatened freedom. The author's attempts to clarify his intentions made little impression on readers determined to hold to their own interpretation of his novel.⁶¹

Kneale's Quatermass was a man of science, the embodiment of reason, which meant he often confronted Whitehall bureaucrats and politicians because they were uninterested in the truth, being lost in procedure, afraid of frightening the public or in possession of their own dark motives. H. G. Wells in a variety of earlier novels had promulgated the superiority of science over politics, and this remained a popular view in the 1950s. It was even articulated in Gielgud's otherwise flippant *Party Manners*, in which an ex-Labour Cabinet minister declaims:

We can't afford generous emotions, good intentions, loosely-phrased promises, windy speechifying, any longer in politics. What we need is the assembly of scientific facts, and their truthful and accurate presentation to the people. To govern in present-day conditions you need technical accomplishment, not amiable amateurism.⁶²

Quatermass II was broadcast in 1955, and as the continuity announcer warned viewers, it was not for children or those 'of a nervous disposition', but was popular enough for Hammer to have Kneale adapt the series for a 1957 big-screen version. Kneale's drama anticipated Hollywood's *The Invasion of the*

Body Snatchers (1956), but while that was an allegory about Communists taking over American society, *Quatermass II* focused on dangers posed by clandestine government power.⁶³ Kneale had been inspired by fears over the purpose of secret Ministry of Defence research establishments, such as Porton Down. He had also been influenced by his work on *1984*, which took the Quatermass series in a more paranoid direction than in its first outing and exploited the prevailing sense that, according to Kneale, 'there were dark forces around'.⁶⁴

The series concerned an illicit government establishment protected by 'a conspiracy of silence'. On being told the facility is secret, in the movie Quatermass says: "Secret?" You put a label like that on anything and law and order goes out the window.' This pointed to the real issues involved, something the *Manchester Guardian* critic noted, calling the movie 'an interesting and subversive piece of science fiction' for the way it 'tapped the ordinary man's subconscious doubts about what might happen if something went wrong behind the high and inscrutable walls of security'.⁶⁵ It is a wall that the people's elected representatives cannot penetrate. When a backbench MP tries to find out what is going on, he is neutralized. It is left to Quatermass to uncover the awful truth, which is that aliens have taken over the bodies of leading government officials, including the Prime Minister, and under the cover of state security have built a feeding station in preparation for an invasion of Earth. The government is, therefore, working against the people – but at the last minute Quatermass, a campaigning journalist and a group of workers manage to save the day.

As the 1960s progressed, authors working within the science fiction or futuristic fantasy genres continued to employ conspiracy as a narrative device. Government secrecy was the theme of *The Damned*, directed by Joseph Losey, who came to Britain hoping to escape the Red Scare McCarthyism of his native United States. Distributors reluctantly released Losey's film in 1963 after a two-year delay, with no press screenings and as the second half of a down-market horror double bill.⁶⁶ With the Cold War at its height, had it been presented as a serious film, *The Damned* would have been highly controversial, involving as it did a covert military establishment raising children capable of withstanding a widely expected nuclear war. Anthony Burgess's novel *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) focuses on Alex, a teenage gang member who becomes the subject of an illicit government attempt to eradicate youth violence by turning him into 'something other than a human being ... a little machine capable only of good' – a clockwork orange.⁶⁷ While the experiment fails, had it succeeded the project would have created the basis for totalitarian rule. An episode of *The Prisoner* even features an election in the Village – the series' fictional setting – in which

ex-spy Number 6 is incarcerated.⁶⁸ This brings out the futility of such contests, as the authorities need elections to integrate those like Number 6, who are 'militant and individualistic'. When Number 6 sees through the device, he is drugged so that he becomes the ideal candidate, able to only mouth platitudes, and if he does not say the right thing the press invents quotes suitable for publication.

Peter Watkins' *Privilege* (1967) was the only film to posit a domestic political conspiracy at this time. Watkins was a radical writer-director whose dramatized television documentary *The Wargame* (1965) showed in disturbing detail how Britons would suffer in the event of a nuclear attack. The BBC, under some government pressure, refused to show it for fear it would demoralize viewers, something that precipitated Watkins' move into the freer world of cinema.⁶⁹ *Privilege* also assumed the documentary style, but was in other respects very different from *The Wargame*, being a satire set in the near future, which mooted a plot between the media, business, the church and a coalition government threatened by anarchy and communism. Using a pop star to control the minds of the young, the government deploys the singer to mobilize support for a fascist-style campaign of national unity. British critics found *Privilege* risibly unrealistic: the *Guardian* considered it 'false and contrived'. American reviewers, however, accepted its presentation of a manipulative Establishment; indeed the *New York Times* critic thought it 'brilliantly credible'.⁷⁰

The fascist threat

As industrial discontent intensified and popular hostility to black immigration became ever more apparent, an increasing number of fictions depicted a Britain under threat from the authoritarian, usually racist, right. One of the first to tackle this theme, Gillian Freeman's *The Leader* (1965) presented its aspirant Nazi leader as a seedy asthmatic mother's boy only able to attract adolescents and layabouts. Robert Muller's *The Lost Diaries of Albert Smith* (1965), republished two years later as *After all, this is England*, posited a more successful assault on democracy. Echoing how the Nazis took power in Germany, the novel is written from the perspective of Albert Smith, a lower-middle-class figure who holds many conventional conservative attitudes, such as a belief in the need for discipline, dislike of ethnic groups and nostalgia for empire. Muller shows that even those who, like Smith, embrace fascism find themselves in death camps along with those trade unionists, Jews and blacks they so despise. Like Robin Cook's *A State of Denmark* (1970), the novel warns readers how easily

democracy will be destroyed if the far right is not opposed before it becomes irresistible. The institutions of democracy are shown to be fragile and the people easily persuaded of the merits of authoritarianism.

Such novels played it safe by looking to the future. Arthur Wise took the controversial step in *Who Killed Enoch Powell?* (1970) by depicting the assassination of the man some feared would lead an imminent assault on democracy. Indeed, during the 1970 general election, the Labour Cabinet minister Tony Benn compared Powell's views on black immigration with those held by the Nazis of the Jews.⁷¹ In Wise's novel Powell's killing provokes a series of riots between supporters and opponents, one that further weakens an already insipid government and leads to a narrowly averted right-wing coup.

The fascist threat was normally left to novelists: television tended to fight shy of depicting it. Even so, in 1969 BBC Two broadcast a short play '*... And Was Invited to Form a Government*', set some time in the future, with a coalition government crumbling, the country at a standstill and the newly formed National Party thirsting for power. More substantively, ITV broadcast the thirteen-part series *The Guardians* on Saturday evenings during 1971. This, according to its producer Andrew Brown, asked: 'Is democracy the best form of government? Or is there an alternative? How many threats to their freedom will the British people accept? When will they begin to resist?'⁷² In fact, due to the sensitivity of its themes, the series was not shown in strife-torn Northern Ireland.

The Guardians was set in the 1980s, a time when democracy has been overthrown by the military. According to a government broadcast, the 'professional politicians' – Wilson, Heath and Liberal leader Jeremy Thorpe are shown on the screen – had failed the nation. Unable to deal with a general strike, they were replaced by a Cabinet of technocrats drawn from outside politics. A New Party was then created and confirmed in power through a stage-managed election. Parliament as a consequence has become a rubber stamp, the old parties abolished and the Queen living overseas. Behind the scenes, 'the General' runs the show through the Cabinet Secretary, a civil servant obsessively dedicated to 'efficiency' and willing to follow whoever promises to deliver it. The new regime was certainly economically efficient, having solved all the problems with which viewers in 1971 would have been familiar: the country's balance of payments was in the black, inflation was down and productivity up. The government also regulated prices and incomes and adopted a fair wages policy while it had increased welfare benefits. It had even introduced measures to protect the environment. Indeed, such was the progressive nature of its reforms, the Americans were said to see the government as dangerously left-wing.

Britain is, however, a police state. During the series, the influence of Sir Timothy Hobson, the Prime Minister, increases, but if he looks towards political liberalization, he does not want to go back to democracy. A successful businessman until called to office, he is decent and principled. Yet to Hobson's eyes the post-war decades had brought confusion and trivialization, permissiveness, sexual freedom, crime and strikes. He therefore seeks to run the country on the people's behalf because he believes they do not know what is best for them. In this way, the series analyzed the merits of democracy and its alternatives with remarkable nuance. If Hobson's paternalistic regime was flawed, its opponents were hardly moral arbiters. *The Guardians* consequently ends on an appropriately ambiguous tone. Hobson's son, once a critic of the government, comes to see its virtues, agreeing with his father that the people need guidance. On Sir Timothy's death he becomes Prime Minister and continues his father's work.

The feminine threat

The 1966 general election saw the election of just twenty-six women to the Commons, representing but 4.1 per cent of MPs. Given this position, it is not surprising that during this period even dramas that critiqued party politics from a radical perspective usually assigned women marginal roles, with *Vote, Vote, Vote for Nigel Barton* presenting working-class women as comically ignorant about politics. Yet the 1960s saw a new wave of feminists demand greater equality, notably in pay, something the Labour government reluctantly conceded in 1970. The revival of feminism provoked a few to imagine what it might be like should women take political control of the nation. If Pamela Kettle's *Day of the Women* (1969) and Walter Harris' *The Mistress of Downing Street* (1972) were at all representative, however, women had a long way to go before they were to be taken seriously.

Kettle's novel was described on its jacket as 'an almost Orwellian vision of the future'. A 'feminist elite' forms Impulse, an all-woman party that wins office in 1974. Impulse begins as an organization ostensibly to help young mothers enter the job market by assisting them with childcare. This was a real issue in 1960s Britain: while ministers and employers encouraged women to enter the labour force, they gave them little help to reconcile work with their domestic responsibilities. Impulse, however, had more sinister motives, for its real object was to make sure every constituency contained at least one crèche and every

crèche possessed an outstanding leader who would double as a future parliamentary candidate.

Employing sophisticated public relations techniques, Impulse presents an image which obscures the fact that its members are 'like the suffragettes with jack-boots and spurs'.⁷³ The failure of male-led politics has in any case created a disillusioned electorate, allowing Impulse to win votes from men and women. In office, the all-woman government introduces various modest reforms that many women in the 1960s would have welcomed, such as assessing wives as individuals for tax purposes. As a result women start to take politics more seriously and discuss government policy rather than gossip about trivia. Moreover, as it becomes entrenched in power, Impulse reveals its radical feminist agenda by introducing single-sex schools and discouraging marriage. It becomes apparent that the party aims to put men into servitude. At this point Eve, Kettle's naïve young protagonist, turns against the movement, arguing that biology dictates that men and women can never be truly equal, for man's role is to master the environment while women's is to help populate it. Despite her change of heart, the novel ends with Impulse set to create a feminist police state.

If *Day of the Women* was meant to be a serious imagining of female rule, Walter Harris' *The Mistress of Downing Street* (1972) was ostensibly a comic novel, replete with the first outwardly gay, lilac toga-wearing, Home Secretary and an over-sexed, and inevitably well-endowed, black American President. The novel's heroine is Viola Jones, the beautiful twenty-five-year-old widow of the Prime Minister, who the Cabinet decides should succeed her husband. As one minister states, given the government is now impotent, a woman might as well be in charge. Government is powerless because Britain and the United States are under the thumb of Janus Thudd, an international computing entrepreneur and (conveniently enough for him) robot master. In a pointed comment on the nature of the Special Relationship, Viola becomes the President's mistress, figuring the affair might help her better advance British interests. Anticipating what many said of Margaret Thatcher, Britain's real first female Prime Minister, Viola also shows that she is more of a man than her Cabinet colleagues, for it is she who leads the fight against Thudd.

Conclusion

Despite misgivings, the BBC broadcast Dennis Potter's *Vote, Vote, Vote for Nigel Barton* in December 1965. Potter had become a Labour party member

at Oxford, although he recalled that 'I always kept one foot outside the circle.'⁷⁴ He was on the left of the party and criticized Hugh Gaitskell's cautious 1959 general election strategy, which he described as appealing to voters' 'stupidity and general selfishness'. Gaitskell, he complained, avoided addressing any of the awkward problems faced by Britain as it entered the 1960s.⁷⁵ Potter wanted to become an MP so he could help solve some of those problems, which is how he came to stand, at not quite thirty, as Labour candidate for East Hertfordshire in the 1964 election. The seat was safely Conservative, but like all aspiring MPs, Potter had to start somewhere. His campaign, however, proved to be an epiphany, which forever cured him of his parliamentary ambitions. Indeed, so disillusioned with party politics did he become, Potter did not even vote. Also experiencing an acute form of psoriasis, he claimed, 'I felt a kind of entropy of the emotions', and recreated himself as a dramatist.

Vote, Vote, Vote for Nigel Barton was one of the first products of Potter's new vocation and showed viewers what it felt like to be a principled parliamentary candidate. Clearly semi-autobiographical, it reveals how Barton loses his idealism under the weight of his agent's insistence that he should just smile his way through the campaign, get his hair cut and appeal to 'floating' voters. Working for a constituency Labour party whose chair is racist and most of whose women activists prefer gossip to debating policy, this is a traumatic experience for Barton. Indeed, after confronting only hostility, apathy and ignorance while canvassing he is physically sick.

The agent – whose dark pessimism had earlier caused Potter so much trouble with BBC executives – unexpectedly empathizes with Barton's predicament. His own cynicism, it becomes apparent, is but a shell to protect this covert idealist from the pain of perpetual disappointment. In a remarkable dramatic manoeuvre, during the final scene he turns to camera and looks viewers directly in the eye and says: 'You may despise me but don't blame me because it's all *your* fault.' While initially appearing to reflect, as he put it, 'the conventional and perhaps unthinking cynicism of the viewer', Potter uses the agent to subvert it and suggest the voters, not the parties, are responsible for the shortcomings of politics. So unusual was this device and the intent behind it that it would be another three decades before a television political dramatist repeated it.

Like H. G. Wells and many others, Potter wrote as a socialist disappointed in the people's poverty of ambition. This was set to become an increasingly rare perspective. For many of those writers who emerged during and especially after the 1960s satire boom, it was those who exercised authority in the name

of the people – not the people themselves – who were the exclusive cause of democracy's ills. Thus, while Maurice Edelman wrote novels in which politicians were shown trapped by images the public expected them to maintain, it would be those who claimed politicians used their images to trap the public into voting for them who would grow in number. The conspiracy genre would also go from strength to strength such that in 1970 Raymond Williams considered the 'official conspiracy, by Ministers and corporations' a 'common-place' theme in television science fiction series, including *Doctor Who*.⁷⁶ By the 1980s conspiracies would escape the science fiction genre and be found in fictions based in contemporary Britain, be directly political – and more readily believed.

The immediate post-war period saw a mixture of new and old ways of critiquing politics. Old themes were presented in new ways while old ways took on new themes. But if the remedies to politics' ills were contradictory or more usually non-existent, all such works pointed in one direction: *something* was wrong with democracy, and it was the fault of the politicians. This populist perspective would only grow in intensity.

Notes

- 1 L. Black, 'The lost world of Young Conservatism', *Historical Journal* 51:4 (2008), pp. 992–3, 1000.
- 2 B. Sarlvik and I. Crewe, *Decade of Dealignment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
- 3 R. Biorcio and R. Mannheimer, 'Relationships between citizens and political parties' in H. Klingemann and D. Fuchs (eds), *Beliefs in Government. Volume 1: Citizens and the State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 206–26.
- 4 <http://www.red11.org/mufc/stats/attendances.htm>, accessed 10 October 2012.
- 5 R. Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- 6 S. Fielding, *Labour and Cultural Change: The Labour Governments 1964–70. Volume 1* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 177–80.
- 7 P. Thane, 'Towards equal opportunities? Women in Britain since 1945' in T. Gourvish and A. O'Day (eds), *Britain Since 1945* (London: Macmillan, 1991).
- 8 D. Blaazer, 'Devalued and fejected Britons': the pound in public discourse in the mid 1960s', *History Workshop Journal* 47 (1999), pp. 121–40.
- 9 R. Davenport-Hines, *An English Affair: Sex, Class and Power in the Age of Profumo* (London: HarperPress, 2013), pp. 187–215.

- 10 *The Times*, 20 May 1961.
- 11 Cook's impersonation is available here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sb2zuuufQCA>, accessed 12 October 2012.
- 12 On this period, see H. Carpenter, *That Was Satire That Was* (London: Victor Gollancz, 2000).
- 13 For which, see P. Wilkin, *The Strange Case of Tory Anarchism* (Faringdon: Libri, 2010), pp. 43–76.
- 14 *Independent on Sunday*, 29 July 2012.
- 15 J. Lynn, *Comedy Rules: From the Cambridge Footlights to Yes, Prime Minister* (London: Faber & Faber, 2011), p. 32.
- 16 A. Christie, *Mrs. McGinty's Dead* (London: Collins, 1952), pp. 133–6, 138, 139, 152–3.
- 17 A. Christie, *Hickory Dickory Dock* (London: Collins, 1955), pp. 31, 50, 73.
- 18 P. G. Wodehouse, *Much Obligated, Jeeves* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1971), p. 176.
- 19 J. Chapman, *Past and Present: National Identity and the British Historical Film* (London: IB Tauris, 2005), pp. 166–79.
- 20 *Guardian*, 10 June 1966.
- 21 *Sun*, 8 June 1966.
- 22 *Radio Times*, 16 December 1965.
- 23 E. Simon, *The BBC from Within* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1953), p. 329.
- 24 *Kinematograph Weekly*, 19 January 1961.
- 25 R. Lewis, *The Life and Death of Peter Sellers* (London: Century, 1994), pp. 326–7.
- 26 For Greene's regime, see M. Tracey, *A Variety of Lives: A Biography of Sir Hugh Greene* (London: Bodley Head, 1983).
- 27, 28 *The Times*, 19 August 1964; *The Guardian*, 3 October 1964.
- 29 *Radio Times*, 13 August 1964.
- 30 *The Times*, 24 August 1964.
- 31 *Evening Standard*, 2 September 1964.
- 32 *Guardian*, 24 November 2001.
- 33 *Guardian*, 24 August 1964.
- 34 *Daily Mail*, 19 August and 16 September 1964.
- 35 *Guardian*, 26 August 1964 and 5 September 1964.
- 36 *Guardian*, 29 August 1964.
- 37 *Daily Mail*, 24 June 1965; *Daily Telegraph*, 16 December 1965.
- 38 Both were current affairs programmes. *Radio Times*, 17 June 1965.
- 39 D. Potter, *The Nigel Barton Plays* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), pp. 17–19; G. Fuller, *Potter on Potter* (London: Faber & Faber, 1993), p. 31.
- 40 *Daily Express*, 16 December 1965.
- 41 *The Times*, 9 October 1967 and 26 September 1968.
- 42 *The Times*, 26 June and 25 August 1967.

- 43 *The Times*, 22 November 1968; *Daily Telegraph*, 14 December 1968; *Daily Express*, 4 January 1969.
- 44 *Daily Telegraph*, 6 January 1969; *Sun*, 6 January 1969; *Observer*, 12 January 1969.
- 45 B. Osgerby, *Youth in Britain Since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).
- 46 *Evening News*, 8 December 1966.
- 47 On this preoccupation with the conflict between 'Them and Us', see C. Geraghty, *Cinema in the Fifties: Gender, Genre and The 'New Look'* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 56–63.
- 48 N. Wisdom, *My Turn: An Autobiography* (London: Arrow, 2003).
- 49 *The Times*, 11 June 1973.
- 50 I. Millsted, 'Man of mystery', *Journal of Liberal History* 57 (2007–8), pp. 43–6.
- 51 J. Creasey, *Vote for the Toff* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1971), pp. 43, 93, 99, 164–5.
- 52 Quotations taken from P. Gallico, *Mrs Harris MP* (London: Heinemann, 1965), pp. 6, 13–16, 102, 106, 113–14, 138–40.
- 53 *Sunday Express*, 13 January 1963.
- 54 Quoted in D. Shellard, *British Theatre Since the War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 45–6.
- 55 G. Wansell, *Terence Rattigan* (London: Oberon, 2009), pp. 342–3.
- 56 *Daily Express*, 7 December 1962.
- 57 *Evening Standard*, 7 December 1962.
- 58 On the making of the film, see H. Thompson, *Peter Cook: A Biography* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1997), pp. 259–62.
- 59 R. Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (New York: Knopf, 1965).
- 60 A. Murray, *Into the Unknown: The Fantastic Life of Nigel Kneale* (London: Headpress, 2006), pp. 27–41.
- 61 B. Crick, *George Orwell: A Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), pp. 563–71.
- 62 V. Gielgud, *Party Manners* (London: Muller, 1950), p. 74.
- 63 B. K. Grant, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (London: BFI, 2010).
- 64 Murray, *Into the Unknown*, p. 49.
- 65 *Manchester Guardian*, 28 May 1957.
- 66 *Evening News*, 23 May 1963; *Observer*, 12 May 1963.
- 67 A. Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000), p. 115.
- 68 'Free for all', first transmitted 20 October 1967.
- 69 P. Goodwin, 'Low conspiracy? Government interference in the BBC', *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 2:1 (2005), pp. 114–15.
- 70 *The Guardian*, 28 April 1967; *New York Times*, 25 July 1967. For other views, see: <http://pwatkins.mnsi.net/privilege.htm>, accessed 10 April 2012.
- 71 Fielding, *Labour and Cultural Change*, p. 227.
- 72 London Weekend Television press release, June 1971, British Film Institute cuttings file.

73 P. Kettle, *Day of the Women* (London: Leslie Frewin, 1969), p. 24.

74 Fuller, *Potter on Potter*, pp. 13–14.

75 D. Potter, *The Glittering Coffin* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1960), ii–iii.

76 *The Listener*, 16 April 1970.