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Still No Job for a Lady

While the Conservative ascendancy saw the rise of conspiracy narratives and anti-political satires it had a modest effect on fictional depictions of gender in politics, one especially remarkable given Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister for much of that time. Indeed, even after Thatcher resigned in 1990, some continued to believe that men and women were wholly distinct animals, politically or otherwise. The London *Evening Standard's* veteran movie critic Alexander Walker, for example, complained of Stephen Fleming, the Conservative minister in Louis Malle's *Damage* (1993), that he

acts, thinks and reacts to love at first glance the way a woman would do – that's to say instinctively, impulsively, irrationally, instantly ... One tries to understand his motivation and one is continually frustrated because it is that of a female sensibility inside a masculine character.¹

Things certainly end badly for Fleming, just as they did in Josephine Hart's original 1991 novel, as his 'unmanly' impulsiveness sees him lose lover, family and career.

Dramas sometimes applied the traditional view – that men and women had discrete characters and roles – to Thatcher, notably in the James Bond movie *For Your Eyes Only* (1981). This found humour in the apparent paradox of a female Prime Minister. The film concludes with Thatcher phoning 007 to thank him for once again thwarting the KGB. The Prime Minister is in the Number 10 kitchen preparing a meal for husband Dennis, like any good housewife; to make the call she even has to discard her Marigold gloves. Bond, the epitome of untamed masculinity, has, however, disappeared for a naked moonlight dip in the Mediterranean with his young lover, contemptuously leaving the Prime Minister to talk to a squawking parrot.

Bond films appealed to broadly conservative sentiments. But many of Thatcher's left-wing critics also saw her as a contradiction which reversed the one Walker had seen in *Damage*, as they believed she exhibited a masculine sensibility unaccountably contained in a female body. According to them, her

desire to break up the welfare state and make the economy more competitive was the very antithesis of those nurturing qualities historically connected with women, thanks to their longstanding association with the domestic sphere. This meant that, ironically, such ostensibly progressive voices depicted the Prime Minister in ways that relied on Gladstone-era norms about how women should behave. That said, even some of Thatcher's admirers called her the 'best man' in the Cabinet while the Conservative leader's early embrace of the title of 'Iron Lady' suggested she also held to a complex gender identity.²

This uncertainty about how to characterize Thatcher was largely because, while she reached the top of the greasy pole, the Prime Minister operated in what remained overwhelmingly and overtly a man's world. The number of women MPs tripled between 1979 and 1992, but that still meant only sixty sat in the Commons at the start of the Conservatives' fourth successive term, less than ten per cent of the total. Thatcher, though, was unconcerned by men's dominance of Westminster and did nothing to promote other women in her party. The Prime Minister even defended errant male behaviour and did her best to prevent the resignation of her favourite Cabinet minister Cecil Parkinson when in 1983 he was exposed as the father of an illegitimate child. Both matters became more salient during the run-up to the 1997 general election. Labour courted popularity with women by increasing the number of its female parliamentary candidates.³ At the same time, in its search for 'Tory sleaze', the popular press exposed numerous instances of Conservative men betraying wives or otherwise falling foul of conventional morality.⁴ This meant that by the time the Conservatives finally left office in 1997, Westminster's almost exclusive association with a certain kind of traditional masculinity was viewed as increasingly problematic.

Political fictions had always been gendered, but the Conservative time in government saw the production of more self-conscious and critical, if often contradictory, instances. As we shall see, many of these were novels written by leading members of Thatcher's party, usually men who took for granted their dominance of Westminster. During the mid-1990s, however, a number of Conservative women ventured into print and expressed their alienation from the political *status quo* in novels that concluded with female protagonists abandoning Westminster to seek happiness in family life. As such endings suggest, even female critics found it difficult to imagine politics as anything other than a masculine game. If the dominance of a particular male ethos was a problem – and while some remained oblivious to it, others keenly believed it was – then the solution remained beyond anyone's grasp: flight not fight appeared to be the only sensible response.

Having it both ways?

In *Yes, Minister*, the series so beloved of Thatcher, the main protagonists were all men: women generally assumed their traditional subordinate position, albeit with a caustic edge. Thus Jim Hacker's wife, Annie, calls herself sarcastically in the first episode 'a happy, care-free politician's wife'. Her role is mostly confined to tartly commenting on the absurdities of politics or, like her student activist daughter, performing the role of Jim Hacker's moral policeman. Dorothy Wainwright, Hacker's Chief Political Advisor, effectively takes up Annie's role in *Yes, Prime Minister*. Wainwright is, however, unusual in having a significant political role, one that pitches her against Sir Humphrey Appleby in a battle for Hacker's ear, a conflict which reveals the latter's sexism.

The series had already exposed the misogyny of those running Whitehall in the 1982 episode 'Equal Opportunities'.⁵ Still just a minister, Hacker discovered how few women filled top administrative positions in his department and so accelerates the promotion of a token woman to a higher rank. Having overcome Appleby's opposition, Hacker discovers that the beneficiary of his positive discrimination intends to leave public service. She tells him that she wants a job that gives her a sense of achievement, one that is relevant and where she will be treated as an equal – so she is going to work for a merchant bank. Richard Last in the *Daily Telegraph* believed the episode exposed the hypocrisy of entrenched male attitudes better than 'half a hundred shrieking feminist tracts on Channel 4'.⁶ If it did, the story also gave Antony Jay the chance to underline his belief in the merits of private enterprise on this as on so many other issues.

Initially billed as ITV's answer to *Yes, Minister*, *No Job for a Lady* (1990–2) was the only sitcom to have a female MP as its protagonist during this period.⁷ As played by Penelope Keith – whose previous television comedy roles included a suburban snob and an aristocrat – Jean Price might have been Labour, but she was posher than most real Tories. While a sitcom, the series attempted to make serious points, and to mark its first episode the *TV Times* published an article by Labour MP Harriet Harman on the problems women faced in Parliament. Setting the tone of the series, Keith also told the *Daily Mail* she believed that there should be more women in the Commons.⁸ *No Job for a Lady* consequently highlighted the lack of provision the House made for women in terms of toilets, crèches and family-friendly working hours. Yet, if advancing a vaguely feminist agenda, the first episode also sought laughs in Price missing a vote because one of her high heels falls off and her handbag gets caught in a door. The series, in other words, tried to have its cake and eat it.

As an *ingénue* MP, Price's role is to ask the kind of questions the ITV audience might pose, such as what was the difference between a Standing Committee and a Select Committee? The answers she receives from her male interlocutors do not enlighten and instead emulate Humphrey Appleby's bureaucratic gobbledygook, so as to underline the alienating, nonsensical and arcane nature of parliamentary procedure. The Commons is therefore presented as a place in which form is a substitute for action and its many committees are, for example, described as 'argumentative rubber stamps'. Unlike *Yes, Minister*, however, *No Job for a Lady* suggests an important reason politics assumes this character is because it is run by *men* who are, despite their different party labels, all sexist. Among them is a Labour whip only interested in what will get his party into power and who therefore steers Price away from principled but unpopular stands. Price's main antagonist is, however, Godfrey Eagan, her Conservative pair, a friend of apartheid and lobbyist for the tobacco and pharmaceutical industries, indeed the very acme of 'Tory sleaze' before the term had been invented, complete with a braying, silly-ass laugh. No wonder the *Sunday Telegraph* complained of the series 'clumpingly predictable' stereotypes.⁹

Dismissed as 'tame twaddle' with little to say about real politics, the series lacked the finesse of *Yes, Minister*.¹⁰ Despite that, *No Job for a Lady* tackled live issues, such as the censorship of pornography, police corruption and immigration. But its treatment only highlighted Price's naivety or impotence, such as when the man she saves from wrongful imprisonment tries to steal her VCR. Moreover, while the series presented Price as benign figure, not everybody saw her that way. After watching a 1992 episode in which she encourages a secretary to take her employer to an industrial tribunal for letting colleagues call her 'Melons' due to the size of her breasts, the *Sun* critic claimed: 'snooty Socialist Jean Price is all too typical of today's breed of Left-wing wimmin, a man-hating harridan'. In what was to be an election year, readers were told *No Job for a Lady* showed them what terrible things Labour would do if Neil Kinnock became Prime Minister.¹¹

According to *No Job for a Lady*, politics remained a man's game. That should have come as no surprise to many viewers, for according to her *Spitting Image* puppet, even Thatcher was not a proper woman, her masculine qualities being indicated by the fact that she wore suits, smoked Churchillian cigars and in one sketch relieved herself standing up in a urinal.¹² Indeed, while Janet Brown impersonated the Prime Minister in *For Your Eyes Only*, one of her most popular imitators was Steve Nallon. If Thatcher's supposed maleness was exploited for comic effect, the left-wing dramatist David Hare used it for more

serious purposes. His play *The Secret Rapture* (1988), later made into a 1993 film, and movie *Paris by Night* (1988) gave audiences two female Conservatives cast in the Thatcher mould. These were, Hare makes clear, women gone wrong: their passions are political not maternal; they are selfish and harsh, not giving and caring.

The Secret Rapture's Marion is a junior Conservative minister destined for higher things. She is also and not coincidentally self-centred, judgemental and career-focused, in contrast to Isobel, her younger, selfless, empathetic and apolitical sister. Marion induces her sibling to bear all their family's responsibilities, which as an elder sister she would normally be expected to take up. She embodies all the faults Hare believed defined Thatcher's government, notably materialism and an abstraction from emotions. Thus he has Marion see her family as something only fit for weekends. At one point she even declares: 'God, how I hate all this human stuff'.¹³

Clara Paige of *Paris by Night* is an MEP with a brilliant Westminster career before her. She also neglects her son, who she often leaves in the care of her more domestically inclined sister, and despises her husband for his various fallibilities. Paige's politics are overtly Thatcherite and adhere to the view that the basis of freedom is, as a Conservative intellectual tells her, 'to do what you want to'. According to Hare, Clara 'is a character who believes a lot of quite stupid and half-thought things'.¹⁴ He has her put these ideas into practice by murdering the man to whom she had sold a failing business because she fears he will ruin her career by taking the story to the press.

Hare saw his two characters as watered-down versions of their real counterparts, with whom he came into contact while researching *Paris by Night*, revealing that:

When I went to Blackpool to see the new Tory woman, as it were, in captivity, I was struck by how much more generosity, breadth and soul I had given my principal character than was on immediate show in the simultaneously controlled and hysterical atmosphere of their Annual Party Conference.¹⁵

Thus, Hare allows Marion and Clara to realize they have chosen the wrong course. Yet if Marion lives to benefit from her insight, when Clara discovers a more caring side through the love of a younger man this provokes her betrayed husband to shoot her.

Hare juxtaposed his noxious political women against their benign domestic sisters: in *The Secret Rapture* Marion effectively victimizes Isobel. For his pains, feminists accused the playwright of trading in traditional gender stereotypes.¹⁶

Hare, however, at least innovated insofar as he had female politicians trampling over other women, a role normally reserved for men. Thanks to 'sleaze', though, men's accustomed position was revived when Channel 4 broadcast Paula Milne's 1995 series *The Politician's Wife*. This focused on how the spouse of an adulterous Conservative Cabinet minister reacted to his affair being exposed in the press. Milne's series closely echoed real events, and she even included a scene that evoked David Mellor's attempt to save his place in government by forcing his family to face the cameras so as to prove they had forgiven his infidelity.

This was a highly melodramatic and explicitly gendered rendition of contemporary events. For Flora, the loyal and virtuous wife has not only been betrayed by husband Duncan, she also discovers that her marriage was from the start a political convenience. Hoping to gain a peerage and vicarious participation in high politics, Flora's father had encouraged her relationship with the dashing Duncan, given he was tipped to be a future Prime Minister. Duncan was in turn only attracted to Flora because her father was a party grandee who could furnish him with useful contacts. Duncan is then consumed by political ambition: not only does Flora mean nothing to him, he also has no interest in their children. For him, even making love has no emotional meaning: it is just a perverted power game. Milne leaves viewers in no doubt about the political consequences of this situation, for Duncan is a right-wing Minister for the Family intent on privatizing Child Benefit, and so, as one Tory figure notes, with ambitions to 'smash one of the sacred cows of the welfare state' on his way to Number 10.

Other than Duncan's gay Special Advisor, all the men in *The Politician's Wife* are aligned with the Dark Side. In contrast, even the escort with whom Duncan betrays his wife is not all bad: it was her ex-partner who ensured the relationship reached the press. Flora is moreover just one of an army of wronged women, from middle-aged, middle-class party activists to poor single parents and working mothers who desperately need their local nurseries to remain open. The series presents all of them as exploited, ignored or victimized by the male-run Conservative party. In the *Guardian* the feminist commentator Suzanne Moore thought the series 'as topical and gripping a deconstruction of patriarchy as you could wish for'. That was, however, a contested view: critics in the right-wing press detected a 'feminist triumphalism' and even a 'vengeful, feminist spitefulness' in the series.¹⁷

Yet while Milne subjected Conservative politics to a broad feminist critique her conclusion was ultimately pessimistic. For in Flora's covert campaign to destroy Duncan and replace him as MP, she uses all the low, manipulative

techniques associated with her husband and becomes as hardened as her spouse. As those critics like Hare had claimed of Thatcher and her kind, Milne's Flora had become, politically speaking at least, a man: this appeared to be the only way to succeed in politics.

Tory novelists

The Thatcher-Major years saw the publication of an unprecedented number of works written by ministers and ex-ministers (Douglas Hurd, Tim Renton and Michael Spicer), the Chief Whip in the Lords (Bertie Denham), backbench MPs (Julian Critchley and Nigel West), former MPs (Jeffrey Archer) and ex-Central Office officials (Michael Dobbs). As with earlier Parliamentary Novels, their appeal lay in appearing to give readers an authentic view of politics. Thus, the *Spectator* reviewer wrote of Douglas Hurd's first novel (co-written with Andrew Osmond), *Send Her Victorious* (1968), that its 'documentary approach, the coating of surface realism' gave him confidence the authors 'know how politicians talk, how diplomats react and government departments work'.¹⁸ Like those produced by Maurice Edelman in the 1950s and 1960s, these novels were mainly aimed at the 'middle-brow' market, where sales of 30,000 were considered decent. A few, however, achieved mass sales: Dobbs' *House of Cards* trilogy (1989–94) ultimately sold near 1.5 million copies worldwide.¹⁹ His novels did so well partly because they were adapted for television, something that also helped Archer's *First Among Equals* (1984) become a bestseller.

Evoking the excitement of being part of life-or-death decisions, close Cabinet votes and critical Commons divisions, if these were hyper-real accounts of parliamentary life meant to entertain they also conveyed the banality of politics. As Critchley wrote in *Hung Parliament* (1991): 'MPs lead dullish and frustrating lives, obliged as they are to listen to ministerial speeches and bounded as they are by ambitious rivals, resentful wives and curmudgeonly constituents.'²⁰ Some were crime thrillers with their tongues firmly in their cheek, in which MPs performed the time-served role of amateur detective. But all had something to say about real politics. West's *Murder in the Commons* (1992) and *Murder in the Lords* (1994) saw Conservative Phillip North solve two homicides while the author made none-too-subtle defences of privatization and MPs' outside interests. Critchley's *Hung Parliament* and *Floating Voter* (1992) were also murder mysteries, which gave him scope to make snide comments about leading Conservative contemporaries.

In contrast, Spicer specialized in dystopian Cold War fantasies. His first novel, *Final Act* (1981), warned of the consequences of appeasing Moscow. Set in a near future in which Europe is under direct Soviet rule, Britain's political parties are ultimately run by the London High Commission of the USSR. Indicating his own hostility to the EEC, Spicer has the Conservative party morph into the European Unity Party, whose main object is to placate Moscow. Describing a revolt against Britain being completely integrated into the Soviet Empire, Spicer has it fail because it comes too late: Britons should have been more alert in the 1980s. *Prime Minister Spy* (1986) was another paranoid fantasy. It was, however, unlikely Moscow would ever have adopted the scheme outlined in the novel, which involved the KGB ensuring Adolf Hitler's son becomes Conservative Prime Minister so he can lead Britain into the Warsaw Pact.

Patrician politics

Hurd and Renton specialized in thrillers that evoked and commented on contemporary events. The former had been writing novels since before his election to the Commons in 1973 and continued to do so, even after becoming a junior minister in 1979.²¹ *The Palace of Enchantments* (1985), co-authored with his Private Secretary at the Foreign Office, was Hurd's sixth but the only one published during the Conservative period in power, which saw him become Home and later Foreign Secretary. Renton started writing only after he left frontline politics in 1992, prior to which he had been Thatcher's last Chief Whip and Major's first Minister for the Arts. Both men were of the same generation and class, having been born in the early 1930s and educated at Eton and Oxbridge; they also shared the same kind of liberal One-Nation Toryism that Thatcher described as 'wet'. The hereditary peer Denham enjoyed a similar background. If his four novels published between 1979 and 1997 had more crime than politics, even *Foxhunt* (1988) has mounting inner-city discontent as part of its background.

Like those produced by Hurd and Renton, Denham's novels expressed a cautious idealism about the parliamentary system. These fictions also paint a picture of a politics best left in the hands of rational, patrician, pragmatic men, those very much like their authors. They depict dangers within parliamentary democracy that only men of this stripe can negotiate, notably the overweening influence of party and the short-sightedness of the people, perils Trollope had also recognized.

The Palace of Enchantments has a City banker take his American counterpart on a tour of London.²² Passing a suburban street replete with roses, Virginia creepers, a red pillar box and 'small gables and pediments in architectural confusion', Hurd has him claim:

Suburban living, that is England's gift to the twentieth century. The Scots can't do it, nor the French, let alone the Italians. Miles and miles of houses like that. Moderate incomes, moderate opinions, moderate achievements. Pleasant, sensible people, with front and back gardens. They worry about their children, but their children end up like them. They vote Conservative, but constantly disappoint the Conservatives because they are not entrepreneurs. You can cut their taxes, but you can't get them to take risks. Forget the British upper class which hypnotises you Americans. Forget the media, the cloth-capped workers, forget the bankers we're going to meet. All the minorities. It's the people up that road who count.

This vision was one that would have frustrated those Thatcherites keen to turn Britain into a nation of striving entrepreneurs. Hurd believed such moderation was moreover based on an ultimately sound parliamentary system, one largely composed of men dedicated to selfless public service. To make this point he has a German banker speak of the democratic nature of the Palace of Westminster while explaining why the novel's hero, Edward Dunsford, had abandoned a lucrative career in finance for the uncertainties of politics:

Gothic in architecture and in spirit. The Gothic of the English nineteenth-century – darkness, pinnacles, discomfort, too hot, too cold, poor food. But splendid, the splendour not of reality but of dreams. It is a palace of enchantments ... Go one day to the House of Commons as an elector, a constituent. Be you high or low, rich or poor, the procedure is the same. You are told by a policeman to wait, in a gilded hall with soaring absurd arches, mythical patriotic saints, and an impolite post office. You wait, minutes, quarters of an hour. If you are importunate or self-important you will fill in a green card, and the policeman carries it away, but it makes no difference. Eventually the Member of Parliament arrives, trailing clouds of glory from some sanctum, some further Gothic hall which you cannot penetrate. He bustles towards you, apologises, shakes your hand, explains how he is busy, is pleasant with you. He radiates the superiority, that is the enchantment which Dunsford feels, they all feel and which you and I cannot feel ... It is the pleasure of service, the pleasure of being elected to serve others ... The service of the people, that is the real seduction.

Renton's *Hostage to Fortune* (1997) expanded on the authenticity of this 'service' by having a Conservative Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition combine in the national interest to support Britain's entry into the Euro. In the real world, this policy was strongly opposed by the deposed Thatcher's still-vocal supporters. In Renton's novel, however, the Prime Minister believes Britain will benefit from the move, but is aware many in his party oppose the measure and so, as both are good men, the two leaders put partisan considerations aside and do the right thing. The constitution is moreover, Renton suggests, still sound, for when politicians fail to show the right leadership the Queen acts as a fail-safe. In *A Dangerous Edge* (1994), when the personal ambitions of a Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister bring the Cabinet to deadlock, the monarch forces the latter to declare an election, one which sees both lose their seat, allowing her to call for the novel's righteous hero to form a new government.

Written while his leader was preparing to mount an attack on the post-war consensus, Denham's *The Man Who Lost His Shadow* (1979) also depicts the mutual respect uniting men of good character on both sides of the House – even those like Jimmy Spiller, a working-class ex-Communist Labour MP and the Conservative shadow Home Secretary Sir John Elton, who disagree on every aspect of politics. Denham's hero across his four novels is Derek Thryde, a Lords Whip and something of a throwback whose universe comprises country houses, loyal retainers, pink gins and fox hunting. This comforting society is complemented by a Parliament whose time-worn but grand architecture Denham describes in loving detail along with some of the more arcane but still-effective chapters of legislative procedure. Denham's is a world of a sound and living tradition, one whose heroes are 'self effacing' and whose villains are 'aggressively self confident' bounders. Even the press is benign, with Thryde writing of Lobby journalists that their 'ethical standards are higher than any other section of the Press in the country, probably the world'.²³

Soap-opera Westminster

Despite being well-regarded literary efforts, only one of Hurd's novels, *Scotch on the Rocks* (1971), was adapted for television, in 1973. Such was their popularity, the work of Jeffrey Archer was in contrast habitually adapted for the small screen. The disdain poured on Archer in Critchley's *Floating Voter* suggests that not every Conservative thought of him highly, although Thatcher claimed to admire his novels.

Aiming at a transatlantic audience, Archer to begin with fought shy of depicting British politics for fear of alienating American readers; indeed two early novels, *Shall We Tell the President?* (1977) and *The Prodigal Daughter* (1982), tackled US politics. This emphasis changed with his fifth outing, *First Among Equals* (1984), described by his publisher as 'The book he was born to write.'²⁴ Archer had only turned to novels after his time as a Conservative MP came to an abrupt end when bankruptcy forced his resignation in 1974. His change of career nonetheless proved extremely lucrative. Archer's novels adhered to a popular recipe, one that involved struggles for power and wealth between small groups of highly motivated and often over-sexed men, leading one critic to snootily have it that they 'rely on little more than the lust for money, sex and power.'²⁵ *First Among Equals* applied this formula to Westminster, charting the lives and loves of four young MPs entering the Commons in 1964, each ambitious to become Prime Minister. Archer sets his protagonists' struggles against real events, with versions of Wilson, Heath, Thatcher and others making appearances, although party politics, at least in terms of policy, is rarely mentioned. Few consequently looked upon *First Amongst Equals* as a serious political document. Conservative party chair Norman Tebbit even claimed an Archer novel was ideal hospital reading because it 'requires no mental effort.'²⁶ Yet, whatever his quality as a writer, Archer projected a glamorized vision of Westminster to an unprecedented number, one that quickly sold a million copies and when adapted for television reached seven million viewers.

Archer's MPs are balanced in partisan terms, with two each from Labour and the Conservatives, although one of the former defects to the SDP. They also come from contrasting classes. If two originate from landed backgrounds, money troubles plague Simon Kerslake, Archer's middle-class Tory, as well as the Labour MP Raymond Gould, who while a barrister has emerged from the back streets of Leeds. Archer presents being an MP as a poorly paid and insecure occupation, meaning that when he loses his marginal seat Kerslake comes to a profitable arrangement with a property developer who wants introductions to useful people. Archer does not however see anything wrong in this relationship and is at pains to stress that Kerslake's integrity remains intact.

If the four MPs' private lives all suffer due to their grand passion, Archer presents their desire to be Prime Minister as righteous, for if personally ambitious these are ultimately well-motivated men. When Northern Ireland Secretary, Kerslake is nearly assassinated after the IRA booby-trap his car, and despite incredible pain he staggers to the Commons to make a speech so as to prevent the defeat of his plan for peace. Gould also shows himself a man of honour

when he resigns from the Labour Front Bench after the Wilson government devalues sterling, having publicly just opposed such a move. Similarly, Labour and Conservative co-operate to ensure a wrongfully convicted man gets justice. Archer, then, meant his story to show Westminster in positive terms.

When the novel was adapted into a ten-part ITV series in 1986, producer Mervyn Watson claimed it was a 'serious drama ... [which] delves deep into the working of the MPs and the whole political system'. Reflecting the number of scenes to be shot there, Granada even invested a considerable sum in carefully reconstructing the Commons Chamber, emphasizing the centrality Archer's novel gave the arena.²⁷ Yet few television reviewers believed the series had anything positive to say about Westminster. Noting the number of naked women on view, the future *Guardian* editor Alan Rusbridger even described the series as embodying 'politics-with-nipples'.²⁸ Many saw the series in terms of *Dallas* and *Dynasty*, then-popular American soap operas about the rich and powerful. As one critic had it, the series was a 'political soap at its slipperiest, and no one is safe from the suds of corruption that float out of every doorway'.²⁹ Indeed, some looked upon the adaptation as containing 'a hard kernel of cynicism' in which politics was 'nothing more than snakes-and-ladders, anything other than the clash of ego and ambition' and whose four protagonists were 'motivated purely by self-interest and a lust for power'.³⁰ According to Mary Kenny in the *Daily Mail*, 'Archer brilliantly exposes the hollow obsessions which make so many politicians tick', while in its Sunday counterpart Alan Coren said of the MPs, 'not only are the four candidates venal. Shifty, toadying and egomaniacal, they are also pinheads'.³¹ Robert Kilroy-Silk, about to embark on a media career having just resigned as a Labour MP, was one of the few to notice that Archer's protagonists did have values and distinct ideas. But even he considered the series depicted MPs as a whole as 'ruthlessly ambitious, manipulative and self-seeking', just as they were, he claimed, in real life.³²

Despite his commercial success, Archer remained a frustrated politician. As *First Among Equals* showed, he looked on his absence from the Commons in the same way Trollope had mourned his own exclusion. In 1985, between the publication of the novel and its television adaptation, Archer made a return to Conservative politics when at Thatcher's insistence he was appointed Deputy Chair of the party. As an ironic coda to what viewers were then watching on the screen, halfway through the series Archer's ambitions were again thwarted when he resigned, having been discovered paying money to a prostitute. Unlike Raymond Gould, who survived a blackmail attempt after also having an encounter with an escort, Archer would not make Prime Minister.

Houses of cards

Michael Dobbs was over twenty years younger than Denham, Hurd and Renton and born almost a decade after Archer. Of a different generation, he was also a graduate of the University of Nottingham rather than Oxbridge and never became an MP. From the mid-1970s he did, however, work for the Conservative party in various roles, including advising Thatcher while in Opposition and acting as Tebbit's chief of staff when he was Chairman prior to and during the 1987 general election. Dobbs also worked for Saatchi and Saatchi, the advertising agency with intimate Conservative party links. After Thatcher's third election triumph, he left Central Office when criticism of Tebbit's management of the 1987 campaign led to acrimony with Number 10. With Thatcher gone, he returned to assist John Major as Deputy Chairman and was elevated to the peerage after David Cameron became Prime Minister in 2010.

Dobbs began to write during his post-1987 hiatus, so beginning a second career as a prolific novelist. *House of Cards* (1989), his first and most famous novel, charted the rise of Francis Urquhart, from Chief Whip in a failing Conservative government to the verge of Number 10. As Dobbs paints him, Urquhart is an antediluvian figure, one at home on the grouse moor rather than in an advertising agency. A hard-up member of the landed elite who took up politics only after being forced to sell his family estate, he resents being surrounded by modern Tories, pushy grammar school types to whom he has to defer. Such mediocrities, as Urquhart sees them, have only succeeded thanks to their superficially amenable television manner. Unable to take any more, Urquhart turns the power and knowledge of the Chief Whip to eliminate those standing between him and Number 10. Such is his desire for power, Dobbs' cold-hearted protagonist even murders to achieve his ends. Yet, when threatened with exposure by a young investigative female journalist, Urquhart throws himself from the top of the Palace of Westminster, allowing normal politics to resume.

The very kind of Tory Dobbs has Urquhart detest, the author undoubtedly indulged in some playful intra-party stereotyping, and while Urquhart dominates the novel his dreadful plot ends in failure. When Andrew Davies adapted Dobbs' novel for BBC One in 1990 he transformed it into a very different piece of work. No Conservative, Davies gave *House of Cards* a darkly comic edge the novel lacked, parodying the Parliamentary Novel by turning qualities previous novelists working in that genre had praised against themselves and critiquing how real Conservatives exercised power. Urquhart in Davies' hands becomes

the inhuman embodiment of the pursuit and exercise of political authority. Moreover, in this bleaker vision, Davies has Urquhart succeed: rather than commit suicide, he throws his accuser to her death.

The series was extremely popular; indeed Edwina Currie thought it 'infinitely better' than the novel.³³ Timing helped: its first two episodes were broadcast while Conservative MPs divested themselves of Thatcher and chose another leader, albeit in a less bloody way than was depicted on the screen. If *First Among Equals* was compared to a soap opera, critics saw *House of Cards* in Shakespearean terms; according to one critic it was 'Richard III in modern dress'.³⁴ Many drew parallels with ongoing real-life events and while some thought Davies guilty of hyperbole, others believed that 'as in the best satire, exaggeration reveals a truth'.³⁵ Responding to the success of the series, Dobbs resurrected Urquhart to live on as Prime Minister in two further novels, both of which Davies adapted. In his hands, *To Play the King* (BBC, 1993) and *The Final Cut* (BBC, 1995) drew parallels between Urquhart and Thatcher, ones absent in the original series and Dobbs' novels. In the latter Urquhart even wants his own version of the Falklands war – by which he means a cynically engineered conflict – and his downfall, like Thatcher's, is precipitated by the resignation of a Foreign Secretary over Europe.

Urquhart nonetheless remains the embodiment of traditional political power: as Davies has him say in *To Play the King*, 'The forces that drive me come from centuries of history.' A self-described 'loyal servant of the state', Urquhart exploits those who demonstrate 'human' qualities. Indeed the recognizably Thatcherite policies pursued by his government are themselves criticized for their 'sheer lack of humanity' by a Prince Charles-like monarch in the 1993 series. Very unusually – indeed the last time was probably in *Vote, Vote, Vote for Nigel Barton* (BBC, 1965) – Davies implicates viewers in these policies. One of the series conceits is that Urquhart – like the agent in Dennis Potter's earlier television play – occasionally addresses the camera. Looking at viewers, in *To Play the King*, he declares:

Under the show, the struggle for power. Deep down below it all, deeper than honour, deeper than pride, deeper than lust and deeper than love is the getting of it all. The seizing and the holding on. The jaws locked, biting into power and hanging on. Biting and hanging on.

From this speech there is an immediate dissolve to a group believed to be IRA terrorists being shot down by the military while out shopping, evoking the murder of unarmed Irish terror suspects on Gibraltar in 1988. They have been

killed on Urquhart's orders. The act having been accomplished, he turns to the viewers, and – anticipating any queasiness on their part – states: 'I thought you liked strong leadership.' In *The Final Cut* Urquhart also reminds viewers that if they want a strong leader, which was said to have attracted many to Thatcher, then whatever that person does they 'partake in it'.

In the concluding series Urquhart becomes the victim of his own cold-hearted approach to power. Knowing her husband's days in office are numbered, Urquhart's wife wants him to avoid the kind of humiliation that befell Thatcher. Having already started a liaison with the Prime Minister's security advisor Commander Corder, she has him arrange Urquhart's assassination while unveiling a statue to Thatcher's memory. Once the act is over, Davies has Corder immediately approach Urquhart's closest rival and effectively anoint him on behalf of the security services, stating that 'anything you need, we're right behind you'. In this way, Davies merges the Parliamentary Novel with the conspiracy genre, suggesting the central role of dark and secret forces in British politics. In Dobbs' third novel, Urquhart was also assassinated, but while it would have been little comfort to his protagonist, his death was not the product of any conspiracy. Dobbs did not have the same political outlook as his television interpreter; indeed, as he archly put it, in contrast to those cynics at the BBC he believed politics could still consist of 'truth, justice and [the] triumph of good'.³⁶

Tory men and their women

Tory novels of this period were stories by men about men with women restricted to their accustomed roles as their protagonists' hobbies, hindrances or helpmates. In *First Among Equals*, apart from Archer's fictionalized Thatcher, women play all of these parts. Raymond Gould, the one who makes it to Number 10, not only survives blackmail from a prostitute, he also has an affair with an American lawyer. News of the latter (but not the former) comes to attention of Gould's wife, who spends much of the novel stuck in Leeds, where she does most of her husband's constituency work. Yet even this self-sacrificing spouse can only take so much, inducing Gould's mistress to give up the man she still loves because she fears a divorce will stop him becoming Prime Minister. Gould's wife similarly forgives her husband so he can remain on course for Downing Street.

If these novels suggest a good woman in politics is one who sublimates herself to her man's ambition, they also indicate that women could be *too* ambitious.

Edward Dunsford in Hurd's *The Palace of Enchantments* has a wife more ruthless than her spouse to the extent she urges him to abandon his principles when they are politically inconvenient. Indeed, early in the novel, Dunsford figures 'life without women, though still difficult, would be a damned sight simpler'.³⁷ When his wife leaves him because he puts principle before ambition he becomes a happier man. Varying this theme, in Renton's *The Dangerous Edge*, the protagonist's wife is sexually excited by politics, but this visceral effect means she cannot appreciate its subtleties. She is in any case primarily concerned for her husband to rise to the top so he can earn enough money to finance her lavish lifestyle. In other words, she is one more source of tension in an already high-pressure career.

Under the guise of comedy, Critchley's two novels show how one Tory man reacted to those women who challenged their subsidiary role. Both involve the murder of a female MP and an aspiring parliamentary candidate. In *Hung Parliament* (1991), while MP Emma Kerr is sexually adept she is a bore outside the bedroom, common to boot, and a blackmailer, which is why she ends up murdered. Critchley sets *Floating Voter* (1992) at the Conservative annual conference, to which a variety of transgressive horrors fetch up, men as well as women. This cast includes Hyacinth Scragg, a big-breasted Young Conservative from the West Midlands, and most notably Amaranth Wilikins, who is intent on securing a constituency in time for the next election. To attract attention, when speaking at the conference, for every anti-Labour point she advances Wilikins removes a layer of clothes, in effect doing a striptease. Yet Wilikins ends up a corpse not a candidate, for she is a woman with a past, which includes being a porn model.

Tory women strike back

After Thatcher fell from power a number of Conservative women wrote novels that combined the Parliamentary Novel with an approach familiar to readers of romantic fictions made popular by Jilly Cooper. Edwina Currie was the leading exponent of this trend, one encouraged by the popularity of her *A Parliamentary Affair* (1994). Currie was elected to the Commons in 1983 and even before becoming an MP had developed a talent for attracting media attention. In 1986 she became a junior health minister until forced to resign two years later after making injudicious remarks about salmonella in eggs. A married woman, she conducted a secret affair with the similarly placed John Major as he rose up the ministerial

ladder, beginning a literary career when it was clear her political ambitions would remain unfulfilled during his premiership. Liverpool-born, Jewish and mixing authoritarian populism with social liberalism, she was not a classic Tory. Indeed, according to Currie's friend and fellow MP Gyles Brandreth, writing a few months before the publication of her first novel, in the Commons Tea Room:

she's the easy butt of every joke. In the Chamber, she speaks well, with conviction and authority, but no one seems to rate her. Perhaps *it's because she behaves like a man* – she interrupts, she's loud, she's opinionated.³⁸

Whether due to her 'mannish' ways or not, Currie was certainly a despised figure among a variety of male colleagues, from Alan Clark on the Conservative far right to Crichtley on its 'wet' wing.

Currie's motives for writing her first novel were initially simple: she hoped it would be a 'meal ticket'. It seems, however, that writing became a kind of therapy, a 'refuge from the awfulness and uncertainty of my political life', where she could express her increasing distaste for the Commons. It also became a form of 'revenge, for all the snide remarks, for all the arrogant macho assumptions of Westminster'.³⁹ *A Parliamentary Affair* had as its protagonist Elaine Stalker, a newly elected and very Currie-like MP. While she read Trollope to help her writing style, unlike the author of *The Prime Minister* (1876) Currie wanted to include as much sex as possible, confiding to her diary 'I want the book to sell, dammit'.⁴⁰ It was consequently dubbed a 'bonkbuster'. Serialized in the *Daily Mail*, sell it definitely did, with as many as 250,000 copies bought within months of publication.⁴¹

On the back of this success, Currie wrote a sequel, *A Woman's Place* (1996), published in the same year as Sara Keays' *The Black Book*. Jo Delvere, Keays' heroine, also evoked her creator's story insofar as she becomes secretary to an MP. Like Currie, Keays had thwarted ambitions, once harbouring hopes of becoming a Conservative MP. These were, however, smashed in 1983 when her twelve-year relationship with Cecil Parkinson became public, as did news that she was bearing his child. In the fall-out, Parkinson, a close Thatcher favourite, resigned from the government, much to his leader's distress. Many in the party blamed Keays for his downfall. An editorial in the *Daily Telegraph* headed, in a nod to one of Trollope's Palliser novels, 'Can You Forgive Him?', even suggested that 'a quiet abortion is greatly to be preferred to a scandal'.⁴² A year later came Alice Renton's *Maiden Speech* and Vanessa Hannam's *Division Belle*; in contrast to Currie and Keays these were professional writers whose connection to politics came via marriages to Conservative MPs, in Renton's case the sometime

novelist, Tim. Their protagonists were also MPs' wives with, like their authors, careers to pursue.

With married heroines in their thirties or forties whose children still lived at home, these novels were aimed at similar kinds of readers, ones their authors assumed had little knowledge of Westminster. Keays, for example, felt obliged to explain what was the Black Book that gave her novel its title. Presumably to help readers identify with their protagonists, the authors also made them express a lack of interest in or even hostility for politics. 'Thus Keays' Delvere knows nothing, 'except what a mess the Government seems to be making of everything.' When told that Parliament 'belongs to all of us, doesn't it, and we've got to look after it. It's our Parliament. What happens here affects all of us and it's up to all of us to see that it's what we want it to be', Delvere realizes she had never thought of the institution in such terms, but 'only as something imposed from above'.⁴³ Even the MP Stalker only stands for Parliament after becoming the mother of a handicapped child encourages her to take an interest in the politics of health.

If such works were not widely regarded as political documents, Currie claimed of her second effort: 'Underneath the sex and the humour, the novel is intended to have a serious theme. It is designed to expose the decline of Parliament and the appalling treatment of women there.' It was, she claimed, 'my way of exposing what I consider are the faults and abuses of the system'.⁴⁴ Indeed, the novels had much to say about the alien nature of a male-dominated Westminster and the low place women and the issues they are presumed to think important, like family and relationships, held there. As one of Keays' characters states, there were so few women MPs because politics promotes 'aggressive and adversarial behaviour, rather than sharing and compromise'.⁴⁵

The novels depict their male Conservative politicians as the ultimate embodiments of masculine selfishness, to whom wives and children were to be subordinated. Renton has a Central Office figure hope her heroine will be a 'good wife', by which he meant 'One who'll do all the expected duties' and certainly not 'some free-thinking career woman'.⁴⁶ To be the wife of an MP, Renton makes it clear, a woman has to return to a 'pre-historic' world and give up her separate identity.⁴⁷ Similarly, Hannam's protagonist is described as 'the sort of wife the Party did not need: a woman who spoke her mind'. She is, even so, forced to put her son's welfare after that of her husband's career. Yet when she does attend constituency functions, hidebound female party activists criticize her for appearing bare-legged.⁴⁸

Those women who accept this position are not presented in a positive light. Cabinet Minister Ted Bampton (Currie's unflattering rendering of her old boss

Ken Clarke) appears in *A Woman's Place*. He is a sexist bully, married to Jean, an accommodating wife, whom he addresses thus:

'You're a good woman, you know that? You don't argue with me and mess me about, not when it comes to my job, and I don't interfere with you. You know your place – running things here in the home, bringing up the girls, and not bothering yourself with silliness outside. Why can't the rest be like that? Makes life much easier.'

Jean laughed, a slow reassuring chuckle. 'Because women don't know their place any more, and many wouldn't be content to live the way we do. More fool them, I suppose. But it suits me.'

At the door he turned. 'I suppose we're a bit old fashioned, the pair of us.'

'So what? We're more typical of couples in this country than the feminists would believe. And the happier for it.'

'Thank God for that.'⁴⁹

As Hannam has the Chancellor of the Exchequer in an exclusively male Conservative Cabinet tell his supine wife, Thatcher might have once been Prime Minister, 'but we've come to our senses since'.⁵⁰

The politicians to whom the novels' heroines are expected to suborn themselves are a very particular bunch. *Division Belle's* James Askew is described as having a 'controlled, ambitious heart' and being in possession of no feelings. He is a machine, not a man. If these qualities are invaluable in his political career they are nearly the undoing of his marriage.⁵¹ Similarly, Roger Dickson – Stalker's lover who ultimately becomes Prime Minister – is 'cold-blooded' and said to reserve most of his emotions for politics.⁵² As a character in Keays' novel states of Westminster: 'the place is full of odd-balls and misfits ... I've a theory that it's often men with some kind of hangup who go into politics to make themselves feel important.'⁵³ Not all MPs fit that bill, notably Arnold Hobbs, but he is in his late sixties and one of the 'old school, the kind of MP who believes in public service'. Keays' novel nostalgically believes that things were better in the past, with one character claiming of MPs that 'they don't have the same values as in the old days' when they weren't so pompous.⁵⁴

This largely gendered critique of Westminster complemented an eclectic distaste for Conservative activists. According to Renton, they were obsessed with law and order, capital punishment and bypasses; they were also racist and xenophobic. The chair of her heroine's constituency party was, for good measure, a convicted drink-driver who aspired to the post because it boosted his self-importance. Some authors put their own snobbishness on show the better to denigrate the party's rank and file. Hannam thus describes female

Conservatives as thinking it fashionable to wear crimplene cocktail dresses in primary colours; her heroine's husband's constituency chair even eats meals watching television.⁵⁵ Readers were clearly meant to view politics as distasteful on many levels, including the aesthetic.

Whatever their emphases, these novels systematically present politics as antithetical to domestic happiness and so female fulfilment. On watching the real Betty Boothroyd elected Speaker at the start of *A Parliamentary Affair*, Elaine Stalker wondered if – given Boothroyd was unmarried and childless – it was impossible to be an MP and, 'like millions of other women,' also have a husband and children?⁵⁶ In Stalker's case the answer was ultimately in the negative. Having happily given up housework and morning sickness to pursue a political career, *A Woman's Place* ends with Stalker marrying the acme of conventional masculinity, a reserve officer in the Guards and returning to a career outside politics where 'success [is] not based on hypocrisy but on hard work and talent'.⁵⁷ In the Renton and Hannam novels domestic life that is torn asunder by politics only returns to tranquillity when their heroines' husbands quit Westminster. Indeed, James Askew only saves his marriage by appreciating that marriage is a partnership, that his wife has her own life, and family is superior to political ambition.

If these novels express any hope for a different kind of politics it is not one embodied by women, suggesting that these Tory writers could not, at this point, imagine a time when their sisters might enjoy a more equal place at Westminster. For Currie, hope is personalized in young Fred, who will marry Stalker's daughter; for Renton it takes the shape of the Green Party boyfriend of her protagonist's daughter who thinks it might be worth his while becoming a Conservative.

Conclusion

Novels that crossed the divide between political and romantic fiction continued to be written after the Conservatives left office. Michael Howard led the party to its third defeat in a row in 2005; a year later his wife Sandra wrote *Glass Houses* (2006). Wives or daughters of men from other parties also contributed to the sub-genre: Susan Crosland wrote *The Prime Minister's Wife* (2002); Melissa Benn penned *One of Us* (2009); Rosie Wallace produced *A Small Town Affair* (2010). These remained relatively rare literary creatures, however, suggesting publishers were not confident they could find them a guaranteed audience of sufficient size. Perhaps that was why, despite the success of her first two efforts, Currie moved on to other subjects. Similarly, the former Conservative minister Ann Widdecombe

published four novels between 2000 and 2005, but steered clear of Westminster. Even more strikingly, none of Louise Bagshawe's fourteen efforts written between 1995 and her election as Conservative MP in 2010 touched politics; indeed they were all located in the lucrative 'chick lit' genre, one that celebrated the glamorous and wholly apolitical lives of their twenty-something female protagonists.

At the start of the twenty-first century, the Tory Parliamentary Novel therefore retained its traditional masculine character. In the midst of his *House of Cards* trilogy, Michael Dobbs tried his hand at a female-friendly political novel with *The Touch of Innocents* (1994). This inevitably had a male politician consumed by his need for power, one that leaves his private life empty; he is opposed by a female nemesis who in contrast puts family first. It took another twelve years before Dobbs wrote another similarly themed work, *First Lady* (2006). For the most part, however, Dobbs' output after Francis Urquhart's second and final death in 1994 consisted of three series of novels about a variety of maverick, irredeemably masculine, Conservative heroes. First came a trilogy about down-at-heel Tom Goodfellowe MP (1997–2000) and then a quadrilogy featuring former SAS killing machine Harry Jones MP (2007–12). In between Dobbs wrote four historical fictions exploring the life of the ultimate Tory idol, Winston Churchill (2002–9).

Similarly, after he resigned as Foreign Secretary in 1995, Douglas Hurd returned to writing novels featuring calm, reassuring and male Prime Ministers navigating choppy waters. In what was a significant departure from Hurd's norm, in *The Shape of Ice* (1998) and *Image in the Water* (2001) he nonetheless presented readers with a female Chancellor of the Exchequer. Joan Freetown is Hurd's version of Margaret Thatcher in all but name. In contrast to her more relaxed and balanced male peers, Freetown is consumed by politics and hard work: as a result she has alienated her children and is semi-detached from an emasculated husband. This intimidating, histrionic and inhumane Boadicea also puts her colleagues on edge, for even Freetown's hair is 'harsh' and her voice 'sharp'. Evoking the perspective of many of Thatcher's left-wing critics, Freetown was, according to Hurd, 'half-masculine, half-feminine'.²⁵⁸ Politics in his as in so many others' eyes still remained no job for a lady.

Notes

1 *Evening Standard*, 4 February 1993.

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- 3 L. Peake, 'Women in the campaign and in the Commons', in A. Geddes and J. Tonge (eds), *Labour's Landslide: The British General Election 1997* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp. 165–77.
- 4 P. Dunleavy and S. Weir with G. Subrahmanyam, 'Public response and constitutional significance', *Parliamentary Affairs* 48:4 (1995), pp. 602–16.
- 5 First transmitted 11 November 1982.
- 6 *Daily Telegraph*, 12 November 1982.
- 7 *Today*, 10 May 1989.
- 8 *TV Times*, 3–9 February 1990; *Daily Mail*, 10 May 1989.
- 9 *Sunday Telegraph*, 11 February 1990.
- 10 *Daily Mirror*, 10 February 1990.
- 11 *Sun*, 21 January 1992.
- 12 For an excellent analysis of Thatcher's depiction on television during this period, see M. K. Harmes, 'A creature not quite of this world: adaptations of Margaret Thatcher on 1980s British television', *Journal of Popular Television* 1:1 (2013), pp. 53–68.
- 13 D. Hare, *The Secret Rapture* (London: Faber, 1988), p. 68.
- 14 *International Herald Tribune*, 2 August 1988.
- 15 *New Woman*, September 1988.
- 16 *Scotsman*, 12 July 1989; *New Statesman and Society*, 9 June 1989.
- 17 *Guardian*, 18 May 1995; *Daily Mail*, 17 May 1995; *Sunday Express*, 4 June 1995.
- 18 Quoted in M. Stuart, *Douglas Hurd: The Public Servant* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1998), p. 58.
- 19 *Daily Telegraph*, 27 November 2008.
- 20 J. Critchley, *Hung Parliament* (London: Headline, 1991), p. 68.
- 21 For an assessment of Hurd's early novels, see Stuart, *The Public Servant*, pp. 56–65.
- 22 Quotations are taken from D. Hurd and S. Lamport, *The Palace of Enchantments* (Sevenoaks: Coronet, 1985), pp. 99–100 and 108–9.
- 23 B. Denham, *Foxhunt* (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 43, 57.
- 24 For the novel, see M. Crick, *Jeffrey Archer: Stranger than Fiction* (London: Fourth Estate, 2000), pp. 240–5.
- 25 *The Times*, 5 July 1984.
- 26 Quoted in Crick, *Jeffrey Archer*, p. 252.
- 27 *Mail on Sunday*, 16 February 1986; *NOW!*, 18 May 1986.
- 28 *Observer*, 7 December 1986.
- 29 *NOW!*, 18 May 1986.
- 30 *Today*, 1 October 1986.
- 31 *Daily Mail*, 18 October 1986; *Mail on Sunday*, 5 October 1986.
- 32 *Today*, 4 November 1986.
- 33 E. Currie, *Diaries: Volume II, 1992–1997* (London: Biteback, 2012), p. 84.
- 34 *Western Mail*, 15 December 1990.

- 35 *Spectator*, 24 November 1990; *Independent*, 25 November and 3 December 1990; *Today*, 1 December 1990.
- 36 M. Dobbs, *To Play the King* (London: Harper, 2007), p. 9.
- 37 Hurd and Lamport, *The Palace of Enchantments*, p. 23.
- 38 G. Brandreth, *Breaking the Code* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), p. 210. Emphasis added.
- 39 Currie, *Diaries*, pp. 12, 94, 148, 162–3.
- 40 *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 45.
- 41 *Guardian*, 11 March 1994.
- 42 S. Keays, *A Question of Judgement* (London: Quintessential, 1985), pp. 144–5
- 43 S. Keays, *The Black Book* (London: Doubleday, 1996), pp.15, 58.
- 44 *Guardian*, 22 January 1996.
- 45 Keays, *The Black Book*, p. 27.
- 46 A. Renton, *Maiden Speech* (London: Review, 1997), p. 60.
- 47 *Ibid.*, p. 98.
- 48 V. Hannam, *Division Belle* (London: Headline, 1997), pp. 16, 90, 144.
- 49 E. Currie, *A Woman's Place* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996), pp. 478–9.
- 50 Hannam, *Division Belle*, p. 144.
- 51 *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 35, 178.
- 52 E. Currie, *A Parliamentary Affair* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994), p. 74.
- 53 Keays, *The Black Book*, pp. 64–5, 110–11.
- 54 *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 107.
- 55 Hannam, *Division Belle*, pp. 85–6.
- 56 Currie, *A Parliamentary Affair*, p. 20.
- 57 Currie, *A Woman's Place*, p. 499.
- 58 D. Hurd, *The Shape of Ice* (London: Warner, 1999) p. 298 and *Image in the Water* (London: Little, Brown, 2001), pp. 25, 23.