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**Changing Images of Margaret Thatcher**

**by**

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**Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of Politics and International Relations**

**University of Kent**

**November 1996**

## **Abstract**

This thesis concerns the changing images of Mrs Thatcher presented in the press during the general election campaigns of 1979, 1983 and 1987. These benchmarks were arguably the times when the most diverse and concentrated verbal and visual images appeared. From 1979 onwards the nature of Conservative campaigns changed significantly. The public became 'consumers' of politics. A brand leader with style and personality became a necessity in the marketing operation. The presidential-style election campaign was relentlessly pursued by the Conservative party, with media support and sometimes connivance. This helped to alter the content of media election news. The Press reported the new-style events in a partisan manner, using a variety of verbal and visual imagery to support, explain and criticise Mrs Thatcher and her leadership.

Mrs Thatcher was not the first Party Leader or Prime Minister to be specially tutored and packaged for media presentation. She was, however, the first to use the media so extensively as an integral part of her personal campaign at general elections. She lent herself completely to the image development deemed necessary by her advisors.

The concern here is not to develop a theory of images, but to focus on Mrs Thatcher's Premiership, personality and recent history. The work opens with a discussion of the notion of image and the particular way it is used. This use is then related to the verbal images found in selected articles, features and editorials, and the visual images drawn from cartoons and photographs at the three chosen general elections.. Factors which influenced the changes of image at particular times or for special reasons feature in the various related lines of enquiry. Influential colleagues and people who advised on presentation of the personality, central to the presidential-style campaigns, are also included.

The results of the analysis show that in 1979 many of the images were imprecise and not particularly critical since Mrs Thatcher was a contender for Premiership and not a previous incumbent. By 1987 very significant changes appear in the images, due to her length of time in office and her style of leadership. The analysis also revealed the range and diversity of images used. It becomes plain, not only how striking are the differences in the way Mrs Thatcher is portrayed, but how much she contributed to the process, and thus to her own image.

***This thesis is dedicated to my Mother,  
Frances Robinson,  
who watched the work take shape  
and patiently awaited the completion.***

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***"The wicked are wicked, no doubt,  
and they go astray and they fall,  
and they come by their desserts;  
but who can tell the mischief which  
the very virtuous do."***

***William Makepeace Thackeray  
The Newcomes, Chapter 9***

## PREFACE

It is no coincidence that Mrs Thatcher is sometimes referred to as a phenomenon (King 1985; Young 1990; Foley 1993). Many factors contribute to such a description. The first is that she was so long in office as Prime Minister, and longer as leader of the Conservative party. Second, that she was the first woman Prime Minister in a party noted for Tradition. Third, her radical approach broke the mould, in that she turned traditional Tory assumptions upside down over the role of government and the economic system. Fourth, her political approach was confrontational, both with colleagues and the Cabinet, then later, for example, with the miners. Fifth, no other leader has an '-ism' attached to their name. 'Thatcherism' is a matter of substance and style.

This thesis is not concerned to develop a theory of images, but concentrates on the diversity of images of Mrs Thatcher, their changes over time and their origins and process of creation. Some reasons for change are suggested with contributory factors and individual influences. The work is based on the changing images of Mrs Thatcher presented specifically in the press during the general election campaigns of 1979, 1983 and 1987. With increasingly 'presidential' election campaigns and packaged personality leadership, these benchmarks were arguably the times when the most diverse and concentrated visual and verbal images appeared.

Mrs Thatcher was not the first politician to rise from a working class background and become Prime Minister, nor was she the first Party Leader or Prime Minister to be specially tutored and packaged for media presentation. Harold Macmillan, Harold Wilson and Edward Heath co-operated with the media to some extent, with varying degrees of success.

Harold Wilson, for example, preferred television to the press for his own communication purposes, because he had more control of the message. Mrs Thatcher, however, was the first to use the media so extensively; it was an integral part of her personal campaign. She lent herself completely to the image development deemed necessary by her advisors for projecting 'the right image' - or perhaps 'the Right Image'. She took directions at first (1975-79) but the situation seems to have changed by 1987. The later chapters will discuss how Mrs Thatcher contributed to, or controlled her image apart from this advice.

From 1979 onwards the nature of Conservative campaigns changed significantly, attributable to organisation and technology amongst other things. The public became 'consumers' of politics as well as of goods. A brand leader with style and personality became a necessity in the marketing operation. The 'Leader' and the 'Party' became interchangeable, although arguably Mrs Thatcher's new image might have damaged the party, or at least, not have helped after all. In 1979, for example, she trailed her party in the opinion polls most of the time. The presidential-style election campaign was relentlessly pursued by the Conservative Party with media support and sometimes contrivance, with the result that the content of the election news in the media altered. In the 1980's Mrs Thatcher featured prominently in what was reported, or deemed newsworthy in both television and the press. Of note, however, is the absence of the 'Spin Doctors', at least by that name, until the middle of the decade. Although the extent of the political change envisaged for the Conservative party by Mrs Thatcher was not clear in 1979, she appreciated the value of any conduit for her particular message. Part of that message was conveyed in her new style and new image.

Images represent an attempt both by people working for the media and by the readers to define and interpret what is happening. They show the ways that people characterise her.

The Press reported the new style events in the expected partisan manner. In shaping their news they used many types of visual and verbal imagery to support, explain or criticise Mrs Thatcher and her style of leadership.

Campaign images cannot be seen in isolation. Change in Mrs Thatcher's image was to be expected when she became Tory Leader, and again when she became Prime Minister. Change was inevitable; indeed, it would have been most unusual if nothing had occurred. It will become clear throughout the thesis that the considerable changes in image between 1975 and 1987 are not just physical ones. We shall see how some images are based on personal characteristics discernible in Mrs Thatcher's youth and pre-political years, whilst others were attributed, or developed, as the politician advanced from backbencher to Minister, through Party Leadership to Premiership.

Factors which influenced the changes of image at particular times or for special reasons will feature in the various related lines of inquiry. People who advised on presentation of the personality, central to the presidential style campaigns, are included in the discussion, as are colleagues whose influence was apparent at other times.

Analysing material from the Press allows the use of carefully selected and static visual and verbal images. For comparative purposes Press material has much to commend it. There are no commentator overtones, no soundbites and no transient pictures. What is presented to a particular readership is deliberately partisan. There is a variety of journalists writing, and varied shades of opinion. Reasons for the choice of publications used, the collection, analysis and classification of material are detailed in Appendix 1. Events that were set up for television purposes may be the basis of the printed words and pictures, but these events are also grist to the mill for the editor, the journalist and the cartoonist. And a lone

photographer may get a long shot or a delayed shot which never reaches the television screen.

To illustrate and examine the foregoing points the work is organised in the following way:

Chapter One is a discussion of the notion of 'Image' and an explanation of the particular way it is used in this thesis. This use is then related to the verbal images found in the selected Articles, Features and Editorials, and the visual images drawn from Photographs and Cartoons. It will also be shown how Mrs Thatcher, with specialist guidance - or perhaps manipulation - led the way in image management, using media assistance to portray her in particular ways. These 'marketing of a Personality' procedures heralded the new, more presidential style of election campaign which arguably had a greater influence through television news than on the Press or Periodicals.

Chapter Two looks at Mrs Thatcher's characteristics and attributes from childhood days in Grantham through to the general election campaign of 1979, and the images that were triggered by personal experience and political events. The discussion covers the Methodist influence central to the Roberts family's way of life, the influential bond between father and daughter which helped shape her views, and her early political experience. The chapter is not a mini-biography, but it seeks to show particular, relevant points in her life.

The next three chapters are reviews of researched material from each of the general elections to give an indication of the tenor of each campaign. The visual and verbal images referred to appear again later in relevant chapters.

Chapter Three shows that in 1979 there was a novelty factor and even some amazement that Mrs Thatcher - all briskness and conviction but apparently 'nice', as in the TV news and photographs - presented such a challenge for Premiership. The descriptions and images reflect this surprise, and although there is some press criticism it is not particularly strongly worded.

Chapter Four shows that by 1983 any tentative images or uncertain descriptions have been swept away, and there is a quite different approach by newspapers. The initial feeling is "can she do it?" which has a double meaning. Is a second general election win possible, and is the 'Falklands factor' enough to ensure her popularity after the low esteem of the early 1980's? Of particular note here is the difference in campaigning styles between the Conservative and Labour leaders. Mrs Thatcher's images indicate much approval and success, but it is not overwhelming. There are already some doubts and criticisms, quite different from anything in 1979.

Chapter Five shows how personality and image seemed even more important in 1987, and how both had changed in eight years. The Prime Minister had become a World Stateswoman, and her lofty isolation triggered many critical descriptions. There appeared to be disunity in the Conservative campaign, a Black Thursday and cracks in the presidential image. These points are considered against other electoral factors such as the very professional campaign of the Labour Party and its personable packaged leader. The broad sweep of three campaigns is followed by the analytical chapters on the verbal and visual images found in the selected publications.

Chapter Six considers the verbal images found in the signed Articles and Features concerned with the election campaign, but not the unsigned Editorials. The images for

each election are analysed for both quantity and quality, and comparisons are drawn between each election. Particular themes are also traced.

Chapter Seven follows the same format, being concerned with the verbal images in the Editorials, which are here taken to mean the unsigned article giving the publication's official view on election issues. Comparisons are to be drawn on how these images differ from, or perhaps match, those in the previous chapter.

In Chapter Eight the visual images of Mrs Thatcher found in Cartoons, Caricatures and line drawings are analysed. Definitions are given and the nature of the message is discussed. The apparent freedom of the cartoonist to express an alternative, or even personal opinion, not necessarily matching the publication's bias, is also considered.

Chapter Nine concerns Photographs and their place in a publication. The discussion covers how they are used to communicate a message, or 'tell a story' and how they may mislead - by accident or design. It is in this area that perhaps one becomes aware of how great a physical change there was in Mrs Thatcher from 1975 onwards, particularly the Premiership years. The analysis for this type of visual image is different from cartoons because of the nature of the material. The discussion enlarges upon this point.

\* \* \* \* \*

The expectation, which was born out by the analysis, was that at first many of the images would be imprecise or not particularly critical, since Mrs Thatcher was only a contender for Premiership in 1979 and not a previous incumbent. By 1987 a very positive approach is plain. Due to the influence of time, circumstances and her increasing experience, the

images are specific and familiar. The nature of uncertainties expressed concern her track record and outlook, in the event of success.

The analysis is arranged so that the development of certain themes can be traced: notions of leadership, personality and other characteristics, the use of nicknames, and historical allusions. From the analysis it is possible to trace relationships between visual and verbal images and between Labour and Conservative viewpoints, at one election and across elections. As one would expect, significant changes appear in Mrs Thatcher's image, due to her length of time in office and her style of leadership. The influence of critical events between general elections is shown: the Falklands War is an obvious one, but policies or personal/political crises or national events are also reflected.

Before embarking on the Chapters outlined above, it is worth drawing attention finally to three features which emerge clearly in the work. The first is the sheer diversity of the visual and verbal images, which in turn influenced the number of categories required for classification purposes. Not a few of these images require leaps of the imagination, whilst others are possibly beyond the ken of some readers. The more abstruse ones tend to appear in the Broadsheets, but the Tabloids have a few unusual ones as well, the 'girl with the golden larynx', for example. Secondly - not surprisingly - Mrs Thatcher did indeed appear to change during her eleven years in office. The increased number and quality of the photographs provide particularly good examples. Lastly, it will become plain, not only how striking are the differences in the way Mrs Thatcher is presented, but also how much she herself contributed to the process, and thus to her own image.

## CHAPTER ONE

### IMAGE

"Image is a word that leaves most of the hard work to the reader ..." (Furbank 1970 : 113)

Although this thesis is not intended as a contribution to the theory of images, it is important to understand how the notion of 'image' is used here. Following a brief discussion of 'image', this chapter examines what will be analysed as 'images' in newspaper editorials, news and features, cartoons and photographs, and their distinctive features. The chapter will also show how Mrs Thatcher exemplified modern politicians managing the public image, with the aim of getting newspapers to portray her in particular ways. The success, or failure, of her enterprise is considered later.

#### The 'image' - a brief introduction

From earliest times humans have judged each other by appearance. Common experience suggests that survival often depended upon an instant decision if time and circumstance did not permit a sign or verbal communication. The eye view precedes cogent thought, but "tribal instinct" prompts "Is he/she one of us?" Even with time permitting, words may be superfluous, for consciously or unconsciously the judgement, favourable or otherwise, may rest on diverse and unrelated factors. The observer is influenced by personal opinion, experience and relevant previous knowledge.

The first impression may remain the only impression, never tempered, regardless of circumstances. Given time and favourable conditions the first impression may resolve into an acceptable image - a personality with tolerable principles. Judgement may be

overwhelmed by the nature of the image, and humanity is not necessarily rational in making the decision, or expressing an opinion, about that image.

Apart from gender, at a basic level the visual impression is created from obvious and instantly recognised aspects such as ethnic features, distinctive clothing and general demeanour. Dress, for example, defines the geographic and historic identity of a person within a group and society, yet it maintains individuality; it defines the social and economic position of the individual and may be an emblem or indication of power (Barnes and Eicher 1992 : 1). Yet clothing's 'code' is low level semantics, there is ambiguity as fashion changes (Davis 1992 : 5). Clothing therefore communicates - but may misinform.

A more sophisticated or refined decision is influenced by details such as use of words, mode of speaking and accent, style of dressing and body language, the behaviour in a particular role. Sometimes one feature alone can adversely outweigh other acceptable points : political leaning, voice, or the X factor "I do not like thee Dr Fell .....".

Relatively few people in the population of this country will see or meet an MP in person - even one with a high profile. In Mrs Thatcher's case, for most people the nearest 'live' impression probably comes from television, possibly radio, where what is seen and heard is not the viewer's/listener's own choice of image and situation. With the exception of an interview or discussion, the news item has been selected and edited, attempting a balanced and impartial view as legally required. The sound bite, therefore, gives the unseen audience a chance to look at, and/or listen to the personality and perhaps form an opinion but the image is refracted in the process of being communicated to potential voters. The broadcasting channels of communication have important but variable degrees of influence on the viewer/listener (Negrine 1989 : 207). It may be a double influence in the case of television, having sound and vision.

In newspapers and periodicals the visual and verbal images presented can be biased in some way, and the readership consciously or unconsciously accept this. There is no legal obligation for reports, features, photographs and cartoons to present a balanced view of a politician at any particular time. Certain words, phrases and images are chosen specifically to support the acknowledged political leaning of the publication; the editorial is, so to speak, the official guide to the opinion and outlook. The views stated and images depicted may support or reinforce the readers' opinions and impressions. It seems likely that the television image of a particular personality must also play some part in influencing the voter's opinion and perception of a specific personal image, as it appears in the press.

### Verbal Images : News, Features and Editorials

The extent and expressiveness of the English language allow an 'image' to be developed in various distinctive ways. In its simplest form the image is a likeness or representation of a person (or a thing), possibly with a resemblance to another. Alternatively, it can be a mental picture or idea resulting from thought or memory; this also works in reverse. Personification, simile and metaphor are further ways of expressing images. All these notions of image apply to the forms explored in this thesis. In addition, three other possibilities are particularly appropriate to the political scene. First, an image can be public perception of the character or attributes of a person or institution. Second, it may be the favourable self-representation created by a public figure or corporation. Third, excessive media attention, for whatever reason, may alter the status of the public person's image into that of idol or icon. Such specific images may stimulate extremes of uncritical admiration, honour and veneration in some people - although this is rarely a universal feeling. In this thesis the term 'Image' will be used to denote verbal and graphic perceptions.

These general distinctions can be elaborated in a variety of different ways. For example, Harrop and Miller (1987 : 115) define an Image as: "... a human construct imposed upon

an array of perceived attributes projected by an object, event or person". Party image is defined as: "... the voters' mental pictures of parties ... (which) include perceptions of style as well as perceptions of policy". (Harrop and Miller 1987 : 116)

It is also recognised that excessive media attention may work against a public person so that they become a monster, rogue or demon, or perhaps a "love to hate" symbol. Arguably, in these circumstances sections of the media become the Judge and Jury as well as the stocks and pillory. Many writers warn that those who live by the media should also be prepared to die by it. It is perhaps worth noting here that the archaic or obsolete meaning of 'an idol' was an impostor, phantom or sham. (Chambers 1993 : 830) whereas 'the Icon' is a window on God according to the Greek and Russian Orthodox beliefs.

Because the image can be expressed in so many ways this adds colour and dimension to the writing, be it report, feature, commentary or leading article. In the case of Mrs Thatcher, figures of speech and other allusions - Britannia, St Joan, Iron Lady and Best Man - contrast with straightforward description or statement of fact - Mrs Thatcher, Prime Minister, Tory Leader. The writer's choice of words is partially influenced by the political bias of the publication and the house style. As will be shown in later chapters, however, sometimes the choice of descriptions is for effect, to influence the readership. Some verbal images seem to be used entirely for their own sake - almost sleight of pen, for impression. Whether the reader understands the allusion or, even if understanding it, gains the impression the writer intended, is another matter.

The types of images used in journalistic writing will depend to some extent on whether the language, by Bernstein's definition, is 'formal' where meaning is logically explicit and finely differentiated - as in the quality papers - or 'public' with implicit meaning crudely differentiated - as in the tabloids. This is not to say there are no verbal images common to all publications as later analysis will show. The essential difference is in the way imagery is used to make a point or develop an argument, intended to influence or shape readership

opinion. "Images also organise and structure political thinking ... (they) relate more to political objects and actors rather than issues". (Harrop and Miller 1987 : 115)

When describing the current political scene, the progress of the campaign, or the actions of prominent people, the writer's intention is for the images, in some capacity, to aid the message. Reinforcing the message requires repetition and the ability to disguise the fact, so that attention and interest are retained. In Formal language the images are judiciously interwoven with the policies and issues, strengthened or modified by the party record. By contrast, Public language is rather less subtle; an image, sometimes crude or careless, replaces an opinion or argument. It serves as a whipping boy or denigration, there is no message.. In seeking to be very persuasive, the verbal images can defeat themselves by being too much, or too many. The message may then suffer and lose its value, the bias being inverted. Verbal images have a place and a function, but rather like mixed metaphors the choice is crucial for them to be significant and not confusing. In a presidential style campaign with 'the leader' and 'the party' being sometimes synonymous

"Images make the incommensurable commensurable: competence can be weighed against integrity, good policies against exciting policies, policies against personalities". (Heath, Jowell and Curtice 1985 : 117)

Voters may be influenced as much by images as issues.

### Visual Images : Cartoons

Cartoons have a distinctive graphic quality which contrasts markedly with the verbal images found in the rest of the newspaper, for example in the Editorials. Amongst all the news generated by a modern general election campaign the cartoons have a small but arguably vital role to play, serving several purposes.

"They monitor the progress of the campaign, reflecting the activities of participants ... they interpret the campaign, setting it in context and evaluating it ... (they) can offer approval or disapproval." (Seymour-Ure 1983 : 11)

The brevity and implicit meaning of cartoons, unhindered by grammar, contrasts, sometimes forcibly, with the extensive and explicit nature of news. Their visual impact may be disproportionate to that of the verbal medium. They are effective, some more than others, through the often unconventional approach in appraising a situation.

Cartoonists, observers of human frailty and foolishness, use a variety of techniques as well as several of the figures of speech in graphic form. Their message is an alternative form of communication. They query, undermine and shake the complacency of the establishment and reader. Theirs is not the impartial eye, but rather the indignant one which does not automatically accept the status quo, testing the credibility and foundation. Cartoonists seem particularly hostile to the work of Public Relations and Image Makers. Their observations and critical pictorial comment may be looked at prior to, or in preference to editorials and other articles. (Seymour-Ure 1986 : 160) Arguably, they may influence or reinforce an opinion.

The cartoonist does not have to be reasonable, objective or unbiased. His work does not necessarily have the same bias as the publication. He has a degree of freedom to depict or distort denied to journalists. His work is provocative by appealing to, or prompting, an emotional response. His images may therefore show Mrs Thatcher as herself, for example, in a stylised implied likeness but not a portrait, as a stereotype character, or some other image in an election campaign situation. There may be some parallels between visual and verbal images: the Iron Lady, St Joan, Nanny, Britannia and Queen Victoria - even the Best Man. The reader/observer interprets the particular image in the light of personal

factors, certain preconceived notions of and feelings about the person depicted. (Seymour-Ure 1986 : 176)

However, there is a double meaning and wealth of detail in this imagery; the style of draughtsmanship has a subtle influence of its own. Part of the cartoonist's licence is that he can, and frequently does, distort the image, giving additional power and meaning to the day's comment. A comparison of Mrs Thatcher - as herself - in the spiked frenzy of Scarfe, the less distorted but caustic and witty style of Garland, and the apparent blandness portrayed by Cummings illustrates the point. The artist may reveal something personal of himself in this depiction, more than the journalist does with his range of words. It is worth noting here a particular advantage the cartoonist has over the journalist. "While leader writers agonise over their detailed comments on public policy, the cartoonist dances in with a quip and makes the point much more effectively to a wider audience." (Wainwright 1987 : 6)

It will be shown later that although there are visual and verbal parallels in named images, it is often in name only; the Iron Lady for example may differ markedly due to idiosyncratic factors. Verbally, she may be 'rusty', 'creaking', 'dull' or needing to show or prove her metal/mettle. Cartoons (page 197a) show that she may be portrayed clad in saucepans, lids and colanders (Fluck and Law) or clad in an empty food can (Swedish cartoon), or a suit of armour (Jensen). The visual image may be more powerful, since the verbal one requires, or may have, a further description of inflexible attitudes and battling language. The impact is different because the power of the image is different.

The pen may be mightier than the sword in some circumstances, but Garland argues that cartoons are not rapier thrusts but missiles carrying three explosive warheads - the caricature, the political comment, and the chosen image. At its formidable best it represents "... a reverberating, subversive power". (Garland 1987 : 40) Steve Bell has a proviso however, suggesting that "visual literacy " is essential. When the cartoonist

"... bounces ideas off popular cultural forms, does the reader understand the point of reference?" (Bell 1995) Cartoonists' images are effectively alternative conversations, but a knowledge of the 'language' is essential. Yet even with this knowledge, the observer may still misunderstand the message. The code and symbols are flexible, and not part of a rigid structure.

The strip cartoon, though a different genre, has many of the characteristics of the one frame cartoon. It uses visual figures of speech, 'in' jokes, non-politically correct situations, and various other techniques. The additional frames and space allow the development of an idea or theme, for one or more days. Steve Bell in the Guardian used four days in 1983 for his view of the development of Mrs Thatcher's television image - a talking head, which ultimately misfires. He updated the theme in 1987 to show even more disastrous results. (page 380a) Sundry other characters were in the frame besides Mrs Thatcher and details of television production technology, so there was a complex storyline and developments. In 1987 John Kent in Private Eye used similar methods but was more sparing of background minutiae and graphic detail. "Monty Stubble's" cartoon strip, also in Private Eye, used a style more like the graphic novel, intense and detailed, needing careful reading to follow conversations around each frame. (page 387a)

The politically biased strip cartoon reflects the climate of the time, containing moral and cultural aspects, as well as the political comment. It can be an ideal medium for the dissemination of propaganda. Most potently

"By using the subversive power of humour, (strip cartoons) can attack the establishment, and express criticisms of institutions which would remain unassailable by any other means." (Davidson 1982 : 43)

The quote might seem a touch abrasive, even extreme for this country and Davidson wrote with non-democratic regimes in mind, but by 1987 it seemed a percentage of the electorate

had reservations about Mrs Thatcher's reign. He also argues that strip cartoons rarely attack individuals, focusing instead on characters representing whole groups or classes. (ibid) A 'presidential' style campaign where "the chief character" can also be "the party", depending on presentational circumstances, might prove the exception to his contention.

Nonetheless, what ever the nature of the images and how ever subversive, humorous or politically incorrect the strip cartoon may be, as with the cartoons, the reader needs a key, visual literacy, to fully appreciate the message.

### Visual Images : Photographs

A photograph is another direct form of communication, although it can also be an iconic symbol. It represents the making of an image in a double sense. Earlier this century it was thought to be a message without a code. Later, however, it was established that photographs are not simple re-presentations. (Barthes 1977 : 15) As words make up a text so elements within a photograph can be read and interpreted in the light of the viewer's own knowledge and experience. There is a degree of subjectivity in the interpretation "... (a) secret chart of tastes, distaste's (and) indifference's ... interest may be intense, passing, indifferent, none." (Barthes 1984 : 18) The message is the subject of the picture as well as photographic features like focus, camera angle, degree of blur and devices of composition. Thus, the possibility exists for Garland's "missiles and multiple warheads".

The signs and symbols within the photograph have two parts: the physical object and the meaning ascribed to it. Because the latter is culturally determined, the meaning or significance is never absolute but fluid and subject to change. If society did not agree, most of the time, on the significance of particular signs there would be severe difficulties in communication. Much of the agreement is never explicitly stated, being part of social culture. Political image makers, public relations managers and others make use of these conventions - they manipulate visual symbols to create specific, implied meanings.

The use of colour may be symbolic. The black and white photograph itself is ambiguous. White and black have come to represent truth or lies, fact or fiction, and true opposites or opposition. (Barthes 1984 : 81) The old axiom ran: if its down in black and white (i.e. print) it must be true, or a fact, or supportive evidence. In time the belief spread and was adapted to include the photograph.

The photographer apparently catches a moment of truth. How ever false the truth of the picture - "the camera never lies" - the split second image existed, regardless of how it was created. It is "... a prophecy in reverse: like Cassandra but eyes fixed on the past. Photography never lies: or rather, it can lie as to the meaning of the thing." (Barthes 1984 : 87) The untruthfulness of a photograph may be revealed by the press, even though they use that photograph at some point. A second photograph, or sometimes a feature, betrays "the staging". This is a type of inverted joke and acknowledges complicity. There were examples of this in all three general election campaigns. In 1987 a photograph of Mrs Thatcher's quiet day in the country where she 'bird watched', or 'surveyed the scenery' or 'looked to the future', depending on the publication, was shown by the Daily Mirror to be a well organised photo-opportunity. (3 June 1987) Elsewhere a photograph (taken from a TV Party Election Broadcast) showed Neil Kinnock apparently in an oak panelled office with appropriate décor, "The Office" turned out to be a specially dressed set in the MORI Polls offices. The oak panels were genuine. (London Daily News, 4 June 1987)

Manipulating visual symbols to create specific, implied meanings "... suggestive visual impressions" sometimes produces a very potent image. (Foley 1993 : 110) The 1983 general election

"... was held on the anniversary of the Falklands war, and during the campaign Margaret Thatcher had herself photographed in front of an aircraft hangar which

was painted with the world's largest Union Jack ... one picture made all the right associations." (Harrop and Miller 1987 : 14)

There was no need to mention anything, the photograph 'said it all', whatever the bias of the publication.

Photography in the beginning, achieved its originality and impact on the public with "... photographs of the notable; but soon, by a familiar reversal it decrees notable whatever it photographs." (Barthes 1984 : 34)

This echoes Boorstin's argument that the nature of the 'Graphic Revolution' helped create the celebrity and the false impression, the pseudo event and the photo opportunity. (Boorstin 1978 : 47) The impact of the personal image and the message of the photograph can be subtly altered by the way it is used in any publication. Trimmed to fit a specific space, or illustrate a particular feature with a message of its own, the photograph may lose important detail whereby its own message is lost or negated. Further ambiguity or confusion arises when differing publications use a similar distinctive or unusual photograph and interpret the message differently, or use it to aid their own message or opinion. Exceptionally, the photograph and feature are not complementary, in spite of editorial choice and intentions.

One unexpected feature of the photo-opportunity was its use as an evasive technique. The politician cannot, and need not, say anything of importance to anyone; the mechanics of the occasion preclude such contact. The media themselves add the caption to the resulting picture. "As a communications strategy the photo opportunity is geared almost exclusively to the needs of television. It wholly excludes radio journalists and relegates the press to a journalistic second division." (Franklin 1994 : 148)

## Managing the public image : creating leaders

The management of a public image is a relatively recent development, as noted earlier. Some people in public life do not, or do not feel the need to 'manage the image'. For example, the Queen Mother's 'uniform' is little changed in design in more than a decade. Only the fabrics and colours reflect the seasons and occasions. She has long eschewed dental improvements as too frightening to be contemplated. But the nature of modern political communication especially of general election campaigns, and the need for the political leader to have a televisual presence, have contributed to a burgeoning industry geared to managing images, with supporting advisers, managers and practitioners. (Nimmo 1970 : 37) Media influence on the general election campaign assists the personalising of the politics - television news, for example, tends to concentrate mainly on party leaders, making all aspects of 'image' crucial for maximum impact. This increases the need for further or continued 'grooming'.

A feature of the presidential style of campaign with one person predominantly in the spotlight, is that the personality and the party become interchangeable; the image tends to be personal rather than corporate. Although the grooming and tutoring of party leaders is for television purposes, inevitably the result is reflected and recorded in the press. The best and worst photographs, the planned or spontaneous move, the words, the attitude, the role play are all news, and subject to comment and criticism in the form of further visual and verbal images.

The newsworthiness of the leader gives her/him the added advantage of "personifying the government or appearing as its spokesman". (Kavanagh 1992 : 270) This effective control of communication strengthens the leadership base and "may condition political behaviour". (Seymour-Ure 1987 : 3) Mrs Thatcher frequently took advantage on television and elsewhere both during and between elections "to make policy without consulting Cabinet

colleagues". Her personal policies were presented by the media as government policies. (Kavanagh *ibid*) Particularly during her third term in office, and supported by Bernard Ingham's press briefings, taking such advantages gave some basis for the charges that she presidentialised her position as Prime Minister with her personal non-Cabinet style of government and strongly divisive management. (Discussed later). The centre-stage spokesman needs a strong image, but the true strength of the Iron Lady only developed over a period of time. Arguably, Mrs Thatcher grew into that particular image imbuing it with her own attributes, but this was not where she started as the Conservative Party leader.

In 1975 Mrs Thatcher took advice from Gordon Reece at a crucial time in her career. The first of several transformations occurred in image and behaviour. The 'Dresden Doll' of the early 1970's gave way to the super efficient housewife of 1979, juggling a family, home and a career. Her campaign included "homilies of housekeeping and parables of the parlour" (Young 1990 : 5) for running the country. She was portrayed as someone "... with whom ordinary housewives could identify" and was photographed as a housewife doing things and meeting people. (Bilton and Humelfarb 1980 : 251) Apart from Mrs Thatcher's sex and personality, a new element was perceived in the campaign "... something called the 'Thatcher factor', although (strategists) were not very clear what they meant by it". (Butler and Kavanagh 1980 : 322) The 'factor' continued, but even though the image was transformed by 1983, the media retained the earlier image of the housewife. The Sunday Express reported that on a trip to buy groceries during the 1983 campaign Mrs Thatcher was accompanied by 8 camera crews and 60 photographers and reporters. (22 May 1987)

Mrs Thatcher made full use of advisers and specialists in the media and advertising, including a director of the Mars Bar company. The adman's language was prominent in the 1983 campaign; "...we must watch for signs of palate fatigue' - i.e. a particular Thatcher image must not begin to cloy." (Seymour-Ure 1987 : 4) Foley points out that Mrs Thatcher considered "... the effective portrayal of leadership ... as fundamental to a leader's

modern role in publicising the party and its policies ... She exploited a prodigious array of advanced techniques ... ensuring maximum ... public recognition of leadership (she) deemed necessary." (Foley 1993 : 109)

By doing this she endorsed the 'presidential' style campaign, encouraged the packaging of the image, personalised the policies, and more than assisted in the discomfiture of Michael Foot. It is perhaps a moot point whether Mrs Thatcher's 1983 campaign could have had an alternative strategy. Arguably in 1987 she was also the cause of the Labour party's stunning campaign and Neil Kinnock's personal PEB. "... surely any Leaders in the 1980's who do not actively try to manage their communication show either a blind-spot about the intrusiveness of media into politics or a blind optimism about their public image." (Seymour-Ure 1987 : 20)

Michael Foot thought policies and political principles outweighed all other considerations, particularly media demands. Personal projection was anathema to him, and it cost him dearly. "He was damned for his apparent lack of presidentialism" (Foley 1983 : 108) Packaging or managing the leader's image may be essential, but inevitably it is open to the charge of creating not a new image but a new person. It suggests concealment of the real person, sins and all, and the creation of a sham or hypocrite. Advisers challenge this and contend they only help develop traits of character and abilities already there - by extension, certain problems are corrected. Bernard Ingham notes:

"you are what you are. You may try and hide your principal's shortcomings, but in the end they will emerge. People will believe that you can make someone into something they are not, when it isn't true." (quoted in Bruce 1992 : 76)

It has been suggested that we 'build up a library' from various sources on 'personalities', famous, or prominent people. In turn, this library helps shape our reaction to a particular person. The image maker therefore ensures that

"this library contains only suitably positive reading material. (This can be done) by changing the physical appearance of the person and choosing which aspects of their background or personality to publicise." (Bruce 1992 : 39)

The marketing of commodities or organisations works on similar principles.

In the 1980's Gordon Reece disputed that he created an image for Mrs Thatcher. He disliked the label 'Image-maker', considering it a cipher or code for something devious<sup>1</sup>. He advised her during her challenge for leadership in 1975 and was asked to stay on. During this time Mrs Thatcher came to rely on him increasingly and "... he in turn was said to regard her with 'near veneration'." (Fallon 1988 : 150) Mrs Thatcher records: "Gordon was a Godsend. He was able to jolly me along to accept things I would have rejected from other people." (Thatcher 1995 : 294) There was comment, censure and ridicule about his work and the perceived changes in her image and presentation.

"... it was said (she) was being moulded by the media men and was no longer entirely herself ... that criticism did not last long once she became prime minister, when it was replaced by complaints that she was too strong a character dominating a cabinet of yes-men." (Fallon 1988 : 151)

Where leadership is concerned media coverage seems to exaggerate facets of character or image already there, sometimes to the extent of distortion and cruel perception. Voters have to be wooed and won, supporters encouraged and confirmed in their judgement, waverer's reassured. "Image and chemistry can be of overwhelming significance." (Young 1990 : 124) In a presidential campaign the leader and the party will inevitably be news. To command attention and retain it they have to be different and out of the ordinary. Mrs Thatcher's "... accommodating malleability" was much in evidence in the approach to the

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon Reece. BBC 2 Documentary 'TV and Number 10' Part 2 (1985)

1979 general election. She was happy to adapt to the "politics of salesmanship". Her known "guileless rectitude" suffered not at all when she entered into every aspect of the campaign strategy. "... If selling the party and fashioning its leader's profile were elementary preconditions for winning the election, she would not hesitate to do what was required." (Young 1990 : 124)

Not surprisingly Mrs Thatcher's view on how far to go - or not - in changing manner and appearance for media purposes was positive:

"... It may sound grittily honourable to refuse to make any concessions, but such an attitude in a public figure is most likely to betray a lack of seriousness about winning power or even, paradoxically, the pride that apes humility." (Thatcher 1995 : 295)

Making these changes, in order to make a good impression on television was, she notes "quite an education." (Thatcher *ibid*)

The door was opened for photo opportunities, pseudo events, the emergence of a Personality, and a plethora of confusing visual and verbal images. As these images diversified so paradox and contradiction multiplied, as we shall see later. But where did all this leave 'The Image'? The cynical reply seems to be: On the steps of No 10 quoting an alternative version of the prayer of St Francis of Assisi; in time giving rise to a new active verb - a coup de grâce - "to handbag" and a new abstract noun signifying a different Conservative system; and two further general election victories.

### The Image : lateral influences

General election images do not exist in isolation, generally there is some overlap of other depiction's from intervening years. The best example of this is the Falklands influence on

the 1983 campaign - discussed elsewhere. Probably the two most important contributory influences on the images across all three of the parliamentary terms were Bernard Ingham and Mrs Thatcher herself.

His time as her Press Secretary was marginally shorter than her Premiership. Charged with the management of the image in Downing Street, his pervasive control increased with the years. Svengali he was not, but arguably an *éminence grise*, with an influence greater than any of the other image-makers - Gordon Reece for example. Mrs Thatcher had Ingham's whole-hearted support, not only because it was his job, but because he was an enthusiastic convert to Thatcherism, and arguably a zealot, like her. (Harris 1990 :85) She kept converts "close to her heart" (Young 1990 : 166). Their rapport and teamwork was such that he could read her mind and often did not need detailed briefing. "He knew almost as quickly as (her) what decision to take". (Thomson 1989 : 226) Jones suggests that regardless of the criticism levelled, Ingham became "the linchpin of (her) drive for favourable publicity" - personal and governmental (Jones 1995 : 95). Ingham controlled the news, as spokesman for the Prime Minister, and in certain circumstances, for the Government. He controlled not only the flow in information to and from the media, but also the quantity and quality.

Thomson argues that in the early 1980's when Mrs Thatcher was still a "novice Prime Minister" establishing herself and her economic vision, Ingham

"took the essence of Margaret Thatcher out to the media ... They (thought) there was a ferocious tigress on the loose in Whitehall ... Inevitably, the role and image that he projected and which (remained) were cruder than the reality." (Thomson 1989 : 22/3/5)

Franklin considers there is little support for this argument, rather that a Press Secretary "complements public perception of the Prime Minister with whom (he) works." He cites

Harold Evans' calm style with the Lobby, reinforcing perceptions of an 'unflappable' Macmillan. (Franklin 1994 : 84) Harris stresses the importance of "not overstating the case ... There was already a tigress on the loose in Whitehall ... Margaret Thatcher was not invented by her Press Secretary," she had prowled for months before his arrival. (Harris 1990 : 87)

In taking the 'essence of Margaret Thatcher out to the media', Harris also notes how Ingham created a vicious circle. In the lobby briefing he stressed her toughness and determination; the resulting headlines and comment were in his early morning press summary for her next day, "this would fire her up ... She was sometimes baffled or amazed at her reflection ... giving him for ammunition for his next Lobby briefing". In effect, "he did not merely speak for Thatcher, he out-Thatchered Thatcher." (Harris 1990 : 86, 87)<sup>2</sup>

Identifying so closely with the Prime Minister, Ingham was almost more intolerant of the 'wets' in the Cabinet than she was. Their criticisms and lack of firm support and commitment smacked of disloyalty in his eyes. Lobbyists picked up the clues. (Harris *ibid*). Once the matters "rubbished or leaked" were in the public domain - "his hallmark though not his style" (Ingham 1991 : 319) - somehow in the press they seem to carry a hint of her tacit approval. In the early 1980's Francis Pym was likened to Mona Lot, and John Biffen was described as a 'semi-detached' member of the Cabinet. In both cases Lobbyists assumed each Minister was soon to be sacked for speaking 'out of turn'. In 1990 'only a courtesy title' was his put down for Sir Geoffrey Howe's appointment as deputy Prime Minister. The apologies appeared in his book. (Ingham 1991 : 332; 327) Given these circumstances, images of the Leader and her style could only be hard, or harsh or unyielding in the Lobbyists projections.

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<sup>2</sup> See also Lawson 1993 : 467 and Tunstall 1996 : 272

The 'leaking' of the Solicitor General's letter in the Westland affair touched the personal integrity of Mrs Thatcher, and several close colleagues. Ingham denied any wrong doing but admitted partial error in handling the matter. (Ingham 1991 : 337) Her image and reputation were tarnished by the whole business. In all the cases of 'rubbish and/or leak' Ingham emphatically denied Mrs Thatcher's involvement. Yet perhaps his vehemence only created suspicion that the man protested too much.

More than any of her predecessors, Mrs Thatcher had a greater reliance on her Press Secretary for media contact. Because Mrs Thatcher had less time available for media interviews, again Ingham 'controlled the flow' and much of the detail regarding place, date and scene-setting. Indeed, if the proposed interviewer was not friendly there might be no meeting at all, and no image or message.

Ingham's control in so many areas helped shape a wide variety of verbal images presented in the press - and indirectly perhaps some of the visual ones also. It much be remembered however, that during general election periods he was not in post; his appointment lasted only the lifetime of each Conservative government. He had no place in the strategy and marketing or on the campaign circuit.

Some of the conflict between visual and verbal images (discussed later) was attributable to Mrs Thatcher's own activities or personal characteristics. She considered herself a conviction politician and was convinced of the rightness of her cause. She spoke her mind forcefully when ever the opportunity arose (and became the 'Iron Lady') - and occasionally when it was untimely. (Lewis 1975, Harris 1988) The often coy or less than flattering photographs between 1975 and early 1980 gave confusing messages to the viewer/reader. As we shall find later, the Lady looked like a suburban housewife. There are signs of trying too hard to project the "right" image. The 'milk snatcher' days were not forgotten, otherwise most of these images were relatively benign.

Once Mrs Thatcher became Prime Minister, parliamentary and public events and her newsworthiness not only extended the arenas where she was 'on show', they also extended the possibilities for her to develop and expand her image. The return from a foreign visit gave the opportunity for pronouncements on agreements and policies, reflecting her particular style of leadership and the slow but inexorable accretion of power. Elsewhere 'off-the-cuff' statements which sounded like officially agreed policies gave the impression of someone firmly in control (Captain on the Bridge; the Airline pilot) with a sense of purpose and certain objectives in view.

Mrs Thatcher had none of this type of experience behind her in 1979, nor the related images, though she had acquired both by 1983. As later analysis will show she sloughed off the 'Dresden Shepherdess' and 'the Housewife'<sup>3</sup> - the Falklands virtually precluded this - and formidable or dominant female images replaced them, amongst which was an updated Iron Lady.

In addition to these developments 'leaks' from Cabinet colleagues about her treatment of, and relationship with them added further dimensions to existing images and gave rise to new ones. As we shall see later, her 1975 Shadow Cabinet was not the happiest of groups; Mrs Thatcher records an easier relationship with the Parliamentary Party. By appointing William Whitelaw as her deputy there was a truce of sorts between opposing personalities and viewpoints, and old loyalty to Edward Heath. Even if she got limited support from the team she "did not anticipate agreement - even on basic principles". (Thatcher 1995: 285, 291) The success of 1979 removed constraints so that everything could develop - the image, the influence, her policies and her leadership.

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<sup>3</sup> The press retained the housewife, particularly in graphic form for several years even though Mrs Thatcher herself presented an entirely different image. (Discussed again later)

A Tory Cabinet, traditionally a committee, implemented major decisions, guided by the doctrine of collective responsibility. The Prime Minister controlled the agenda, the proceedings and the frequency of the meetings, and through patronage, the Cabinet and Parliamentary party. Cabinets in the past were often an uncomfortable mix of colleagues drawn from various sectors of the party for pragmatic reasons. The group also works on a "limiting of power" basis. The Prime Minister is only as strong as they allow him to be, or to become. (Jones 1990) Individual influence is limited to a threat to resign, but this can rebound. Whilst the Prime Minister continues to win general elections and remains efficient, he gains in stature and confidence, retaining colleagues' support and co-operation. Signs that he is 'not up to the job' eventually result in a leadership challenge - or his resignation.

There were some traditions Mrs Thatcher deliberately did not follow. She literally 'broke the mould' as a Leader, a Chairman and with her political conviction. She led rather than listened and during her Premiership fully stretched the bounds of power, emulating Macmillan to a certain extent. (Foley 1993 : 11)

In 1979 Mrs Thatcher's first administration was an expedient choice of mainly Heath supporters with Cabinet experience, who were prepared to work with her, and a few of her own keen supporters. Most of the Heathmen had grave reservations about the new ideas and policies, but thought to control and contain the novice. The atmosphere was often fraught. (Prior 1986 : 133) Colleagues were surprised to find the Chairman joining in discussions and stating opinions, instead of taking soundings and listening. She argued and contradicted to preserve her own schemes, but did not appreciate colleagues doing the same. (Hennessy 1993 : 94) she expected a conformist Cabinet.

The balance of power was slightly adjusted with the first reshuffle (1981); her resolution to have things "her way, was a warning to dissenters". (King 1985 : 105) By this time Mrs

Thatcher had discovered the value of operating "through small ad hoc groups" which she, or one of her faithful, chaired in order to "move things along". The Cabinet proper was "downgraded" - though to begin with it had operated along traditional lines, even to the extent of having Minutes taken. (Prior op cit)<sup>4</sup> The ad hoc groups burgeoned, becoming places where detailed discussions took place and major decisions were made. Small groups are easy to control and influence, and may yield information never disclosed in a larger, open forum. Ministers attending find the meetings useful, but those not participating are sidelined through lack of information. A meeting may be stacked against a Minister, and then the Prime Minister's decision prevails. Mrs Thatcher was often found to be "judge and jury" in her own cause. (Hennessy 1986 : 103) The ad hoc system is an alternative version of the 'divide and rule' method of control, and a side lined Minister may find himself the victim of an assiduous Press Secretary.

Mrs Thatcher occasionally, briefly, returned to traditional Cabinet government, for example after the Falklands, and in the wake of the Westland Affair, but soon reverted and she retained her pervasive influence. Cabinet members needed to be very well prepared to face any onslaught. Beside the two official briefings a third, from an unknown source and heavily highlighted, might appear from her handbag to be a hurdle or stumbling block for some unfortunate. Ministers knew they had done well if the handbag remained closed. (Baker 1993 : 255)

Through the 1980's the Cabinet met once each week, often with relatively little business to discuss, mainly to rubber-stamp decisions reached elsewhere. No minutes were taken, but some Ministers kept notes or aide-Memoires. In 1982 the decision on the Falklands War was a whole Cabinet decision after detailed briefings by Service chiefs, with full agreement on the need for a smaller War Cabinet. Some decisions made by this committee were

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<sup>4</sup> James Prior also records that Nigel Lawson, Norman Tebbit and John Biffen joined Mrs Thatcher as an ad hoc breakfast group before the three men entered the Cabinet in 1981. (Prior op cit)

outside their remit and should have been discussed in full Cabinet, but "somehow these matters slipped through". (Prior 1986 : 133)

Mrs Thatcher had other ways of controlling her Cabinet and reinforcing her leadership. Her Ministers were categorised as: "Those she could put down, those she could break down, and those she could wear down. She never respected wimps or those who were meekly compliant, but she did respect those who stood their corner." (Baker 1993 : 256) Being called a 'Wet' was unnerving at first, but later it was seen as a badge of honour. (Prior op cit) Her own phrase "Is he One of Us" was equally discriminatory. In her "armoury of command" Mrs Thatcher was prepared to use fear, anger, disdain and feminine wiles to achieve her purpose; she would bully and humiliate people if necessary. It was the Lyndon Johnson factor: "people will take a lot from as powerful a person as the President of the United States; Mrs Thatcher had made the same discovery about the British Prime Minister." (King 1985 : 131; King 1988 : 58) She also found that "well brought up Englishmen" found it difficult to deal with "strong assertive women" confronting them and shouting when necessary. (King 1988 : 58)

These Cabinet pointers in themselves may seem small, but they are important as a whole for displaying the deliberate control and direction by Mrs Thatcher, reflected in some of her images or at least requiring the press to make changes in her presentation. In all the foregoing situations she responded to stimuli and adapted to, or took advantage of circumstance - the armoury of command noted above. Equally, her driving conviction and self righteousness meant that she had to be different to make her mark and be the best. Achievement was a Roberts family watchword, as we shall see in Chapter 2.

Through seeking to change the direction of Conservatism away from consensus she needed supreme powers of persuasion, a new style and a new image (even if many transformations of the latter had to be tested first). In persuading by image she was emulating John F

Kennedy, whose vision for a new Era with the commencement of his Presidency was based on the packaging and marketing of a radical personal change of image. (Brown 1975 : 5)

## CONCLUSION

During a general election campaign it is essential that the modern political party, and its Leader, take advantage of diverse methods of communication, shaping the message to the medium. The presidential style campaign helped create the celebrity Leader whose infinitely flexible image embraces both the personality and the party. But this image means different things to different people. In the press, the verbal and visual figures of speech or descriptions may not be complementary, indeed they may contrast with, or contradict, each other, and perhaps confuse the public. The reader/observer needs more than one type of literacy and even then may not be on the same wavelength as the journalist , photographer or cartoonist. Personal knowledge and experience may temper discernment and judgement of the message, whatever form it takes.

The Leader's image created for the television biased campaign is inevitably reflected to some extent in the press. Some limited comparison of the image between vision and print is possible, but whether this helps influence the voter's judgement is another matter and not dealt with here. Mainly due to television's scrutiny, political parties and their election campaign teams are aware of the need to project the 'right' images, and to control or remove the 'wrong' ones. It is considered essential that the party leader's presence and personal image should be a positive one. To this end Image Makers and advisers are now an indispensable part of the campaign team; to do without them could mean electoral disaster.

From the point of view of politicians, images are not regarded as naturally occurring or spontaneous; images need to be managed. Managing and marketing the Image - 'The product' must impress and persuade the voters - requires the manipulation of particular

symbols to imply specific meaning. The political leader's attributes, characteristics and activities in role fulfilment, form part of these symbols. The adjustments required to create the right image need his/her approval and willing co-operation. The drawback is that this creation can be considered a new and different person, screening the reality, someone unreal or artificial - a chimera. As a result there is the possibility that in spite of the advertising, the electorate might remain unconvinced and prefer not to 'purchase the product'. Yet Mrs Thatcher's 'improved' image, adjusted at intervals to suit prevailing circumstances, helped her to win an unprecedented three consecutive general elections.

In the next chapter we shall look at some of Mrs Thatcher's images, attributes and characteristics drawn from childhood, pre- and early parliamentary years. We shall also consider some of the influences which helped shape these years. The circumstances of the Conservative leadership election 1975 will be discussed, with a further look at the Image Making process which started with, and followed, her success.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Pursuit of Excellence

The early life and pre-parliament years of Margaret Roberts and the political life of Mrs Thatcher have been well documented for many years.<sup>1</sup> Some of the works are more concerned with upbringing and personal life, others emphasise the political years, with detailed analysis of Thatcherism and policies. To these studies Mrs Thatcher has added her two volume autobiography. Kavanagh notes the immense amount of literature available on Mrs Thatcher whilst she was still in office, in comparison with her predecessors, including material prepared for her tenth anniversary. With the "honourable exception" of Hugo Young's 1990 book, it is suggested that "most of the biographies border on hagiography". (Kavanagh 1990 : 2)

This chapter is neither a biographical précis nor a survey of policies and Thatcherism. It seeks to show some particular and influential aspects which helped shape the life, relevant to the concerns of this thesis, of someone who, though not extraordinary, was perhaps not entirely ordinary.

For convenience the chapter is in six sections. First: there are some brief points about Methodism as applicable to the Roberts family. These principles were the foundation of their way of life and Mrs Thatcher referred to them in many ways, or acknowledged their influence throughout her personal and public life. The point needs clarifying because some writers and journalists have occasionally cited 'Methodism' as though the word alone was

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<sup>1</sup>

For example:

Lewis 1975

Wapshott & Brock 1983

Young & Sloman 1986

Harris 1988

Murray 1978

Ridell 1983

Minogue & Biddis 1987

Young 1990

Cosgrave 1978 and 1985

Bruce-Gardyne 1984

Jenkins 1987

explanation for Mrs Thatcher's beliefs, behaviour or comments. As reference will be made to Methodism in this thesis, we should be clear about what it is, or perhaps what it is not.

Part Two covers the period 1925-1947, the Grantham and Oxford years. In writing of Mrs Thatcher's childhood and upbringing it is inevitable that her father should cast a giant shadow. It has been suggested that his image and his influence resembled a "child's fantasy of an Old Testament prophet, a role in which his daughter ... increasingly cast him". (Webster 1990 : 6) The result of his influence and expectations enabled his daughter to escape from Grantham, using Oxford as a stepping stone to greater things. Mrs Roberts casts a less obvious shadow, but her influence appears in different things at different times.

Part Three covers the eventful years from 1947-1959, going from the young chemist to the new Conservative MP for Finchley. It is a time of transformation, achievement and marriage.

Part Four, 1959-1974, concerns the beginning of a parliamentary career and the development of the MP through various posts. It also marks the beginning of the notable images - the 'milk snatcher', and the 'Tory Lady in a Hat' for example. She was becoming better known yet somehow remained 'an outsider'. As a colleague remarked later, "She was not one of us". (Prior)

Part Five looks at the leadership challenge and how the impossible happened. 'An outsider' was successful and a political party found itself with a woman leader.

Part Six, 1975-1979, considers a few points of the party leadership during the Opposition years, and the marketing preparations for the general election.

Throughout the chapter reference will be made to images and descriptions of Mrs Thatcher at various strategic points. These are often related to, or are forerunners of other images and descriptions analysed later, drawn from the three general elections she won.

### Part 1 Methodism

Early Methodism was based on the pre-eminent doctrine of Salvation - the Saving of Souls. Later followers believed a more fundamental approach was required and a programme of social reform was grafted on to the spiritual dimension. The more modern approach, i.e. from early this century, believes the same disciplines apply to self improvement, whether spiritual or worldly, in a practical application of belief. Talents or abilities, 'Gifts of God', should be put to good use not only for the individual or the family, but for the neighbour who is not necessarily a friend, and the community. Meticulous planning and attention to detail are essential. An individual's success or achievement is the celebration of these gifts which are returned to God in good works. This part is the "just reward" or "merited success" ethos.

Waste of any sort is to be deplored. Wasting time is tantamount to wasting talent. "In my family we were never idle - partly because idleness was a sin ...partly because there was so much work to be done, and partly no doubt because we were just that sort of people". (Thatcher 1995 : 11) Waking hours should therefore be filled purposefully - having conviction in the rightness of the cause - through duty, responsibility, good works and personal advancement. Spiritually, it was the pilgrim's path or, in more worldly terms, the pursuit of excellence.

Sundays are exclusively for spiritual matters, nothing trivial, although some workday or domestic matters could be attended to if 'essential'. Mr Roberts did not take a Sunday paper, but might finish his book-keeping. Mrs Roberts did baking, with extra done for

needy persons known to them. The girls did not sew or knit, but might finish homework.  
(Thatcher 1995 : 13)

Weekdays are for secular matters, conscientiously pursued - the spiritual overtone in mind. The legal making of money, for example, is not evil providing it is then used for good purposes. In her speech to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1988, Mrs Thatcher noted "The spiritual dimension comes in deciding what one does with the wealth". In his 'Counterblast' to this speech Raban reminds readers that the word wealth "is always hedged about with heavy caveats by Biblical authors".<sup>2</sup>

He later argues that Mrs Thatcher was speaking at forty years remove from her Grantham days. At the Assembly she was the

"... civil leader (who had) entered the ... ecclesiastical establishment. She is Caesar<sup>3</sup> in person, and she is laying down a warning claim to her own territory". (Raban 1989 : 13, 38, 39)

On another occasion Mrs Thatcher used the parable of the Good Samaritan<sup>4</sup> to point the "good" use of wealth, but her interpretation might be said to have a modern slant.

Throughout her life Mrs Thatcher benefited from the rigour of Methodist standards of achievement instilled in the Roberts' home - using zealous application to overcome problems and achieve success. Or, to put it another way : she had a single-minded, disciplined approach and a will to succeed. "... (at fifteen) she realised there was nothing

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<sup>2</sup> He cites: Deuteronomy 8 and Proverbs 22 v.1 as examples.

<sup>3</sup> "Render unto Caesar ... Render unto God ,..." St Luke 20 v.25.

<sup>4</sup> (a) Good Samaritan ... St Luke 10 v.30-37.

(b) "No one would remember the Good Samaritan if he'd only had good intentions. He had money as well". Television interview 6 Jan 1986, reported in The Times 12 Jan 1986.

(c) The Samaritan was originally mentioned in a speech at St Lawrence Jewry, City of London, 30 March 1978. (Cooke 1989 : 66)

she couldn't get out of life". (Young & Sloman 1986 : 13) Such single-mindedness, however, may look different to others, or give an impression not intended. Election descriptions in the 1980's mentioned 'tenacity', 'overpowering confidence' and her self description 'conviction politician'. In contrast there were descriptions of 'blinkered obstinacy' and 'arrogance', of 'being a zealot' and 'riding roughshod', of having an 'opportunist veneer' and, above all having the belief in the 'invincibility of her own values'. Other descriptions included 'fanatic', having 'tunnel vision' and being 'narrow minded'. From 1987 onwards, and crucially in 1990, many argued that she could not or would not see the writing on the wall.

A lateral thought here is that throughout the years, being able and subsequently powerful, colleagues and competitors found her sometimes ignorant of, and oblivious to those who, for good and adequate reason, could not and did not achieve as she had done. It gave an apparently sound basis to the charge of being 'uncaring'.

A Spartan upbringing and strict observation of religious principles never was, nor is now, the sole prerogative of the Methodist church. In comparison with other parts of the Protestant and Catholic persuasions of the time (1920's) the Methodists dealt in practicality and every day application, rather than in intellectual, other-worldly scholarship and high church ritual. There were many thousands of other strict Methodist families with the commitment of the Roberts'; Mrs Thatcher was not alone in such an upbringing and the shaping of her convictions and prejudices. For example: Tony Benn was brought up strictly Nonconformist, but his family were socially higher than the Roberts so the nature of the frugality was rather different. Mrs Thatcher records that when the Hon. Anthony Wedgwood Benn ("then rattling his full complement of syllables") became President of the Union at Oxford, his celebration party was teetotal, "true to (his) principles". (Thatcher 1990 : 43)

In a TV commentary Kenneth Baker<sup>5</sup> mentioned the similarity of background between himself and Mrs Thatcher, particularly the pursuit of knowledge and advancement through education. Pimlott suggests parallels between Harold Wilson and Mrs Thatcher, with identical education and political commitment. For each, "university was a critical launching-pad (and) political achievement was considered the acme of success". (Pimlott 1992 : 34) Their images do not match. He was not 'Iron', but something much less rigid, with his pipe and avuncular approach. Young considers that in terms of personality, background and politics the best comparison is with Edward Heath. Oxford "transmuted two diligent grammar school toilers into dedicated Conservative politicians." Later, whereas she "gloried in her origins (he) spent a lifetime escaping (his)." Young argues that in electing the carpenter's son to leadership in 1965 - by then a Club Member, an officer and a gentleman - the conservative Party made it easier, albeit marginally, to elect the grocer's daughter in 1975. to their leadership each brought an "abrasive dynamism which would wipe away the prevailing image of Conservatism". (Young 1990 : 52, 53) The abrasive dynamism included a dogmatic approach and a considerable degree of self-righteousness.

An interesting by-product of Mrs Thatcher's background came from the instructive value of the Sunday sermons - often her father's - to which can be added the shop discussions and his speeches for civic and other commitments. It was not only the content and the shaping of the argument but the delivery also which impressed itself upon her youthful awareness - some would argue it was copied in later years. (Mr Roberts had a special "sermon voice", Thatcher, 1995 : 5) Perhaps it was good instruction and experience for the aspiring politician - particularly for media communication purposes.<sup>6</sup> Once she was in the main political arena Mrs Thatcher's speeches were rarely all of her own devising. Initial outlines and all the rewrites were dealt with by one or more of her advisors or main speech writer,

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<sup>5</sup> To his programme "Maggie's Ministers" : 11 September 1993 : BBC 2.

<sup>6</sup> (Sir) David Frost, a son of the Manse, brought up in a communication rich environment, makes a useful contrast here, or Jon Snow, son of a Bishop.

Ronald Millar, but always under her eagle eye and bearing her imprint and phraseology. She set a precedent at the Conservative Party Conference in 1975 - the precedent apparently remains - whereby the Leader's speech is about forty minutes long, but never more than fifty. A 'good sermon' length in fact. Millar quotes Angus Maude:

"Ted used to go on and on ... You can't hold five thousand people for an hour and a quarter unless you're Winston, Macleod or Cicero". (Millar 1993 : 235)

Although she never abandoned Methodism, Mrs Thatcher, left the Methodists after her marriage - not attributable to her husband's influence - and joined the Church of England. Her repeated homilies and parables of prudence, however, remain located in Grantham and the Chapel.

\* This section benefits from discussions with members of the Methodist Church.

## Part 2 - Grantham and Oxford 1925-1947

Grantham was not a prosperous town in the years following the first world war and through the 1930's. Several thousand men were on the dole. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 23) Margaret Roberts had the good fortune to be born not into hardship and distress, but into a lower middle class business family, fully committed to the work ethic, precepts of self improvement through education and Methodist principles. Her father was a "driven" man in the best sense of the word, being self-made and mainly self-educated. It was a secure though rather serious home - perhaps joyless, but not unhappy. Living with them until 1935 was Mrs Stephenson, Mrs Roberts' mother, whose Victorian influence almost certainly added to the restraints and austerity. (Thatcher 1995 : 15) There was a lighter side to their Methodism - many social and musical events which they enjoyed were held at the Chapel, or, on Sunday evenings, they entertained visitors and themselves in traditional ways. (Thatcher 1995 : 9)

The family's frugal living style was attributable not to poverty - as some writers mistakenly supposed, partly misled by Mrs Thatcher herself - but to the "self imposed penury" and "thrift carried to the point of parsimony" by Mr Roberts. (Young 1990 : 7) Even in 1951, Denis Thatcher was taken aback by the fundamentalism. (Thatcher 1996 : 64) The teetotal habit was eased when Mr Roberts became Mayor; Sherry and Cherry Brandy - considered 'respectable' - were kept for visitors. Later, Mrs Thatcher found Cherry brandy good for sore throats after electioneering. (Thatcher 1995 : 16)

The home may not have had what are now considered essential facilities, indoor lavatory and piped hot water to a separate bathroom, but in this it was no different from many other homes in Grantham and the rest of the country at that time.<sup>7</sup> The home could have had these facilities before 1940 but for the "muscular meanness of a man who positively frowned on the smallest form of self indulgence" Which included bathing in an "unplumbed tub". (Young 1990 : 7) These frugal habits, the sound economy in the shop and efficient housekeeping, the overwhelming influence in her formative years, were the basis of homilies used by Mrs Thatcher while in office. Press reaction to the homilies appeared in visual and verbal forms of the homebody image - some of it highly critical, as will be shown later. Mr Roberts' frugality did have a positive side. It enabled him to open a second shop some miles away and to send both his daughters to the modern progressive primary school nearby. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 26; Lewis 1975 : 13) In due course for the younger daughter there were piano and elocution lessons (Lewis 1975 : 13) and in her teenage years a trip to London to stay with friends, which included seeing a musical. (Thatcher 1995 : 10) After Mrs Stephenson died (1935) visits to pier-end and variety shows were permitted during the annual one week self-catering holiday. About this time also, a maid, and later a cleaner were employed to assist Mrs Roberts. (Thatcher 1995 : 12)

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<sup>7</sup> For example: Compare statistics in:  
(a) Rowntree Trust: Poverty in York 1925, and  
(b) Rowntree Trust Housing Study 1965.

The Roberts family was close knit though not blinkered or inward looking. They spent a lot of time in each other's company, in spite of commitments elsewhere. Both girls were literate and numerate when they started school. Margaret was moved up a class within months of starting. (Thatcher 1995 : 5, 17) Living above the shop meant that family life and shop business were closely interwoven; the home space virtually extended into the shop. (Thatcher 1995 : 4, 12) From an early age, both daughters had regular responsibilities in this combined area, outside school hours and homework time. This training, under Mrs Roberts' critical eye with her exacting standards, is where the super-organised 'super-housewife' of later years developed. The joking image was, at first, not so far from the truth, but it altered with the years, and her increasing responsibilities.

The grocer's shop with the sub-post office was well known in Grantham for the quality of service and the long hours it stayed open. Civic and political business was transacted there, as well as trade. Mrs Thatcher recalls respect and friendly relationships with Labour Councillors who visited the shop. Battles of the Council chamber and partisanship were "left behind". (Thatcher 1995 : 21) Her bitterness for, and condemnation of the Labour Party, or more particularly Socialism, are of a later date. "His corner by the bacon slicer was an informal forum ... (for discussions of) municipal matters and often national and international politics" (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 30) Margaret was encouraged to listen to these discussions and join in. Debating from an early age, first with her father then with his friends and colleagues gave her self-assurance and fluency, with some assistance from elocution; public speaking held few fears. It was, however, unexpected in one so young and was frequently considered arrogant by her peer group and some elders. (Young & Sloman 1986 : 14; Lewis 1975 : 12) Mrs Thatcher seemed arrogant to some people when she became an MP with a super elocution voice. Ronald Millar could still note that in 1979 she had a tendency to "over elocute" - except at Airey Neave's funeral. (Millar 1993 : 271, 277)

Mr Roberts expected much of his daughters and set them high standards. He was proud of both girls but had a particular bond with the younger one who shared his enthusiasm for learning and achievement. He was a kindly, if authoritarian parent. (Young & Sloman 1986 : 16) Father and daughter found relaxing difficult, and were, therefore, always active. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 31) They had a "thirst for knowledge about politics and public affairs". (Thatcher 1995 : 22) From this bonding and familiarity, Margaret, aged ten, could confidently choose the library books each week. On his behalf at busy times she also attended meetings to hear visiting speakers, giving a detailed report afterwards. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 30; Harris 1988) It sounds a little like the senior monitor with special responsibility - an image of later years.

Her first major political experience was as a Runner, again aged ten, on General Election day 1935, in support of the local Conservative candidate. She was also active when her father was elected to local government. She found these experiences exciting and never lost the feeling, "politics was fun". (Thatcher 1995 : 25) Mr Roberts was elected to the local council as an Independent and served with distinction, becoming Mayor in 1945. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 33, 34; Harris 1988)

Mr Roberts' politics were "old fashioned liberal" but he was no longer a Liberal, having been "left behind by (their) acceptance of collectivism". (Thatcher 1995 : 21) Perhaps there is the faintest echo here of her own "There is no such thing as Society" ...? It is interesting to find that religious, political and civic tenets are all of a piece in his personal philosophy. "Individual responsibility was his watchword and sound finance his passion". (Thatcher 1995 : 21) Methodism expected achievement, thrift, organisation, and personal responsibility; Rotary aspired to put service before self; "Politics was a matter of civic duty and party was of secondary importance". He considered that Council work should be "non-partisan" but "I never remember him as anything other than a staunch Conservative". (Thatcher 1995 : 21)

With such an influence pervading her formative years it is not surprising to find Mrs Thatcher quoting it, and her father, in her moral tales, nor in her writing:

"... both by instinct and upbringing I was always a 'true blue' Conservative. No matter how many left-wing books I read or left-wing commentaries I heard, I never doubted where my political loyalties lay". (Thatcher 1995 : 28)

She reminds us also that through sharing her father's interest in politics and international affairs she frequently read books which other girls of her age probably knew nothing about.<sup>8</sup> She records one "strong meat" book which her father forbade her to read: "Out of the Night" by Jan Valtin (aka Richard Krebs)

"(a) spine-chilling account of totalitarianism in action ... in truth an unsuitable book for a girl of sixteen, full of scenes of sadistic violence whose authenticity makes them still more horrifying".

She read the book surreptitiously when her father was out at meetings. (Thatcher 1995 : 28)

Through unremitting industry during her school years Margaret Roberts achieved all that was expected of her, possibly more. This included "cramming" Latin in order to sit Oxford Entrance. Her father paid for the tuition. She was determined on Oxford and not Nottingham, although it was considered the 'local' University. Her Headmistress thought

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<sup>8</sup> Books she particularly mentions are certainly diverse:

"Ronald Cartland" by Barbara Cartland		Biography
"The Last Enemy" by Richard Hillary		Biography
"The Coming Struggle for Power" by John Strachey	(1932)	Politics
"Guns or Butter" by Robert Bruce Lockhart	(1938)	Politics
"Guilty Men" co-author Michael Foot	(1940)	Politics

she aspired too high. Competition was stiff for a place at a woman's college, possibilities were limited, but there was considerably less competition for chemistry.

"There was also the attraction of invading and succeeding in what was considered a man's domain. This trait was to reappear later in her political career, when she deliberately tried to keep clear of the women's territory ... to make her name in the 'male' subjects of public finance and taxation". (Lewis 1975 : 12)

She did not achieve the desired scholarship for Somerville, and was placed on the waiting list. She was disappointed but not entirely surprised. She hoped to avoid the shortened degree course and therefore "call up" at twenty. (Thatcher 1995 : 34) Returning to school she became Joint Head Girl. Barely three weeks later she was awarded a place when someone withdrew, and her father's years of economies meant he could pay for her. Mrs Thatcher records that there was little or no money to spare whilst she was an undergraduate.<sup>9</sup> Fortunately, her tutor Dorothy Hodgkin secured some "modest grants" and there was assistance from an educational trust. She preferred not to give an undertaking to go into teaching and so could not supplement her income from that source. "I had no such calling ... and do believe that good teachers need a vocation". (ibid : 38) In fact she taught briefly during the long vacation 1944 to earn the money for a bicycle. (ibid : 38) As will be shown later, election images appear to contradict her 'not a teacher' claim. Kavanagh argues that in her political years she was a "relentless educator" in both public and private - "famous for berating and lecturing people". (Kavanagh 1990 : 246/8) The homilies and parables referred to elsewhere are preaching and moralising, and arguably the leader's speech at the Party Conference is a good sermon. In some circumstances there is a hairline crack - just - between teaching and preaching. Later images such as the 'Headmistress', 'Governess' or 'Bossy Woman' tend to support Kavanagh's opinion.

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<sup>9</sup> On Saturday mornings she queued outside a cake factory in north Oxford to buy reduced goods for Sunday tea. She paid for The Times daily by not smoking. (Thatcher 1995 : 37)

The time consuming demands of the Chemistry degree were greater than for any other subject, yet characteristically this student organised every waking minute of her time to maximise achievement. There is no indication at this stage of the four hours sleep per night pattern of her years in office. Apart from the additional laboratory work required she managed to fit in a choir, a scientific society, a student Methodist group and the University Conservative Association. At this time it was "not fashionable to be a scientist or a Conservative". (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 44) As Young points out, through Chemistry she gained a degree which allowed her to live away from home, but it was not a vocation, it was a pathway.

"As an influence on her impressionable mind it took a poor second place to the Conservative Party. The discovery of Conservatism was what ensured that Oxford would not be a trivial or transient experience in her life". (Young 1990 : 17)

We are reminded also that because of the war time coalition and partly through its own inadequacy, the Conservative Party was "in limbo" with no clear or convincing aims and beliefs, possibly drifting slowly towards oblivion. Reforms initiated within the party started in 1943 but were not sufficiently advanced, or sufficient in themselves, to secure the 1945 General Election for the Conservatives. There were obviously other more important factors which influenced the outcome in Labour's favour. Anyone newly entering Conservative politics at the time might contribute - if only in a minor way - to the redevelopment of the party. (Young 1990 : 21)

The Margaret Roberts approach to the 1945 General Election was to be involved in supporting the Conservative candidate, Quintin Hogg, in Oxford until term's end, and the Grantham candidate during the vacation. As a 'warm-up' speaker she regularly attended one or more meetings in an evening and gained the valuable experience "of having to think

on my feet when answering questions from a good-humoured but critical audience".  
(Thatcher 1995 : 45)

Of her time in OUCA (Oxford University Conservative Association) Mrs Thatcher records that the activities soon became a focus for her life, providing a network of friends and acquaintances, many of whom reappeared later in her life. (Thatcher 1995 : 42) It gave her a social life such as she had never previously experienced. Conservative replaced Methodist in these matters. Whilst climbing the ladder of office to President of OUCA her expertise at entertaining (Mrs Roberts' influence) was favourably noted. The food and drink never ran out at her receptions. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 47) A considerable achievement in the days of rationing.

The Principal of Somerville did not find Margaret Roberts interesting "except as a Conservative" when most of the other students were left wing. (Young & Sloman 1986 : 17) Dame Janet Vaughan often entertained at weekends but never invited her: "she had nothing to contribute". Mrs Thatcher later recalled her anger at "Dame Janet's intermittent attempts at political re-education (which) had helped develop her own political position". (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 47)

The result of moves to change the image of the Conservative party at national level to improve support were eventually reflected within OUCA during Margaret Roberts' Presidency, with a significant increase in membership. Her time in office (1947), coinciding with the fourth year of the degree, was a "triumph" according to Young. "She entered and, for a brief span, dominated a world that was assumed to lead to a political career if such were desired." (Young 1990 : 25) It is notable also, that as President "she presided over an all male governing board (many of them) several years her senior. (Mayer 1979 : 54 ) The list of guest speakers to OUCA meetings included prominent, or soon to be prominent, men in the revived Conservative party, many of whom later became friends and colleagues in Parliament. It was, in effect, her own old boy network. Throughout it all the invaluable

experience gained at conferences, speaking engagements and contributions to debates (though not at the Union) continued and brought her to the attention of people at Conservative Central Office. (Young 1990 : 23-26) It was essential preparation for the next step.

Descriptions of Margaret Roberts in the 1940's are fascinating not only for the images projected but also for the choice of words. The "Oxford image" and the "flashing brilliance" of the Downing Street years are polar opposites. Friends described her in 1945 as a "brown girl" with a "muted tone of upwardly mobile earnestness ... brown hair ... nicely dressed, pleasant ... with little sense of humour". Dame Janet thought her "a mousy person with mouse coloured hair. The young at that time were pretty so that her (dark) neat tailor-mades, always mouse-coloured were fixed in my mind". (Young & Sloman 1986 : 18, 19) The tailor-mades and the colour, the neatness and implied sobriety or unobtrusiveness probably owed something to Mrs Roberts and Methodism. Above all they were serviceable, something of a uniform and meant to last. Dame Janet would have instantly recognised London prêt à porter or tailor-mades. The friends' description is more kindly and apparently accurate. The 'mouse-like' image seems an odd one for Dame Janet to use, of a piece with her 'nothing to offer' comment recorded earlier. The dull girl sounds almost a non-person. It seems a touch condescending with a "them and us" ring to it - almost a snub. This is still a provincial girl in the Principal's eyes, but it is rather at odds with the young woman President, organising prominent speakers for OUCA, the 'triumph' described by Young. 'The mouse' is one of several strange contradictions concerning the imagery of Mrs Thatcher, as will be shown later.

Dame Janet Vaughan's views on Margaret Roberts have a curious parallel in the 1980's. At the time of the great refusal by Oxford to confer an Honorary Doctorate on Mrs Thatcher, many Academics, and others, voiced aversion to the Prime Minister and all she stood for. Baroness Warnock considered her to be "inadequately cultured and, when it came to the academic world, incapable of understanding what it was all about". (Young 1990 : 411)

The fact that Mrs Thatcher wore Marks and Spencer garments seemed to be "obscene" and put her beyond the pale. Lady Warnock considered "the clothes showed a woman 'packaged together in a way that's not exactly vulgar, just low'". (Young *ibid*; also the Sunday Telegraph 10 January 1988)

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The character forming upbringing meant that from an early age Margaret Roberts was not afraid to be independent and individualistic in her approach to life and work. She was prepared to 'stand her ground', or speak her mind if she considered she was right, or that something was the right thing to do. As directed by her father, she avoided the 'lemming instinct' or "following the crowd". (Harris 1988 : 46)

She appeared to have no false modesty and was, perhaps, precocious. When congratulated on winning a poetry prize, aged 9, she replied "I wasn't lucky, I deserved it". (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 27) In later years when asked how she achieved the Conservative leadership the reply was "Merit".

Her determination - perhaps rebellion at a later stage - took various forms, like reading a "forbidden" book. Against advice she eventually achieved the University of her choice, Latin proving no obstacle. Reading chemistry was not considered 'usual' for a young woman. She clearly dared to be different from an early age. It led her ultimately to become Tory Leader and then Prime Minister.

In four years at Oxford Margaret Roberts changed from a confident, unsophisticated middle-class provincial girl to a politically keen young woman with a Chemistry degree and friends in higher social circles. She was determined to pursue a career in Law when finances permitted. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 42; also Young 1990; Lewis 1975) She knew for certain by then that she wanted to be an MP. (Thatcher 1995 :60) Several

writers and friends thought she made the decision much earlier than this - probably before going to University. (Wapshott & Brock; Harris) Young considers she was born to be a politician, her upbringing and her father's influence made it inevitable. (Young 1990 : 3)

Margaret Roberts left Oxford with a good second class Honours, but wished she had not done chemistry. She admitted to not expecting a First because too much of her time had been spent on politics. (Lewis 1975 : 16) It is not recorded whether Mr Roberts was disappointed at any of this. Possibly not; he had educated her after his own unfulfilled ambitions, as he would have with a son.

In the intervening years since leaving Grantham just a few of the Methodist principles had become a little more flexible; none had been abandoned. She had, however, broken out of her father's environment, never to return, and stepped into a man's world and on to a larger stage.

### Part 3 - Eventful years 1947-1959

In a remarkably short time - just over three years - Margaret Roberts had worked through two jobs; was picked as a Conservative candidate in a Labour stronghold and reduced the majority at two general elections; had met and married Denis Thatcher. This last event gave her a new support and guide in her life, an important influence but not a patriarchal replacement. It also gave her the opportunity to read Law, a better qualification for a politician and financially more rewarding.

Margaret Roberts' first job, as a research Chemist, was with BX Plastics at Manningtree. She joined the local Conservative Association and became fully involved with Party activities. She also kept in touch with political friends from Oxford days. In 1948 she was selected (presumably as a past-President) to attend the Party Conference at Llandudno as the representative for the Oxford Graduate Association. (Thatcher 1995 :62)

Whilst there she met the Chairman of the Dartford Conservative Association. The constituency needed a new candidate and, after some hesitation, eventually her name went forward - one of twenty-four. Cranley Onslow and Trevor Skeet were also listed (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 53) The Committee were impressed with her and in a Labour stronghold were prepared to consider the possibility of a woman candidate. "There was not much to lose and some good publicity for the Party to gain". (Thatcher 1995 : 64) The constituency had had difficulty recruiting and "had been unable to tempt the men they thought would do best". Even local businessmen had been unwilling to stand in this area, a mixture of working class housing, commuter dormitories and varied light industry.<sup>10</sup> Margaret Roberts was short listed and finally adopted (1949). At 23 she was the youngest candidate in the country. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 53) For her it was a matter of great pride and pleasure that her father was present and spoke at her adoption meeting. Her own speech had a housewifely theme, and borrowing from Gladstone, she advised the Government to look at the accounts again since money was short, and see what was wrong. (Thatcher 1995 : 65) At a dinner afterwards she met Denis Thatcher.

After her selection at Dartford, Margaret Roberts became a food research chemist with J Lyons & Co at Hammersmith, but later left the job and moved to Dartford when the 1950 General Election was called. About that same time the Daily Telegraph noted:

"She is a good pianist, loves colourful well-cut clothes and cooking. She is an effective elocutionist. (At the evening event) Margaret wore black velvet and pearls". (Irene Hanstatter, 3 February 1950)

This makes an interesting contrast with the "mouse-like" Oxford gownswoman of 1946/7.

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<sup>10</sup> Denis Thatcher had been approached eighteen months earlier, but he refused, knowing himself to be "too damn shy" and "no politician in the making". (Thatcher 1996 : 57/8)

The Labour MP for the constituency was Norman Dodds, with whom she developed an amicable relationship. She records her good fortune. "I was lucky to have an opponent like (him), a genuine and extremely chivalrous socialist of the old school". (Thatcher 1995 : 72) The local paper noted them "gliding across the dance floor in perfect harmony", when they were guests of honour at a function in Crayford Town Hall. (Lewis 1975 : 20) Mrs Thatcher also admits to being an admirer of Clement Atlee at this time (1950) "he was a serious man and a patriot ... all substance and no show. His was a genuine radical and reforming government. (Thatcher 1995 : 69) It is interesting to find these distinctions drawn between the 'old style' socialists and her response to socialism when she later came to office. As Prime Minister she hoped to preside over its demise. Of note here is that Alderman Roberts had not yet been asked to resign at Grantham, and that old style socialists can be patriots.

Central Office encouraged co-operative support between constituencies, particularly between strong and weak ones. Fellow Tories included Pat Hornsby-Smith (Chislehurst) "perhaps the star woman politician of the time", and Edward Heath at Bexley. "When we met I was struck by his crisp and logical approach".<sup>11</sup> She goes on to note that he was "very much the man in charge", but "even when at his most affable, somewhat aloof and alone". (Thatcher 1995 : 68) A restrained comment in view of what came later, but at forty-five years remove magnanimity costs nothing.

When campaigning for the 1950 General Election began, Margaret Roberts found it exhausting work being the candidate, particularly with public meetings most nights and speeches to prepare almost daily. New Conservative candidates were given specific advice on appropriate and distinctive dressing. Miss Roberts "took this very seriously and spent (her) days in a tailored black suit and a hat bought specially for this event - she ribbon

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<sup>11</sup> Though she does not say so, this is something he had in common with Denis Thatcher, probably due to the army background and similar rank.

trimmed it herself. (Thatcher 1995 : 71) Mrs Roberts would have recommended the same outfit: neat, unostentatious, serviceable and professional looking. The hat - the first of many - was a reasonably subdued creation, much like Pat Hornsby-Smith's style.

Margaret Roberts caused quite a stir when she canvassed - on a soapbox - in Erith shopping centre, as well as inside and outside factories. It was a particularly effective way to getting attention since Norman Dodds did not do it. She sometimes also used a megaphone. "Some inhibitions die hard" so she did not go into pubs (Thatcher 1995 : 71) Nine years, and twenty-nine years later her electioneering style was rather different.

In the 1950 General Election the Labour majority in Dartford was reduced by 6,000. The Conservative vote rose 50%. In 1951 the majority fell a further 1,000. Her engagement was announced on election day. (Lewis 1975 : 20, 23)

Marriage to Denis Thatcher did many things for Margaret Roberts. She acquired "a friend and faithful prop", someone who gave commitment and stability to the life and career she wished to pursue. "His money provided a security denied to most of her contemporaries". As a businessman he was sound on financial matters and could analyse and explain balance sheets. (Young & Sloman 1986 : 22) He knew as much about politics as she did. Best of all, he understood her and her politics. (Thatcher 1995 : 66)

By marrying him Margaret Roberts severed the links with "her town, her class and her religion ... she married above herself, he by conventional standards, below". (Young 1990 : 35, 36) In 1951, the Methodist Church was not entirely in favour of divorce - but there were no strict rules against the marriage of divorced persons.. The wedding, therefore, took place in Wesley's Chapel in City Road, London, and Mr Roberts attended. "The religious leaning (afterwards) in the Thatcher household was towards more comfortable Tory solace, the Church of England". (Young 1990 : 36)

The elements of this formidable partnership were to stand her in good stead for the rest of her private and public life. Many people agreed in later years that Denis Thatcher was "one of the most successful consorts of the post-war years", never hooked on the "adrenaline of power". He became "(that) rare and delightful creature a silent celebrity, known to the vast majority only through his caricature in Private Eye and "Anyone for Denis". (Graham Turner : Sunday Telegraph, 7 May 1995) There was probably a greater degree of genuine public affection for him than for her, even at her most popular time, amongst those who truly admired and fully supported the first woman prime minister.

One other factor was banished by this marriage - any lingering Grantham tendency to be strait-laced.

"With D.T. for a husband prudery was not possible. His vocabulary, uninhibited and vividly educational, would have laughed any such over-refinement out of court and, contrary to almost universal belief (she) became what Americans called 'a broad-minded broad without hangups' ... She was morally quite unshockable". (Millar 1993 : 33)

This last point was probably a good thing bearing in mind events which became public during the 1980s. Some of her colleagues and party members had reason to be grateful for this tolerance. Equally, it contrasts sharply with the "prim Aunt Margaret" or the "Nanny" or "Headmistress" images of the same decade.

The following eight years were relatively peaceful though not uneventful. With her husband's money to support her, and his approval, Mrs Thatcher satisfied a long standing ambition to read for the Bar. She had discovered too late a preference for Law rather than Chemistry for her degree. The Recorder of Grantham advised her to continue Chemistry and to read Law later. (Thatcher 1995 : 79) Young points out that the Chemistry degree

was "an oppressively inadequate qualification ... for an ambitious Conservative Politician. (Reading for the Bar) was a much more respectable vocation". He also points out that it is the location of a most influential Conservative network. (Young 1990 : 32) Once in Chambers, Mrs Thatcher met other politically minded people, some of whom became friends. One in particular rendered her great service later - Airey Neave; some eventually became media adversaries - like Robin Day.

While the children were young the law career continued and the political career was on partial hold. During the eight years she sought nomination in at least four constituencies but was not selected. Young and other biographers indicate that this was partly due to her being female and a mother. Conservative Committees considered she could only honour "two commitments, to the law and to the family, but not a third, to politics ... they had firm views about proper priorities". (Young 1990 : 39) Mrs Thatcher resented the implied criticism. She also disliked the impression given that the House of Commons was "not really the right place for a woman anyway". Worse still, although some of the men were prejudiced, it was the women Committee members "who came nearest to expressing it openly". She was hurt and disappointed by these encounters. (Thatcher 1995 : 94) She was to remain a housewife and mother and career woman, politically disappointed, until Finchley fell vacant in 1958.

There are some interesting points arising from her grim determination to be picked for a constituency, in spite of the twins being so young. The desire partly arose from being convinced there was nothing she could not achieve if she wished, but also from frustration at being so often thwarted in her attempts to succeed. The latter point is a reminder that as a grammar school girl she was advised by the Headmistress not to set her sights so high as Oxford, but achieve more modestly, and suitably for Grantham, a place at Nottingham

During this lull in parliamentary matters the Thatcher family moved from a flat in central London to a house at Farnborough in Kent. It necessitated employing a live-in

Nanny/Housekeeper since both Mr and Mrs Thatcher were working. The arrangement matched other households in "the upper echelons of the Conservative party". (Webster 1990 : 43) Mrs Thatcher wanted a career; the restless child had become a restless adult. Being a wife and mother "was not the whole of my vocation". (Thatcher 1995 : 81) Marriage and the birth of her children did not mean loss of independence for her; the key was a supportive husband and money. She could afford the necessary staffing arrangements to make the career possible, and retain a clear conscience. Many other women in the 1950s wanted to make the same decision, but most could not finance it.

Social changes during that decade meant not only was it more acceptable for woman to work after marriage it was acceptable for mothers to be employed too - from choice. Webster notes that apart from the two periods of war, during the first half of the century "respectability was enshrined in the figure of the wife who did not work outside the home. Jobs were mainly for single women, or widows; the climate was "hostile" for married women. (Webster 1990 : 32, 33) Many writers have noted, however, that what Mrs Thatcher practised in the 1950s, in the 'dual-role' model, was rather different from her publicly stated opinion twenty years later. In a 1952 article with quite a radical approach, she considered it possible, even essential for a women to have a career, as well as being a wife and mother. "... gifts and talents that would otherwise be wasted are developed to the benefit of the community". (Sunday Graphic, 17 February 1952) She overlooked or ignored the financial aspects and home arrangements required, as in her own case. By the 1970s and later, Mrs Thatcher praised "the devotion of women as wives and mothers, and the practicality and good sense of the housewife". (Webster 1990 : 39) These sentiments apart, she appears to imply that this is the way things should be. What she did earlier, is no longer advocated for others. Yet in the 1980s further social change meant that even more mothers were having to work to support themselves and their families. "... the most famous working mother of all is still trying to explain herself in the rhetoric of the 1950s rather than the realities of the 1980s". (Campbell 1987 : 172)

In 1952 Mrs Thatcher wanted to see more women at Westminster in positions of responsibility, yet during her time at No 10 women were not conspicuous in the Cabinet or the House, or other prominent places. 'Madam Speaker' was also several years away, although that choice was not in Mrs Thatcher's gift and she supported another candidate. The apparent volte face on some matters was used by critics and opponents to shape some of the visual and verbal images analysed later. It joined a list later renamed U-turns. Such changes did seem to indicate to some people a 'Them and Us' attitude, or the special situation of "one" or "I" in rather more than politics. The old adage of slight authority comes to mind: "Don't do as I do, do as I tell you".

In 1958 Finchley, with a substantial Conservative majority, became vacant. From amongst the 150 original applicants and then a short list of 4, Mrs Thatcher emerged triumphant. Experience finally paid off. The local paper had an "ecstatic" report and resorted to homely images, perhaps inevitably:

"(She) weighed up Russia's propagandist moves with the skill of a housewife measuring the ingredients in a familiar receipt, pinpointed Nasser as the fly in the mixing bowl ..." (Young 1990 : 40)

Mrs Thatcher records that although she won on the final vote, when she went back in to receive congratulations from the Executive interviewing panel, some did not disguise their disapproval and disappointment. The stumbling block? Could a young professional woman and mother make a good and effective representative? She had been accepted on the narrowest of margins. When the 1959 General Election came she campaigned as though it was a marginal seat, and won with an increased majority - up 35%. (Thatcher 1995 : 96, 99)

A few eventful years brought Mrs Thatcher to the threshold of her greatest ambition. In Dartford she had served an apprenticeship, honed her political skills and extended her network. A "good" marriage had given her a financially erudite and sound companion, one who was politically knowledgeable and supportive. Some first hand experience of commerce and industry of barely three years duration gave way to a more politically acceptable career in Law. After disappointments with several constituencies, success came in a Tory stronghold. She was finally elected at Finchley and remained there for thirty-two years.

#### Part 4 - In the House 1959 - 1974

With her major ambition achieved, apart from the first two years in Parliament, Mrs Thatcher's next thirteen years were spent either in various Ministries or Shadowing them. Although known only to parts of the media, her entry to the House did not go unmarked, and she was later used by Central Office in party promotion material. She eventually gained Cabinet experience though not at senior level but her place at the table was furthest from Edward Heath, out of sight, concealed by her neighbour. One particular event in 1970 catapulted her to doubtful fame. From then onwards she was never far from media and public attention. After the October general election of 1974 the crucial question of Conservative leadership drew her to a position near centre stage.

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On 20 October 1959, Mrs Thatcher went to Westminster, the day before Parliament was opened, with other new members of the 1922 Committee. Thanks to flattering press photographs showing her "wearing a snappy new cocktail hat to go with her elegant dark dress", (Lewis 1975 : 25) her parents were able to see her entering the House. (Thatcher 1995 : 107) She was entering an almost exclusively Gentlemen's Club as one of only 25



Entering Parliament 1959

woman MPs, who themselves constituted an even more exclusive group within it. It is suggested that the Gentlemen "are prepared to tolerate (the) women as long as there are not too many of them". (Phillips 1980 : 39) Women trying to become MPs face an obstacle course considerably more complex than for men, including a personal endurance test and extraordinary bias. Once elected they face another series of obstacles - some insuperable - to be accepted. "The women who get there must have certain qualities to enable them to stay the course". (Phillips 1980 : 55) The prejudice and bias of male MPs remains an ever present difficulty.

Advised to find a 'pair', Mrs Thatcher found Charlie Pannell, Labour MP for Leeds West, an old acquaintance from the Dartford constituency. "He was exactly the sort of good-humoured decent Labour man I liked". (Thatcher 1995 : 108) He obviously remembered her and remained impressed, so much so that he drew her to the attention of a Labour colleague in a neighbouring constituency,

"... saying that she was exceptionally able, and also a very nice woman. This was quite a compliment coming from a cockney engineer who was famous for his rough tongue. I did watch her, but found little to excite my interest ..." (Healey 1990 : 465, 487)

In 1974 Denis Healey was far more impressed with her, calling her "a formidable opponent" when she was part of the Shadow Chancellor's team at the Treasury. At a later date he was also the author of some of Mrs Thatcher's nicknames, among them 'Attila the Hen'. (Healey 1990 : 485, 487)

Mrs Thatcher soon felt 'at home' in the Commons, in spite of the masculine atmosphere. She found the 'Old Stagers' agreeably helpful. (Thatcher 1995 : 108) One of her conservative colleagues writes of a whole group, all new in 1959, going around together.

"Margaret Thatcher ... wasn't really one of our set. (She) made an early impact with a Private Member's Bill ... at that time the few women ... tended not to be accepted so easily by their male colleagues." (Prior 1986 : 21)

Another 1959 colleague was of the opinion that she "too swiftly" became a Junior Minister as a result of her successful Bill. She was,

"a primitive Conservative, her views were unfashionably fundamentalist, and widely disregarded by her peers ... (she was) avoided by her more sophisticated, and ultimately less successful colleagues". (Critchley 1989 : 91)

Mrs Thatcher may not have felt isolated, but to some colleagues she was an outsider in every sense, and remained so.

In the Commons ballot for Private Members' Bills, Mrs Thatcher's name was drawn second. She eventually settled on a Bill to ensure the press had proper facilities for reporting local Council proceedings, but which indirectly touched on public accountability of these Councils and their Committees. (Lewis 1915 : 25, 26) Mrs Thatcher called it an issue "of civil liberties under threat from collectivism". The Junior Minister who supervised the Bill was Sir Keith Joseph. (Thatcher 1995 : 110, 111) "... it was a measure that the Cabinet wanted to see enacted but preferably not as a government bill". (Halcrow 1989 : 25)<sup>12</sup>

The Second Reading was on a Friday afternoon. To try and ensure a reasonable attendance at the House and get support for her measure - and her Maiden Speech - she wrote 250 letters to Government backbenchers. (Thatcher 1995 : 112)

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<sup>12</sup> The measure repaired a "legislative defect" in an Act of 1908. (Lewis 1975 : 26)

On the day nearly two hundred MPs were present, drawn from all parties, including all the women members - an unusually good turnout. Mrs Thatcher spoke for twenty-seven minutes, without notes, on a complex bill. Her Bar experience proved invaluable. It was the first of many such displays when she dazzled and dazed the company with her grasp of facts and statistics and apparently encyclopaedic knowledge. "It was, in a minor way, a parliamentary tour de force, which produced many compliments". (Young 1990 : 44) There were congratulations and plaudits from both sides of the House for this outstanding achievement. The women were particularly complimentary. Jean Mann commended the 'two cherries in one bite' approach, (Maiden speech and a Bill) "at this pace Margaret Thatcher is capable of quads and the Foreign Office". (Mann 1962 : 31). The star herself thought it "a competent performance, but ... not an epic". (Thatcher 1995 : 113). She thought the Press praise next day "excessive".

The Press were fulsome in their praise, but Phillips deplores the trivialisation of the occasion, even though the début "was universally praised as one of the most effective performances ever witnessed by her contemporaries". She particularly cites the Daily Telegraph of 6 February 1960 which, though it recognised the "front bench quality" (of the Bill) then continued:

"To her intellectual and forensic abilities she added yesterday a new frock and not merely charm but an uncanny instinct for the mood of the House which some members take years to acquire - and many never acquire at all". (Phillips 1980 : 119)

The Daily Telegraph was still doing something similar during the 1979 General Election campaign. In the midst of a statement, or observation or report there is a note about Mrs Thatcher's suit, or the colour of her blouse, or how fashionable she looks. The arguments about this type of patronising or condescension are weighty and continuous. Perhaps the

most serious fact is that during the 1960 and 1970s women journalists on some papers were equal offenders with male colleagues; and fault could be found in broadsheet and tabloid. There is sometimes a very fine line between fair comment and trivialisation.

As a result of her successful début Mrs Thatcher joined Pat Hornsby-Smith as the women MPs used regularly for Conservative party promotion purposes by Central Office.

"Although they did not consider her to be a natural performer and her voice was very high, she was suitably attractive for television work". (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 79)

Up until 1975 there was relatively little alteration in Mrs Thatcher's high voice and stilted delivery on television. In the series of PEB's for the October 1974 general election she "prophetically (had) a more prominent role than the party leader". In the fourth programme, an outside broadcast, it was particularly noted that "... Mrs Thatcher, windswept but immaculate in the street (presented) the pledges on mortgages, rates and council houses yet again". (Butler & Kavanagh 1975 : 156, 157) The comment might indirectly be construed as Mrs Thatcher keeping her head in difficult circumstances, vaguely reminiscent of her favourite poet. A few weeks afterwards she was involved in a leadership challenge where she certainly needed to keep her head.

There is a lateral point here regarding Mrs Thatcher's high voice and tendency to over elocute. A possible parallel can be drawn. In a personal dedication broadcast from South Africa in 1947, Princess Elizabeth's diction was distinctive and her voice rather high. It was not until her later years as Queen that the tone deepened and the diction altered a little. In 1960 her voice had a similar high tone to the MP, although the two could not be mistaken for each other. In this decade Mrs Thatcher looked and sounded like many of the well-groomed and carefully trained ladies then gracing Mr J Arthur Rank's film productions.

The stilted and stylised acting was in vogue and accepted before the "full realism" of modern drama took over.

From 1961 onwards Mrs Thatcher's passage through various Ministries, Shadowing when in Opposition, with the related political detail is well charted elsewhere. Her experiences were varied and some of the working relationships had unexpected repercussions, particularly with the Civil Service. Two points are of especial interest here. Mrs Thatcher had to learn to cope with the 'sticks and stones' of public office as well as the more favourable parts. She also acquired a nickname, as an unpopular person, which survived in varied but recognisable form right up until 1987.

Her first appointment as junior Minister at Pensions and National Insurance came just two years after entering Parliament, and was thought to be a Macmillan gimmick to improve the government image. However, "the good looking woman" soon surprised everyone with her grasp of the technical complexities of this particular Ministry, and her capacity for hard work. (Young 1990 : 47) She was fortunate to commence here with no great baptism of fire, and to have successively congenial bosses. All was not entirely well, however. The Permanent Secretary disapproved of the appointment and expressed traditional doubts about a married female MP with children. He eventually agreed, with reluctance, that she had given a bit more than most to the job. There was a legacy to all this "Pensions is where the seeds of her aggression (towards Civil Servants) were sown". (Young 1990 : 47/8) Harris suggests that the problem was with the Service and the mode of working. (Harris 1988 : 55) It was the 'practice' not the 'people'.<sup>13</sup>

Mrs Thatcher was promoted to the Shadow Cabinet in 1967, first at Fuel and Power and then transferring to Education where she was at the General Election 1970. She assumed, correctly, that since she was already in the Cabinet as the 'token woman' she would

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<sup>13</sup> A slightly less cheerful version of this first appointment is given by Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 81.

probably remain there and retain Education. (Thatcher 1995 : 163) She remained until February 1974. "Education ... had become a very hot political issue, not only between the two major parties but also within the Conservative Party". (Harris 1988 : 55) When Mrs Thatcher became Secretary of State at the DES in 1970 arguably it was a watershed in her political life. The prominent position meant a much higher profile. Her approach to the job and her pronouncements kept her regularly in the news. Due to Edward Heath's election promises she was expected to make substantial economies, yet the expectations of teachers, students and parents, anticipated a wide and varied educational provision. (Harris 1988 : 55) Almost every month for two years, there was an area of conflict with a sector of the Education Establishment. (Thatcher 1995 : Young 1990 : Harris 1988) There were difficult decisions to make because previous Ministers of Education had not implemented changes promised, or, as Shadow Ministers had made other promises. (Harris 1988 : 54) Her reputation and popularity declined sharply, and there was almost continuous media attention. The Sun, not then Tory biased, labelled her 'the most unpopular woman in Britain'. (Lewis 1975 : 67)<sup>14</sup> An image developed of a hard, calculating, uncaring woman, probably exaggerated to some extent because she was a woman. Rather unexpectedly, her standing improved slightly before she left the Ministry in 1974, as we shall see later.

In the Department, friction was apparent from the first day. Mrs Thatcher did not conform to expectations or tradition. She arrived with some preconceived notions and a determination to do the right thing. She saw the friction as a clash of politics not personalities, due to the "self-righteously socialist ethos of the DES" - and opposing styles - her "executive style of decision making, and the more consultative style to which they were accustomed!". She "challenged conventional wisdom in Education" and was opposed. "It was soon clear ... I was not among friends". (Thatcher 1995 : 165, 166)

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<sup>14</sup> The Daily Mirror found the piece and the accompanying line drawing and reproduced it for their readers in 1983.

Her distrust was immediately apparent. She was a "new experience" and a "revelation" for the Department and the Permanent Secretary". (Young 1990 : 71) She disconcerted and confused them with her abrasive approach and impatience with delay. (Harris 1988 : 56) On arrival she brought a list of fifteen points for immediate action to counteract Labour policies. There was no time for discussions. Mrs Thatcher had already notified the Press that Labour's Circular (on Comprehensive Schools) would be withdrawn before the Queen's Speech, although a replacement Circular had not been prepared, as is the custom.

"The alarm this provoked seems to have made its way to No 10, for I was reminded that I should have Cabinet's agreement to the policy, though of course, this was only a formality". (Thatcher 1995 : 168)

There are overtones here of later years. In her book, Mrs Thatcher defends her speedy action by saying, indirectly, that the normal inner wheels of the DES 'grind exceedingly slow'. Although the permanent staff must have read the Conservative Manifesto and knew the changes envisaged, they assumed the policy could be well diluted - after protracted discussions. From her viewpoint not to implement the changes promised could look like weakness. (Thatcher 1995 : 168, 169)

The Education Establishment was angry at the lack of 'normal consultation' before a new Circular was issued.<sup>15</sup> Echoing Disraeli, she says, "I felt no need to apologise". She reminded the House in her speech that "the biggest consultation of all had just taken place". (Thatcher 1995 : 169) She felt it justified her actions. Much of the foregoing - the DES experience - has a familiar ring now. Then, it looked rather more like a one woman crusade or possibly a rebellion.

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<sup>15</sup> The hastily issued replacement - Circular 10/70  
In line with the Conservative Manifesto, it removed the compulsory conversion requirement from Secondary/Grammar Schools to become Comprehensive.

Mrs Thatcher's self sufficiency and need for facts, not help and advice, fuelled the friction in her Department. (Young & Sloman 1986 : 25) The poor relationship existed for some considerable time. Eventually, she won reluctant admiration for drive and determination, working inordinately long hours and always clearing her boxes. She won limited approval for fighting off some of the enormous cuts in the Education Budget demanded by the Treasury and expected by Edward Heath.

Before his sudden death, Ian Macleod had outlined some proposed cuts in the Education budget to meet Treasury demands. Colleagues decided that, in deference, these proposals should not be altered. Two of the items were charges for libraries and school milk. The first, Mrs Thatcher would not endorse. Her father "had regarded the public library as his University", others should be able to benefit too. (Young & Sloman 1986 : 26) She also retained the Open University "because ... it was an inexpensive way of giving wider access to higher education". (Thatcher 1995 : 179) In the second case, having taken Health Care advice, and rather than make a charge, she abolished free milk for Primary school children above the age of seven, which provoked an immediate storm of protest.<sup>16</sup> The catchphrase "Thatcher the milk snatcher" was born. Through the years numerous alternative 'snatchers' appeared, with additional notoriety for Mrs Thatcher. For the cartoonists it was all grist to the mill.

"The scale of the derision and abuse took her aback, although she never showed it; she was hurt but kept her cool in public and didn't duck the inevitable public confrontations." (Phillips 1980 : 21) It was the first time she had ever been exposed to such a barrage of continuous criticism. Nothing and no one, not even her Civil Servants at the DES, had prepared her for the prolonged vituperation. Denis Thatcher, concerned that the perpetual stress might cause his wife health problems, suggested she leave the political arena. She declined to do so. (Young 1990 : 74) "She developed a tough carapace to deal with it."

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<sup>16</sup> At some places visited by Mrs Thatcher, demonstrations were controlled by mounted Police.

(Phillips 1980 : 21) Mrs Thatcher admits to being "deeply wounded" by the callous and uncaring image projected by the press, and the criticisms of opponents also aired in the media. "... even a woman who has lived a professional life in a man's world is more emotionally vulnerable to personal abuse than most men." (Thatcher 1995 : 182)

During 1972 her standing as Minister of Education slowly began improving. She stood her ground against Edward Heath and the Treasury over further cuts in the Budget; the new White Paper was favourably received by most of the Education Establishment, and some measures implemented were seen to be valuable. Of her experience at the DES, her contact with the Civil Service and the Servants, she observed ominously, or perhaps prophetically, "Iron entered my soul". (Young 1990 : 74) She remained in this Office for the duration of the Conservative Government. It was her longest spell in any Department, and what ever people thought of her incumbency, she was a formidable 'Headmistress'.

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It was noted earlier that Mrs Thatcher's initial success in the House was partially offset by trivial personal comments in the Daily Telegraph. This attitude towards a woman MP was not an isolated case, nor was one paper alone guilty of such action. All women MPs were subject to the treatment. Another Press obsession was with the women's clothes and personal appearance - often expressed in perjorative and non-political terms. Arguably a male MP would not have suffered in quite the same way; criticism in such matters, if expressed, would have been rather different.<sup>17</sup> All this is not a new occurrence, there are numerous examples both before and since the 1960 Daily Telegraph incident mentioned.<sup>18</sup> Paul Johnson writing in the Daily Mirror 26 July 1968 said: "(Barbara Castle's) bright red

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17 A good comparison here would be the general criticism of Michael Foot for being incorrectly/unsuitably dressed for the Cenotaph ceremony, by wearing a duffel coat. Eccentricity of dress is acceptable on almost any other occasion.

18 A good discussion of this subject including the feminist arguments appears in "The Divided House. Women at Westminster", by Melanie Phillips (1980)

hair is always in place. She is clean, scented, carefully made up. Her clothes are bandbox fresh." (Phillips 1980 : 117) The Guardian of 5 July 1960 contrasted the conservative dress of male MPs with Barbara Castle's appearance at Question Time. "... (her entry) has come to be the sartorial moment of every parliamentary day". (ibid). The Daily Mirror of 30 December 1970 said:

"Shirley (Williams) is solid, half-girl, half-matron; she has clothes that keep her warm, a hair-do that sometimes looks like a home perm and an adorable waddling walk like that of a barefoot goosegirl". (ibid)

Mrs Thatcher, then Shadow spokesman on Education, was interviewed by Ivan Rowan of the Sunday Telegraph, 26 October 1969.

"(She) is a very pretty woman in a soft suburban way, with a nice mouth and nice teeth and large round dolly eyes like a candy box tied off with two shiny bows of blue ribbon".<sup>19</sup> (Phillips 1980 : 119)

It may not have been politically correct, but comments about, and criticisms of, Mrs Thatcher in the Press, were in the prevailing mode. People in the political arena either ignored or shrugged off these points, but shielded themselves from hurt. Mrs Thatcher gave up avidly reading papers and settled for a digest of daily events, but this was also because her "spare" time became more and more limited. Reading only a digest, however, can both isolate and insulate. The reader may acquire false impressions and, as a result, give wrong impressions. This was one of the criticisms of Bernard Ingham's methods of keeping Mrs Thatcher informed.

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<sup>19</sup> Two years later Mrs Thatcher repaid the, by then, overweight journalist. After an interview he waited for a lift to the ground floor, "she instructed him rather peremptorily to walk, adding that his waistline required exercise". (Cosgrave 1978 : 16) It sounds like Nanny, or the Headmistress.

There seemed to be a campaign in parts of the press against Mrs Thatcher in 1970, with The Sun giving a lead. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 97) The adverse publicity followed the school milk decision. The Sun called Mrs Thatcher 'a liability' and 'The most unpopular woman in Britain' at a time when the Cabinet particularly wanted an image of compassion and concern. (Harris 1988 : 56) Apart from 'Milk Snatcher'<sup>20</sup> other new nicknames included 'Ice Maiden', 'Cave Woman', 'Open Refrigerator' and 'Salome'. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 97) All of them except the last were indicators of a particular type of personal coldness - heartlessness or perhaps glacial indifference. Similar 'cold' names appeared at later elections and will be discussed in other chapters. 'Salome' is somewhat unexpected in the above quotation. The famous dance for which she is remembered, was more a calculated inducement for personal gain than heartlessness or cold indifference. Arguably, the nicknames were shorthand for detailed but inaccurate comment, some of it ambiguous, a recognised, though not entirely necessary, part of the news gathering process.

In 1969 a journalist wrote of the aloof and stony hearted Mrs Thatcher, "Something happens to her eyes, like a cold wind passing over a Norfolk beach". (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 97) The icy winds across the North Sea are noted in Norfolk because of their treacherous effect on sea and land. Working colleagues find her unexpectedly sympathetic about their personal domestic crises. "(Yet) friends find in her a paradoxical iciness from which they recoil. They find a hardness and a ruthlessness unexpected in a woman but acceptable in a man like Edward Heath". (Phillips 1980 : 20)

It is interesting to note that the criticism and opposition in the press changed to co-operation after 1975. From belittling Mrs Thatcher, apparently for a principle, many later supported her in photo-opportunities and pseudo events, with her willing assistance and encouragement, to present a kinder and softer image. "Even as her political stature grew,

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<sup>20</sup> "Hindsight makes it look a peculiar row. Labour had (only) recently ended free milk for secondary school children". (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 97)

more newspaper column inches were devoted to examining her appearance than her policies". (Phillips 1980 : 119) A sweeping statement perhaps, but understandable. Apparently, Mrs Thatcher's appearance, personality and sex are somehow inextricably entwined with her politics. In the 1980s her physical attributes were commented on by world leaders at Summit or EC meetings. They did not discuss each other's personal foibles with the press, even when they criticised the policies. President Mitterand said she had the eyes of Caligula but the mouth of Marilyn Monroe. Privately he found her "fascinating". (Daily Telegraph Obituary, January 1996)

Mrs Thatcher's appearance apparently remained of fundamental importance to the Press for the rest of her public life, particularly at general election times, as will be shown later. Press treatment of women MPs can be matched with similar attitudes by the male colleagues in the House. The 'intruders' have to be tolerated since they are democratically elected, but prejudice and the non-politically correct approach may take many forms.

In the House, female MPs were often outraged at the treatment Mrs Thatcher received before she became Leader of the Opposition. The main offenders were northern Labour Party men - obviously not the old fashioned ones noted earlier.

"(she was) subjected to offensive cat-calls, MPs would shout out ;'Get your hair done', or call her a silly little woman; they nicknamed her 'Naggie Thatcher'".  
(Phillips 1980 : 171)

When Mrs Thatcher was in the Cabinet, Reginald Maudling sometimes left Downing Street grumbling about "that bloody woman rabbiting on". (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 98) Women may get promotion to a Ministry if it is a 'soft' one, or if there is a "nasty" or "difficult" or an "unpopular" issue to be tackled (Delamont 1980 : 167) For example - Barbara Castle was chosen to pilot a Bill restricting Trades Unions. She also had the Transport portfolio - hardly a soft option. Mrs Thatcher got Education when £300 million

was supposed to be trimmed from the budget and various charges were to be imposed. She accepted the job, fought off some of the impositions and maintained much of the Budget.

Some male MPs carry their bias into print, with articles or books which, implicitly or explicitly, denigrate the woman MP. The opinion is public and open for further comment, criticism or reinforcement. Phillips notes: Lord Altrincham declared there was no substitute for the power of the political wife; it was efficient and effective - and by implication, not in the House (Guardian 1960); Leo Abse wrote that women MPs are "aberrant" or "intelligent hysterics" or "fated by constitution or upbringing never to attain a full creative femininity" ("Private Member" 1973) and decades earlier, (Manchester Guardian 1929) Sir Alfred Hopkinson could not envisage a woman Prime Minister. "In spite of her brains ... there is something lacking in her which a man leader has". (Phillips 1980 : 152, 153) A surprising comment perhaps from such an early date, but the antipathy must have been there in the House and remained part of the specialised culture and belief system, reinforced by social conditioning. Social change brought some enlightenment and some challenges, but not many more women into parliament.

With such animus absorbed into the atmosphere of the Gentlemen's Club, perhaps it is not surprising that a woman MP of Mrs Thatcher's calibre, even the younger Mrs Thatcher, reacted in the way she did - briskly, abrasively, coldly, determinedly, harshly. To establish herself and be noticed, not as a woman but as an MP, she knew - as do other professional women - she had to be better prepared and more able than male colleagues; hence the fanatical preparation and briefing for when she spoke or replied in the House. At the DES, her boxes were cleared every day - all papers were dealt with. Bias, prejudice and baiting were likely to act as stimulants to a determined woman politician rather than as deterrents, a challenge to her merited and democratic right to be there. When the opportunity arose she had the courage to take the next step and break the mould.

## Part 5 - The Outsider's Challenge - 1974-1975

Judged by almost any criteria, Mrs Thatcher's eventual election as the Tory Party leader was an extraordinary event. It was immediately preceded by a series of lost opportunities, a list of 'if onlys'. There was an inevitability about Edward Heath's removal, although he would not see it after the October defeat. There was nothing certain or automatic about Mrs Thatcher's success - although Patrick Cosgrave had predicted it during the summer of 1974. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 110)

Edward Heath's leadership had been causing quiet concern to some colleagues for several years. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 102) The notorious U-turn

"became a seminal event in the history of late-twentieth century Conservatism ... (it) took on the status of a demon ... its perpetrator ... the devil incarnate". (Young 1990 : 75)

It was a milestone event for him and the Conservative Party. Perhaps, just as important, it haunted Mrs Thatcher. Her later policies were entirely different from his; and when the time came she had to be a quite different type of leader.

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The February 1974 general election was ostensibly called "on a point of principle", with the Cabinet apparently fully supporting the Prime Minister and the recharged policies he offered. (Young 1990 : 82) Apart from putting them in Opposition, the election result unsettled the Conservatives. With such a slim majority, inevitably Harold Wilson would call a snap election. Because the February one had primarily been fought over a question of Heath's leadership, any dissatisfaction felt anywhere within the Conservative Party had to

be concealed. The MPs could not afford to destabilise the Party, or give the electorate suspicions, by openly criticising him for his style of leadership and management. He, therefore, seemed secure. A few of his closest supporters - including William Whitelaw - thought a leadership election would clear the air; the back benchers would not dare unseat him at such a crucial moment. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 109) He would not submit himself. He was confident that Labour's economic policy would be their downfall, and that a general election would then favour the Conservatives. There was no leadership contest.

Mrs Thatcher was given the shadow Environment portfolio in February 1974, with a directive to produce a new Housing Policy to capture the voter's interest. Edward Heath particularly wanted the plan to include fixed rate mortgages, Sale of council Houses and the Abolition of the Rates. Mrs Thatcher argued; he insisted; she finally agreed and the document was produced four months later. It "consolidated her reputation for being able to master a complicated brief on economic matters". Senior colleagues were impressed. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 110) In October she campaigned with "real panache" for policies she fundamentally disapproved of". It was taken as "satisfactory proof that she was learning to be a real politician". In the PEB concerning Housing Policy she made a "studiously theatrical personal pledge." (Young 1990 : 82, 83) She also appeared to be a reliable Heath supporter.

Mrs Thatcher went along with the policies as a matter of expediency. She was one of many MPs profoundly unhappy about the leadership, and was determined to back a suitable candidate immediately a challenge could be safely mounted. Her choice was Sir Keith Joseph whom she admired. She considered "(he) was the pre-eminent choice for leader, combining a rare intellectual capacity with a sense of resolution". (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 110) In a series of speeches during the summer he had begun to publicly analyse the defects in Conservative economic policy since 1972, assisted by various economic commentators. It was part of his "new thinking" about policies and economics which

would eventually influence Mrs Thatcher to some degree, though the extent was not entirely clear at this stage.

The possibility of a woman leading a political party or even becoming Prime Minister still seemed fairly remote to most people in 1974, including Mrs Thatcher. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 110) She denied her candidacy to two newspapers; to reach the top she considered it essential for a candidate to have had experience in at least one of the three important posts. (Thatcher 1995 : 261) She had no illusions about her own prospects when a leadership contest came, and had no intention of standing against Sir Keith Joseph. She did, however, nurse hopes of becoming the first woman Chancellor, at some future date.

A General Election was called for mid-October, Edward Heath was safe for a while longer. When the campaign began some Conservative candidates were faced with the unexpected problem of "Southern Conservatism" being unacceptable in the north. Even more of them found that the "stubborn, power-hungry man" image of their Leader was a major handicap. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 113) The Conservatives lost the election, though not by the landslide many had feared. The Labour Government was secure for several years. The Conservatives all knew that a change of leader was now essential.

If Edward Heath had gracefully resigned immediately, the leadership would have gone eventually to one of "his" men - probably William Whitelaw - and presumably Mrs Thatcher would never have reached No 10. However, "... he preferred to resist every inducement from his friends, and show seigneurial contempt for his enemies" which only postponed the inevitable challenge. (Young 1995 : 261) Mrs Thatcher notes: "He himself could not change and he was too defensive of his own past record to see that a fundamental change of policies was needed". (Thatcher 1995 : 261) There are stirrings of the new direction here, and new intentions.

The (1974) rules for selecting a Leader did not cover re-election; Edward Heath could not legally be forced to resign. When the 1922 committee was re-elected unopposed they again advised him to reconsider his situation. Heath had questioned their legitimacy as representatives of the backbenchers; having been elected in the previous parliament, he considered they, too, should seek re-election. (Thatcher 1995 : 264) A new Committee was formed to review the leadership election procedure and devise new rules. Recommendations included requiring the leader to seek annual re-election, and more stringent criteria governing a win on the first ballot.

The contenders for leadership should have been able to step forward unhindered at this point; but there was a further constraint. Edward Heath was determined to fight and declared his candidacy. Loyalty prevented friends and colleagues from standing against him. None of them had the so essential "killer instinct", or the "grim determination" to win. "... one of the basic lessons of power. There is no friendship at the very top". (Margach 1979 :3 ) By standing back at this stage unknowingly they wasted their only chance.<sup>21</sup> "Whitelaw decided not to run ... because of old-style chivalry; he felt it would not be honourable conduct" for the second-in-command to seek such promotion. Mrs Thatcher, as an outsider, was free of any such obligation or constraint. She was not a gentleman. (Young 1990 : ) The backbenchers had difficulties finding a candidate who might win on the first ballot, and be acceptable to a large proportion of the conservative MPs. Sir Keith Joseph was prepared to stand but within a few days had to withdraw, after a disastrous speech in Birmingham.<sup>22</sup> He advised Mrs Thatcher of his decision and she immediately put forward her own name. "Ted had to go, and that meant that someone had to challenge him. If he won, I was politically finished". (Thatcher 1995 : 267) As a courtesy she asked for an interview to tell him of her resolve. In the two minute meeting he hardly glanced at her, or stopped work.

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21 'Rab' Butler suffered the same problem years earlier. He was 'too nice'.

22 Sir Keith Joseph was also beset with personal problems by this time and probably would have had to withdraw anyway.

Mrs Thatcher's candidacy was a great surprise to many. Among the MPs she was not a political heavyweight. She was not particularly experienced, nor had she held a senior Cabinet post. As a 'southern suburban Tory woman' some colleagues considered her a liability. She did not attract serious attention at this time, being seen more as a stalking horse to attract the anti-Heath vote, thus preventing him achieving the all important majority vote plus 15% in the first ballot. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 124)

A second candidate much approved of was the Chairman of the 1922 Committee, Edward du Cann. He was known to dislike Edward Heath, and initially attracted considerable support. To prevent splitting the anti-Heath vote, Mrs Thatcher offered to withdraw. However, after the Christmas recess, he decided not to stand, and Mrs Thatcher acquired a campaign organiser, a team and supporters, only three weeks before the first ballot. Airey Neave and numerous other MPs had backed Edward du Cann - the transfer of allegiance to a woman caused them no heart searching. Airey Neave strongly recommended her to avoid ideology, and to make her style of leadership a central issue. (Shepherd 1991 : 177)

In November 1974 Mrs Thatcher had been moved to the Treasury team with Robert Carr. It was an astonishing thing for Edward Heath to do, a singular error of judgement. Ironically he had established his reputation in the same post ten years earlier, just before he won his first leadership election. (Shepherd 1991 : 168) Lewis suggests it was a form of arrogance on his part, showing he did not take his rival's challenge seriously, or see her as a threat. (Lewis 1975 : 97) Nonetheless, he was obviously confident that she could take such responsibility. This prominent position ensured maximum opportunity to distinguish herself before her peers. It was a "platform for some pyrotechnic aggression against the Labour Governments tax proposals". (Young 1990 : 97) In January 1975 she impressed many members of the House, and attracted more supporters when she crossed swords successfully with Denis Healey. She gathered another "sure proof of celebrity" when the

Chancellor called her "La Pasionara"<sup>23</sup> of privilege". Perhaps prophetically he added: "She has decided to see her party tagged as the party of the rich few, and I believe she and her party will regret it". (Young 1990 : 97) The sobriquet surfaced again during the 1987 general election.

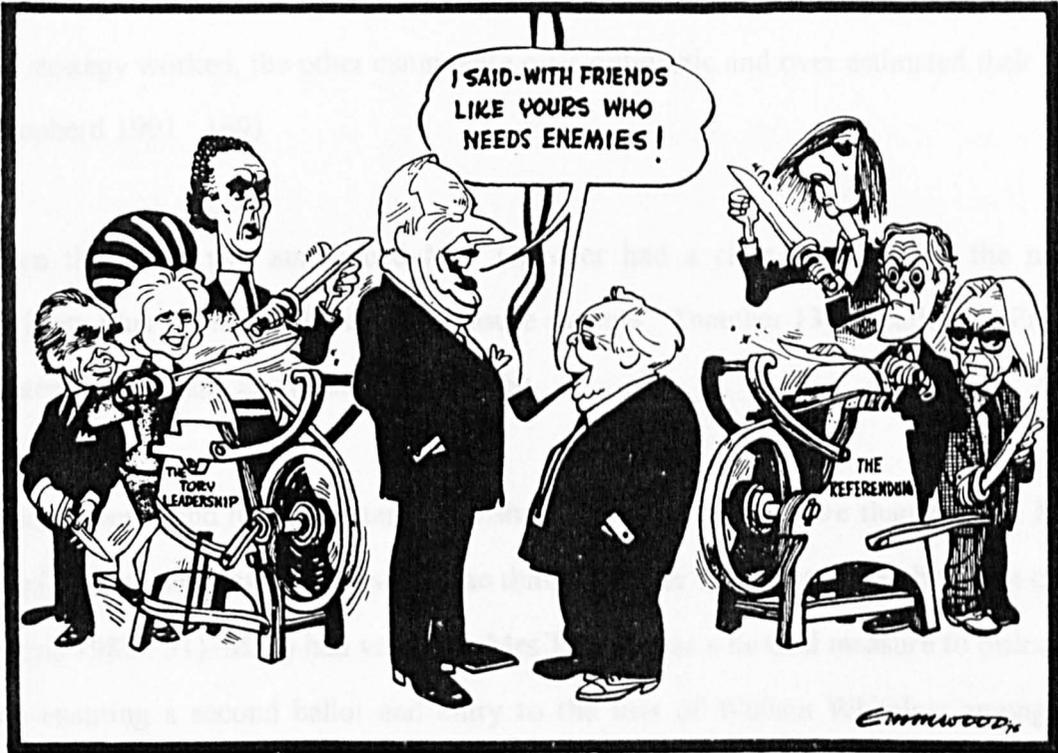
Out of the Chamber campaigning continued. A food hoarding story concerning Mrs Thatcher may have been started deliberately. Airey Neave was certain it was a pro-Heath ploy by the "dirty tricks brigade". The press had descriptions and photographs of the Finsbury housewife, busy in her kitchen, who might become Conservative leader. The distant and elegant MP "a Dresden shepherdess image" (Phillips 1980 : 30) had to be 'adjusted' and presented in a more popular form, fulfilling the dual role successfully. Jenkins argues that Mrs Thatcher was never truly a suburban housewife, it was simply part of 'the image'. (Jenkins 1987 : 85/86) Elsewhere the Permanent Secretary DES confirmed that she had dashed out between or before meetings to shop for bacon "for Denis". (Young & Sloman 1986 : ) Mrs Thatcher was news.

By the day of the first ballot there was a third contender, Hugh Fraser. It was assumed that he stood hoping to gain votes from those who would not vote for Heath, but equally would not vote for a woman. The campaign teams for the other two candidates had been extremely active in vastly different ways, securing support. By nature and training Airey Neave was a secretive and cautious man. He was

"... no mean student of the arts of black propaganda. His major achievement was to secure a general under-estimate of the scale of votes pledged to his candidate. "This induced complacency in the Heath stable ..."

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<sup>23</sup> 'La Pasionara' is the passion flower. It was also the nickname of a Communist lady at the time of the Spanish Civil War, who was a fiery orator. (Lewis 1975 : 112)



27 January 1975

Emmwood Daily Mail

THE SUNDAY TIMES, FEBRUARY 9 1975



Thatcher (6-4 against)  
"Rapierlike wit and an immense compassion," say her backers

Whitelaw (odds on 1-5)  
A badly troubled man, the victim of friends and enemies alike

Prior (14-1)  
A "marxist relationship with Heath — "straight out of the pouch"

Peyton (33-1)  
A few personal admirers and a Churchillian bark

Howe (20-1)  
He prepared two statements: why he would stand, why he would not

His strategy worked, the other camp were over optimistic and over estimated their support. (Shepherd 1991 : 169)

When the result was announced Mrs Thatcher had a clear lead but not the necessary marjority plus 15% (ie 139 votes) to ensure success. Thatcher 130, Heath 119, Fraser 16 , Abstentions/Absent 11. (Young 1990 : 98)

Edward Heath and his supporters were shocked at the result, more than half the MPs had voted against their leader. This was the third "hammer blow" to his authority in one year. (Harris 1988 : 31) Many had voted for Mrs Thatcher as a tactical measure to dislodge him, thus ensuring a second ballot and entry to the lists of William Whitelaw among others. Heath lost because he was an electoral liability. His fellow MPs indicated clearly that change was necessary. There was now no reason for him to stay, and Robert Carr was appointed temporary leader until balloting was complete.

Several new candidates now entered the lists thereby creating a problem for the man many had anticipated seeing as the next Leader. The newcomers spoiled William Whitelaw's chances by dividing loyalty; previous allegiance to the ex-Leader and his policies probably spoiled their chance of success. Mrs Thatcher's campaign was organised and had momentum; and she had risked all to stand against the leader. They had to start from scratch, with only a week in which to achieve anything. The result at the second ballot was decisive.

Mrs Thatcher	146	Geoffrey Howe	19
William Whitelaw	79	James Prior	19
		John Peyton	11

(Young 1990 : 98)

The Conservative MPs made history when they elected a new leader.

For some in the Party, die-hards perhaps, Mrs Thatcher could only be considered as a temporary leader, nothing more than a stop gap. The expectation was that 'someone more suitable' would emerge before the next general election. Yet they could hardly call the voting figures a fluke. The result was accepted, with difficulty.

The result was described as "the peasants' revolt" by Julian Critchley.

"She started as she was to continue: to an extent unique in the history of the modern Tory Party the standard bearer of the rank and file, whom the elites viewed with bemusement, apprehension or downright antipathy". (Bruce-Gardyne 1984 : 3)

Mrs Thatcher was successful in her leadership bid because she grabbed an unexpected opportunity, and was not afraid to do so. She could have done worse than borrow a motto: "Who dares wins", (SAS motto). She knew she was politically 'dead' if her challenge failed, but she had the courage of her convictions whilst others stood back. The killer instinct was stirring. As a woman, as an 'outsider' and not particularly popular, it was both a gamble and a rebellion. She was fortunate in that so many factors over which she had no control - the unique set of circumstances - went the way they did. Most fortunate of all she had a very remarkable campaign manager with exceptional skills. When asked why she thought she had won, she replied crisply in one word, "Merit".

#### Part 6 - Leader of the Opposition - 1975-1979

The unbelievable had happened. The outsider had decisively won the second ballot. A woman MP with a narrow range of Cabinet experience, was now Leader of the Opposition. If, against expectation, she remained the Party Leader surviving the annual re-election procedure each November, there was now the astonishing possibility of a woman Prime

Minister in the foreseeable future. First, however, she had to emerge from, and step clear of, the shadow of Edward Heath, his policies and years of leadership.

Mrs Thatcher, like Edward Heath, came to Conservative leadership when the party was in Opposition. Burch suggests this poses particular problems for a new leader both in exercising power and having less moral authority. They are "on trial" until they prove "quality and potential by winning and holding office". (Burch 1980 : 180) The parallels end there. Heath had already achieved seniority in the party as chief whip and senior minister in previous administrations. His election, more predictable than Mrs Thatcher's in spite of his background, represented a continuation of traditional Conservative values; he was a natural successor, likely to be more readily accepted by the Parliamentary party. By comparison, Mrs Thatcher, a woman with limited Cabinet experience, the outsider who dared to challenge, was elected, in effect, by "a back-bench revolt", because she was not Edward Heath. (Burch 1980 : 181) Once elected she had to be different to make an impact, otherwise she would be seen as merely a Caretaker until a more suitable or traditional Tory leader emerged. Such a message would not inspire confidence in the electorate, nor win the next general election.

Assuming the Labour Government stayed full term, and barring accidents, Mrs Thatcher had about four years in which to establish herself and begin to establish her own philosophy which eventually became known as Thatcherism. The direction was away from the post-war consensus and, many have since argued, away from Paternalism and traditional Conservatism. These matters are not for discussion here. Alongside these changes developed the new image of Mrs Thatcher and the Party; all of which influenced the way the Conservatives fought the next general election.

The political changes could not be too sweeping or too sudden. The obvious divisions in the Party, if they were to be healed, would only be healed slowly. The Party had suffered several severe setbacks since 1970, most particularly in 1974, and was at a low ebb with

policies the electorate did not like. (Harris 1988 : 59) Change was crucial and inevitable. It came from the top, but was often a difficult and painful process for the person instigating it. The 'Conviction politician' could not afford to ride rough-shod at this stage, although by accident or design she often did so with her "prickly sense of personal pride and self-worth". (Mayer 1979 : 15)

Inexperienced and in a job she did not fully understand, Mrs Thatcher's first Shadow cabinet could not contain many new faces, ie pro-Thatcher men; the political experience was needed, and they were therefore Heath-men. But

"They were pragmatists ... and made varying accommodations with the new leader. But all understood there had to be some change". (Young 1990 : 102)

If she appeared to make a wrong decision or too sweeping a change, sacked a "good" man or was abrasive and challenging, it was perhaps hardly surprising.

On the Jimmy Young programme she admitted to having a "horrid day being a Tory butcher having to wield the axe on her colleagues". It was an apt, though hardly new description, Prime Ministers and Party Leaders are noted for being 'butchers'. Harold Macmillan had a famous long knife session. The butcher image was one she used again, though in variation, after the 1983 general election when she spoke of "carving the joint". The image was not used in 1979.

Though he eventually sent her a carefully worded letter of congratulation, Mrs Thatcher was unable to make peace or progress with the ex-leader. The press particularly noted the attitudes and atmosphere between them and surrounding them at the Party Conference that year. Then, and later, Edward Heath declined all offers of posts, and continued to speak his mind both in the House and outside for the rest of her leadership. From being a subject of importance he returned to the back benches to pontificate, or sulk. (Harris 1988 : 60)

When Mrs Thatcher was formally adopted as Party Leader, as opposed to Leader of the Conservatives in the Commons, the Gallup Poll in the Daily Telegraph recorded a swing of 18½% to the Conservatives. This represented a 4% lead. The poll also indicated that voters from across the political spectrum thought she would make a good leader. (Lewis 1975 : 136)

Mrs Thatcher's own supporters were delighted when she was finally elected leader. But there was even greater pleasure on the Labour side, particularly in the Cabinet. "... 'we're home and dry' was the general tenor". (Falkender 1983 : 233) It seemed to them that the Conservatives, in their frantic haste to be rid of one electoral liability had now "hung an albatross around their necks" with the new choice.

"They replaced a stiff-necked man who lacked the common touch with a woman whose cultivated accent and appearance were almost a caricature of the twinset-and-pearls party faithful, themselves a stereotype in the popular imagination". (Phillips 1980 : 15)

At an early opportunity Mrs Thatcher refuted the twinset-and-pearls stereotype. Her recent verbal fireworks over the Finance Bill, much acclaimed in the House and the press, were obviously soon forgotten. It was possibly assumed that she would not have the stamina for this new demanding role, or withstanding the onslaughts from Labour heavyweights. There were some on her own front bench who feared she had not the stamina - William Whitelaw among them. (Whitelaw 1989 : 144) A few on the Labour side - Barbara Castle, Marcia Williams and Peter Shore among others - realised that the Labour gloating came too soon, and was based on some false assumptions.

"She is so clearly the best man among them and she will, in my view, have an enormous advantage in being a woman too. I can't help feeling a thrill, even though

I believe her election will make things much more difficult for us". 11 February 1975 (Castle 1980 : 309)

These are prophetic words, as it turned out, but even more interesting is the early use of the androgyne image not found in the listing of names until 1983 (shown later).

It is important for every new Leader of the Opposition to create a strong impression in the House, since she/he influences the electoral image of the party. (Kavanagh 1985 : 80) There are times, however, when the leader is regularly wrong footed and cannot set the agenda. The particularly difficult spots for Mrs Thatcher were Prime Minister's Question Time on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. She was probably at slightly more of a disadvantage through not having held a more senior post, though she was not without experience of riposte and sparring in the House. "Mrs Thatcher came out battling from her place opposite the Despatch box ... Twice a week regular as clockwork she bit the canvas". (Bruce-Gardyne 1984 : 4) Her very first such encounter with Harold Wilson has a familiar ring to it. As her attempted intervention was brushed aside "Some of us are rather old hands at these matters' he said with lordly patronage ..." (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 143) Mrs Thatcher's recollection is of "much male chauvinist hilarity" on her entrance ("Give us a kiss, Maggie") of wittily barbed congratulations from the Prime Minister, "at his still incomparable best" and her own less witty reply. She notes philosophically:

"... as a new Leader of a shaken and still badly split party, and as a woman striving for dominance in this noisy, boisterous masculine world, I could expect difficulties ahead". (Thatcher 1995 : 284)

A few months later Barbara Castle recorded that "She never risks anything: just sits there listening to Harold with a carefully modulated look of disapproval on her face, then produces one regulation intervention per Question Time. 5 August 1975 (Castle 1980 : 487)

Things improved a little for Mrs Thatcher when James Callaghan succeeded Harold Wilson.

All Opposition leaders suffered the same problems only to flourish as Prime Minister. She was not a lost cause or an inadequate performer; it was all part of the system.

"When Mrs Thatcher herself acceded to the purple, her effortless superiority over Michael Foot, one of the great parliamentarians of his generation, was marvellous to behold". (Bruce-Gardyne 1984 : 4)

Though the contest is "hopelessly unequal" this is the Parliamentary way of doing things. The Prime Minister "always has the last word and the leader of the Opposition might as well stay silent, but cannot afford to do so". (Bruce-Gardyne *ibid*)

Mrs Thatcher's relationship with the Shadow Cabinet remained on an uneasy footing for some considerable time. The problem was not so much that she was a woman, more "the kind of woman she was". (Harris 1988 : 60) At later general elections the description became "That woman" or "that bloody woman" - the TBW factor of which Mrs Thatcher professed to know nothing until 1986. Her style of leadership was a new experience for the colleagues, something they were not used to dealing with - which echoes the DES situation, previously discussed. For many of them, their upbringing brought Nanny and/or Matron into their experience, as well as "aristocratic, upper and middle class women who had been to boarding and finishing school" (Harris 1988 : 60) The conviction and assertiveness of the colleague - turned leader - was disconcerting. "They were not used to being in a subordinate relationship with a self-made woman used to saying what she thought without being asked". (Harris *ibid*) The men would remember also that this Cabinet colleague, until recently 'one of them', had formerly sat at the far end of the table out of sight of the Leader. That Leader had listened to all and spoken later, sometimes days later, when he expressed an opinion. (Harris *ibid*) Mrs Thatcher, on the other hand,

was certain of her facts, certain of what needed doing, and certain her way was right. She gave her opinion first and talked too much during the meeting. She would argue fiercely and loudly if challenged, and almost always interrupted other speakers: in short, the early image of the Formidable Female, who appeared with various names in 1983 and especially in 1987. It was also the early signal of, and basis for, the 1980s arguments that collective decisions in Cabinet and governing power had changed.

It has been suggested that the loudness and abrasiveness of the first year (1975) was due to a sense of insecurity. Mrs Thatcher felt the need to prove her strength and resolution to justify her election and conceal uncertainty. It is possibly the Methodist stirrings 'of merit' and the 'prickly sense of pride'. She knew of the behind-the-scenes derision of her inexperience by the pro-Heath men in Parliament, including some in the Cabinet. She knew of the speculation about how long she could survive as leader, and who her successor might be. (Bruce-Gardyne 1984 : 4) Most important of all, she knew that a woman leader would be given one chance only to prove her worth and win a general election. The relationship became somewhat easier after the Party Conference when the Leader's speech was well received.

"The papers are full of (her) triumph at the Tory Conference yesterday. (10 October. 1975) I was struck by how blooming she looked after what must have been a week of intense strain; the vitamin of power again". (Castle 1980 : 518)

It was also noted by the party faithful and MPs that Edward Heath's public resentment towards Mrs Thatcher often looked "ungenerous and ungentlemanly".<sup>24</sup> In the House he stared and glowered at her, to the amusement of Labour members opposite. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 145)

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<sup>24</sup> "Throughout 1974 and 1975 (he) had been seriously ill with a thyroid complaint which he had kept to himself". (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 145)

Mrs Thatcher's appearance on the Jimmy Young programme in the first week after her appointment was on the advice of Gordon Reece. It was part of the process of making her seem less formidable and distant. during the conversation she made it clear that "twins- and-pearls was not her style". (Lewis 1975 : 137)

This exercise in popularising Mrs Thatcher was partly to counteract the almost too successful job she had done for herself thus far. She had risen above her background and upbringing, she had married money, and had modelled herself on the Tory Ladies in the hierarchy, in order to be accepted. Gordon Reece and other advisers now thought that she was separated by that transformation from the people it was hoped would eventually vote for her. The fear was that they would be unable to identify with her, so Mrs Thatcher had to be able to show the human face of leadership - though only of the Conservative Party at this stage. In her leadership campaign Gordon Reece had joined her office as an adviser. The photographs of Mrs Thatcher in her kitchen, or out shopping or generally active in the constituency had all been his idea. When her challenge was successful, and with eyes on the forward planning for a general election campaign, it seemed an obvious move to retain this adviser.

Mrs Thatcher was prepared to co-operate fully in what ever plan was needed to ensure her victory when the general election came.

"If selling the party and fashioning the leader's public profile were elementary preconditions for winning the election, she would not hesitate to do what was required. By plunging serenely into this new world, Mrs Thatcher showed a lack of fastidiousness that did credit to her commitment to victory". (Young 1990 : 126)

As a grocer's daughter Mrs Thatcher was not entirely ignorant of brand leaders and selling - though her father's methods might be called old fashioned compared with what she became involved in, and appeared to enjoy.

Selling Mrs Thatcher as a 'Housewife', the image she adopted during her Leadership Challenge and maintained until well into the 1980s, seems an odd choice, but it was to 'capture' the C2 vote - 'ordinary' people. Gordon Reece considered the image change necessary, yet it appears at variance with the major change in her life. As discussed earlier, Mrs Thatcher had previously been somewhat ambivalent about women having dual roles; her personal choice was special and a particular instance, she considered other women were different.

In status terms 'the housewife' was always at least half way down social structure lists, sometimes much lower. Her responsibilities and skills, though essential in some specific areas were not ones considered crucial for high public office.<sup>25</sup> (Webster 1990 : 52) For a woman seeking this position, the first ever to do so, the image seems inappropriate, even unwise, to make her seem quite ordinary and acceptable to women voters. Given the circumstances and the goal in view, arguably she needed to seem special or extra-ordinary to attempt, and possibly achieve, the objective. Writers, commentators and others were unconvinced: Mrs Thatcher was never just 'ordinary' even if she did housewifely things sometimes. (Watkins 1991 : 40) Time at home is limited for all MPs, including the Leader of the Opposition. "... it is quite impossible to do one's own chores. shopping becomes one of the great unattainables". 13 October 1975 (Castle 1980 : 518) But the image was only for the voters in this country, it did not go abroad with her. As Leader of the Opposition gaining knowledge and experience and building relationships, she caused no

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<sup>25</sup> In the 1980s an attempt to maintain the status of the knowledge and skills of Home Economics as an academic discipline in schools and selected Colleges was unsuccessful. At FE and HE levels the field of study ultimately disappeared or was absorbed into other disciplines. (Home Economics Curriculum Survey, 1985) When appealed to, Mrs Thatcher declined to intercede to save the subject at any level, within the 'New Curriculum' developments.



"There lay Sleeping Beauty - fast asleep!"

14 January 1975

Daily Telegraph



"Mind that car - keep left - careful - watch your speed..."

Nicholas Garland

Daily Telegraph 9 July 1976

little interest in other countries. In addition to the excellent publicity she appeared to be "taken seriously on the world stage". (Cosgrave 1985 : 50) This was the World Stateswoman image developing - used as an election image in 1983 and 1987. The contrast with the ordinary housewife is somewhat ludicrous. Several newspapers later added 'prodigious' or 'super' to the housewife tag effectively exaggerating an already near mythic figure.

In January 1976 the burgeoning world stateswoman received a boost from a most unexpected source. A public speech, one of a series, concerning the serious political and military threat posed by Russia, and criticising their poor record on human rights in spite of signing the Helsinki Accords (1975), incensed the Soviet authorities and brought furious protests. As a result "... in less than forty minutes (she) secured more international headlines than most politicians could expect to receive in a lifetime". (Cosgrave 1985 : 54) With the first censorious comments came her most famous nickname, 'The Iron Lady' - ultimately an accolade - and she tried to live up to the implied qualities. "... some apparatchik ... his imagination surpassing his judgement, coined the description. (The Russians) had inadvertently put me on a pedestal as their strongest European opponent. They never did me a greater favour". (Thatcher 1995 : 362)

There were cartoons of this opponent in Moscow newspapers, portraying her as "the Wicked Witch of the West". (Mayer 1979 : 136) The same description appeared in the 1987 election, but with a rather different connotation, discussed later. Moscow also continued the vigorous propaganda campaign to discredit her, which had quite the reverse effect this side of the Iron Curtain - an interesting transposition. The image remained with her into the 1990s. It probably already appears in the prepared obituaries.

When the 1979 general election finally arrived the grooming of Mrs Thatcher, and the 'marketing of Margaret' had been in place nearly four years. Pictures of 'the Housewife' were familiar in the press - the 'Iron Lady' made headlines, by-lines, column inches and some cartoons. By 1979 her style of dressing had altered to the often not very stylish or flattering outfits labelled 'Mumsy' by various journalists. Changes in her voice pitch and diction had removed some of the shrillness and over-elocuting if not all the aggression. (Scammell 1995 : 79) There were clips on television news showing her at carefully selected venues 'doing' or 'looking at' things, with a few carefully selected with a few carefully spontaneous remarks, or the advertisers favoured nine-word sentence. She was heard on radio in undemanding non-aggressive shows such as the Jimmy Young Show, or with Michael Aspel on TV. (Franklin 1994 : 6)

When the campaign started in earnest these well selected activities continued. (Bilton & Humelfarb 1980 : 251) In spite of the guiding and controlling hand of Gordon Reece there was still some concern about the public's perception of Mrs Thatcher. One private poll suggested that the conservatives "lacked both compassion and sympathetic leaders". (Butler & Kavanagh 1980 : 138) Mrs Thatcher continued to project "an image of confidence" in the House, and in public "against the grain of public opinion". (Young 1990 : 128) Labour campaign leaders "marked her as a weakness and potentially their best hope". (Scammell 1995 : 78) At the beginning of the campaign, Public Opinion Polls gave the Conservative Party a ten point lead, but this decreased to three points. By contrast, Mrs Thatcher trailed James Callaghan by seven points to start with, but the gap increased to 19 points by election day. (Butler & Kavanagh 1980 : 323)

The general election campaign was a presidential style media event, markedly more so than at any previous elections. The two main parties went about marketing and communicating in rather different ways. Generally speaking, the Conservative campaign was more professionally organised. "The influence was in the conduct of the campaign rather than

increased (media) coverage ... Mrs Thatcher dominates (the scene) as the ablest communicator in the shadow cabinet". (Butler & Kavanagh 1980 : 319, 323) She seemed happy to have journalists and photographers in attendance all day every day, whereas James Callaghan specifically excluded the photographers from parts of his daily programme, although he was not averse to 'the right' photo-opportunities. It often seemed as though the images detracted from the political arguments. (Scammell 1995 : 77, 78)

Gordon Reece shaped Mrs Thatcher's personal campaign to continue the 'humanising' process, placing her "in environments where she would seem warm and womanly ... mixing easily with ordinary people". (Scammell 1980 : 80) The exercise also helped control or counteract her apparent electoral weakness. Some forceful images came from her formal speaking engagements, 'ticket only' affairs, in part due to security restrictions, where the audience was captive and disposed to be faithful. The 'enhancing' images came from walkabouts and photo-opportunities

"honed for the pictorial media. The adman kept his eye on that night's television news and next day's front pages, with much photography of a harsh politician in gentle environments". (Young 1990 : 130)

Mrs Thatcher cuddled a calf, stitched a pocket, coated chocolates, visited a brush factory, and a laboratory and often had to wear protective clothing - labelled 'fancy dress' by some of the media. (Thatcher 1995 : 447-453) The possibilities for visual and verbal images, puns and metaphors abounded, but there were snide remarks as well from the same media group. (Butler & Kavanagh 1980 : 172)

The pseudo-event, borrowed from America, personalised the politics and made celebrities of political leaders on a par with film stars and pop idols. (Mayer 1979 : 134) The problem with these events is that they have little or no news value, but impartiality on television requires a balance of 'non-news' from opposing parties - thus wasting everyone's time.

(Negrine 1989 : 196) The non-news subliminal television message, if there is one, reaches a vast audience, but this begs the question whether to see is to believe. Press bias, being permitted, means that individual papers may use some of the same images in photographs to convey, with words or by implication, their own interpretation or choice of message. The photograph records a specific moment, implying a specific message. The veracity of what the camera records is open to question. sometimes, the words and pictures are not complementary, and sometimes the camera records falsehoods. The message is thus confused or distorted and the result for the reader is a damp squib, not a salvo or warning shot.

The Conviction politician's countrywide publicity drive, performed with crusading zeal, displayed "her prodigious energy (as a) ceaseless exercise in self-exposure ... making a good impression through personal appearances ... She ran her entourage into the ground." The writing journalists were very disgruntled when events revolved round the photographers. (Young 1990 : 130) Photographers and journalists, however, were not aware of how they were being drawn in to the charades, even dressing up as bit players. It was some time before they questioned what was happening. A particular visit was "fun until they realised the nature of the event was flawed". (Dispatches<sup>26</sup>)

"The journalists came to realise they were the costumed extras in the drama of Thatcher goes to Downing Street. There was an air of excitement as they donned fancy dress (white coats and caps) at the Bournville chocolate factory and had a group photograph taken - looking like a mass outing of dentists - while awaiting Mrs Thatcher's arrival. (Elinor Goodman;<sup>27</sup> Dispatches op cit)

On her arrival at the factory Mrs Thatcher thought the white coated factory staff had lined up to meet her. She was not pleased, having given orders there was to be no formality. As

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26 "Democracy in Danger", Dispatches, Channel 4, March 1992, Commentary by Hugo Young.  
27 Elinor Goodman, Channel 4, political correspondent.

there was no sign of photographers she assumed they were "waiting somewhere to take suitable shots of this ludicrous scene". For a few minutes she remained on the bus "to regain (her) cool". When she looked again she recognised some faces and eventually entered the factory under an arch of cameras. The photographers didn't get their pictures until later. (Thatcher 1995 : 451)

The whole business of pseudo events in whatever form initially excited the media and some of the bit players. Politics was apparently taken to the people, but at what price! Of the now famous calf episode Michael Dobbs thought it "the day when British Politics changed significantly. There was a good symbol, a good message in the photograph". (Dispatches op cit) Michael Bunsen reporting for News at 10 noted the press had been reduced to a state of hysteria, but doubted whether the day had won over any voters. (Dispatches op cit)

The last innovation for the campaign was the Conservative Trade Unionists' Rally at the Wembley Conference Centre. Organised by Harvey Thomas and based on Billy Graham's evangelical rallies, it had the endorsement of "a galaxy of actors and comedians (who) livened up the proceedings". Mrs Thatcher entered to her campaign song and delivered a short, sharp speech that received a "terrific reception". With hindsight she notes: "compared with Harvey's extravaganzas of future years this came to seem quite tame". (Thatcher 1995 : 458) It was a lively event though not undignified, and there was a captive audience to appreciate the spectacle. It was a new concept for campaigning, but as a reinforcing exercise it brought no converts. It also generated new visual and verbal images for the media. For Mrs Thatcher it was another stage and another first.

On the 3 May 1979, the Labour party lost the general election. On the 4 May, after posing for the media and making a short speech, the contents of which were grist to the mill for her opponents at a later date, Britain's first woman Prime Minister crossed the threshold of No 10 to face the greatest challenge of her life.

Lady in waiting, though not necessarily heir apparent, perhaps describes Mrs Thatcher's time as Opposition Leader. Others describe the four year period as 'wilderness years' for the Conservative party. From a very surprising win, a not particularly auspicious beginning, she had to establish herself in the eyes of the party and the country as a credible choice - a potential Prime Minister. Policies aside, she had to become known as more than 'the milk snatcher' and former Education Minister, the Tory lady in a hat, the target of cartoonists and photographers. Whilst maintaining the assertive drive as a 'Conviction' politician, Mrs Thatcher had to display a personality that invited the confidence of the electorate.

On the advice of Gordon Reece the adaptation of this personality and some specific communication skills were developed to aid the public perception of an ordinary but very capable housewife. Beside this new image another was acquired through Soviet censure, which was more in line with the formidable female crusader known to the Shadow Cabinet.

Long before the general election, modern marketing techniques were being used to 'sell' Mrs Thatcher, so that when the campaign finally arrived it was business as usual, only more so. In the process of selling the product to capture the public imagination, the media gave enthusiastic co-operation for a variety of reasons. However, some of them found they were more than doing their job.

The range of events which brought Mrs Thatcher to public attention, mainly via television but also in the press, can be questioned for their value and influence. A set-piece speech with audience is one thing; a dash to the country to cuddle a calf is non-news, even spurious. A cynic might query whether the public really wants, or expects, to see a prospective Prime Minister sorting chocolates or stitching a pocket. Perhaps it is the

necessary light-relief moment in the concentrated and serious business of campaigning. Be this as it may, the Conservatives won the 1979 general election perhaps in spite of, not because of, Mrs Thatcher.

### Conclusion

Many of the characteristics admired or disliked in Mrs Thatcher, can be traced from her early years. Her father's influence and her upbringing are the basis for the many exhortations, the homespun philosophy and moral lessons preached by the 'Headmistress/Nanny/Matron' to colleagues and country.<sup>28</sup> The serious childhood bounded by Methodist principles, the need for education and self-improvement and a commitment to public service produced a constantly active, serious and determined young woman. She rebelled, in a minor way, by setting her sights on going to Oxford. By reading chemistry and being a Conservative she broke into male dominated domains, yet remained an 'outsider'.

If Oxford was her escape route from provincial obscurity, politics was her entry to the world she wanted and to which, she became utterly devoted. Part of the path was smoothed for her by a happy and successful marriage, and the opportunity to Read and to practise Law. Her determination to enter parliament was eventually rewarded in 1959.

Mrs Thatcher remained an outsider to some degree throughout all her parliamentary years. Her drive and application, her determination to 'do the right thing' and to do it 'her way' was not always popular with male colleagues at any stage in her career. The lemming instinct was never hers. The 'milk incident' of 1970 brought her dubious fame, a nickname which lingered and media attention. She was newsworthy, but not popular. Her

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<sup>28</sup> Charles Powell suggests that Mrs Thatcher's two part biography should be seen as the equivalent of the Old and New Testaments tracing her road to Downing Street. "The Making of Margaret", Sunday Telegraph 11 June 1995

experiences of male bias and prejudice in the House did not deter her when eventually the unusual circumstances allowing a leadership challenge occurred, when the Tory party was at a very low ebb. It was a gamble and a rebellion by a female politician, but she had the courage of her convictions, and her name went forward. She also had canny advice and guidance from two very different men who helped her to unexpected success.

This event marked the earliest stages of the 'marketing of Margaret'. After becoming Tory Leader her advisers thought there was a need to 'adjust' her image to draw the electorate and to give them more confidence in a woman known in the media for her hats, a shrill voice and often scolding tone, with a not very warm or inviting personality. The efficient super-housewife image was developed and 'sold'. A contrasting, and perhaps more accurate, description came from Russia. Being the 'Iron Lady' appealed to Mrs Thatcher; she later said she had iron in her soul, but opponents and some colleagues saw it as the alternative version of a tough, hard, inflexible, indomitable or otherwise unyielding woman. The 'uncaring' images, an extension of the hard woman, appeared by 1983. In due course there were even more contrasting and often contradictory images, though the 'housewife' continued.

In 1979 Mrs Thatcher gave whole hearted commitment to the new style of media designed election campaign. Although it involved her in events of doubtful news value, the events kept her in the public eye and apparently made her seem 'human'. She had a pragmatic view of the situation. Although Tory Leader, as a woman she would have one chance only to win a general election. No excuse would be made for her, no benefit of the doubt extended, as had been done for Edward Heath in 1970. "... she was leader, at least until she lost an election". (Butler & Kavanagh 1980 : 68) The opportunity was not to be wasted - every moment had to be filled with a positive action to help the Conservative cause, and help herself to success.

Whether the methods used were 'right' for the purposes of winning the election, and whether the public liked what the media presented, or perceived qualities of leadership in the images, can be debated endlessly. The Conservative win could equally be attributed to 'the winter of discontent' and other political factors, rather than Mrs Thatcher's new images.

The next three chapters are brief reviews of some aspects and images from the general elections in which Mrs Thatcher was successful: 1979, 1983 and 1987.

The reasons for choice of publications are detailed more fully in the Appendix. For this section, it is important to note that The Times and Sunday Times were not published during most of 1979 due to a strike.<sup>1</sup> In order to maintain the particular range and bias, therefore, the Daily and Sunday Telegraph have been substituted. Obviously true comparisons cannot be made between the Telegraph and Times reporting and outlook, but the visual and verbal images indicating a Conservative viewpoint in the quality range at a critical general election are represented.

The other publications reviewed are:

Daily	Guardian, Express, Mirror
Sunday	Observer, Express, Mirror
Periodicals	Spectator, New Statesman, Punch and Private Eye.

Each Election review has four main sections: Articles, Editorials, Cartoons and Photographs.

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<sup>1</sup> Publication was suspended from 30 November 1978 to 13 November 1979, pending agreement on new technology and manning levels.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE GENERAL ELECTION 1979

1979 was a fateful year for Prime Ministers. Dr Saurez became the first elected Prime Minister of Spain for more than forty years. In Pakistan Mr Bhutto was hanged. Bishop Abel Muzorewa became Zimbabwe Rhodesia's first black Prime Minister. In Iran Mr Hoveyda, the Shah's last Prime Minister was shot. In Britain Mr Callaghan and the Labour Party lost the general election, and Mrs Thatcher became the first woman Prime Minister of a European democracy.<sup>1</sup>

While reviewing election material for 1979, it is surprising now to find how apparently sanguine some of the printed media was at the prospect of a woman premier. Another surprise was to see the small amount published in some papers and the relatively restrained style of reporting.

The general election might have been seen as something of a Goliath and David contest, to use images not in the research material. Politics aside, James Callaghan, Prime Minister and Statesman faced a little woman with a handbag, Leader of the Opposition, remembered as the Milk Snatcher, more recently christened Iron Lady. There seemed to be much scope for a variety of images to be used, both visual and verbal, particularly to place the challenger "in context", should she become Prime Minister.

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<sup>1</sup> She joined: Mrs Bandaranaike - Sri Lanka elected 1960  
Mrs Ghandi - India 1966  
Mrs Meir - Israel 1969  
NB Mrs Finnbogadottir - Iceland elected 1980

## ARTICLES

The most surprising headline, with the possible exception of the election results, appeared in the Daily Express on 2 May. "Give the Girl a Chance" (p. 96a)

There is nothing to match it in any of the other reviewed material. Beside the headline is a large photograph of a smiling Mrs Thatcher, but it is typical of her 1979 style of presentation. There is nothing girlish or girl-like in the accompanying article which uses phrases already familiar from her own speeches and interviews. In 1979 girl-ish glee or girl-ish enthusiasm had no place in the Thatcher image, and had never been apparent during her earlier years in politics. Newspaper headlines serve many purposes, not always connected with the main article on the front page. In this case the jolly enthusiasm headlined is at odds with the visual image.

A more reliable image comes from George Gale writing in the Daily Express (23 April). He calls Mrs Thatcher a "one woman revolution", and considers her the chief issue of the general election. In the Spectator (14 April) under the title 'The Woman as the Issue' he suggests that it is impossible to disentangle Mrs Thatcher the woman from Mrs Thatcher the Tory politician. "I think her being a woman has far more to do with her politics than she cares, or chooses, to admit ...". He also raises the interesting and crucial point of how passionate this woman is about her politics. In this he is joined by many other writers from various publications.

The important point raised is the changing of the Thatcher image in time for the campaign, and the value of such a change. Peter Jenkins in the Guardian (16 April) said: "... is she embarking on a campaign of style without content all media and no message ... (the) discussion (is) in terms of her image rather than her sex ...". While Jean Rook in the Daily Express commented: "Mrs Thatcher's performance has had rave notices, even from the

critics, though to my personal taste, Maggie's one woman band is a bit too Billy Smart ...". From reserved approval to the Daily Mirror (5 April): "She will concentrate on personal appearance, walkabouts, doing the things at which she excels ...". But by 13 April it was noted: "... a new layer of treacle to hide the nastiness (of her voice) ... enter a new simpering presence on the catwalk of politics". There is obviously no value to the change of image from this standpoint.

Recalling an Arcadian musical, Peter Jenkins reported:

"A day on the farm campaigning for the media, in time for the evening news on television ... Mrs Thatcher has been practising this style of campaigning for eighteen months or more. She has been rehearsing it at by-elections, perfecting it on her visits to regions ...". (Guardian, 19 April)

He goes on to suggest that Mrs Thatcher is already a polished media performer who considers this publicity to be necessary and valuable. Several papers note an adeptness in the walkabouts for the photographic pause, or the easing of the way for TV cameramen, whilst reporters and others are deftly kept at bay. The non-event, and the value of being seen were clearly in evidence at this general election, in spite of leaders' protests about it being called a presidential-style campaign. Elsewhere in the Guardian (19 April) it is suggested that Mrs Thatcher worked hard to counter the TV image. The Telegraph also reports comments from the public about Mrs Thatcher, in person, being nicer than, or different from, the TV 'personality'.

By contrast, and almost contradicting the previous two paragraphs, it should be recorded that part of Mrs Thatcher's newsworthiness arises from her being a woman prepared not only to accept power, but to wield it confidently as a 'conviction politician', in her own description.

The power and conviction were sufficiently arresting to be called passionate in more than one newspaper, whilst another found an appropriate quote from Sophocles. (Daily Express) Another publication thought a passionate political woman was a frightening phenomenon. Early in the campaign (14 April) the Spectator signposted the deadly earnestness of this phenomenon: "Politics is a game that men play ... Mrs Thatcher does not see it as a game at all." The Daily Express (12 April) quoting Mrs Thatcher: "I've learned, if you've got a message, preach it. I am a conviction politician." It is very tempting to add, or think, 'I have a dream'. The Guardian (17 April) while reporting her sortie into enemy territory (James Callaghan's Cardiff constituency) wrote: "In by far the most inspirational speech of the election, she identified herself with the Old Testament prophets and described herself as a "conviction politician". On the same date the Daily Mirror adds to the conviction politician statement "The Old Testament prophets didn't say 'Brothers I want consensus'". There are echoes here of the strict Sunday observance, morality and upbringing, one of the important background strands in Mrs Thatcher's life. The strand is evident again after the election when she entered No 10 quoting St Francis, the "Rejoice" at a victory during the Falklands war, and the later personal interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan, in the speech to the Scottish Assembly. On a slightly disquieting note, Conor Cruise O'Brien said: "She believes, I am sure, in some kind of God; ... This is a God long on efficiency and retribution, rather short on compassion". (The Observer, 29 April) Commenting further on all that is involved in being a 'conviction politician' with its compelling motives, he considers Mrs Thatcher better described as an 'Imperial votaress'.

The Sunday Telegraph (29 April) considered that: "Her personality is such as to lend credence to scare tactics." While in another article: "... one has to agree that she is a politician of conviction. And her strongest conviction is that she is capable of taking on the job of being Prime Minister." The Guardian (25 April) reports: "Her true self, which she

imparts to the meetings of party faithfuls, (she) is the fervent crusader (who believes that free enterprise ... is morally right)."

The Spectator (28 April) likens her campaign to a passion play, where she is a force for good. "This explains her conviction that she is morally right ..."

George Gale suggests that the one woman revolution is based on the natural instinct of fighting for the survival of the fittest.

"She is profoundly disturbing ... (she) fights back and fights fiercely, red in tooth and claw ... She is passionate about her politics, and men are frightened by passionate women ..."

The Express (3 May) decided that Mrs Thatcher remained a disturbing political phenomenon. "A passionate woman is a frightening thing ...". On the 5 May, as Mrs Thatcher "... stepped into history quoting St Francis" the Express quoted Sophocles: "once a woman becomes equal to man she becomes his superior."

Further conviction, if not passion, appear in Mrs Thatcher's own words on the sensitive subject of Feminism, and women with power. The Daily Express (27 April) reported: "I don't like strident females ... I can do an awful (sic) lot for women at the top and women trying to get to the top ..." Daily Mirror (27 April): "I like people who have ability and don't run the feminist ticket too hard. I didn't get my opportunities by being some strident female." Guardian (27 April):

"... people like her (Mrs Thatcher) had got where they were long before there was a Women's Lib movement. It was in the bloodstream ... People got on by virtue of their ability, not their sex ...".

Bearing in mind that the criticism of the shrillness and hectoring or nagging manner had already been made of Mrs Thatcher herself early in the campaign, and for some time before it, there is a certain irony in her choice of words and stated aversions. In view of later charges levelled at her for having an all male cabinet, of being the only woman in the picture for the media, or at official functions, and her apparent disinterest in assisting women towards, or at the top, once again the quotations have a certain incongruity. It is argued in another chapter that when Mrs Thatcher was 'getting on' or 'getting opportunities' in politics, she did not have to be a 'strident' female. She had the invaluable asset of a wealthy husband to assist her passage. Once again there is paradox connected with Mrs Thatcher; here, it is the difference between her practice and her preaching. The motive for 'getting on being in the bloodstream' was a device to recall her upbringing, and the paternal tenets for, and approval of, self-improvement.

A crisp rebuttal of Mrs Thatcher's personal viewpoint appeared in *New Statesman* (27 April). Patrick Wintour and Rick Rogers suggest that the real woman is deliberately obscured (behind Gordon Reece's images)

"... she presents herself as a meritocrat who won her way to the top despite unprivileged beginnings .. the truth (is) that she is a professional mediocrity ... her supreme attitude is the absence of self-awareness ...".

On the question of the making and projection of the 'new image' Adam Raphael and Geoffrey Wansell wrote about 'The Selling of Maggie', suggesting it had been a "skilfully managed and discreet operation", given, in their view, the "sceptical and largely antipathetic electorate". In apparent contradiction of the 'discreet', however, they are very critical of some of the methods used for publicising Mrs Thatcher which appeared in the press and elsewhere:

"It is inherently silly when a politician as frantically busy as she is, is seen tripping out of her Chelsea house to go shopping in her local supermarket, tailed by a huge crowd of television cameramen, arc lights, sound men and continuity girls, researchers and other supernumeraries". (Observer 22 April)

The element of unease recorded in many quarters about the increasing development of all aspects of Mrs Thatcher's 'new image' was echoed by Keith Waterhouse (Daily Mirror) on election day.

"... when a leader has been voice trained to talk to me as if my dog has just died, it is hard to believe that what she is publicly saying squares with what she is privately thinking ..."

On the 4 May, Patrick Cosgrave wrote in the Daily Telegraph:

"... there is always a difference between the private face of a politician and his or her television image. But there are not many politicians ... in whom the difference is so marked as Margaret Thatcher. Again and again I have seen visitors who have been put off if not repelled by her public image come away from a private meeting captivated."

These two quotations raise one of the fundamental problems with Mrs Thatcher and her public image. Although through the years it has been tailored for her by experts to suit her position and to enhance her attributes, she projects this image in such a way as to continually provoke comment. As with a borrowed garment, the fit may not be exact. One

What would YOUR life be like..

# UNDER MRS THATCHER'S BROOMSTICK?

by **TERENCE LANCASTER**



MIRROR POLITICAL EDITOR

**F**OR many people this election is about one person: Margaret Thatcher. It is almost as if she alone is about the big moment in the history of the whole future of Britain. Thatcher leaders have generally evaded the Thatcher question. They have avoided the issue by the simple expedient of saying "Yes, we will" or "No, we won't". But Margaret has not. She has answered the question. She has said: "I will be in charge of the country for the next four years."

And for Tory shills the same. Fighting things about the last stage of the campaign in the way in which they thought in the election. Every path about the Collyer-Thatcher drama. Every path about the Tory gap widening drama. Every path about the Tory gap widening drama. Every path about the Tory gap widening drama.

Some were brought to us well but just as Margaret's election was sold. Richard Nixon at the United States. Mrs Thatcher decided away from a TV debate with Jim Callaghan to give the impression that she was a professional politician. But in fact she was not a professional politician.



Mrs Thatcher's promises

# I'M GOING TO



Page One Comment

**M**RS THATCHER doesn't pay for the promises she is making unless she decides to go beyond OUR means. She has said she will spend more on the NHS. She has said she will spend more on education. She has said she will spend more on housing. She has said she will spend more on the environment. She has said she will spend more on the arts. She has said she will spend more on the sciences. She has said she will spend more on the space programme. She has said she will spend more on the moon. She has said she will spend more on the stars. She has said she will spend more on the galaxies. She has said she will spend more on the universe.

# SPEND, SPEND, SPEND

(but who will pay the Bill, Maggie?)

1979

**YOU can help Margaret Thatcher make Britain really GREAT again**



# GIVE THE GIRL A CHANCE!

**WHY THE EXPRESS BELIEVES IT IS TIME FOR CHANGE! CENTRE PAGES**

The moment Margaret Thatcher stepped into history

# HOME, SWEET HOME!



**AND FROM THE NEW PRIME MINISTER, A MESSAGE OF HOPE FOR THE NATION**

Where there is discord, may we bring harmony. Where there is error, may we bring truth. Where there is doubt, may we bring faith. Where there is despair, may we bring hope.

might question whether there is possible contention between the public persona and the private individual. Possibly it is an enigma of the Churchillian variety.<sup>2</sup>

## EDITORIALS

Compared with 1983 and 1987 there is a limited amount of material in this category. There are some personal and some political comments about Mrs Thatcher in some of the publications reviewed. The tone of the writing is different, and the emphasis is more on the Prime Minister than Mrs Thatcher - within the bias of the publication. *New Statesman*, for example, made little mention of Mrs Thatcher but concentrated on James Callaghan, Labour's performance and the Socialist perspective.

The *Daily* and *Sunday Mirror* editorials do not have the incisiveness of their 1987 counterparts for example. The staccato phrasing is not there, and the choice of words, some of them mildly critical make a different impression altogether. Topics chosen for discussion in 1979 are similar to 1987, for example the cost of changes in Allowances, Defence, NHS and Care Services, and footing the bills but the tone is quite different because of the choice of words. This obviously affects the verbal images where personal allusions are made to Mrs Thatcher. The influence of the image makers is recorded, but again the critical comment lacks the bite of later years. Before the election on the 29 April the *Sunday Mirror* notes:

"She is a bonny fighter. If she does win we wish her well ... But the thoughtful Elector would be wise to reflect ... Perhaps Mrs Thatcher's advisers are right. If you can't sell her policies to the thoughtful Elector, sell her like toothpaste."

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<sup>2</sup> W S Churchill. Broadcast talk. 1 October 1939  
"I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia." It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.

These are not the tones or sentiments of the Mirror group in 1987 before the election. On the 5 May the Daily Mirror says:

"Mrs Thatcher has won a clear victory and must be congratulated ... The nation has voted for a change... But after (that) novelty has worn off she will be judged by her competence not her sex." But will she?

The Daily Mirror used the whole front page and half page two for its one personal editorial the day before the election (2 May). Set beside this editorial Mrs Thatcher, smiling broadly, is pictured wielding a very large broom. The title asks, "What would your life be like under Mrs Thatcher's broomstick?" The editorial continues later:

"For many people this election is about one person. Margaret Thatcher. It shouldn't be. It should be about big issues ... inevitably her personality has dominated the Tory campaign. Inevitably she has become the central issue in the minds of voters."

Leaving aside the domination aspect, the headline has an interesting placement of words and image, particularly in a Labour biased newspaper. The words quoted could easily have come from 1987, and not necessarily from the Daily Mirror. They lose much of the impact anticipated in the title because of the accompanying photograph. The word broomstick has overtones of Victorian discipline and correction, or the older folklore of witches and dubious, perhaps evil, powers. Yet the photograph shows a neat and tidy, though hardly elegant, middle-aged smiling woman with a giant broom. The sweeping clean adage comes to mind, or perhaps the happy housewife image, which is probably not quite what was intended by the editorial. Nonetheless, the foundation is laid for the criticisms and verbal images of later elections. By contrast the Russian 'Iron Lady *does* have a broomstick, but she also becomes rather more like 'The Wicked Witch of the West'.

The Daily and Sunday Express, though clearly in favour of Mrs Thatcher, both concentrate more on the need for a change of government, a change of policies and Prime Minister. The Daily Express considered the election to be a "Trial of Mrs Thatcher", (17 April) "if she loses she will not get another chance to lead the Tories into a General Election". Two weeks later, whilst noting her "indifferent public performance" in front of TV cameras, but her "excellence" when handling an argument, the editorial suggests "there is a great deal in Mrs Thatcher of which we are just beginning to get a glimpse". (2 May)

The Guardian seems to be reserving critical judgement. With a neat echo, or near parody, of a popular hymn, an editorial (17 April) notes:

"Mrs Thatcher, pavilioned in evasion, and shopping for Persil, is currently a media event rather than a force of nature ..."<sup>3</sup>

The housewife politician image is reinforced here, and in other publications throughout the election, and is the one common theme. As we saw, however, some commentators did not give it much credence.

The Guardian editorial of 17 April sagely adds: "Continuity exasperates Mrs Thatcher ..." In 1979 obviously the possibility of another Labour government gave rise to some of Mrs Thatcher's ire. She had been quoted as saying that change should be based on tradition. With some prescience, or perhaps simple political acumen, the 1979 editorial also records that "... devout Conservatives proclaim the need for three full Parliaments and fifteen years for a changed philosophy to truly achieve."

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<sup>3</sup> No 618 in Songs of Praise. The hymn was written by Sir Robert Grant.  
"O Worship the King / All glorious above;  
O gratefully sing / His power and His Love:  
Our Shield and Defender / The ancient of days,  
Pavilioned in splendour / And girded with praise.

The Spectator, whilst certainly supportive is not uncritical. In one editorial it approves her strength of character in challenging the Butskellite consensus, and probably winning the election by so doing. The following week enthusiasm is tempered:

"Mrs Thatcher offers a clear alternative. The manner in which she does so has from time to time irritated all but her most besotted admirers ... very real personal qualities are balanced by faults of personality, a certain shrillness ... a hectoring or nagging manner ..."

Criticisms such as these tend to appear more often in the articles than in the editorials, but these too are common themes.

Editorials in the Daily Telegraph seem to alternate between approval and veiled criticism or wise words of warning. Early in the campaign (16 April) "... Mrs Thatcher states her case with dignity, moderation and statesman-like force ..." By the 23rd: "She is not doctrinaire, but a practical, shrewd and humane politician with a touch of imagination and a more than average aspiration to coherent thought." However, in the same paragraph this approval is tempered with a reminder that although she had successfully drawn the party along a road of her choosing, Mrs Thatcher had used the "...unorthodox and alarming method of moving out in front without warning or adequate consultation." Within the space of a few sentences the personal editorial has spotlighted contradictions which seem to be part of this complex character.

The balance comes on 30 April "... (she is) seen as a brisk, able, high principled, but arguably impetuous innovator" and on the 2 May "... (she should) avoid the shrill tones of a latter day Cassandra ...". By 4 May, however, there are no reservations: "So she has done it, our first woman Prime Minister!" It is argued that in spite of media coverage the nation does not know the real woman.

"Those who know her personally must have wondered how on earth a lady so spirited and warm, so vivacious, inspiring and quick in riposte, could be thus pasteurised and homogenised to seem so restrained and low in key, so out of character."

Only a few days earlier the Telegraph had reported an American columnist's description: "Mrs Thatcher's television smile could chill a daffodil." It makes an astonishing contrast, but it is partially supported by Conor Cruise O'Brien's observation that she has a "humourless twinkle in her eye". (Observer, 29 April) A Telegraph editorial closed with an exhortation: "Good luck to her, anyway, and God bless her," but after a full page, near eulogy, one missed the measured tones of the Times.

The Observer supported the Prime Minister's re-election, and considered him better suited to deal with the political situation and the changes needed. (22, 29 April) Mrs Thatcher's "brand of Conservatism" was judged likely to be more divisive than Churchill's or Macmillan's. (15 April) Moreover, prophetically it also warns that "Mrs Thatcher, untried in very high office, is at present no more than *prima inter pares* ... (If she becomes Prime Minister) then the *donna* will be *prima* indeed; no *pares* any more". (29 April)

## CARTOONS

As the statistics will show later, one of the more noticeable things about the 1979 cartoons is the limited range of images portrayed. There are, for example, no major historical or heroic figures - no Boadicea, no Britannia, no Queen. There is a Birth of Venus, by Garland, (Spectator 28 April) where the apparently gale force zephyrs look like Len Murray and other Trade Union leaders. The Iron Maiden, a Statue of Liberty figure and a Sergeant Major each appear once. In the main, however, Mrs Thatcher is represented in some housewifely guise; sometimes in unusual situations. The Guardian phrase of 25 April



nation's most prodigious housewife" is a good general description. "The prudent housewife" is a different image altogether. It matches some verbal images, but few of the visual ones. (Woodrow Wyatt, Sunday Mirror, 29 April) The housewife is sometimes dowdy in coat and headscarf, sometimes elegant in suit or dress and pearls, depending upon the situation and the comment. Garland parodies an earlier photograph of Mrs Thatcher with the two bags of shopping. His housewife looks equally ungainly and awkward. (Daily Telegraph 26 April). The subtle difference is in the labelled contents of the bags.

The newspaper cartoonists have devoted most of their attention to James Callaghan, the Labour party and the Unions. Mrs Thatcher is portrayed much less frequently. It almost seems as though they were biding their time, either conserving their efforts, or reserving judgement until after general election day.

Of the periodicals, Punch had two collections of cartoons. Jensen's Election Collection was published on the 4 April and featured six images of Mrs Thatcher. Mahood offered Total Abstainer on the 2 May. Jensen portrays a series of femmes fatales, and with his choice of women the pun is most apt. In some, the weapon is in the hand, in others the weapon is the woman herself. With his satirical viewpoint he seems to be asking how 'fatale' or fatal this woman is in 1979, and possibly asking also what she may become. The French adjective has an ambivalence totally lacking in the English translation, while the word 'seductive' hardly matches the wider implications of 'fatale' when used with 'femme'. The nature of a double entendre becomes more profound it seems, when a comparable translation becomes more difficult.

Jensen's 1979 question also seems to beg a further one concerning images to come. The double entendre is found in several of the women portrayed. The Iron Maiden, for example, was a mediaeval instrument of torture. The Iron Maiden here, apart from the comment, has a lemon slice decoration and the House of Commons Mace upside down. For good measure, the helmet plume parodies the 1979 hairstyle, but in fact it more nearly

matches a style yet to come. The selection of images seems to be significant in its ratio of four seductive women to two tormentors, or terrifying females. Most significant of all is the underlying theme of female supremacy. The cartoonist has the skill and insight to depict an image with many possible meanings, all facets of the same character.

The Mahood collection of cartoons on the eve of the election comments on some of the salient points of the campaign. A buxom Liberty figure accompanied by a Knight (James Callaghan) and a miniature monk (David Steel) review the outstanding problems represented by guests at the election party. Ulster is the spectre at the feast. An elegant housewife in suit and pearls, with a media entourage, holds a calf even more incorrectly than in the original photograph. The little animal dreams of being a highly prized and highly priced carcass. The prodigious (or prudent) housewife races along with the shopping trolley piled high; the public are running too, but it's not quite clear why. Probably as his comment on their campaign conduct Mahood shows two householders (Mrs Thatcher and the Prime Minister) emptying their dustbins over the fence into each other's garden.

Most of the Thatcher images depicted, therefore, seem to fit into the 'housewife' theme, and even Liberty is buxom and has a homely, rather than a heroic look. There is nothing here to be labelled passionate or crusading.

As a taste of things to come, probably the most intriguing cartoon is by Trog in the Observer, (29 April, shown later). What makes it particularly interesting now is not only the Queen's activity (practising a curtsy), the pre-election date and the comment, but the benefit of hindsight, since we know of the images and criticisms of Mrs Thatcher still to come, and the media reports of the relationship between the Monarch and Prime Minister.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Looking at the press photographs immediately after reviewing Editorials and Articles, there is another surprise. Many verbal images do not match the visual images. The passionate politician or the fervent crusader do not come to mind when looking at the woman with the large broom, for example (page 96a). A search for a more appropriate photograph to suit the descriptions was not entirely successful, unless one accepts the winning smile and wave from the steps of No. 10 (page 96a). Older photographs certainly do not fit; Tory lady in a hat (Garden Fete 1970 printed in the Daily Mirror 20 April 1979) and the new young politician (First day as MP, 1959 printed in New Statesman 27 April 1979) do not create the right impression for 'crusading', passionate or otherwise.

The word that does come to mind is one which many women journalists applied in the early 1980's - 'Mumsy'. Others were more direct with 'Frumpish' or 'Fussy dresser', implying a not too well developed dress sense. A comparison with Vogue or Tatler photographs for Spring/Summer 1979, however, shows that although Mrs Thatcher was not dressed with the first degree of elegance, she was in fashion for that period. The hairstyle was also appropriate, although the election style had been 'updated', according to one newspaper. The Washington columnist of the 'chilled daffodil' comment referred to Mrs Thatcher as "looking every inch the well turned-out English matron", probably an apt description for her, at that time. The problem may arise, as much from the style of the photograph as from the personal style of Mrs Thatcher herself. Several of the photographs are similar to the type of picture used on the Agony Aunt page in the womens magazines of the period, particularly Womans Weekly. The pose is 'traditional', as in 'looking up from writing at a desk', or 'gazing into the distance'. (Daily Mirror 12 and 17 April respectively).

According to the Daily Mirror (20 April) Gordon Reece "... persuaded Mrs Thatcher to adopt a soft misty look ...". On the same date, however, the Guardian said: "... the efforts to turn her into a softly spoken, intimate woman-next-door, a political Avon lady, have really failed." Several of the photographs look remarkably like Janet Brown impersonating Mrs Thatcher. Perhaps even more ironically, they can also look like Mrs Thatcher parodying herself. The rather coy, or 'too nice' pose makes it look like a deliberate parody.

The failure of the softer image is seen as Mrs Thatcher's instinct to remain what she has always been, a teacher. The journalists imply that she is, by nature, the person who corrects the faults, knows what is right, and exhorts everyone to do better. The Daily Express (1 May) suggests that Mrs Thatcher has been trying too hard: "... to subdue her femininity, so that we can be persuaded to take her seriously as a politician. The result has been far too neutral". In the event of her becoming the first female Prime Minister of Britain, Mrs Thatcher is recommended to make a virtue of it and not a burden.

'Trying too hard' is an apt description of some of the photographs. One in particular illustrates the point. In the Daily Express (25 April) Mrs Thatcher, as the 'prodigious housewife' perhaps, holds up two bags of shopping to illustrate the purchasing power of the pound in 1974 and 1979 - Tory v Labour values. Her facial expression is no doubt meant to be a triumphant smile as she proves a point. Unfortunately, the smile is more of a grimace, because of the effort and holding up the unequal shopping bags gives an ugly look to the suit she is wearing. The reason for the photograph is wasted because the eye is drawn to the awkward stance, the ungainly dress and the strange facial expression. A day later Garland's cartoon in the Daily Telegraph is based on this photograph, with some satirical adjustments.

The other famous photograph from this election is of Mrs Thatcher holding a calf, wrongly as it later transpired. The farm visit was labelled 'an Arcadian musical' by Peter Jenkins in

the Guardian; the non-event was planned for maximum publicity. As in later elections, one photographer stood behind Mrs Thatcher and recorded the media 'arrangements'. This photograph with the calf was also used later in the campaign by Mahood in Punch (2 May) with a visual, pithy alteration.

Other photographs of visits which became 'traditional' during later campaigns included a factory visit (wearing protective clothing) and a lot of swift visits to busy supermarkets to 'stock up' and 'meet a few people'. Arguably a 'swift' visit to a 'busy' supermarket is not only a contradiction, but an impossible feat.

It was interesting to see the photographs during the campaign and immediately afterwards, where Mrs Thatcher was not only near the centre of the picture, but the only woman in the picture. The criticisms of this arrangement came much later. It is difficult to see the 'surrogate male' or the 'obligatory female' in these pictures. During the election, photographs show that the surrounding males are often media men, their numbers swelled by foreign correspondants, according to reports. After the election Mrs Thatcher was dwarfed by policemen when she walked along Downing Street to No. 10. At this election there is little sign of, or verbal comment about, security men; the real isolation of the principal character comes later.

## CONCLUSION

Although the Telegraph replaced the strikebound Times for this 1979 review, it did not prove to be quite the counterweight hoped for. Certainly, a Conservative viewpoint was presented which contrasted with opinions in the Guardian or Daily Mirror, and the Sunday counterparts, but it lacked the gravitas of the Times. One Telegraph editorial did record that, unlike the Times, it could not report the election with an entirely open mind since it supported the Conservative party. Several times a factual report of a speech was interrupted by a few sentences describing her ensemble. Elsewhere, praise was swiftly

followed by criticism. It sometimes seemed as though the Telegraph was trying too hard to be 'balanced' in outlook.

Journalists in several papers saw Mrs Thatcher's personality as a major issue in the general election. Yet from the material reviewed this is not the impression gained. The expectation was to find a great deal more written about her at this time, particularly regarding the possibility of her becoming the first woman prime minister. Far more was made of James Callaghan's avuncular approach and his style of government. Labour's relationship with the Unions, and the exact nature of the changes proposed by the Conservative party and its leader. Mrs Thatcher was certainly an issue, but it seemed she was not the "major" one.

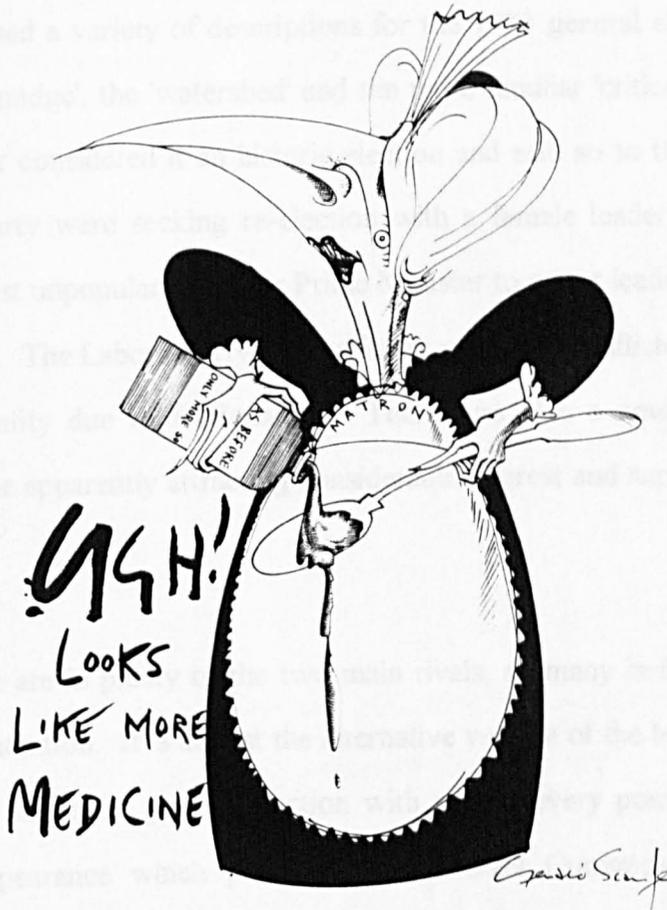
The 1979 cartoons lack the later astringency of say, 1987. More than half the visual images of Mrs Thatcher could fit into a category labelled 'The Housewife - a theme and variations'; the rest were already known having developed during the five years of leadership in Opposition. Winning the election did not immediately bring forth cartoon pictorial comment, let alone a new image.

In the photographs also there is a relatively benign image, including the broomstick picture. There is a good proportion of 'smiling' pictures at this election, even in the Daily Mirror, which is not the case by 1987. However, there is one interesting reversal in the words and images between 1979 and 1987. The 'crusading' and 'passionate' politician is supported by the housewife images in 1979, yet in 1987 the 'power dressed' leader with a crown (or halo) of hair, is calling for the support of 'Mum's Army'.

The prevailing image of Mrs Thatcher, therefore, in 1979 was the one which evolved during the previous five years leading the Opposition. There were no radical changes for the general election, although 'improvements' were incorporated. The major developments were yet to come, during the first term of office as Prime Minister.

CHAPTER 4

THE GENERAL ELECTION 1983



1983

## CHAPTER 4

### THE GENERAL ELECTION 1983

The media used a variety of descriptions for the 1983 general election. 'The Iron Lady v Worzel Gummidge', the 'watershed' and the more familiar 'critical' and 'crucial' definitions. Mrs Thatcher considered it an historic election and said so to the Scottish Conservatives. The Tory Party were seeking re-election with a female leader who had seesawed from being the most unpopular post-war Prime Minister to a war leader of note within the space of four years. The Labour Party was suffering severe, self-inflicted turmoil and, arguably, a crisis of identity due to factionalism. There was also a new contending party on the election scene apparently attracting considerable interest and support, according to opinion polls.

Images there are in plenty of the two main rivals, so many in fact the representations are nearly in contention. It is almost the alternative version of the battle of the titans. Michael Foot fought the 1983 general election with almost every possible drawback. He had a personal appearance which provoked the 'Worzel Gummidge' description, a personal handicap which some of the media overemphasised, a manifesto labelled "the longest suicide note in history", and a preference for old style oratory at the hustings. His opponent had Gordon Reece and other media advisers, she knew the value of the well-timed quotable-quote at the carefully ordered televised public meeting, and she had a well developed 'image consciousness' already commented on in previous chapters. He became a victim of the image the media created about him. 'The Iron Lady' continued to exploit her image with the active encouragement of some sections of the media. Butler and Kavanagh record: "The party strategists were determined to exploit Mrs Thatcher's leadership qualities, particularly as long as Mr Foot was her principal opponent." (Butler & Kavanagh

1983 : 42) Since use of the media is an essential conduit for political communication, 'leadership qualities' include looking and sounding like a leader in public estimation.

Throughout the campaign Mrs Thatcher appeared to be centre stage. What also developed was a 'style of leadership' contest as well as concern over which party might come second, and the size of the majority. However, in this presidential style contest there was little danger these issues would claim the limelight

## ARTICLES

Articles concerning Mrs Thatcher appeared immediately the election was announced. Unlike the Editorials, she was clearly placed centre stage. However, as the campaign developed other people, events and issues achieved prominence, but never quite displaced or upstaged Mrs Thatcher. The spotlight was rarely off her.

The Times commenced with a warning. Geoffrey Smith conceded that Mrs Thatcher was a considerable electoral asset, but he reminded the public that:

"British General Elections are more than popularity contests between rival leaders ... those parties which have depended on the popularity of their leader have invariably lost." (10 May)

George Gale in the Daily Express had no reservations about Mrs Thatcher or her position in the political firmament:

"The issue at the last General Election was Margaret Thatcher. The issue in this election will be Thatcher and Thatcherism. The Prime Minister remains the sun around which all other politicians orbit." (10 May)

The Guardian is far more direct: "For all her provincial Protestant-work-ethic image Mrs Thatcher has embraced Madison Avenue with the free market side of her personality." The article assumes that, as in 1979, the campaign will be a televisual one "... preferably with the sound turned down." (10 May) Colin Welch in the Spectator quoted Mrs Thatcher as dissenting with the view that she was the main issue "... with becoming if unconvincing modesty ... (and) low vibrant tones ...". (21 May)

Hugo Young (Sunday Times, 15 May) took up the 'president under the crown issue'. Quoting a Civil Service friend who had first hand knowledge, Mrs Thatcher would prefer to be:

"... a president with a difference, since the monarchy would, of course, remain in all its historic splendour, and she would be president under the Crown."

As he says "It doesn't quite smack of incipient Bonapartism" since both Monarch and Parliament are to remain, but what is revealed is "... a view of politics ... focused with the utmost intensity upon herself". He suggests the Lady protests too much by incessantly talking issues when patently it is "... the great power of her political persona" she has in mind. Hugo Young later calls attention to a drawback in presidentialism:

"The personality cult can reverse itself with such electric speed. If the fortunes of a party are made to depend so completely on the image and reputation, not to mention the sagacity, of a single person driving all before her, the price of error can be swift and irretrievable ...".

His final thought is reassuring: "any fears of an approaching presidency are premature". Geoffrey Smith (The Times, 18 May) reinforced many of Hugo Young's points, but in a variant of his 10 May comment quoted earlier, he reminded the Conservative party that too

heavy a reliance on the leader's personality might well be their downfall. Leo Abse in the Spectator is of the opinion that:

"... the Tory MPs ... exude no warmth towards the leader. Their ambivalence springs from a sullen recognition of their utter dependence upon her; she alone is likely to lead them to victory ...". (4 June)

The brief visit to the Williamsburg Summit offered opportunities for the status of the leader to be emphasised. Mrs Thatcher was secure enough and self-confident enough to leave a campaign for two days, knowing that morale and momentum would not flag in her absence. For herself, she reinforced her position on the world stage, and as the esteemed friend of a real President, she was assured of maximum media coverage. The election campaign went with her, for, as was noted at home, there could hardly have been a greater contrast in leadership style and presentation, particularly on television, than three minutes of Mrs Thatcher at Williamsburg followed by a brief snip of Michael Foot at the hustings on the main evening news. As the Guardian pointed out, even the locations were propitious. "Mrs Thatcher didn't really have to try. Virginia is good Conservative territory ... a lot of people don't think much good happened after 1770 ...". (30 May) The Sunday Mirror said:

"Her arrival in the 'old colonial' town ... could hardly have been more stage managed ... she drove in regal style ... in an open horse drawn carriage ... like a setting for an American musical ... and a 'Surrey with a fringe on the top'." (29 May)

The Daily Mirror sounded very glum: "It won't even count as an election broadcast". (28 May)

The world leader image may have been one of Mrs Thatcher's favourites but there were several others of which she approved, and inevitably some which were probably ignored. Parallels with royalty in language and style were noted before the General Election, so it was no surprise to find the 'Queen -' tag used both visually and verbally. The 'Victorian values' which appeared in Mrs Thatcher's thoughts and speeches prompted some interesting images. For this election the verbal images included some new variations, and some combining of names, apparently giving greater definition. These are shown and discussed in later chapters.

The Sunday Mirror's contribution was rather intriguing, and quite thought provoking: "She will be portrayed as a combination of all that is best in Boadicea, Florence Nightingale and Joan Collins." Without casting aspersions on Joan Collins, one could perhaps be forgiven for expressing surprise at her inclusion in this trio. Opinions would differ as to what constitutes 'all that is best' in these three women, and qualify this by suggesting that the leadership attributes of the first two are fairly obvious. However, Boadicea has never been particularly noted for her femininity, and Florence Nightingale was considered 'unladylike' in some quarters for pursuing her mission in nursing in the Crimea. But Joan Collins? It seems a reasonable assumption that her contribution lies in the area of presentation, theatricality and glamour; the star is the centre of attraction, photographed from the best side in the best surroundings. The Dallas and Dynasty syndrome overshadows the stage-managed occasion and the pre-packaged politician. The choice of these three women highlights the paradox of the Thatcher image; it is a "synthesis of opposites". (Webster 1990 : 73) This is the obviously feminine exterior, contrasting with the "masculinity of her inner qualities". The word 'robust' beloved by many journalists when describing Mrs Thatcher's views, approach, or dealings could very often be understood to mean masculine, simply because it means forceful, unfeminine, even unladylike or non-ladylike. Anthony Holden in the Sunday Express (5 June) wrote:

"The 'female factor' is complicated by the fact that she is a much tougher less feminine politician - and likes to be perceived as such - than many of her male counterparts."

The Guardian (19 May) said: "Temperamentally, she is a cross between Squadron Leader Guy Gibson and the inventor Dr Barnes Wallis and his Bomb."<sup>1</sup> Although the article has a touch of malicious humour together with straight reporting, there is no sense of incongruity reading the masculine definition of the female personality.

Melanie Phillips writing in Guardian Woman suggests that even in 1983 we already no longer noticed that we had a 'female' Prime Minister. The question 'Is Mrs Thatcher really a man?' was posed "... not as an election smear but by miserable, frustrated, teeth clenched, baffled ... women". The changing image from the pretty suburban housewife to Wonder woman (Jean Rook) or Iron Britannia (Anthony Barnett), stunned electorate, colleagues and opponents alike. Some feminists said "... she's not really a woman is she ...?" Moreover: "The gender factor seems to have been utterly erased by the Thatcher factor, a phenomenon undreamed of in feminist philosophy". (8 June) The ambivalence of a woman with a mission in a man's world, being perceived as a 'gender bender' or intruder is considered in other chapters together with related issues.

Irrespective of gender, the political insult, serves a variety of purposes. Some insults are truly inadvertent, some arise from ignorance, and some from 'malice aforethought'. The results may belittle or demean all persons involved; the receiver may emerge with dignity. Mrs Thatcher was apparently very upset by the heated exchanges and aspersions arising from all the Falklands issues aired during the election campaign. (Daily Mirror, 3 June). . An interesting gender-based difference in reaction to an insult arises here:

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<sup>1</sup> The launch of the Conservative Party manifesto was accompanied by the Dambuster's March.

"When she was herself insulted by Mr Healey last week ... she scorned the man, but it was Mr Pym who told Healey he was 'beyond the pale'. Any man of conscience would feel much more deeply such a rebuke from Mr Pym than any words of Mrs Thatchers." (Terry Coleman, Guardian, 6 June)

After the election, Punch considered that the Tories resented the insults to Mrs Thatcher far more than the insults to the Falklanders' feelings. As a result of the cult of leadership and a second election victory, the Tories had formed the view that it was near treason even to criticise her.

Terry Coleman also pointed out that Mrs Thatcher herself was not reticent in using insults, whether by accident or design. Though he does not say so, it is presumably to maintain control of, and power over, the Cabinet and Party, as an incontrovertible leader. In making his criticism he particularly stresses that she is not the traditional style of Tory, and he thereby sets aside a particular image. The examples cited, with similar ones elsewhere, are of Mrs Thatcher's treatment of 'Wets', and the almost trainer-like display of colleagues performing to order at the daily Press conferences. Mr Pym is particularly named.

"She did not know ... that she was insulting Mr Pym after he had made the mistake of saying a majority of 50 to 100 would be enough ... . She wanted a landslide and called his caution that of an ex-chief whip. There was, she said, a club of ex-chief whips who were very unusual people ... another ex-chief whip was Mr Heath, who she does not love, and whom she also once insulted by offering him the post of ambassador to Washington ... . She lacks the loyalty which is instinctive to the older Patrician Tories ... " (6 June)

Under the title 'The Importance of the Thatcher-Pym Fracas' Geoffrey Smith in The Times put an alternative point of view on the need for decisive actions and strong leadership.

"... in slapping down Mr Pym in the way she did, Mrs Thatcher was brusque but correct. She will be seen as having displayed the very strength of leadership for which the electorate admires her beyond all other qualities ...".

Political opponents saw Mrs Thatcher's stated desire for a very large majority in quite a different light, and some considered that it displayed a near fanatical desire for dominance. A different interpretation of strong leadership altogether, producing a quite different image. At this stage also, there were no Machiavellian comparisons in the researched material which would have given another dimension to the Image.

Mrs Thatcher's call for a return to 'Victorian Values' prompted many comments. Some were brief, some were derisory, there were a few plaudits. Out of all the publications only *New Statesman* chose to make a particular issue of this topic. (27 May) Some of Mrs Thatcher's key phrases and precepts indicative of the values were analysed. Raphael Samuel, for example, considered that modern 'soft focus nostalgia' obscured reality, for the genuine Victorian values were a very mixed blessing, depending on wealth, class and gender.

"'Victorian values' Mrs Thatcher tells us 'are perennial', they are the qualities which make Britain great. Ironically, Victorian England becomes ... a symbol of vanished stability ... it exists in allegory rather than actual time ... For Mrs Thatcher, it also occupies the enchanted space which memory accords to childhood ... there is a constant elision between the precepts of her own childhood and those of an earlier epoch".

He goes on to point out that Mrs Thatcher frequently uses Victorian phrases to describe her childhood. This is nearly an anachronism since she grew up in "semi-rural Grantham" in the 1920's and 1930's, the daughter of a "comfortably-off shop owner ... (She was)

uttering the limited conventional wisdom which had percolated down at several generations removed".

Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall question the values of 'Home Sweet Home' and 'Happy Families'. They suggest it was: "... a model, as much an ideal in its own time as ours. Its ideological presence was hard to escape in Victorian society ... it was strictly hierarchical, and domestic order was founded on a chain of dependencies."

They argue also that even in its own time this ideal was being questioned and there were some very powerful analyses published.

"In exhorting us to return to 'Victorian Values', Mrs Thatcher is appealing to a myth, which glosses over ... contradictions and hides the cost of nineteenth century family life. Myths help us to believe the impossible ... Her myth has been selectively reconstructed and echoes what was a myth in its own time".

Justice with Law and Order, Poor Laws and Market Forces, and Patriotism are also considered. The consensus seems to be that nostalgia can blind us to the truth, so that the view is enchanting from this distance. We should, therefore, question the judgement of those who do not, or who cannot, or who prefer not to differentiate between actual and allegorical time.

In complete contrast, the soundness of Mrs Thatcher's is examined in two personal interviews, by Jean Rook in the Daily Express and Anne Robinson in the Daily Mirror. Under the title 'Up, up and away with Wonderwoman', in some rather florid language, perhaps intentionally so, Jean Rook writes: (23 May)

"Surging up the runway at 145 miles an hour, I can feel Margaret Thatcher vibrating with crusading passion ... She's an astonishing bird. A Superwoman who could take off from Gatwick without her BAC-111 wings".

The interview, which was apparently "roared" above the noise of the engines, particularly emphasis the vitality and stamina of the Prime Minister, who considers herself more fit than when she fought her first election. The feature records the day long visit to Cornwall, and the admiration of some American visitors for the pace of the day, and the Prime Minister's capacity for "pressing the flesh". Walter Kronkite was apparently profuse in his praise. Beside this interview there is a shorter article by the Fashion Editor accompanied by 'then and now' photographs. Mrs Thatcher is quoted as saying that there is no secret about her youthful appearance, except that she loves her job. "(she) is a perfect example of what power, confidence and success can do for a women's sense of style". The photographs clearly show that the image has been changed by a new hairstyle, dental work, more stylish and less matronly clothes and some loss of weight.

Anne Robinson's article (6 June) entitled 'Mrs Thatcher's Circus' records three days of visiting. The place, the time and the unemployment figure are carefully detailed, as well as:

"Six security guards, two Press officers, one public relations man, five paid hangers-on, her husband Denis ... and daughter Carol". Probably intentionally, one is reminded of a Christmas carol.

Anne Robinson points out that on this tour the priority is obviously media coverage, rather than meeting and listening to the people. The photo opportunity and the non-event are reported as newsmaking events, just as in 1979. There is no news in, or beside, this article; it concerns Mrs Thatcher's style of dressing, cosmetic dentistry, and change of image.

What is particularly remarked on is her voice. "The ever-so-genteel voice has gone, a harsh, defiant, raw bellow has taken its place".

In a similar view, Patrick Bishop in *The Observer* (22 May) notes an aspect of the campaign, and implicitly questions the value.

"(it) will be marked with a robust lack of modesty that will make more sensitive Tories cringe ... Mrs Thatcher has aided and abetted the reproduction of scenes showing her gazing in apparent fascination at a dead skate, or sitting on a tractor and cuddling a cow".

Mrs Thatcher's zest and vitality, not only for her job but also during the election campaign and the Williamsburg visit, are recorded by several of the publications. *The Sunday Express* talks of her "... bouncing with confidence" and she "plunged" into talks with the six Summit colleagues, "... she set out to do three days work in one". (29 May) *The Sunday Mirror* (5 June) speaks of her "... still looking bandbox fresh" after a full day in Leicester, and protesters in a crowd being "overwhelmed and silenced by her onslaught on patriotism, thrift and obedience" - three good religious tenets. *The Daily Express* reported the return from Williamsburg:

"Thanks to a bed fit for a queen, she arrived at Heathrow looking buoyant and bright eyed. Ninety minutes later she was discussing election tactics with her party chiefs". (31 May)

*The Guardian* considered that Mrs Thatcher showed "... little sign of any weariness despite her rigorous routine over the last few days". (29 May) Peter Fiddick drew attention not only to "the voice" but to the pace of delivery.

Where have all the rain drops gone?

Between now and Saturday it's SUMMER!

By JAMES FRASER... It's a hot day in London... The sun is shining... The rain has stopped...

What all bossy women should know-by Anne Robinson



NEW Mirror! See Page 21

BUMBLING BENNY, THE SUAVE MAN ABOUT TOWN



Thatcher's black day



By TERENCE LANCASTER Mirror Political Editor

PREMIER Margaret Thatcher's decision for naming unopposed Blair up to her last party...

- Top Tory in storm over jobs
Candidate who stood for the MF
Troops in plan to hit strikers

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

TWO FACES



Mirror Comment

WHEN Mr. Kenny Everett bounced onto the stage at a Conservative youth rally and shrieked: 'Let's bomb Russia... Let's kick Mitchell's face's stick away,' he was being himself.

I won't betray my lover, says Shirley

SHIRLEY GIBBY... I won't betray my lover... I'm a woman of my word...

By PAUL GIBBY... Mr. Thatcher's decision to name Blair...



It is an attitude rather than a philosophy... Mrs. Thatcher may be right when she says Mr. Everett is 'humorous'.

1983

BACK AT No. 10, MAGGIE GOES TO WORK ON HER NEW CABINET

Home again

Reshuffle? I've learned how to carve, she says



By JOHN BARDEN Political Editor... MRS THATCHER, wearing a broad smile and a blue dress, walked among cheering crowds in Downing Street yesterday after her election victory.

FINAL STATE OF THE PARTIES: Tories 397, Labour 209, Lib/SDP 23, Others 21, Majority 144

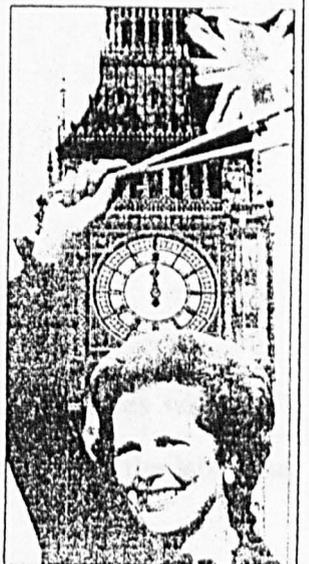
THE FULL RESULTS YOUR EIGHT-PAGE ELECTION PULLOUT STARTS ON PAGE 19

THE LANDMARK ELECTION Now is the hour

Only one way for Britain

THE TUMULT and the shouting have died down. The politicians have had their say. Now it is YOUR turn.

PAGE ONE OPINION



Bitter and bloody

Maggie is the man

"It only takes a still photograph of the arrival in Downing Street four years ago to evoke the sound of that voice ... low, slow and begging for Janet Brown to send it up... How different from the piping tones of two or three years earlier ... an achievement we knew of her media guru giving her calmness, gravitas and time to think in the middle of a sentence. The style has not actually disappeared, but suddenly in this campaign a change can be noted. The lady talks faster ..."  
(Guardian, 2 June)

One wonders if this speed is to prevent the opposition getting a word in, or to prevent critics airing their views, or perhaps it is simply that Mrs Thatcher's vitality runs away with the words. It may be part of her enthusiasm for the job, and as such is just a piece of the whole image.

The Sunday Times (22 May) made a brief comparison of three leaders' images; David Steel was not included.

"(On television news) Mrs Thatcher stepping immaculate from her helicopter (to meet President Reagan), ... Michael Foot peering myopically over the lectern at St George's Hall, Bradford, and Roy Jenkins walking the streets of Glasgow. For voters to contemplate either in her place will seem an act of inexcusable lèse-majesté".

It seems a very neat précis at this stage.

## **EDITORIALS**

As will be shown later, statistically, editorials for 1983 have more similarities with 1979 than those of 1987. The language is also nearer to the earlier election than the later one.

Once again, the writing is relatively restrained and temperate, even when being critical, or dealing with events which brought Falklands issues to the fore, or questioning the value of the Williamsburg visit. The Daily and Sunday Mirror are very critical in some editorials but the writing does not match that of 1987. The criticism in the Guardian and Observer, as might be expected, is often witty, always precise and perceptive.

Some of the descriptions which appeared included 'Queen Maggie' in the Sunday Mirror (12 June), 'ersatz Churchillianism' in New Statesman (3 June) and some messianic allusions in the Spectator (11 June) and the New Statesman (3 June). 'Ayatollah' appeared in the Guardian (6 June). Geological forces also appeared in the campaign, in the form of landslips, landslides and earthquakes. The cartoonists also found these forms helpful in the creation of some images.

A significant feature in the Editorials is that there is so little comment about Mrs Thatcher early on in the campaign. This accords with the Conservative plan, repeating a 1979 ploy, when Mrs Thatcher was "kept" for the second half of the campaign. She was not inactive, merely keeping a slightly lower profile. Although the statistics start mid-May, most of the 'image' comment comes in the last nine or ten days before the election, that is, from the time of the Williamsburg visit onwards. The exception is The Times which briefly aired the 'President Thatcher' subject on the 18 May, and then had a gap in 'Thatcher' comment until the 31 May. The Times editorial was the only one to deal with this particular issue. In this context, however, it is the possibility of a fundamental change in the method of governing which is being considered, and not the style of the election campaign. Under the heading 'Prima inter Pares' the editorial notes an opinion circulating that "Mrs Thatcher aspires to be a president under the crown"; John Silkin's description of "... a very presidential kind of Prime Minister"; and the inevitable personalising of election contests. Nonetheless, it considers that the 'President Thatcher' image is misplaced, for all that "... British Cabinet Government is a robust and flexible instrument". Readers are reminded that any

remodelling of the Cabinet system would have to survive a change of government, since it might otherwise be seen as "... an artefact of an overmighty premier". (18 May)

In talking about political luck, or the lack of it, and seeming to argue against the possibility of such a phenomenon, the Guardian resorted to the most interesting word of 'happenstance'. (8 June) It concluded that without happenstance, Mrs Thatcher would never have become leader of the Conservative party. "(She was) an accident, not an inevitability". By contrast the editorial goes on to point out that happenstance should not be applied to the "threshings and Sunderings on the left ..." since 1979. Coupled with the "... confusion of who was leading what ..." in the Alliance, the editorial was of the opinion that Mrs Thatcher "... is heading for absurd dominance in the new Parliament". It anticipated a win by default.

Early in the campaign the Spectator commented, with some perception:

"Elections should take place with the full vulgarity and fierceness which are proper to democratic politics. No legal method of electioneering should be eschewed ...".

(21 May)

Thus, the way is paved for the presidential style, the Falklands factor and the inevitable insults. Commenting on the wit and wisdom of MP's insults, and in particular those arising from the Falklands events, the Daily Mirror observed:

"It would be a pity if Denis Healey's gaffe about Mrs Thatcher put an end to political insults. Election campaigns wouldn't be the same without them ... Politicians have always insulted each other ..." (4 June)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Churchill called Atlee 'A sheep in sheep's clothing' and considered Bevan 'a squalid nuisance'. Bevan said Churchill was a 'captain of disaster'. (Daily Mirror, 4 June)

Insults are traded for various reasons, and they are a traditional and ancient form of 'one-upmanship' by humbling the opponent. By extension, they also deflate an ego or prick a bubble of pretentiousness, so that a personality or image may be reduced in size and kept in perspective.

The 'bonny fighter' of the 1979 campaign whom the Sunday Mirror wished well, even though she would have to be sold like toothpaste because her Advisers could not sell her policies, has disappeared by 1983. Instead, the editorial deprecates her lack of achievement and failures in political promises in this country, despite being courageous and achieving world stature. (5 June) The Daily Mirror considers the campaign to be "... polished, professional and phoney"; by implication the Thatcher image is central to this criticism. (30 May) The Guardian notes that even though Mrs Thatcher "dithered desperately" about if and when to call the election, "... put her in a corner, with only one exit, and she will fight her way out with awesome determination ..." (26 May) Against this, however, in a later editorial, it sets the weakness of the Opposition which allows her an "absurdly easy ride ... (and) makes her look so hugely invincible".

The piece continues in a way which, read out of context, one could easily mistake for 1987 criticism:

"She has shown throughout a serenity, a certainty, an imperious self-confidence which few voters can have seen in any British politician in their lifetimes and which many will fervently hope never to see again .... If present trends continue (i.e. a landslide victory occurs) ... increasingly she will shape her government, and seek to shape the country, in her own inflexible image." (30 May)

The Daily Express, on similar dates, presented the Conservative version of these same observations. On the 30 May Mrs Thatcher was called 'the dominant personality' at the

Williamsburg conference, thriving in the atmosphere and 'commanding respect'. On the 1 June it considered that the two factors having a "wholly disproportionate influence" on the campaign were:

"The personal stature of the Prime Minister and the colossal ineptitude of the Opposition parties. The Tories (have been) running a rather laid-back, lack lustre campaign ... with honourable exceptions". [Mrs Thatcher, Messrs Tebbit and Heseltine.]

In the judgement of *New Statesman*, since Labour failed by default in having no convincing modern or radical appeal, Mrs Thatcher had an "... unregainable lead in the campaign (although) an essentially negative lead." (27 May) The following week the contention was that 'a national catastrophe' would follow a re-election with a 'thumping majority'. The depth of concern was expressed:

"Since she became intoxicated by draughts of ersatz Churchillianism while playing the role of the great war leader during the Falklands campaign, what were previously just ideological prejudices have become a messianic conviction. At times during this election campaign she has entirely lost touch with reality ..." (3 June)

It is conceded, however, that Mrs Thatcher is "... not a stupid or ill-educated woman ...". The final censure (10 June) states that "The Prime Minister's manic presentation is grating on even some traditional Tory supporters". The conclusion is that nothing short of a "... political earthquake will stop her now". When 'ideological prejudices' become 'messianic convictions' it is perhaps not too surprising to find 'manic presentation' following closely. The choice of words, with their variety of alternative meanings challenges the reader to draw conclusions according to personal political preferences. It seems to call into question whether the image conjured up is one to be venerated. Rhetorically, one may wonder, perhaps, if a hint of fiendishness is not also implied.

The Spectator doubts that people believe in Mrs Thatcher's revolutionary image, otherwise she would not be so popular. It also suggests that:

"... the most faithful followers of the Thatcher cult are to be found within the Labour Party, (because they think) the leader of the Tory Party is some sort of messianic figure bent upon a complete transformation of our society." (5 June)

Her choice of words, in a Walden interview, "I, as a government ..." belong to such an image. (5 June)

The Guardian neatly combined many of the foregoing points on 6 June, in a last look at the Conservatives before the general election.

"For Mrs Thatcher, on her record, has not always proved the heedless radical of legend ... The record, for the most part, betokens a narrow corner-shop caution rather than an Ayatollah in a two-piece silken suit ... Yet there is always unease when a person with the fervour of Aimee Semple Macpherson so repeatedly brooks no argument in the pursuit of her voices and a vision ..."

This seems to indicate that Mrs Thatcher appeared to have stayed true to her roots and upbringing, quite apart from the paternal principles often quoted, and the Methodist ordinance in the family home over the shop. Equally, it seems slightly at odds with the St Joan aspect, and the hint of schizophrenic images.

The Observer editorials, though consistently critical of the Conservatives, did not particularly concentrate on Mrs Thatcher until 5 June. The concern then was not for presidential images, or other pretensions, but the need for an "effective opposition - both in her own ranks and in Parliament - to curb some of her wayward instincts (and policies)".

One is reminded of the Observer's 1979 warning that if the 'Donna' became 'prima' there would be no 'pares'.

The Sunday Times, declaring its non-affiliation to any party, seemed to wish to bring some equilibrium to the final days before the election. Although acknowledging the presidential style of the campaign, and Mrs Thatcher's pervasive influence, it substituted two familiar images, one of which - the headmistress - Mrs Thatcher herself was known to approve.

"We do not, in this country, have a presidential system. It is no good pretending, however, that this is an election like others. Mrs Thatcher has stamped it with her own personality, as a silversmith puts his mark upon his own creation ... She has certainly given the appearance ... of being able to administer the proverbial smack of firm government; the phrase itself accords well with her role, as perceived by many people, of nanny or headmistress ..."

There is one final thought, as though to clinch an argument: "(she is) not the fiend in human form that her critics discern". On the day after the election The Times advised the returning Prime Minister: "Listen to the people".

## CARTOONS

Some of the images used were already familiar and almost traditional. Mrs Thatcher was 'herself' as in the No 10 strip (Sunday Express) or The Leader as in 'Maggie Rules OK' (Private Eye), Britannia, Boadicea, Nanny, Matron and The Witch also appeared, as did The Pilot, the Admiral and the Captain/Skipper.

Among the new or less frequently used images were: the gardener, the Mastermind contestant, Snow White, the Racing Driver, the mountaineer, the Professor and the Bailiff. The bestiary included a white sheep and a hare. There were two other particularly

interesting ones: Blessed Margaret and a Grotesque. This latter word is used here at present for want of a better description, and gorgon does not seem to be quite correct. There are several line drawings, some more flattering than others. Most of them appear in the Daily Mirror, either beside excerpts from a recently published book, a few to advertise a forthcoming article, and several seem to be instead of a photograph.

Variations on the themes of Trooping the colour were most interesting. Once again Mrs Thatcher's face supplanted a royal one. This time it was the Queen's features which suffered. A line drawing by John Walsh of Her Majesty on Burmese, taking the salute, with guardsmen behind her, became a smiling Mrs Thatcher with a halo-like hairstyle. The illustration accompanied an editorial entitled 'Queen Maggie. Why her landslide isn't quite'. (12 June). There are various cynical thoughts here, not least of them the editorial comment "It is probably true that Mrs Thatcher is now the most powerful woman in this country's history". Mrs Thatcher's prime ministerial visits to other countries which practically become royal tours were still in the future. The use of the royal pronoun continued. Gerald Scarfe in the Sunday Times (12 June) had his sharp beaked nose Premier in a uniform with medal ribbons and epaulettes of a considerable size, obviously wearing a skirt perched sideways on a new variation of a horse. The body is a missile done up in a harness with amazingly thin horses legs. The missile has a Union Jack on it and the Image is not only perched wrong-side on for side saddle riding, it is also saluting with the wrong hand. Gerald Scarfe has cannily transposed his drawing, so that nothing is as it should be,<sup>3</sup> that is, everything is wrong, and thus he underlines his cynical view of the Image.

In the Daily Mirror, Griffen introduces what can only be called a 'Grotesque' as Mrs Thatcher's alter ego. It lurks behind a very toothy smiling Prime Minister with super bouffant hair, (and bearing some resemblance to the Princess Royal), which appears on the front page beside the Editorial labelled 'Two Faces' (7 June). The Grotesque is not

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<sup>3</sup> Perhaps it is the mirror world of "Alice through the Looking-Glass".

identical with an image which appears in 1987 in academic robes, but it has similarities and seems to be a 'pilot' drawing awaiting a later adaptation. The curious likeness of the cartoon image to the Princess Royal is really rather ironic, given Mrs Thatcher's royal tendencies and great regard for the monarchy.

The 'Blessed Margaret' image appears in a (stained) glass window. The edifice is The Chapel of the Blessed Margaret and the Falklands Martyrs, drawn by Gibbard in the *Guardian* (4 June). The window has been broken by Denis Healey with a catapult, dropping a note to say: "Sorry! I withdraw that shot", as he runs towards Michael Foot with an angry mob after him. The latter looks very apprehensive. The punch line: "Here's your big chance - now I've got their attention you convert 'em!" This is one of many 'topical' cartoons which appeared during the campaign. The 'shot' here refers to the personal remarks made when the Falklands issues became prominent. To a lesser extent Foot's apparent panic emphasises the difference in public perception between himself and Mrs Thatcher, although these differences were exaggerated by the media themselves. The 'Blessed Margaret' label raises another ironic, near royal connection. At a much earlier date Norman St John Stevas had nicknamed Mrs Thatcher "Blessed Margaret", and Princess Margaret was "the divine Margaret".

As noted earlier in the chapter, the media helped to promote the contrasts between Mrs Thatcher and Michael Foot, particularly his personal handicap, and preferred style of campaigning. Many cartoonists used him as the butt of the joke in varied situations. Mrs Thatcher usually triumphed at his expense. When she was the smug looking hare taking a nap on the end of the mobile pavement at the airport, he was the tortoise hampered with baggage (a manifesto) struggling along. Well ahead of him Roy Jenkins and David Steel are trying to run. (*Guardian*, 7 June) On the *Spectator* cover (4 June) Garland depicts him with his walking stick whistling his dog, Denis Healey, to chase a very skittish hare, Mrs Thatcher. The other interesting point to this cartoon is that by this date many cartoonists had transposed Michael Foot and Denis Healey in the 'man and his dog' theme.

Topical points in the election campaign prompt some of the 'Thatcher' images. The inflation rate leads Mrs Thatcher, as a hearty golfer, to shout "Four %" as she plays a long shot. (Guardian, 19 May). As a jump-jet pilot she rescues a floating voter whilst other leaders wave butterfly nets (Daily Express, 9 June). When all the leaders are dancing around the MORI maypole Michael Foot is hampered with a zimmer, Roy Jenkins and David Steel have their ribbons twisted, Mrs Thatcher alone moves freely, making her ribbon pattern the pole. (Guardian, 28 May). In the Times (31 May) a colossus of a mountaineer, properly clad and equipped bestrides the twin mountain peaks marked Williamsburg and Election. The other leaders, ill prepared by comparison, make little progress around one mountain.

Obviously not all the images are flattering or favourable. In New Statesman, for example, Steadman, after da Vinci has a new slant on a famous picture. Called "The Adoration of the Maggie", he depicts a sharp featured baby cradled by a Virgin with a 'City gent' head in a bowler; the other details of the picture are equally satirical (27 May)<sup>4</sup>. The following week Mrs Thatcher has become a wildly gloating witch, complete with steeple crowned hat, standing on the cliff top after a landslide. The rocks from the fall have caused chaos and destruction amongst the population below. There is an appropriately hissing, evil cat, but it is not clear whether this Witch's Familiar represents anyone in particular. (3 June).

Peter Brookes in The Times leans on Rembrandt's 'Anatomy Lesson' for his view of Mrs Thatcher and the NHS. The demonstrating Professor (or Doctor) in dark hat and costume with pearls, earrings and lace collar, appears to be gloating over severing an arm of the NHS 'body' with nothing more than a pair of scissors. The 'students' - Messrs Foot, Healey, Benn, Hattersley and Shore are apparently horrified. (1 June). Again in The Times, Peter Brookes depicts St Margaret of Assisi 1983. A sharp featured, beak nosed

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<sup>4</sup> Private Eye used the same picture, but with a different group of characters for a front cover in December 1992. John Major is the Infant.

Mrs Thatcher in monks robes and sandals stands outside No 10 with vultures and other birds of prey, holding a sheet with part of the famous St Francis prayer on it. (7 June).

The strip cartoons had some pithy comments and interesting situations. Private Eye had 'Maggie Rules OK' by John Kent. On the 2 June an at first irate Prime Minister wants Mr Pym and some colleagues to know why a landslide is important. By the punch line there is a smile and the coup de grace: "... then I can get rid of you lot". A smirking Norman Tebbit, apple in hand, waits behind the door. The Sunday Express had 'No 10' by Maddox, where Mrs Thatcher practices a brand of one-upmanship on her major domo and chef. The Guardian had two nicely honed lines of satire. The 'IF' cartoons of Steve Bell featured a troop of Falkland penguins who had flown in specially to support Mrs Thatcher. Whilst waiting for the event they mount a 'politically incorrect' musical extravaganza based, not surprisingly, on the Falklands. The leading female is a Thatcher lookalike with pearls and a handbag, and the male has a Reagan quiff and manner of speaking. The director bears some resemblance to Gordon Reece. The extremely patriotic penguins give their all for the Show, only to discover they are not eligible to vote in the election. They fly out in a huff. The second of the Guardian cartoon strips 'What the Dickens' is by Carla Ostrer. Two Victorian characters review the general election. One seems to be Micawber, the other could be his son, or any other of the boys from Dickens' novels. Mrs Thatchers' soft focus nostalgia' is reversed as the Victorians observe, question and comment on what is happening during the campaign. Mrs Thatcher appears as herself in some of the situations which highlight the idiosyncrasies and practices of all parties during the campaign.

A cartoon or representation may be considered successful if it provokes a reaction of some kind. By simply naming Mrs Thatcher's images, words come to mind, and probably also pithy statements. It seems at this stage the cartoonists made some particularly appropriate representations through which they made their comments and criticisms of the woman and her public image. The images have remained and in many cases been refined, but above all they are remembered.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

When compared with photographs from the 1979 campaign, those of 1983 certainly show some of the image changes that had taken place. Sometimes there is a more elegant and less fussy style of dressing which draws attention to the weight loss. The change of hairstyle and the dental work also make a difference. There has probably also been a change in the style of make-up, as well as more carefully chosen camera angles. It is a different style of maturity, and Mrs Thatcher actually does look younger. There are also the early signs of the 1987 executive power dressing. "But Mrs Thatcher's image has been worked over by experts. She is an example of the conscious use of the semiology of dress - and a skilful use at that". (Guardian, 2 June)

Some photo-opportunity pictures are represented in visits to factories or other carefully selected locations where 'dressing-up' in special clothing was necessary, not only for Mrs Thatcher but the cameramen and journalists as well.. A visit to a Marzipan factory necessitated a mop cap and white overall "to be on the production line" was featured by the Daily Mirror and the Daily Express. (Both, 7 June) The Guardian preferred a visit to a Bakery for a production line protective clothing picture. (2 June) Country visits often necessitate the 'the headscarf and wellies' style. The Daily Mirror also showed Mrs Thatcher in hard hat and overalls driving a dumper truck, during an 'industry' visit. Variations included a visit to Padstow and the fishermen and a Lifeboat station, plus crew, on the south coast. Supermarkets also featured, but the 'just a housewife' image was not prominent. The alternative picture of Mrs Thatcher with the calf, from 1979 appeared again in the Guardian. (10 May) This picture shows her sitting on the grass beside the prostrate little animal, stroking it. The comment is "Mrs Thatcher and friend. The calf lived to tell the tale". Another old traditional pose also appeared, this time the Campaign bus replaced the Office or Study. "Mrs Thatcher at work ..." pen in hand, looks up for the camera shot. Although the photo-opportunity is a classic pseudo-event, contrived, rarely

spontaneous, and usually without a message, we are meant to infer that the message is being spread, as Mrs Thatcher meets the people. Pictures of Mrs Thatcher at the morning press conferences, with or without Cabinet colleagues, and with no members of the public present are an alternative version of spreading the word. This time it is to the media and recorded by some of them.

The visit to Williamsburg extended the scope of the election campaign for Mrs Thatcher. Being photographed with President Reagan reinforced the world Stateswoman image, although application of Boorstin's criteria for the pseudo-event might undermine the value of the occasion. Several of the photographs were taken during the leaders' relaxed moments in gardens and a few on arrival and departure. The Times and The Guardian printed only one picture each, 30 May, recording the visit, and perhaps significantly, both chose to show the two leaders leaving church after morning service. The Daily Express illustrated the Press conference at the end of the American visit, 11.30 pm their time, the arrival at Heathrow 8.45 am, and the arrival 'to start work' at Smith Square by 10.15 am, with a change of outfit. (31 May) The accompanying report speaks of Mrs Thatcher being 'bright and buoyant' as well as remarking on her stamina. The 'Heathrow' picture is actually far more complimentary, than the 'Smith Square' one. The choice of a 'fussy style' dress, for Smith Square, reminiscent of the 1979 styles, on an obviously windy day is far less elegant than the tailored suit with frilled blouse in which she travelled (page 432a).

Of the more unusual photographs, The Daily Mirror (6 June) showed Mrs Thatcher looking quite angry: "Finchley. What's she scented? Not a Labour voter, surely!"(page 432a) It accompanies the Anne Robinson article on Mrs Thatcher's Circus. This particular picture is more akin to the less than flattering ones which the Daily Mirror uses quite extensively in 1987. This is exactly the type of unguarded moment that the campaign organisers dread, the one truly spontaneous moment during a carefully planned visit.

Private Eye used an archive photograph of Mrs Thatcher with Harold Wilson and James Callaghan (probably taken in the House of Commons) for the front cover of their Election Special (3 June). Mrs Thatcher's speech bubble thanks them both very much for their support. She is in one of her 'Mumsy' style dresses with shoes to match, and a scarf draped around her neck, plus her necklace and earrings. Her image does not look very business like, compared with the two men in their dark suits.

New Statesman had a rather fine photomontage of Mrs Thatcher's stern face superimposed on a very regal Queen Victoria, complete with jewels, Orders, a miniature imperial crown and a veil. This impressive image was on the cover of their Victorian Values supplement, and part of it was also on the front cover of the magazine (27 May).<sup>5</sup> The photograph of Queen Victoria is one taken during the later years of her life when the sylph like young Queen had given way to a superabundance of Imperial Majesty. Bearing in mind the nature of the articles in the supplement and the criticisms they make of Mrs Thatcher's 'soft focus nostalgia, and allegorical time', this image seems particularly apposite. The regal phrases and bearing continue to develop and expand, and remain subjects of comment, criticism and caricature for the rest of Mrs Thatcher's prime ministerial years.

By accident or design the messianic theme reappeared twice in visual form in the Guardian. In the first (23 May) there are no details of the location, but Mrs Thatcher is certainly in a church standing at a lectern with her back to the altar. The cross therefore appears some way above her head, and the embroidery of the altar frontal is immediately behind her head. Although the detail of the embroidered design is not too clear, two figures are holding a laurel wreath which gives a halo like effect, with a crown just above the halo. The photograph is captioned: "Another lesson from Mrs Thatcher?", and it accompanies an

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<sup>5</sup> Part of this same photomontage is used again by The Guardian, 11 December 1989. A photograph of the EEC in session at Strasbourg, in the large open circle layout, has the head and shoulders of 'Queen Margaret' towering through the centre of the circle.

article by Salmon Rushdie, "She has persuaded the nation that everything which goes wrong is an act of God".

The second photograph (27 May) captioned: "Missionary zeal: Mrs Thatcher campaigning vigorously". The speaker's platform has been set up in front of a cinema advertising the film 'The Missionary'. Mrs Thatcher has the Committee around her, a Conservative banner beside her, and an amplifier nearby. The banner headline is above her. One of the problems of enhancing the image by any legitimate means is maintaining the high profile without reducing the event to bathos, or exposing it to derision. In spite of careful planning the location may sometimes overpower the image.

The Wembley location, and a night with all the stars had just about everything the organisers could have wished for in their careful planning. Mrs Thatcher was 'the star'. The photographs show her alone, dramatically placed against a dark background, or with groups of smiling people prominent in their own spheres. The audience was youthful and wildly enthusiastic, but out of sight in the pictures. The flaw in the extravaganza was Kenny Everett, and the Image was carefully distanced from the 'warm-up man' in most media reports the following day.

As in 1979 the Daily Mirror had one exceptional photograph of Mrs Thatcher on the front page one day. The headline was 'Thatcher's black day' and the article concerned soaring unemployment. Beside it was a photograph from Mrs Thatcher's visit to a Cornish farm; a tweed suit, scarf and green wellies type of day, with an appropriate political message. The picture is honest but not flattering. Mrs Thatcher, for once looking dishevelled, has her face screwed up obviously unhappy and probably saying "yuk" at the texture and smell of what she is holding. "On the campaign trail ... Mrs Thatcher visited a Cornish farm on Friday. There she posed for photographers with a handful of silage". The image the Mirror intended to portray here is open to question, but inadvertently perhaps they have shown a

rare and natural person. There is a nice irony in the juxtaposition of the headline and the photograph. This is a good example of the photo-opportunity descending to mediocrity.

The ceremony of Trooping the Colour rather neatly links the visual images from the Photograph and Cartoon sections. The Sunday Mirror (12 June) recorded Mrs Thatcher's presence at the event with a picture of her in a rather distinctive hat, smiling very happily. Under the heading 'Thatcher gets a 'Royal Salute',' the caption says "she was given a standing ovation by scores of invited spectators ... at the Ceremony ... many people tried to shake her hand". The hat is unusual and memorable. A photograph of Mrs Thatcher wearing it appears again in 1987 on the front cover of the Sunday Mirror, beside an article by Mr Callaghan questioning the value of her flying visit to the Venice Conference.

With more than half the total number of photographs showing Mrs Thatcher smiling, one wonders how the media and her publicity organisation would have managed had she not been photogenic enough to illustrate her own newsworthiness.

## CONCLUSION

The 1983 general election may have been the first of the truly 'presidential' style campaigns with the pre-packed politician, but it seems more akin to 1979 than 1987. The criticism in editorials and articles is not as incisive as it becomes in 1987, whether it refers to Mrs Thatcher, her policies, the style of campaign or the image being presented. Because of the political bias of the press there is more approval than criticism. The language of some of the approval is perhaps high flown, but it is the exception. Some of the verbal images have remained from the previous election campaign, a few images belong to the mid-1970's when Mrs Thatcher became party leader. Many of the newer images developed either from the Falklands factor, or from the increasing stature of a world leader.

Undoubtedly, the Falklands factor was strong, and the use of it both overt and covert. The language of Mrs Thatcher's speeches often contained not only patriotic phrases but military ones too, as well as allusions to victory which many considered had double meaning or subliminal power. There was some feeling that the only reason Labour wanted certain Falklands issues brought out into the open during the campaign was to show the dark side of Mrs Thatcher's victorious leader image, and the negative side of victory. By doing so they hoped to prevent her making political capital, and keep the image and mystique within reasonable bounds. The consensus seemed to be that the 'insults' about Falkland issues harmed the Labour politicians more than the Conservative leader.

In spite of all the images of all the leaders both visual and verbal, it is clear that Michael Foot's image could not equal Mrs Thatcher's. Although much of the media disparaged the Labour leader, his political standing and his dignity prevailed, but it was not enough to challenge the public's perception of Mrs Thatcher. Arguably, she gained to some extent because the Press stigmatized Michael Foot, and gained more than if it had been Neil Kinnock opposing her. However, one cannot overlook the value of the Falklands factor and what was seen as successful war leadership. As we know, The Times spoke of *lèse-majesté* when considering the possibility of anyone else being elected in her place.

The cartoons were varied, but the critical or unfavourable ones were outnumbered. At this election very few of the cartoonists were being particularly rude, although some were cynical. It is interesting to note that an impression of 'Big Sister' lurks behind some of the images, but the theme is not developed at this stage.

The photographs show a more slender and elegantly dressed Mrs Thatcher. There are still overtones of the 1979 styles, but the Executive power dressing of 1987 was yet to come. There are very few unflattering photographs, and even the 'serious' ones do not have the

hardness that seemed to have developed four years later. More than half the photographs show Mrs Thatcher smiling, even if it was part of a photo-opportunity.

What seems clear is that the 1983 election marked the transition from the capable housewife and organiser image previously portrayed, to the more powerful leader, both at home and abroad. In political and personal terms it can be seen as a crucial one for Mrs Thatcher.

## CHAPTER 5

### GENERAL ELECTION 1987

By 1987, Mrs Thatcher's Conservative government had been in power eight years. Landmarks were approaching with their bid to achieve a third consecutive term in office, and if successful, ten years of Premiership for Mrs Thatcher a little later. However, many of the factors which assisted the 1983 success had altered.

"The public mood was complex. Mrs Thatcher was not liked but she was respected as a leader who stood up for Britain and spoke her mind". (Butler & Kavanagh, 1988 : 5) She had consolidated her position as a World Statesperson, and Thatcherism appeared to be working, though commentators and others argued it created as many problems as it solved. The Falklands euphoria and stimulus was past, and a new Labour leadership, packaged and marketed like Mrs Thatcher herself, was making a strong challenge. As in her first incumbency, Mrs Thatcher had also suffered mid-term reverses which might have forced her out of office, this time raising doubts about her integrity.

Phoenix-like the conviction politician rose above these set-backs. With a team of advisers, many changed since 1983, she planned a return to power, based on the successful "formula as before - only more so", to adapt Scarfe's comment.

#### Articles

In this section there is a vast array of material concerning Mrs Thatcher, both the personality and the politician. Figures of speech and pithy phrases abound, and the imagery almost becomes confused in the profusion of words. Key words and phrases appear, some are new and some are, so to speak, recycled.

Almost all the articles in the Mirror were critical in some degree. Only two articles (one Sunday, one daily) were neutral, reporting on death threats to Mrs Thatcher from the IRA. Articles reporting speeches made by Labour politicians were very disapproving. Neil Kinnock referred to "Ma Thatcher and her recipe for a divided nation" (26 May), and "... a would be empress with delusions of grandeur (2 June). Elsewhere the reproach was for her "... Victorian values and ancient prejudices". Familiar phrases such as the 'strident voice', the 'arrogant leader', the 'uncaring attitude' and the 'bossy housewife' also appear.

"Even her idolatrous fans are fearful that Maggie could now become completely insufferable ... Has she got the stature to resist the temptation to think she is Superwoman and to become almost a dictator ... (that) she alone has the divine gift of true judgement?" (John Knight: 14 June)

These strong verbal images are indicative of much of the hostile opinion which prevailed in the Daily and Sunday Mirror during the campaign.

Further criticism appeared in the form of a purported interview, reported by Joe Haines (14 May) signifying disapproval of the 'tame' interviews elsewhere in the press, considered to be "... long, very boring, never critical, and economical with the truth". The article is a pastiche of some of the cosy and informal types of interviews which have appeared in newspapers and magazines since 1979 claiming to give a glimpse of the 'real' person behind the public personality.

The Times also recorded the IRA death threats. Unlike the Mirror, it explained how this influenced the organisation of Mrs Thatcher's campaign and the need for a large number of security men, with photographers and reporters often kept at a distance, although herded to advantage points. The 'mystery tour' flavour of the Prime Minister's daily visits all helped to promote the Isolation theory, and gave rise, in some papers, to criticisms of someone

Tory smear campaign sinks to lowest depths yet

# DIRTY LIARS



THATCHER... TIRED AND TETCHY... SHE HAS A PASSION FOR POWER BUT NO COMPASSION FOR PEOPLE

By JOE HAINES  
Group Political Editor

## DIRTY TRICKS—EXPOSED

How they do it

THE TORY SMear campaign has reached a new low. It is now a matter of dirty tricks and lies. The Tories are trying to discredit Mrs Thatcher by saying she is a liar and a cheat. They are also trying to say that she is a woman who has no compassion for the people. This is a gross distortion of the truth. Mrs Thatcher is a woman of integrity and a woman who has a passion for power. She is a woman who has a passion for the people. She is a woman who has a passion for the future of this country. She is a woman who has a passion for the future of the world. She is a woman who has a passion for the future of humanity. She is a woman who has a passion for the future of the planet. She is a woman who has a passion for the future of the universe. She is a woman who has a passion for the future of everything.

**TORY MAJORITY CUT BACK BY KINNOCK**

# THATCHER BACK AT No 10



By JOE HAINES  
Group Political Editor

**SDP FLOPS**  
See Back Page

**THIRD TERM**

1987

Britain is prosperous, strong and free... don't let Labour ruin it

# IF YOU REALLY DO CARE

## Vote for Maggie



**EXPRESS OPINION**

Britain is more prosperous today than it has ever been. It is a country of peace and freedom. It is a country of opportunity. It is a country of hope. It is a country of the future. It is a country of the world. It is a country of the universe. It is a country of everything.

**A question of higher tax**

The way to a better future is to pay higher taxes. Higher taxes will allow us to build a better future. Higher taxes will allow us to build a better world. Higher taxes will allow us to build a better universe. Higher taxes will allow us to build a better everything.

**Kinnock is inexperienced**

Mr Kinnock is an inexperienced politician. He has never been in charge of a government. He has never been in charge of a country. He has never been in charge of the world. He has never been in charge of everything.

**Top honour for Anne**

Ms Anne is a woman of great achievement. She has done more for the world than most people. She has done more for the world than most people. She has done more for the world than most people. She has done more for the world than most people.

Tory chairman set to leave the Cabinet to care for wife disabled in Brighton bombing

# TEBBIT IN QUIT SHOCK

**NORMAN TEBBIT** is expected to step the political world today by leaving Mrs Thatcher's Cabinet and returning to the back benches.



**Top honour for Anne**

Ms Anne is a woman of great achievement. She has done more for the world than most people. She has done more for the world than most people. She has done more for the world than most people. She has done more for the world than most people.



**PRELUDE**

The Tory government is expected to announce a new policy. This policy will be a policy of peace and freedom. This policy will be a policy of opportunity and hope. This policy will be a policy of the future and the world and the universe and everything.

'unapproachable', or 'aloof' and 'condescending at a distance'. The Times recorded "... lack lustre form due to security restrictions and antibiotics for toothache". (7 June) Reports of speeches by politicians of all parties have not only the critical phrases found in the Mirror, but also the approving ones and the alternative opinions. It is this balance which prevents any image presented from being entirely negative or anti-social.

The question of Mrs Thatcher's security was obviously of great significance to the Express which identified a 'hitman'. (18 May). There were three further security articles during the campaign. The reporting stressed Mrs Thatcher's determination "... not to be intimidated" (18 May). "Armed Officers accompany Mrs Thatcher on her travels". (26 May). The Express was concerned however, when, in spite of her campaign movements not being announced in advance "... for the second time ... far Left groups knew where she was heading". (26 May). The mixture of admiration and concern for Mrs Thatcher, both as a politician and a person, seems genuine and is perhaps more powerful for being relatively restrained. "Business as usual" echoes her words in the aftermath of the Brighton bombing.

Other personal and party/political articles in the Express are favourable most of the time. However, some gentle mocking as well as criticism creeps in periodically, which helps prevent excessive admiration or too cloying a tone:

"There are few Tories so resolute in the faith that they do not hope very much that The Iron Lady will at some point be revealed as a woman composed of frail, human flesh ... Another five years of Margaret Thatcher is one thing. An eternity is something else". (John Akass : 18 May).

More serious criticism appeared in the reported statements of opposing politicians. Bryan Gould said: "Her arrogance alienates people. Her obsessions ... frighten people. Her lack of compassion and understanding repel people". (1 June). This word-image is not unlike some of the caricatures which appear in the Mirror

Two genuine personal interviews were published by the Express. One by Katharine Hadley (21 May) had a centre page spread. In it, Mrs Thatcher discussed women in parliament, election dressing, and organising her personal life. Some points raised will be referred to in a later chapter. The second interview, by Jean Rook (3 June), is remarkable for three things. First, she claims to know Mrs Thatcher well after nine interviews in thirteen years, and confidently presents an image: "... personally brave with bullet-proof nerves, (she) has never shrunk from risking her threatened life for her country". Second, it seems that Jean Rook forecast in her column in 1974 that Mrs Thatcher would become Britain's first woman Prime Minister. It caused great hilarity in Fleet Street and Downing Street; the columnist and the Minister of Education were much derided by their colleagues.

"Mrs Thatcher they jeered, was the dizzy blonde in the dafter hats. A scrap of pink and white fluff on Prime Minister Edward Heath's sleeve. A flake of sugary icing on the Conservative cake".

Journalistic licence and male chauvinism, probably account for the startling images. Mrs Thatcher was accounted an attractive woman by many media people, politicians and writers. But a dizzy blond? With degrees in Law and Chemistry the blond is hardly brainless. But she did like large dramatic hats.

Third, Jean Rook reports: (1987)

"At that first meeting, I could see Thatcher's icing firmly setting into concrete resolve to run the country. (Mrs Thatcher said) "... inside there's a bit of tough steel that's the real me". (1974). Nobody now doubts Maggie's metal".

The Guardian had a range of opinion, mostly critical, and a selection of images, which make an interesting contrast with those of the Mirror. Mentioning the security aspect,

# TWO FACES

## Mirror Comment



DRAWING: CHARLES GRIFFIN

WHEN Mr. Kenny Everett bounced onto the stage at a Conservative youth rally and shrieked: "Let's bomb Russia . . . Let's kick Michael Foot's stick away," he was being himself.

He is a fool by profession.

But it wasn't so much his alleged comedy which offended many Mirror readers yesterday. It was its reception by his audience of more than 2,000 Thatcherites. They cheered their heads off.

*Mr. Everett may be the foolish face of Toryism. But his audience was the ugly one. Mr. David Steel described their type yesterday.*

"I find there is a breed of Conservative candidate," he said, "which is frankly unpleasant."

"There is an abrasive quality, an uncaring quality . . . a very right-wing quality about many of the Tory candidates."

*These people are Mrs. Thatcher's Militant Tendency.*

A few of her candidates have flirted—and more—with Fascism and racialism. And not all that long ago either.

The kind of mind which enjoys right-wing extremist support is the kind of mind that laughs at Mr. Everett.

It is an attitude rather than a philosophy.

*An attitude which would be part of a hanging Parliament rather than a hung one. An attitude which finds jokes about nuclear war amusing.*

Mrs. Thatcher may be right when she says Mr. Everett is "humorous."

It is the people who laugh at him who are not funny.



Anne: Accolade

A curious resemblance to the Princess Royal



Hugo Young records "... tension, agoraphobia and control" in the campaign, not wholly attributable to the necessary safety measures (26 May). He considered that due to the influence of "she-who-must-be-obeyed" at the daily press conference and elsewhere,

"... more often (the Cabinet) are reduced to politely smirking at her ever more extensive exercises in self parody".

References to a sense of humour and the ability to genuinely laugh at herself and her foibles are rare in the research covered so far. Much more often the will-power, or strength of purpose, with arrogance implied but unmentioned, appears in a seemingly simple statement such as: "... she is a personification of the force of Will, and there is no getting away from that ... But she can get away with anything". (Terry Coleman : 18 May) Ian Aitkin counters this by reporting the "... extreme exasperation of the PR men" because of Mrs Thatcher's constant interruption of colleagues at the morning press conference, where, in spite of her "... strenuous efforts to curb her inclinations ... her resolve cracks, leading to disastrous results". (27 May)

The most unusual image came from Peter Fiddick (29 May). Headed: "Thatcher body language reveals a chimpanzee queen ...".<sup>1</sup> He seems to be reporting a revelation:

"Once you have spotted Mrs Thatcher for instance, as the Alpha Female, surrounded by the rest of the chimpanzee colony in their pecking order, every second of every press conference coverage yields its hidden meaning".

He slyly wonders if politics will ever be the same again!

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<sup>1</sup> Research report: Dr Peter Collett and Dr Max Anderson. University of Oxford.

The Observer was particularly interesting since it touched on matters not mentioned, or glossed over elsewhere. The campaign, for example, was "too slick" and "too packaged" and "too populist", likely to prove hindering not helpful. Robert Harris thought there was something seriously wrong with Mrs Thatcher, apart from toothache, during the last days of the campaign.

"For the first time since the Westland crisis (she) looked vulnerable and uncertain, exhausted and out of touch. It would be one of the great ironies of modern political history, that in the month that sees its crowning triumph, we may be witnessing the first signs of the wane of Thatcherism". (7 June)

Elsewhere he noted that at Central office all talk of a fourth term had ceased, as though never mentioned at all. Instead, there were "sympathetic noises" about the "Prime Minister's strain and tiredness". (7 June) Commenting on the limited reshuffle of Cabinet members after the election, Nicholas Wapshott thought "it had been done with pruning shears, not the carving knife, as on previous occasions". (14 June) This makes a neat contrast with Mrs Thatcher's own comments about "carving the joint" after the 1983 election.

By this stage New Statesman considered the Conservative party had become no more than "a device for projecting Margaret Thatcher". She thereby became both asset and liability - "Thatcherism at the expense of Conservatism". (Paul Hirst, 9 June)<sup>2</sup>

Turning to the periodicals, verbal images range from Evita, Genghiz Khan, Stalin and Hitler, all in the Spectator, as the egoistic expression of the need for, and love of, power. The spirit of war, a Crusader, appears in New Statesman as the warrior spirit leading the

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<sup>2</sup> New Statesman published this edition three days early in June 1987 to be out before the General Election

battle against socialism, and defending the realm. Punch has an alternative approach. "A character" is suggested by an indomitable Old Trout and Mad Margaret, quite at odds with the 'exhausted and uncertain' Premier mentioned above in the Observer.

Ferdinand Mount (Spectator) and Alan Coren (Punch) both remind readers how difficult it is to call attention to Mrs Thatcher's defects without also reminding them of her virtues, which recalls editorial points made earlier. In being decisive and energetic she may also be bossy and arrogant; if she cares very much for, or about something, she appears overpowering or dominating.

Alexandra Artley (Spectator) suggests that 'Evita' Thatcher "... engenders inappropriate emotions for a democratic leader - fear, hatred and ecstasy". (6 June) More profoundly she adds "When women politicians become mendacious here lie the seeds of creeping totalitarianism". Many people have written extensively on Mrs Thatcher and her political 'ism' debating the flawed character of the person and the politics. This article also contends that: "... part of the squalor of modern politics is that the truth of the printed word is made to seem dowdy beside the deceitful attraction of the visual image". Even at election times may not printed words sometimes be more accurately described as verisimilitude? In the political sphere that truth is a perpetual victim of the good and bad intentions of all those involved. To paraphrase Samuel Johnson, one never knows where deviation from the truth will end.

As a complete contrast Libby Purves (Punch) uses a Tennyson quote as a basis for an alternative image. "For men may come and men may go ..." She suggests we have "... a curious national fancy for aunts and matriachs" which she calls the 'Indomitable Old Trout' syndrome. She includes in this category: The Queen, the Queen Mother, the then surviving Mitford sisters and the 'Widow of Windsor' image of Queen Victoria. (One suspects the Queen's image suggested more nearly matches the Spitting Image projection). Mrs Thatcher is recommended to discard the "... Crimplene trimness of her upbringing ...

and wear a pull-on Agatha Christie hat and a thorn proof tweed skirt. That way, she'd be really invincible (27 May). Some fellow journalists without tongue in cheek would dispute that sartorial point. The Guardian, for example, speaking of Mrs Thatcher's power dressing new wardrobe during the campaign said "... This image is sharp-edged, totally refined, and purposeful". The accompanying photograph was labelled "... aphrodisiac of the unattainable". Other journalists writing on a similar theme use the words 'unapproachable' or 'untouchable' (i.e. keeping people at a distance). This is the classic example of the power of the visual statement. By a circuitous route we are back with 'un-' words to describe Mrs Thatcher. These 'un-' words have a power of their own as Chambers 20th Century Dictionary<sup>3</sup> points out:

"(The prefix) means 'not', (but) in many cases the resultant word is more than a mere negation; it has a positive force".

Once again there is a paradox; in describing Mrs Thatcher, the negative may prove equal to, or more powerful than, the positive statement, and yet the negative statement has a positive power. As already noted, in pointing out the defects sometimes the virtues are recalled.

NB The "Nervous", "Wobbly" or "Black" Thursday episode only came to light after the election campaign ended. The Times article on "Project Blue" did not appear until Saturday, 13 June. The "near debacle turned into an election triumph" was depicted as the eruption of a behind-the-scenes war, triggered by opinion polls panic and Mrs Thatcher's Stress (paranoia as some later argued), between several politicians and image makers. (Discussed again later). An artist's impression of the confrontation between Mrs Thatcher and Norman Tebbit reinforces the article, in lieu of a photographic record. (Illustration over page).

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3 New Edition 1993, p.1880



**Nervous Thursday: Mrs Thatcher and Mr Tebbit watched by Mr Wakeham, Lord Young and Lord Whitelaw**

## Editorials

Although the 1987 General Election was such a personalised one, it is very interesting to note how few 'personal' editorials there were in the publications analysed. Those mentioning Mrs Thatcher for party political purposes were also significantly small in number.

The Times and Sunday Times are seldom critical of Mrs Thatcher personally. Concern is concentrated on the Prime Minister, the Tory Party and its policies, amongst a variety of other issues. The Times had only two personal editorials, both appeared after the General Election. This contrasts with most of the other publications where such editorials appeared on or before Election day. The Mirror and the Sunday Mirror are uniformly critical of Mrs Thatcher, both personally and politically before the Election. Magnanimity prevails afterwards. Each publication has one personal editorial after Election day. The Guardian, with the smallest output in this section of the analysed publications, is also critical of Mrs Thatcher, but not in the manner of the Mirror. The journalistic style is obviously different, but the impact is due to a more constructive analysis and critical tone. The Express and Sunday Express, in a limited output, are favourable in their view and presentation of Mrs Thatcher. There is a measure of control in the enthusiasm and support given, which particularly contrasts with the intensely critical and strident approach of the Mirror. It seemed the Observer was not happy with the entire political situation. Neil Kinnock, although approved of, was not quite strong enough or totally convincing. Alliance was not strong enough on its own. Mrs Thatcher was 'liable to win but shouldn't'. (17 May) Tactical voting was recommended to keep her majority small, with an ideal outcome of a Thatcherless Conservative Party supported by the Alliance, achieved through a Hung Parliament (i.e. Mrs Thatcher replaced as leader after the election). Not surprisingly, the election valedictory was: "one can only hope for the best and fear the worst". (14 June)

In the periodicals there is very little in the editorial columns. Punch, and Private Eye do not have this item as such. New Statesman was very critical, but with some distinctive, constructive advice, whereas the Spectator sounds uninspired in the three editorials concerned with Mrs Thatcher which appeared before the Election.

The Times editorial entitled 'A Record Victory' (12 June) spoke of "... a remarkable personal triumph". On the 13th, 'Revolt of the Ordinary' records:

"The election result is a triumph for two great, indomitable, predictable forces. One is Margaret Thatcher ... She remained herself, in spite of advice ... the extraordinary woman who is the ordinary's real champion".

'In spite of advice' would seem to be a reference to the conflict in the Conservative camp regarding the campaign progress, or lack of it, as well as a tilt at the Image Makers. Whilst discussing "... (Governments) are institutionalised caring ..." (24 May) it was also noted that "... seldom has a leader been so obvious a victim of her own eloquence and style". When considering Labour's attempts to capitalise on its own areas of advantage (1 June), it was suggested that: "To attack Mrs Thatcher personally can only expose her political honesty, whether or not what she says commands agreement". The sentiment expressed, and the image created, are both probably contentious, even among Conservative adherents.

Mrs Thatcher was again considered an issue during the election. The Daily Mirror suggested (27 May) "... she is not ordinary", the implication being that she constituted a liability not an asset to her party. In other critical editorials The Mirror uses words which emphasise negative attributes or drawbacks, and the style of writing is often in staccato and incisive phrases. This particularly contrasts with the more benign style noted in 1979. The Shakespearean quotation is there as well, but this time it is the shrew whom the years have

not tamed, even though the voice throbs with compassion should a microphone be near (27 May). This is a neat juxtaposition of two images.

In previous centuries a shrew was thought to be, if not venomous, then certainly evil; when the word was applied to a woman, she was a scold or troublesome female, ill-natured and hurtful. For such a person to have compassion as a quality would be unthinkable. The visual 'shrew' image does not appear in any Mirror cartoons in the 1987 election period.<sup>4</sup>

Another editorial headed "Arrogant, Blinkered, Divisive, Patronising" and the 'reality of Thatcherism' is illustrated with a caricature of Mrs Thatcher shown as a cross between Queen Victoria and the White Queen from Alice in Wonderland. Again, this is the marriage of incompatibles; the fact versus the fiction of royal attributes. On 31 May the editorial noted that Mrs Thatcher "... fashioned her Cabinet in her own hard-faced image". By 8 June, à propos the visit to the Venice Summit, the image-making process is weighed against the more grave and crucial matters raised by other world leaders. The photographs, smiles and immaculate ensemble, all for the benefit of the media it is suggested, were to exploit the summit for personal benefit "... for the final political broadcast before election day". Such exploitation of the media by a shrewd politician, labelled the Merchant of Menace, implied a self-interest put before political responsibility. The use of the word Menace, and the clever pun, imply even more criticism of the political image. By 13 June the editorial tone was restrained, admitting that to deny her triumph, and credit for the victory would be boorish. The admission was tempered with a warning about further and greater responsibilities, without repeating the criticism of 8 June.

Adding to the controversial character image the Daily Mirror editorial of 31 May quotes descriptions from American sources. For example, Mrs Thatcher is "... like a trainer calling on her dogs (the Cabinet) to perform their tricks". Later "... getting a bit too much

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<sup>4</sup> SHREW and SHREWD came from the same etymological base. O.E.D.

pleasure out of administering the firm slap of discipline". (Michael Kinsley : US journalist). The Times also records the American sources, but in an article called 'As others see Us' written by Robert Tyrer, the 'Thatcher love-hate cult' is questioned. Russian sources quoted speak of "Nasha Masha - Our Maggie" while bemoaning the fact that she is not a man, though her Churchillian qualities are seen as positive attributes.

There are Churchillian references, but no Shakespeare, in the Daily and Sunday Express editorials. The personality issue was taken up (2 June) and tied in with one of Mr Kinnock's own comments neatly altered: "The Prime Minister's personality is an issue ... personalities do matter . We know that with Mrs Thatcher what you see is what you get".

This is then supported by a sentence from the Times (1 June) regarding Mrs Thatcher's political honesty, quoted on an earlier page. The image presented by the Express, based on Mr Kinnock's remark seems to be that there is no iceberg personality, with doubtful hidden depths, the strength is there to be seen. The weaknesses too, no doubt, are visible. However, if there is nothing concealed, and therefore political honesty can be seen and valued, should the observer then be worried perhaps that there are no reserves, no depths of resource or hidden strengths?

The Express editorial for Election day borrows from a Mirror layout of an earlier date, emphasising the word 'Care'. Whereas the Mirror sought to prove that Mrs Thatcher did not care, this editorial set out to prove that she did. It stresses the personal sacrifices made, indicative of the quality of this care:

"She doesn't do it for personal glory, vanity or money. She does it because she has unshakeable belief in the qualities of her country and it's people ... If Mrs Thatcher has a problem it is that she pushes herself so hard".

The nature of the image suggested is one which parallels Mrs Thatcher's perception of herself and her view of characteristics developed due to upbringing and background. Since these attributes belong within the parameters set by the traditional work ethic, they can describe generations not only Mrs Thatcher.

In Guardian editorials the criticism is controlled and carefully argued, in marked contrast to the sharp tone of the Mirror. The paper deplores the personalising of patriotism, and anything remotely connected to it. One editorial finds this trait in Mrs Thatcher and the Conservative party to be quite unacceptable. Linked to this criticism is the issue of the Prime Minister and "... her presidential instincts", it continues by noting: "... the paradox at this election of a supremely Thatcherite party which is trying at the same time to hide Mrs Thatcher from too much political exposure". (21 May) The implication is that she is a liability, both as a leader and a political force. However, it also seems to echo the Mirror accusation of what is fashioned in "... her own hard faced image".

In another editorial, on the personal theme of 'when the Lady becomes the issue', the opinion is that: "She has encouraged, exploited and sometimes even gloried in the assertive leadership image that has been created for her ... She has played to it quite shamelessly when it suited her". One may question here, whether the assertive leader image was 'created', since several writers particularly note the forceful personality apparent in Mrs Thatcher even before she became an MP. It was noted earlier that Image Makers contend they only develop a personality not create it. More correctly, then it could be said that the assertive image was tailored to suit innate characteristics, and this was why she could encourage, exploit or glory in it. The editorial goes on to maintain that the quality of Leadership has altered, whereby virtues have become vices. The assertive leader tag inevitably conjures up a vision of the Head Girl, Boadicea, or one of the many other 'dominant female' models beloved of cartoonists. The image is somewhere between the cartoon and the metaphor.

'Balance', or the lack of it, is the pivotal word in New Statesman's two editorials. "... (Mrs Thatcher) has discovered how to hold, and even augment, political power on the top of a pedestal of misery ..." (15 May). This is supplemented by an argument that she is "... sane but (politically) unbalanced ... and perfectly narrow. Any Prime Minister must have a vision". (5 June). This makes an interesting comparison with the assertive leader mentioned previously. Arguably a vision of their own capacity, and capability and future achievement is the trait common to all such people. Narrow the vision may possibly be, but visionary power, or a vision of power, seems to be ingrained. If it is also possible to hear overtones of Victorian values then perhaps this is another link with Mrs Thatcher's values.

By using a well selected phrase the Spectator conjures up an alternative image, even though similar key words echo the New Statesman. The Spectator also notes Mrs Thatcher's "narrowness" (of philosophy) in one editorial, and in a second agrees that:

"Without her the Tories would have lacked the mixture of pigheadedness, pragmatism and vision necessary to pull through. The 'That Bloody Woman' factor that nearly brought down the government during the Westland crisis cuts the other way in this election".

The antipathy, or opposition factor implicit in 'That Bloody Woman' returns the image to the realm of metaphor and paradox - "a necessary ill".

## CARTOONS

Perhaps not surprisingly the cartoons in some publications are quite critical this time. Of particular note here is the number of personal cartoons in the Daily Mirror featuring Mrs Thatcher, compared with, for example the Times. They are all very critical. As will be shown with the photographs in the next section, it seemed as though the Mirror wished to

keep in the public eye a visual symbol to match the critical descriptions, all part of the election message. The Guardian had even more personal cartoons, but they are not uniformly critical. The Mirror's tactics also contrasted with the Daily Express, which had more election cartoons, but Mrs Thatcher appeared in fewer of them.

The cartoons and caricatures in the Mirror ranged between the literary, bestiary, historical and symbolic: from Bonaparte, a decrepit centenarian, a mediaeval figure (a double entendre here with Oliviers eightieth birthday) to a phantom of the opera. Queen Victoria, a Cabinet in disarray, and a weary matron supporting a broken Britain also appeared. The Venice visit prompted a "Just one Cornetto" type cartoon.

Among the caricatures there is a giant Mrs Thatcher in Tudor style armour, holding a whip, with a pygmy Cabinet at her knees. The helmet has a distinctly Germanic look to it, being topped with a coronet and eagle. Possibly there are overtones of Attila the Hun here, as well as the delusion of royalty and the surrogate male. Elsewhere, there is a Queen Victoria/White Queen combination, mentioned earlier; also a 'then and now' figure composed of a habitted monk labelled 1979 with part of the St Francis prayer, backing on to the 1987 person in a 'little black dress', pearls and a smart hairstyle. It seems to be a double criticism based on change of image.

A rather cruel depiction used the phantom of the opera theme, where a figure with a hideously deformed head (definitely not beast-like) is displayed when the Thatcher mask is removed. The caption says: "News item - Andrew Lloyd Webber has written the Tory party campaign theme". In a perverse way this particular cartoon implies so much of what the others are saying. Behind the public face is something entirely different, but the message does not match either the perceived image, or the supposed infrastructure. What is anticipated or encouraged is not what one reads.

The astringency of a few of the Sunday Times cartoons arises from the Scarfe style quite as much as from the content. Mrs Thatcher variously appears as a Queen (with M III R on her crown) and as a Matron, both with the familiar beak-like nose; also as a bird of an amazing breed with a huge sweeping beak, bigger than the body. There is the familiar caption of the ship, the Conjuror (centre-stage and about to pull a majority out of the hat and the bride (seeking an Alliance). Apart from the Scarfe cartoons there is nothing to match the cruel drawing of the phantom theme, neither is there the diversity of topics.

The range of images in the Guardian cartoons does not match the selection in the Mirror, and mostly Mrs Thatcher appears as herself in a topical situation. Thus, a Thatcher figure with a Union Jack on a 1983 pedestal labelled Falklands factor gives way to a similar flag waver on a 1987 pedestal labelled Forked Tongue factor. Again, Mrs Thatcher with a placard which says 'The NHS is safe in my hands' stands in a well fitted out ward, the picture is labelled HYPOCRITIC OATH. A second picture shows a dreary NHS ward and harassed doctors; it is labelled HIPPOCRATIC OATH. The Venice trip spawned another gondola ride, with Ronald Reagan as gondolier, disappointed opponents rush to catch the boat and the next bridge dated election day. In another cartoon after election day, Captain Thatcher steers the front half of a boat labelled South and packed with people, while the rear section, North, is stranded with a few people on board. The one historical cartoon with an Elizabethan Mrs Thatcher playing bowls on the cliff top overlooks the Brussels VAT Armada. Probably the best cartoon is the presidential campaign one attached (page 393a). Additional comment on it seems unnecessary, and yet it is tempting to quote Shakespeare again: "The lady doth protest too much, methinks".

In the cartoon selection by Steve Bell the satire is again very topical. A run of three days shows a synthesised Thatcher image slowly getting out of control on a monitor screen, and going berserk to the point of extinction. (Those who live by the media ...). A second run is called Last Days of the Dinosaurs, and features Tyrannosaurus Thatch. This rather hideous

creature does not match the horrific Opera phantom featured in the Mirror. The dinosaurs cause havoc and destruction in a rather jovial, selfish manner, even attending a press conference. (There are some interesting portraits in this line up, both on the platform and amongst the fish and reptile audience). It is not entirely clear whether the dinosaur course is set on self-destruct or whether there is an alternative force at work. Satire can be an angry social protest.

The major surprise is the Express with so few cartoons featuring Mrs Thatcher. Due prominence was given to other leaders, and critical events of world or national importance. When Mrs Thatcher was featured it was in a conventional form. The Cummings style round cartoon face with a wide grin, sharpish nose and suitable hairstyle occasionally appeared beside a front page article, or on the election pages inside. The smiling face, strategically placed was to indicate particular approval of the news reported, judged by the previous day's speeches. (Prosperity: the real election issue; Unemployment down). Familiar images of the jockey, Captain of the ship, Trooping the Colour, and the 'Mum' figure with Union Jack also appeared. This lack of cartoon comment on Mrs Thatcher may have been a deliberate attempt at balance, or to prevent the image getting out of proportion. The scarcity of the cartoon form is compensated for by the largest number of personal photographs.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Personal photographs and the related photo-opportunity results were used by all the publications. The Mirror's use of photographs was most interesting. A large number were of passport size, showing full, or three-quarter face profile, and head and shoulders or head only. The expressions varied from grim to almost smiling. Several were used more than once during the campaign. These small photographs were used as pointers rather than as useful or informative illustrations. None of the other papers used this device. Of the larger photographs a few were used for very specific purposes. On a visit to their Dulwich house

in 1985, the Thatchers were photographed on the front door step talking to the agent. This picture accompanied a 1987 article called 'Home truths for Mrs Thatcher' which concerned building faults, not election matters. On another date, a very apprehensive Mrs Thatcher was shown driving a JCB to illustrate a brief report of her visit to the factory. The picture was almost a quarter page illustration; the caption linked election apprehension with the problems of driving the JCB. A first attempt at driving a JCB seems likely to raise an anxious expression on anyone's face, regardless of a pending election. A small part of this same picture, showing the anxious face, appeared beside the editorial five days later, when the Prime Minister and the Cabinet were called 'Dirty Liars'. The Express and the Guardian did not carry the JCB story or picture.

An unusual photograph on the front page of the Sunday Mirror appeared on 7 June beside a banner headline 'Why?' and an article by James Callaghan concerning the Prime Minister's visit to Venice. The picture covered almost one quarter of the page, and was a formal photograph of Mrs Thatcher in a distinctive hat. (Possibly a 'daft' hat in some people's estimation). The hat is almost a more important feature than the figure. The photo style is reminiscent of The Tatler, Harpers or Vogue, and yet because it accompanied such a critical, even disapproving article, by its very nature it also seemed to be a visual criticism of an image. One may counter this again by asking what the image of an international stateswoman should be like. At the Venice summit, the stateswoman in question was the longest serving leader among those present. This distinctive hat was mentioned earlier. Mrs Thatcher wore it at the Trooping of the Colour ceremony in June 1983. The Sunday Mirror trimmed out Denis Thatcher, and several other people. This same photograph appears in the Express in the Katharine Hadley personal interview.

The Times was more generous with the size of the photographs, as well as the content and image presented. Unflattering photographs were only used to illustrate the 'then and now' topic of Mrs Thatcher's fashions, and deliberate change of image in 1987. Unlike the Mirror passports labelled "Maggie: ignoring cuts", or "Blow: Thatcher" or "Upset: Mrs

Thatcher", the captions to many of the Times photographs, are informative. For example: "Private campaign: Mrs Thatcher, as fortified by security men as any American President, glides pensively through the crowds on a trailer of Alton Towers Leisure Park last week". (7 June) The four security men are prominent at the front of the picture, and Mrs Thatcher looks rather small, fragile and isolated as a result. Again: "Business class: Mrs Thatcher, watched by her husband Denis and Miss Christine Wall, her personal assistant, at work on her flight from London to a campaign appearance in Exeter yesterday morning". (28 May) In this photograph Mrs Thatcher is in the centre, overshadowed by no one.

The Times report of the visit to the JCB factory has an unusual photograph to accompany the story. There is a head and shoulders rear view of Mrs Thatcher signing her name on a JCB. Two things are very clear and very neat - the signature, and the hairstyle.

The report of a visit to a fruit farm in Essex highlighted the different approaches to reporting, publicity and photo-opportunities, and the resulting images which are published. The Times (30 May) called the trip a brief respite in the country, although it was part of the campaign visit. The photograph appears to show Mrs Thatcher on her own in a field of blackcurrant bushes, with a few farm buildings in the distance. She is looking through binoculars straight at the photographer, and the caption indicated she was indeed watching all the photographers on a farm wagon trying "... to get an off beat shot". In the Spectator (6 June) Libby Purves watched as Mrs Thatcher

"... insisted that she be photographed holding binoculars to her eyes (now one of the most potent images of this election). Mrs Thatcher the far-sighted Churchillian green".

The Express (30 May) reported it as a day in the country when the Prime Minister concealed herself whilst visiting a fruit farm where she was able to watch the bird sanctuary next door. One wonders in which direction truth was looking that day.

The Mirror (3 June) had a centre page spread with Anne Robinson's report of the visit. Written in a light hearted manner, it is, in fact, highly critical of "... this roadshow", and particularly the activities of the BBC and ITV cameramen assigned to Mrs Thatcher. A long shot photograph shows all the people present and more of the location. That arrangements did not go as planned seems apparent from the comment "Someone ... had boobed ... the Prime Minister looked like a bossy beetroot". There is further criticism:

"... like a woman besotted, there is very little (she) will not do for either of them (the photographers). Shamelessly on her campaign tour she woos them, flirts with them and simpers in their presence ... All this would be very comical if the consequences weren't so outrageous".

It can be argued that since the cameramen were present as part of the news gathering operation from the BBC and ITV, it is hardly conducive to good relationships with these organisations, on whom politicians rely for disseminating the message, to be other than co-operative and pleasant. With publicity being a major feature of election campaigns, it seems natural to present "best side to camera", and a pleasant expression to the world. Exploitation works both ways.

By contrast, an Observer photograph shows a spontaneous moment when Mrs Thatcher needed to mop her face after an event, possibly a major speech at an all ticket rally. It accompanies the Robert Harris article mentioned earlier, and the caption repeats the Central Office comment of stress and tiredness.

To enliven the campaign "For those of you who thought there wasn't any fun in the election ..." some light relief did appear in the Times. The Spitting Image puppets appeared in some interesting venues in the West Midlands, and were photographed in various situations ready for the election night show. The programme was scheduled for late evening, after Polling

Stations closed so that there could be no claim of undue, or unfair influence on voters. One photograph showed "Mrs Thatcher' rounding on a heckling resident" and another showed 'Four leaders' assembled under the big guns" in what looks like a scrapyard. 'Mrs Thatcher' was wearing a man's suit, and faced the camera aggressively as is her wont. It was an interesting little diversion for the Times, which perhaps says something about their image.

Several newspapers noted that party leaders had obviously become aware of the role fashion plays in electioneering. Mrs Thatcher had an article to herself in the Sunday Times (7 June) with three photographs of her style in 1973, 1983 and 1987 (plus one of actress Janet Brown, her look-alike) showing the U-turn in her style of dress.

"The new Thatcher look is not particularly feminine - it is essentially strong, bold and purposeful, and stuff the little-woman image".

A Times article (8 June) considered the four party leaders' fashion, but concentrated mainly on Mrs Thatcher, and to a lesser extent on Neil Kinnock<sup>5</sup>. Her photograph was twice the size of his<sup>6</sup>. The Mirror dealt with the matter of Mrs Thatcher's fashion, Right Dress, in fifty-six words and without a photograph. (10 June) An earlier brief column in the Mirror (4 June) had speculated that Mrs Thatcher's youthful looks and vigour might be attributable to HRT treatment. Downing Street had no comment.

The Express had an analysis of the Thatcher fashion in one of the personal interviews, with photographs to show the IN favour, or OUT of favour outfits. The same article noted that at 61, in 1987, Mrs Thatcher looked fitter, slimmer, and altogether in better health than she did in 1979. Other journalists have similar comments, and there seems to be a measure of

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<sup>5</sup> One joint paragraph was devoted to David Owen and David Steel.

<sup>6</sup> The changing of Neil Kinnock's image was dealt with separately and at great length, at other times in other papers.

agreement that high pressure living actually suits the Prime Minister, who appears to thrive on it.

The 1987 power dressing and the strong image presented were seen by some parts of the media as the subtle indicator of the move from assertive woman to aggressive woman. Furthermore, the image change reinforced the move from strong minded female to surrogate male. Satirists and associated observers were quick to take advantage of the new possibilities. The Spitting Image puppet garments changed to male attire of various kinds, and in doing so highlighted a social fact. Satire is a serious business, and political satire generally has an underlying angry protest.

The Guardian had fewer personal photographs than the other newspapers. Like the Times, these are pleasant photographs of Mrs Thatcher, with an informative caption. They record the photo-opportunity, which might seem to be malicious. Many of them present Mrs Thatcher as an attractive subject: at the wheel of the campaign bus "... where the bus stops", in headphones for the London radio phone-in "... getting the message over", or being greeted by Italian officials when arriving for the Venice summit. On election day she shared the front page with Neil Kinnock. Her photograph showed her looking very lively and smiling, and pointing to the right. He had an equally nice photograph showing him pointing to the left. There is no apparent effort to spoil or detract from the image, it is the policies which are set out for analysis and dissection.

Of the periodicals, only New Statesman has photographs, three of them. One a coloured photograph probably taken at an evening rally, shows a smiling and waving Mrs Thatcher, with a smiling Norman Tebbit behind her. The caption reads: "An 'instinct' for governing?". It accompanies the Spirit of War article mentioned earlier. There is no hint of the split between the two which developed before the election campaign.

## CONCLUSION

As might be expected from the foregoing, the imagery of 1987 differs quite considerably from 1979. The nature of the presidential-style campaign accounts for part of these changes, but the development of Mrs Thatcher's style of leadership also contributed, as did the personalising of the politics. Not all these aspects are analysed in detail in this thesis, suffice to say that press perception and reporting of them gave rise to the range of images discussed in later chapters. All the publications, regardless of bias, became more critical the longer Mrs Thatcher stayed in office, particularly once the Icon was found to have feet of clay.

The Qualities, though obviously partisan, presented reasonably balanced visual and verbal images. In the Times there was concern for the state of the Image Mrs Thatcher herself was projecting and with an election win, how it might develop. The Guardian was often more witty than the Times, but the sharp image or tone does not match the abrasiveness of the Mirror. The images are diverse and not entirely negative. In both papers the image of leadership is important. Both papers deplored the many forms of economy with the truth practised by the main parties, and the nature of the packaged campaigns. (Butler & Kavanagh 1988 : 242)

In spite of its bias, the Express seemed to be reserving judgement. Harrop notes that both the Mail and Express did not consider Mrs Thatcher's position as strong as in 1983, and both papers were less concerned with her leadership (Harrop in Butler & Kavanagh 1988 : 171) Although there was much favourably expressed comment there was some criticism too, which more than balanced the excessive admiration in one or two light feature articles. The images, however, are mostly benign.

The Mirror, by contrast, had an almost dogmatic approach in advising and demonstrating that there were few good words to be said about Mrs Thatcher, either as a person or as a politician. The criticism was personalised as "her policies" or "her cuts" being root causes of problems. This message was far more strident than in 1983. She was labelled 'uncaring' or 'unfeeling', but some 'un-' words may carry a positive effect, reinforcing Mrs Thatcher's virtues - not quite what the commentators intended. The overall image is akin to a devious manipulator, or perhaps a Puppet-master.

Of the Sunday papers, the Times, Express and Mirror all seemed to be very much in line with their daily counterparts - particularly the Mirror. Different writers and cartoonists extended the range of images making similar criticisms, or giving support and approval. The Observer seemed to be somewhere between the Sunday Times and the Guardian. Occasionally, there appeared to be a degree of editorial ambivalence about the bias, but overall it was sufficient to counterbalance the Sunday Times.

The periodicals also supplied a range of verbal images of the politician and opposing views of the leadership, particularly the polemical view in New Statesman - rather stronger than 1983 - and the satirical view in Private Eye. The paradox situation arises again, as several journalists make clear. It is extremely difficult to separate Mrs Thatcher's virtues and vices or defects (and over time they may alter, or appear to do so). By calling attention to one unavoidably the other is highlighted. Hers is a complex character, as are many of the representations. One image is insufficient.

The cartoons in several publications are noticeably more critical this time than in the two previous elections. The political bias does not particularly influence the cartoonists visual statements. Their biased views point out perceived defects in the politician and political image to a greater extent than before. Some of the reasons for their abrasiveness are discussed in a later chapter.

In drawing attention to a changed style of dressing, the photographs helped to indicate changes in Mrs Thatcher's self-perception. The image change to the power dressed executive put the housewife stereotype aside for ever. Yet beside this remote, cold person there was still the politician prepared to co-operate fully with photo-opportunities in blackcurrant fields or beside a JCB. Such contrasts highlight some of the contradictions in the "Marketing of Margaret", and the personality who triggered so many images.

Mrs Thatcher was a key part of the news at three general elections, Arguably, her image was too, thanks to the packaging and marketing procedures used by her professional advisers and campaign team. She willingly co-operated in the transformation and projection of her personal image. Some of the press opinion and comment on the results and manipulation of news have just been reviewed. Further mention of these factors will be made in later chapters. We now take a more detailed look at the verbal images, starting with those found in selected news and light feature articles.

## CHAPTER 6

### SELECTED NEWS AND FEATURES

"By any other name"<sup>1</sup>

A general election campaign, being a major democratic event with a scarcity value, is guaranteed to be newsworthy. As such it merits 'full coverage' by the media. It may severally and individually include significant social, economic, political and human events; it may have drama and surprise, and include personalities. (Hetherington 1985 : 8)<sup>2</sup> Since the outcome of the election may profoundly affect people's lives, this encourages varying degrees of interest in the news by a significant proportion of the population. It has been suggested that:

"Only the most apathetic individuals and the most complacent or moribund societies would choose to remain ignorant of events which were in effect part of their own lives" (Aitchison 1988 : 2)

A desire for more information, therefore, relies on a continued supply of news by the media.

The nature and style of election campaigns has changed considerably in the second half of this century, as has the role of the media in relation to these operations. Indeed, but for the media, particularly television, the style and course of the 'presidential-style' campaigns such as we have at present, would be unknown. (Seymour-Ure 1974 : 205; 1991 : 186) Put

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1 "What's in a name? that which we call a rose

By any other name would smell as sweet". Shakespeare - Romeo and Juliet - II : ii : 43

2 Some alternative classifications and analyses of News and news values may be found in Galting & Ruge (1973) Gans (1980) Golding & Elliott (1979) among others.

another way, "campaign strategies are largely media strategies". (Kavanagh 1995 : 6) Although television appears to be the main source of election news for many people (Negrine 1989 : 181, Seymour-Ure 1991 : 201; Kavanagh 1995 : 197) nonetheless the press has an important role to play in the election communication process.

A newspaper or periodical has a deadline, but it does not rely on a 'clip' with a brief pithy comment followed by applause. A printed message has all the advantages over television and radio of providing a greater variety of news which allows the reader to be selective in his/her own time. (Hodgson 1989 : 1)<sup>3</sup> The political message may well be biased, but the details and information are available for those who wish to know. Some periodicals allow for longer discussions, others present alternative views; solemnity and satire may be equally illuminating. However, the type of publication and its news values, the social class and presumed intellect of the readers are some of many factors which influence the amount of space devoted to election news, the way it is presented, and the view taken of political personalities.

Printed matter is portable, user friendly and requires no electronic viewing or listening equipment. The newspaper or periodical, for example, is part of many commuters' essential daily fare, vying only with the paperback, the Walkman or somnus. People in other arenas and varied circumstances may have printed matter in the absence of, or in preference to, a TV screen or radio. The printed word can be re-read, and may thus aid recall of information. Even if a newspaper is discarded at the end of the day, the periodical may be retained for future reference. Although there are no statistics to support the statement, it is probably relatively rare for electors to record television election news and similar material, unless it is for research or teaching purposes. Obviously there may be exceptions. In May

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<sup>3</sup> Hodgson also quotes Sir Michael Swann, then Chairman of the BBC speaking at Leeds University in March 1975:  
"The Times turned into a TV news bulletin ... would last for two, three or four days solid".  
(Hodgson 1989 : 12)

1987 many publications commented on a steep rise in the video hire and purchase markets during the election period. The Sunday Telegraph noted:

"Faced with what the trade calls "adverse programming" - that band of election specials running across the television channels at peak time - viewers are causing a mini-boom in the video hire business at the time of year when it is usually depressed."<sup>4</sup>

The article also commented on the "eagerly awaited video of "Aliens"." Peak business was expected on election day itself. (31 May 1987) Elsewhere it was recorded that:

"Popular papers which covered the election extensively lost readers to those which focused on other matters, and video rentals boomed as television viewers sought a respite from election reporting." (Jones 1987)

This chapter considers verbal images of Mrs Thatcher to be found in articles other than the Editorials which are discussed in the next chapter. The main emphasis is on the signed light feature articles and signed commentary such as the work of columnists, since this is where much of the verbal imagery arises, but it is not to imply a lack of descriptive matter in other reports. There are, for example, some vivid phrases concerning Mrs Thatcher personally, her leadership and politics, in the reported speech of Conservative and other politicians, as well as journalists and writers.

The signed commentary or opinion in this context is understood to mean an article expressing a named writer's opinions, usually in line with the publication's bias, which appears on, or possibly opposite to, the editorial page. It is not 'hard news' reporting. The article is 'about' Mrs Thatcher, probably in the light of the current campaign, or on previous

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<sup>4</sup> A 30% increase in trade was recorded at the Bristol Enterprise Video Club, for example, and a 20% increase at the Fulham Video Centre. (Sunday Telegraph 31 May 1987)

form, although the day's news may not always have an immediate bearing on the opinion expressed. Like the editorialist, the writer seeks to influence the reader by being thought provoking; and will choose and use language accordingly. Often an accompanying cartoon or line drawing can enhance both items, but is usually found only in the tabloids.

By contrast, the light feature article makes more reference to personalities in its attempt to influence opinion. Once again the choice of language is important, particularly in the 'human interest' story, or the 'spotlight on ...' approach. To be 'featured' confers or confirms 'personality' status. The feature article may be presented in a variety of ways, but it is usually more conversational in style, particularly in the tabloids. It is often illustrated with line drawings, cartoons or photographs. The article is generally concerned with the more personal aspects of the Leader - the 'real Maggie' at home cooking breakfast for Denis - rather than the politician. Precepts learned in earlier life which informed her then current political thinking are usually found in the article, as will be seen later in the chapter. Some of these precepts are the prompts for the verbal images.

Broadsheet, Tabloid and Periodical have differing approaches to the type of articles mentioned above, particularly on the question of language used. The reader of the Broadsheet or serious Periodical anticipates informed comment, balanced argument, discussion, analysis or explanation, all expressed in a range of complex and sophisticated language of which imagery is a part. The publication has the space necessary for this procedure. If time is available for an in-depth read, as well as inclination, it is assumed also that the readership expects and enjoys that type of approach. Coverage of a general election would provide extensive reading.

By contrast, the Tabloid reader may have neither the time nor inclination for a long and detailed read. With limited space available articles have to be brief and pithy, with supporting illustrations - more 'looking at' rather than reading the news. A 'serious' article may encapsulate summaries of the day's main news, and takes less space. Simpler,

colourful, even extravagant language, often repetitive and less cerebral tends to be used. Presumed readership preference for sport, entertainment and other human interest stories would therefore mean limited coverage of a general election.

Bearing the above points in mind we shall now consider the range and usage of names and descriptions of Mrs Thatcher at the three general elections.

## TYPES OF ARTICLE AND MENTIONS OF MRS THATCHER

For the purposes of analysis, the articles have been divided into four groups in each election year, for each publication. On the next page, Table 6.1, is the complete analysis.

Column 1 - records the total election articles by named journalists or contributors, found on the front and/or election pages of each publication. It does not include articles found in the Business section or the Reviews.

Column 2 - MENTIONED - shows the number of election articles out of the total in Column 1 where Mrs Thatcher is mentioned by her own name or variant, by an appropriate official title, by a nickname or descriptive term, or by a clear inference in some form. 'Clear inference' here means beyond reasonable doubt that 'she' or 'Her' in upper case, lower case or italic print, or the implied person in the article is Mrs Thatcher and no other female politician. The figures indicate that Mrs Thatcher is mentioned in some way at least once in an article, but she is not necessarily the subject of, or important to, the discussion. Other people mentioned may be equally germane.

Column 3 - SIGNIFICANT MENTION (S/M) - shows the number of articles out of the total in Column 2 where Mrs Thatcher is an important part of, or the subject of, the article. Put another way - the article cannot stand without her. The way she may be mentioned is the same as in the previous paragraph.

Column 4 - LIGHT FEATURE ARTICLES (L/F) - figures extracted from the totals in column 3, show the number of articles which are 'about' Mrs Thatcher personally, rather than politically. In many cases these two aspects of the person seem indivisible, and many writers make this point, as will be shown later. We shall now consider the statistics in

**Table 6.1 Analysis of General Election Articles**

	<b>1979</b>				<b>1983</b>				<b>1987</b>			
	Total Election Articles	Mentioned	Significant Mention	L/F Articles	Total Election Articles	Mentioned	Significant Mention	L/F Articles	Total Election Articles	Mentioned	Significant Mention	L/F Articles
<b>DAILY PAPERS</b>												
THE TIMES *	333*	57	16	3	487	145	24	9	501	131	32	11
THE GUARDIAN	376	71	15	2	494	153	32	9	472	151	25	8
DAILY EXPRESS	140	49	12	5	218	86	24	7	225	105	27	9
DAILY MIRROR	138	56	8	4	134	60	17	8	123	82	26	7
<b>SUNDAY PAPERS</b>												
SUNDAY TIMES*	50*	23	8	2	64	33	7	3	104	45	14	4
OBSERVER	77	25	9	3	67	25	11	3	58	27	7	5
SUNDAY EXPRESS	18	6	1	1	30	14	3	1	41	17	4	1
SUNDAY MIRROR	21	7	1	1	31	20	6	1	20	10	1	1
<b>PERIODICALS</b>												
SPECTATOR	24	13	4	4	25	19	3	3	26	13	1	1
NEW STATESMAN	16	10	1	1	26	18	4	3	29	20	4	2
PUNCH	6	1	-	-	12	9	2	-	7	5	3	2
PRIVATE EYE	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1

**KEY**

**Column 1** TOTAL ELECTION ARTICLES All signed commentary and signed light feature articles specifically concerned with the general election, usually labelled as such by the publication.

**Column 2** MENTIONED From the total in Column 1, the number of articles in which Mrs Thatcher is mentioned or clearly indicated by any name.

**Column 3** SIGNIFICANT MENTION From the total in Column 2, the number of articles in which Mrs Thatcher is the subject of, or an essential part of the article.

**Column 4** LIGHT FEATURE ARTICLES The number of articles 'about' Mrs Thatcher as a person.

\* DAILY and SUNDAY TELEGRAPH in 1979

Table 6.1 in an alternative form, where Significant Mention and Light Feature details are shown as histograms.

## ARTICLES IN DAILY PAPERS

As Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show, there are no uniform rises and falls in any sets of statistics for the Daily papers, but there are several interesting features.

Taking election articles totals first, (a) in Table 6.2: No true comparison can be made between the Telegraph 1979 and the Times 1983 - the Telegraph total indicates a "possibility". The Guardian increase for that period is 31%. Had the Times been available for 1979, a comparable rise would have required an initial total of 371 articles - somewhat higher than the Telegraph. The slight decrease in the Guardian total for 1987 represents about one article less per day during the campaign. There were slightly fewer short signed articles concerning various constituencies. The Tabloids are interesting in that the Express alone shows an overall rise across the three elections, with the greatest increase (approximately 65%) between 1979 and 1983. The Mirror by contrast has an overall decline, albeit marginal, between 1979 and 1983 and the equivalent of one less election article every third day accounting for the decrease in 1987. Proportionally, this is almost the same as for the Guardian at the same election.

In Articles mentioning Mrs Thatcher, (b) in Table 6.2: She receives attention of some sort in more than a quarter of them in the Times and just under one third in the Guardian, for 1983 and 1987. The percentage increase for the Guardian from 1979 to 1983 seems surprisingly large considering the paper's bias. However, it was also of interest to see such close percentages for the Telegraph and Guardian in 1979, bearing in mind how enthusiastically the former supported Mrs Thatcher. We shall see another version of this enthusiasm later in the chapter. The increased attention in the Tabloids is marked, particularly in the Mirror, in view of the slight decrease in its election articles, noted above.

Table 6.2

## Articles in Daily Newspapers

Analysis of SIGNIFICANT MENTION (S/M) and LIGHT FEATURE (L/F) articles showing their percentages of ARTICLES in which Mrs Thatcher is mentioned. Statistics drawn from Table 6.1

PAPER

ELECTION YEAR

(a) Total election Articles

(b) Number of Articles mentioning Mrs Thatcher

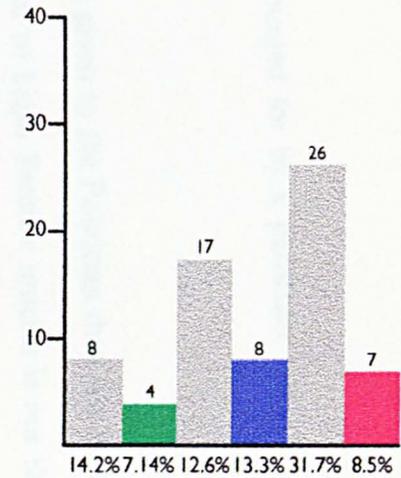
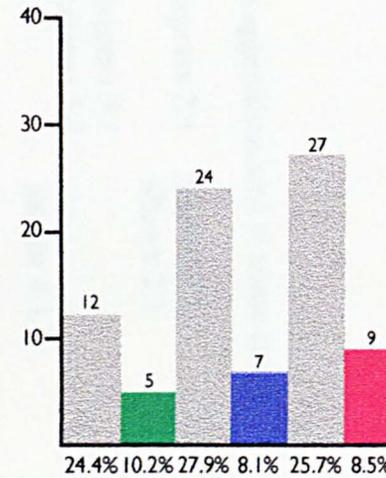
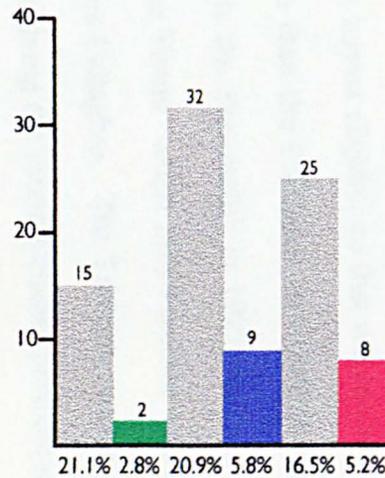
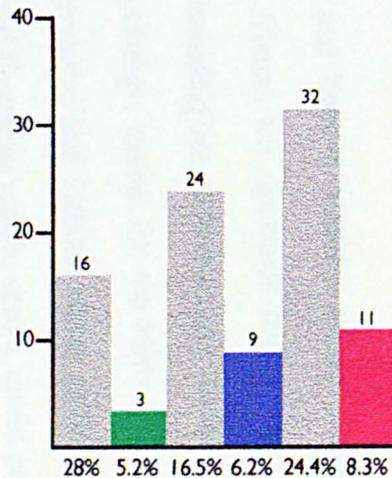
(b) as % of (a)

TELEGRAPH	TIMES	
1979	1983	1987
333	487	501
57	145	131
17.1%	29.7%	26.1%

GUARDIAN		
1979	1983	1987
376	494	472
71	153	151
18.8%	30.9%	31.9%

DAILY EXPRESS		
1979	1983	1987
140	218	225
49	86	105
35%	39.4%	46.6%

DAILY MIRROR		
1979	1983	1987
138	134	123
56	60	82
40.5%	44.7%	66.6%



S/M and L/F ARTICLES as % of (b) above

ARTICLES WITH SIGNIFICANT MENTION OF MRS THATCHER



LIGHT FEATURE OR COMMENT ARTICLES 'ABOUT' MRS THATCHER PERSONALLY



The 1987 increase in the Mirror is partly accounted for by a particular tactic using her name, which will be referred to again later.

The histograms indicate the greater importance given to the Politician than the Personality in all the Dailies. The ratio of Special Mention to Light Feature articles is not the same across the three elections as can be seen here.

Note: For ease of comparison these figures are approximations in some cases.

1979	Telegraph 5:1	Guardian 7:1	Express 2:1	Mirror 2:1
1983}				Mirror 2:1
1983}	Times 3:1	Guardian 3:1	Express 3:1	
1987}	Times 3:1	Guardian 3:1	Express 3:1	
1987}				Mirror 4:1

In view of these changes the statement can be turned slightly, so that we can say although the Personality never received more attention than the Politician, nonetheless the interest did alter. The Qualities were distant towards the Personality in 1979, and we can only assume this would have been the case with the Times; whilst Mrs Thatcher was Leader of the Opposition, the attention centred on James Callaghan. The Tabloids were much more interested - the 'human interest' factor - whilst giving the Prime Minister prominence.

By 1983 the situation was vastly different, and Special Mention articles doubled. Mrs Thatcher was Prime Minister and Falkland Victor, her opponent had a poor leadership image in a media biased campaign, notwithstanding his parliamentary stature. In 1987, even without the Falkland factor there is no change, except for the Mirror. Harrop notes that in 1987 the quality dailies gave Conservative and Labour equal election coverage. (Harrop 1988 : 168) Therefore, the Times and Guardian ratio's, above, could possibly also apply to Neil Kinnock, perhaps not surprising in view of the professional campaign and presentation of the leader. The ratio for Mrs Thatcher did not alter in spite of the greater challenge - except in the Mirror, where, as noted earlier, articles and tactics had slightly altered, concentrating on personalised politics.

Table 6.3

## Articles in Sunday Newspapers

Analysis of SIGNIFICANT MENTION (S/M) and LIGHT FEATURE (L/F) articles showing their percentages of ARTICLES in which Mrs Thatcher is mentioned. Statistics drawn from Table 6.1

PAPER

ELECTION YEAR

(a) Total election Articles

(b) Number of Articles mentioning Mrs Thatcher

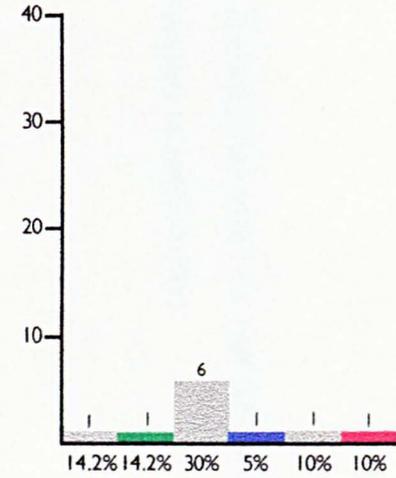
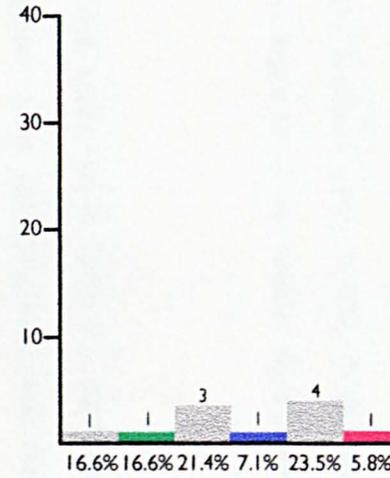
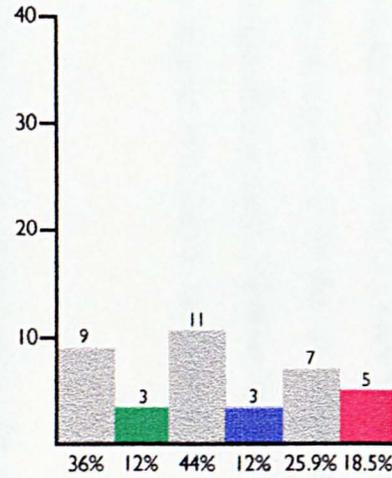
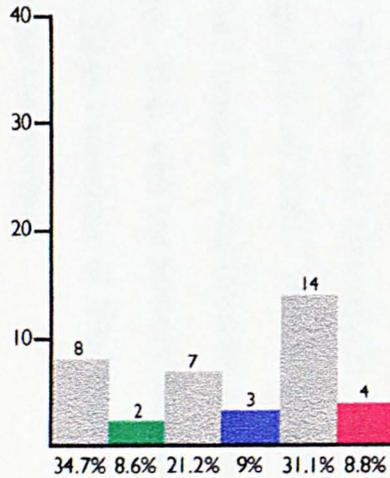
(b) as % of (a)

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH	SUNDAY TIMES	
	1979	1983
50	64	104
23	33	45
46%	51.5%	43.2%

OBSERVER		
1979	1983	1987
77	67	58
25	25	27
32.4%	37.3%	46.5%

SUNDAY EXPRESS		
1979	1983	1987
18	30	41
6	14	17
33.3%	46.6%	41.4%

SUNDAY MIRROR		
1979	1983	1987
21	31	20
7	20	10
33.3%	64.5%	50%



S/M and L/F ARTICLES as % of (b) above

ARTICLES WITH SIGNIFICANT MENTION OF MRS THATCHER



LIGHT FEATURE OR COMMENT ARTICLES 'ABOUT' MRS THATCHER PERSONALLY



Overall there are no particular surprises; the statistics are much as one would expect considering Mrs Thatcher's personal and political stature at each election.

#### ARTICLES IN SUNDAY PAPERS

As with the Daily papers, Table 6.3 shows few uniform rises or falls in the statistics. Percentage differences tend to look greater here because of the smaller figures involved, changes are exaggerated.

There are two unexpected points with the election totals, (a) in Table 6.3, apart from the obvious problem with the Telegraph/Times figures. First, the Observer totals fall a little almost equally across the elections, which represents two less articles each Sunday in 1983 and almost the same in 1987. Articles lost did not appear to be the important, standard ones. The second point is the odd fluctuation in the Mirror totals, representing two articles difference weekly. The Express appeared to follow the overall increase of its weekly counterpart.

Although the number of articles in both Conservative papers increased across the elections, and the number of articles mentioning Mrs Thatcher also rose, (b) in Table 6.3, the percentages show a drop in 1987 from the high point of 1983 - 10% in the Express and 8.4% in the Times. This contrasts with the 1987 increase in the Observer of almost 10%, even though the total election articles fell again. Even with the Mirror's fluctuating totals and the 1983 high spot - the highest in the Table - mentions of Mrs Thatcher are still considerably higher in the Labour press than in the Conservative.

The percentages, (b) as % of (a) show that in all the Sunday papers Mrs Thatcher is mentioned in at least one third of the articles, and in some cases nearly half of them. It may

be only a passing reference, the name may not be her proper one, but she is never far from the reader's attention.

Histograms for the Qualities indicate the greater emphasis given to the Politician, just as we saw in their Daily counterpart. Because of the low figures, the ratios - some approximations, as before - present some difficulties.

1979	Telegraph 4:1	Observer 3:1	Express 1:1	Mirror 1:1
1983	Times 2:1	Observer 4:1	Express 3:1	Mirror 6:1
1987	Times 7:2	Observer 7:5	Express 4:1	Mirror 1:1

We can see that the Times stressed 1983 as Mrs Thatcher's important year politically and personally, reflecting the Falkland factor and quality of leadership. The Observer was much more concerned with 1987, and the state of the leadership, (mentioned in the previous chapter). It was also concerned with the quality and economic cost of Thatcherism. (Harrop 1988 : 175)

In the case of the Tabloids, the situation is a little difficult with the very low numbers but the picture is quite different. The Politician and the Personality were seen to be of equal importance in 1979, a tabloid tendency perhaps. We saw earlier that the Mirror's approach then was relatively benign, compared with 1987 for example. The Express raised the political interest at the next two elections without overlooking the personal aspects. In the Mirror, the rise in 1983 is in line with the increased total articles and at first the return to the 1:1 ratio of 1987 seems odd in relation to 1979. By the third election there was equal interest in the Politician and the Personality, but for entirely different reasons. The paper was also strongly partisan and strongly critical of Mrs Thatcher. There may have been fewer election articles all told, but Mrs Thatcher was mentioned in half of them, and two centred on her.

Overall, Mrs Thatcher seems to have had slightly more attention in the Sunday than Daily press, in proportion to the limited number of days available, and therefore the space. There are one or two surprising features in the statistics, but nothing particularly critical.

Table 6.4

## Articles in Periodicals

Analysis of SIGNIFICANT MENTION (S/M) and LIGHT FEATURE (L/F) articles showing their percentages of ARTICLES in which Mrs Thatcher is mentioned. Statistics drawn from Table 6.1

PERIODICAL

ELECTION YEAR

(a) Total election Articles

(b) Number of Articles mentioning Mrs Thatcher

(b) as % of (a)

SPECTATOR		
1979	1983	1987
24	25	26
13	19	13
54.1%	76%	50%

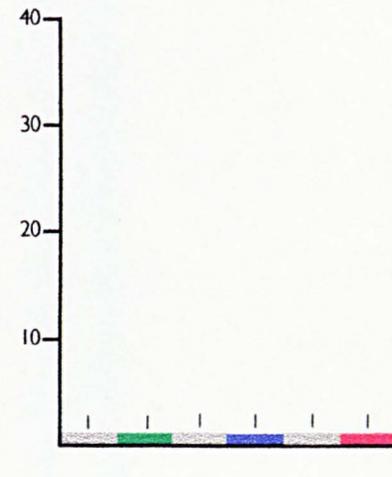
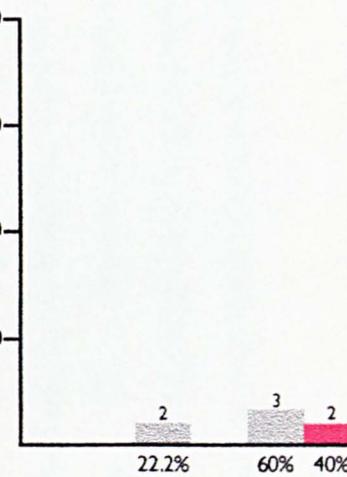
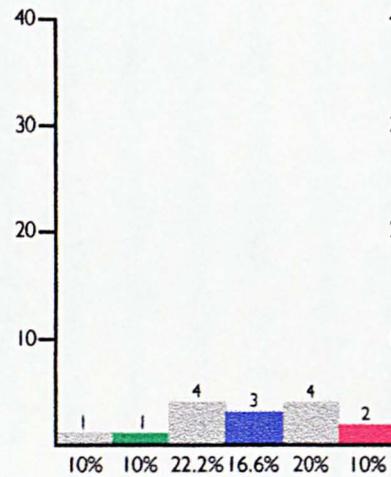
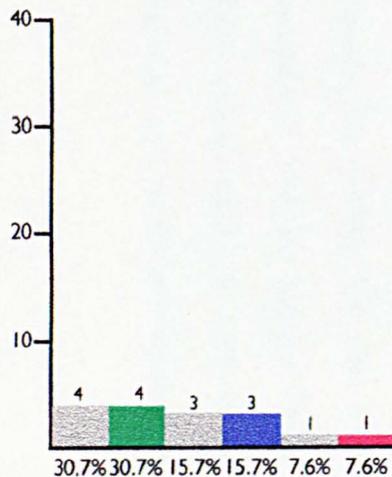
NEW STATESMAN		
1979	1983	1987
16	26	29
10	18	20
62.5%	69.2%	68.9%

PUNCH		
1979	1983	1987
6	12	7
1	9	5
16.6%	75%	71.4%

PRIVATE EYE		
1979	1983	1987
2	1	2
2	1	1
100%	100%	50%

171a

S/M and L/F ARTICLES as % of (b) above



ARTICLES WITH SIGNIFICANT MENTION OF MRS THATCHER



LIGHT FEATURE OR COMMENT ARTICLES 'ABOUT' MRS THATCHER PERSONALLY



## ARTICLES IN PERIODICALS

Because of the nature of the four periodicals, the brief analysis in this section will be done in two parts. The Spectator and New Statesman will be considered first, and then Punch and Private Eye.

The most obvious differences in the top section are the relatively steep rises overall in New Statesman's figures, for both the election articles and those mentioning Mrs Thatcher. It should be no surprise perhaps to find the percentages consistently high. (Although comparisons cannot be made across various types of publications, nonetheless it is worth nothing that these percentages are the highest maintained level of the twelve titles.) The surprise with the Spectator is not the almost consistent election totals, but the rise and fall of the Mention articles and therefore the big swing in percentages. It does not happen in any of the other Conservative publications. In the histogram section the surprise again is what happens to the Spectator totals. The Politician and the Personality are of equal interest, but declining with each election. Interest was keen in 1979 and marginally less in 1983. though its partisanship never wavered, the total interest had declined by 1987, and there was some concern about when an asset becomes a liability. New Statesman is really the reverse situation. In 1979 it seemed inconceivable to them that Mrs Thatcher could topple James Callaghan. He was their prime interest, with the Labour Party. She was recorded only as a party leader and for policies which could not work in the economic climate. The interest and concern rose in 1983 and was maintained because she remained Prime Minister and stayed so long.

Bilton and Himmelfarb note that the Spectator and New Statesman were "clearly partisan" but with different approaches. (They do not say "stridently" but it seems to be implied). The Spectator's way was strongly personalised, where "profiles of political celebrities" and associates of the Conservative party "outweighed the issues" each week. New Statesman,

by contrast, gave a detailed analysis of all aspects of economic policy and the class structure of the electorate". (Bilton & Himmelfarb 1980 : 256)

It is difficult to analyse the other two publications in quite the same way. Part of the problem is due to their format, although both changed somewhat after 1979. Punch articles were not "about" the election in the same way as Spectator or New Statesman, for example, but they contained some election matter and references. In 1979 attention was concentrated on James Callaghan, his colleagues and the Labour party, rather than Mrs Thatcher. She was mentioned once, but the Opposition fared better. Visually, however, she was well represented as we shall see later, appearing frequently in cartoons. In 1983, she was mentioned more often and again appeared more in photographs and cartoons. The situation changed in 1987 when significant Mention and light articles appeared, but there were no photographs.

Private Eye statistics are more indicators that the elections did not go unnoticed in a welter of other alternative comment, analysis and sleuthing., The earlier definitions of the types of article are difficult to apply. In 1979, for example, Mrs Thatcher was mentioned several times in various small paragraphs, some of them not strictly related to the general election, yet not irrelevant. In 1983 and 1987 reference to her tended to appear in items such as "Dear Bill", where she was the subject of a few sentences or a witty paragraph, but not the subject of the letter. Over three elections much more emphasis was given to the visual image of Mrs Thatcher in photographs and particularly in cartoons, as will be shown later.

\* \* \* \* \*

In this section on Articles, the statistics for the Daily papers were much as expected, in line with partisanship, and no major surprises. There was a relative balance between the two Qualities and between the two Tabloids. In the Sunday papers Mrs Thatcher appeared to have marginally more attention than in the Dailies, in relation to the space available. In

almost all cases in the Daily and Sunday papers the Politician received more attention than the Personality. In a very few cases the attention was equal, but the Personality never exceeded the Politician.

The serious Periodicals, strongly partisan, gave an equal amount of attention to the Politician and the Personality, but for different reasons. Surprisingly, the attention in the Spectator decreased across the elections against New Statesman's sharper increase. New Statesman gave the highest percentage of Mentions per Total Articles of all the publications. The low statistics recorded for the satirical Periodicals was due to their placing more emphasis on the visual images of Mrs Thatcher - to be shown later - than the verbal ones. Possibly it was a reaction to the increasingly presidential nature of the campaigns; if not a criticism then perhaps it was a slight counterbalance.

In the next section we shall consider the most frequently used names in all the publications.

IN CONSTANT USE : The range of frequently used names

Arguably, all the publications could refer to Mrs Thatcher by that proper name every time she was mentioned, and use no other name, title or description. Their message would soon pall. To attract and retain attention requires diversity and some originality in the language used. Since the publications researched are aimed at different sections of the population and are designed to appeal to that audience, the language is chosen accordingly. As noted earlier, the Broadsheets and serious Periodicals use a wide range of language for reasoned argument, interpretation, analysis and comment. (Seymour-Ure 1994 : 269) The formal mode using complex figures of speech forms a "House style". Reasoned argument and comment requires reasonable language.

The Tabloids prefer a more brash or colloquial style which may sometimes be repetitive. The "House style" of Tabloids is rather variable. Some are more idiomatic than others and the material is presented in a punchy, graphic way. (Seymour-Ure *ibid*) Mostly the imagery is basic for instant assimilation - but there are exceptions. Middle-market Tabloid language is a little less colloquial and rather more reasonable.

The satirical approach also requires quite careful use of the language, to be effective. To present an alternative view requires artful means or perhaps adroitness, when the editorial bias is quirky and the House style distinctive.

The pun, the witticism, the metaphor, personification and the double entendre all have a place in these publications. The way they are used - with subtlety or careless unconcern makes the difference.

For the purposes of discussion, the verbal images have been analysed in two ways. Quantitative matters are dealt with first, by election, in the sections of Daily and Sunday papers and Periodicals. This will show the names or images common to all publications

within the section and frequency of use. The Qualitative part then shows the classification of these verbal descriptions to illustrate particular aspects of Mrs Thatcher's image. At this stage probably the most frequently used names will be from four main categories - the plain language rather than the high-flown description or allusion.

The categories are as follows. First : the proper name, ranging from the formal Mrs Thatcher to the informality of Maggie Thatcher. Second : a political title or variation - Leader of the Opposition, Tory leader and eventually Prime Minister or Premier. Third : nicknames which in this case are taken to mean names given in familiarity or contempt, added to, or sometimes substituted for the proper name. It should be noted that although 'Maggie' is an accepted derivation or corruption of Margaret, in this context it counts as a name in it's own right, a friendly or familiar name, rather than a nickname. Fourth : aspects of the Character and Personality or descriptions of perceived attributes or vices. This includes notions of leadership. These categories are used again later in the chapter.

Taking the total number of different names used at each election first, (a) in Table 6.5, shows an increase of almost one-third between 1979 and 1983. The difference is partly accounted for by the change of status from Opposition Leader seeking election to Prime Minister seeking re-election. The Falkland factor helped, but the increase in press interest was possibly also attributable to the presidential type campaign and various marketing ploys. As we shall see later, journalists and photographers did their job and yet also became "part of the action". By 1987, with another presidential campaign and Mrs Thatcher looking for an unprecedented third consecutive election win there was a minimal increase in the names. Later Tables will show this was due to intensive rather than extensive use of names.

The Daily papers, marked (b), also record a significant increase between 1979 and 1983 - with a much higher percentage than for the election totals. Two other points are worth noting here. First, the Guardian figures are considerably higher than the Telegraph/Times.

**Table 6.5 Analysis of Numbers of Different Names Used at Each Election**

	1979	1983	1987
(a) Total number of different names used - all sources ie no repetition or overlap	117	153	155
% change on previous election		*	+ 1.3%
<b><u>Daily Papers</u></b>			
(b) Total number of different names used % of election total (a) in brackets	76 (64.9%)	108 (70.5%)	106 (68.3%)
% change on previous election		*	- 1.8%
<b><u>Publication with % Daily paper total in brackets</u></b>			
Numbers of names used from total (b)			
Times (Telegraph 1979)	21 (27.6%)	22 (20.8%)	32 (30.1%)
Guardian	46 (60.5%)	56 (51.8%)	52 (49%)
Express	35 (46.0%)	42 (38.8%)	33 (31.1%)
Mirror	16 (21.0%)	30 (27.7%)	31 (29.2%)
<b><u>Sunday Papers</u></b>			
(c) Total number of different names used % of election total (a) in brackets	44 (37.6%)	38 (24.8%)	37 (23.8%)
% change on previous election		*	- 2.6%
<b><u>Publication with % of Sunday papers total in brackets</u></b>			
Number of names used from total (c)			
Times (Telegraph 1979)	16 (36.3%)	11 (28.9%)	13 (35.1%)
Observer	31 (70.4%)	24 (63.1%)	18 (48.6%)
Express	9 (20.4%)	12 (31.5%)	6 (16.2%)
Mirror	8 (18.1%)	16 (42.1%)	18 (48.6%)
<b><u>Periodicals</u></b>			
(d) Total number of different names used % of election total (a) in brackets	31 (26.6%)	39 (25.4%)	49 (31.6%)
% change on previous election		+ 25.8%	+ 25.6%
<b><u>Publication with % Periodicals total in brackets</u></b>			
Number of names used from total (d)			
Spectator	17 (54.8%)	14 (35.8%)	18 (36.7%)
New Statesman	15 (48.3%)	18 (46.1%)	18 (36.7%)
Punch	5 (16.1%)	8 (20.5%)	14 (28.5%)
Private Eye	10 (32.2%)	15 (38.4%)	20 (40.8%)

\* affected by Telegraph/Times changes

It will be shown later that a particular style of witty election articles developed - a theme based on a recent event - containing many related images. Second, rather unexpectedly the 1987 totals for the two tabloids match the Times, in spite of its extra space and extensive coverage.

Against the general trend of the other two sections, the Sunday totals marked (c) fall with the larger decrease, surprisingly between 1979 and 1983. This is not entirely accounted for with intensive name use. Both the Broadsheets show an overall decline and there is also an odd fluctuation in the Express totals although it increased the number of election articles. (Table 6.3) The Observer did have an overall fall in total articles. The Mirror alone shows a substantial increase overall, which, though on a different scale, is similar to the daily counterpart.

The election totals for the Periodicals, marked (d), show a very consistent rise. The figures for Spectator and New Statesman show a similarity, with relatively little increase overall. The major increases can be seen in Punch and Private Eye. This is particularly interesting with the satirical two, since there seemed to be a preference for the visual rather than verbal images of Mrs Thatcher - as later statistics will show.

From numbers of different names, we now turn to the names themselves, specifically, those used most frequently.

#### CLASSIFICATION BY FREQUENCY AND COMMONALITY

'Frequent use' relative to daily papers presented a problem. One name that appears once per day either two days out of three, or every other day, hardly seems frequent, given that the campaign weekdays for research purposes were fixed at 24, (Appendix note). However, a name used 16-20 times in a Tabloid is probably more likely to be noticed than if it appears the same number of times in a Broadsheet. To avoid boredom with one name a

selection of other names is used each day depending on various contexts. Arguably an exception to this is if the name is particularly distinctive in some way - outlandish, unusual, a dire or witty pun, or some other peculiar feature. The more distinctive the name or description the more likely it is to be remembered, even if it has relatively little use - perhaps less than 10 mentions.

Keeping 'frequent' as flexible as possible, therefore, it has two meanings here. First, commonality, and second, the number of times a name is used. The main group of names are those common to the four publications. For reference purposes, names common to three publications are also shown, as is the exceptional use of one name by one publication. The 'limited use' names at the end of the Table are discussed later in the chapter.

As noted earlier, it is anticipated that most names shown in Tables 6.6 to 6.14 inclusive will belong in the categories: Proper name, Proper title, Nickname or Characteristic.

#### Daily Papers 1979 (Table 6.6)

It can be seen that the formal 'Mrs Thatcher' was the most used name in all the daily papers by a very wide margin. Given the size of the totals, there is relatively little difference between the two broadsheets and between the two tabloids. Formality overrides all other names at this stage. Very little was known of Mrs Thatcher's leadership qualities, so there was never a derogatory or over critical comment attached to this formality. There is a degree of dignity and respect regardless of partisanship.

The Broadsheets both use 'Thatcher' as a second choice name. This might seem surprising but at this point it was neither dismissive or rude, being used in much the same way as 'Callaghan'. It appeared in straplines or paragraph headings, but rarely in the text. The abbreviated form was a space saver, rather than disparagement. The Tabloids made similar use of it, but considerably less often - a fourth choice name in both cases.

**Table 6.6 Analysis of Names Used Most Frequently in 1979**

**DAILY PAPERS**

		Telegraph	Guardian	Express	Mirror
<u>Number of names used common to all</u>					
<u>Daily Papers : 9</u>					
Mrs Thatcher	Number of times used	492	486	119	126
Thatcher	-----“-----	21	38	7	8
Maggie	-----“-----	10	4	28	19
Margaret Thatcher	-----“-----	3	7	14	25
Mrs Margaret Thatcher	-----“-----	1	16	14	3
Tory Leader	-----“-----	4	10	4	3
First Woman Prime Minister	-----“-----	9	1	2	1
Conviction politician	-----“-----	1	1	2	1
Thatcher factor	-----“-----	1	1	1	1
<u>Number of names used common to three</u>					
<u>Daily Papers : 4</u>					
Prime Minister	Number of times used	3	7	2	
Iron Lady	-----“-----	3	3	3	
Margaret	-----“-----	2	4	2	
Mrs T	-----“-----		1	2	10
<u>Other names used frequently</u>					
Conservative Leader	Number of times used	16	3		
Opposition Leader	-----“-----		6	1	
Tory Leader Margaret Thatcher	-----“-----			3	21
<u>Limited Use</u>					
Number of other names used per publication, not mentioned above.		8	31	21	5
Total number of different names used in each Periodical at this election. (From Table 6.5)		<b>21</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>16</b>

The third choice name in the Broadsheets - 'Conservative Leader' in the Telegraph, 'Mrs Margaret Thatcher' in the Guardian are both on the border of frequent use, as defined earlier. Thus far, the Telegraph has had two proper names and one title, the Guardian three proper names. At this point for both there is a drop from sixteen uses to ten for the next two names, both still within categories 1 and 2.

The Express second choice name is the friendly and familiar 'Maggie' which appeared in headlines, sub-headings and feature articles, whereas the joint third choice of Mrs Margaret Thatcher or Margaret Thatcher was kept for reports and commentary. These are all category 1 names.

The Mirror had 'Margaret Thatcher' as second choice and only a slight variation. 'Tory Leader Margaret Thatcher' as third choice. This also keeps the Mirror's choice to the formal name and title selection. 'Maggie' appears as the fourth choice and therefore comes within the 'frequent' limit.

Both 'Maggie' and 'Thatcher' had occasional headline use

It is interesting to find 'Maggie' used in an agreeable way in this paper in 1979. The situation is rather different by 1987.

At this point we can see that the choice of names tends to be the formal 'Mrs Thatcher' with a little unbending to (Mrs) Margaret Thatcher, and 'Thatcher' used uncritically. 'Maggie' was given much more attention by the Tabloids; it suits their style, and probably has readership appeal. Neither of the Broadsheets rate it highly. Of the other names, for obvious reasons 'Prime Minister' could have only limited use; 'Thatcher factor' had not the clout it developed later; and Mrs Thatcher's own description 'conviction politician' was remarked upon but to no great extent. It is interesting to note that two familiar nicknames,

'Iron Lady' and 'Mrs T' appear in the lists, but are not very high. The exception is the Mirror, where numerically this is the fourth choice name, and was used in a friendly fashion.

The calling of names, or the use of various descriptions had not really developed to any great extent at this stage, although a selection of images already existed by 1979, as we have seen in earlier chapters. Later Tables will show a marked increase for 1983, in view of Mrs Thatcher's unpopular years on the one hand, and marketing zeal on the other.

### Sunday Papers 1979 (Table 6.7)

The Broadsheets' use of 'Mrs Thatcher' was to be expected. The formality is in line with their standing and readership expectations. The Telegraph used 'Thatcher' as an abbreviation, not as disparagement. The approach at this stage did not include any familiar terms. The Observer, by contrast, seemed keen to have familiarity as well as degrees of formality. 'Mrs T' was often used with critical comment, so that there was contradiction or incongruity in the article with the use of informal language in the argument. In another article 'Margaret' or 'Maggie' was used in conjunction with favourable comment. It sometimes seemed more like a middle-market Tabloid.

The totals for 'Mrs Thatcher' in the Tabloids were unexpectedly low, particularly in the Express. Although Table 6.3 did show she was mentioned in six articles in the Express, only two were 'about' her. Even with the less formal second choice of 'Margaret Thatcher' it looks a rather meagre list compared with the Mirror - although the latter has one less name overall. Looking at the Mirror totals for 'Mrs Thatcher' and 'Margaret Thatcher', and in conjunction with Table 6.3, we find that although Mrs Thatcher was mentioned in seven Mirror articles, again, only two were "about" her, giving 33% of the total articles for both Tabloids. Mrs Thatcher was therefore mentioned much more often in the Mirror articles than the Express. And at this stage the Mirror was not particularly critical, though perhaps

**Table 6.7**      **Analysis of Names Used Most Frequently in 1979**

**SUNDAY PAPERS**

		<b>Telegraph</b>	<b>Observer</b>	<b>Express</b>	<b>Mirror</b>
<u>Number of names used common to all Sunday Papers : 4</u>					
Mrs Thatcher	Number of times used	100	82	9	15
Margaret Thatcher	-----"-----	2	9	8	12
Maggie	-----"-----	4	10	3	6
Prime Minister	-----"-----	3	1	2	1
<u>Number of names used common to three Sunday Papers : 2</u>					
Mrs Margaret Thatcher	Number of times used		4	1	6
Margaret	-----"-----	1	8		1
<u>Other names used frequently</u>					
Thatcher	Number of times used	7	5		
Mrs T	-----"-----		14		
<u>Limited Use</u>					
Number of other names used per publication, not mentioned above.		10	23	4	2
<b>Total number of different names used in each Periodical at this election. (From Table 6.5)</b>		<b>16</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>

a touch condescending. Of note here is the absence of 'Iron Lady' and although 'Prime Minister' just creeps in, there is no use of any other formal title, or the word "Leader" in any of the papers.

### Periodicals 1979 (Table 6.8)

The partisanship in the serious periodicals is indicated with the use of 'Mrs Thatcher'. For the Spectator it is clearly the most important name with little use of anything less formal or more familiar. There is no obvious second choice name, although a range of sixteen other names were used.

New Statesman gave most of the attention to James Callaghan, noted earlier, and only two articles were "about" Mrs Thatcher, although she was mentioned in ten articles (Table 6.4), which accounts for the totals here. 'Thatcher' was used like Callaghan or Healey in the articles, but also critically and in comparisons over policy issues. At this stage New Statesman is brisk not brusque about Mrs Thatcher. It is interesting to find 'Margaret' used, particularly as it does not appear in the Spectator. In the context of an article about Mrs Thatcher and meritocracy, however, the name did not indicate a friendly attitude, referring most often to a schoolgirl and undergraduate, her achievements and progress.

Punch also gave more attention to James Callaghan in 1979, so once again there is limited use of both 'Mrs Thatcher' and any other names. There were no articles "about" her (Table 6.4) and relatively little comment, apart from acknowledgement that she was part of the general election.

Private Eye articles, more often paragraphs, were all friendly in intent, how ever expressed. Mrs Thatcher was not mentioned a great deal, a shade more than in Punch, but in a larger range of names. 'M' used more than other names appears in the first of the "Dear Bill"

**Table 6.8      Analysis of Names Used Most Frequently in 1979**

**PERIODICALS**

		<b>Spectator</b>	<b>New Statesman</b>	<b>Punch</b>	<b>Private Eye</b>
<u>Number of names used common to all Periodicals : 3</u>					
Mrs Thatcher	Number of times used	61	19	11	15
Thatcher	-----“-----	2	14	3	2
Margaret Thatcher	-----“-----	5	3	1	3
<u>Number of names used common to three Periodicals : 2</u>					
Prime Minister	Number of times used	4	1		2
Maggie	-----“-----	3	2		4
<u>Other names used frequently</u>					
Margaret	Number of times used		9		
M	-----“-----				8
<u>Limited Use</u>					
Number of other names used per publication, not mentioned above.		12	9	2	4
<b>Total number of different names used in each Periodical at this election. (From Table 6.5)</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>

letters. Used as within the brisk affection of marriage, there is perhaps a faint allusion to James Bond's Boss, and Controller of the agents. In that context it is an omen.

As expected, and in keeping with Mrs Thatcher's change in status, her experience on the world stage and the Falklands issue, together with the marketing process, there are significant changes in the statistics for 1983. Of note also at this point is the replacement of the Telegraph by the Times.

### Daily Papers 1983 (Table 6.9)

Once again the Broadsheets emphasise the formal name and now also the formal title, but the difference in use between the papers is quite marked. We know from Table 6.2 that the Guardian had a big increase in election articles of all kinds in 1983, and Mrs Thatcher was mentioned in nearly a third of them. The Times relaxes formality a little with the third choice of 'Mrs Margaret Thatcher' which has no place in the Guardian, but this does not help close the wide gap in the use of the proper name. The Guardian makes little use of the less formal proper name. 'Thatcher' is the next choice of both papers. It has some headline use as well as straplines and sub-headings, and is used like 'Foot' or 'Healey' within paragraphs. In the Guardian it was used much more often with critical comment than in 1979. The Times also used it with critical comment, but to a lesser extent and obviously no other comparison is possible. After this name the Times made only a little use of a variety of others - so that the emphasis in description is on respectful formality. A little familiarity creeps into the Guardian with 'Maggie' and 'PM', and the rather strange selection at the end of the column come from usage in the witty articles mentioned earlier. Neither Broadsheet makes much use of nicknames. The Guardian's noticeably larger number of election articles with the greater number of mentions of Mrs Thatcher in them accounts for the increased total which make the Times' selection look a little thin.

**Table 6.9 Analysis of Names Used Most Frequently in 1983**

**DAILY PAPERS**

		<b>Times</b>	<b>Guardian</b>	<b>Express</b>	<b>Mirror</b>
<u>Number of names used common to all Daily Papers : 6</u>					
Mrs Thatcher	Number of times used	375	586	242	161
Prime Minister	-----“-----	160	137	55	28
Thatcher	-----“-----	61	50	14	22
Margaret Thatcher	-----“-----	15	12	9	18
Maggie	-----“-----	1	8	29	15
Mrs T	-----“-----	1	1	1	4
<u>Number of names used common to three Papers : 6</u>					
Iron Lady	Number of times used	2	4	2	
Headmistress	-----“-----	2	1	1	
Boadicea	-----“-----	1	3		1
Most loathed Prime Minister	-----“-----		1	1	1
Iron Maiden	-----“-----	1		1	2
Mrs Margaret Thatcher	-----“-----	62		1	1
<u>Other names used frequently</u>					
Premier Margaret Thatcher	Number of times used				
PM	-----“-----	2	8	25	1
Bertie Wooster's Aunt Agatha	-----“-----		6		
Maggie May	-----“-----		6		
Squadron Leader	-----“-----		6		
<u>Limited Use</u>					
Number of other names used per publication, not mentioned above.		10	42	30	19
Total number of different names used in each Periodical at this election. (From Table 6.5)		<b>22</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>30</b>

The Tabloids also emphasise the formal name and title, with the Express making much greater use of it than the Mirror. There was plenty of space for this extension; the Special Mention and Light Feature articles "about" Mrs Thatcher doubled in both papers. Although the Express doubled its number of names from 1979, the Mirror's increased sixfold. (Table 6.6) The third choice name was the friendly informality of "Maggie", sometimes reinforced by a Cummings line drawing of either a cheerful, face-only Mrs Thatcher, or occasionally the dumpy little woman cartoon figure. The name also appeared as a "good-news" type headline. The Mirror's third choice was 'Thatcher' used similarly to the Broadsheets, and more noticeable as a headline than in 1979 - though not a particularly good news one. For the Express 'Thatcher' was down the list this time.

'Premier Margaret Thatcher', an interesting combination of title with less formality was fourth choice in the Express, after 'Maggie'. The Broadsheets do not use it at all in 1983 or 1987. The Mirror, here, uses it once. The traditional nicknames had little use, one in each paper, with 'Mrs T' going to the Mirror, and 'Iron Lady' to the Express. Apart from the formality at the top of the Table, there was a degree less inhibition immediately following it, as one would expect.

#### Sunday Papers 1983 (Table 6.10)

'Mrs Thatcher' heads the Table but 'Prime Minister' is second choice only for the Observer and not all the papers as might be expected. The Times prefers 'Thatcher' and uses it as an alternative name in various contexts, sometimes critical, but not as a derogatory term. 'Prime Minister' is third choice but almost on the frequency limit. The Observer makes little use of 'Thatcher', or of 'Mrs T', so popular last time. The rest of the names have limited use in either paper. Of the total names used, the Observer again has a considerable list, but fewer than 1979. The Times total, like the Telegraph's previously looks thin in comparison.

**Table 6.10 Analysis of Names Used Most Frequently in 1983**

**SUNDAY PAPERS**

		<b>Times</b>	<b>Observer</b>	<b>Express</b>	<b>Mirror</b>
<b><u>Number of names used common to all Sunday Papers : 5</u></b>					
Mrs Thatcher	Number of times used	126	110	20	21
Prime Minister	-----“-----	15	22	1	4
Margaret Thatcher	-----“-----	4	5	8	9
Maggie	-----“-----	1	2	1	10
Mrs Margaret Thatcher	-----“-----	1	4	6	1
<b><u>Number of names used common to three papers : 3</u></b>					
Thatcher	Number of times used	25	3		3
Margaret	-----“-----		4	7	1
Mrs T	-----“-----		2	1	2
<b><u>Other names used frequently</u></b>					
Cautious politician	Number of times used		4		
<b><u>Limited Use</u></b>					
Number of other names used per publication, not mentioned above.		5	15	5	8
<b>Total number of different names used in each Periodical at this election. (From Table 6.5)</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>

The Tabloids prefer the less formal as their second and third choice, but the three names are well outside the frequency limit. There is quite a gap between these totals and 'Mrs Thatcher'. Perhaps even more significant, the leadership indicator of 'Prime Minister' is used even less than these choices, and is almost on a par with 'Mrs T'. The Express for example, uses both of them once. This is probably the second most surprising point in the whole Table.

### Periodicals 1983 (Table 6.11)

After 'Mrs Thatcher', once again we find that 'Prime Minister' is not the second name, except in Punch. The serious periodicals both have 'Thatcher', for different reasons. The writers' use of it was along partisan lines, although there was some limited critical comment in the Spectator. In both cases there is a big difference between the totals for 'Thatcher' and 'Mrs Thatcher', less so in New Statesman. It was a surprise to find 'Prime Minister' as third choice, and with such limited use.

Punch has 'Prime Minister' and 'Maggie' as joint second, which may be accidental, but in this case seems appropriate, not surprising. Mrs Thatcher received more attention from Punch contributors in this election compared with 1979. There was a limited increase in the number of names but her own name was used much more.

Private Eye statistics are interesting because many of them come from so-called "family sources" and overshadow the other names. An article by "Carol Thatcher" accounts for the 'Mum' total. It was a skit on a diary and articles - later to become a book - the real Carol Thatcher wrote during the campaign. 'M' and 'The Boss' came from 'Dear Bill', which also included an occasion 'Margaret'. In sundry paragraphs and articles 'Maggie' and Mrs Thatcher' were the main choice. The range of names overall matched the Spectator total, and have been double the Punch figure in 1979 and 1983.

**Table 6.11 Analysis of Names Used Most Frequently in 1983**

**PERIODICALS**

		<b>Spectator</b>	<b>New Statesman</b>	<b>Punch</b>	<b>Private Eye</b>
<u>Number of names used common to all Periodicals : 3</u>					
Mrs Thatcher	Number of times used	100	81	16	14
Prime Minister	-----“-----	9	8	7	1
Maggie	-----“-----	1	2	7	8
<u>Number of names used common to three Periodicals : 2</u>					
Thatcher	Number of times used	11	23	5	
Margaret Thatcher	-----“-----	5	4	6	
<u>Other names used frequently</u>					
Margaret	Number of times used	1			10
M	-----“-----				7
The Boss	-----“-----				6
Mum	-----“-----				19
<u>Limited Use</u>					
Number of other names used per publication, not mentioned above.		8	13	3	8
<b>Total number of different names used in each Periodical at this election. (From Table 6.5)</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>

A small point is worth noting here. The two traditional nicknames, 'Mrs T' and 'Iron Lady', have so far not been used by either Punch or Private Eye to an extent sufficient to bring them into the Table. As we shall find later, 'Iron Lady' was mentioned once by Private Eye in 1979. 'Mrs T' was used once in 1983 by Private Eye, and 'Iron Lady' once by Punch. For satirical publications they seem an obvious choice for greater use. Attention was on Mrs Thatcher to an even greater extent in 1987, partly because of her eight years in power, and setting a record if she won again, and partly for being an acknowledged World Senior Stateswoman. More particularly, her style of leadership and policies were matters of serious concern. Even in the Tory press cracks were appearing in the deference and respect for the Icon.

#### Daily Papers 1987 (Table 6.12)

Mainly formal names and titles, with some nicknames and a literary allusion are represented in the list. Surprisingly, there is no character reference sufficiently used by several papers to be shown here. There is also a clearer demarcation between the most frequently used names and the rest, particularly in the Broadsheets. As happened before, there is one well used name popular in one paper, little used in the others.

There is an interesting development to be seen in the Broadsheets' use of 'Mrs Thatcher' and 'Prime Minister' this time, and the change of emphasis to the formal name or formal title. The Times low total of 'Mrs Thatcher' compared with the Guardian's was noted. Both these names were attached to critical comment this time, rather more so in the Guardian. 'Thatcher', third choice for both and near equal usage, was also being used for more than headlines, and paragraph headings, or an abbreviated form. This time the intent has changed. Particularly critical comment was often attached to it, but in well argued terms. For favourable or encouraging comment the Times used 'Mrs Margaret Thatcher'.

**Table 6.12 Analysis of Names Used Most Frequently in 1987**

**DAILY PAPERS**

		<b>Times</b>	<b>Guardian</b>	<b>Express</b>	<b>Mirror</b>
<b><u>Number of names used common to all Daily Papers : 8</u></b>					
Mrs Thatcher	Number of times used	511	548	259	157
Prime Minister	-----“-----	153	185	74	22
Thatcher	-----“-----	75	77	3	23
Maggie	-----“-----	8	7	37	17
Margaret Thatcher	-----“-----	8	11	10	15
Mrs T	-----“-----	3	4	2	1
Iron Lady	-----“-----	1	1	4	1
Maggie Thatcher	-----“-----	2	1	1	1
<b><u>Number of names used common to three papers : 4</u></b>					
Mrs Margaret Thatcher	Number of times used	55	1		2
PM	-----“-----	1	7	1	
Ma Thatcher	-----“-----	2		2	1
Miss Haversham of Dulwich	-----“-----	1	1	1	
<b><u>Other names used frequently</u></b>					
Premier	Number of times used		2	5	
Premier Margaret Thatcher	-----“-----			1	5
Field Marshall	-----“-----		7		
<b><u>Limited Use</u></b>					
Number of other names used per publication, not mentioned above.		20	39	20	20
<b>Total number of different names used in each Periodical at this election. (From Table 6.5)</b>		<b>32</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>

As the Table shows, the other names with limited use are all less formal ones. This is the first time that both the nicknames have been in the main section, nonetheless, the amount of use is really very limited. The Guardian again had the greater list of different names for the same reasons given earlier.

The movement in the Tabloid totals is not really surprising. By this stage popular feelings about Mrs Thatcher were polar. She was very much liked or loathed; few people were indifferent, the press least of all. The Express was not wholly in favour or approving, the criticism was limited and the enthusiasm more than balanced the concerns. The main choice of names is unchanged, but with increased usage, although 'Premier Margaret Thatcher, popular in 1983, is used once. That loss is absorbed in the greatly increased percentage for 'Prime Minister'. Repeating the title accentuates the standing and may be seen as respect and partisanship, as is the large increase in the friendly and encouraging 'Maggie'.

The Mirror was critical on all occasions and on all counts. There was a big decrease in 'Prime Minister', perhaps indicating a reluctance to use the title, or wishful thinking on the election outcome. There was also a change in style with the main articles every day, so that 'Conservative faults' with a picture of Mrs Thatcher nearby pointed up failures in policies. 'She' and 'Her' were used more often in the paragraphs. The increase in 'Thatcher' is for censure, and to stress lack of deference. 'Maggie' is used for contemptuous familiarity.

A final interesting point is how very close the Tabloids were to the Times in the range and number of names used. The expectation would be for the broadsheets to have a similarity.

Sunday Papers 1987 (Table 6.13)

At first sight the Table looks thin on names compared with 1983. (Table 6.10) However, the big percentage increases for 'Mrs Thatcher' continue the trend shown by Broadsheets and Tabloids. As we know from Table 6.3, the Tory papers increased the articles "about" Mrs Thatcher in 1987, whereas the Labour ones slightly reduced them, but the indirect attention - the mention in election articles - remained relatively high in all papers.

The Times tripled its use of 'Thatcher' in 1987, and together with 'Prime Minister' almost eclipses the rest of the column, as well as overshadowing the Observer. There was never any doubt about partisanship, but the Times was often quite critical of Mrs Thatcher and the political situation generally, not just matters raised by the election. Analysis tended towards the frequent use of 'Thatcher', but support and approval outweighed the criticism.

The Observer greatly increased the use of 'Prime Minister' but relied primarily on 'Mrs Thatcher', interspersed with a larger range of names than the Times. There was a degree of ambivalence about which party was being supported, so the decrease for Mrs Thatcher and the Conservatives was partly due to the editorial balancing act. Eventually, the preference was for a 'non-conservative' victory.. (Negrine 1989 : 201)

Apart from the Tabloids' greatly increased use of 'Mrs Thatcher', it is noticeable how small the figures are for the other main choice names. The Express had two articles more than the Mirror 'about' Mrs Thatcher (Table 6.3), yet has one third its range of names. There was unqualified support for the Prime Minister, relatively little criticism, but not quite the enthusiasm of 1983.

The Mirror, like its daily counterpart, was very critical. All the names, particularly 'Mrs Thatcher' were part of this personalised process. There were fewer election articles, but they were more detailed, and Mrs Thatcher was mentioned in half of them (Table 6.3)

**Table 6.13 Analysis of Names Used Most Frequently in 1987**

**SUNDAY PAPERS**

		<b>Times</b>	<b>Observer</b>	<b>Express</b>	<b>Mirror</b>
<u>Number of names used common to all Sunday Papers : 3</u>					
Mrs Thatcher	Number of times used	138	124	37	47
Prime Minister	-----“-----	19	39	7	3
Margaret Thatcher	-----“-----	5	8	2	1
<u>Number of names used common to three papers : 3</u>					
Thatcher	Number of times used	105	9		4
Maggie	-----“-----		1	5	5
Mrs T	-----“-----	1	1		1
<u>Limited Use</u>					
Number of other names used per publication, not mentioned above.		8	11	2	12
Total number of different names used in each Periodical at this election. (From Table 6.5)		<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>

'Maggie' and 'Thatcher' have a fraction more use than 'Prime Minister', but are virtually lost in the range of names.

### Periodicals 1987 (Table 6.14)

The serious Periodicals continued to use 'Mrs Thatcher' extensively. The main choice names also continue as before, with the order slightly altered.

The percentage change in 'Mrs Thatcher' seems surprising, but the decrease in the Spectator matches the decrease in articles 'about' her, although she was still mentioned in half the total election articles. By contrast, New Statesman' increase is because she was mentioned in two-thirds of their articles, and there was almost no change in articles 'about' her. (Table 6.4) Partisanship remained strong in both cases, although the Spectator was less "Thatcherite" this time. (Butler & Kavanagh 1988 : 176) New statesman analysed and criticised to a greater extent than 1983, the increased attention was a measure of the concern.

Punch and Private Eye increased their particular and jaundiced comment on the election. The alternative view found many chinks in Mrs Thatcher's armour, giving them due and appropriate attention in the 'house' style. They also managed a few favourable comments, but not quite a repeat prescription of 1983. Punch preferred 'Mrs Thatcher'; all the other names 'faded', 'Maggie' in particular. The slightly more formal 'Margaret Thatcher' was revived in its place, and is perhaps the indicator of the tone.

Private Eye preferred 'Thatcher' and 'Maggie' for the paragraphs or very short articles. 'Mrs Thatcher' faded quite considerably. Once again 'Dear Bill' accounted for 'The Boss', 'M' and 'Margaret'. We shall find that visual images particularly in one strip cartoon are sharper at this election, more so than verbal ones. Overall the satire bites a little harder this time.

**Table 6.14 Analysis of Names Used Most Frequently in 1987**

**PERIODICALS**

		<b>Spectator</b>	<b>New Statesman</b>	<b>Punch</b>	<b>Private Eye</b>
<u>Number of names used common to all Periodicals : 5</u>					
Mrs Thatcher	Number of times used	78	96	19	9
Thatcher	-----“-----	10	19	4	12
Margaret Thatcher	-----“-----	5	21	3	4
Maggie	-----“-----	5	2	1	13
Prime Minister	-----“-----	10	12	5	8
<u>Number of names used common to three Periodicals : 2</u>					
Mrs T	Number of times used	4	2	1	
Margaret	-----“-----	1		4	3
<u>Other names used frequently</u>					
M	Number of times used				6
The Boss	-----“-----				13
<u>Limited Use</u>					
Number of other names used per publication, not mentioned above.		11	12	7	12
Total number of different names used in each Periodical at this election. (From Table 6.5)		<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>20</b>

\* \* \* \* \*

To sum up briefly at this stage: 'Mrs Thatcher' was the most frequently used name, common to all publications at each election. It was first choice, usually by a substantial margin in all publications. Mostly its use increased at each election, decreases were few and very small. The other most popular names, for various reasons were: 'Prime Minister', 'Thatcher', '(Mrs) Margaret Thatcher', and 'Maggie'.

In 1979 'Prime Minister' naturally had very limited use, but the possibility of 'the first woman Prime Minister' appeared much lower down the list. 'Prime Minister' was the second choice in 1983 for nine publications. Apart from Punch and Private Eye, the surprise was to find the Sunday Times preferred 'Thatcher'. Only six publications made 'Prime Minister' second in 1987, all the other's preferred something else. For the official title, therefore, there is no overall or uniform pattern, but it would be difficult to argue that its not having second place indicated a particular loss or lack of respect.

At first 'Thatcher' tended to be used either as abbreviation or simply the equivalent of 'Callaghan', in other words, not particularly indicating a critical mode. In 1979 it was the second name in the daily Broadsheets, Sunday Telegraph and New Statesman, whereas all the other publications put it further down their list. By 1983 the situation had changed and several publications across the range, both Conservative and Labour were using it more often in a critical context. It was second name in the Spectator and New Statesman, as well as in the Sunday Times. By 1987 all publications were using it for criticism, the Labour ones markedly so, but it also continued as shorthand, rather more in the Conservative press.

'(Mrs) Margaret Thatcher' - use of the prefix was quite flexible - seemed to be used mostly for the less formal, but not too familiar comment. On the whole it was not used for strong

criticism, but the exception was *New Statesman* in 1987, when it was second choice, just above 'Thatcher' ('Prime Minister' was fourth choice). In this periodical as we know, the articles tended towards analysis, criticism and disadvantageous comparison with Labour.

'Maggie' - the least formal though proper name - had very variable use, and not exclusively in the *Tabloids* at first. The *Daily* and *Sunday* papers of 1979 had it fairly high in their list, although a very long way behind 'Mrs Thatcher'. It was slipping down the list of most publications in 1983, except the *Sunday Mirror*, *Punch* and *Private Eye*. By 1987 it was used mostly in the *Tabloids* and given a partisan slant, and was popular in *Private Eye* as well.

The two most familiar nicknames - 'Mrs T' and 'Iron Lady' - appeared in the *Tables* but had very limited use. The exception and great surprise was to find 'Mrs T' as second choice in the *Observer* in 1979, used in a variety of contexts and occasionally sounding patronising.

A very limited selection of names therefore provided the list of those "used most frequently". Apart from the official title these were all proper forms of Mrs Thatcher's own name, though varying in the amount of usage at each election, and in each publication. At this point it might be argued that there is little need to consider other classification of names and images. Yet most are significant because they were used, since they must have been selected for some reason, not picked at random. Some acquire more importance for appearing more often, whilst others appear once in one publication. Diversity in allusion prevents monotony in the report, commentary or feature, figures of speech can give greater impact. In certain circumstances 'Iron Lady', 'Field Marshal' or 'Queen Margaret' are shorthand for a message which 'Mrs Thatcher' or 'Maggie' cannot match. The writers' choice of image depends on the import of that message, but it may also be influenced by the house style and bias of the publication. With this in mind, we turn now to the qualitative analysis and discussion.

## **Classification**

With so many names and images listed at each election, there are many possible categories which could be used. However, as shown earlier, some categories are almost inevitable, given the subject of discussion. In certain circumstances, language can be a visual medium, some further categories were needed to assist comparisons to be drawn with visual images analysed later in the cartoon chapter. These categories are based on some of those defined by Seymour-Ure in his analysis of 1983 election cartoons. (Seymour-Ure 1984 : 160) All names and descriptions are divided into ten categories under the following headings:

- 1 Mrs Thatcher's own name and proper variations:  
e.g. Mrs Margaret Thatcher
- 2 Government and political leadership  
e.g. Prime Minister
- 3 Nicknames, based on her name or personalised through use:  
e.g. Iron Lady
- 4 Personality and Character - Various  
e.g. conviction politician
- 5 Personality and Character - Regal and Aristocratic  
e.g. Surrogate Queen
- 6 Historical  
e.g. Florence Nightingale
- 7 Literary  
e.g. Mother Courage
- 8 Bestiary  
e.g. She-bear
- 9 Pictorial  
e.g. Joan Collins
- 10 Unclassified

For the very few names or descriptions which fall outside the categories given above.

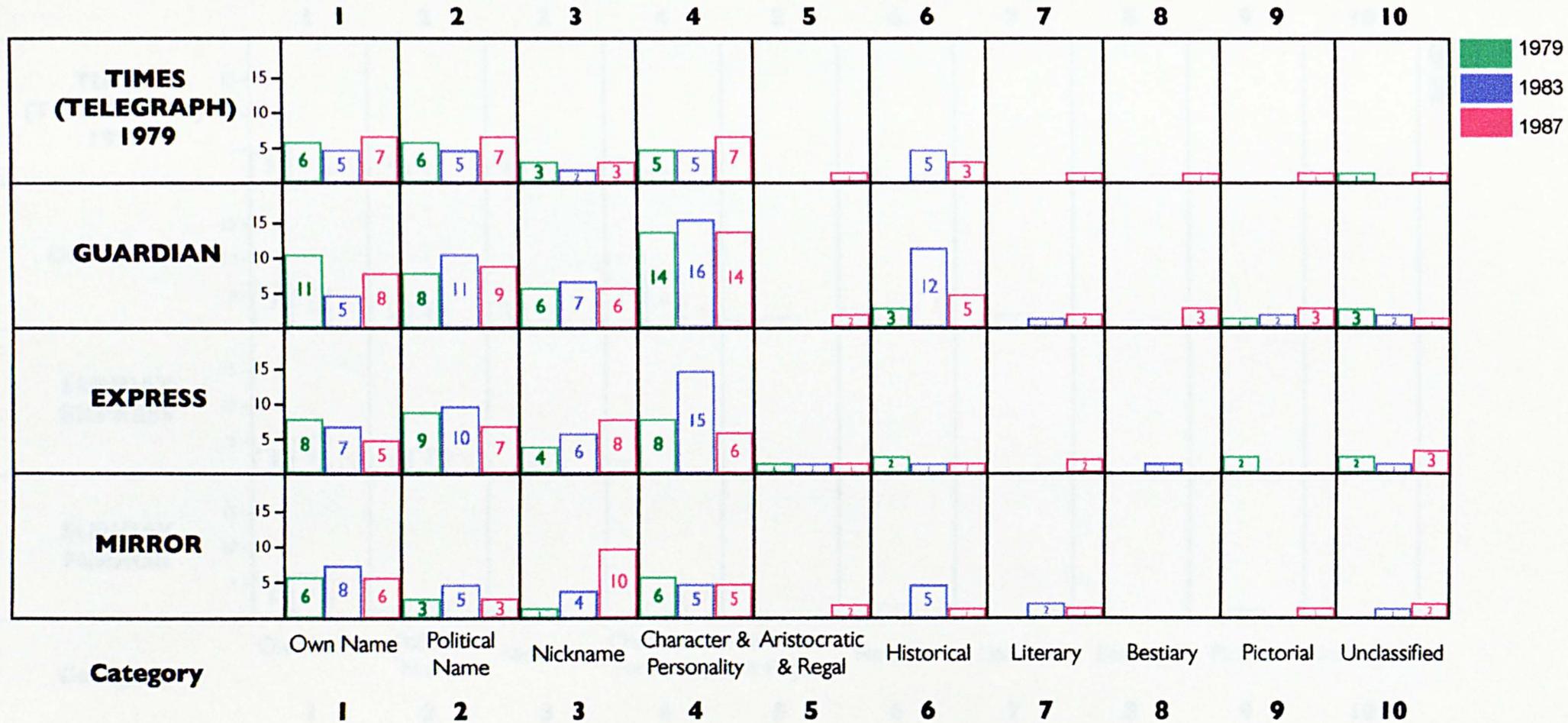
By definition these categories are mutually exclusive and no name has been placed in more than one. This involved a number of relatively arbitrary, but unimportant, distinctions. Throughout the following discussion short Tables will show the full range of names and their usage. In some cases no comment or further detail is required. The Table shows a situation but does not, or cannot prove a point.

Table 6.1.1

# Names in Daily Papers

Numerical analysis of names used by Publication/Category/Year

## Daily Papers



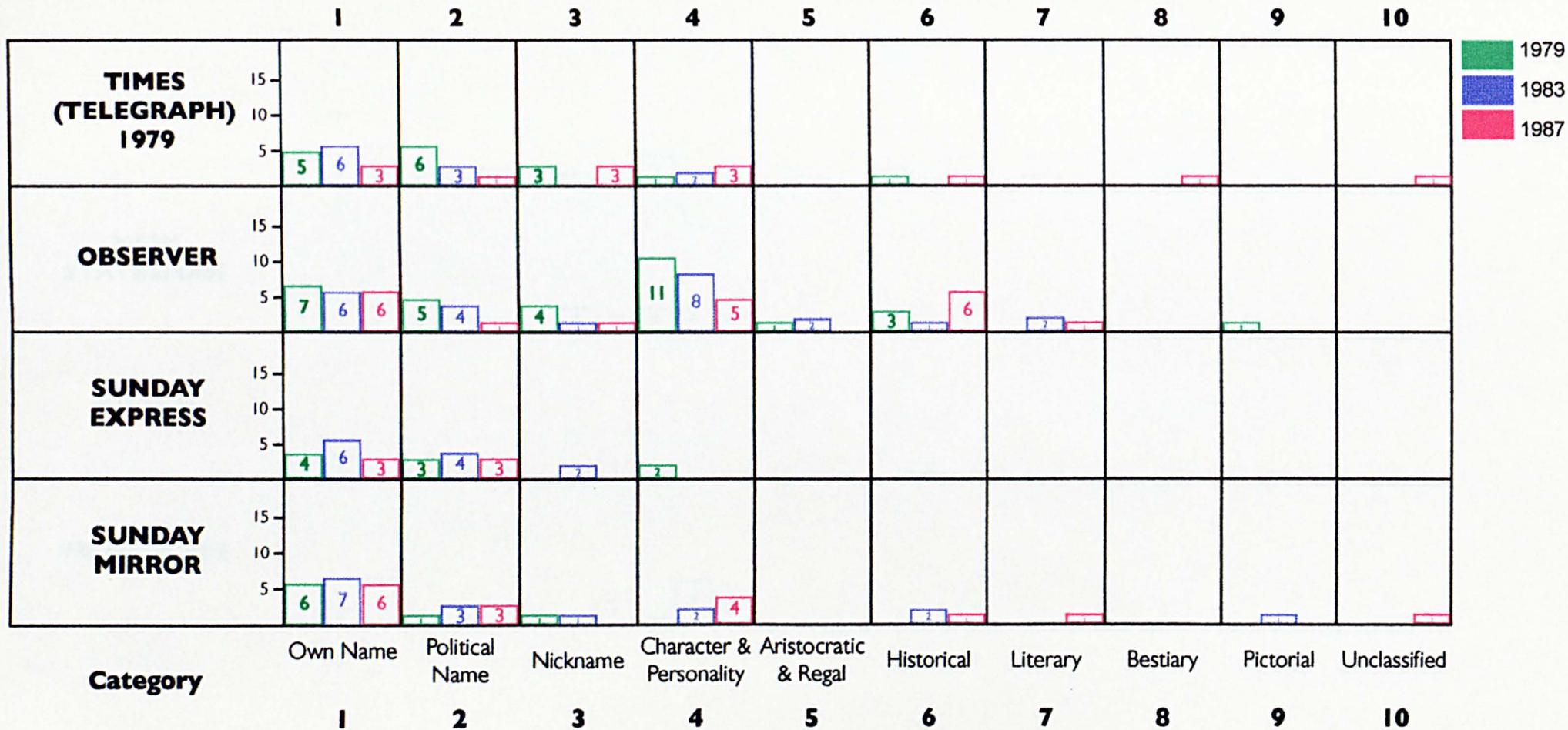
192a

Table 6.1.2

# Names in Sunday Papers

Numerical analysis of names used by Publication/Category/Year

## Sunday Papers



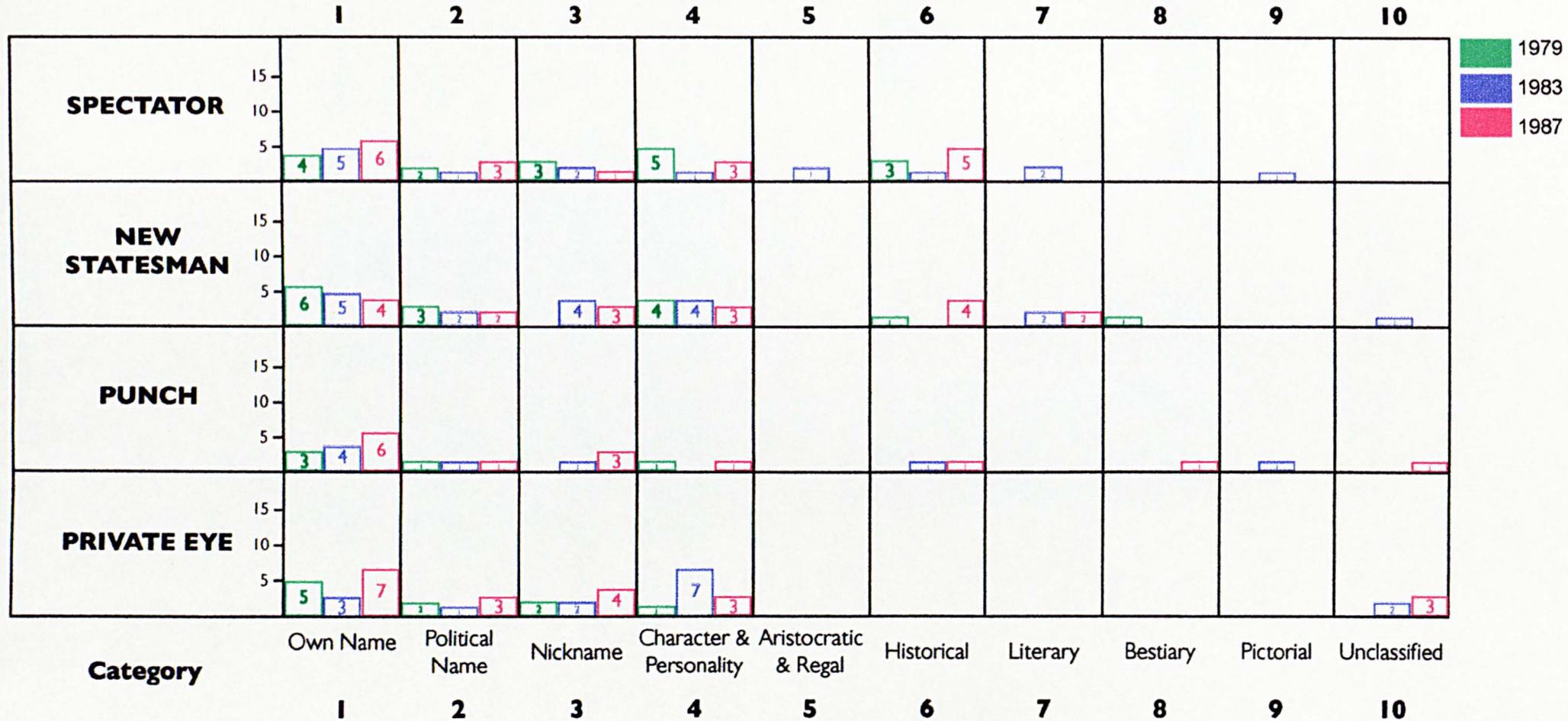
192b

Table 6.1.3

### Names in Periodicals

Numerical analysis of names used by Publication/Category/Year

#### Periodicals



192c

General Election 1979

1 MRS THATCHER'S NAME AND PROPER VARIATIONS

DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.15)

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 11</b>	<b>*T</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
Mrs Thatcher number of times used	492	486	119	126
Mrs Margaret Thatcher	1	16	14	3
Mrs Maggie Thatcher	0	1	1	0
Margaret Thatcher	3	7	14	25
Thatcher	21	38	7	8
Margaret	2	4	2	0
Maggie	10	4	28	19
Maggie Thatcher	0	1	1	0
Margaret Roberts	0	1	0	0
Hilda Margaret Roberts	0	1	0	0
†Margaret Hilda Roberts Thatcher	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>

\*Daily Telegraph    G = Guardian    E = Express    M = Mirror

The full selection of formal to informal names was to be expected at this election, with reminders also of Mrs Thatcher's background. The full name combination, listed last, is interesting in that it is a form relatively little used in this country. It is unusual, too, since this usage is not accorded to all women of fame or nobility. Probably the most famous candidate was the late Mrs Jacqueline (Bouvier) Kennedy Onassis. Such juggling of names seems to be part of the image development, or perhaps image maintenance process - a resumé and reminder of many years in the public eye. In 1979 Mrs Thatcher had only limited fame, such a naming once was an image projection exercise. The Christian names at † are ordered correctly.

**SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.16)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 8</b>	<b>*T</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Mrs Thatcher</b> number of times used	100	82	9	15
<b>Mrs Margaret Thatcher</b>	0	4	1	6
<b>Margaret Thatcher</b>	2	9	8	12
<b>Thatcher</b>	7	5	0	0
<b>Margaret</b>	1	8	0	1
<b>Maggie</b>	4	10	3	6
<b>Maggie Thatcher</b>	0	0	0	1
<b>Margaret T</b>	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>

\* Telegraph    O = Observer    E = Express    M = Mirror

The range is as expected. The unusual variation of 'Margaret T' in the Observer was in line with the frequent use of 'Mrs T' noted earlier.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.17)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 7</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>PE</b>
<b>Mrs Thatcher</b>	61	19	11	5
<b>Margaret Thatcher</b>	5	3	1	3
<b>Thatcher</b>	2	14	3	2
<b>Margaret</b>	0	9	0	0
<b>Maggie</b>	3	2	0	2
<b>Maggie Thatcher</b>	0	0	0	1
<b>Margaret Roberts</b>	0	2	0	0
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>

S = Spectator    N = New Statesman    P = Punch    PE = Private Eye

**2      GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP**

**DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.18)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 14</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
Prime Minister      number of times used	3	7	2	0
Conservative Leader	16	3	0	0
Leader of the Opposition	3	2	0	0
Opposition Leader	0	6	1	0
Tory Leader Margaret Thatcher	0	0	3	21
Prime-Minister-in-Waiting	1	0	0	0
Britain's first woman Prime Minister	0	2	0	0
Britain's first woman party leader	0	1	0	0
Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher	0	0	1	0
Tory Leader Mrs Thatcher	0	0	2	0
Leader of the Conservative Party	0	0	1	0
Tory Leader Maggie Thatcher	0	0	1	0
First woman Prime Minister	9	1	2	1
Tory Leader	4	10	4	3
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>

Predictably the 'first woman' tag appears in this category, sundry variations on political standing and with election success, the new title. Although the list is long, the Mirror is noticeable for brevity and the other three papers each use under two-thirds of the possibilities. Between the variations it is interesting to note the papers' preferences - in the Mirror 'Tory Leader Margaret Thatcher', and in the Express as well as 'Tory Leader Maggie Thatcher', and all of them use 'Tory Leader'. The Telegraph's variation of 'Prime-Minister-in-Waiting' was the sole example of something unusual.

**SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.19)**

<b>Number of different names in the Table : 11</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
Prime Minister      number of times used	3	1	2	1
Tory Leader	0	1	1	0
First woman Prime Minister	1	0	0	0
Britains first woman prime Minister	1	3	0	0
Conservative Leader	2	1	0	0
Opposition Leader	1	0	0	0
Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher	0	0	1	0
New Prime Minister	0	1	0	0
Prime-Minister-to-be	0	1	0	0
First possible woman Prime Minister	0	1	0	0
Prospective Premier	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

Like the daily papers, all the variations make a long list and again the Mirror is very brief. The Observer supplied most names, but each has very limited use. The 'Rt. Hon' might have been expected in the Broadsheets rather than the Express.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.20)**

<b>Number of different names in the Table : 6</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>PE</b>
Prime Minister number of times used	4	1	0	1
Leader of the Opposition	1	0	0	0
Thatcher Premiership	0	1	0	0
Tory Leader	0	1	0	0
Leader of the Tories	0	0	1	0
First woman Prime Minister	0	0	0	1
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

**3 NICKNAMES**

**DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.21)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 10</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
Mrs T number of times used	0	1	2	10
Iron Lady	3	3	3	0
Margaret Thatcher	0	2	0	0
Mother Thatcher	0	2	0	0
Thatcher the Snatcher	0	1	0	0
Mistress of Downing Street	1	0	0	0
Mighty Maggie	0	0	1	0
Maggie's one woman band	0	0	1	0
prodigious housewife	0	1	0	0
Housewife's friend	1	0	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>

The nickname, is a substitute or additional name, perhaps descriptive, given in fun, affection or contempt which represents perceived strengths or weaknesses. Some of the nicknames in this group are based on or attached to Mrs Thatcher's name, whilst others are descriptive. Some were previously attributed and personalised by use. Many of the latter are well documented or easily traced to pre-1979, such as Housewife, Superwoman,

Boadicea, Iron Lady and Joan of Arc. (Webster 1990 : 104), or were famously achieved - 'Thatcher the Milk Snatcher'. All of these, or variations of them are easily classified. Many more became familiar sobriquets in the early eighties before the 1983 election - Britannia, The Queen, Nanny (Webster 1990 : 72) By keeping this classification narrow and having two categories for aspects of Personality and Character, (Numbers 4 and 5), that is, alternative classification for other names, comparisons are still being made and contempt or sportive familiarity is implicit in the choice made by the journalist or writer.

Probably the most famous of all the nicknames, 'Iron Lady', originating in the mid-70's, was minted especially for Mrs Thatcher, though not as a compliment. The Russian version of Iron Lady is 'Stalina' - the feminine of Stalin - meaning woman of steel. It appears that in translation Iron and Steel may be interchanged, although in some contexts one word is used to mean both metals, and by implication also, the characteristics. The sobriquet may have come into use originally through misunderstanding and into wider circulation through mischievous intent. (O'Connor & Dosmukhamedov) Young records the official Soviet news agency Tass, using it first. (Young 1989 : 170) Howard, however, writes that it first appeared in Red Star, the Soviet Defence Ministry newspaper, in an article by Captain Y Gavrilov, 24 January 1976. Gavrilov mistakenly styled Mrs Thatcher "the Iron Lady as she is called in her own country", accusing her of trying to revive the Cold War through "vicious anti-Soviet speeches". Opponents of Mrs Thatcher picked up the title and thought to turn it to account, but the plan misfired largely due to the fact that 'Iron' is not necessarily a frightening or intimidating word in this country.<sup>1</sup>

"In British English it also has strong positive political connotations, implying resolution and courage, as in the Iron Duke, Cromwell's Ironsides, and going back 10 centuries, Edmund Ironside, so called from his iron armour". (Howard, op cit)

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<sup>1</sup> In comparison with, for example, the Iron Curtain; or the Iron Maiden of Nuremberg - a cruel form of mediaeval torture where a box or metal casing with internal spikes was forcibly closed on a victim; also, but for a different reason, Bismarck the Iron Chancellor.

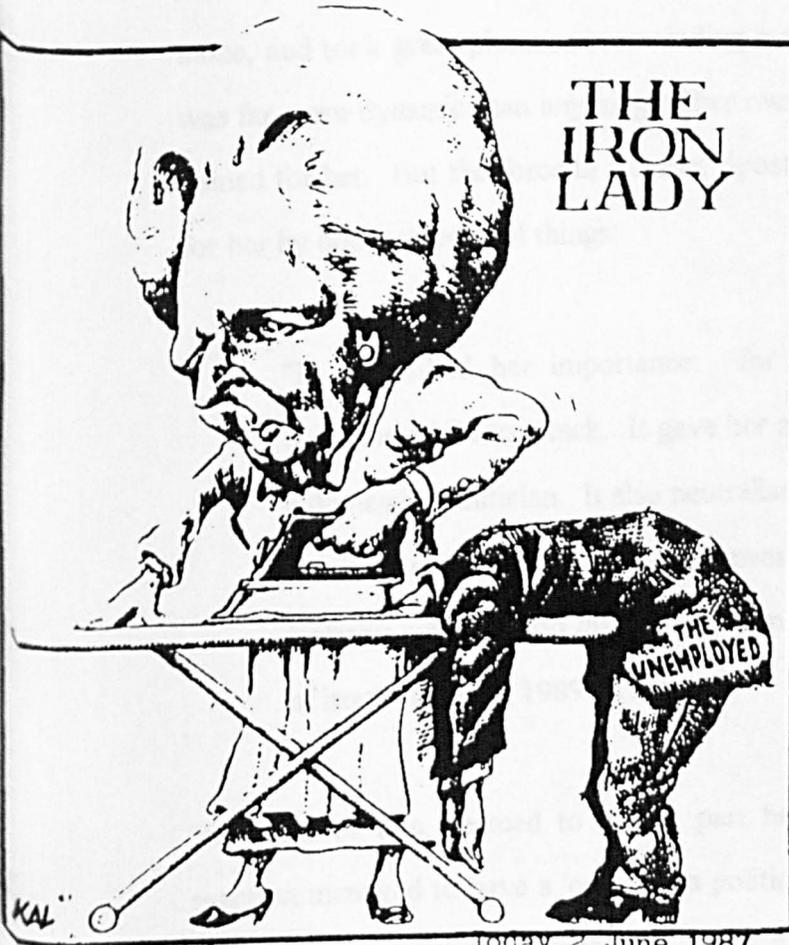


EWERT KARLSSON (EWK)/Aftonbladet, Sweden

Cartoons of the 70's  
Robinson 1981



The Iron Lady, as seen by Luck and Flaw, November 1976. (Luck and Flaw)  
From: Wapshott & Brock 1983



THE  
IRON  
LADY

Today 2 June 1987



Spectator The IRON Lady? 1 Nov 1980

Howard was also of the opinion that the name would disappear after the 1983 general election "into the dictionaries of dead political jargon", and be replaced by other images, but 'Iron Lady' went on to the bitter end, and was not immediately dropped after Mrs Thatcher left office.

As many writers have recorded, there were more facets to the Iron Lady epithet than people at first realised.

"The aptness ... derive(s) from the way it captures the two most visible and contrasting characteristics of her public image - toughness and femininity".  
(Atkinson 1984 : 117)

Audiences and writers noted repeatedly how Mrs Thatcher seemed delighted with the name, and took great pleasure in reminding everyone of it's applicability and relevance. It was far more dynamic than anything of her own coining - and more than matched anything coined for her. But the forceful Russian riposte helped initiate a wider political reputation for her by doing three vital things:

"It established her importance: for nobody unimportant would be worth the Russians' while to attack. It gave her an identity as an international, and not merely a domestic, politician. It also neutralised the danger still seen to lurk in the fact that she was a woman, completely unversed in the male world of high diplomacy. Nobody could be too disturbingly feminine who was now presented as being made of iron". (Young 1989 : 170)

Yet luck, or fate, seemed to play a part here, for the speech which provoked such a reaction managed to have a 'conviction politician' statement with a 'housewife' insert. Mrs Thatcher accused them of putting "... guns before butter" and was highly critical of their

"failure in human and economic terms". She also strongly favoured conventional and nuclear deterrents against their aggressiveness. For various reasons these sentiments were not well received by the Wilson government (January 1976), nor by Reginald Maudling then Shadow Foreign Secretary. The latter had had little notice of the contents of the speech, and apparently would have strongly advised against it on the grounds of conservative (and Conservative) judgement v. political capital. (Young 1989 : 171; Ridley 1991 : 259)<sup>2</sup> A different speech, an "approved" speech might have provoked little or no reaction. Whether 'Iron Lady' or a less auspicious epithet would have materialised at an opportune moment is a matter for conjecture. The Russians gave her power through an incomparable image, but Mrs Thatcher perhaps considered speaking her truth as having the courage to take the next step.

The strength of this particular image rather overshadows the other names in the group. Any which have critical overtones do pale slightly as a result, with the possible exception of 'Thatcher the Milk Snatcher' - an even older nickname from 1971. 'Thatcher the Snatcher' of something, or a witticism based on it, appears at the three elections. The phrase remained current partly due to the catchy rhyme, and also because its a useful frame on which to hang another criticism. It makes "... an irresistible taunt, appealing as much to the tabloid press as to Opposition politicians ... It was an absurd issue on which to enter the national demonology". (Young 1989 : 73)

Absurd perhaps, but the taunt continued to reappear, with the same uncaring, 'wicked' implication, or thinly disguised alternative.

The rest of the names seem to be of three types - comment, wit or familiarity - none of them strongly critical at this stage. Taking familiar ones first : 'Maggie' is the friendly diminutive which is not a nickname on its own, as explained earlier, but becomes one when

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<sup>2</sup> Mrs Thatcher's speech was given at Kensington Town Hall on 18 January 1976. The Sunday Times printed the name 'Iron Lady' on 25 January 1976.

qualified with an adjective. 'Maggie' can suit friend and foe alike - in this case 'Mighty -' and 'one woman band indicate approbation by the Express, (the Mirror uses 'Monstrous -' at a later election). Additional impact comes from alliteration, but it may also come from any oxymoron-like conjunction of opposites, as with 'Monstrous Maggie' in sportive contempt. 'Mrs T' is sportive familiarity. Like 'Maggie' it is fairly certain this is not a name used by family and friends, but is media humour overcoming a perceived lack of warmth and rapport. 'Mrs T' brings the subject down to grass roots level; it demolishes myth and mystery and may even encourage humour and humanity.

'Mother Thatcher' as used by the Guardian has a degree of ambiguity about it, which leaves some choice to the reader. Since it is not 'Mother Margaret' there are no caring, compassionate or spiritual overtones. But equally, neither is it the 'Old Mother Reilly' image and Music Hall humour, nor the wise or wicked witch in the wood. It might be classed as 'lower middle' or perhaps 'working', as the background. It somehow lacks any great degree of warmth, though it could be a cloak for the very practical housewife image, which is another Guardian choice, with the adjective 'prodigious' - here meaning astonishing rather than monstrous. There is no ambiguity about the Telegraph's choice of 'Housewives' Friend', even if opponents already questioned the veracity of this representation. In 1979 this was Mrs Thatcher's self-expression image.

'Mistress of Downing Street' was probably intended deferentially by the Telegraph, rather in the style of Lady of the Manor, or the Chatelaine, but it could be otherwise construed. The description sounds a little too much like the title of a romantic novel to be effective; it simpers, when it was probably meant to indicate something more like ascendancy, achievement and power. Compare this with the Guardian's 'Margaret Thatchi', a neat pithy comment on the 'marketing of Margaret', and her apparent take-over by Saatchi & Saatchi. In one subtle spelling alteration it says a great deal about the protagonists without any further comment being necessary. This is censure with a smile.

**SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.22)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 6</b>		<b>T</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Mrs T</b>	<b>Number of times used</b>	1	14	0	0
<b>Iron Lady</b>		1	2	0	0
<b>Housewife-Shopper</b>		1	0	0	0
<b>Shopper's Friend</b>		0	1	0	0
<b>Captain Maggie</b>		0	0	0	1
<b>Milk Snatcher</b>		0	2	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

The almost extravagant use of one nickname by a Broadsheet seems a little incongruous at first, but like a cartoon, it can mask serious intent. As we saw earlier, it keeps the subject in perspective, but the Observer maintained several views of their subject in varying degrees of seriousness.

The lack of an entry here for the Express was surprising, considering the hearty partisanship. The use of 'Maggie' seemed a possibility, rather like the variation in the Mirror. This particular image is one shared with the cartoonists, Cummings for example, in the Express after the election success. Here, 'Captain' seemed to mean leadership or being in charge, not the later 'being in command' or the domineering person.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.23)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 4</b>		<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>PE</b>
<b>Iron Lady</b>	<b>number of times used</b>	1	0	0	1
<b>Prim Aunt Margaret</b>		1	0	0	0
<b>Superwoman</b>		1	0	0	0
<b>M</b>		0	0	0	8
<b>Total names per paper</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

'Prim Aunt Margaret' might be deemed to belong in the same category as the later formidable females - 'Nanny', 'Governess' and 'Headmistress' - with the same implied attributes of being judgmental, always right, to be obeyed, and probably without humour.

'Superwoman' like 'Iron Lady' originated in the mid-1970's. It derives from the influence of feminism when notions of traditional female roles were being reassessed. As Webster shows, the advent of 'Superwoman' represents the active movement of women into successful public careers in previously masculine strongholds, when combining work, a home and a family became possible and acceptable. Women achieved new power and new freedom. This 'new woman' was "... ambitious, confident, assured. Like Mrs Thatcher she was always frenetically busy, permanently active, rarely at rest." (Webster 1990 : 91)

It is well documented that Mrs Thatcher seldom needs more than four hours sleep at night; at 2.54 am on the 12 October 1984 she was still working when the Brighton hotel bomb exploded. Freneticism may have saved her life on that occasion. Friends, colleagues and journalists acknowledged her phenomenal daily workload, fanatical attention to detail, and general "busyness" as long established characteristics. It was the image makers who suggested and encouraged the "busy walk and active involvement" when media were present, provoking much critical attention and comment.

Mrs Thatcher/Superwoman is open to several interpretations, and some contradictory images. One is the bustling business woman noted above. Another is the cartoon image which tends towards a youthful Bionic Woman in the briefest costume, reflecting "Sci Fi" and sex, capable of super spatial achievement; this represents the antithesis of the traditional leader in the male biased world of politics. The superhuman image of the political leader was not news; the previous incumbent was 'Super Mac' in a batman-like outfit but with a venerable head. (It was a splendid contradiction of the Edwardian gentleman and space technology). Another variation is the super housewife/super shopper combination, Mrs Thatcher's stated self-image pre-1979 and during the election, which again offered much scope to cartoonists. This is the stereotype without the 'new woman' overtones, much nearer the derogatory 'South east suburban housewife' and 'Mrs Average Suburban Housewife' which came later. (1983) The achievement of this 'super' image

however, is the elevation of the mundane and prosaic to incomparability. 'M', as noted earlier, is a combination of brisk affection with overtones of the James Bond Boss and Controller. Arguably, it is also 'she-who-must-be-obeyed', although this last is used elsewhere later.

#### 4 PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER : VARIOUS

The list of names and descriptions in this category are political or personal attributes, and any notions of leadership not included elsewhere. The analysis is according to the adjective or qualifier into: Favourable (+), Critical (-) and Variable ( $\pm$ ), i.e. open to interpretation. the method of analysis is used particularly with this category since it contains the widest range of perceived characteristics at each election.

##### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.24)

As the analysis shows, whilst Mrs Thatcher was Opposition leader the press were relatively limited for political comment. Their attention, therefore, centred on the personal aspects of the contender, and very limited concern with possible Prime Ministerial attributes. Sportive familiarity has no part here.

In the political section, arguably the 'Thatcher factor' could be divided along partisan lines appearing in both the favourable and critical columns. In 1979 there seemed to be some uncertainty as to the exact nature of this factor, just agreement that there was "something". A similar situation applied to the 'political phenomenon' - only the full extent of the circumstances had still to materialise. The Mirror's critical comments show the early signs of the personalised politics, although some other criticism concerned the Conservative manifesto and their previous term in power. The 'conviction politician' was one of Mrs Thatcher's self-descriptions, and it often accompanied a 'determined woman' description or similar. As we saw earlier, a woman with a mission can be a frightening thing. But Mrs

# Character and Personality 1979

**DAILY PAPERS (TABLE 6.24)**

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL.	conviction politician	T/G/E/B	1/1/2/1	belligerent right winger Vat woman tax temptress	E M M	1 1 1	political phenomenon Thatcher factors political Avon Lady	E T/G/E/M G	1 1/1/1/1 1
	<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 3</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 3</u>		
PERSONAL.	determined woman woman at the top Sister a teacher Mother a brisk lady her true self an attractive personality First Lady	G G G G G G G E E/M	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1/1	strident female simpering presence most hated woman in Britain abrasive vengeful person not a Sister a mere woman	T M  T T G G	1 1  1 1 1 1	one woman revolution governmentsy leader woman next door television lady	E G G E	1 1 1 1
	<u>Total descriptions : 9</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 6</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 4</u>		
	<u>Total descriptions in this Table : 26 of which Political total : 7      Personal total : 19</u>								
<b>Key</b>	T = Telegraph      P = Publication G = Guardian      F = Frequency of use E = Express M = Mirror								

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Thatcher was not really frightening anyone in 1979 - the greater fear for the Conservatives was not winning the election, thereby necessitating a new leadership election and remaining in Opposition.

The positive aspects of personality outweigh the negative ones, and would probably continue to do so if the variables were re-assigned. Many of the attributes or descriptions balance each other, 'Sister'/not a Sister', 'simpering presence'/determined woman', others seem to be forerunners of things to come. There are several indications for example, of the formidable female image which was developing. Perhaps the most interesting points arising at this stage are the selection of favourable comments in the Guardian, and lack of the same in the Telegraph. Also, given the range of descriptions, almost all of them are used only once. Of note also, is that the Telegraph and Mirror are slightly better represented in the earlier categories 1 and 2.

Turning now to Table 6.24.1, notions of leadership are naturally very limited at this stage. Leadership in personality terms is balanced between favourable descriptions and those open to interpretation. Indeed, both the latter could be re-assigned to negative attributes, and arguably 'one woman revolution' could be a positive factor. At this stage, political leadership appears to be expressed in the forms found in category 2.

### Leadership (Table 6.24.1)

Using the statistics from Table 6.24, but without the names, we can also see the contributions from each paper for each column; from those, the totals for Broadsheets and Tabloids and finally the partisan totals.

# Character and Personality 1979

## LEADERSHIP (TABLE 6.24.1)

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
PERSONAL	woman at the top First Lady  Total descriptions : 2	G E/M	1 1/1				governessy leader one woman revolution  Total descriptions : 2	G E	1 1
Key	G = Guardian E = Express M= Mirror								

Numerical Totals (Table 6.24.2)

	POLITICAL				PERSONAL				TOTAL
	Names used per publication								
	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	
Telegraph	1	0	1	2	0	3	0	3	5
Guardian	1	0	2	3	7	2	2	11	14
Express	1	1	2	4	2	0	2	4	8
Mirror	1	2	1	4	1	1	0	2	6
Broadsheets	2	0	3	5	7	5	2	14	19
Tabloids	2	3	3	8	3	1	2	6	14
Labour	2	2	3	7	8	3	2	13	20
Conservative	2	1	3	6	2	3	2	7	13

The Guardian's overall total, and the way it divides is the main influence in this Table, an unusual and unexpected feature. Had this been the Telegraph's total, and weighted towards personal attributes, it would have fitted expectation. In this particular category such a low total looks strange, even compared with the Tabloids. There is little of distinction in the Telegraph's descriptions, whereas the Guardian has variety, and the Tabloids are much as expected.

SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.25)

Like the previous Table, the concentration is on personal rather than political descriptions. Again, one paper dominates, but more surprising there is little or nothing from the other three.

The 'first political evangelist' might be considered an alternative version of the conviction politician, but this is slightly at odds with the 'cautious' one. 'Leaderene' was the touch of humour, witty and perhaps malicious, applied by Norman St John Stevas. Whether it has greater depth of meaning is open to discussion. The word does not seem to imply supremacy, or any of the other strong attributes perceived later in the Prime Minister.

# Character and Personality 1979

## SUNDAY PAPERS (TABLE 6.25)

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL	first political evangelist cautious politician lady MP Leaderene  <u>Total descriptions : 4</u>	T O O O	1 1 1 1						
PERSONAL	not a flinty female not an ice princess ambitious, kindly, resilient Mamma  <u>Total descriptions : 4</u>	O O O O	1 1 1 1	South east suburban woman menopausal woman the 'little' woman  <u>Total descriptions : 3</u>	E E O	1 1 1	slightly governsessy imperial votaress  <u>Total descriptions : 2</u>	O O	1 1
<u>Total descriptions in this Table : 13 of which Political total : 4      Personal total : 9</u>									
<b>Key</b>	T = Telegraph      P = Publication O = Observer      F = Frequency of use E = Express M = Mirror								

It is strange to find the personality not well presented in the Tory press, and the apparently more accurate (for 1979) 'ambitious, kindly, resilient' in the Observer. As we shall see later, the ambition and resilience are judged to have turned to vices, because of Mrs Thatcher's time in power and the nature of that power.

Apart from the slightly patronising 'little woman', the criticism in the Express appears to be of sex, age and area represented - with a possible housewife overtone. It is difficult to find quite the same biased criticism, stated in male terms, of a male Opposition Leader. Arguably, the criticism, though maladroit, was an expression of reasonable concern for her suitability for high office.

The thought-provoking 'imperial-votaress,' from Conor Cruise O'Brien, raises several interesting points. It implies more than the commitment of the 'conviction politician' or similar descriptions. This is the 'evangelist', 'St Joan' and 'Boadicea'. It suggests someone driven with religious fervour, almost a sacred mission - probably with tunnel vision, seeing only one way ahead. With all this there are powerful overtones of supremacy and sovereignty. The original phrase may have been used with a hint of tongue-in-cheek - rather like the abundance of 'Mrs T', in the same paper - but there was a serious intent here, and some writers are prescient. But equally, as the old adage says: many a true word ....

### Leadership (Table 6.25.1)

Turning now to Leadership, the indicators are very limited again. (Table 6.25.1) One could argue that the 'evangelist' and the 'votaress' are not necessarily 'Leaders'. Applied to Mrs Thatcher there seems little doubt about the matter now, but it may not have seemed so at the time, particularly given the standing of the then Prime Minister.

**Character and Personality 1979**

**LEADERSHIP (TABLE 6.25.1)**

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL	first political evangelist Leaderene  <u>Total descriptions : 2</u>	T O	1 1						1 1/1/1/1 1
PERSONAL							Imperial votaress  <u>Total descriptions : 1</u>	O	1
<b>Key</b>	T = Telegraph O = Observer								

**Numerical Totals (Table 6.25.2)**

	POLITICAL				PERSONAL				TOTAL
	Names used per publication								
	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	
Telegraph	1			1	0	0	0	0	1
Observer	3			3	4	1	2	7	10
Express	0			0	0	2	0	2	2
Mirror	0			0	0	0	0	0	0
Broadsheets	4			4	4	1	2	7	11
Tabloids	0			0	0	2	0	2	2
Labour	3			3	4	1	2	7	10
Conservative	1			1	0	2	0	2	3

We have a similar situation here as in the Daily paper statistics (Table 6.24.2), exaggerated because of little or no input from three papers. They were using other descriptions, and as shown earlier, the Tabloids made relatively little reference to Mrs Thatcher in 1979. The Telegraph preferred the proper name and official title.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.26)**

The concentration is again on personal factors, rather than political ones. The contributions are almost entirely from the two serious periodicals.

'Selsdon woman' (the original was 'Selsdon man', apparently coined by Harold Wilson) is a reminder of 1970 Conservative re-thinking, with some similarities to parts of what came to be known as Thatcherism. Mrs Thatcher was in the Shadow Cabinet which planned the new direction policies. Limited implementation took place between the general election success and Edward Heath's U-turn. The 'statutory woman' refers to Mrs Thatcher being the only female in one of Harold Macmillan's Cabinets, and in Edward Heath's.

# Character and Personality 1979

## PERIODICALS (TABLE 6.26)

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL							Selsdon woman Mrs Thatcher the politician statutory woman (in the cabinet)	N S N	1 1 1
							<u>Total descriptions : 3</u>		
PERSONAL	female female plucky little woman	S PE	1 1	professional mediocrity that damned woman	N S	1 1	meritocrat Head Schoolgirl Mrs Thatcher the woman this woman	N S S PH	1 1 2 1
							<u>Total descriptions : 2</u>		
							<u>Total descriptions : 2</u>		
							<u>Total descriptions : 4</u>		
	<u>Total descriptions in this Table : 11 of which Political total : 3      Personal total : 8</u>								
<b>Key</b>	S = Spectator      P = Publication N = New Statesman      F = Frequency of use PH = Punch PE = Private Eye								

'That damned woman' in the early form of 'that bloody woman' or the TBW factor. The 'meritocrat' was put up by Wintour and Rogers specifically to be countered by, in their opinion, the more accurate oxymoron of 'professional mediocrity'. They saw Mrs Thatcher's achievements and rise to Opposition leadership not as reward for application and hard work, but 'getting by' with the assistance of, for example, a wealthy husband, and other fortunate factors.

'Head Schoolgirl' is a prototype bossy female, as well as leadership under licence. Of all the descriptions here it is the only one with any notions of leadership implied. For this reason there is no Leadership table in this section.

#### NUMERICAL TOTALS (Table 6.26.1)

	POLITICAL				PERSONAL				TOTAL
	Names used per publication								
	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	
Spectator			1	1	1	1	2	4	5
New Statesman			2	2		1	1	2	4
Punch							1	1	1
Private Eye					1			1	1
Serious			3	3	1	2	3	6	9
Satirical					1		1	2	2

#### 5 PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER : REGAL AND ARISTOCRATIC

##### DAILY PAPERS Table 6.27)

Number of different names in this Table : 1	T	G	E	M
Second Queen of England number of times used	0	0	1	0
Total names per paper	0	0	1	0

With leadership, and more particularly with Premiership, writers, observers and cartoonists noted early signs of Mrs Thatcher's increasing tendency towards regal and aristocratic

attitudes. An innate inclination, perhaps based on knowledge of personal value, became an overt foible. Therefore, it seemed worth considering the matter in a separate category, even though there was only one entry for it amongst all the publications in 1979.

The Daily Express used 'second Queen of England' once, when the election result was known. It was perhaps an exuberant high-flown compliment at this stage, marking Mrs Thatcher's achievement and promotion; something stronger than a repetition of 'first woman Prime Minister' perhaps seemed necessary and they had already, rather confusingly used 'First Lady'. Thus, 'second Queen of England' is high, but not the highest.

#### SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.28)

Number of different names in this Table : 1		T	O	E	M
Surrogate Queen	number of times used	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The Observer has a slightly different opinion of the regal aspirations. The substitute or deputy angle opens up various possibilities, such as 'replacement' or 'alternative', and in certain circumstances surrogate can mean second. There is a subtle and significant difference between the Tabloid and Broadsheet choice.

## 6 HISTORICAL

#### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.29)

Number of different names in this Table : 5		T	G	E	M
fervent crusader	number of times used	0	1	0	0
Iron Maiden		0	1	0	0
the Blessed One		0	1	0	0
no Salome		0	0	1	0
Salome of modern British politics		0	0	1	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

An historical allusion can précis a lengthy description of anything from heroic attributes or failings through to exposing monstrous behaviour and attitude, or the fall of a flawed idol. For Mrs Thatcher, even before 1979, the historic images were very varied.

It is difficult to see quite why Salome was chosen by the writers. A beguiling dance to achieve the downfall of a moralising adversary is hardly a true description of the 1979 general election. Mrs Thatcher shed no more than parts of a previous image, even if this was to impress media and the public.

The 'fervent crusader' nearly echoes one of Mrs Thatcher's preferred images - the conviction politician. It indicates the same zealous, concerted action to further a cause, but there is also a built-in image of a type of military mission. The Guardian suggests that 'her true self' is the other half of the 'fervent crusader'. (25 April 1979) The 'Iron Maiden' was a mediaeval instrument of torture as we know. In 1979, however, some newspapers either ignored, or perhaps did not appreciate the historic significance of this name, and it was interchanged with 'Iron Lady'. It seems doubtful that this remained the case by 1983. The 'Blessed One' ("with flawless skin") is an alternative version of the 'Blessed Margaret' coined by Norman St John Stevas. With the possible exception of the 'fervent crusader' none of these images imply any leadership qualities or aspirations.

The 'Iron Maiden' is the only one of these images found in the 1979 cartoons - Historic section. But in Punch there is no ambivalence. Jensen's Iron Maiden wears "... unbreakable blue plastic armour" and the helmet plume is an abundant flowing hairstyle. (4 April 1979)

**SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.30)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 4</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Crusader</b> number of times used	1	0	0	0
<b>Florence Nightingale</b>	0	1	0	0
<b>Salome of modern British politics</b>	0	1	0	0
<b>Iron Maiden</b>	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	1	3	0	0

For this Crusader the mission and intent are implied, and commitment to a cause, but not the zealousness or perhaps fanaticism of the 'fervent crusader' above.

Florence Nightingale fits the mould for an Iron Lady or other formidable female in her fight for recognition and an honourable role in work that was not professional, and considered unsuitable for a well brought up Victorian lady. Her conviction and resolution won the end, against massive opposition, but her style of leadership was often confrontational.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.31)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 3</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>PE</b>
<b>Joan of Arc</b> number of times used	2	1	0	0
<b>Blessed Margaret</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>Attilina the Hunette</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>Total names per publication</b>	3	1	0	0

A "Blessed One" is on the way to sainthood, so the sportive familiarity of "Blessed Margaret" from Normal St John Stevas, hovers perceptively on the edge of cynicism years before the iconisation of Mrs Thatcher.<sup>3</sup> The Guardian reported the image and his compliment when he was canvassing (17 April 1979) but also noted in another article that, in person, people found her 'more attractive' and 'nicer' than on television.

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<sup>3</sup> Blessed Margaret could mean St Margaret, but there are 5 possibilities. (Farmer 1982) The one with interesting credentials and a saint's day nearest the election is Margaret of Scotland (1046-1093) wife of King Malcolm III, and grand-daughter of Edmund Ironside.

The feminisation of 'Attilina the Hunette' robs it of any ferocity. It is difficult to take 'Hunnette' seriously; '-ette' has fussy feminine overtones of such images as Usherette or drum majorette. The original and more ludicrous version - 'Attila the Hen' - seems not to have been used during the election period. The derisive and droll conversion (by Denis Healey) of Hun to Hen implying a tyrant of a domestic biddy makes thoughts of a female despot laughable. Either version negates political leadership and power, but conjures up a cartoon-like image, though it is not used by cartoonists at this time.

Resolution of purpose and crusading spirit are two traits which Mrs Thatcher apparently shares with another of the historical figures.

"(St Joan) a woman renowned for doing something on her own, not by birthright ... she makes evident the dimensions of woman's dynamism". (Warner 1981 : 9)

This image prompts some interesting parallels with Mrs Thatcher. The woman succeeding in a man's world, the unexpected female leader instrumental in later victories, but after the glory a tragic fall, although 'tragic' is open to question in Mrs Thatcher's case. The Guardian used the 'fervent crusader' image which seems akin to the saintly one. St Joan has been called 'the ideal androgyne' (Warner 1981 : 139); 'ideal' might not apply, but Mrs Thatcher was called 'the best man for the job' and 'the best man in her Cabinet'. In 1983 a Guardian article started "Is Mrs Thatcher really a man?"<sup>4</sup>

In that same year several publications recorded voter comments about forgetting, or no longer noticing, that Mrs Thatcher was 'a woman' or 'female'. Campbell writes:

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4 'The Politics of sex' - Melanie Phillips - Guardian 8 June 1983



"If you must have a Conservative Prime Minister, I'm your man."

Sunday Mirror, April 8, 1979



"Mr. Callaghan! In your heart you know I'm right—you'd be happier in MY party..."

Daily Express, April 18, 1979

"... friends and enemies have been known to say about her ... that she is just like a man ... in the public mind she belongs to one sex but could be either". (Campbell 1987 : 233)

By 1987 her style of dressing, though not a suit of armour, was symbolic protection, rendering her unapproachable and unassailable: "Fortress Thatcher" (Sunday Times 7 June 1987); "surrogate man's uniform" (Guardian 30 May 1987). The matter of dress is discussed more fully in a later chapter. "(St Joan had) specialness of personality. Her individuality created the reality of the story she dominates". (Warner 1981 : 3) For vastly different reasons Mrs Thatcher's supporters and opponents alike might find this description appropriate. Mrs Thatcher said in a 1975 statement: "What I have, and where I am, is the result of continuous effort and courage to take the next step."<sup>5</sup>

## 7 LITERARY

No entries for this election.

## 8 BESTIARY

### PERIODICALS (Table 6.32)

Number of different names in this Table : 1	S	N	P	PE
She-bear      number of times used	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Another way of enhancing a reputation or cutting it down to size is by investing someone with the characteristics of a particular animal. As we shall see, it is a form popular with

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<sup>5</sup> Wintour and Rogers (New Statesman 27 April 1979) quote Kenneth Harris in the Observer : undated.

cartoonists since they can be very rude, or critical or even complimentary in a wordless way. The category here is a word picture, an inference which may need explanation, or which is supplemented by having literary connections.

The 'she-bear' is quoted by Wintour and Rogers (27 April 1979) from a poem by Kipling. The article entitled 'The she-bear in her pride' is a critical survey of the life and times of Mrs Thatcher: 'she-bear', 'pride' and Kipling are all significant. Using a Kipling quote to describe her is double edged, since Mrs Thatcher is said to be keen on his poetry. She had already quoted 'that the female of the (bear) species is more deadly than the male', but the writers doubted she knew the extent and nature of the quotation:

"Unprovoked and awful charges - even so the she-bear fights, speech that drips corrodes and poisons - even so the cobra bites", (From: The Female of the Species : Rudyard Kipling : 1919)

With hindsight the quote might be considered prophetic; but Mrs Thatcher did not win the election until early May, and it was the 1980s before her popularity fell so low. Wintour and Rogers concluded that Mrs Thatcher was not the lethal she-bear but "The governess, in the dead of night, Giving the Universe nought for behaviour". (From Auden and Isherwood 'The Ascent of F6'. Wintour and Rogers op cit). There was no cartoon to match this image.

## 9 PICTORIAL

### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.33)

Number of different names in this Table : 3	T	G	E	M
Garbo-type mezzo number of times used	0	1	0	0
La Passionara of modern British politics	0	0	1	0
La Passionara of Middle Class privilege	0	0	1	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>

Under an 'umbrella' title this category draws images from several sources, mainly the Art world and Films. There are a very few borderline cases which do not quite belong in the Literary (No 7) group.

'Garbo-type mezzo' was a reference to Mrs Thatcher's vocal changes which were part of the Gordon Reece directed new image. The slower diction and lower tone made a better impression than the former slightly breathless higher pitched voice, which became disconcertingly shrill in the House of Commons hubbub. Atkinson notes that voice pitch is a particular problem for women speaking in public. Since their natural voice pitch is already high, and nervous tension drives it higher, it cannot rise far without sounding shrill. However, this high sound is often associated with emotion or anger

"...(when) the tendency of male colleagues (is) to accuse them of 'over-reacting' whenever they become involved in arguments". (Atkinson 1984 : 113)

Writers and poets, Shakespeare among them, have acknowledged the attraction of the mezzo voice. The lower, slower female voice is more dignified (and majestic), is easier to listen to, and gives weight to statements and discussion. Mrs Thatcher's 46 Hz reduction in pitch, equal to half the average difference between male and female voices is remarkable for being achieved at an age when a woman's voice pitch normally tends to rise. (Atkinson 1984 : 113)

"... the fact that Mrs Thatcher has taken positive steps to lower the pitch of her voice can be seen as a perfectly rational response to a very real problem". (Atkinson 1984 : 113)

The rational response and changes in appearance are part of the reason why the regal attitude developed and drew much critical comment, giving rise to further nicknames and descriptions.

Something like 'La Passionara - of modern British politics/of Middle Class privilege' originated with Denis Healey as a form of sportive criticism. 'La Passionara'<sup>6</sup> is a composite figure part Prima Donna and part passionate woman; the parts are not necessarily the same thing. This might be considered another version of the 'conviction politician' or the 'fervent crusader' and commitment to a cause. At a later election it was said that because Mrs Thatcher was so passionate about her politics she frightened people, friends and foes alike, and the voters. The 'middle class privilege' can be related to a point made earlier in No 6 regarding the 'professional mediocrity' who achieved advancement because of the benefits of inherited wealth, rather than the meritocratic grocer's daughter. Either way the image seems to suggest a dynamic but uncomfortable person. Although these descriptions appeared in the Express they were not used as direct criticism, rather more impressions requiring explanation.

**SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.33.1)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 1</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>La Passionara of Middle Class privilege</b> number of times used	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**CONCLUSION**

As we have seen so far in this section, all publications made most use of categories 1 and 2 - Mrs Thatcher's proper or formal names, and proper descriptions concerning her political standing, several prefixed with 'first woman'. The nicknames included some old familiar

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<sup>6</sup>Maria Callas was known as La Passionara for the vehemence and emotion of her singing.

ones which had distinguished Mrs Thatcher earlier in her political career, and some newly minted especially for the election. Other descriptions of her character were of either a personal or political nature, or of regal possibilities. The favourable/unfavourable analyses showed the weight was on the favourable terms, but not excessively so, and there were sufficient variables to show possible reservations. Amongst the four last special categories, although there were some strong characteristics demonstrated there was almost no overlap or parallel with cartoon images.

## GENERAL ELECTION 1983

By 1983 there were bound to be some very obvious differences in the person and therefore the images. Mrs Thatcher had been four years in power and was seeking re-election, after first plumbing the depths in unpopularity, before scaling the heights after the Falklands. The professional image was still being honed, but voters were more attuned to the contralto voice. The World Statesperson was high on the ladder, though not at the top. In 1979 as Leader of the Opposition Mrs Thatcher was, to a degree, an unknown quantity for such a powerful position. In 1983 the situation had changed - criticism was inevitable.

### 1 MRS THATCHER'S NAME AND VARIATIONS

#### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.34)

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 9</b>	<b>*T</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Mrs Thatcher</b> number of times used	<b>375</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>Mrs Margaret Thatcher</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Margaret Thatcher</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Margaret</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Thatcher</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Maggie</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Maggie Thatcher</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Margaret Roberts</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Young Margaret</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

\* The Times

The list is only two names shorter than 1979. The extended full names combinations are missing. 'Young Margaret' appeared in a mini-biography in the Express.

**SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.35)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 9</b>	<b>*T</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Mrs Thatcher</b> number of times used	126	110	20	21
<b>Margaret Thatcher</b>	4	5	8	9
<b>Maggie</b>	1	2	1	10
<b>Mrs Margaret Thatcher</b>	1	4	6	1
<b>Margaret</b>	0	4	7	1
<b>Thatcher</b>	25	3	0	3
<b>Thatcher II</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>Margaret Hilda Thatcher née Roberts</b>	0	0	1	0
<b>Margaret Roberts</b>	0	0	0	1
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

\* The Times

The extended full name combination is new, also 'Thatcher II'. The Times used the latter to indicate an updated image, and fighting a second election. The Sunday Express also ran a brief biography and used the combined name.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.36)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 6</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>PE</b>
<b>Mrs Thatcher</b> number of times used	100	81	16	7
<b>Maggie</b>	1	2	7	3
<b>Thatcher</b>	11	23	5	0
<b>Margaret Thatcher</b>	5	4	6	0
<b>Margaret</b>	1	0	0	1
<b>Maggie Thatcher</b>	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>

The range of names and pattern of use has changed very little since last time. As noted earlier, the critical use of 'Thatcher' increased in New Statesman.

## 2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.37)

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 21</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Prime Minister number of times used</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>most loathed Prime Minister</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Conservative Prime Minister</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Conservative Party Leader</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>P.M.</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Premier Margaret Thatcher</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Premier</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Tory Leader</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Stateswoman</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Monumental Stateswoman</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>British Prime Minister</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Tory Prime Minister</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Tory front runner</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Tory Prime Minister Maggie May</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Prime Minister May</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>First woman Prime Minister</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Britain's Prime Minister</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Prime Minister Mrs Thatcher</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Premier Thatcher</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

This list is a 50% increase over 1979. References to Opposition have disappeared, and all but one 'first woman ...' More than half these variations are based on Prime Minister, with a few on Premier, Tory Leadership, and a small miscellaneous group.

The 'most loathed .. ' was a brief reminder of Mrs Thatcher's standing during 1980 to early 1982. The Maggie May allusions are critical ones, and resulted from a Denis Healey joke.

The original Maggie May (the name was also a joke) was a Liverpool prostitute. The alliteration and a Music Hall song "Maggie may ... Maggie might ..." seemed too good to be ignored when there was some dithering and uncertainty early in the conservative

campaign. It was teasing provocation of Mrs Thatcher hinting at unreliability, even untrustworthiness.

The 'Monumental Stateswoman' in the Express, no doubt meant with respect or regard, seems a rather unfortunate choice of adjective.

It was nice to find a little unbending in the Broadsheets with their use of PM - albeit briefly.

**SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.38)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 9</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Prime Minister</b> number of times used	15	22	1	4
<b>Premier</b>	0	0	1	1
<b>PM</b>	1	2	0	0
<b>first woman Prime Minister</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher</b>	0	0	1	0
<b>Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher</b>	0	0	1	0
<b>Premier Margaret Thatcher</b>	0	0	0	1
<b>Presidential-Style Prime Minister</b>	0	1	0	0
<b>Resolute Stateswoman</b>	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>

This is slightly shorter than last time. The new descriptions are obviously the title variations. These Broadsheets also unbent and used PM. The Stateswoman is resolute, which is the progression of the conviction politician.

Of particular interest here is the 'Presidential-Style ...' and comments on the packaging and marketing. These aspects of the Tory campaign received some attention in 1979, but without the 'Presidential' overtones. The influence of the Falklands factor, murmurings of a different style of government, Mrs Thatcher's regal attitude were all new influences on press perception, and their method of disseminating the message.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.39)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 2</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>PE</b>
Prime Minister            number of times used	9	8	7	1
British Prime Minister	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

**3        NICKNAMES**

**DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.40)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 12</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
Mrs T                    number of times used	1	1	1	4
Iron Lady	2	4	2	0
Wonderwoman	0	1	2	0
housewife	0	1	0	1
Mrs Average Suburban housewife	0	1	0	0
Maggie May	0	6	0	0
Mrs May	0	1	0	0
Fanatic Maggie	0	0	1	0
Maggie is the Man	0	0	1	0
Superwoman	0	0	1	0
hard hearted Maggie	0	0	0	1
Thatcher the job snatcher	0	0	0	1
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>

As well as the familiar names, the few new ones could probably be described as variations on themes.

The first variation is 'Wonderwoman', which belongs with 'Superwoman'. Jean Rook in the Express waxed lyrical over the amount Mrs Thatcher accomplished in a day on the campaign trail, and still looked fresh, tidy and full of energy in the evening when everyone else in the entourage was untidy and exhausted. The Guardian and Mirror writers conceded the freshness and energy, but had a different opinion on what was actually achieved. The 'Snatcher' appears again but this time 'job' is inserted because of the Mirror's analysis of the economic situation and rising unemployment.

The most variations were attached to Maggie; some of them are not favourable. The 'Maggie May' image with 'Mrs May' was all part of the variation mentioned earlier. The Music Hall song 'Hard Hearted Hannah' (another Denis Healey-ism) gave rise to 'hard hearted Maggie', in the Mirror.<sup>7</sup> Again, this is social comment on Mrs Thatcher's attitude and policies - the 'uncaring' image was already being used, and would be employed more extensively in the 1987 election. 'Fanatic Maggie' seemed a strange name to find in the Express, but they were refuting strong criticism of her being "cranky, fanatical and extreme". (1 June) It was pointed out elsewhere that her strength of will was backed by "extraordinary resolution". It seems like the difference between the visionary and the zealot. 'Maggie is the Man' is part of the (St Joan) androgyne mentioned earlier.

SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.41)

Number of different names in this Table : 2	T	O	E	M
Mrs T number of times used	0	2	1	2
Housewife Mrs T	0	0	1	0
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

The Observer's use of 'Mrs T' seems very sober after the exuberance of 1979. The Express used no nicknames last time, and overall the Table is four names shorter.

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<sup>7</sup> Whilst campaigning, Denis Healey sometimes visited Day Centres or Homes for the Elderly. A talented pianist and entertainer, he has a wide repertoire of the older songs and Music Hall ditties, well known to and appreciated by the elderly. The outrageous nonsense, or clever patter of the song may, however, be turned to political account when he is campaigning.

## PERIODICALS (Table 6.42)

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 7</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>PE</b>
Mrs T            number of times used	4	0	0	2
Iron Lady	1	0	1	0
Housewife Superstar	0	2	0	0
Nanny	0	2	0	0
Governess	0	1	0	0
Superwoman	0	1	0	0
M	0	0	0	7
<b>Total Names per publication</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

This Table is nearly doubled since 1979, due to the contributions from *New Statesman*. The formidable female, the always right humourless moralist of 'Nanny' and 'Governess' join the familiar 'Housewife Superstar' and 'Superwoman'. An alternative category for these particular pairs of contrasts might be 'The woman who cannot be ignored', or 'She who must be obeyed'.<sup>1</sup> *New Statesman* took relatively little notice of Mrs Thatcher in 1979, but during the present campaign used the nicknames for critical purposes.

'Mrs T' and 'Iron Lady' were not used in critical ways. *Private Eye* preferred the visual approach for criticism and representing Mrs Thatcher's method of maintaining her power base in John Kent's "Maggie Rules OK", (discussed later).

## 4      PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER : VARIOUS

### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.43)

The list of descriptions is nearly 30% longer than in 1979 (Table 6.24). Apart from the range of descriptions, there is a better balance between political and personal, and the

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<sup>1</sup> In "Maggie's Minister" (11 September 1993 : BBC 2) Kenneth Baker remarked on how disconcerting it was to find that Nanny was not left in the Nursery, but was still there, running your mature career. Quoting a colleague he said: "The day starts badly ... you get to the office to be met by a woman who is far worse than your wife or your Mother-in-law, and what's so infuriating, she's always right."

# Character and Personality 1983

**DAILY PAPERS (TABLE 6.43)**

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL	Britain's Boss	E	1	Authoritarian leader	E	1	Her right Ladyship	G	1
	Nation's chosen leader	G	1	one woman dictatorship	E	1	accidental leader	G	1
	leader who runs the country	E	1	Tina, the tearaway word			Thatcher phenomenon	G	1
	Best man in her Cabinet	E	1	machine	G	1	political phenomenon	E	1
	Master of her party	E	1	extremists	M	1	remarkable political		
	a good butcher politically	E	1				phenomenon	E	1
	Leaderene	G	1				figurehead	G	1
	not a butcher	M	1						
	<u>Total descriptions : 8</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 4</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 6</u>		
PERSONAL	bright little girl	M	1	Mrs Big	E	1	the grocer's daughter	M	1
	the lady	T	1	Bossy Headmistress	E	1	Leading Lady	G/M	1/1
	force of will	G	1	Big Sister	T/G		tough lady	E	1
	Mum	G	1	Bossy Boots	T	1	Headmistress	T/G/E	2/1/1
	a graceful woman	G	1	middle aged matron	G	1	Iron Mother	E	1
	a capable woman	G	1	charismatic mediocrity	G	1			
	a marvellous woman	E	1	that woman	T	1			
		<u>Total descriptions : 7</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 7</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 5</u>	
<u>Total descriptions in this Table : 37 of which Political total : 18      Personal total : 19</u>									

columnar divisions, as might be expected, after Mrs Thatcher's first term in office. This is an extensive range but the usage is very limited.

The distribution has not noticeably been influenced by the change from the Telegraph to the Times. Even without the numerical analysis it can be seen that the main contributions come from the Guardian and the Express. As noted elsewhere, the Guardian clothed some criticism and topical election comment in a series of satirical articles, based on themes associated with Mrs Thatcher. In a more limited space, but with strong partisanship, the Express lauded Mrs Thatcher.

Some of the unfavourable comments both political and personal are very critical, and come from all four papers. By contrast, most of the favourable comments come from the Guardian.

As can be seen, the images fall into four alternative groups. Leadership and formidable females would form the two largest groups, with the androgyne and the phenomenon in two smaller ones. A very few descriptions would be 'miscellaneous', for example: 'the grocer's daughter', 'a graceful woman' and the 'bright little girl'. The Leadership group are discussed with their own Table 6.43.1.

The formidable female image was mentioned earlier, the 'Governess' and 'Nanny' are other examples. "They know best", is probably the watchword; it includes getting things done, never being wrong, and brooking no argument. The formidable female is not noted for her femininity. 'Iron Mother' is a special point here. This variation makes it particularly feminine, unlike the earlier description of the 'Iron Lady' in which it was suggested, she could not be "too disturbingly feminine". 'Iron Mother' sounds equally unbending and not to be provoked, but it cannot be motherly in the accepted sense. Also, 'Iron Mother' - of the nation presumably - lacks a certain something implicit in the Iron Lady. Arguably, one image fits Mrs Thatcher, the other does not have the right connotation.

The androgyne form, apart from St Joan, is expressed in 'Master of her party' for instance, and it echoes the Barbara Castle comment of 1975. 'Mastering' the party, as we know, can also mean someone akin to a puppet master or the trainer of Pavlov's dogs. For all Mrs Thatcher's obvious femininity, many commentators noted this could be forgotten or overlooked in the political arena. Yet part of the contrariness and contradiction in the projection of the image and personality is that Mrs Thatcher frequently used, or took advantage of this femininity. It depended on the image deployed, or the role being played.

The phenomenon is difficult to define precisely - we all know one when we see or experience it in some way. The remarkable, outstanding or unusual person may be unpredictable, and a non-conformist in a particular role. They dare to be different and break the mould. Whether they are a "good thing" in any arena - political or otherwise - is open to discussion.

One other description is important here, the 'charismatic mediocrity'. (Wintour & Rogers) Being an oxymoron everything implicit in charisma is negated by mediocrity; not only that, it even seems to make it ludicrous or unbelievable. The phenomenon therefore, is commonplace, or a nonentity, less than average in quality or performance.

Charisma comes from a religious context, but Weber borrowed the word and used it to mean that an individual had certain unique attributes which set him/her apart. This made them greater than ordinary mortals, so that they appeared to be, if not supernatural, then superhuman, elevated by their exceptional powers and qualities. Weber's proviso was that this leader (perhaps Messiah) would arise in times of national distress or overwhelming crisis and have "charismatic authority" because of the recognition and belief of the followers (disciples). This relationship was the vital element.

Kavanagh notes, however, that charisma has been "so stretched between advertising copywriters and social scientists that it now (means) different things to different researchers". He also suggests that the original meaning has been lost because later writers emphasised "charisma as a personal trait of the leader". (Kavanagh 1990 : 134, 135) <sup>1</sup>

Mrs Thatcher did not 'arise' at a time of crisis. She may have had a strong patriotic and nationalist spirit, she was not alone in this. She was different; not like anyone else, and not like any preceding Prime Minister. She had a mission and a vision and drive. She admitted all these things and often repeated them. She terrified people or galvanised them into action. No one was indifferent to her. She had followers and believers, but hero-worship does not establish, indicate or prove 'charisma'. Neither does marketing and image-making.

#### Leadership (Table 6.43.1)

The Leadership division reduces the list considerably and it differs markedly from 1979 (Table 6.24.1) as one would expect. The different political images imply degrees of power and standing which have developed in the four years. Notions of absolute power and authority, domination and discipline are now apparent. There is also noticeable disparity with the limited contribution and descriptions under Personality. The formidable female can be seen in both parts of the Table.

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<sup>1</sup> Charismatic leadership also "depends on the maintenance of the crisis atmosphere and on ... the leader's continuance of outstanding feats or "miracles". (Kavanagh 1990 : 136)

# Character and Personality 1983

## LEADERSHIP (TABLE 6.43.1)

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL	Britain's Boss	E	1	Authoritarian leader one woman's dictatorship	E	1	accidental leader	G	1
	Nation's chosen leader	G	1		E	1			
	leader who runs the country	EE	1						
	Master of her party	E	1						
	Leaderene	G	1						
	<u>Total descriptions : 5</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 2</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>		
PERSONAL				Bossy Headmistress	E	1	Leading Lady Headmistress	G/M T/G/E	1 2/1/1
				<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 2</u>		

**Numerical Totals (Table 6.43.2)**

	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	TOTAL
Times	0	0	0		1	3	1	5	5
Guardian	2	1	4	7	4	3	2	9	16
Express	5	2	2	9	1	2	3	6	15
Mirror	1	1		2	1	0	2	3	5
Broadsheets	2	1	4	7	5	6	3	14	21
Tabloids	6	3	2	11	2	2	5	9	20
Labour	3	2	4	9	5	3	4	12	21
Conservative	5	2	2	9	2	5	4	11	20

The totals for Broadsheets and Tabloids and then political parties are perhaps not so surprising, given the totals for individual papers. It seems strange that the Times' descriptions appear for the person rather than the politician, whereas the others have a better balance.

**SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.44)**

Like the daily papers there is a better distribution of descriptions this time, and evenly balanced between the two halves. Although there are only small numbers involved it is interesting to note the balance of favourable in the Political section, and critical in the Personal. As before, we can see the stress on Leadership factors and the formidable female.

The Observer clearly has the largest input, which matches its previous pattern. It also uses several of the descriptions more than once. The dailies, by contrast, had an extensive list but limited usage.

# Character and Personality 1983

SUNDAY PAPERS (TABLE 6.44)

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL	Leader	T	1	woman dictatoress	M	1	Thatcher as figurehead	T	1
	cautious politician	O	4				laissez-faire politician	O	3
	cautious and conservative politician	O	1						
	<u>Total descriptions : 3</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 2</u>		
PERSONAL	the Lady	O	3	Bossy Headmistress	M	1	high priestess	O	1
	the Boss	O	1	Bossy woman	O	1			
				Authoritarian	O	3			
	<u>Total descriptions : 2</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 3</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>		
<u>Total descriptions in this Table : 12 of which Political total : 6      Personal total : 6</u>									

# Character and Personality 1983

## LEADERSHIP (TABLE 6.44.1)

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL	Leader	T	1	woman dictatoress	M	1			
	<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>					
PERSONAL				Bossy Headmistress	O	1	high priestess	O	1
				<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>		

The replacement of the Telegraph by the Times appears to have made little difference - the former had one entry in 1979, the Times has two. The Express is conspicuously absent and the Mirror's contribution minimal, which is the reverse of last time.

The variation in the 'woman dictatoress' is a clumsy phrase, and does not seem to have the power or impact of the 'one woman dictatorship' used in the daily papers. Possibly this is due to the double feminine nouns. The description came from Edward Heath.

The notions of leadership are rather limited (Table 6.44.1) but the critical factor stressed both politically and personally seems significant even with these minimal numbers.

Numerical Totals (Table 6.44.2)

	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	TOTAL
Times	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2
Observer	2	0	1	3	2	2	1	5	8
Express	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mirror	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	2
Broadsheets	3	0	2	5	2	2	1	5	10
Tabloids	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	2
Labour	2	1	1	4	2	3	1	6	10
Conservative	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2

PERIODICALS (Table 6.45)

Although this is a longer Table and more widely distributed this time, most of the input is from Private Eye. Of the seven entries, five are from 'Dear Bill' and the 'Mum' total from 'Carol Thatcher'. Spectator, New Statesman and Punch make use of other categories.

Only one description needs comment. 'Phallic woman', this is the only time it appears, come from an article by Leo Abse. His discussion and argument is an early outline of his

# Character and Personality 1983

## PERIODICALS (TABLE 6.45)

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL				Class Enemy No 1	N	1	Thatcher factor revolutionary image	N S	1 1
				<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 2</u>		
PERSONAL	Tory Lady	N	1	Mrs Big	N	1	Paragon Headmistress phallic woman	PE	1
	The Lady	PE	1					PE	1
	Mum	PE	19					S	1
	The Boss	PE	6						
	Proprietor	PE	1						
	Supreme Commander	PE	1						
	<u>Total descriptions : 6</u>							<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>	
<u>Total descriptions in this Table : 13 of which Political total : 3      Personal total : 10</u>									

**Character and Personality 1983**

**LEADERSHIP (TABLE 6. 45.1)**

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL	The Boss	PE	6				Headmistress	PE	1
	Proprietor	PE	1						
	Supreme Commander	PE	1						
	<u>Total descriptions : 3</u>								

later book.<sup>2</sup> He analyses Mrs Thatcher's upbringing and background from the psychological viewpoint, and the extent and strength of her Father's influence whilst her Mother fulfilled a traditionally ascribed role. Part of his argument is that the repressive strictness and stern morality which governed the formation of her character and outlook was more fitted to a son and heir. The filial pursuit of excellence was therefore 'as a son' to conform with, and achieve, the Father's expectations. Thus, the foundation was laid for the non-female or un-female-like characteristics perceived in the later powerful adult. Whether or not this is an accurate analysis is debatable, but it is a different approach to the concept of the 'surrogate male', and another example of the many apparent contradictions in this woman's life and personality.

Numerical Totals (Table 6.45.2)

	POLITICAL				PERSONAL				TOTAL
	Names used per publication								
	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	
Spectator	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	2
New Statesman	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	3
Punch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private Eye	0	0	0	0	6	0	2	8	8
Serious	1	1	1	3	0	1	1	2	5
Satirical	0	0	0	0	6	0	2	8	8

5 PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER - REGAL AND ARISTOCRATIC

DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.46)

Number of different names in this Table : 1	T	G	E	M
No Queen with divine right      number of times used	0	0	1	0
Total names per paper	0	0	1	0

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2 "Margaret, daughter of Beatrice"  
At publication the book had a mixed reception from specialists in the field of Psychology and related sciences, not least because it was a psycho-biography written by a non-psychologist MP.

The Express comment, not intended to be critical, sounds blunt rather than a plain statement of fact, countering the regal criticisms. The other papers use Category 6 for their royal comment, with historical overtones.

**SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.47)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 2</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Quasi-regal number of times used</b>	0	3	0	0
<b>elective-executive monarch</b>	0	2	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	0	2	0	0

The Observer took issue with Mrs Thatcher for her presumption and encroaching habits. The complaint was not only the royal 'We;', but stately attitudes and progresses, taking the Falkland Parade Salute, and taking on a role not in keeping with Prime Ministerial duties. Mainly, it concerned her being a Presidential-style Prime Minister. This discussion continues later.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.48)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 1</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>PE</b>
<b>Warrior Queen of the Falklands number of times used</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>Total names per publication</b>	1	0	0	0

'Warrior queen of the Falklands' is one of several descriptions which fit in more than one category. The phrase is interesting for several reasons, mainly because, a Warrior Queen is a paradox and phenomenon. Implicit in the name is supreme power, not as a figurehead, but as a true leader. Historical and traditionally ascribed roles for women have been as the weaker and inferior sex, and because by nature more peaceful, a pacifying influence. Therefore, the appearance of a Warrior Queen by whatever means (fate, accident, character) has stimulated excitement and awe, arousing admiration and enthusiasm for her causes. (Fraser 1989 : 6) The argument continues: Mrs Thatcher, Mrs Gandhi and Mrs

Meir must be counted honorary men i.e. non-pacific people, having adopted masculine values in order to succeed in a patriarchal world. The person who succeeds in this male dominated world "... is generally regarded as the 'singular exception' and that very singularity for better or for worse provides her aura". (Fraser 1989 : 9)

Fraser goes on to suggest that in modern terms a Warrior Queen might "... under certain circumstances have to take the decision to deploy her country's military resources ... Mrs Thatcher at the time of the Falklands War played the Warrior Queen while Queen Elizabeth II was merely the reigning monarch". (Fraser 1989 : 8)

Historically, there have been few British Warrior Queens - the two most obvious ones are Boadicea and Queen Elizabeth I.<sup>3</sup> In the context of the Spectator's article 'Warrior Queen' was probably an indirect reference to Boadicea, but could possibly be, even more indirectly, Britannia. Both appear in the next Category.

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<sup>3</sup> Joan of Arc was a leader but not a ruler and is therefore a Women Warrior. (Fraser 1989 : 8)

6 HISTORICAL

**DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.49)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 19</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Boadicea</b> number of times used	1	3	0	1
Home counties Boadicea	1	0	0	0
Boudicaa	1	0	0	0
amphibious Boadicea	0	1	0	0
Boadicea of the South Atlantic	0	0	0	1
Woadicea	0	1	0	0
Warrior Queen	0	1	0	0
Britannia	0	0	0	1
Iron Britannia	0	1	0	0
Iron Maiden	1	0	1	2
Queen of Prussia	0	0	0	1
personification of Queen Elizabeth	0	1	0	0
personification of Queen Victoria	0	1	0	0
Barnes Wallis	0	1	0	0
Squadron Leader	0	6	0	0
Sq. Ldr. Barnes Bounce Bomb	0	1	0	0
the Bomb	0	1	0	0
Ayatollah in a silk suit	0	1	0	0
Lady Macbeth factor	1	1	0	0
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>

This is the largest Category 6 of any of the publications at any of the three elections. The figure in the Guardian column signals the range of names here which came from the special articles mentioned earlier. Directly or indirectly the names are due to the Falklands, or martial, influence. But the other intriguing point here is the complex relationship which already exists between Boadicea, Britannia and two of the Queens, Falklands notwithstanding.

There appears to be much uncertainty about Boadicea. The confusion arises from

"... ambivalence towards (her) name, like the misapprehensions concerning her career and circumstances, is ... part of her aura ..." (Fraser 1989 : 5)

The stereotype image is the fierce woman in flowing robes driving a chariot with flailing knives on the wheels, not unlike the Victorian statue on the Embankment. The abundance of possibilities for representation is a gift for cartoonists.<sup>4</sup> The Embankment statue was erected in 1902<sup>5</sup> in an atmosphere of "... holy patriotism ... when the mystique of the empire was at its apogee". (Warner 1985 : 50) It is paradoxical that this queen became such a representative at that time, and remained so, according to some arguments, ninety years later. In the researched material, however, the image appeared verbally but not visually.

The certainties are that Boadicea was nobly born and a Queen in her own right, the leader of the British tribe Iceni. History apart, she is the classic example of the Warrior Queen, combining martial leadership and sovereignty, whose aura is due to singularity. She is a unique symbol.

The puzzle regarding the name accounts for some variations on the list. Fraser points out that Boudicca, or Boudica, brings the Queen's name close to "... Celtic words for victory, notably the Old Welsh 'bouda' ...". (Fraser 1989 : 5)<sup>6</sup> Mrs Thatcher's perceived parochiality, partly responsible for the North/South divide according to some commentators, provoked the 'Home counties ...' adjunct. A Guardian pithy report of a visit to the Isle of Wight used the 'amphibians ...', and three of the Queen's references; Cowes estuary deputised for San Carlos water, the symbolic 'figurehead' arrived on "a cushion" of hot air aboard a naval hovercraft and "received homage" from the assembled crowds. (9 June 1983)

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<sup>4</sup> eg (a) Griffin in the Daily Express, 24 June 1982, following Mrs Thatcher's appearance on American TV after the Falklands War.

(b) Gale in the Daily Telegraph, 11 June 1987 - polling day.

<sup>5</sup> A year after Queen Victoria's death, and after Lord Kitchener's Victory in the Boer War. (Warner 1985 : 50)

<sup>6</sup> This author also records that whilst on an archeological enquiry in East Anglie in 1985, the first three experts she met pronounced the name: Bōdīcā; Boudīcā; and Boudicā. (Fraser 1989 : 5)

'Woadicea' is rather a neat pun, and it brings the woad of the ancient Britons into the political arena. 'Woadicea rides again' appears in "1066 and all that" the alternative or revised version of some English history, but Salman Rushdie quoted the name in an article deploring Mrs Thatcher's attitude in blaming an Act of God, or someone else for what he considered to be the parlous state of the country. He was puzzled at the support she was given, at her followers and her attempt at a second victory. He possibly had the word 'woe' in mind, therefore intending a homophone.

Of the three Queens, two have many things in common, but only one of them has ties with the 'Warrior Queen'. The third image is isolated and based on a different concept. The Mirror used 'Queen of Prussia' to indicate cold, hard, materialistic traits of character as well as arrogance, dominance and militarism. But the supporting visual image from an artist or cartoonist often looked more like the Queen from Alice in Wonderland - archaic and outrageous. In either case the character implied was not a good one.

Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria longevous hereditary monarchs both, and women in a male role through individuality, myth and symbol came to personify the nation. Under both there was a tradition of national prosperity. Neither Queen approved of anything for the advancement of women, and certainly not an improvement in rights or the prescribed role in life.

A constant message to the court, the country and covetous foreign royalty was Queen Elizabeth's individuality; it was a two part image composed of

"... (an) exquisite ... lady who needed to be protected - (a) goddess who had to be adored ... and a 'prince': like many successful pieces of composite propaganda, the second part was in direct contradiction of the first." (Fraser 1989 : 210)

She ascended the throne at a time of general aversion to queens regnant,<sup>7</sup> yet by stateswomanship sometimes of a flirtatious nature, charisma and individuality, she remained in power for 45 years. Her near pathological dislike of war was displayed in an 'ostentatious parsimony' towards it, so that she strove to keep the nation free "... and made herself feared by Spain, by France, by the Empire and by all." (Fraser 1989 : 208) Yet when war became inevitable she addressed her troops at Tilbury as a 'King of England', even though a woman.

The Surrogate Male, however, did nothing to improve the lot of women during her reign, nor the perception of their worth. The few high-born men and women who could claim distant blood ties with her were kept well away from the Court, in limited spheres of influence. Her favourites were male and wealthy. Uncompromising allegiance was exacted. In fighting for peace the Warrior Queen reigned supreme, and mostly in peace, as an Icon concealing a Virago and Battle-axe.

In Queen Victoria's reign there was expansion of empire, and the developing concept of "greatness" of the Mother country and therefore, also, the Sovereign. This latter state did not occur until the 1880's on her 'return' to public life when her

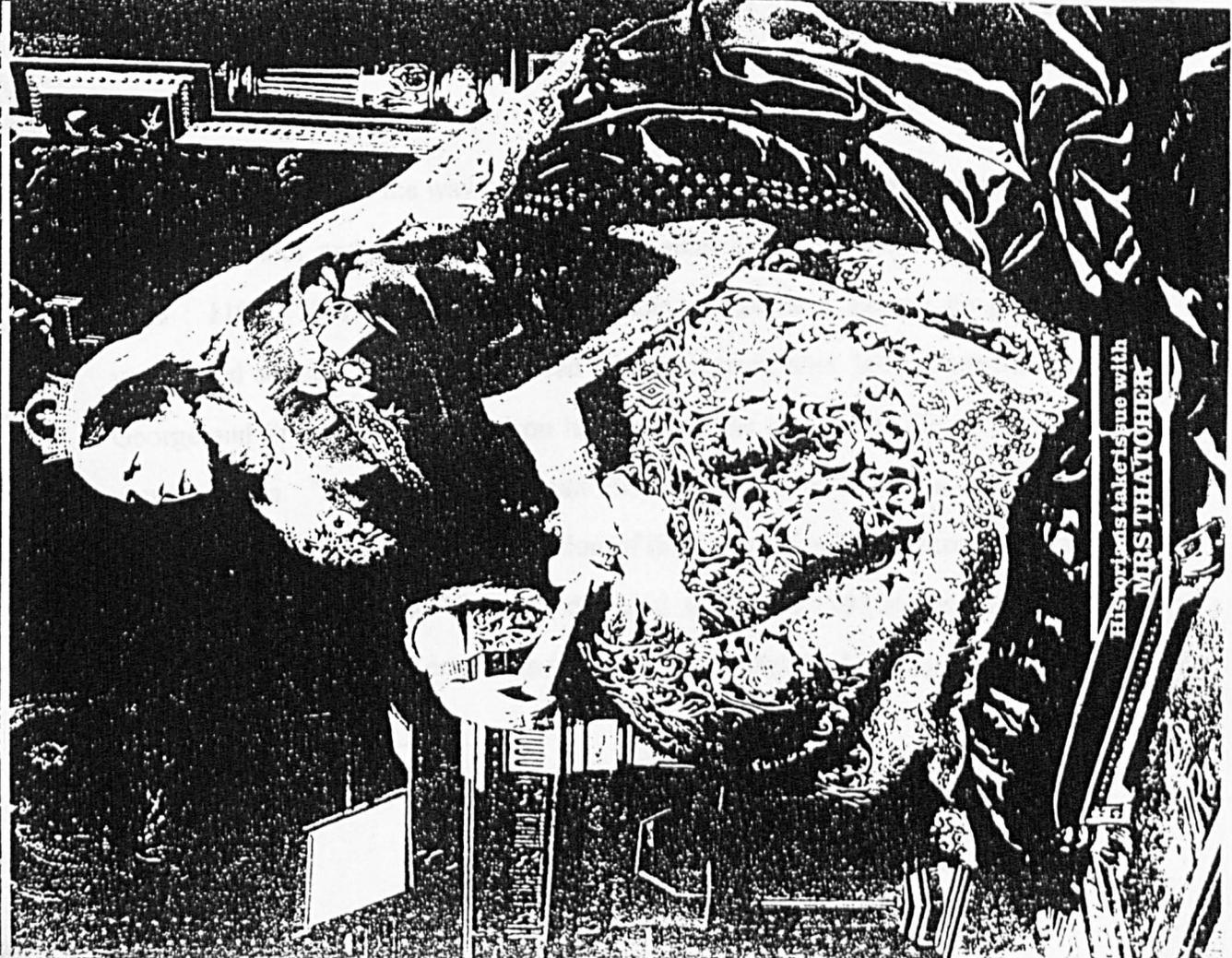
"... longevity, probity, sense of duty and unrivalled position as matriach of Europe and mother-figure of empire came to outweigh, and then eclipse, the earlier hostile attitude towards her. At her death, she was no longer 'Mrs Guelph' (or) the 'Queen of the Whigs' but the 'most excellent of sovereigns', who bequeathed a name eternally to be revered." (Cannadine 1983 : 121)

In the early years of her reign Victoria was often self-willed and uncooperative with Government and Ministers, and was not particularly popular. For a variety of reasons,

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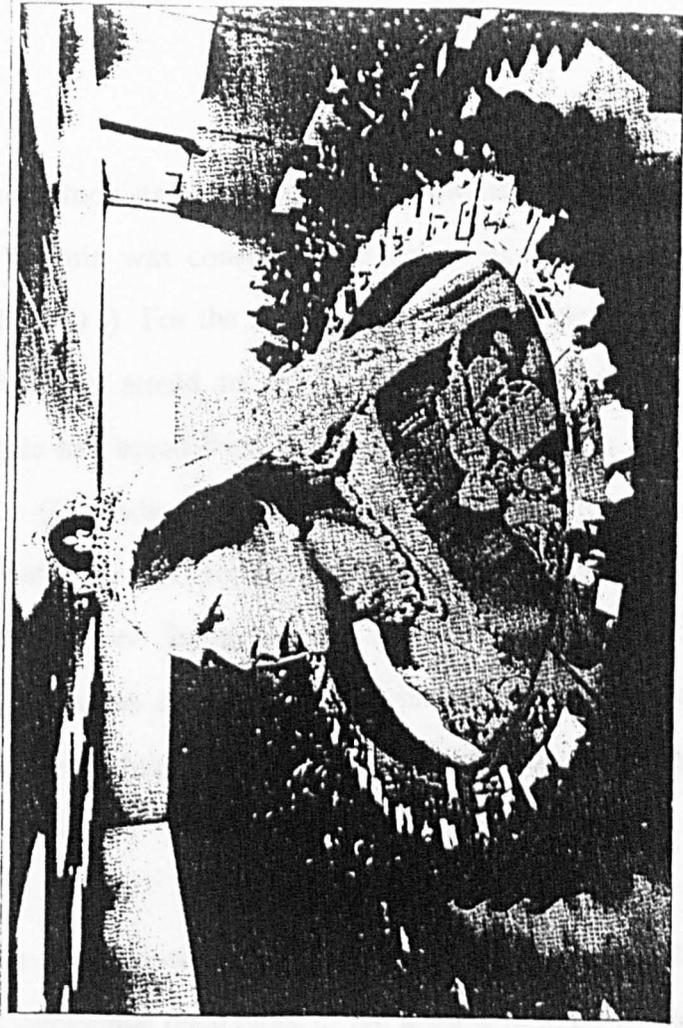
<sup>7</sup> Following her half-sister Queen Mary I, who was not universally loved.

# VICTORIAN VALUES



His torpens take issue with  
**MRS THATCHER**

THE GUARDIAN  
Monday December 11 1989



PHOTOGRAPH BY P. KENNEDY  
The Lady's still not for turning. But her iron exterior may be softening. **Michael White** reports from Stratford

some historic, the press and cartoonists alike were hostile towards the monarchy. "From the 1850's to the 1870's, Victoria was constantly the object of criticism in newspaper editorials". (Cannadine 1983 : 111) For the first twenty years of widowhood the Queen became a recluse and refused to attend to royal duties. The Prince of Wales was considered to live a profligate and scandalous life. Cannadine notes that Bagehot called him 'an unemployed youth'. (Cannadine 1983 : 110) Yet when the Queen returned to public life, and for the rest of her reign, her image was transformed into the icon of the Queen-Empress and supreme Mother. In her absence however, a most significant change had taken place. Not only was the electorate greatly increased, so was their political awareness; the royal prerogative had decreased considerably - the Sovereign was no longer politically centre-stage. However,

"... as the real power of the monarchy waned, the way was open for it to become the centre of grand ceremonial once more ... the growth in popular veneration for the monarchy made such enhanced ceremonial convincing in a manner that had not been possible before, as power was exchanged for popularity." (Cannadine 1983 : 121)

The stage was set and the way clear - enter Boadicea and Britannia, for as Bagehot wrote: "To be a symbol, and an effective symbol, you must be vividly and often seen". (Cannadine 1983 : 119)<sup>8</sup> Warner records that Britannia, originally a Roman image symbolising a vanquished country, became associated with patriotism after 1670 when the crosses of St George and St Andrew appeared on her shield. She was 'given life' through literary and popular media. "Propaganda ... became Britannia's chief theatre of activity" By the mid-nineteenth century "... the personification of the constitution" has become "Britannia ... the might of Britain". Queen Victoria's diamond Jubilee of 1897 also marked the height of popularity, and notions of empire and supremacy, implicit in this image. (Warner 1985 : 48)

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<sup>8</sup> Cannadine quotes from 'The Collected Works of Walter Bagehot' Ed: St John-Stevan.

The Queen and Britannia both flourished, but the Queen was only rarely represented as Britannia.<sup>9</sup>

Warner argues that a Victorian legacy which combines a mythical figure and an ancient Briton influenced the "... conception of Britain entertained by enthusiasts of the Falklands war". She suggests the creation of the myth was highly selective since "... a real figure (was) colonised to become a symbol of British greatness in a Victorian Myth of Empire." (Warner 1985 : 49) It is an interesting inversion of history when images of defeat nearly two thousand years old emerge symbolising the nation's patriotism and expectation of victory. As Queen Victoria said (regarding another problem), and Mrs Thatcher at an appropriate moment quoted her: "We are not interested in the possibilities of defeat; they do not exist".<sup>10</sup> There is a military aphorism which speaks of snatching victory from the jaws of defeat.

The 'Iron Britannia' image originated with Anthony Barnett's book of the same title concerning the Falklands War. The image suggested is another combination of symbols - Iron Lady, Warrior queen, Boadicea and Britannia. But there is an unusual twist here. His argument suggests that

"... a recognisable interpretation of the despatch of the Armada (is that) the country house has at last been captured ... the governess ... the pillar of rectitude and narrow-mindedness ... has taken over from the squire ... and decided to run it herself." (Barnett 1982)

She was successful possibly because she anticipated antagonism from all sides and countered it. This is another example of one image having an unexpected relationship with

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<sup>9</sup> The Britannia symbol is discussed further in the Cartoon chapter. The image was used by cartoonists to a limited extent in the researched material for the 1983 election.

<sup>10</sup> Queen Victoria, December 1899 Oxford Dictionary of Quotations 1989 : 556

another, or possibly appearances being deceptive, where links exist which are not at first apparent. The Guardian used the name on the occasion of the Isle of Wight visit mentioned earlier, but as an extension of the figurehead on the vessel image - as it were, at face value - and fitting the theme of the article.

The Dam Busters connection came from the Guardian the day after the launch of the Conservative Manifesto, i.e. 'the Bomb'. The Squadron Leader referred to first was Guy Gibson VC, but then the image changed to become Mrs Thatcher, then Barnes Wallis - and finally a confusing combination of all three. It was a reminder of Mrs Thatcher's vicarious approach to the morning Press conference and organisation of her colleagues. It was a reminder also of her ability to bounce back from, or ricochet off, political opponent or impediment, whilst not forgetting the Bomb's ability to 'walk on water', and by inference Mrs Thatcher also, before the delayed explosion. Again, there are war allusions, but the Warrior Queen or Woman Warrior is not really part of the scene; the leadership aspect in this case is too fussy with detail, rather than the sweep of a 'battlefield'.

Probably, though not certainly, Iron Maiden in this list is an Iron Lady variation, rather than the torture. If that is the case, then arguably it is the linking theme for twelve of the names, as well as being a link with other publications and other elections as shown in the statistics.

The 'Ayatollah' - a topical allusion to Iran's problems and the fervour of the religious leader - and 'Lady Macbeth' have a certain amount in common. Their ruthlessness and brooking no opposition to their will, knowing that opponents or dissidents could be overcome or removed. The Ayatollah image was personalised for Mrs Thatcher, the surrogate male, with a silk suit. Her dissidents sometimes found themselves in the House of Lords.

### SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.50)

Number of different names in this Table : 2	T	O	E	M
Boadicea number of times used	0	1	0	1
Florence Nightingale	0	0	0	1
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

Both names have been discussed elsewhere. The Mirror's use implied the conviction approach and righteous resolution; the hard manner, the inflexibility - the Iron in the soul.

### PERIODICALS (Table 6.51)

Number of different names in this Table : 2	S	N	P	PE
Fuehrerin number of times used	1	0	0	0
Her Majesty	0	0	2	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

The Periodicals contributed two new names: 'Fuehrerin'<sup>11</sup> and 'Her Majesty'. The first name in the masculine form will inevitably be linked with Hitler. The names may be considered polar opposites for the images represented, yet both indicate a leader or Head of nation,<sup>12</sup> powerful but not necessarily a dictator. Colin Welch in the Spectator commented on Denis Healey's opinion of Mrs Thatcher and her regime. "... as a personal dictatorship ... charming, beaming, 'dominating but not domineering' (Willie Whitelaw's mot) ..." (28 May 1983) This seems to limit the Hitlerian image and the undesirable attributes of tyranny; the Hitler image, however, reappears both visually and verbally in 1987 in several publications. By contrast, and continuing the contradiction of images noted elsewhere, Welch also notes her "... innate grandeur of manner checked by a philosophy essentially modest and humble" and draws a comparison between this regal attitude and Harold Wilson's 'folie de grandeur' in 1970. He might have drawn parallels with other Prime Ministers equally susceptible to the foible.

By 1983 Mrs Thatcher's regal attitude and statements were commented on both visually and verbally with varying degrees of irritation or amusement. Probably the most famous

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11 The alternative spelling, without an umlaut, is necessary for newspaper publishing purposes in this country where such a facility for modification signs is not required by the language.

12 Führer can also mean a guide.

observation was Trog's cartoon of Trooping the Colour in the Observer of 12 June (discussed later), but her pre-eminence and increased use of the royal pronoun is reflected in 'Her Majesty' used, albeit jocularly, by Punch.

## 7 LITERARY

### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.52)

Number of different names in this Table : 3	T	G	E	M
Hard hearted Hannah number of times used	0	0	0	1
Aunt Sally	0	0	0	1
Bertie Wooster's Aunt Agatha	0	6	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

'Bertie Wooster's Aunt Agatha' represents 'she who must be obeyed', and therefore belongs with the Headmistress/Nanny group. The marked contrast is 'hard hearted Hannah' and 'Aunt Sally'. The first was another of Denis Healey's jolly little songs, serving a political purpose whilst entertaining with alliteration and a catchy tune; it usefully reinforced the Mirror's theme of the uncaring Prime Minister. 'Aunt Sally' is double edged being both a wooden target or target for abuse, and the prim character, unfriendly and critical, in the story of Worzel Gummidge the scarecrow. The dual intent was clearly signalled by the Mirror in a defence of Michael Foot, who was portrayed as 'Worzel' by some papers and cartoonists. Ironically, this latter name is also double edged.<sup>13</sup> None of these four names for Mrs Thatcher could be considered favourable descriptions.

### SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.53)

Number of different names in this Table : 2	T	O	E	M
Snow Queen number of times used	0	1	0	0
Countess Dracula	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

There are two further unfavourable images. The 'Snow Queen' is the icy-hearted non-saviour of the Health Service, and the uncaring face of Thatcherism. 'Countess Dracula'

<sup>13</sup> Simon Hoggart in Punch (15 June 1983) wrote: "... so many humiliations were heaped on poor Michael Foot through the election campaign that, paradoxically, the man's essential dignity shone through more brightly than ever."

refers to photographs of a smiling Mrs Thatcher looking over the shoulders of seated factory workers, whilst they explain the processes. The Observer thought there was a gleam on her teeth as well as in her eye.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.54)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 4</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>PE</b>
Medusa figure      number of times used	1	0	0	0
Gorgon Queen	1	0	0	0
Wicked Witch of the West	0	1	0	0
Mother Courage	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The four names used by the periodicals are all critical to some extent. apart from the literary connection, they might also be considered mythical - ancient, middle and modern. The related ancient two, 'Medusa figure' and 'Gorgon Queen', appeared in the Spectator in the Leo Abse article mentioned earlier. He considered that in spite of her good looks the "... subliminal perception of her by many Tory MP's was of a Medusa figure" - the snake haired Gorgon who could, with one look, turn people to stone. In a similar vein others have noted the "basilisk stare", rather more prevalent in 1987 than 1983. An interesting point is that Medusa means 'rule' so there are slight connections here with the earlier Historic category. The other two names from New Statesman are polar opposites - 'Mother Courage' from a Brecht play and 'Wicked Witch of the West' from the Wizard of Oz.

'Mother Courage' seems a curious choice, but it was quoted from Le Figaro, and bearing in mind the Brecht play and the nature of the original story on which it is based, possibly only the image name was intended, not the subject.<sup>14</sup> Arguably, since Le Figaro was not enamoured of Mrs Thatcher in 1983, another possibility is an opinion of her reliance on war and it's perversity for the sake of fame - an alternative version of the Falkland factor.

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14 'Mother Courage and her children'. Bertolt Brecht 1939; based on a novel by the German writer Grimmelshansen (c1621-76) The play covers twelve years of the Thirty Years War. Mother Courage makes her living following the armies, selling trifling goods to the soldiers. "Despite her many admirable qualities (she) pays dearly for (this) economic dependence ... each of her children dies a violent death". (Benét 1987 : 307)

'The Wicked Witch of the West', Peter Kellner's alliterative description, was rather more serious than Denis Healey's chorus. Commenting on Mrs Thatcher's words during a Walden interview ("No, no, no, don't stop me. I'm in full flight and I've got to finish" (June 1983) he suggested they might serve as an election motto. Apart from her policies, his concern was about her "sinister triumph of words", and his fear that she would unleash something frightening after another election victory. Mrs Thatcher was, in effect, weaving spells with words, concealing her true intentions.<sup>15</sup> This particular witch of the western hemisphere was not to be dispersed with a bucket of water like her mythical counterpart. The witch image also appeared in a New Statesman cartoon (3 June 1983) a week before Kellner's article. Mrs Thatcher as a gloating witch on a cliff top precipitates a landslide (election result), crushing the protesting masses. Steadman's cartoon, in an incisive style not unlike Scarfe, is labelled 'Beware the Landslide'. The cartoonist has been called 'a moral and social commentator' (Lucie-Smith 1981 : 104) and of the two 'witch images' his visual one seems to have an edge and greater impact than the folk tale. Another version of the Witch in a Russian cartoon, issued when the 'Iron Lady' image came into being.

## 8 BESTIARY

### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.55)

Number of different names in this Table : 1	T	G	E	M
Queen Bee number of times used	0	0	2	0
Total names per paper	0	0	1	0

As shown earlier, some images carry inherent contradictions. The bee and Mrs Thatcher might seem to have much in common, it symbolises energy, industry and capability. The hive or swarm is centred on the queen since her role is to ensure community survival. She is naturally designed and developed for this role, and does not have to achieve it. Potential

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<sup>15</sup> Peter Kellner also suggests that Michael Foot is like the Wizard of Oz - the well-meaning old man who can never quite achieve what he promises. "When accused of being 'a very bad man' he replies 'I'm a very good man; I'm just a very bad wizard'." Kellner considered the reply a good epitaph for Michael Foot 'in a grubby world of politics'. (New Statesman : 10 June 1983)

rivals either leave the hive or are killed by the workers if a replacement for the queen is not required. A Queen Bee, however, becomes the centre of attention among associates as a woman of importance in a profession, business or social arena for reasons not necessarily bee-like. There are often Machiavellian overtones when this phrase is used, for this is a dominant, and possibly domineering female. In this case the Daily Express article indicated approval.

There are no entries for Sunday papers and Periodicals.

## 9 PICTORIAL

### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.56)

Number of different names in this Table : 2		T	G	E	M
Personification of Botticelli's Venus	number of times used	0	1	0	0
Bottomley Venus		0	1	0	0
Total names per paper		0	2	0	0

Mrs Thatcher's visit to the Isle of Wight, referred to earlier, and her arrival by hovercraft "rising from the waves" prompted further images in the Guardian. The visit served several purposes, one of which was to support the local candidate Mrs Virginia Bottomley. The result: 'Botticelli Venus' and the alternative 'Bottomley Venus'. It needs hardly remarking that 'Venus' was formally dressed for the occasion. The 'Birth of Venus' also appeared as a 1979 cartoon by Garland in the Spectator. The discreetly clad goddess had the chilling breath of Trades Unions zephyrs welcoming her advent.<sup>16</sup>

### SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.57)

Number of different names in this Table : 1		T	O	E	M
Joan Collins	number of times used	0	0	0	1
Total names per paper		0	0	0	1

<sup>16</sup> Although there is only a tenuous link between the topical comments, one visual, one verbal, it is worth noting that the 1978/9 Winter of Discontent, with a different Prime Minister, was not long in the past and the 1984 Miner's Strike was in the not too distant future.

The 'Joan Collins' image was part of a whole picture. The tripartite image composed of Boadicea, Florence Nightingale and Joan Collins was an effort to give a description of the nature and personality of a complex person. 'Joan Collins' represented the film and soap-opera star presentation and immaculate appearance, with the sexual overtones. The triple combination indicates the difficulties of foes and friends to define Mrs Thatcher satisfactorily - or, conversely, how easy it was to shed a harsh or inaccurate light with an alternative viewpoint.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.58)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 2</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>PE</b>
<b>Pantomime Dame</b> number of times used	1	0	0	0
<b>La Stupenda</b>	0	0	2	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

The Periodicals went from the sublime to the ridiculous in their images. 'La Stupenda' is drawn from the operatic world, and in the 1980's often meant Dame Joan Sutherland, occasionally another famous Diva, Maria Callas. But La Stupenda is also the Prima Donna, and inherent in the latter is the temperamental or hard to please character - another variation on Queen Bee or the formidable female. Punch took the 'larger-than-life' or 'nearly-too-much' view of this particular character, rather than the 'divine' aspect.

The Spectator's 'Pantomime Dame' concerned the absurdity of Mrs Thatcher's 'busyness', encouraged originally to give a good impression of an organised housewife, but which some people judged she later overstressed and carried to extremes. Charles Moore wrote that her campaign performance raised the wrong sort of tension, and produced comedy.

"She hurries along the street with all that energy and neatness, and that bag ... and that husband ... this figure with a slight touch of the pantomime dame ..." (28 May 1993)

Although the 'Pantomime Dame', as such, does not appear in the cartoons at any election, nonetheless "the slight touch of ..." qualification is very near some of the images depicting Mrs Thatcher either as 'Herself', or her early self-proclaimed preference as 'the Housewife'. By tradition the Pantomime Dame presides over scenes of fuss, farce and confusion. The cartoonists licence to illuminate a personality or his/her characteristics stylistically, or by distortion, is the serious comment expressed in a ludicrous image; it can also indicate the unintentionally ludicrous in a serious situation.

## CONCLUSION

As anticipated there was a big increase in the names and images in 1983. Most use was made of the formal name, and title and their variations. Descriptions of characteristics and personality brought a wide selection, often with only slight usage. One of the main images emerging was that of a hard, cold woman, but variations of the formidable female were there, together with criticism of the quasi-royal and her pre-eminence. Notions of leadership were many and varied, some publications were relatively critical. The dictatorial style was particularly noted and the 'Falkland factor' influenced other images. Historical allusions, both ancient and modern, were plentiful, among them Warrior Queens and Warrior women, which tend to reinforce Mrs Thatcher's own drive and commitment to 'her vision' and 'her commitment'. On balance, the images at this stage were more favourable than otherwise, and the personality received almost as much attention as the politician.

## GENERAL ELECTION 1987

Although the Conservative government had only completed four years in office, Mrs Thatcher called an election at a time when there was not a pressing need to do so. Media speculation on the possibility was based on the Budget, local election results, opinion polls and her eventful Russian visit. By 1987 Mrs Thatcher had been Prime Minister for eight years after victory at two consecutive general elections. A third attempt was unprecedented, and if successful she would become the longest serving Prime Minister this century. There had been four more years of consolidating her position, of grooming and experience. As an international leader she was famous, and often seemed more popular abroad, in America and Russia for example, than at home. Feelings 'for' and 'against' her seemed to be intensifying, and only a minority admitted indifference. At this election, however, there would be no Falkland factor, and the electors' expectations and disappointments were four years older. Mrs Thatcher had not experienced a particularly comfortable or easy term of office. As a high profile leader both successes and failures were seen as 'hers' alone - "... the consequence of being so dominant". (Young 1990 : 494) Given this situation some significant differences in the names and images can be expected.

### 1 MRS THATCHER'S NAME AND VARIATIONS

#### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.59)

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 8</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Mrs Thatcher</b> number of times used	<b>511</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>Thatcher</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Maggie</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Margaret Thatcher</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Maggie Thatcher</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Mrs Margaret Thatcher</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Margaret Hilda Thatcher</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Hilda Margaret Roberts</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

This is a very similar range of names to 1983. All the papers have used more of the names, both formal and informal, a little more often.

**SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.60)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 7</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Mrs Thatcher</b> number of times used	100	124	9	15
<b>Margaret Thatcher</b>	2	8	8	12
<b>Maggie</b>	0	1	3	6
<b>Mrs Margaret Thatcher</b>	0	4	1	6
<b>Maggie Thatcher</b>	0	0	0	1
<b>Thatcher</b>	7	9	0	0
<b>Margaret</b>	0	1	0	1
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>

This is two names shorter than last time. Thatcher II and the extended name are missing, otherwise usage for the rest is similar.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.61)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 9</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>PE</b>
<b>Mrs Thatcher</b> number of times used	78	96	19	9
<b>Thatcher</b>	10	19	4	12
<b>Margaret Thatcher</b>	5	21	3	4
<b>Maggie</b>	5	2	1	13
<b>Margaret</b>	1	0	4	3
<b>Mrs Margaret Thatcher</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>Maggie Thatcher</b>	0	0	0	1
<b>Margaret Hilda</b>	0	0	4	0
<b>Hilda</b>	0	0	0	1
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

The Table is three names longer than in 1983, mainly due to Punch and Private Eye contributions.

## 2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.62)

Number of different names in this Table : 14	T	G	E	M
Prime Minister number of times used	153	185	74	22
P.M.	1	7	1	0
Tory Prime Minister	1	1	0	0
Rt. Hon. Lady	2	1	0	0
Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher	1	0	0	1
Premier	0	2	5	0
Prime Minister Thatcher	0	1	1	0
Premier Margaret Thatcher	0	0	1	5
British Prime Minister	4	0	0	0
Conservative Leader	0	3	0	0
Leader of the Conservative Party	0	1	0	0
President Thatcher	0	1	0	0
Britain's first woman Prime Minister	0	0	1	0
Party Leader	3	0	1	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>

This is shorter by one-third from 1983. All the titles have been used before with the exception of 'President'.

Only the Guardian used 'President Thatcher'. The presidential nature of the election campaign, with the relentless concentration on the party leaders, was mainly due to television influence, although the press and broadcasting contributed. "Party images were carried through and by the party leaders ..." (Butler & Kavanagh 1988 : 249) On the basis of press accounts alone Mrs Thatcher and Neil Kinnock actively assisted the process which set them above, and to an extent, apart from a political party; from one perspective, therefore, the election might seem a contest between them personally.

There is, however, a complex argument here which might suggest that the presidential-type campaign brings into the open, and perhaps reinforces, matters already in existence. As Watkins points out, the possibility of having a more Presidential Prime Minister has been debated by academics (mainly), politicians and journalists since the early 1960's with little progress made. The main stumbling block is the word 'presidential' with four possible meanings: two concerning Prime Minister, Cabinet and Government, and two the Leader

and the party. (Watkins 1991 : 41) Others have seen further possibilities. On one level it has been suggested that Mrs Thatcher developed a presidential style by increasing her regality on "occasions", such as the Falklands victory parade; or her tendency to arrive at scenes of disaster before Royalty, thereby upstaging the Queen; or the Queen's trip to Russia 'postponed' whilst the Prime Minister's went ahead. (Webber 1990 : 107) The Observer reported Conor Cruise O'Brien's thoughts that Mrs Thatcher's "monarchical" air indicated a new style of politics, whereby a Presidential-style Prime Minister (an elective executive monarch) would exist parallel with the monarchy (a recessive ceremonial one).<sup>17</sup> On another level Mrs Thatcher is known to have expressed an interest in being a president but qualified it with "under the crown", as part of her earnest desire to 'beat the enemy' - initially, Neil Kinnock in a one-to-one battle, but socialism eventually. (Young 1990 : 324) Much closer to Watkins' argument, Robert Harris quotes John Biffen:<sup>18</sup>

"... She has centralised, presidential powers - much more presidential than anything you'll find in North America - powers which had always been there, but had simply lain dormant." (Harris 1990 : 150)<sup>19</sup>

Nicholas Ridley takes a different view altogether. He considers that one of the main reasons for 'her style of government' was the continual problem of Cabinet 'leaks' during her time in office. These caused her endless difficulties. As Mrs Thatcher lost confidence in untrustworthy Cabinet colleagues, so they lost their influence and importance. The result was complaints of no consultation, lack of collective discussion, meetings starting with a summing up, briefings from outsiders, and small group meetings (from which 'suspects' could be excluded). Ridley maintains that Mrs Thatcher used only legitimate means to achieve her objectives, and was not corrupted by power.

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17 Webber 1990 : 106 and Observer 12 June 1983. Co-incidentally this was the weekend of the famous Trog cartoon based on Trooping the Colour.

18 No details given, but probably 1986; also 'stalinist regime' 1987. (Young 1990 : 520)

19 Harris also quotes a motto for Mrs Thatcher, used frequently and borrowed from Louis XIV: "L'état, c'est moi". (Harris 1990 : 114) But this maxim had undertones of its own related to the power of her Press Secretary and the Lobby.

"So impregnable did she become that her enemies had to build up myths about her abuse of the system of cabinet government, myths which were eagerly taken up by the media". (Ridley 1991 : 37, 39)

Strong words perhaps, and debatable on their own account quite apart from reference to a style of cabinet government. But Mrs Thatcher, as a Prime Minister, was quite different from all the other Prime Ministers this century; she was

"... willing to take risks with her authority and her own personal position - on an unprecedented scale ... She ... put her own personal stamp on the actions of her Government." (King 1988 : 55)

She was a traditionalist who broke with tradition. As we have seen earlier, descriptions of Mrs Thatcher often contain contradictions.

#### SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.63)

Number of different names in this Table : 4	T	O	E	M
Prime Minister number of times used	19	39	7	3
British Prime Minister	0	0	0	1
Premier Margaret Thatcher	0	0	1	2
Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher	0	0	1	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

This is half the 1983 total, but all publications made more use of 'Prime Minister'.

#### PERIODICALS (Table 6.64)

Number of different names in this Table : 6	S	N	P	PE
Prime Minister number of times used	10	12	5	8
British Prime Minister	1	0	0	0
Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher	1	0	0	0
Member of Finchley	0	2	0	0
PM	0	0	0	1
Rt. Hon. Lady the Prime Minister	0	0	0	2
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

The Periodicals doubled their 1983 total, Entirely new to this whole category is 'Member for Finchley'. The last two names were used seriously and in a proper context in Private Eye.

### 3 NICKNAMES

#### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.65)

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 19</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
Iron Lady number of times used	1	1	4	1
Mrs T	3	4	2	1
Ma Thatcher	2	0	2	1
Field Marshall Thatcher	0	1	0	0
Field-Marshall-for-life Thatcher	0	1	0	0
Field Marshall	0	7	0	0
Our Margaret	0	1	0	0
Monstrous Maggie	0	0	1	0
Mega Maggie	0	0	1	0
Super Maggie	0	0	1	0
Super Mag	0	0	3	0
Mrs Finchley	0	0	1	0
Maggs	0	0	0	1
Thatcher the Pay Snatcher	0	0	0	1
Milk snatcher	0	0	0	1
Thatcher the Star Snatcher	0	0	0	1
Ma T	0	0	0	1
Mrs Thatch	0	0	0	4
Thatch	0	0	0	1
<b>Total names per publication</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>

This is a 50% increase on 1983. Nicknames flourished in 1987, but it was part of the 'knockabout' and general name calling which became prevalent in public and some parts of the press. What is clear here is that no paper used an extensive range of names, rather they all had 'their' selection, so that only the two traditional nicknames were common to all. Although 'Housewife' and 'Superwoman' are missing, there are echoes of them in the list.

The Snatcher of Milk, Pay and Stardom are all in the Mirror where each day a particular social concern was examined. The findings were detrimental to Mrs Thatcher and Conservative policies; it was considered impossible for anything to improve judged against the Tory manifesto. The 'uncaring attitude' was reinforced by the use of small photographs

of a grim faced Mrs Thatcher, and the frequent use of 'Thatcher' in the comment. The 'Star Snatcher' at the Wembley Rally - the night of the Stars and the 'Mum's Army' speech, was also criticised, though not in a large or major article. Mrs Thatcher called the gathering

"... the 'family rally' ... where, as in 1983, television personalities, actors, comedians and musicians gave us their public support". (Thatcher 1993 : 586)

In the speech she predicted '... a multitude of traditional Labour voters would change allegiance' and join 'Mum's Army' because of Labour's apparent swing left, and neutralism (on Defence matters). She records being "... surprised to find it the lead item of that evening's TV news". (Thatcher op cit) Like the 1983 Youth Rally this event assumed the air of an act of public worship with Mrs Thatcher preaching to the converted. It was "... created for the media but with the needs of the political party in mind" (Negrine 1989 : 195); a classic example of Boorstin's 'pseudo event'. At this stage of her political career Mrs Thatcher was more famous than anyone else present, she did not need to 'borrow fame' or seek endorsement. But if Mrs Thatcher was 'The Party' then a razzmatazz rally was unlikely to conceal the acrimony and confusion besetting the conservative campaign at this date. The Mirror's criticism also seems a shade ironic, bearing in mind the high profile presentation of Neil Kinnock<sup>20</sup> during his campaign, designed specifically to match or even outshine Mrs Thatcher, and in marked contrast to the image of Michael Foot in 1983.

Variations on 'Maggie' appeared mostly in the Express, with prefixes of 'Mega' and 'super', echoing 1983, but now indicating 'image-as-before-only-more-so' rather like the 'new and improved' tag in various advertising campaigns. These variations were also used to counter

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<sup>20</sup> The famous PEB mini-film biography of Neil Kinnock probably reached more people than any news clip of the Wembley rally, since it was shown twice at peak viewing time. The Labour Party had a corresponding showbiz type event at the Islington Design Centre when, amidst roses, streamers and balloons and the sound of a fanfare, Neil and Glenys Kinnock walked down a grand staircase to meet the Stars and the audience.

the 'monstrous' label quoted from elsewhere. 'Maggs', in the Mirror, was much more critical than the familiarity might indicate; Ben Elton's jocularity had a cutting edge.

'Ma Thatcher' appeared for the first time, briefly, in three papers, but not the Guardian; 'Ma T' was only in the Mirror. 'Ma' has generally been regarded as either a term of disrespect, or as an indicator of status, personality or familiarity usually applied to a working class or lower middle class woman. The personality was probably, though not invariably, a 'battle-axe' or very strong character - another in the formidable female mould. Used as an impudent description it is either denigration, or bravado, or both.<sup>21</sup> This seems to be the intention of the original speech, and the usage in the Mirror.

In another of its witty parables the Guardian used the Field Marshall description whilst commenting on the procedure at the morning press conference, the political state of the country and the Leader's iron grip.

"... the occasion of her quinquennial plebiscite appeal ... one of the most bizarre rituals known to anthropologists, even against the strong competition offered yesterday by the Labour Party."<sup>22</sup>

Michael White notes that no sooner does the Field Marshall appear than she is lost for five minutes "... behind a solid wall of enormous brutes carrying Japanese cameras". There appears to be a cruel ordeal awaiting surviving members of the Junta "who used to be brought in in chains". The name Pym is mentioned from last time, but Biffen has been

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21 There is also the socially inverted use of this word. For example: It was used by 'the Mitford girls', the daughters of Lord Redesdale; and also by Joyce Grenfell in her letters to her Mother. ("Darling Ma" Letters to her Mother - Joyce Grenfell - Hodder and Staughton - 1988 - London.) Joyce Grenfell's mother, an American, was sister to Lady Nancy Astor.

22 Journalist Michael White's view of the Labour Manifesto launch: "Arriving to a fanfare from Barry Manilow Remembers Brahms (Neil Kinnock) walked down the aisle side-by-side with Roy Hattersley. Both men wore red roses in keeping with the party's commitment to florism ... It may have been an ad-man's idea of terrific television, but in the flesh it looked like a gay-wedding." (Guardian 20 May 1987)

"tipped the Blue Spot" this time. (Guardian 20 May 1987) It is amusing, and salutary, and a serious alternative view. Mention of a Field Marshall and a Junta has a hollow ring to it, a reminder that the Falklands shade would not last. The difference between the 1987 "ordeal" (the Press conferences) and 1983 is pointed out. Previously Mrs Thatcher encouraged colleagues to speak on their subject whilst she tried not to interrupt them, although eventually she could not resist. In 1987 she made statements on subjects whilst her colleagues seemed reluctant to contribute, even when invited, or commanded.

Of the four remaining names: 'Mrs Thatch' and 'Thatch' in the Mirror came from the critical thoughts of Ben Elton, and are probably close to the 'Ma Thatcher' expressions. 'Our Margaret' was a friendly not critical note in the Guardian; 'Mrs Finchley' (Express) was noted for being the amusing, possibly Freudian, slip of the tongue by David Dimbleby during an interview with Mrs Thatcher, and has intriguing possibilities.

It is noticeable that in 1987 more of the nicknames are less friendly than in 1983 or 1979. earlier statistics in the chapter also indicated half the nicknames appeared in the Mirror against only three in the Times.

**SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.66)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 4</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
Iron Lady            number of times used	2	0	0	0
Mrs T	1	1	0	1
Nasha Masha - Our Maggie	2	0	0	0
Superwoman	0	0	0	1
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

The new name, translated to a more familiar one, derives from Mrs Thatcher's successful visit to Russia earlier in the year.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.67)**

Number of different names in this Table : 8	S	N	P	PE
Mrs T number of times used	4	2	1	0
Iron Lady	0	0	1	1
Mad Margaret	0	0	1	0
Governess	0	1	0	0
Nanny	0	1	0	0
Mrs Margaret Landslide	0	0	0	1
Mossis Thotcher	0	0	0	1
M	0	0	0	6
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

Although used in a satirical way 'Mad Margaret' indicated a Janiform<sup>23</sup> image: "strong, competent and dependable" (Alan Coren's "... ingrained gallantry (made him) cringe (to) type the words ...") "power mad, untrustworthy, and despicable." (27 May 1987) Somehow this does not match the madness of barely suppressed hysteria suggested by the Steve Bell cartoons in the Guardian, where the image is being constructed 'on screen' and then goes berserk. 'Mrs Margaret Landslide' was the comment on the possible outcome of the election. It was supposedly repeated from "Hanzzzard". 'Mossis Thotcher' represented a John Cole-ism, from a piece written in the style of the dense verbal blanket with a near impenetrable Northern Ireland accent (also known as plum-in-the-mouth diction). Although the 'verbal blanket' might be seen as a satirical comment on the inbuilt difficulties of some communications, perhaps also there was a serious statement being made. John Cole managed to modify the accent.

#### 4 PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER : VARIOUS

##### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.68)

The Table is seven names shorter than in 1983. Only a few of these names in their present form have appeared before. The exceptions are 'Mum' and 'Big Sister' in 1983; 'First Lady', 'conviction politician' and 'sister' all correspond with 1979. Regularly used words with different adjectives are: woman, lady, politician and Thatcher.

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<sup>23</sup> The Temple of the Roman two-faced god, the guardian of doors, was closed in time of peace.

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**DAILY PAPERS (TABLE 6.68)**

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL	First Lady of Politics	E	1	domineering politician	G	1			
	First Lady of Downing Street	E	1	sleazy conspirator	T	1			
	Leader	T/G	3/1	divisive Thatcher	G	1			
	legendary British	G	1	brutal Thatcher	E	1			
	Stateswoman	G	1	heartless Margaret Thatcher	M	1			
	World Statesperson	G	1	british Thatcher	G	1			
	British Thatcher	T	1	Big Sister	T	3			
	Conviction politician the Boss	M							
	<u>Total descriptions : 8</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 7</u>					
PERSONAL	Mum	G/E	2/1	harridan	M	1			
	Not a harridan	T	2	desperate woman	M	1			
	Our Lady	G	1	prophet of Doom	M				
	The Lady	T?G	2/1	she-who-must-be-obeyed	G	1			
	Our Lady of Finchley	G	1	emotional woman	E	1			
	personification of Will	G	1	all-knowing, all-seeing	G	1			
	Warrior	T	1	dangerous weapon	G	1			
	sliver of steel	E	1						
	<u>Total descriptions : 8</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 7</u>					
<u>Total descriptions in this Table : 30 of which Political total : 15      Personal total : 15</u>									

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This Table is significantly different from those of 1979 and 1983 in several ways. The most obvious one is the absence of entries under the variable heading, both political and personal. The descriptions seemed more easily categorised this time, rather than open to interpretation. This suggests a more decisive approach to the descriptions of Mrs Thatcher used in newspaper articles by the journalists and writers, which is perhaps not surprising after eight years of scrutiny, analysing and commenting on the person, the politics, and the government.

Second: there are more emphatic differences between the favourable and critical columns. On the favourable side in the 1983 Personal section, for example, Mrs Thatcher was variously described as a graceful, capable, marvellous woman. These adjectives are missing in 1987; some of the descriptions are favourable others are appropriate statements of fact. In the Political section the admirable androgyne has gone and the statement is plain not garnished. In the critical column the difference is even more marked in both sections. The words are severe and percussive: divisive, brutal, heartless, desperate, dangerous. These are stronger more basic criticisms compared with many of the descriptive critical terms of 1983 and 1979. there are also many more of them.

Third: the use of 'First Lady' again is for a different reason from 1979. Then it was part of the 'first woman Prime Minister' type of descriptions. This time it relates to Mrs Thatcher's pre-eminence.

Fourth: it was unexpected to find such a balance between Political and Personal totals as well as Favourable and Critical.

The Leadership table (6.68.1) is almost as brief as in 1979 when Mrs Thatcher was on the brink of Premiership. In the critical column it was surprising to find only one description of her political leadership, and no personal ones. Alternative critical comparisons appear in

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**LEADERSHIP (TABLE 6.68.1)**

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL	First Lady of Politics	E	1	Big Sister	T	3			
	First Lady of Downing Street	E	1						
	Leader	T/G	3/1						
	World Statesperson	G	1						
	the Boss	M	1						
<u>Total descriptions : 5</u>				<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>					
<u>Total descriptions in this Table : 11</u>									

other categories. In the favourable column degrees of power and standing are indicated, but there is little evidence of absolute power and authority compared with the 1983 list. Also, there is little that is particularly approving of Leadership in political terms and personal terms are absent. Even the domineering female image has a limited entry, although a counterpart appears elsewhere. This particular result does seem curious, given Mrs Thatcher's pre-eminence both nationally and internationally in May/June 1987.

**Numerical totals (Table 6.68.2)**

	POLITICAL				PERSONAL				TOTAL
	Names used per publication								
	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	
Times	2	2	0	4	3	0	0	3	7
Guardian	4	3	0	7	5	3	0	8	15
Express	2	1	0	3	2	1	0	3	6
Mirror	1	1	0	2	0	3	0	3	5
Broadsheet	6	5	0	11	8	3	0	11	22
Tabloid	3	2	0	5	2	4	0	6	11
Labour	5	4	0	9	5	6	0	11	20
Conservative	4	3	0	7	5	1	0	6	13

The Times' limited range matches the tabloids, but most of it is used with more frequency, and there is nothing personally detrimental. The Tabloids appear almost equally divided on names and frequency, being limited in both areas, although the Mirror has nothing favourable in the personal column.

The middle section shows the Broadsheets' greater variety and frequency of names, apart from the personal criticism column. Here the Tabloids result, mainly due to the Mirror's contribution, is just greater, assisted by the apparent lack of criticism by the Broadsheets; as suggested earlier their disapproval appears elsewhere.

The third section indicates the emphasis given by the Labour press in all areas but one, influenced by the Guardian's contributions. Since 'Mrs Thatcher the person' was still considered an 'issue' at this election, finding attention to personality was no surprise, except that the matching result is in the favourable column.

## SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.69)

The Sunday Papers have a shorter list than 1983; again, there is no input from the Express. Half this list comprises critical comments. Words such as Privateer, Dictator,<sup>24</sup> sleazy conspirator and malign influence appear for the first time, and are more critical than anything used by the Sunday press so far. The nature of the critical column altogether outweighs the favourable and variable columns. The critical comments are mainly in the Observer and Mirror. Even if the variable comment went into the favourable column it would do little to redress the tone. The way this Table works out, for this election, was much more the type of pattern anticipated with the Daily papers.

### Leadership (Table 6.69.1)

There are contrasting notions of leadership here. In one, the flamboyant Elizabethan overtones of a private person of means, with permission to plunder enemy ships - a practical example of private enterprise, and "a law unto themselves". The Dictator or Despot has absolute power based on force and fear, with no effective state opposition.<sup>25</sup> The slightly less horrific alternative is the domineering autocrat or tyrant. Since the Mirror supported The Opposition Leader and his party, the probable intention was to indicate 'one who dictates political action'<sup>26</sup> (i.e. the domineering autocrat) with little opposition from within her own party', otherwise Mr Kinnock's political efforts would have been denigrated. To give the point maximum impact a degree of exaggeration was needed.

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24 'woman dictatoress' appeared in the Sunday Mirror in 1983. Because of the double feminism it was thought to have less impact than 'Dictator'.

25 Scruton points out that "(dictatorship) is not truly distinct in modern usage from despotism ... Just as there can be 'enlightened despotism', so there can be 'benign dictatorship' ..." Scruton 1982 : 127.

26 1987 election result: "Mandate to do whatever Mrs Thatcher pleases". Hugo Young, Guardian 13 June 1987

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## SUNDAY PAPERS (TABLE 6.69)

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL	Shrewd politician	M	1	Privateer Premier Dictator sleazy conspirator	M M T	1 1 1	Leader for life old political trouper	T O	1 1
	<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 3</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 2</u>		
PERSONAL	The Lady	T	1	malign influence caustic personality a Nightmare	M O O	1 1 1	Herself Rock of Ages	O O	1 1
	<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 3</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 2</u>		
<u>Total descriptions in this Table : 12 of which Political total : 6      Personal total : 6</u>									

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## LEADERSHIP (TABLE 6.69.1)

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL				Privateer Premier	M	1	Leader for life	T	1
				Dictator	M	1			
				<u>Total descriptions : 2</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>		
<u>Total descriptions in this Table : 3</u>									

Three of the Observer's descriptions merit a little further comment. Wapshott considered Mrs Thatcher "a nightmare ... but a winner". He noted that in the course of her eight year tenure, she had benefited from a divided Opposition, and had "turned conventional political wisdom on it's head". (31 May 1987) On 7 June Harris thought things were seriously amiss with Mrs Thatcher and the campaign the week of the "jitters". The "old political trouper" began to look as "faded as some of the "celebrities" due to be wheeled out (at Wembley)". Central Office was no longer mentioning a fourth term. Editorials at this time are resigned to a third victory. It is all somewhat at variance with the Leader for life presented elsewhere, and the possibility of "going on and on". Religious overtones and a famous hymn resound in 'Rock of Ages' but that, too, goes on and on, as the witty criticism implies.

**Numerical Totals (Table 6.69.2)**

	POLITICAL				PERSONAL				TOTAL
	Names used per publication								
	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	TOTAL
Times	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	3
Observer	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	4	5
Express	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mirror	1	2	0	3	0	1	0	1	4
Broadsheets	0	1	2	3	1	2	2	5	8
Tabloids	1	2	0	3	0	1	0	1	4
Labour	1	2	1	4	0	3	2	5	9
Conservative	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	3

The lack of comment in the Express which might fit into this category accounts for the results here. The support for, and approval of Mrs Thatcher was stated in other ways.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.70)**

The Periodicals Table 6.70 looks at odds with 6.68 and 6.69. Three of the names are new to the lists, although two of them were in use at a much earlier date - 'that bloody woman' and 'grocer's daughter'. The third phrase 'not a man, a woman in drag' disputes the

**Character and Personality 1987**

**PERIODICALS (TABLE 6.70)**

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL	Famous political leader Leaderene Leader	N PE P/PE	1 1 1/1						
	<u>Total descriptions : 3</u>								
PERSONAL	Experienced Head Girl Great Housekeeper The Boss	S N PE	2 1 1	that bloody woman	s	1	Not a man, a woman in drag Grocer's daughter	N S	1 1
	<u>Total descriptions : 3</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 1</u>			<u>Total descriptions : 2</u>		

## Character and Personality 1987

### LEADERSHIP (TABLE 6.70.1)

	Favourable	P	F	Critical	P	F	Variable	P	F
POLITICAL	Famous political leader Leaderene Leader	N PE P/PE	1 1 1/1						
	<u>Total descriptions</u> : 3								
PERSONAL	Experienced Head Girl The Boss	S E	2 1						
	<u>Total descriptions</u> : 2								

androgynous by raising doubt or even distrust. Altogether the names shed no new light on the personal or political character, and as the Table shows, most of them are favourable, which was unexpected. Was there lack of interest or enthusiasm, or more interesting topics to analyse? On the critical side much depends on how strong an epithet "bloody" is thought to be - a subjective decision - since it might be considered to outweigh any positive personal factors. It was very surprising to find no critical comments here at all from *New Statesman*, and very little comment at all from *Punch*.

Indications of Power and Leadership are not strong; 'famous political leader' is a statement of fact for 1987. Even the domineering female image is absent. Perhaps it is significant that there is not more, and stronger criticism, or alternatively that the Leadership images are not stronger.

#### Numerical totals (Table 6.70.2)

	POLITICAL				PERSONAL				TOTAL
	Names used per publication								
	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	+	-	±	SUB-TOTAL	
Spectator	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	3
New Statesman	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	3
Punch	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Private Eye	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	3
Serious	1	0	0	1	2	1	2	5	6
Satirical	3	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	4

## 5 PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER : REGAL AND ARISTOCRATIC

#### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.71)

Number of different names in this Table : 6	T	G	E	M
captive Queen of the campaign	1	0	0	0
Regal Thatcher	0	1	0	0
fading Empress	0	1	0	0
authoritarian would-be Empress	0	0	1	0
Duchess of Dulwich	0	0	0	1
Good Queen Maggie	0	0	0	1
Total names per paper	1	2	1	2

Mrs Thatcher's regal tendencies, both visual and verbal, continued to be newsworthy. It has been suggested that she pursued a "royal role on a world stage" where she appeared to

have a greater realm, and by implication a greater sphere of influence, than the Queen with a seventeen nation Commonwealth. (Webster 1990 : 106) Of the successful visit to Moscow, providentially timed for the last four days of March 1987, Mrs Thatcher records walking the length of the magnificent St George's Hall in the Kremlin to greet the Gorbachevs:

"I cannot deny that I enjoy the splendour of these occasions, but I sometimes reflected that the traditional formalities were intended to clothe in the trappings of legitimacy regimes that had neither historic nor democratic credentials." (Thatcher 1993 : 478)

She also records a 'walkabout', done at her suggestion, in a bleak Moscow housing estate

"...more and more people gathered to meet me. Soon they poured in from everywhere, a huge crowd cheering, smiling, wanting to shake hands. As in Hungary I was being received rapturously as an anti-Communist by those who knew the system even better than I did." (Thatcher 1993 : 479)

The true state of the Queen's working relationship with Mrs Thatcher aroused much speculation in the press throughout the years. Leaks concerning supposed differences of opinion over national and international policies appeared in, for example, the Sunday Times (Miners' Strike; sanctions against South Africa; bombing of Libya) and the Sunday Express (the Queen's postponed visit to Russia)<sup>27</sup>. Publication of details of this latter story

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<sup>27</sup> The murder of the Russian Royal Family was one of the "official reasons" given for the postponed visit. A Lobby briefing, however, had breached confidentiality. "Buckingham Palace discreetly let it be known that the Prime Minister had apologized for the briefing". (Harris 1990 : 166)

"... appeared to confirm the damaging rumours that the Prime Minister saw herself as superior to the Queen, treating her as a glorified roving ambassador to be dispatched hither and thither as she saw fit." (Harris 1990 : 166)

By contrast Young stresses that from her youth Mrs Thatcher was "a devoted monarchist; the Queen's accession made her a role model for that generation of women aspiring to greater things. When Mrs Thatcher achieved her political prominence and met the Queen regularly

"... all who observed their relationship noted only her elaborate humility in the presence of such a historic personage. One courtier found her 'excessively reverential'". (Young 1990 : 489)

He notes that a strong working relationship developed in spite of the "singular differences of outlook", categorising serious members of the Royal Family as "worried paternalists" or a "collection of Tory wets".

Strong viewpoints apart

"... the relationship between Mrs Thatcher and the House of Windsor was essentially conventional. Neither side, in truth, came anywhere near overstepping the line in a way which might give public scandal." (Young 1990 : 492)<sup>28</sup>

Mrs Thatcher reinforces this when writing of the regular Tuesday audiences:

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28 Young records that the only Prime Minister with whom the Queen had difficulty developing an easy relationship was Mr Heath: "a failing which gave Her Majesty something in common with much of the human race". (Young 1990 : 490)

"... they are quietly businesslike and Her Majesty brings to bear a formidable grasp of current issues and breadth of experience ... I always found the Queen's attitude towards the work of the government absolutely correct ... stories of clashes between 'two powerful women' were just too good not to make up." (Thatcher 1993 : 18)

On the question of one 'leak' to the Sunday Times, apparently from a source close to the Queen, regarding her anxieties over the Government's then current policies and some "differences of outlook", Young says, in effect, the newspaper should have known better than to believe and publish the story. Furthermore, it was a serious misjudgement of the Sovereign.<sup>29</sup> Inevitably such a story in a Broadsheet, or the veto on the Russian trip (Sunday Express) for example, appeared to give further substance to rumour and suspicion. False images of the Queen at loggerheads with a 'Regal Rival' is the stuff of caricature and satire - as are the names in this category.

It will be shown in the Cartoon chapter there are several variations on the Trooping the Colour theme where, although the image may be distorted, Mrs Thatcher appears as the Queen. Another Queen, Margaret III, is clearly indicated by Scarfe in 1987, beaked and incisive. There are also several cartoons depicting a pompous, exaggerated image with regal trappings which may be a Queen or an Empress, or merely a duchess with pretensions. The Duchess image perhaps works better verbally with the alliteration, and the irony of grand suburbia to off-set the Grande Dame.

#### SUNDAY PAPERS AND PERIODICALS - (no entry)

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<sup>29</sup> "Whatever her opinions might be, it was not conceivable that so punctilious a constitutionalist would for a single moment have desired her servants to ventilate them through the pages of the Sunday Times." (Young 1990 : 489)

## 6 HISTORICAL

### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.72)

Number of different names in this Table : 10	T	G	E	M
Catherine the Great of Finchley                      number of times used	1	0	0	0
Joseph Stalin	1	0	0	0
Queen Elizabeth	1	0	0	0
Blessed Margaret	0	2	0	0
Quisling	0	1	0	0
Hitler	0	1	0	0
Genghis Khan	0	0	1	0
Empress of India	0	0	0	1
Marie Antoinette	0	1	0	0
Big Bertha	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

With the exception of Queen Elizabeth and Blessed Margaret most of the names in this section are new. Two of them have appeared previously in an alternative form - Empress of India/Queen Victoria and Feuhrerin/Hitler. The most unusual of the new names is 'Big Bertha' a reminder of the first World War German mammoth field gun with a barely controlled but enormous firing range, which became lethal to friend and foe alike. Marie Antoinette seems to represent the 'royal' uncaring face of Thatcherism, stressing the let-them-eat-cake aspect.

A new notion of alternative power, or perhaps abuse of power, appears with Quisling. Synonymous with treachery and collusion with the enemy, this is the only reference found in the researched material. It represents a particular view of a manipulated national Prime Minister, a pawn or figurehead exploited by a foreign power. The argument was that America as the collector of Falkland debts, required and took for granted unconditional support for the invasion of Grenada, and the later bombing of Libya. This opinion apparently held strong in some quarters in spite of later evidence which proved conclusively that the Queen, Prime Minister, Government and Foreign Office had all been totally deceived about American intentions concerning Grenada. (Thatcher 1993 : 331-2; Young 1990 : 346) The Libyan matter was rather different. Mrs Thatcher at first opposed

military strikes, citing international law, and the possibility of unleashing something worse than terrorism. She later gave conditional approval for the bombing

"I pledged 'our unqualified support' for action directed against specific Libyan targets demonstrably involved in the conduct and support of terrorist activities;" (Thatcher 1993 : 445)<sup>30</sup>

Young records the several complex strands interwoven in this change of mind calling it one of the

"... arresting policy switches of her time ... (showing) the hold Reagan had on British policy when he really needed it - which over Grenada he didn't - and the impotence of collective cabinet government when faced with an unbreakable bond between President and Prime Minister." (Young 1990 : 475)

The impotence of the collective cabinet links with points made earlier in the chapter regarding 'President Thatcher'.

A possible example of a benign autocrat whose schemes, though well intentioned initially, went astray, is Catherine the Great. An intelligent highly cultured ruler, she removed her husband from power<sup>31</sup> and set out with zeal to reform her adopted country, in spite of strong opposition from the aristocracy. Though successful at first, the reforms were lost in territorial expansion, with increased feudalism after the peasants revolted. She had a propensity for deep friendships with great men.

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30 "There was no doubt of Gaddafi's culpability. Nor when the most powerful country in the free world decided to act against him must there be any doubt where Britain stood. Whatever the cost to me, I knew that the cost to Britain of not backing American action was unthinkable." (Thatcher 1993 : 444)

31 She was a party to his removal from office, but there seems to be some doubt about the extent of her involvement in or knowledge of, his later murder.

Stalin and Genghis Khan (Hitler also) are the dictators, tyrants, despots mentioned earlier, whose ultimate power and control was based on fear and merciless killing. In spite of this, a benevolent image, and a personality cult developed around Stalin, yet his five year plans were ruthlessly carried out, as were purges of any opposition. Total media control ensured his propaganda was inescapable. Genghis Khan was said to destroy everything he did not understand. He considered his race superior to all others, creating his empire on the destruction of conquered nations. As a military commander in that era he had no equal, and his army was considered the finest in the known world of Europe and Asia.<sup>32</sup>

As mentioned in earlier categories, some of the images listed have other links. Among those who had an intellectual influence on Hitler was Genghis Khan. On 22 August 1939 Hitler quoted him in a speech to the commanders of the armed forces, as a model and an icon to be matched on "... the killing of millions by his own will with a gay heart". (Breitman 1990 : 337)<sup>33</sup> Whatever her faults, Mrs Thatcher was not guilty of genocide, or other despotic excesses. It is a little difficult to ally her with the three mentioned above when probably the original intention was to indicate particularly callous, uncaring, domineering, dogmatic, authoritarian characteristics. These same descriptions suit many of the strong women listed in other categories.

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<sup>32</sup> At his death he ruled from the Black Sea to the Yellow Sea. His title Chingis means "the perfect Warrior". It has been suggested that he was not senselessly cruel or barbaric. "He regarded human life as worth very little, and when he saw some purpose in taking it (necessity, vengeance) ... he did so. (As we kill poisonous rats)" (Breitman 1990 : 344) Arguably this is a very fine distinction.

<sup>33</sup> Hitler and Himmler recognised the "good" qualities and policies of Genghis Khan as a military leader of an élite force. His warriors were devoted to him - ready to fight and die when required. (Breitman 1990 : 344)

**SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.73)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 6</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
Catherine the Great of Finchley      number of times used	0	1	2	10
The Queen	0	0	0	1
Queen Victoria	0	1	0	0
Jezebel	0	1	0	0
Blessed Margaret	0	1	0	0
Divinity	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

'Divinity', like the goddess mentioned earlier, is the icon on a pedestal, with the same problems. 'Blessed Margaret' was included in the observations on the difficulties of setting oneself apart, being a shining model in lofty isolation. Of more interest was 'Jezebel', the scheming woman, who introduced a new religion and new habits into her husband's country, and made herself unpopular with the leading prophets.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.74)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 9</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>PE</b>
Crusader	1	0	0	0
England's Evita	1	0	0	0
Genghis Khan	1	0	0	0
Stalin	1	0	0	0
Hitler	1	0	0	0
Jeanne d'Arc	0	1	0	0
Queen Boadicea	0	1	0	0
Grantham Gloriana	0	0	1	0
Joan of Finchley	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

Some images match those in the daily papers for this election, some are repeated from previous elections, or are variations - Grantham Gloriana<sup>34</sup> for example is the alliterative form of Grantham's Queen Elizabeth I.

The one new name is 'English Evita' - one of a few names accompanied by its own illustration. A middle-aged actress looks in a mirror and sees a younger woman in armour, probably St Joan. The irony of 'Evita' is the Falkland association, but the name and the mirror-image are indicators of the deceptiveness of the political image - specifically women

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<sup>34</sup> Gloriana is the Queen of Faeryland in Spenser's "Faerie Queene", also used as a nickname for Queen Elizabeth I.

with power. The Eva Peron façade of fragile health and no particular beauty, a woman caring for her husband, her country and its people, concealed an iron willed woman with great power. Her apparent fragility and compassion allowed and assisted her exploitation of all those devoted to her.

Whereas male prime ministers tend to clothe their power as duty, or the burden of government, many people were surprised to find that Mrs Thatcher loved power for itself and revelled in it. In 1975 Barbara Castle recorded that Mrs Thatcher looked "blooming" on 5 February. "She is in love: in love with power, success - and with herself." (Castle 1980 : 303)

In the Spectator 1987, the exultation in power was "... not necessarily a means to good government but to intense personal satisfaction. She wants it, needs it, loves it. And occasionally an election must be won." (Alexanda Artley, Spectator 6 June 1987)

The image, though benefiting from the "vitamin of power" (Castle 1980 : 518) also needed the assistance of Mrs Thatcher herself, not only the impeccable hairstyle and fastidious neatness, but in the displaying of that image. Much of the display was for television purposes, often via the pseudo-event, but press photographers were there too. Valuable though the moving picture is, the still photograph holds the 'instant of time'; even if it is a false image it can be retained. But it has an even more unique value

"... (as) glossy magazine publishers know ... a colour picture of an attractive woman holds the interest of both men and women. All women instantly identify with it<sup>35</sup>...

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<sup>35</sup> "... she's older, younger, prettier, plainer, more successful, richer, poorer, happier, nastier than me." (Artley *ibid*)

All men are attracted to it<sup>36</sup>... Politically that is virtually 100 per cent impact ..."  
 (Artley *ibid*)<sup>37</sup>

An excess of pretty pictures can lead to further problems however. First -

"When women politicians become mendacious here lie the seeds of creeping totalitarianism". (Artley *ibid*)

Mrs Thatcher felt the need to assist the press and television reporters and cameramen on many occasions. Second - a picture or cartoon may be worth more than words sometimes, or may need additional words to avoid misunderstanding, so the possibilities of communication need to be retained, not edged out.

"It is part of the squalor of modern politics that the truth of the printed word is made to seem dowdy beside the deceitful attraction of the visual image." (Artley *ibid*)

It is only a short step from 'image' to 'icon' if the steady stream of pictures become an avalanche, and the excess may devalue the image.

## 7 LITERARY

### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.75)

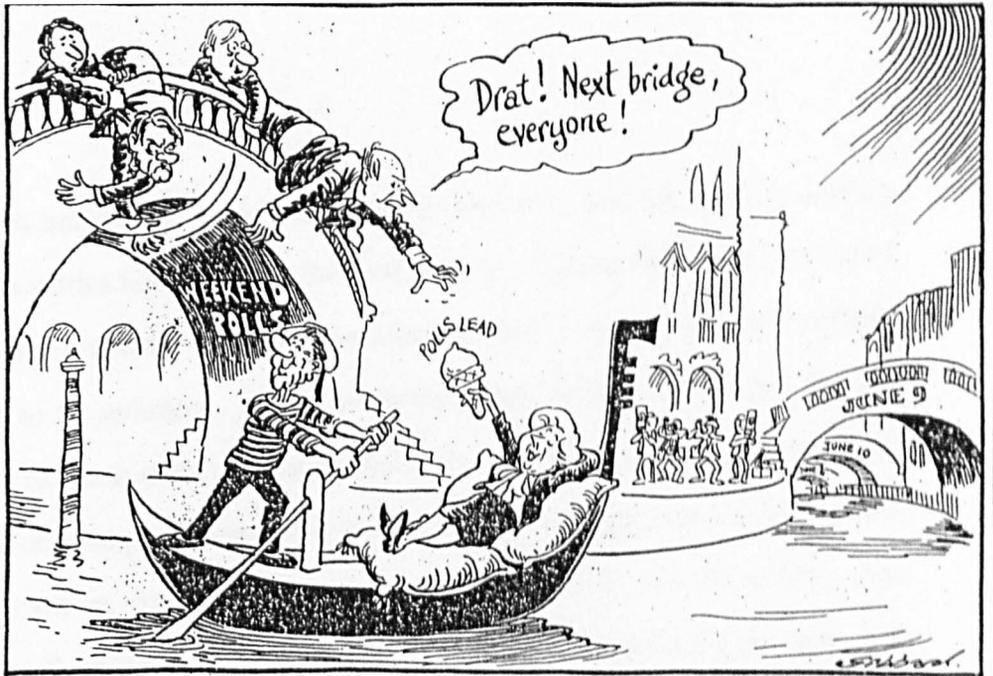
Number of different names in this Table : 3	T	G	E	M
Miss Haversham of Dulwich	1	1	1	0
Shylock	0	0	1	1
Goddess	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

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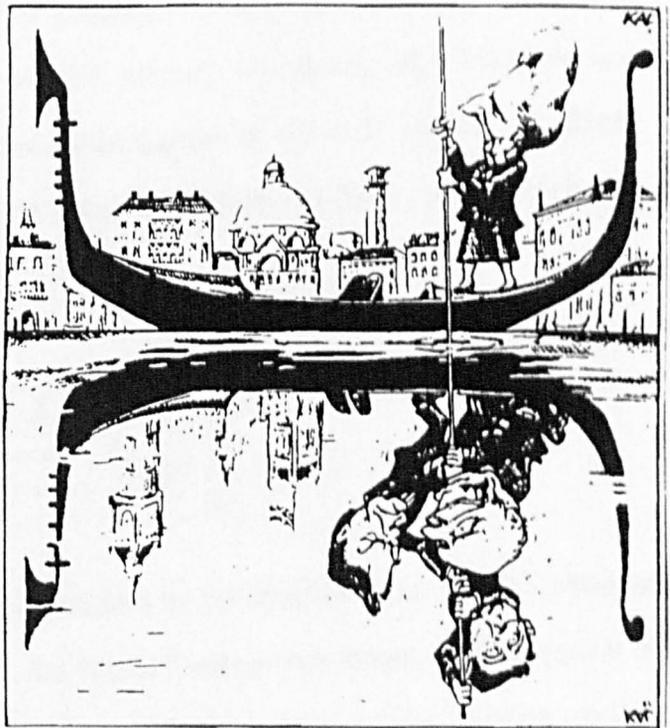
<sup>36</sup> "... or later repelled". (Artley *ibid*)

<sup>37</sup> Artley suggests that "... pictures of men do not work like this in reverse."

The Guardian  
8 June 1987



Today  
8 June 1987



Daily Mirror  
8 June 1987



A desire to keep things unchanged, fiscal and spiritual meanness, and being above earthly things were the characteristics highlighted in the daily papers. The significance of the faded and reclusive bride was not entirely clear, but the desire to look back and keep some things as they were seemed to be indicated. Mrs Thatcher's power dressed image and frenetic campaign activity was rather at odds with 'Miss Havisham', and there was no cartoon match for this image. 'Shylock' was part of the Venice image, and the flying visit to the Summit. There were several cartoon views of the visit but Mrs Thatcher was cheerfully, even exuberantly herself in all of them. The unnamed 'Goddess', a variation of the icon, was warned about the durability and stability of pedestals. Persons on pedestals featured in cartoons to a limited extent. A 1987 double cartoon concerning Mrs Thatcher and patriotism - 1983 Falklands version and the subtle changes of the 1987 version - is clearly Mrs Thatcher as "Herself". A 1979 cartoon featured a Statue of Liberty, but definitely not a goddess.

#### SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.76)

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 2</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
Merchant of Menace	0	0	0	1
Goddess	0	2	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

The Sunday Mirror had a witty pun and criticism in the alternative to the Merchant of Venice. The menace here was twofold: the World Statesperson herself and her power of influence. Although making the briefest stay of all leaders, as the longest serving Statesperson Mrs Thatcher was the centre of attention. Courted, fêted, listened to and quoted, she had maximum recognition simply by being there. This was the second occasion therefore Mrs Thatcher had had a personal PEB at television's peak news time, with 'spin-off' in the press.

#### PERIODICALS (Table 6.77)

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 2</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>PE</b>
Britannia	0	1	0	0
Pallas Athene	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

New Statesman used Britannia again, but also had an interesting new image with some unexpected links. The goddess Pallas Athene, daughter of Zeus, emerged from his cleft head entering the world not as a child but as a young woman warrior, fully armed.<sup>38</sup> Several writers, Marina Warner and Leo Abse among others, have found symbolic links between this image and Mrs Thatcher's upbringing, paternally controlled and inspired. Mrs Robert's retiring nature, and the daughter Margaret's apparent rejection of her Mother at about the age of fifteen assisted this impression. It gives an added dimension to the phrase "her father's daughter", the bond between them, and the often mentioned paternal precepts.

## 8 BESTIARY

### DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.78)

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 4</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
Tabby cat	1	0	0	0
old cow	0	1	0	0
Alpha Female	0	2	0	0
Chimpanzee queen	0	1	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

None of the animal images in the daily papers are felicitous. They reinforce other images, or stress characteristics already mentioned. 'Tabby cat' and 'old cow' are terms of disparagement or denigration. Without 'tabby' the first means a malicious or spiteful woman; otherwise it means an interfering and rather smug woman. The second phrase indicates an insufferable or objectionable woman, also a woman beyond her prime. The "un-" words recorded elsewhere such as uncaring, uncharitable, unfeeling used to describe Mrs Thatcher because of policies implemented by 1987, or promised in the manifesto gave way to descriptions such as the two above. There were no cats in the cartoon images.

The two chimpanzee images came from the research into animal behaviour by two Doctors at Bristol University. They found that the organisation and tactics displayed at the Tory

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<sup>38</sup> Pallas Athene was also Goddess of Wisdom, Patron of arts and crafts, and Protectress of agriculture.

press conference each morning when Mrs Thatcher presided, closely resembled group practices of Chimpanzee queen and her extended family. The body language of the dominant female, the hierarchical structure, submissive or hesitant behaviour, placatory movements were all detected in the human and animal gatherings. The Guardian gleefully indicated that Mrs Thatcher was an Alpha Female of the species.

**SUNDAY PAPERS (Table 6.79)**

Number of different names in this Table : 1	T	O	E	M
She-elephant	1	0	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

The 'she-elephant' is the assertive, dominant female image again, with the additional characteristics of being protective of the herd and its pastures, though liable to trumpet loudly, rampage and charge an enemy when provoked.

**PERIODICALS (Table 6.80)**

Number of different names in this Table : 1	S	N	P	PE
Grantham's petite chestnut mare number of times used	0	0	1	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

'Grantham's petite chestnut mare' had Mrs Thatcher as the favourite in a four horse race. this was the most favourable of the animal images, and was an interesting variation on the theme of elections and horse racing used by the cartoonists. The cartoon statistics show that in 1987 Mrs Thatcher appeared as a jockey three times, but never as the horse which always represented some factor, favourable or otherwise, which might affect the result. She is liable to win or lose in spite of, or because of this circumstance. The result depends on Mrs Thatcher herself.

**DAILY PAPERS (Table 6.81)**

<b>Number of different names in this Table : 5</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Laughing Cavalier</b> number of times used	0	0	0	1
<b>leading Lady</b>	0	1	0	0
<b>acquiescent photographic model</b>	0	1	0	0
<b>the Star turn</b>	0	1	0	0
<b>A Star</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>Total names per paper</b>	1	3	0	1

The 'Laughing Cavalier' in the Mirror is a pun and double image, based on the uncaring woman represented in a series of articles examining social problems. The elegantly clad 'Laughing Cavalier' is portrayed as having a laughing, cavalier attitude to the problem areas.

The acquiescent photographic model description, or something similar, was given to Mrs Thatcher mainly from 1979, although it had been noted earlier in 1975. Her apparent readiness to cooperate with the cameramen assisted the production of some famous, even disingenuous, photographs at election time, as well as other occasions. It was part of the 'Star' treatment that she should be frequently photographed advantageously. The symbolic images and the pseudo-events were faithfully recorded for television and the press. The 'deceitful attraction' of the visual image, was discussed earlier.

Three other images, leading lady, a Star and Star turn, all variations on a theme, have been used before. The Cartoonists also used this image in 1987: the Star appeared both on and off the stage. As 'leading lady', in two senses, arguably other visual images could be included such as the Bandleader (1987). Of the Big Event and being Centre Stage, the 'Star' herself observed: "... our rallies had now moved into the twentieth century with a vengeance. Dry ice shot out over the first six rows, enveloping the press in a dense fog; lasers flashed madly ... our campaign tune ... blared out; a video of me on international visits was shown; and then on I walked to deliver my speech, feeling something of an anti-climax." (Thatcher 1993 : 580)

## CONCLUSION

Probably the most striking features of the analysis and discussion in this Chapter are the quantity and diversity of the descriptions and images applied to Mrs Thatcher at each election, quite apart from her own names and official descriptions. Journalists ranged widely for 'le mot juste' or the descriptive image to give impact and focus to the articles and reports. The clever manipulation of names resulted in some subtle interpretations, particularly in the Guardian, while other papers preferred a more obvious approach, like the Mirror for example. Various figures of speech were used, some to good effect, but there was occasional ambiguity.

The images and descriptions cover a spectrum of great names from history, literature and mythology, with more graphic names from class structure and sometimes also the North-South divide. Other images come from the popular culture of stage, cinema, television and the traditional music hall. The names used were not always indicative of the stereotype image of the publication. As the analysis showed it cannot be said that all the 'good/pro' words appeared in the Conservative biased press and that all the 'anti/con' words appeared in the Labour biased press. Some criticism and censure appeared in Conservative publications at each election not only from the regular journalists but also from contributors, although the latter were more than balanced by the bias. In the Daily Express for example, George Gale was not always entirely approving of Mrs Thatcher's campaign in 1983 or her policy statements in 1987. Conversely, favourable comment and sometimes approval appeared intermittently in the Labour press - markedly less by 1987 - but again it was more than balanced by the bias. Peter Jenkins conceded a good point in the Guardian in 1979, for example, as did Woodrow Wyatt with much more affability in the Sunday Mirror in the same year. The analysis also showed that for all the wealth of descriptions, names and images, apart from 'Mrs Thatcher' there were three variations of her own name (Margaret Thatcher, Maggie and Thatcher) and two nicknames (Mrs T and Iron Lady)

common to the three elections, found in most publications though with fluctuating percentages.

In 1979 the images and descriptions were relatively diverse, with only a few instances of true opposites to give an impression of the two sides of a character. Mrs Thatcher's importance had been greatly assisted by her 'christening' and positive embrace of the Iron Lady epithet, and as Leader of the Opposition she was not a newcomer to political prominence, yet there was almost an element of searching for "tabs of identity". Mrs Thatcher was portrayed as the Housewife/aspiring Prime Minister who cooked her husband's (very early) breakfast, and was photographed in the kitchen or washing up. Elsewhere she was depicted as Superwoman, even Supermarket woman with plans for the nation's budget and economy. By contrast she declared herself a conviction politician with a crusading spirit. For newspaper bias purposes the Housewife was more exactly defined as 'South east suburban' to stress socio-political divisions. But the crossing of these and other boundaries was implied in the fervour of the 'crusader' politician - particularly when she took her message to Mr Callaghan's constituency.

Amongst all the images there is the paradox of the two main nicknames: Mrs T (of Finchley) and the Iron Lady. In one interpretation these are the Janiform faces, the personal and political, of a prominent woman leader. These masks, or faces, are opposites yet indivisible. In another sense they are the conflicting faces of both the politician and the personality. Part of the confusion of Mrs T and Iron Lady possibly arises from the image makers photo opportunities and Mrs Thatcher's speeches - some of them her own and some of them prepared for her. As we saw earlier, in chiding the Russians about their civil liberties record she also managed to include a housewife's comment on butter. Pictorially there was conflict between "the fluffy and the toughie" which was never really resolved until 1987 when her style of dressing changed for a new uniform. This point is discussed later.

A curious lateral thought arises here from the array of images. As a 'surrogate male', the 'best man' in the Cabinet, Hitler, Stalin, various other men and androgynes, Mrs Thatcher always remained the Iron Lady - never the Iron woman - and in these lists at least, never the Iron Gentleman. Hitler, Stalin and Genghis Khan were described with other adjectives and epithets. Mrs Thatcher may be caricatured as a Tin man, but that is something quite different. Visually she was often a male, as in the Spitting Image puppets or the strip cartoons in Private eye.

Fellow MPs patronised and underestimated her, as James Prior later admitted. Not being a male precluded her joining a Club like her colleagues. The Carlton Club made an exception for her, but she formed her own highly exclusive one, where the judgement of suitability for membership was hers alone - 'Is he "One of Us"?' She was 'ungentlemanly' in her treatment of 'Wets' and other Cabinet members, Francis Pym for example. Her contempt for the Foreign Office and some civil Servants was thinly veiled. (Webster 1990 : 124-126)

Mrs Thatcher was obviously not a Gentleman, like Harold Macmillan for example - nor was she a Lady - with a public school background and what might be called a Code of Honour. As an 'outsider' she made her own way with a different guiding code, drawn partly from her background and partly of her own devising, to suit her circumstances in a man's world. When Harold Macmillan deplored the sale of the "family silver" there was an implied criticism of her, quite separate from the Thatcherism v Conservatism aspect.

'Iron Lady' came from Russia as the unyielding unbending, confrontational, aggressive image - mocking as well as censuring. In a newspaper, 'Gentleman' in such a context does not have the same connotation. The Times, voice of the Establishment, would not have used this alternative, neither would the Guardian. Possibly the tabloids might, or the satirical Periodicals, either as a 'send-up', possibly an inverted insult, or as mocking praise.

Somehow Mrs Thatcher, Gentleman, does not sound right, or express a credible image - unlike the Iron Lady.

In 1979 there is a very limited amount of criticism, although the tone is severe in some cases, and there are some critical images. Together these form a relatively small proportion of the total images used in this election. The criticism at this stage is mainly about personal characteristics rather than political matters or failings. There is relatively little concern with leadership images. Leadership is expressed in terms of government or political standing.

There were early indications of particular image themes which developed later. The Formidable Female is there as the 'second Queen of England' and 'governessy leader'. Both literally and figuratively, The Warrior or Woman with a mission is in 'Iron Lady' or Joan of Arc' or 'one woman revolution'. There are levels of leadership implied in all these woman. The uncaring uncharitable woman is established in 'abrasive vengeful person', and the complexities of the character in 'strident female' and 'simpling presence'.

All the publications made most use of the first four categories. There was very little in Regal characteristics, Historical, Literary, Bestiary or Pictorial.

In 1983 the additional themes of Regality and the Androgyne became more apparent, but inevitably the Falkland factor and the hint of invincibility lay over all.

Mrs Thatcher retained the Falkland symbolism if not by name then by intent. Her speeches, statements and reported interviews used combat idiom: problems to be faced up to or overcome became battles to be won, freedom to be gained and victory achieved. There were foes and enemies, and wrongs to be righted. Liberation was implied. It is hardly surprising that this stimulated further names and variations from all the publications; it was

almost a spiralling challenge. In all this there were still her early life precepts and convictions; Mr Roberts and Methodism/methodism were ever present, with the Victorian - or Georgian - values.

The notes of caution and warning regarding the wisdom of raising any Falklands matters came in various Editorials (referred to elsewhere). Suffice to say it is difficult to see how mention of the conflict could have been avoided altogether. For very specific reasons Mrs Thatcher was regarded by many as a successful Prime Minister and war leader, whilst for identical reasons many other people considered her to be quite the opposite. Whether Mrs Thatcher was wise to retain the military idiom in her election campaign is a matter for conjecture. If nothing else, the lists would have been shorter, and Guardian readers would have lost some witty articles, although no doubt there would have been equally ingenious replacements.

There was, as it were, more of everything in the 1983 lists, particularly in the Daily papers, and New Statesman. There was more praise, more criticism and more images, especially historical ones. The historical images more than trebled in the Daily papers for example. The Sunday papers and three Periodicals had only a little more in most categories than in 1979.

The criticism was expressed in a variety of ways, which, because there was more of it, was more noticeable than in 1979. Most of the criticism is a phrase or extended phrase rather than one word: 'Tina the tearaway word machine' (Guardian) or 'Bossy headmistress' (Sunday Mirror) or 'Class Enemy Number One' (New Statesman). The 'one woman revolution' of 1979 was replaced by 'one woman dictatorship' (both in the Daily Express). There was an unusual oxymoron 'charismatic mediocrity' (Guardian) which has an interesting relationship with another theme. It has been suggested that

"... true charisma is androgynous ... many important leaders have a subliminal androgyny appealing to and unifying the social classes ... Egoism is the androgyne's raison d'être. Self-complete beings need no one and nothing". (Paglia 1988 : 44)

There was a strange combination of wit and humour laced with criticism which seemed near the cartoonists' territory. 'Maggie May' (Guardian) 'Aunt Sally' (Daily Mirror) and 'Pantomime Dame' (Spectator) all cross boundaries of Nicknames and Pictorial or Literary categories. Some descriptions like the Pantomime Dame could perhaps be considered unfortunate but accurate. Bearing in mind some of the photo opportunities which have been less than auspicious for Mrs Thatcher, because she assisted in them, it might be seen as self-inflicted damage. In a serious situation she has been unintentionally ludicrous.

The uncaring aspect appeared as 'hard hearted Maggie' in the Daily Mirror as well as 'hard hearted Hannah'. Surprisingly for this context there was also a mention of Queen Elizabeth I who was not noted for her generosity.

In the Falkland context both the praise and criticism mainly rested in the Historical images. To add a little confusion some of the images served more than one purpose or occasion. Boadicea (or Boudicaa), used by several publications, was for example '... of the South Atlantic' and 'Home Counties ...' and 'amphibious ...' and was also 'Woadicea'. There was also a confused image from another war which was a many edged criticism: 'Squadron Leader Barnes Bounce Bomb'.

Just as the criticism was multifaceted, so too was the praise and a fair proportion of it balanced the adverse comments. Some of it also continued themes from the 1979 election: 'The best man in the Cabinet' and 'a good butcher, politically' (Daily Express); 'Thatcher as figurehead' (Sunday Times).

"As with other aspects of the tabloid's election coverage the portraits of the party leaders were obviously a gross caricature - But like a distorting mirror, which shapes and exaggerates the image presented to it, they did bear some relationship to the underlying reality." (Harrop 1984 : 208)

It is perhaps with hindsight that some of the images now appear to be a warning and a censure: 'Fuehrerin' and 'Medusa figure' or 'Wicked Witch of the West' and 'the Lady Macbeth factor'. One could argue that the writers were only looking for something a little different to reinforce a point, or give dramatic impact, instead of using a frequently quoted cliché or over-worn image. The unusual choice of words is one way of creating a memorable article; it is also a way of expressing concern, exasperation or frustration. At the extreme it is the voice of the prophet.

By 1987 with the Falklands in the past, the problem for the image makers and for Mrs Thatcher was maintaining the impetus and refreshing the representation. After eight years in office there is a danger of the public getting bored; interest and support may decrease and familiarity can breed contempt or at least disenchantment. The problem may be with the politician or the personality or both. The mid-1980's were not entirely peaceful and plain sailing for Mrs Thatcher. The 1987 election might be seen as the phoenix arising.

Writing in January 1986 John Cole considered this problem of possible public boredom, an affliction he suggested never suffered by media-free Prime Ministers. The difficulty facing the modern leader is that:

"However carefully the handler's protect them from over exposure - after fighting a couple of elections they appear to have been around for ever".

He also considered it impossible for the media-bound leaders to live up to Shakespeare's praise of Cleopatra "Age cannot wither her ..." <sup>1</sup> In Mrs Thatcher's case he thought it was precluded by her unvaried "unrelenting style" - her strength and her weakness (The Listener 2 January 1986). Once again a self-cancelling characteristic is mentioned.

Mrs Thatcher apparently became aware of her image problem in April 1986. The visual aspect of the matter was dealt with when she called in a specialist to advise her on clothes and personal presentation. In turn this led to the 'executive look' from Aquascutum replacing the fussy matronly styles for which she was known. The colours favoured also changed. The new-look Margaret Thatcher first appeared in Moscow 1987, apparently to stunning effect. (Thomson 1989 : 81)

It was not only the visual image which concerned Mrs Thatcher, the verbal ones did too. According to Thomson the TBW syndrome was unknown to Mrs Thatcher until April 1986 when there was a planning meeting for the earliest stages of the next general election, during which she learned of the initials and their meaning.

"With such forthrightness were the differing perceptions of the Prime Minister laid bare that she became aware of the antagonism towards her from some quarters".

Thomson also seems to suggest that the TBW discovery was a contributory factor to the later deterioration in the Thatcher/Tebbitt relationship. After the meeting Mrs Thatcher became suspicious that he was indicating she should step down as Prime Minister in his favour to ensure a Conservative victory at the next general election. (Thomson 1989 : 81)

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<sup>1</sup> "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale  
Her infinite variety; other women cloy  
The appetites they feed;"                      Shakespeare - Anthony and Cleopatra - II : ii : 243

If it seems surprising that Mrs Thatcher did not know of the TBW image and others, it has to be remembered that because of the time factor she rarely read newspapers, but relied on Bernard Ingham for a fifteen minute digest every morning. (Wapshott & Brock 1983 : 7) In filtering the news so carefully each day he probably did her a grave disservice, but had reasons for so carefully selecting the news.

By the time of the 1987 general election Mrs Thatcher's visual image was sharpened up, but with it went the press concern about a lofty, isolated, World Statesperson linked with Presidential tendencies and awesome powers. There was a danger of the image seeming too hard, too harsh, and uncaring.

A good marketing manager knows that if the packaging changes but not the successful product then it is essential to have new words. Orwell thought that "A newly invented metaphor assists thought by evoking a new image". (Orwell and Angus 1968 : 127)

In a related thought from another discipline, Theodossin has noted Education's

"unquenchable capacity for recycling seemingly exhausted ideas. A new metaphor can generate a new rhetoric ... (which) can brighten a tarnished proposition .. (aiding) the transformation of the familiar into the seemingly novel". (Theodossin 1986 : 2-4)

The nature of the verbal images changed in 1987, even the type of words used were different, and these changes were not all favourable to Mrs Thatcher.

The 1987 analysis showed the number of descriptions were very little changed from 1983 for the Daily and Sunday papers, but the Periodicals' total went up by almost 25%. This was because the latter used the Historical section more, as well as the Government and

Political Leadership category. Private Eye had increased contributions in the first four categories and because of their jovial nature it tended to off set the critical descriptions from New Statesman in the statistics.

Among the changes particularly to note is the disappearance of almost all the Falkland overtones as well as some familiar, older images. 'The Headmistress' and 'Matron' have gone, 'Nanny' and 'Governess' almost so. They are replaced by images not likely to trigger amused or even fond memories at a later date. The older images might be seen as minor dictators - sometimes benevolent - in their limited spheres of influence. Was it Mrs Thatcher who was deemed to have outgrown these images, or had the electorate, her young charges of yesteryear, outgrown the need for old fashioned discipline and correction in the apparent new freedom of the political climate? The replacements for these formidable females appeared in the Historical section as fearsome Dictators whose influence was, or had been world wide - Genghis Khan, Stalin and Hitler. Did the World Statesperson merit a Critical image of similar dimensions?

There were other Formidable Females new to the list, Catherine the Great, with more than one Empress and Duchess. A disquieting image too -from the Guardian - Quisling. Nothing else in all the lists matches this one description, or had quite the same connotation.

In the Political and Personal characteristics (category four) there are also important changes in the criticism. As noted earlier, the 1987 words are severe and many are percussive: brutal, divisive, domineering, snatcher, heartless, desperate, dangerous, sleazy, conspirator. They are ugly words in themselves which increases the effect. The sibilance of some words also gives increased power; even though they are being read the recall of the sound is sufficient for impact. These are strong basic criticisms and there are many more of them in 1987 than in 1979 and 1983. Also missing are the approval words in the Personal section, such as graceful, capable, marvellous and attractive.

If the Critical section changed so too did the type of approval: World Statesperson, British Thatcher, First Lady (of Politics, or Downing Street), Leader, Legendary British Stateswoman, The/Our Lady, Shrewd politician. The 'nice, feminine descriptions' have mostly been replaced with more factual, even business-like descriptions. Strangely 'Mum' reappeared at this election, as a contrast to the previous comment. Her "Mum's army" statement, however, was totally at odds with the powerful and power-dressed executive of this election. A lateral thought here is that descriptions of shopping for bacon, or cooking Denis's breakfast have been replaced by Mrs Thatcher buying meat for 'midnight snacks at Number 10' to feed those delayed by marathon discussions or committee meetings.

Returning to an earlier factor, and on a related matter, the cult of the personality described as 'iconisation' by some commentators developed after the Falklands. Over exposure in certain parts of the media assisted in, and maintained, the process. Without Mrs Thatcher's willing co-operation it could not have succeeded. Young considered that: "Far from scorning the cult of personality, she sees her own personality as the one irreplaceable ingredient in the politics of her time and country". (Guardian 3 June 1987)

That Mrs Thatcher enjoyed being Prime Minister we know from her "mission statements" and her continued crusade against socialism. She blossomed with the power, as Mrs Castle recorded, but what she appeared to do with it increasingly concerned many people. Later, some writers and journalists noticed what power did to Mrs Thatcher. As the virtues turned to vices, "hard-headed" became "hard-hearted", in her restlessness (fill every minute effectively) she had a need for new challenges or an opponent; the crusader could not stop fighting, and became meddlesome and more difficult. Others saw her as going from strength to strength by taking on new challenges, by fearing no one,<sup>2</sup> by having reserves of energy and inner resources. These developments and progressions needed a range of

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<sup>2</sup> Arguably Saddam Hussein might have been the catalyst needed for the phoenix to arise again, ready for her fourth election.

descriptive explanations, and later modification. It is inaccurate but not illegal to call someone Hitler or Lenin, although done for effect to draw attention to failings and pretensions. Arguably, Dictators are a distinct variety of conviction politician, of a single minded unrelenting nature.

It is open to question whether the journalists seriously suggested Mrs Thatcher matched such frightening and fearsome people. To draw parallels may be effective, to simply label may be futile or offensive. Equally a striking or horrid image may be necessary to raise the level of awareness and jolt the readership out of apathy. The same result might be achieved with a different method, humour, if the writer or publication so chooses. The images themselves may carry conflicting connotations, and not be all they seem. It can depend on a reader's relevant previous knowledge or preconceived ideas. Stalin, for example, was often projected as 'Uncle Joe', with indications of bluntness or benevolence, particularly if children were, so to speak, in the picture. Gulags and the NKVD were unknown or ignored.

A public figure may need fulsome even extravagant positive images to help maintain the prominence, retain widespread interest and prevent a decline in support. There is, however, a finite point for this type of exercise. As Young noted: "... the personality carries a frightening burden. But those who live by the cult must expect, if called upon, to die by it as well". (Young : Guardian 3 June 1987)

The alternative but similar sentiment says that those who live by the media will die by it, given time. To some extent the nature of the images chosen depends on the partisanship of the publication and the journalistic house style. Closely related to this is the anticipated type of readership and their expectations.

Some descriptions or images including various nicknames were used simply for effect, not to be effective images; 'Maggs', 'Bossy Beetroot'. This tended to occur more in the

Tabloids than in the Broadsheets, so too did the use of unfavourable names in the vernacular, or as grass root comment, claiming to give the 'real feeling' of the people. By contrast the Broadsheets and serious Periodicals generally used more subtle types of image. *Punch* and *Private Eye* pursued their own particular styles.

For the readership of all publications, notions of what Mrs Thatcher symbolised, and mental images of 'Mrs Thatcher', were partly influenced by the range and choice presented by particular publications.<sup>3</sup> Overall, what tended to happen was an emphasis on overt partisan praise or criticism in the Tabloids, with a more subtle and intellectual approach in the Broadsheets and serious Periodicals, and predictably humour, invective and a certain innovative approach in the other Periodicals.

It is fascinating and intriguing to find that so many descriptions/images were deemed necessary to explain and portray Mrs Thatcher. Yet, as we saw earlier, the variety serves to reinforce and repeat the contrariness and contradictions of her character and personality. It was the personality as well as the politics which provoked extremes of feeling in the electorate; she could not be ignored, and few could be indifferent towards her.

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<sup>3</sup> The other major influence on the image of Mrs Thatcher is television, but that is not part of the discussion in this thesis.